# Assassination Attempt on Slovakian Prime Minister Sparks Political Tensions



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Robert Fico, the Prime Minister of Slovakia, survived an assassination attempt on Wednesday, May 15, 2024. The incident occurred in Handlová during a public meet-and-greet following a government meeting. Fico was shot five times by a suspect identified as Juraj Cintula, a 71-year-old retiree who reportedly acted alone. Fico was rushed to the hospital where he underwent a five-hour surgery and remains in stable condition, though concerns about his recovery persist.

Cintula, a former security guard with a background in poetry, has been charged with attempted premeditated murder. Local reports suggest that Cintula disagreed with the government's policies, though his motivations appear personal rather than politically orchestrated.

This attack, the first serious attempt on a European leader's life since 2003, has heightened political tensions in Slovakia. Interior Minister Matus Sutaj Estok warned that the country could be "on the doorstep of a civil war." The incident underscores Slovakia's deep political divisions, exacerbated by Fico's controversial policies, which include judiciary overhauls and opposition to military aid for Ukraine.

European leaders have condemned the attack, calling for calm in a region marked by increasing political unrest. The impact of this event on the upcoming European elections remains to be seen, as political parties navigate an already volatile landscape.