



To:

Ivan Malenica, Minister of Justice and Administration

Josip Salapić, Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice and Administration

Juro Martinović, Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice and Administration

Sanjin Rukavina, Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice and Administration

Sent electronically

8 April 2021

Dear Mr Malenica

The Media Freedom Rapid Response, partner organisations and leading experts call on the Croatian government to resist calls from Monaco to extradite whistleblower Jonathan Taylor based on a now-revoked Interpol red notice.

We are writing to you today to ensure that ongoing Croatian legal proceedings against whistleblower Jonathan Taylor reflect the withdrawal of the Interpol Red Notice and the absence of legal charges in Monaco. It is our belief that there is no legitimate reason for Taylor to remain in Croatia and call for all proceedings to be dropped, allowing him to return home to his family.

On 30 July 2020, Jonathan Taylor, a whistleblower who disclosed bribery and corrupt practices in the oil and gas industry, was arrested upon his arrival in Croatia for a holiday pursuant to an Interpol Red Notice issued on request of Monaco. On 1 September, a court in Dubrovnik ordered his extradition. However, on 12 October the Supreme Court partially sustained an appeal by Taylor, ruling that it should be returned to a lower court, and the UK should be afforded the right to request his surrender under the European Arrest Warrant Scheme. It further ordered that in the event that the United Kingdom does not seek his surrender then the lower Court should rule on the request for extradition by Monaco.

On 31 December the Dubrovnik County Court again ruled to extradite Jonathan to Monaco. On 18 February 2021, the Croatian Supreme Court accepted Taylor's appeal. However, instead of barring his extradition it ordered the Court in Dubrovnik to request a notification from Monaco to state the reason for the extradition and whether criminal proceedings are being conducted.

At the request of the Monegasque authorities Interpol has subsequently withdrawn the arrest warrant for "corruption and blackmail" but the country is still demanding Taylor's extradition to facilitate further interrogation over alleged offences arising from a complaint lodged against him in September 2014 by SBM Offshore's Monaco affiliate. Even when the Interpol Red Notice was in effect, Taylor did not satisfy the criteria for the warrant as he was neither awaiting trial, nor had he been convicted. As Jonathan Taylor has not been charged with any crimes in Monaco the extradition request is disproportionate and unwarranted. Any continued involvement from the Croatian authorities threatens to extend the reach of Monaco's intimidation of Taylor and further threatens other potential whistleblowers from stepping forward. This will undermine democracy, both in Croatia and Monaco, as well as across Europe more broadly.

Without the Interpol Red Notice and no charges being brought against Jonathan Taylor that is no justification for extradition, nor any reason for him to remain in Croatia. The undersigned organisations demand that he is able to return to the UK without impediment. Further, in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the serious health risks associated with travel, alongside serious concerns for his family's welfare, it is only right and humane that Jonathan Taylor is allowed to return directly to his home and to be allowed to answer all questions remotely. This has been offered numerous times by Jonathan Taylor and his legal team and we are calling on Monaco to meaningfully explore this option.

As of 6 April 2021, Jonathan Taylor has spent 252 days in legal limbo in Croatia solely for blowing the whistle in the public interest regarding widespread corruption that has resulted in investigations in the UK, the US, Brazil, Switzerland and the Netherlands and fines against SBM Offshore amounting to \$827 million USD, as well as the conviction of two former CEOs for fraud-related offences. Taylor should not continue to be persecuted for an action that strengthens the public's right to know, encourages lawful, transparent and fair business practices and reinforces European democracy.

We call on the Ministry of Justice and Administration to ensure updated information regarding the extradition to Monaco and the repealed Interpol Red Notice is communicated to all relevant judicial bodies to ensure Jonathan Taylor is able to return home to his family.

Signed:

Organisations:

Access Info Europe

African Centre for Media & Information Literacy (AFRICMIL)

Blueprint for Free Speech

Campax, Switzerland

Centre for Free Expression (Canada)

Centre for Peace Studies (Croatia)

Centre for Research in Employment and Work (CREW - University of Greenwich)

Protect (UK)

Civil Liberties Union for Europe (Liberties)
European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)
European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)
Free Press Unlimited
Government Accountability Project (USA)
Index on Censorship
Maison des Lanceurs d'Alerte (France)
OBC Transeuropa
Sherpa (France)
The Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation
The Signals Network (US/France)
Transparency International
Transparency International Bulgaria
Transparency International EU
Transparency International Ireland
Transparency International Italy
Transparency International UK
WBN (Germany)
WhistleblowersUK
Whistleblowing International Network (WIN)

Individuals:

Dame Margaret Hodge MP, Chair, APPG on Anti-Corruption & Responsible Tax
Professor David Lewis, Middlesex University, UK
Peter Matjašič, Senior Program Officer, Open Society Initiative for Europe
Jóhannes Stefánsson, Fishrot Whistleblower

This letter has been coordinated by the Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR), which tracks, monitors and responds to violations of press and media freedom in EU Member States and Candidate Countries. This project provides legal and practical support, public advocacy and information to protect journalists and media workers. The MFRR is organised by a consortium led by the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF) including ARTICLE 19, the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), Free Press Unlimited (FPU), the Institute for Applied Informatics at the University of Leipzig (InfAI), International Press Institute (IPI) and CCI/Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa (OBCT). The project is co-funded by the European Commission.

 **MEDIA FREEDOM
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