

December 5, 2014

News24 journalist reports lift attempt against him

Artur Çani, the journalist who runs the investigative programme Kaktus on News 24 TV, reported to the police that a masked person tried to kill him on the evening of December 1, inside the building where he lives in Tirana. Çani reported that at the last moment the gun didn't fire and the aggressor left. He reported he was not aware of this attempt, but later checked the security cameras and noticed the episode.

Police are investigating whether or not the attack was related to his journalist profession. Çani reported that after checking the security cameras of the building he called the Minister of Internal Affairs, Sajmir Tahiri, who expressed his regret for the incident and full support for the journalist. Çani also said that he received a phone call from Prime Minister Edi Rama, expressing interest on the incident, as well as his support. In interviews reported in the media Çani said that the incident was most likely related to his activity as investigative journalist, adding that a journalist working for his investigative broadcast, Kaktus, had resigned earlier due to the pressure put by some people affected by a yet-to-be-aired show.

The Union of Albanian Journalists described the life attempt on the News24 journalist as an unprecedented act, which points to the extreme threats the investigative journalism is facing in Albania. "The Albanian journalists are showing great courage while facing the challenges and threats posed by aggressive politicians and crime," read the Union's press release. The Union sought a thorough investigation into the criminal incident and the arrest of the suspected perpetrator, as well as the placing of Çani and his family under police protection.

The main opposition party, the Democratic Party (DP) also reacted to the incident. The statement released by the party called attention to what they said were his investigative reports into the murder of Credins Bank CEO Artan Santo, the CEZ alleged corruption affair, and into the alleged Albpetrol's oil smuggling, saying that they may have ruined the government's mood. DP spokesperson claimed that this life attempt testifies that the country is being taken over by criminal gangs, as the government is openly coexisting with them. The DP called for an

energetic and swift investigation into the criminal incident, in order to expose the criminal mechanism behind it.

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