

Estonian President received 3,174-euro advice for court battle with parliament

BNN September 3, 2019



<https://bnn-news.com/estonian-president-received-3-174-euro-advice-for-court-battle-with-parliament-204820>

The legal assistance to Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid by a law firm so that she could fight a controversial surveillance bill in court has cost 3,174 euros.

This is about Kaljulaid's twice-rejected plan to expand military surveillance in the country, by amending the country's Defence Forces Organisation Law.

[Estonian public broadcaster ERR reports](#) on Tuesday, September 3, that the President's public relations adviser, Taavi Linnamäe, said the work done, by law firm Sorainen, was analysis leading up to a legal challenge to the amendments to the Estonian Defence Forces Organisation Act 2014, which the president vetoed earlier this year. Linnamäe was unable to comment on whether Sorainen would represent the president at the Supreme Court, since the time and format (written or oral) of the hearing has not been set yet.

Reportedly, the President and the Estonian parliament disagree on the provisions of the amended Defence Forces Organisation Law, which has now been rejected twice by Kaljulaid.

The draft amendments to the bill would grant the Estonian Defence Forces (EDF) the right to secretly gain access to data of the state, municipalities, and legal as well as private persons. The amendments would also allow the military to clandestinely follow individuals, and perform other surveillance activities against persons in urgent cases, and where necessary in the interest of the protection of the security of the EDF.

Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid refused to sign the amended law for the first time in March 2019, and reiterated her opinion in the matter again earlier in June, leaving the matter to be decided in the Supreme Court.

According to Kaljulaid: «The police and Internal Security Service have sufficient legal means to ensure the security of the Estonian Defence Forces and to anticipate potential dangers. (..) To give additional rights to the defence forces as well is not proportional, and substantially violates the basic rights of people in the security sector and the sectors close to it.»