
CROATIAN RIGHTISTS TARGET MEDIA CRITICS OF SPORTING NATIONALISM

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Media criticism of the nationalist flavour of Croatia's World Cup celebrations has angered right-wing fans – who have compiled a list of journalists that are reporting «negatively» about Croatia and are supposedly staining its reputation.

The black list of allegedly unpatriotic reporters has circulated on social networks and right-wing websites.

Vojislav Mazzocco, one of the journalists on the list – which claims that he reports for the Serbian daily Politika – told BIRN that the list is clearly wrong as he never wrote for that media outlet.

Zarko Puhovski, a well known political analyst who is also on the list, noted that he has never written for the Washington Post, as the list asserts.

«The list is full of partial information. Those who put it together do not even know the difference between reporters' real names and pseudonyms,» Puhovski said.

«The people who are on the list don't have much in common, except that they are listed there on the basis of their names and surnames. Obviously, those who put us together on the list did not even read our texts,» said Nikola Vukobratovic, who wrote for the now closed Le Monde diplomatique –Croatian edition – not French Le Monde, as was written on the list.

Croatia's second place at the World Cup in Russia – after losing 4-2 to France in the final – was the country's best-ever performance in an international tournament and caused widespread jubilation.

However, the mood of national unity was fractured after the players celebrated their triumph back home in the presence of a controversial nationalist singer, Marko Perkovic «Thompson».

The appearance of the right-wing balladeer, whose concerts are often marked by anti-Serbian chants and hate speech, sparked dissent on social networks and in the foreign media.

The UK Financial Times wrote that Croatia had «scored an own goal» after its World Cup success, by inviting Thompson to the national team's celebration.

Mazzocco's colleague, Neven Barkovic, from the same editorial office, Index.hr, said he and other editorial staff had been on the receiving end of threats.

On Tuesday, Barkovic published an article for Index.hr examining the lyrics of Thompson's songs and noting the various Fascist motifs that he uses.

Thompson's most famous song, Bojna Cavoglava, begins with the words Za dom spremni □ Ready for the homeland – which was a slogan of the World War II Fascist Ustasa movement.

«It is well known that Thompson is a sympathizer with the Ustasha. Index wrote about it 15 years ago,» said Barkovic.

He added that the threats had been posted on his personal Facebook profile, on the official newsroom email and the Facebook fan page of his media outlet.

Puhovski told BIRN that angry right-wingers had reacted like this in an attempt to determine what should, and should not, happen within the nation.

«All those who do not behave according to the prescribed form are, of course, traitors,» he said.

Puhovski said Croatia's current centre-right government had so far stopped this kind of aggressive discourse from entering the political mainstream.

«PM Plenkovic and his government are stopping the right-wing rush. But for how long, we'll see,» Puhovski added.

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/croatian-rightists-target-media-critics-of-sporting-nationalism-07-25-2018>

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