

ELECTIONS

UNDER THE MAGNIFYING GLASS

24 days
until the
elections



human
rights
violations

DATE: 9-10/03/2022

The Three Freedoms Platform will monitor and record all irregularities in public information and the election process on a daily basis, and send its reports to the international community and the interested public.

Opposition Request to Put a Promotional Stand in Subotica Rejected

The opposition Movement for Change announced that the City Administration of the Subotica rejected the request for permission to set up a promotional stand of the "Marinika Tepic - United for the Victory of Serbia" list in this city as part of the election campaign. As it is stated, the request was rejected due to the valid epidemiological regulations, which include the ban on gathering more than 500 people indoors and outdoors and the obligatory distance between people of 2 meters. The leader of this movement, Janko Veselinovic, stated that the case is "tragicomic" considering that the ruling Serbian Progressive Party organized gatherings disrespecting the mentioned epidemiological measures, and especially of their gatherings in a closed space attended by "hundreds and thousands of people".

Another Party Targeting Civil Society Organizations in Election Campaign

The Serbian Radical Party announced a "ban on financing" those civil society organizations that deal with "anti-Serbian propaganda" if they win the upcoming elections on April 3, 2022. According to the deputy president of this political party, Aleksandar Seselj, the budget of the Republic of Serbia finances "anti-Serbian non-governmental organizations that spread anti-Serbian propaganda" and that the propaganda refers to the one about "independent Kosovo, genocide about Srebrenica, which says Serbs are to blame that they were bombed, and it insults the Serbian national identity". We remind that civil society was targeted earlier in the campaign of the "Sovereignists" by the leader of the Enough Was Enough party, Sasa Radulovic and the candidate for the President of the Republic of that list, Branka Stamenkovic.

PLATFORM



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Death Threats to Leskovac Journalist Dragan Marinovic

The journalist of the local portal "Resetka", Dragan Marinovic, received death threats while sitting with his wife and colleague in a cafe in this city. As he stated, an unknown man approached him and started threatening, which is why they had to leave the bar soon after. Marinovic stated that he did not file a report regarding this event because he lost trust in the competent institutions after several previous reports due to the threats he received were rejected. He points out that he does not feel safe and that high-ranking politicians in the local government structure in Leskovac often lead the campaign against him. They are putting pressure on him by commenting on the news from this portal on social networks, and as he states, he additionally encourages others to post comments and threaten this journalist with them.

Activists Face Prison Sentences for Interrupting a Commission Session

Criminal charges were filed against three activists from Novi Sad for interrupting the session of a city commission which was supposed to discuss changes to the General Urban Plan of this city. Activists Brajan Brkovic, Srdjan Djuric and Mladen Cvijetic interrupted this session on March 7, 2022, by spreading a banner and lighting pyrotechnics, and they now face up to 5 years in prison for violent behavior. The activists stated that they saw this process as political persecution and that there was no violent behavior during the interruption of the session.

They also stated that no one was endangered and they called their action a political performance. On this occasion, the "Three Freedoms" Platform also expressed their concern over the qualification of the criminal act the activists are charged with and the threatened sanctions, but also because of the "double standards" of the authorities. The Platform states that the exclusion of the public from the decision-making process leads to the fact that citizens increasingly resort to non-institutional mechanisms to protect their rights, which could be seen in the example of environmental protests, after which they become targets of state repression. It is stated that the qualification of this act as a criminal and not a misdemeanor one, as well as the high sanction, would further discourage activists and demotivate the enjoyment of the freedom of expression. The Platform also reminded of the case when activists of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR) interrupted an event of the convicted war criminal Veselin Slijivancanin in 2017, when they were initially charged with a crime act, only for it to be reclassified as a misdemeanor by the competent prosecutor's office. The criminal charges filed by the activists against the persons who physically attacked them and damaged their car on that occasion were rejected. The Platform stated that it will closely monitor court procedure against the Novi Sad activists in the future.

