
THREE FREEDOMS UNDER THE MAGNIFYING GLASS



Civic
Initiatives

freedom of expression

freedom of assembly

freedom of association

Three Freedoms Under the Magnifying Glass Violations of Basic Human Rights in Serbia

December 29 - January 11, 2024

Freedom of Expression

The ban on Rade Šerbedžija's concert

The producer and organizer of Rade Šerbedžija's concert stated that the coordinator of the Serbian Progressive Party from Bač canceled the already rented hall for which all the tickets were sold out, at the last moment. In the end, the concert was held outdoors, and the residents of Bač came to support the artist in large numbers. Šerbedžija stated that the potential reason for canceling the concert is that its producer is an oppositionist, which the municipality of Bač denies. At the concert, the actor announced "Woe to the country that closes the doors to art", and this example of censorship is an indicator of the authoritarian path that our country has been traveling for a few years now.

The Prime Minister insults Danas and Nova

Even in 2024, Prime Minister Brnabić continues as before in her attitude towards independent media. She started the new year with traditional insults to the newspapers Danas and Nova, which she accused of continuing to "lie even more brutally". Last year ended with brutal police violence against citizens, but also the media and journalists who reported on the protests. Judging by the beginning of this year, the situation will not change for the better in the treatment of critical media by the government representatives, and such a treatment is a generator of violence to which journalists in Serbia are exposed.

Freedom of Assembly

Lawyer detained at protest

At the lawyer's protest in Kragujevac, one of the protest participants was arrested after the protest march allegedly because of an incident while "crossing the street". The arrested lawyer was taken to the police station, from where he was released after half an hour. "This pressure on the lawyer on the day when we peacefully gathered, reported the meeting and followed all the procedures and thus showed respect for the institutions to then arrest a colleague and take him away from the meeting where we express our protest is the best proof of how the police treat us", pointed out the lawyer and participant of the protest walk. By the way, the protest of members of the Kragujevac Chamber Association was organized due to the attack of a police officer on one of their colleagues.

Minor incident at the student blockade

During the student blockade, an unknown man approached and started insulting a group of students. On that occasion, one student's phone was knocked out of his hand. Nikola Ristić, one of the organizers of the student protests, said that the police reacted in a timely manner. The student blockade was organized in order to point out all the election irregularities recorded on December 17 and to demand that the elections be repeated.

The student has been under house arrest for 19 days

Student Dimitrije Popovski, arrested on the day of the protest on December 24, 2023, is still under house arrest. At the protest on December 24, excessive force was used by the police against the gathered citizens, and a large number of people were arrested on that occasion. However, Dimitrije was arrested before the incidents took place in front of the City Assembly. His lawyer stated that the harsher measure imposed on the student represents "a form of repression". And indeed, the police arresting a student without any reason, and then imposing a more severe measure of banning him from leaving the apartment without electronic monitoring, is an attempt to intimidate all those, above all young people, who dare to fight for democratic values and principles and for a free country with a free elections.

Freedom of Association

Vandalized Pride Info Center

On Christmas Day at 4 p.m., an unknown man vandalized the premises of the Pride Info Center in Belgrade, and on that occasion the center's window was completely broken. "This is a message to LGBT+ people in Serbia that there is no day of the year when we are safe and that even during the holidays we are the target of those who hate us and want to disenfranchise us, force us to hide and tell us that there is no place for us", published is on the Instagram page of the Pride Info Center. This organization reminds that not a single attacker has been prosecuted or convicted for the attack, despite the video surveillance evidence submitted to the prosecutor's office. The Protector of Citizens initiated the procedure for assessing the legality and regularity of the work of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in this case. By their inaction, the competent authorities are sending a message to the LGBTQ community in Serbia that no one will protect them when they are victims of homophobic and transphobic attacks. This is also an encouragement and a signal to bullies that their behavior is completely permissible. The multiple marginalized LGBTQ community in Serbia has been left in the lurch and completely abandoned by the state, which does not guarantee protection for members of this community either at home or on the street.