

Media freedom groups dismayed at the abrupt closure of investigation into smear campaign against Romanian journalist

Prosecutor fails to thoroughly investigate the disclosure of criminal evidence held by the police and the publication of stolen private photos before ruling they are not a crime.

Journalists and media freedom groups today expressed dismay at the decision of Romania's Prosecutor Office at the Bucharest Court of Appeal to close the investigation into the smear campaign against journalist Emilia Șercan. To do so the Prosecutor made the extraordinary ruling that 'the offences', including the publication of stolen private photos and the presumed disclosure of evidence held by the police, 'were not provided for by the criminal law'.

This decision comes twenty months after Șercan first filed a complaint to the police about stolen personal photos posted on adult sites in February 2022. Within hours of filing the complaint, evidence provided by Șercan to the police was then posted on a Moldovan media web-site strongly suggesting that someone within the police had leaked the information.

On 26 October, in anticipation of the probable closure of the investigation, media freedom groups [appealed](#) to the Prosecutor General, Alex Florin Florența, demanding the investigation be kept open and transferred to a new team supervised by himself.

The letter noted the litany of failures and clear breaches of procedure in the original investigation, that suggest a deliberate attempt to scupper the investigation and to protect the perpetrators of the crime.

The smear campaign against Emilia Șercan began after she published, in January 2022, revelations that Nicolae Ciucă, President of the Romanian Senate who was at the time Prime Minister, had plagiarized his doctoral dissertation.

This decision fails both Emilia Șercan and all Romanian journalists who seek to hold political power to account.

We support Emilia Șercan's search for justice and back her appeal to overturn this unjust decision.

Signed

International Press Institute (IPI)

ActiveWatch

Center for Independent Journalism (CIJ)

Committee to Protect Journalists

European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)

European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)

Free Press Unlimited

OBC Transeuropa (OBCT)

Reporters Without Borders (RSF)

The Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation