
Netherlands: attack on journalist de Vries, serious conditions. PM Rutte, “shocking attack”. Reactions from across Europe in defence of press freedom

Peter R. de Vries, a well-known investigative journalist, is fighting for his life in a hospital in Amsterdam, after being shot in the head at around 19:45 yesterday. The Amsterdam Police arrested three suspects linked to the attempted murder, which occurred on a street, minutes after the journalist had left a TV studio. De Vries is an experienced criminal journalist. “The attack on Peter R. de Vries is shocking and incomprehensible”, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said in a press conference last night; it is an “attack on a courageous journalist and on the free press that is so critical to our democracy”. Many raised their voices against this umpteenth attack on an uncomfortable information professional. Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatovic was one of the first to condemn the act. She said she was “shocked by the shooting” and asked that everything “be done to bring perpetrators and masterminds of this horrific crime to justice and ensure the safety of journalists in Europe”. “This is a crime against journalism and an attack on our values of democracy and rule of law”, said European Council President Charles Michel. “We will relentlessly continue to defend the freedom of the press”. Even the President of the European Parliament, David Sassoli, said this morning that he was “appalled” by the news of the attack on the Dutch journalist: “The media is the backbone of democracy. Attacks against journalists are attacks against all of us”.

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