

Tzvetan Vassilev: “The motto of Bulgaria’s Prosecution is that the purpose of repression is repression itself”

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On 3 April 2019, Tzvetan Vassilev gave an interview live to Bulgarian journalist Lyuba Kulezich. He commented on the start of the criminal trial against Corpbank, the false testimony of Biser Lazov who is the main witness of the prosecution as well as the unprecedented harassment of witnesses in the case.

When asked to discuss Kaloyan Petrov’s claims that Biser Lazov stole Balkancar, Vassilev contended: “At the very beginning of the so-called trial of the century, even the most prejudiced people had the opportunity to see what the main witness of the prosecution is like. Clearly, this is a man who is psychologically unstable. This is a person inclined towards criminal activity. Kaloyan Petrov’s case is only a small part of Lazov’s crimes. Lazov committed crimes not only after Corpbank’s artificial closure, but also before it.”

“Lazov has been vested with the mission to assist the organizers of the raid against Corpbank to steal the bank’s assets,” Vassilev stressed.

The banker also explained that Kaloyan Petrov’s case illustrates that companies that are referred to as stolen by himself are, in practice, under the control of Biser Lazov, who has diverted funds from them. “In my opinion, this is a crime. In my letter to the court before the first hearing, I underlined that there was an organized criminal group. However, it was not composed of the people facing the trial. Bulgaria’s Prosecutor’s Office and the organizers of the attack against Corpbank act like an organized criminal group,” Vassilev explained.

“How can an indictment be based on the testimony of such a person?,” Vassilev asked rhetorically.

When Lyuba Kulezich wondered why the Prosecutor’s Office had selected Lazov as their main witness, the banker pointed out that Lazov was in the “kitchen” of these companies. Vassilev stressed that Lazov’s claims that he decided to testify against him after he met him in Vienna in June 2014 are false. “Biser Lazov had been actively contributing to the preparation of the raid against Corpbank since 2013. How could they convince him? They know the “carrot and stick” principle quite well,” he added.

Lyuba Kulezich was also astonished that solvent companies like Evrobuild suddenly stopped repaying their loans to Corpbank after the bank was forced to close. Vassilev emphasized that the witnesses against him are board members of these companies. "Biser Lazov permitted himself to even steal the building in which Corpbank's Headquarters were based. Many of the bank's assets have been diverted through a series of criminal sessions to third parties," the banker clarified.

"But where do these assets go? I doubt that Biser Lazov keeps them for himself!," Lyuba Kulezich wondered. In response, the banker commented: "In a presentation on Corpbank's case before the US State Department, Baker & McKenzie argued that Corpbank was a victim of a typical corporate raiding scenario commissioned by private individuals, facilitated with the misuse of repressive state authorities and an insider. The beneficiaries are traditionally those who commission the raid and the insider."

Regarding the scandalous arrests and detention of key witnesses in the Corpbank case, the banker explained: "Absurd accusations for crimes which were never committed. The authorities "prove" the accusations by providing falsified documents. A series of expert examinations showed these documents have been forged. The Prosecutor's Office does not seem to care. It acts as an organized criminal group together with Biser Lazov because it is a crime to raise charges against innocent people. Meanwhile, the Specialized Court does not seem to care either. It has little to do with an actual court and a lot to do with the shameful People's Court which was instituted when Bulgaria became a communist country. This is an extraordinary tribunal that serves the whims of the Prosecutor's Office. I personally agree with Tatyana Doncheva who argued that sooner or later judges and prosecutors involved in this abominable abuse will have to face trials themselves."

"And because Bulgaria's Deputy General Prosecutor Ivan Geshev is excited only by convictions ... I have no doubt that the sentence against me and my colleagues has already been written by the prosecution. I think that the court merely reads what the prosecution has written for it," Vassilev pointed out. However, he also explained that before they have a chance to read the sentences they have already drafted before the trial, they will face assessments of their own work.

The first major slap came from Interpol, which cancelled the notices issued against Tzvetan Vassilev's wife and daughter by the Bulgarian Prosecutor's Office. Vassilev cited a sentence from the decision by Interpol's Commission for the Control of Files: "The Commission established that the documents provided by [Bulgaria] do not alleviate the important concerns of the Commission in the absence of any elements of possible criminal intent to a crime of money laundering of the Applicants which is a constitutive element of the infraction...Therefore the Commission finds that the data is not in compliance with Interpol's rules." "Had Bulgaria been a state governed by the rule of law, Bulgaria's General Prosecutor Tsatsarov and his Deputy Geshev would have resigned," added the banker.

Vassilev explained that the decision on his own Red Notice was delayed because the Bulgarian Prosecutor's Office constantly sends new information to Interpol. "As there is no evidence of crime,

the Bulgarian Prosecutor's Office has resorted to the repression of witnesses who refuse to lie in the proceedings," Vassilev said. "The purpose of repression is repression itself," he concluded, quoting George Orwell.

You can watch [the whole interview after 1:28:09 here](#).

Few media dared to cover the interview. One of them was Frognews: [you can read their article here](#).