

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/kosovo-independent-daily-threatened-with-01-04-2012,42225.html>

Europe/Ex-USSR - Kosovo

Newspaper targeted

Independent daily threatened with bomb

30 March 2012

Reporters Without Borders is concerned by the lack of official response after journalists of the newspaper [Express](#) received blatantly threatening anonymous calls and thugs appeared in its editorial offices two days ago.

"These intolerable incidents are indicative of the pressure to which investigative journalists are subjected in Kosovo," the press freedom organization said.

"We call on the authorities to ensure the safety of the *Express* staff, and to identify and prosecute those responsible for the threats. More generally, the public authorities must do all they can to protect independent and investigative media.

"The country's progress towards membership of the European Union requires that highly sensitive subjects, such as organized crime and corruption, can be investigated."

The pressures began after the paper published an article on 27 March which raised questions about the quality of fuel distributed by some oil companies, and referred to sanctions imposed on them by the ministry of trade and industry as a result.

In response, a number of intruders entered the newspaper's offices and threatened the editorial staff. One of the journalists told Reporters Without Borders that an anonymous caller threatened to put a bomb in the building.

An investigation has been launched and the police have interviewed members of staff. Yet so far no safety precautions have been taken and the government has issued no official response.

A day earlier, a feasibility study was officially launched into Kosovo's possible candidacy for membership of the EU. Kosovo is ranked 87th in [the latest world press freedom index](#) compiled by Reporters Without Borders and journalists there regularly come under pressure, often resulting in self-censorship. In light of this, *Express's* publication of its article on 27 March was a significant act.

"If Kosovo aspires to join the European Union, it must apply itself to promoting genuine independence for its journalists and ensuring freedom of information," Reporters Without Borders added. "In a democracy, the state has to be responsible for the safety of journalists and other sources of news and information."
