

HELŚIŃSKA FUNDACJA PRAW CZŁOWIEKA
HELSINKI FOUNDATION for HUMAN RIGHTS

RADA FUNDACJI

Halina Bortnowska-Dąbrowska
Henryka Bochniarz
Janusz Grzelak
Ireneusz C. Kamiński
Witolda Ewa Osiatyńska

Teresa Romer
Andrzej Rzepliński
Wojciech Sadurski
Miroslaw Wyrzykowski

ZARZĄD FUNDACJI

Prezes: Danuta Przywara
Wiceprezes: Maciej Nowicki
Sekretarz: Piotr Kladoczny
Skarbnik: Lenur Kerymov
Członek Zarządu: Dominika Bychawska-Siniarska

Warsaw, 27th September 2018

Mr Jeff Bezos
Amazon CEO
email. jeff@amazon.com

Re. Amazon corporate pressure on a journalist of Gazeta Wyborcza

Dear Mr. Bezos,

I am writing to you in the name of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, the biggest and oldest Polish NGO dealing with human rights in the country and in the post-soviet region. We conduct litigation, education and monitoring in respect of various human rights violations, particularly those of freedom of expression.

We have been approached by Ms. Adrianna Rozwadowska, a Polish journalist working for Gazeta Wyborcza, one of the main Polish dailies. Ms. Rozwadowska in her journalistic work specializes in labour rights and employment conditions. She has authored a number of articles relating to employment conditions in the Amazon logistic centres located in Poland. To name just a few:

1. "Pracownika Amazona poznasz po chorych stopach. W Polsce bunt w magazynach, w Niemczech i Hiszpanii – protest", 19 July 2018¹;
2. "Ministra rodziny i pracy zleca PIP kontrolę w Amazonie. Po poprzedniej gigant zapłacił... 2 tys. zł mandatu", 23 July 2018²;
3. "Biegły o łamaniu przepisów bhp w Amazonie: Lista uchybień jest długa", 13 August 2018 r.³;
4. „Oczekują maksimum, dają minimum. Dlaczego mam obsesję na punkcie Amazona, Ubera, Ryanaira?", 16 August 2018⁴.

Her articles were based on a number of interviews conducted among Amazon employees, particularly relating to high objectives set to them. She also refers to a number of other sources,

¹ Available at: <http://wyborcza.pl/7,155287,23687189,pracownika-amazona-poznasz-po-stopach-bunt-w-magazynie-w-polsce.html>

² Available at: <http://wyborcza.pl/7,155287,23706246,ministra-rafalska-zleca-pip-kontrolę-w-amazonie-po-poprzedniej.html>

³ Available at: <http://wyborcza.pl/7,155287,23778537,mamy-kolejna-opinie-bieglego-ws-pracy-w-amazonie.html>

⁴ Available at: <http://wyborcza.pl/7,155287,23770306,oczekuja-maksimum-daja-minimum-dlaczego-mam-obsesje-na-punkcie.html>

such as opinions of labour experts, health care providers, as well as the official statements of Amazon.

In relation to those articles Amazon has never used any legal measures against the journalist, editors or the newspaper itself (such as e.g. rectification based on Polish Press law). However, the management of Amazon Poland is calling the publisher and editors for meetings (in August and in September), which later are postponed or cancelled by Amazon, and it is sending letters, accusing the journalist of lack of professionalism. In a letter dated from 29 August 2018, Amazon is calling the newspaper to cease further criticism of the company and is threatening Gazeta Wyborcza with legal proceedings. What is symptomatic, on the specific request of Amazon, the journalist was not invited to the meetings and she could not respond to incompetence allegations addressed towards her. Ms. Rozwadowska, in her work, profited of the right to freedom of expression and journalistic criticism. We believe that creating such an environment around the newspaper and the journalist is a manner of exerting non-judicial pressure by a large international company. This in turn may cause a chilling effect on the journalistic activity of Ms. Rozwadowska and other Polish journalists willing to address the question of employment conditions in Amazon Poland.

Similar interventions from Amazon were directed against Ms. Karolina Lewestam from Dziennik Gazeta Prawna. The intervention of Amazon related to her articles about employment and labour condition in different brunches of Amazon worldwide.

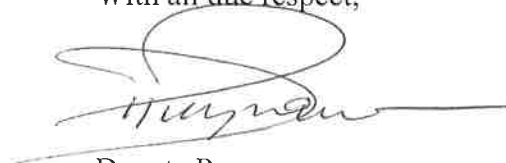
Such interventions from big corporations should be regarded as part of a general trend of discrediting critical journalistic work by political elites and corporate power structures. This trend should be regarded as one of the major threats and challenges to media freedom in democratic countries.

In your interview from 13 September 2018 at the Economic Club of Washington, you mention how important is freedom of expression and the media. Particularly, you mention that your tie to media freedom turn into the investment and restructuring of the Washington Post. We do hope that your interest in media freedom goes beyond United States' borders and that you will be willing to clarify the "pressure" exerted on the journalists and the newspapers.

Please direct your reply to: d.bychawska@hfhr.org.pl.

In the name of Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights,

With all due respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Danuta Przywara', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Danuta Przywara
President of the Board