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# THREE FREEDOMS PLATFORM

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FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION  
FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY  
FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION



## Three freedoms under the magnifying glass

Review of violations of freedom of association, assembly and expression in Serbia  
16-31 January 2020

### Freedom of Expression

On December 31 last year, an agreement between United Media and cable operators, which includes the brand Supernova, owned by Telecom, expired. Exactly where the negotiations got stuck, United Group (the owner of United Media and SBB) and Telecom made [various claims](#). The result is that citizens have been denied the opportunity to watch channels such as N1, Sport Club and others through cable operators from the Supernova brand. N1 television states that in the last two months, as a result of being excluded from the offer of state operators, it has lost the ability to reach a total of around one [million potential viewers](#). United Media points out that they are looking for a new contract to guarantee that their channels are paid for. [Prime Minister Ana Brnabic](#) became involved in the whole conflict that is unfolding in the public space, again labeling N1, this time calling them a [political party](#). On that occasion, she also accused N1 of spreading [fake news](#) that they were banned for censorship and violation of media freedom. [The United Group](#) points out that these moves make it clear that the law does not apply to everyone and that they are constantly discriminated against and prevented from operating normally. The Secretary of State at the Ministry of Culture and Information, Aleksandar Gajovic, also commented on the conflict, stating that he is not exactly sure if N1 was operating by the law. The interference of senior government officials is merely a continuation of the targeting campaign against N1 we've witnessed all year.

[The site of N1 Television](#) has been unavailable because of cyber attacks four times in the last three days. Attacks were found to be paid DDos attacks from China; this means that these attacks are coming from thousands of computers aimed at overloading web servers and thus preventing access to its users. Due to the aforementioned attacks, N1 will also turn to the High-Tech Crime Prosecutor's Office. In the meantime, Press associations are calling on the Prosecutor's Office to urgently determine who was behind the attack. These attacks hurt the [N1](#) editorial staff and prevent their readers to be informed.

[The „Kragujevacke“ newspapers](#), the only printed media in Kragujevac that also continues the tradition of the once famous weekly in Kragujevac, "Svetlost", were not found on newsstands last Thursday. Increased debts to the printing company made it impossible to print. Although the Kragujevac editorial office has not been able to even pay salaries to its employees in recent months, it does not want to give

up the fight, and therefore decided to publish the newspaper biweekly, even though they actually consider it to be top notch for this newspaper shutdown. The „Kragujevacke" newspapers have been twice discriminated, according to the editor-in-chief of this weekly, because city officials do not want to give them the statements, and at the same time they do not receive funds from the city budget. The bad financial situation was directly contributed by the city government, which for years did not announce tenders for co-financing media content of public interest and in this way openly violating the Law on Public Information.

## **Freedom of Assembly**

[Residents of the streets of Pozeska and Valjevska](#) on Banovo brdo in Belgrade have been defending a park from investors six months back. They have been protesting for months, wanting a change in the urban plan to give the park the status of a green space which it would prevent investors from building. During one of the last protests, [investor's security broke into the park](#) and demolished the security fence. [The police did not intervene](#) on this occasion while the security was insulting the assembled citizens and the news crews present. Residents have announced that they will continue to keep the park with methods of civil disobedience and prevent the investor from commencing work. This is another example of an attack on a peaceful assembly of citizens where there is no reaction from those in charge.