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By IJAS - 07/06/2022

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**Investigative Reporting Lab Macedonia (IRL) journalist Maja Jovanovska received threats by Head of the Department of Urbanism in the Municipality of Mavrovo Rostushe Sadredin Elezoski after reporting on the illegal buildings that are being built in the Mavrovo National Park.**

On June, 2nd 2022, the IRL team was in Mavrovo for a meeting with several employees in the municipality of Mavrovo and PE National Park Mavrovo. Only the Head of the Department of Urbanism in the Municipality Sadredin Elezoski, refused to meet with journalists, although, according to Jovanovska, he was contacted on several occasions. After the call made by Sadredin Elezoski with Maja Jovanovska, who explained that they are still waiting for answers to the questions sent on April 4, he sent insults and abusive words to the journalist, threatening with the words: "Beware of today. You will see what might happen to you if you come here."

"Previously, I had indirect threats related to the research I worked on and which came from people with power and influential positions. But this is the first time they have threatened me directly. At first I was really scared, because the research we are working on is more and more proving political and business interests in the destruction of the largest Mavrovo National Park", said Jovanovska to AJM regarding these threats.

**Another threat was made to a Serbian journalist of portal Nova.rs Pero Jovic.**

Two days ago, June 5, 2022, Jovic received a threatening message on Instagram from a profile named "Red Devils" with the following content: "Do you think we forgot when you were in Pristina? P... you don't know what is preparing for you!"

Given that Jovic has received several serious threats eight months ago, which are still being processed before the prosecutor's, the journalist feels scared and disappointed with the actions taken so far.

"Such messages are not uncommon, but that doesn't mean that it's not dangerous – because you never know who and when someone might hurt you. I don't think that institutions will do their job and find responsible for these threats, but I hope there is some humanity and conscience left in people who work there, that something like this could happen to them or their family, children or friends", stated Pero Jović for SafeJournalists network.

SafeJournalists Network which is representing more than 8,200 media professionals in the Western Balkan strongly condemns threats made to journalists and call upon institutions in North Macedonia and Serbia to react in the shortest possible time; to find and sanction perpetrator in Serbia and for Mr Elezoski to bear the consequences in North Macedonia.

Dragan Sekulovski, the director of SafeJournalists Network also asks for urgent reaction from competent authorities.

“When a serious threat to the life of a journalist occurs only because they do their job in the interest of the public, it is of utmost importance for prompt reaction by the institutions. Therefore, the Ministry of Interior and the Prosecutors Office must demonstrate capacity and readiness to investigate and later punish the perpetrators. This is the only way to seize the policy of impunity and demotivate future attacks on the media workers”, said Sekulovski about these threats.

SafeJournalists Network will inform relevant national and international stakeholders about these cases.

Each attack on journalists is an attack on public interest, democracy and rights of all citizens.

Skopje – Belgrade – Podgorica – Pristina – Sarajevo – Zagreb – Tirana, June 7, 2022

Association of Journalists of Macedonia

Association of Journalists of Kosovo

BH Journalists Association

Croatian Journalists' Association

Independent Journalists Association of Serbia

Trade Union of Media of Montenegro