



To: Mrs Elisa Spiropali, Speaker of the Assembly of the Republic of Albania

Cc: Mrs Ina Zhupa, Chairwoman of the Commission for Education and Media
Assembly of the Republic of Albania

Mrs. Jorida Tabaku, Chairwoman of the National Council on European Integration, Assembly of
the Republic of Albania

Mr. Genci Gjonçaj, Secretary General of of the Assembly of the Republic of Albania

Belgrade, 18th October 2024

Repeated Concerns Over Journalistic Access within the Albanian Parliament

Dear Mrs Spiropali,

I am writing on behalf of the [SafeJournalists Network](#), which represents media professionals in the Western Balkans, including journalists from Albania. Our network is dedicated to protecting journalists' rights, ensuring their safety, and defending media freedom. We closely monitor media-related developments across the region, particularly in Albania.

We wish to express our concern regarding the [actions](#) of the Republic Guard on October 17, 2024, which reflect an repeated and troubling pattern of obstructing journalists' access and undermining media freedom. On that day, journalists covering parliamentary developments were denied access by the Guard. Not only were they prevented from filming at the entrance, where deputies were arriving amidst heightened tensions, but they were also barred from entering the plenary session itself as testified by journalists and reporters.

This incident is not isolated but part of a worrying, repeated pattern of restricting media access within the Albanian Parliament. Similar occurrences were documented by Safe Journalists Network over the past year, including on October 9, 2023, when journalists were [denied access to parliamentary premises](#) under vague justifications. Further incidents in 2024 followed: On February 6, journalist Ardit Hoxha was [physically pushed and removed by the Guard](#), preventing him from filming; on May 17, [media crews were barred from filming a meeting](#) with dismissed RTSH journalists, despite formal requests and a public notice; on May 30, journalists were [obstructed during a plenary session](#) as the Guard attempted to remove them from the gallery. Most recently, on October 3, 2024, reporters were [physically prevented from accessing parliamentary developments](#) when the main entrance was intentionally locked.

The right of journalists to access public institutions and report on parliamentary proceedings is fundamental to media freedom. By restricting this access, the actions of the Republic Guard undermine

these essential protections and contribute to a hostile environment for the press, ultimately limiting the public's ability to stay informed and hold their leaders accountable.

Given the heightened tensions and confrontations within Parliament, it is crucial to uphold the highest standards of transparency and accountability. This is essential to ensure that journalists can operate in a safe and supportive environment, allowing them to carry out their critical role of reporting freely and independently on parliamentary proceedings.

We strongly urge the Albanian Assembly to address this issue with the urgency and seriousness it warrants, giving due consideration to the concerns raised by journalists. It is our hope that immediate steps will be taken to create an environment where journalists can exercise their right to report freely, as this is a fundamental pillar of any democratic society.

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

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,
Tamara Filipović Stevanović,
SafeJournalists Network Coordinator

On behalf of
BH Journalists Association
Trade Union of Media of Montenegro
Croatian Journalists Association
Association of Journalists of Kosovo
Association of Journalists of Macedonia
Independent Journalists Association of Serbia