

TO

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Representative

Supreme Judicial Council

OPEN LETTER

On October 20, 2025, a brutal attack was carried out against a magistrate – Ivo Iliev, a prosecutor from the Sofia City Prosecutor's Office (until June, deputy city prosecutor and head of the Criminal Department at the Sofia City Prosecutor's Office). The attack has been classified by the authorities as attempted murder, and publicly available information about it reveals the hallmarks of an act of organized crime.

The brutal physical assault against a prosecutor, which bears all the hallmarks of a mafia-style attack, affects not only the victim and his loved ones, but also has a chilling effect on the entire judicial system.

Moreover, it shows an escalation of attacks against the judiciary, which is unacceptable for a member state of the European Union, where the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary are guiding principles.

Against this backdrop, the behavior of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) and the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria (PRB) is abnormal, inexplicable, and extremely disturbing, as they completely ignore not only the specific serious criminal attack against a magistrate, but also its manifestation towards all his other colleagues.

The PRB, which only a few days ago reacted with a swift and sharp institutional position against the opinion of the Criminal Division of the Supreme Court of Cassation on the illegitimacy of the current acting chief prosecutor, now does not deem it necessary to send any message to prosecutors and the public, even one of basic empathy.

The SJC, in its two colleges, is busy with mundane day-to-day tasks such as rewarding its members and electing administrative leaders.

Although we are well aware that those who govern the judicial system have long since lost all professional integrity and public trust, failing to respond to such a crime against a magistrate goes beyond the bounds of acceptable institutional behavior. Against the backdrop of the absurdity of this silence, we cannot ignore the possible placement of this brazen attack

in the context of escalating criminal plots in the judiciary in just the last two years, when the well-known "regrouping" took place at the top of the prosecutor's office.

We recall, in a non-exhaustive list, that:

- There is still no information about the results of the investigation into the explosion near the car of former Chief Prosecutor Ivan Geshev;
- Nothing is known about the results of the investigation into the exposed organized criminal groups for criminal influence in the judiciary of the missing Petio Petrov – the Euro and the murdered Martin Bojanov – The Notary (Prosecutor Ivo Iliev has publicly stated that the Supreme Prosecutor's Office was about to bring charges against the latter, which was thwarted by his murder);
- There have been no results from the formally declared attempts by various institutions to identify the magistrates linked to the above-mentioned criminal groups;
- The public explanation by the former acting chief prosecutor Borislav Sarafov regarding his photos with Petio Petrov (that he had gone to an incidental meeting with Petrov, who had been set up by Ivan Geshev to be photographed) was discredited by an interview with the special prosecutor investigating the chief prosecutor and his deputies, Daniela Taleva (that Sarafov had been seen by magistrates visiting the establishment several times);
- The acting administrative head of the SCP, Emilia Rusinova, has not publicly commented on her photos in front of the restaurant "The Eight Dwarfs," and institutionally no one has ever asked her for such a comment during the time she has been consistently appointed as acting appellate and city prosecutor;
- At the same time, there is no information about the results of the rapid investigation launched by the SCP into possible corruption by Bulgarian European Prosecutor Teodora Georgieva after the publication of a secret video recording of her meeting with Petio Petrov, in which they discuss lobbying for her appointment to the post;
- There has been no institutional response to the information publicly disclosed by prosecutor Ivaylo Zanev about the unlawful actions of acting prosecutor Sarafov, consisting of the seizure of the case concerning the Hemus motorway, which led to a report being filed with special prosecutor Taleva.

The escalating criminal incidents in the justice system pose enormous challenges to the entire judicial system, which it can no longer ignore if it wants to maintain at least a minimum level of state adequacy.

We therefore call on the Supreme Judicial Council to hold an extraordinary meeting to express its institutional support for Prosecutor Iliev and to discuss the state of the independence of the judiciary in the context of the above-mentioned cases.

We wish Prosecutor Ivo Iliev a speedy recovery and hope that the attack against him will be investigated and punished.

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