
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

August 8 - August 21, 2025

Freedom of Expression

Pressures due to support for the protests

Attacks on the private property of individuals who openly support and participate in protests are becoming increasingly frequent. The perpetrators are mostly masked men who, under the cover of night, vandalize and destroy private property, and as usual, remain unpunished. In recent times, several members of Belgrade assemblies have been targeted. Entrances to their apartment buildings have been vandalized, windows shattered, paint thrown, and family photos scattered. The buildings of three participants from the Zvezdara assembly were vandalized, and unknown individuals attempted to set fire to a flower shop owned by a member of the Konjarnik assembly during the night. One activist had their car destroyed for the second time in just two months. Another activist from Valjevo had their car demolished by thugs. The attackers waited for the activist with batons after a protest, but he managed to escape, but they smashed his car. However, what is more concerning than the destruction of property are the physical attacks on citizens. After the escalation of violent clashes with SNS supporters and the police, several establishments in Valjevo were vandalized, and multiple individuals were injured. Masked men stormed into a cafe venue with sticks and attacked the guests; during the attack, even the underage child of the owner was physically harmed. The police refused to come to the scene to conduct an investigation. Thugs also broke into the workshop of a female student from Valjevo who provides first aid at protests. They smashed the cars parked there and assaulted two people who were present at the time, causing them serious bodily injuries. The owner of another venue in Valjevo suffered injuries as well - broken arm and head injuries. Jaćimović, a transportation worker who has previously endured various forms of intimidation and threats, was physically attacked in his yard by two individuals. It was later revealed that the attacker was Aleksandar Sulc, an SNS supporter known for attacking journalists and even the mother of one of the victims who died in the canopy collapse in Novi Sad. All these attacks highlight that we are living in a constant atmosphere of fear, aimed at creating obedient citizens loyal to a single political party and a culture of ideological conformity.

Cyber attacks and threats to the media

In the previous period, two hacker attacks on the media were recorded. In one hacker attack, the service of the Beta agency was destroyed. Their Daily European Service was hacked, which broadcast news related to the European Union and Serbia's European integration. The Čačak's portal Epicenter press was taken down after a cyber attack and did not work for 24 hours. Cyber attacks aim to deprive the public of timely information, and local media are particularly affected, as they lack the resources to deal with this type of pressure. Other pressures and means were used in dealing with independent media. Death threats were sent to the editorial office of Danas, the Subotica portal Magločistač, to the journalists of the Autonomija info portal, the local media IN Media, and the editorial staff of N1. Danas journalist Marko Dragoslavić was beaten on August 12 by an unknown person because he photographed a building from a public area for which the building inspection had previously issued a work ban. Nova reporter Sanja Ignjatović Eker was exposed to serious threats via social networks, after a smear campaign was organized against her in pro-regime media. Carrying out journalistic work was also made difficult by preventing access to public events, so the N1 team was not allowed to attend a media event organized by the Ministry of Interior, where they were supposed to talk about those arrested and detained at the protests. The Webinfo portal from Novi Bečej also has a problem with access to events organized by the local self-government, and this method is a direct threat to the basic right of citizens to access information.

Director sues journalist

The director of the public utility company "Komrad" from Vranje, Zoran Dimitrijević, filed a (counter) complaint against the journalist of the daily "Večernje novosti" Jelena Stojković. The content of the application is not known, but, as the media reports, it probably refers to an incident from July of this year. Namely, during the fire at the landfill in Vranje, director Dimitrijević first physically attacked journalist Stojković, and then took her phone. The journalist filed a report, and now a month later a counter report arrives. Holders of public authority by filing lawsuits against journalists abuse their position and influence in order to deal with critics, and this is one of the characteristics of SLAPP lawsuits.

Freedom of Assembly

The police injured two students in Novi Pazar

During the intervention of the police at the blockade of the court in Novi Pazar, the police used physical force against the gathered students and citizens and on that occasion slightly injured two students. Students gathered to support fellow citizens who were detained at one of the earlier student support protests in Novi Pazar after masked persons broke into the faculty building. After the protest, the detention was lifted for the remaining detainees, but the intervention of the police is an indication of the broader repression that is actively applied to the demonstrators throughout Serbia. Such actions try to prevent the action of citizens on the local level and their active participation in social and political life.

Police dragging an elderly lady at a protest

At a protest by tenants against illegal construction in Block 45, policemen dragged an elderly woman who was part of the protest group. We remind you that for months, citizens have been pointing to illegal construction, which includes works on digging embankments and connecting them to outdated substations, which threatens the safety of tenants in the area around the embankment. Illegal construction is ensured by communal police.

Freedom of Association

Environmental activist arrested for insulting the minister

The weekly Radar published the news about the arrest of environmental activist Petar Peca Antonijević, which happened on July 12, 2025. Antonijević was arrested after a warrant was issued for him because he allegedly threatened the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marko Đurić. However, Peca's friends say that the truth is that the activist only verbally insulted the minister when he saw him in a bar. According to the latest information, Predrag is in prison in Stara Pazova, but his friends have no more information about him. Antonijević is active locally as an environmental activist and in public has often spoken critically of local authorities.

Environmental activists were pushed out by security

Private security physically prevented environmental activists from attending the public debate on the Strategy for the Management of Mineral Resources, which was organized in the premises of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia. The security stated as the reason for such action that the activists allegedly did not register for the public hearing, which was actually impossible for them to do, because the telephone number listed for applications was unavailable. This behavior is a continuation of the systematic exclusion of the public from the decision-making process of public interest.

Crni ovan targeted by vandals

The Crni ovan cafe in Novi Sad was vandalized again. This well-known meeting place of anti-fascists has been the target of neo-Nazi attackers several times, who once again wrote fascist symbols on the cafe windows and also broke the bar's sign. The impunity of the previous attacks is only encouragement and open support for the extreme right-wing groups who are destroying this bar and endangering its visitors.

Prohibited Pride caravan in Kruševac

The police in Kruševac have banned the registered public event "Pride Caravan", organized by the association "Da se zna!". The "Pride Caravan" is an event held in multiple towns and cities across the country to show support for the local LGBT community, which faces various forms of pressure and marginalization. So far, the organizers have received threats on social media because of the caravan, and in some cases, counter-protests have been organized by those who chanted at the activists participating in the caravan. However, this is the first time such an event has been banned. Shortly before the caravan was scheduled to take place in Kruševac on August 9th, the association "Da se zna!" received a verbal notice from the Police Department about the ban on holding the caravan. According to police information, a large group of hooligans had gathered at the location where the event was supposed to take place, carrying life-threatening objects. Because of this, the police stated they could not guarantee the safety of the participants. During this time, the hooligans gathered in the town square attacked activists from the feminist women's organization "Peščanik." The police were obligated to prevent the violent counter-protest and enable the caravan to take place, but by their decision, they have once again shown that members of the LGBT community cannot rely on the police to ensure their safety. This also represents an open threat to all LGBT individuals at the local level and is a clear indication that they remain endangered and targeted by those who seek to deny others — and those who are "different" - their basic human rights.

Private security attacked the activist

Private security sprayed pepper spray directly into the eyes of environmental activist and professor Marijana Petković. Namely, activists and numerous citizens gathered in Loznica to express their displeasure over the holding of a concert by a folk singer who in the previous months used her social networks to target students, insult them, threaten them, as well as racially insult foreign students. Millions of euros of public money are extracted from local budgets for this person's poorly attended concerts. Citizens gathered to point out the singer's problematic actions by chanting, but private security pushed the crowd and one activist was sprayed with pepper spray. However, due to the significantly larger number of those who gathered as a sign of dissatisfaction, the concert was interrupted, and the singer left Loznica, accompanied by security and chanting from the citizens.

Union activist arrested

EPS union activist, Dragoslav Ljubičić, was arrested on August 13, after receiving a call from a person who introduced himself as a member of the Security Information Agency (BIA). Ljubičić reported the unidentified person to the police station, however, during the day, 6 plainclothes agents came to pick him up and took him into custody. Ljubičić was released two days later, and the weekly Vreme reported that the trade unionist was arrested because of a tweet in which he called on citizens to "wait and neutralize ćaci". This trade unionist has been the target of repression before, and was illegally fired from his job, and then, after public reaction, he was transferred to a lower position. The repression to which Ljubičić is exposed is part of the practice of systematically suppressing trade union activity and is part of the government's tactics to prevent any attempt at broader worker involvement in the current protests.