
**THREE FREEDOMS
PLATFORM**



**Civic
Initiatives**

freedom of association

freedom of assembly

freedom of expression

Three freedoms under a magnifying glass

Review of cases of violations of basic human rights in Serbia

12-25 June, 2020

Freedom of association, assembly and expression

- The Belgrade Center for Security Policy has been the target of an organized campaign in recent days, and this time it is a systemic intimidation that began with video announcements of the GONGO organization National Avant-Garde, as a result of BCSP statements about the president's son and the ruling party and the people who are suspected to be a part of criminal groups. The work of the National Avant-Garde is mainly aimed at discrediting the work of the BCSP, which is reflected in the large number of announcements, videos and their public appearances in the past, which were directed against the BCSP. This time, they addressed the public with a [statement](#) calling on the BCSP to engage in politics openly. The reason was the BCSP's analysis of the "Security Sector in the State of Emergency". In their statement, they say that the mentioned analysis is full of politicization and political assessments of the state of emergency, as well as that it was written tendentiously. Also, a few days after that, they released a [video](#) entitled "Does Sasa Djordjevic endanger the safety of the president's son with his statement?", in which they target Sasa Djordjevic, a researcher at the Belgrade Center for Security Policy. The reason for this video is Djordjevic's guest appearance on N1 television, in which he commented on recent events related to the president's son. Also, the portal Prismotra published a [video](#), in which the Belgrade Center for Security Policy is accused of being a NATO lobbyist and of "endangering the security of Serbia and calling for riots." This video also lists the biographies of the members of the Board of Directors of this organization. These contents were synchronal published on some portals and local TV stations (TV Pancevo, TV Dunav from Novi Sad, TV Rubin from Kikinda, Radio Mitrovica North, portal Nationalist, FB group Zdrava Srbija) which are owned by individuals close to the ruling party, which indicates that such an approach is organized and planned, which is of particular concern. On this occasion, the National Convention on the EU, of which the BCSP is one of the founders, also reacted with a [statement](#), in which they call on the competent authorities to react urgently and act according to the law.

- A photographer and a journalist from the portal "Juzne vesti" were [verbally attacked](#) during the Election Day, in the yard of the Elementary School "Stefan Nemanja" in Nis, when they photographed people with lists with voters in front of the polling station. People holding papers with tables and lists with names and data, a journalist and a photographer of "Juzne vesti", noticed and photographed them at the polling station in Nis. They then verbally attacked the journalist and the photographer, threatened them and asked them to delete the photos. The police quickly went to the field, took a statement from the attacked journalist and photographer, and then found the attacker himself, who was calmly leaving the yard of the "Stefan Nemanja" Elementary School, where the incident took place.
- The Municipal Board of the Serbian Radical Party, in its post on the Facebook page, openly [targeted](#) the journalist of Forum Television and the editor of the Forum info portal, Mirela Veljovic. The publication, which practically represents a statement, because it was posted on the official FB page, puts pressure on the freedom of the media in the roughest possible way, and by publishing the photo of journalist, they additionally targeted her. According to Forum Television, it is especially worrying that, in addition to commenting and questioning professionalism and objectivity of her work, the statement had a religious affiliation and implies that her text is an attack on Zoran Despotovic because he is "of Serbian nationality" and Veljovic is Muslim or Bosniak.
- [Journalist Sasa Mikic](#) was beaten in Kikinda, after leaving a local polling station whose work he wanted to report on. He was attacked by three unidentified men who hit him all over his body, mostly on his face, leaving him with cuts and bruises. At around 4 pm, on June 21, Mikic came to the local polling station with the aim of reporting on the voting process in Kikinda. He introduced himself and showed his journalistic identification, asking for a statement from the president of the polling board at that polling station. After two phone calls made by the president of the polling station, it became clear that there would be no statements. As Mikic was leaving the polls, he was attacked by three men. On this occasion, the Safe Journalists network and the Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia [reacted](#), stating that this attack on Election Day was the culmination of months of intimidation, threats and pressure faced by Serbian journalists during the corona virus and election campaign. The Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia also issued a statement on [frequent attacks on local journalists](#). They stated that they condemned the attacks on local media journalists that took place in the days before the elections and on the Election Day itself, citing all three above-mentioned attacks, and demanded that state authorities identify the perpetrators of the attacks and threats and initiate court proceedings.