

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/kosovo-knife-attack-on-leading-11-07-2012,43011.html>

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Europe/Ex-USSR - Kosovo

Hostile environment

## Knife attack on leading independent journalist in Pristina

11 July 2012

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Reporters Without Borders firmly condemns yesterday evening's assault on **Halil Matoshi**, a leading newspaper reporter and political analyst, who was attacked and beaten by three unidentified men, one of them armed with a knife, on a street of the capital, Pristina, but escaped with relatively minor injuries.

"We are shocked by the extreme violence of this attack," Reporters Without Borders said. "Targeting such a prominent member of the national media, one known for criticizing the government, will send a very disturbing message to all of Kosovo's journalists. It will intimidate them and encourage them to censor themselves.

"We urge the competent authorities to do everything possible to bring those responsible to justice. The possibility that this attack was linked to the victim's work must not be ruled out. It is unthinkable that a country that wants to join the European Union could allow impunity to prevail."

Matoshi, who writes for the daily newspaper *Koha Ditore*, was attacked as he was returning home from a cultural event in the western district of Dardania. According to the information obtained by Reporters Without Borders, two of his assailants punched and kicked him while the third tried repeatedly to stab him. He managed to fend off the knife blows with his bag until his assailants fled at the approach of passers-by.

After being treated at a hospital, Matoshi was able to go home. The police said they were investigating the assault with the aim of identifying those responsible.

Matoshi is one of the country's best known media commentators, one who has made a name for himself with his uncompromising analyses of Kosovar politics and his outspoken criticism of the government, corruption and other subjects that most journalists regard as off-limits.

The attack comes amid a continuing battle between President Atifete Jahjaga and parliamentarians who are insisting on [a revised version of the criminal code in which two articles, 37 and 38, pose a serious threat to media freedom](#).

"This assault, which could have proved fatal for Matoshi, is indicative of the hostility to which the independent media are exposed," Reporters Without Borders added. "It is absolutely essential that journalists receive better protection, one based on precise laws that enable them to work without fear."

Kosovo is ranked 87th out of 179 countries in the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index.

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