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(Dis)Abled Security

(Nie)pełnosprawna ochrona

• Abstract •

According to the Polish legislation, “protection of persons” involves activities aimed at ensuring the safety of life, health, and personal integrity. In the article, the Authors present an analysis of three cases of assassination – the assassination of the first President of the Republic of Poland Gabriel Narutowicz in 1922, the assassination of the assistant of the MEP Marek Rosiak in 2010, and the assassination of the Mayor of Gdańsk Paweł Adamowicz in 2019. In the following part of the article, the Authors present the assassination attempts on Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, and US presidential candidate (former US President) Donald Trump, discussing the irregularities that took place during these events. The Authors also point out irregularities in the personal and property protection industry in Poland that require immediate changes, including legal changes in this area. Further downplaying the current situation may result in an escalation of attacks and acts of sabotage in Poland. As a country that has been actively supporting Ukraine since the first days of Russia’s aggression, Poland has been targeted not only by

• Abstrakt •

„Ochrona osób” to zgodnie z polskim prawodawstwem działania mające na celu zapewnienie bezpieczeństwa życia, zdrowia i nietykalności osobistej. W artykule przedstawiono analizę trzech przypadków zamachów – zabójstwo pierwszego prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej Gabriela Narutowicza w 1922 r., a także ataki na Marka Rosiaka, asystenta europosła, w 2010 r. oraz na prezydenta Gdańska Pawła Adamowicza w 2019 r. W dalszej części artykułu zanalizowano zamach na życie premiera Słowacji Roberta Ficy oraz kandydata na prezydenta USA (byłego prezydenta USA) Donalda Trumpa, omawiając nieprawidłowości, które miały miejsce w czasie tych zdarzeń. Wskazano również nieprawidłowości w branży ochrony osób i mienia w Polsce, które wymagają natychmiastowych zmian, w tym także zmian prawnych. Dalsze bagatelizowanie obecnej sytuacji może skutkować eskalacją zamachów oraz aktów dywersji na terenie RP. Polska jako państwo aktywnie wspierające Ukrainę od pierwszych dni agresji Rosji jest na celowniku nie tylko agresora, ale również innych krajów. Krajów, w których

the aggressor but also by other countries, whose interest lie not only in defeating the Ukrainian state but also in instilling a sense of insecurity among the citizens of neighboring countries.

The main purpose of this article is not to criticize services and entities dealing with personal protection. The Authors would rather like to point the way to rapid changes aimed at minimizing threats and counteracting the escalation of trends conducive to the occurrence of dangerous situations.

Keywords: personal protection; political assassination; Paweł Adamowicz; Donald Trump; Robert Fico; Stefan Wilmont; security agency; public safety; assassination of president; political violence

interesie jest nie tylko zwyciężenie państwa ukraińskiego, ale także wprowadzenie poczucia zagrożenia u obywateli krajów ościennych.

Głównym celem artykułu nie jest krytyka służb i podmiotów zajmujących się ochroną osobistą. Pragniemy wskazać drogę szybkich zmian, mających na celu minimalizację zagrożeń oraz przeciwdziałanie eskalacji trendów sprzyjających wystąpieniu niebezpiecznych sytuacji.

Słowa kluczowe: ochrona osobista; zabójstwo polityczne; Paweł Adamowicz; Donald Trump; Robert Fico; Stefan Wilmont; agencja bezpieczeństwa; bezpieczeństwo publiczne; zamach na prezydenta; przemoc polityczna

Introduction

Protecting people is an extremely difficult task, both for private entities dealing with security and for special state services. Effective protection is not a unilateral action of security agents, from both state and private sectors. The tense political situation leads to tragedy, as shown by the murders of Gabriel Narutowicz, Paweł Adamowicz, and Marek Rosiak.

Political assassinations were often used as a tool of political struggle both in the 20th and 21st centuries. Regardless of religion or political conditioning, these attacks became the scenarios inscribed in the reality of political struggle around the world. Poland was no exception. In the following part of the article, the Authors present the tragic events that took place in Poland and that could have been avoided.

In the times of the fight against terrorism, no one thought that Europe would become a battlefield not only with the terrorists of the Islamic State. Everything changed on February 24, 2022, at 04:00, when Russia attacked Ukraine, starting the Russian-Ukrainian war that continues to this day. The Russians use the term “special military operation” to hide their aggression.

In the attack on Ukraine, the troops of the Russian Federation repeated the pattern of action followed by the 1941 Nazi army as part of Operation Barbarossa. What seems barbaric, they use the same methods of fighting and weapons prohibited by international law.

Europe held its breath on May 15, 2024, when Prime Minister Robert Fico was shot during an off-site government meeting in Handlová (Trenčín Region) – he was hit by three of the five bullets fired by the attacker.

Less than two months later, on July 13, 2024, Donald Trump, a former US President and a presidential candidate, was wounded during an assassination attempt during an election rally in Butler, Pennsylvania. The attacker, 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks, opened fire, wounding Trump's ear. Trump was quickly secured by Secret Service agents and, despite his bleeding wound, managed to get up, raised his fist and chanted "Fight! Fight! Fight!". Trump's campaign members informed that the former president was well and had not been seriously injured and that further campaign rallies were planned.

This incident, the first of its kind since the attempted assassination of Ronald Reagan in 1981, will certainly affect the further course of the election campaign and will strengthen discussions about political violence and public safety in the United States. This article is not an attempt to discredit the services responsible for the protection of Slovak, Polish or any other nationalities' politicians. It is a kind of a signpost indicating what should be changed as soon as possible so that similar events do not take place again.

The examples of attacks on public figures and politicians show how complicated and dangerous the environment in which political leaders operate can be. A detailed analysis of murder and assassination cases, such as the attack on Paweł Adamowicz in Poland or the attempted assassination of the Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, allows for a better understanding of the threats faced by people performing public functions. In the following sections of the article, these tragic events are discussed, along with an analysis of the causes and consequences of such acts of violence.

1. President of the Republic of Poland Gabriel Narutowicz

The murder of Gabriel Narutowicz, the first president of the reborn Polish Republic, is one of the most tragic events in the history of the Second Polish Republic. Elected on December 9, 1922 by the National Assembly, President Narutowicz died just five days after presidential swearing-in, on December 16, 1922, in Zachęta, the National Gallery of Art in Warsaw.

Taking over the President office, Narutowicz, an outstanding engineer and politician, became a target of numerous attacks from the extreme right that did not accept his election. The political atmosphere in Poland was extremely tense at

the time, and the aggressive hate campaign led by the President's opponents had tragic consequences.

On that fateful day, Narutowicz participated in the opening of an exhibition at the Zachęta when Eligiusz Niewiadomski, a painter and supporter of the far-right views, fired three shots at him, causing the President's immediate death. Niewiadomski, previously associated with the national movement, had already been involved in some underground activities and known for his radical views.

This attack revealed serious shortcomings in the system of protection of the highest state officials in Poland at that time. The President's protection was insufficient, which allowed Niewiadomski to carry out the assassination in such an easy way. Even though Niewiadomski was immediately detained and quickly sentenced to death, his act shocked the entire country and showed how deeply political divisions could affect public safety.

The assassination of President Narutowicz had far-reaching consequences. It has become a symbol of political intolerance and hatred that can lead to the worst forms of violence. It also reminds about the importance of ensuring adequate protection for those in key public offices, especially in times of political tension.

2. Marek Rosiak

The murder of Marek Rosiak is one of the tragic events in the history of Poland that shows how a tense political situation can lead to brutal acts of violence.

Marek Rosiak, an activist of the Law and Justice (PiS) party, was murdered on October 19, 2010, in Łódź. The incident took place in the office of MEP Janusz Wojciechowski, where Rosiak was an assistant. The perpetrator, Ryszard Cyba, burst into the office armed with a firearm and a knife. Cyba fired several shots, mortally wounding Rosiak, and then stabbed Paweł Kowalski, another office employee who miraculously survived the attack.

At the time of the attack, Ryszard Cyba, a former member of the Civic Platform, was clearly motivated by politics. In the course of the investigation, it was established that his action was the result of deep hatred towards the Law and Justice party and its leader, Jarosław Kaczyński. Cyba was planning a politically motivated attack, which was confirmed by his own confessions and materials found at his place of residence.

The murder of Marek Rosiak caused a wave of shock and indignation throughout Poland. Politicians from various parties condemned this act of violence, stressing the need to lower the temperature of the political dispute. This event also contributed to the start of a discussion on the protection of parliamentary offices and the security

of politicians in Poland. Some actions were initiated to increase security measures, but the question remains whether they were sufficient enough.

The murder of Marek Rosiak is a painful reminder of the consequences brought by political hatred and the lack of adequate protection of public figures. Today's challenges related to the protection of politicians require continuous improvement of security procedures and cooperation between various services to prevent similar tragedies in the future.

3. Mayor of the City of Gdańsk Paweł Adamowicz

A lot of articles have already been written about this tragic event and numerous film materials have been made. However, it is worth speaking out again on the matter that shocks the public opinion, paying attention to the details of both the attack itself and its consequences for the system of protecting public figures in Poland.

In the years 2000–2010, as the person responsible for the safety of Mayor Paweł Adamowicz, I had a lot of opportunities to observe his close contacts with the residents of Gdańsk during numerous meetings with residents of the particular districts of the city, local government and state events and large mass events. Mayor Adamowicz was known for the fact that after the New Year's greetings he used to give to residents and tourists at midnight on New Year's Eves, he often returned home on foot, which raised concerns among the Municipal Guard officers who were directly responsible for his protection. Despite this fact, the Mayor did not want any uniformed protection, arguing that he wanted to be close to the people of Gdańsk, whom he trusted, claiming that "they are no threat to him".

In 2017–2019, Paweł Adamowicz became the object of an intense media and political witch-hunting, which was compared to the campaign against President Gabriel Narutowicz in 1922, but on a much larger scale. The atmosphere of hatred, fueled almost every day, led to the tragedy that took place on January 13, 2019, at the Coal Market in Gdańsk, during the 27th finale of the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity. On that day, Mayor Adamowicz participated in the charity ceremonies, where he was attacked on the stage by Stefan Wilmont, who wounded him three times with a military assault knife. Paweł Adamowicz died the next day in hospital as a result of his serious injuries.

3.A. The course of the assassination:

The day of the assassination: Mayor Adamowicz participated in the final celebrations of the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity. During his speech on stage, around 8:00 p.m., Stefan Wilmont stormed onto the stage and wounded Adamowicz three times with a knife. The attack caused shock among the gathered people and an immediate reaction of the medical services, which transported the Mayor to hospital.

Death of the Mayor: Despite the efforts of the doctors, Paweł Adamowicz died the next afternoon as a result of his injuries.

3.B. Consequences of the attack:

Trial and verdict: The perpetrator of the murder, Stefan Wilmont, was found guilty by the District Court in Gdańsk on March 16, 2023, and sentenced to life imprisonment with the possibility of a parole after 40 years and deprivation of the public rights for 10 years. On January 23, 2024, the Court of Appeal in Gdańsk upheld the sentence, ruling that the sentence was to be carried out in a therapeutic system.

Criticism of security: The “Typhoon” Security Agency, responsible for the security of the event, was criticized for failing to carry out the task of security. A former officer of the Gdańsk City Police Department, Dariusz S., who was the director of the agency, was accused of a disrespectful approach to his duties and employing untrained and underage security personnel. The fact that such people were responsible for safety at events organized by the City Hall in Gdańsk raised many controversies and questions.

3.C. Conclusions and recommendations:

Legislative changes and supervision: The need for immediate legislative changes and increased control over private security agencies has been highlighted by security experts. There is a need for a thorough verification of the qualifications of security personnel by appropriate services and better monitoring of security agencies by the police.

Prevention and training: It is important that security agencies employ only qualified personnel and regularly conduct training to prevent similar tragedies from happening in the future. The words of General Bogusław Pacek, who warned against the

possibility of further incidents, should be an alarm signal for all services responsible for security.

The assassination of Mayor Paweł Adamowicz reveals serious shortcomings in the system of protection of public figures in Poland and indicates the urgent need for reforms in this area.

4. Prime Minister Robert Fico

On May 15, 2024, at 2:40 p.m., Prime Minister Robert Fico was attacked in front of the community center in Handlová, after the end of an off-site meeting of the Slovak government. When the Prime Minister left the building, he decided to greet a small group of people standing by the street. In this group there was an elderly man who shouted to the Prime Minister: “Robo, come here”, and then fired five shots from a pistol from a very close range. Three of these shots hit the Prime Minister in the abdomen and hip. After being taken to hospital, Fico underwent a five-hour operation.

At the scene, after a great commotion and a delayed reaction of the security services, the perpetrator – 71-year-old Juraj Cintula – was apprehended. The assassination attempt clearly shows obvious deficiencies in the system of training people responsible for protecting the Prime Minister. As the former MP, Jerzy Dzięwski said: “It is difficult for me to criticize people who I should consider absolutely professional”. General Mirosław Gawor, the former head of the Government Protection Bureau, noted that “the security unfortunately went a little too far from the protected person”. The security guards only reacted after a second shot, trying to jump over the metal barriers to stop the attacker, while the Prime Minister was lying on the ground without any cover. General Gawor emphasized that the security should knock the protected person to the ground and cover him with their own bodies, which is a proven and effective method of personal protection, used, for example, during the assassination attempt on US President Ronald Reagan in 1981.

The perpetrator of the attack, Juraj Cintula, came from the south of Slovakia, from the town of Levice, and was a member of the Association of Slovak Writers. He used a legally owned pistol cal. 9 mm, which had been in his possession for over 30 years. In the past, he worked as a security guard, and some Slovak journalists suggested that he may have suffered from mental disorders. This thread will be investigated by court experts.

Juraj Cintula was formally charged with an attempted premeditated murder and placed in custody. The Slovak Criminal Code provides for a prison sentence of

between twenty and twenty-five years, and an assault on a protected person can be punishable by life imprisonment.

General Bogusław Pacek pointed out that the mistakes were made by both the security and Robert Fico himself, who did not sufficiently comply with the safety rules. Many politicians disregard their safety, which often leads to tragedy. A tense political situation always increases the risk of such incidents, as indicated by the history of Poland and other countries.

5. Presidential candidate Donald Trump

On July 13, 2024, Donald Trump, the former US president and a presidential candidate in the upcoming election, survived a dramatic assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania. During a campaign rally, as Trump was addressing the crowd, the assailant, 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks, opened fire with an AR-15 rifle. The shots were fired from a distance, wounding Trump's ear. The incident prompted an immediate reaction from Secret Service agents, who quickly secured Trump and neutralized the attacker.

5.A. The course of the assassination:



This satellite image shows a top-down view of Donald Trump's assassination attempt on July 14, 2024. The scenario was written by Leanne Abraham, June Kim, Elena Shao, Julie Walton Shaver, Anjali Singhvi, Christiaan Triebert and Karen Yourish/ New York Times. Satellite image: GoogleEarth

Preparations: Trump appeared at a rally in Butler, where hundreds of his supporters gathered. The security measures were standard for this type of event, including searches and metal detectors at the entrances.

Moment of attack: During the speech, around 2:30 p.m., shots were fired. Crooks, who was on the roof of a building not far from the rally site, fired several shots, one of which hit Trump in the ear. The shots caused panic among the participants, and the Secret Service responded immediately by shielding Trump and evacuating him quickly.

Neutralizing the assailant: The Secret Service agents immediately located the source of the shots and neutralized Crooks, who was fatally shot. Further actions consisted in securing the area and searching the area for possible collaborators or additional threats.

5.B. Consequences of the attack:

Trump's health: Despite the bleeding wound, Trump quickly got back on his feet, raised his fist, and chanted: "Fight! Fight! Fight!", to keep the morale of his supporters going. He was taken to a nearby hospital, where the wound was treated and his health condition was assessed as stable. Trump's campaign staff informed that the former president was well and not seriously injured, allowing campaign rallies to continue as planned.

Political and social reactions: The incident sparked a wide wave of condemnation for political violence. Politicians on both sides of the political spectrum expressed support for Trump and his family, while calling for more protective measures during election campaigns. This attack reminded the public of the dangers related to the tense political situation and the need of better protection to be provided to politicians.

Security measures: The attack forced security services to analyze and update security procedures. Security measures have been stepped up at subsequent rallies, the number of security agents has been increased, and additional checks and searches have been introduced for participants. More attention has also been paid to monitoring areas outside the immediate security zone to prevent sniper attacks.

5.C. Analysis of protection effectiveness:

Security vulnerabilities: Security specialists noticed that Crooks managed to fire shots from a sniper position outside the immediate zone secured by the Secret

Service. This points to the need of revising the current procedures and better coordination between the different agencies responsible for protection.

Response of the services: The former Secret Service agents emphasized that this attack should be a signal to introduce fundamental changes in the planning and implementation of security measures. Current procedures, while rigorous, need to be more adaptable to new types of threats, such as sniper attacks. Furthermore, the use of monitoring technology and better cooperation with local security services were also suggested.

The attempt of assassinating Donald Trump reveals that even the most advanced protection systems can have their weaknesses that must be constantly analyzed and improved to prevent similar tragedies from happening in the future.

Conclusions

These conclusions should be an alarm signal for all services, both state and civil and private. Especially in the latter group, there is a need for immediate legislative changes and increased police control over private licensed agencies for the protection of people and property.

Many agencies employ people who should never practice this profession due to chronic serious illnesses. This is clearly and precisely specified in the Act on the Protection of Persons and Property in Article 33(2): “Referring to the application referred to in Paragraph 1, a person applying for an entry on the list of qualified physical security employees, or having such an entry, is obliged to attach a statement, made under pain of criminal liability for making false declarations, that he or she is not a disabled person within the meaning of the provisions of the Act of 27 August 1997 on vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 573) or does not have a certificate of disability or inability to work issued by the competent pension authority or documents confirming the degree of disability, disability or inability to work”.

Very often, such people are employed or even sought after by the advertisements, for example: “I will hire a qualified security guard with a disability group”.

It is high time for the Departments of Administrative Proceedings at each Provincial Headquarters throughout Poland to start a thorough verification of physical condition of employees with security qualifications employed in security agencies. A system of informing the Department of Administrative Proceedings of the Provincial Police Headquarters by the State Fund for Rehabilitation of the Disabled and the Social Insurance Institution should be developed.

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