

THREE FREEDOMS UNDER THE MAGNIFYING GLASS

Cases of violations of basic human rights in Serbia 11 - 24 November, 2022



Freedom of expression

- Journalists of the VOICE portal denied accreditation

Journalists from the VOICE research portal were denied accreditation to cover the session of the local assembly in Bač, scheduled for November 14, 2022. The local parliament justified this decision with "limited space" and the impossibility of providing technical conditions because there will already be a television crew present. The Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina (NDNV) stated that "this was a direct attempt to censor the freedom of public speech", connecting this decision with the previously published investigative story of VOICE about environmental pollution in the municipality of Bač.

Vicinity Chronicles under hacker attacks

The portal of the European Fund for the Balkans and the European Movement in Serbia (EMINS) Vicinity Chronicles is under hacker attacks, it was announced in a statement dated November 16, 2022. EMINS stated that the attacks are continuously repeated despite the measures taken and the regular maintenance of the web site. The attacks are considered linked to the views expressed in the texts published on this portal, by authors from all countries of the Western Balkans. EMINS stated that "it was sad that freedom of speech and opinion bothers someone to such an extent, that a project whose mission is rapprochement and understanding can cause such resistance". They also reminded of the permanent cancellation of the Twitter account of this portal in 2021, and they link that case to the recent hacker attacks.

Freedom of association

- The association CK13 threatened with eviction

The Youth Center CK13 is obliged by the first-instance verdict of the Basic Court in Novi Sad, and according to the lawsuit of the association "Kuda.org", to move out of the Black House, the informal activist center where this association works, it was announced on November 22, 2022. The Black House is a building that was purchased and adapted in 2007, with a financial donation from the Schuler Helpen Leben (SHL) foundation, and the Cooperation Agreement signed between SHL and the association "Kuda.org" on that occasion, it was foreseen that "Kuda.org" has limited ownership rights over the object. With the aim of more efficient management of the new center, "Kuda.org" participated in the establishment of the Youth Center CK13, over which it had influence in the form of mentoring, and since 2013, CK13 independently performed all tasks. The formal independence of CK13 from the "Kuda.org" association was completed in 2019, after "Kuda.org" initiated the proposal of moving CK13 to a new space and connecting with other associations in the process, which the CK13 association refused. This was followed by the unilateral termination of the agreement on the use of the space related to the Black House by "Kuda.org", and soon a lawsuit by this association against the SHL foundation, demanding the annulment of the previous loan agreement, and with it, ownership restrictions on the Black House. CK13 will file an appeal against the verdict, which will postpone the execution of the first-instance verdict.

MONITORING

Civil society in solidarity with colleague Miodrag Milićević

A group of 26 civil society organizations and individuals from Serbia and Kosovo supported their colleague Miodrag Milićević from the NGO Aktiv, who suffered police violence near the Jarinje crossing in the north of Kosovo. The joint statement noted that the verbal and physical attack by members of the Special Unit of the Kosovo Police on Milićević was a consequence of the "deteriorated atmosphere of trust and peaceful coexistence in Kosovo" and which has reached "alarming levels of escalation with the withdrawal of Serbian representatives from Kosovo institutions". Organizations and individuals called on the international community to show resolve in relation to the current crisis and an appeal was sent to "resolve the incident in accordance with the existing relevant legal framework".