

Briefing: New Press and Media Freedom Violations in EU

42 press freedom cases documented in EU Member States and Candidate Countries during the last two months

1 October 2020

Purpose

This briefing note provides a clear overview of all press and media freedom violations observed in European Union (EU) Member State and Candidate Country in the months of August and September, on a country-by-country basis. It follows previous briefings published in [May](#), [June](#) and [July](#) which focused solely on the emerging Covid-19 crisis and violence against journalists and media workers covering protests. Cases documented over the summer were recently summarised in a [report](#) by the Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR), which tracks, monitors and responds to threats to journalists and violations of press and media freedom across Europe¹.

Summary

- Over the last two months, the overall number of violations linked to Covid-19 and state's responses to the virus remains low compared to early stages of the pandemic.
- Bulgaria emerges as a hotspot after MFRR monitors four incidents including press access restrictions in parliament and various incidents of police violence towards journalists covering ongoing anti-government protests challenging corruption.
- Seven press freedom violations documented in Serbia in August and September, including online and physical death threats, hacking and destruction of property.
- Three serious physical attacks on journalists resulting in hospital treatment documented in Italy, Sweden and Bulgaria.
- License renewal refused for Klubrádió by FIDESZ controlled media council and implosion of Index accelerates government control over Hungarian media.
- Attacks on journalists and media workers covering protests and demonstrations have continued, with six cases documented. Overall numbers down compared to months following lifting of lockdowns.

¹ This briefing was co-ordinated by IPI as part of the Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR) project and produced in cooperation with other press freedom partners. The MFRR is supported by the European Commission.

Press freedom violations by country

EU Member States

Austria

- In August, Michael Bonvalot, a Vienna-based freelance journalist specialized on right wing extremism was the target of a lawsuit by the head of the Identitarian Movement in Austria, Martin Sellner. In the legal letter, Sellner demanded that Bonvalot cover Sellner's legal costs and donate 2000 Euro to an Identitarian organization in Austria².

Belgium

- The news website Apache was required to take down an article after the Antwerp project developer and lobbyist Erik Van der Paal filed a complaint for 'breach of privacy' and 'slander' to the Antwerp court against the media outlet. The use of this mechanism for cases against journalists and media workers is highly contested³.

Bulgaria

- On 14 September, police in the Bulgarian capital summoned crime reporter Martin Georgiev of the daily newspaper Sega for questioning over inquiries and images he'd sent to the Interior Ministry about the behaviour of police officers during anti-government protesters⁴.
- On 2 September, protests erupted in Sofia against corruption and nepotism. Police officers responded to the protests with pepper spray and other militarised tactics. As part of this, the Bulgarian police and gendarmerie applied pepper spray and other gas indiscriminately against protesters⁵.
- On the night of 2 September, international freelance journalist Dimitar Kenarov was allegedly kicked in the head by police officers during anti-corruption protests in Sofia, detained for hours and had his camera equipment damaged⁶.
- On 2 September, the Bulgarian parliament moved its premises into the former headquarters of the Bulgarian Communist Party in central Sofia. While the former building enabled journalists and media workers to mingle and engage with MPs and their guests in all the common spaces, the new, larger building layout creates a far more controlled and restrictive opportunities for engagement. In response, more than 60 journalists and media workers signed a petition condemning the development⁷.
- On 5 August, Paulina Paunova of Radio Free Europe and Genka Shikerova of TV1 Bulgaria were attacked by several unnamed men when they were trying to cover the conference of the Prime Minister's GERB party held at Sofia Tech Park. Paunova's phone was wrestled from her hand and thrown away several times⁸.

² Austria: Journalist threatened with defamation action from Identitarian movement leader, MMF, 3 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23469>

³ Belgium: Apache required to take down an article following a court's decision, MMF, 18 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23497>

⁴ Bulgaria: Journalist summoned to Interior Ministry over police inquiries, MMF, 24 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23507>

⁵ Bulgaria: Journalists indiscriminately tear gassed by police officers during protests in Sofia, MMF, 3 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23473>

⁶ Bulgaria: Journalist Dimitar Kenarov detained and assaulted by police officers while covering Sofia protest, MMF, 3 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23472>

⁷ Bulgaria: New parliament building offers restricted access for journalists and media workers, MMF, 17 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23496>

⁸ Bulgaria: Two journalists assaulted while covering Prime Ministers party conference, MMF, August, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23444>

Denmark

- In September, six TV 2 employees authored an open letter raising awareness of sexism within the Danish media industry, which was signed by over 701 women across the country. The letter was informed by the experience of sexism suffered by the letter's authors. While TV 2's news director, Jacob Kwon stated that he was "happy that it is coming out now", TV 2 stated that any media professional who signed the letter was disqualified from covering the issue in their professional capacity⁹.

France

- On 25 September, the National Anti-terrorist Prosecutor's Office opened an investigation into attempted murder in relation to a terrorist enterprise after a knife attack occurred on in Paris, close to Charlie Hebdo's former newsroom. The motivation of the attack is still unclear¹⁰.

Germany

- On 13 September, two female radio reporters from the regional public service broadcaster were verbally abused and threatened by a PEGIDA (anti-Islamic right-wing movement) protestor in the centre of Dresden. He ordered one of them in a menacing way to show her press pass¹¹.
- On 29 August, about 40,000 people attended a protest that culminated outside the Reichstag in Berlin, organised by a broad alliance of organisations, against the COVID-19 policies of the German government. Covering the event, a number of journalists and a camera crew were intimidated and assaulted by protesters, with the police impeding the journalists' work¹².

Greece

- For five days starting on 9 September, journalists and photographers on the island of Lesbos were intermittently restricted from reporting from an area where thousands of refugees and asylum seekers had been living on the roadside without accommodation or sanitation. The journalists had been trying to document the aftermath of the fires which destroyed the Moria camp on 9 September¹³.
- On August 9, Turkish/Kurdish journalists Çağdaş Kaplan and Bercem Mordeniz were insulted and threatened by police officers after they questioned their arrest of a young man in Athens. As they presented their press IDs and started to record the arrest, police tried to stop Kaplan from recording, grabbed his phone and threw it on the floor. They then hit him and handcuffed him. Mordeniz was also arrested. They were held at a police station for around eight hours. Both journalists were subject to racist abuse by the police.¹⁴

Hungary

- In a letter dated 2 June, József Magyar, deputy secretary of state for development of European affairs at the ministry of foreign affairs instructed Hungarian embassies in

⁹ Denmark: Signatories to letter about sexual harassment in the media industry prevented from covering the issues, MMF, 11 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23490>

¹⁰ France: two media workers injured in knife attack near Charlie Hebdo's former offices, MMF, 25 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23508>

¹¹ Germany: Reporters threatened at right-wing rally in Dresden, MMF, 16 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23494>

¹² Germany: More than 20 journalists threatened and harassed during anti-COVID protest in Berlin, MMF, 4 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23475>

¹³ Greece: Journalists prevented from covering aftermath of Moria fire, MMF, 14 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23492>

¹⁴ Greece: Kurdish journalists detained while documenting arrest, MMF, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23446>

the EU to monitor the professional visits of Hungarian journalists to the respective countries and provide information back to the ministry as appropriate¹⁵.

- On 11 September, the country's media authority announced it would not extend the license for Klubrádió, the last remaining critical radio station in Hungary. The Budapest-based commercial talk and news radio station has long been a target of Viktor Orbán's ruling FIDESZ party for its reporting on the government¹⁶

Italy

- On 8 September, Michele Santagata, a journalist and manager at online Italian news outlet Iacchitè, was ambushed in broad daylight in Cosenza city centre by two men who punched and kicked him in front of a crowd of more than a dozen witnesses. The motive for the attack was linked to the outlet's reporting on alleged local judicial corruption¹⁷.
- Since 18 August, the president of the Italian Federation of Journalists (FNSI), Giuseppe Giulietti, was targeted by online harassment and intimidation after he publicly defended journalists who had been threatened for debunking an inaccurate report about migrants¹⁸.

Malta

- On 7 August, Christoph Schwaiger, a journalist for Newsbook in Malta, was repeatedly refused comment by the Ministry of Health in Malta in retaliation for his criticism of the body. After three attempts Schwaiger was informed that the ministry "does not collaborate with journalists who publicly try to ridicule our staff for unfounded reasons"¹⁹.

Slovenia

- On 27 September, the Prime Minister of Slovenia, Janez Janša, publicly mocked a journalist on Twitter by suggesting he had recently been released from a mental health hospital²⁰.
- Throughout August and September 2020, Rok Snežič, a tax expert and financial advisor to the Slovenian Prime Minister, filed a barrage of 39 vexatious defamation lawsuits against three journalists at the investigative news website Necenzurirano²¹.
- On 2 August, Uroš Urbanija, head of the Government Communication Office (UKOM) tweeted urging citizens to report and denounce any media or journalists in Slovenia who "obviously and shamelessly use manipulations" in their work to purposefully mislead people²²

Sweden

¹⁵ Hungary: Embassies requested to monitor movements and activities of travelling Hungarian journalists, MMF, 21 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23502>

¹⁶ Hungary: Government-controlled Media Authority refuses license extension for critical Klubrádió station, MMF, 11 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23488>

¹⁷ Italy: Journalist beaten over outlet's reporting on mafia links and alleged judicial corruption, MMF, 25 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23485>

¹⁸ Federation of Journalists faces online intimidation from far-right, MMF, <https://www.mappingmediafreedom.org/>

¹⁹ Malta: Ministry of Health refuses to respond to journalist's questions, MMF, 11 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23486>

²⁰ Slovenia: PM Janša jokes journalist is mentally ill on Twitter, MMF, 30 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23511>

²¹ Slovenia: SLAPP case sees 39 lawsuits launched against three journalists at Necenzurirano, MMF, 29 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23512>

²² Slovenia: Government communications chief calls for citizens to publicly denounce media "manipulators", MMF, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23454>

- On 24 September, Swedish-based Turkish journalist Abdullah Bozkurt was attacked by three men in the middle of the day near his home in Stockholm. This attack that led to injuries to his face, head, arms and legs required medical attention at hospital²³.
- **EU Candidate Countries**

Montenegro

- In mid-August, the online platform UDAR released a list of what it called “collaborators of Serbian secret services,” which included three journalists, namely: Sinisa Lukovic and Vuk Lajovic of the daily Vijesti, and Drazen Zivkovic of the news site Borba.me. No evidence has been provided that the journalists have Serbian connections. The UDAR platform is suspected of being run by the Montenegrin government²⁴.

North Macedonia

- On 9 September, VMRO-DPMNE party organised a protest in the centre of Skopje. Journalist Milka Smilevska and the camera operator Jorde Angelovic were covering it for Al Jazeera when they were assaulted and obstructed by an unknown protester after asking whether they worked for Al Jazeera.²⁵

Serbia

- The online edition of the daily newspaper Vesti was hacked from 10 to 14 September. For four days, users were unable to access the website and journalists were unable to publish new content²⁶.
- On 1 September, Newsmax Adria interviewed outgoing Montenegrin President and DPS leader, Milo Djukanovic. On the same day, as soon as the interview was announced, Serbian journalist and News director at NewsMax Adria Slobodan Georgiev started receiving insults and death threats online²⁷.
- On 31 August, a large crowd gathered in Podgorica to celebrate the preliminary election results. A vehicle with the RTCG logo, the public broadcaster, on the car door was being driven back to headquarters when it was stoned.²⁸
- In August, Predrag Azdejković, the editor of "Optimist", a LGBTQ magazine and his family received death threats. The first threatening email to Azdejković came on August 11, and by August 13 he had received a total of five serious death and physical violence threats against him and his family from the same person. The threats targeted Azdejkovic for his sexual status²⁹.
- On 16 August, Jugoslav Cosic, editor-in-chief of 24-hour cable news channel N1, was threatened online after he had denounced the sabotage of the car of N1's editor Branislav Sovljanski. Two days previously, on 14 August, Sovljanski had his car tyre

²³ Sweden: Journalist attacked in Stockholm by three unknown individuals, MMF, 28 September 2020,

<https://mappingmediafreedom.ushahidi.io/posts/23509>

²⁴ Montenegro: Journalists targeted in online smear campaign, MMF, 1 September 2020,

<https://mappingmediafreedom.ushahidi.io/posts/23465>

²⁵ North Macedonia: Al Jazeera crew assaulted during protest in Skopje, MMF, 10 September 2020,

<https://mappingmediafreedom.ushahidi.io/posts/23484>

²⁶ Serbia: Access to 'Vesti online' blocked for four days due to a cyber-attack, MMF, 15 September 2020,

<https://mappingmediafreedom.ushahidi.io/posts/23493>

²⁷ Serbia: Death threats shared online to Serbian journalist Slobodan Georgiev, MMF, 3 September 2020,

<https://mappingmediafreedom.ushahidi.io/posts/23471>

²⁸ Montenegro: Stones thrown at RTCG branded car during election result celebration, MMF, 3 September 2020,

<https://mappingmediafreedom.ushahidi.io/posts/23470>

²⁹ Serbia: Journalist face death threats, MMF, <https://mappingmediafreedom.ushahidi.io/posts/23459>

punctured five times near his home in the capital Belgrade. The perpetrator continued the online attacks with more insults and threats, including rape threats³⁰.

- On 12 August, Salahudin Fetic, director and editor in chief of Sandzak Television in Serbia was attacked by a local businessman in a restaurant. The verbal argument between the two ended with Fetic being hit in the face. Six days later, Fetic was entering his car with a colleague when two men approached. One asked “What have you been writing about me in the media?”. When Bihorc exited the car trying to calm the situation, the man pressed against him with his body, allegedly showing a gun that was in his bag³¹.
- On 13 August, two perpetrators broke into the house of Jeton Ismaili, editor of the Albanian language FOLonline news portal in Serbia and threatened to kill him and his family. Two men broke in, insulted and then threatened the editor’s wife for around five minutes while their three young children were present. Death threats were also issued against Ismaili³².

Turkey

- On 22 September, Turkish authorities announced they were investigating the death of Russian-born American investigative journalist, author and film-maker Andre Vltchek, who died during an overnight car journey to Istanbul. Police have recorded his death as “suspicious” and an investigation is underway³³.
- On 17 September, a court in Turkey ordered former Cumhuriyet newspaper Editor-in-Chief Can Dündar to return to the country and report to court or be deemed a “fugitive” and have his property confiscated. The court’s ruling followed a request by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office. It gave Dündar, who currently lives in exile in Germany, 15 days to report in person to the court where he faces an ongoing, politically motivated trial³⁴.
- On 7 September, Oktay Candemir, a freelance journalist who writes for the pro-Kurdish news website Nupel, was arrested after a police raid on his home in the eastern city of Van for posting a satirical tweet mocking the TV depiction of a historical Sultan. If convicted, Candemir faces up to two years in prison. It followed an arrest warrant issued by the Van Chief Public Prosecutor's Office³⁵.

Other countries

United Kingdom (left the EU but still in the transition period)

- In September, Marianna Spring, a specialist reporter covering disinformation and social media for the BBC and BBC World Service reported that she had received misogynistic online harassment and a number online threats on different social media platforms as a result of her work³⁶.
- On 5 September, demonstrators from the Extinction Rebellion environmentalist movement blockaded print works which produce newspapers for News Corp, including The Sun, Times, Sun on Sunday and Sunday Times, as well as the Daily

³⁰ Serbia: Journalists face online threats, MMF, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23458>

³¹ Serbia: Journalist attacked and threatened at gun point, MMF, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23457>

³² Serbia: Death threats against editor and his family over coronavirus article, MMF, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23455>

³³ Turkey: Police investigate ‘suspicious’ death of investigative journalist and filmmaker Andre Vltchek, MMF, 22 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23503>

³⁴ Turkey: Former Cumhuriyet editor Can Dündar ordered to return or have assets seized, MMF, 24 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23498>

³⁵ Turkey: Freelance journalist charged with “insulting memory” of historical Sultan in satirical tweet, MMF, 10 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23483>

³⁶ United Kingdom: BBC reporter on disinformation receives online harassment and threats, MMF, 8 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23478>

Telegraph and Sunday Telegraph, the Daily Mail. Five national newspapers failed to appear on newsstands as a result of the blockade³⁷.

- On 25 August, it was revealed the UK Ministry of Defence informed a journalist at Declassified UK that the Ministry would not be providing comment to the outlet. Rather than a standard response, the journalist received a reply enquiring about “what sort of angle have you taken on the war in Yemen?” The outlet complained it had been blacklisted by the MOD in retaliation for its critical stance³⁸.

Statements and Advocacy by MFRR partners³⁹

- **MFRR partners express concern over recent attacks on journalists and media workers in North Macedonia⁴⁰.** MFRR partners, led by ECPMF, sent a letter to Prime Minister Zaev highlighting a number of threats to journalists and media workers that need to be addressed.
- **Sweden: Exiled Turkish journalist attacked in Stockholm⁴¹.** MFRR partner EFJ condemned the attack of Turkish journalist Abdullah Bozkurt, who is exiled in Sweden.
- **EFJ condemns attack near former Charlie Hebdo office in Paris⁴².** MFRR partner EFJ joined its affiliates in France in condemning the knife attack that left two media workers injured.
- **Police violence and press restrictions raise further red flags in Bulgaria⁴³** MFRR partners send a letter to the Prime Minister, Interior Minister and the Speaker of the National Assembly following a number of alarming developments facing journalists and media workers.
- **Hungarian embassies instructed to inform on journalists' EU trips⁴⁴** IPI expressed serious concern over reports that the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested its embassies in EU countries to monitor Hungarian journalists and media workers.
- **MFRR condemns the escalating judicial harassment of Can Dündar by Turkey⁴⁵** The MFRR condemned the decision of the Istanbul 14th Heavy Penal Court ruling that journalist Can Dündar will be considered a fugitive and have his entire property confiscated if he does not appear in Turkish court within 15 days.
- **ECPMF and MFRR partners write letter to the Greek authorities voicing concern over restricted access for media workers to Moria refugee camp⁴⁶** The Greek authorities were accused of undermining press freedom and threatening the public's right to know by restricting access for media workers to sites where refugees and asylum seekers are held following the fire that destroyed the Moria camp.

³⁷ United Kingdom: Climate change protestors block newspaper distribution, MMF, 7 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23476>

³⁸ United Kingdom: Ministry of Defence excludes investigative news outlet Declassified UK, MMF, 1 September 2020, <https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23466>

³⁹ These advocacy statements and letter cover August and September 2020

⁴⁰ MFRR partners express concern over recent attacks on journalists and media workers in North Macedonia, MFRR, 29 September 2020, <https://www.mfrr.eu/mfrr-expresses-concern-over-recent-attacks-on-journalists-and-media-workers/>

⁴¹ Sweden: Exiled Turkish journalist attacked in Stockholm, EFJ, 30 September 2020, <https://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2020/09/30/sweden-exiled-turkish-journalist-attacked-in-stockholm/>

⁴² EFJ condemns attack near former Charlie Hebdo office in Paris, EFJ, 25 September 2020, <https://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2020/09/25/efj-condemns-attack-near-former-charlie-hebdo-office-in-paris/>

⁴³ Police violence and press restrictions raise further red flags in Bulgaria, MFRR, 24 September 2020, <https://www.mfrr.eu/police-violence-and-press-restrictions-raise-further-red-flags-in-bulgaria/>

⁴⁴ <https://ipi.media/hungarian-embassies-instructed-to-inform-on-journalists-eu-trips/>, MFRR, 22 September 2020, <https://www.mfrr.eu/hungarian-embassies-instructed-to-inform-on-journalists-eu-trips/>

⁴⁵ MFRR condemns the escalating judicial harassment of Can Dündar by Turkey, MFRR, 21 September 2020, <https://www.mfrr.eu/mfrr-condemns-the-escalating-judicial-harassment-of-can-dundar-by-turkey/>

⁴⁶ ECPMF and MFRR partners write letter to the Greek authorities voicing concern over restricted access for media workers to Moria refugee camp, MFRR, 16 September 2020, <https://www.mfrr.eu/the-mfrr-voices-concern-over-restricted-access-for-media-workers-to-moria-refugee-camp/>

- **MFRR partners write letter of concern to Albanian government regarding the plan to amend the country's audio-visual laws**⁴⁷ MFRR partners, alongside leading media freedom organisations wrote to Chairperson of the Albanian Parliament, Gramoz Ruçi and Albanian parliamentarians to reiterate their serious concern that the amendments fall short of international law and standards.
- **Hungary's last independent radio station could be forced off airwaves**⁴⁸ The EU must act to stop the accelerating elimination of press freedom in Hungary, IPI said, after the rejection of the license renewal of Hungary's last independent radio broadcaster.
- **ECPMF calls on Turkey drop the charges against journalist Oktay Candemir and return his confiscated property**⁴⁹ ECPMF called on the Turkish authorities to immediately and unconditionally drop the charges against freelance journalist Oktay Candemir.
- **Italian journalist beaten over reporting on alleged judicial corruption**⁵⁰ As part of the MFRR, IPI calls for thorough investigation into brazen daylight attack on Michele Santagata.
- **Journalists detained, tear gassed covering protests in Bulgaria**⁵¹ MFRR partners, ECPMF and IPI and EFJ all condemned the violence against journalists and media workers covering anti-government protests by police officers.
- **Investigative news outlet Declassified UK excluded by Ministry of Defence**⁵² MFRR partner, IPI raises concerns to the UK Government that the exclusion of Declassified UK in apparent retaliation for critical reporting is a significant threat to media freedom.
- **EU must act on Hungary media market distortion**⁵³ 16 groups, including MFRR partners, urge EC Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager to respond to state aid complaints on abuse of state advertising and aid to public broadcaster.
- **MFRR partners raise concerns about smear campaign directed at journalists in Montenegro**⁵⁴ Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR) partners and press and media freedom organisations raise concerns about an online smear campaign directed at journalists in Montenegro.
- **Threats against the president of Italian journalists' federation**⁵⁵. MFRR partner EFJ called for justice to respond to the serious threats.

⁴⁷ MFRR partners write letter of concern to Albanian government regarding the plan to amend the country's audio-visual laws, MFRR, 16 September 2020, <https://www.mfrr.eu/mfrr-partners-write-letter-of-concern-to-albanian-government-regarding-the-plan-to-amend-the-countrys-audio-visual-laws/>

⁴⁸ Hungary's last independent radio station could be forced off airwaves, MFRR, 11 September 2020, <https://www.mfrr.eu/hungarys-last-independent-radio-station-could-be-forced-off-airwaves/>

⁴⁹ ECPMF calls on Turkey drop the charges against journalist Oktay Candemir and return his confiscated property, MFRR, 11 September 2020, <https://www.mfrr.eu/ecpmf-calls-on-turkey-drop-the-charges-against-journalist-oktay-candemir-and-return-his-confiscated-property/>

⁵⁰ Italian journalist beaten over reporting on alleged judicial corruption, MFRR, 10 September 2020, <https://www.mfrr.eu/italian-journalist-beaten-over-reporting-on-alleged-judicial-corruption/>

⁵¹ Journalists detained, tear gassed covering protests in Bulgaria, IPI, September 4, <https://ipi.media/journalists-detained-tear-gassed-covering-protests-in-bulgaria/>, MFRR calls for thorough investigation into use of force against journalists during anti-government protests in Bulgaria, ECPMF, 7 September 2020, <https://www.ecpmf.eu/mfrr-calls-for-thorough-investigation-into-use-of-force-against-journalists-during-anti-government-protests-in-bulgaria/>, Bulgaria: EFJ/IFJ condemn police violence against journalists and protestors, EFJ, 4 September 2020, <https://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2020/09/04/bulgaria-efj-ifj-condemn-police-violence-against-journalists-and-protestors/>

⁵² Investigative news outlet Declassified UK blacklisted by Ministry of Defence, MFRR, 4 September 2020, <https://www.mfrr.eu/investigative-news-outlet-declassified-uk-excluded-by-ministry-of-defence/>

⁵³ EU must act on Hungary media market distortion, MFRR, 2 September 2020, <https://www.mfrr.eu/eu-must-act-on-hungary-media-market-distortion/>

⁵⁴ MFRR partners raise concerns about smear campaign directed at journalists in Montenegro, MFRR, 28 August 2020, <https://www.mfrr.eu/mfrr-partners-raise-concerns-about-smear-campaign-directed-at-journalists-in-montenegro/>

⁵⁵ Threats against the president of Italian journalists' federation, EFJ, 25 August 2020, <https://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2020/08/25/threats-against-the-president-of-italian-journalists/>

- **New administration, old agenda: Press freedom strained again in Slovenia under veteran PM Janša**⁵⁶ *MFRR partner IPI explored the downturn in media freedom in Slovenia after a new government came to power under veteran Prime Minister Janez Janša.*
- **MFRR calls for a robust and transparent investigation into threats made against Nello Scavo**⁵⁷ *Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR) partners and freedom of expression organisations call on the Maltese and Italian governments to ensure a robust, thorough and transparent investigation into Neville Gafà for threats made against journalist, Nello Scavo.*

This briefing was prepared by IPI as part of the Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR), supported by the European Commission, which tracks, monitors and responds to threats to journalists and violations of press and media freedom across Europe.

ARTICLE 19

European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)

European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)

Free Press Unlimited (FPU)

International Press Institute (IPI)

Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa (OBCT)



⁵⁶ *New administration, old agenda: Press freedom strained again in Slovenia under veteran PM Janša*, IPI, 1 September 2020, <https://ipi.media/new-administration-old-agenda-press-freedom-strained-again-in-slovenia-under-veteran-pm-jansa/>

⁵⁷ *MFRR calls for a robust and transparent investigation into threats made against Nello Scavo*, MFRR, 7 August 2020, <https://www.mfrr.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/MFRR-Malta-Neville-Gafa-Investigation.pdf>