



Représentation Permanente du Monténégro auprès du Conseil de l'Europe
Permanent Representation of Montenegro to the Council of Europe

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NOTE VERBALE

The Permanent Representation of Montenegro to the Council of Europe presents its compliments to the Directorate General for Democracy and has the honor to forward the additional information regarding the case "*Investigative Journalist Olivera Lakić Shot and Injured*".

The Permanent Representation of Montenegro to the Council of Europe avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Directorate General for Democracy assurances of its highest consideration. *BN*

Strasbourg, 14 September 2018

Mr. Adrian Evtuhovici

Directorate General for Democracy

Council of Europe



On 8 May 2018, around 20.58 h, in Podgorica, in Bul. Svetog Petra Cetinjskog Street, in front of the entrance no. 62, a criminal offence was committed which was qualified by the competent prosecutor's office as attempted murder of Ms Olivera Lakić. Upon learning of the event, a police patrol was sent to the scene; the officers of the Criminal Police Station in charge of the suppression of violent crimes and domestic violence, the officers of the Criminal Police Station in charge of forensics and crime scene investigation of the Podgorica Security Centre, the representatives of the Criminal Police Security Department, the operational service of the criminal police sent to the closer and to the wider scene in order to secure and inspect the crime scene, to block traffic in the city, to perform the control of persons and vehicles, to gather information and take other actions in order to clarify the mentioned event. The officers talked to the people living in the residential buildings, neighbours and acquaintances of the victim, the staff and guests of hospitality facilities near the crime scene immediately after the offence had been committed, and visited those same persons again so as to obtain possibly new information or make new observations concerning the offence concerned. The State Prosecutor in the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office, Ms S.M., was informed of the offence and came to the crime scene and took over the management thereof.

On their way to the scene, the officers of the Podgorica Security Centre noted that an unknown person had used firearms, and on that occasion, Olivera Lakić was inflicted a through-and-through gunshot wound in her right lower leg. The injured Ms Lakić was transported by emergency ambulance to the Emergency Room of the Clinical Centre of Montenegro, where she received medical assistance and where her injury was recorded. After she received medical assistance, she was admitted to and remained at the Vascular Surgery Ward and was discharged from the hospital on 10 May 2018. A forensic medicine expert will give his/her opinion on the severity of the bodily injury on the basis of the medical documentation compiled. The medical documentation in the name of Olivera Lakić was collected and submitted to the competent prosecutor's office to examine it.

During the crime scene investigation measures, it was established that Olivera Lakić arrived before 21.00h in her red Mini Cooper vehicle to the parking space in front of the entrance to the building where she lives. As she walked towards the entrance to her building, at a distance several meters away from the entrance, she was approached by an unknown male person who bent down, made a move with his arm in the direction of her legs, after which Lakić said that she had heard a sound similar to a firecracker explosion and that, at first, she had thought that the unknown person had thrown a firecracker, but soon after she had felt pain and bleeding from her right leg. Lakić said that she had not been paying attention to the person who shot at her, and she could not specify the direction of movement of this person before the firearm was used, and could not provide a description of that person. She stated that during the drive from the moment she entered the vehicle, at "Vijesti" premises, she did not notice anything suspicious or if someone was following her. During the crime scene investigation, red traces similar to blood were found in front of the entrance No. 62, damage from the projectile to the sidewalk was found 5-6m away from the entrance, a small black flashlight was found opposite the entrance in the grass, while on the next day a transparent nylon glove was found while searching the crime scene. The mentioned traces and items were collected from the crime scene for the purpose of conducting forensic examination.

On 16 May 2018, Ms S.M., the State Prosecutor in the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office, qualified the event concerned as the criminal offence of Attempted Murder, and on the order of the competent prosecutor, a criminal charge was filed against the unknown perpetrator on the same day. On this occasion, an initiative was filed with the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office to conduct forensic examination of items recovered from the place of commission of the criminal offence.

In order to solve the event concerned, criminal inquiry was conducted with respect to three persons who were in the immediate vicinity of the crime scene and their possible observations. These persons did not give a detailed description of the person who used firearm against a journalist, which would help identify that person.

Furthermore, the alibis of several persons monitored by the security agencies were checked (a total of 7 people) who participated in the concealment of evidence in 2012 – testifying falsely when B.I. made physical attack on the journalist Ms Lakić. These activities did not result in any significant observations;

- G.Z. who had a verbal conflict with J.J., a close colleague of Ms Olivera Lakić, a month ago. He passed a polygraph test without any significant observations;
- of the staff of the "Parking Service" company, of their possible observations as to whether they noticed that persons unknown to them went past and stayed in the area where the journalist Ms Lakić parks her private vehicle - no significant observations;
- C.C. and S.A., who had a verbal conflict with the journalist Ms Lakić concerning a parking space a month ago. No significant observations.

Furthermore, an informational interview was conducted with the journalist Ms J.J. and the director Ms B.M. in the Independent Daily Newspaper "Vijesti", who stated that they did not know the true motive behind the attack on their colleague, but that they assume that it might be caused by the professional engagement of the injured journalist Lakić, publication of newspaper articles in the past several years about cigarette smuggling in Montenegro, but they were not able to make a more specific statement about it.

Furthermore, the officers of the Podgorica Security Centre - undertook the following activities: they requested the officers of the Border Police Department to send them data on crossing of the state border exiting Montenegro for the period 8-15 May 2018, for male persons between 25 and 40 years of age; the newspaper articles of Ms Olivera Lakić were analyzed with special focus on the persons mentioned in those articles and in relation to possible motives behind the attack; they made visits to shops supplying and selling small arms and ammunition; they collected video footage from surveillance cameras along the path along which the journalist moved, and analyzed the footage received. There was no video surveillance installed in the mentioned part of the city to be able to determine the direction of arrival and departure of the perpetrators. In addition, on their own initiative, under the order of the investigative judge, it has been allowed to receive information on telecommunications traffic from the base stations for the city of Podgorica for 8 May 2018 in the period from 19.50h to 21.50h. The mentioned list of telephone communications is currently being

processed. The case files formed with regard to this event were handed over to the officers of the FBI of the U.S. Department of Justice, for examination, analysis and provision of international police assistance.

The officers of the Podgorica Security Centre in cooperation with the State Prosecution Office are taking further measures and actions falling within their jurisdiction with a view to detecting the perpetrator of this criminal offence.

As of the moment when the event occurred on 8 May 2018, the officers of the Podgorica Security Centre provide 24-hour security protection for the apartment in entrance No. 62 where the injured journalist Ms Lakić lives and for her vehicle. In the earlier period of 2012, when the injured journalist Ms Lakić was physically attacked, and B.I. from Podgorica was prosecuted for that attack, the journalist concerned was provided personal police and physical protection, which included also the apartment – entrance – she used in that period.

The mentioned case of 8 May 2018 in which Ms Olivera Lakić is the victim has not been processed yet within the court procedure.

The cases that were processed concerning earlier attacks on the journalist Ms Lakić have been completed (by judgments of the Basic Court in Podgorica: in 2011 one defendant M.S. was sentenced to a prison term of 4 months for committing an extended criminal offence of endangering safety, while P.M. was acquitted of charges for the same offence; in 2014 - the accused R.M. was acquitted of charges for the criminal offence of endangering safety; in 2012, the accused B.I. was found guilty of the criminal offence of violent behaviour and sentenced to a prison term of 9 months; in 2014 - by a decision of the Basic Court a bill of indictment was dismissed for two persons, Č.I. and S.I., because there was insufficient evidence that the accused were reasonably suspicious of committing the offence that was the subject of the charge).