
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

13 February 2019 EUR 37/9855/2019

POLAND: OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER MUST BE ABLE TO OPERATE WITHOUT UNDUE INTERFERENCE

In response to reports that TVP, state television in Poland, has demanded that Adam Bodnar, Human Rights Commissioner, publicly apologize and pay a specified amount of money to a charity for comments he made in a television interview in January 2019, Clare Algar, Acting Programme Director, Europe Regional Office of Amnesty International, said:

"TV-Poland's threat of legal action against Adam Bodnar, the Human Rights Commissioner, is the latest example of the types of harassment and intimidation that he has endured these last three years. In his role as Commissioner, Adam Bodnar has spoken out publicly in support of survivors of human rights abuses in Poland and has sought to hold those who perpetrate such abuses accountable. Commissioner Bodnar has commented frequently and with integrity on the rising tide of hatred in Poland and across Europe, including more generally on the issue of hate speech, the obligation of the state to investigate hate speech and hold those responsible for it to account, and the need for governments and public bodies to foster an environment where hate speech is not tolerated. Such commentary falls squarely within the mandate of the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, which we see as an essential independent national human rights institution that plays a key role in the fight for human rights and human dignity in Poland."