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Europe/Ex-USSR - Montenegro

Direct threats

Bomb attack on investigative reporter's home

13 August 2013

Reporters Without Borders strongly condemns a bomb attack on investigative journalist **Tufik Softic**'s home in the northeastern city of Berane on 11 August and urges the authorities to do everything possible to ensure that it does not go unpunished.

A reporter for the national daily *Vijesti* and the weekly *Monitor*, Softic was at home with his family then the TNT-based device exploded at around 10 p.m. in the courtyard near his car, which he had parked just 15 minutes earlier. No one was hurt.

"This bombing could have been deadly and must be taken seriously," Reporters Without Borders said. "We are all the more concerned because it was not an isolated incident, because it was the latest in a long series of targeted attacks on media personnel.

"The repetition of such attacks and the impunity usually enjoyed by those responsible make a major contribution to the oppressive climate for investigative journalism in Montenegro. We hope the police investigation will be conducted with all the necessary resolve and resources so that both perpetrators and instigators are quickly identified."

Vijesti editor **Mihailo Jovovic** told Reporters Without Borders: "This is the latest proof that working journalists who do their job have absolutely no security in Montenegro. This attack clearly aimed to intimidate Mr. Softic and other journalists (...) into refraining from covering crime, corruption, abuse of authority and abuse of public funds."

Jovovic condemned the impunity enjoyed by nearly all those responsible for the previous attacks and said certain media and elected officials were partly to blame because they did not hesitate to demonize the independent media and accuse them of secret links with foreign countries.

Softic has been threatened repeatedly in connection with his coverage of organized crime, drug trafficking and the complicity that organized crime sometimes allegedly enjoys in high places. He was badly beaten outside his home by masked individuals armed with clubs in November 2007 but his assailants were never found.

Vijesti has also been repeatedly targeted in recent years. Several of its employees have been threatened or [physically attacked](#) while four of its vehicles have been [torched](#).

Alluding to the large amount of TNT used in this week's bombing, Softic said it was clearly intended to be more than just an act of intimidation. Interior minister Rasko Konjevic discussed the attack with Softic yesterday.

Montenegro is ranked 113th out of 179 countries in the [2013 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#). Macedonia (116th) is the only Balkan country with a worse ranking.

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