

THREE FREEDOMS UNDER THE MAGNIFYING GLASS

Cases of violations of basic human rights in Serbia 28 January - 10 February 2022



Freedom of expression

- New Targeting of Independent Portals and Journalists

A local portal close to the ruling Serbian Progressive Party published a material in which the Department of Media Studies of the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad and several independent portals and journalists were described as foreign mercenaries, traitors and "Soros people". The Department was characterized as "private" and as "a means of recruiting agent journalists", and students within the Department as someone who deal with "unfounded attacks on the state, construction of false scandals and accusations of genocide". This portal also made similar accusations against the local independent media portal021, Luftika and VOICE, but also against the editor of the VOICE portal Dinko Gruhonjic, as well as the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS). NUNS characterized these attacks as lynching and called on the competent institutions to react, while the Beta News Agency announced that politics was behind the attack on Gruhonjic, and not his engagement at the faculty.

Journalist's Threat Report Rejected

A journalist from Bujanovac, Jeton Ismaili, announced on February 7, 2022, that his report on threats made to him in 2020 **was rejected by the competent prosecutor's office in Vranje**. According to his letter sent to the highest state institutions, the deputy prosecutor made the decision solely based on the testimonies of the suspects, who claimed that they were near his house, while the journalist claimed that they broke into his house and threatened his wife. Ismaili states that this attack happened in August 2020, after he wrote about the epidemiological situation in the municipality of Bujanovac. He also states that the Deputy Prosecutor's Office did not inform him about this decision within the legally prescribed deadline, but with a delay of one year. He characterized this decision as "suspicious" and made with the aim of preventing further professional reporting and informing the public.

Otvoreno pismo novinara Jetona Ismailija

Sramna odluka Osnovnog tužilaštva u Vranju

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Source: nuns.rs

MONITORING



No Epilogue in the Case of Targeting Activists in Sabac, Podrinske Newspaper Shut Down

Journalist Isidora Kovacevic from Sabac announced on February 1, 2022, that the case of "arrest warrants" posted all over this city, which targeted her, lawyer Mijailovic and one minor, has no epilogue yet. Kovacevic states that 40 days have passed since the appearance of these "arrest warrants" and that there is a delay in the investigation, although "the whole Sabac speaks about which printing house printed these posters, who organized and distributed it, and that no one denied it, but the police are silent." Kovacevic also announced that from February 1, 2022, the Podrinske newspaper was left without all sources of financing and that it would cease to exist. She states that they were rejected in all media competitions for co-financing, that new ones were not announced, but that she believes that they would not have received any funds in them either.

First Hearing in Lawsuit Case of the Owner of the Galens Company Against Environmental Activists Was Held

A preparatory hearing in the case of one of the five lawsuits which were filed by the Galens company against environmental activists from the association Let's Defend the Forests of Fruska Gora, was held on February 10, 2022. The owners of this company, Sanja and Nebojsa Petric, have filed lawsuits against environmental associations and activists, and in one of the lawsuits they are seeking financial compensation and imprisonment for activist Dragana Arsic. Arsic stated that the SLAPP lawsuits were filed with the aim of intimidation due to the appearance in public of the mentioned associations about the usurpation of the Fruska Gora National Park by the company.