



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

March 6 - March 26, 2026

**Freedom of Expression**

**Attacks and threats against media workers in the course of their journalistic work**

The election campaign ahead of the upcoming local elections, to be held on March 29 in 10 local government units, is in full swing, and attacks on journalists during the performance of their professional duties are not subsiding. In Kovin, Kragujevac, and Belgrade, journalists reported threats and obstruction of work while covering the pre-election rally of the Serbian Progressive Party on March 21 in Belgrade. Journalist Violeta Živkov, editor of the local portal Kovinskeinfo, was reporting on the departure of Serbian Progressive Party supporters to a rally in Belgrade, until a man directed a direct threat at her while she was recording a report. Particularly concerning is the fact that local officials were present at the scene, including the deputy president of the Municipality of Kovin and the head of the SNS councilor group, who witnessed the incident but did not react. Journalist of the Glas Šumadije portal, Vuk Mladenović, was obstructed while filming SNS supporters, and one of those present attempted to physically take his phone and commented on his work. Journalist of Nova television, Isidora Kovačević, was obstructed and insulted while reporting in the immediate vicinity of the SNS gathering in Belgrade, while journalist Maja Nikolić requested police escort at the event in Belgrade, which was not provided despite it being an assessment of her safety. Against journalist Maja Nikolić, Millenium Team filed a criminal complaint, seeking a one-year prison sentence because she reported on the purchase of Hotel Jugoslavija and state subsidies.

In Loznica, photojournalist Gavriilo Andrić was detained during a support gathering for an arrested farmer and activist, due to alleged disturbance of public order and peace. On that occasion, he was recording a police van in which Zlatko Kokanović was located, as well as the conduct of the police toward his daughter, who was not allowed to approach the vehicle.

In addition to this case, the military police guarding the president of the Serbian Progressive Party, Miloš Vučević, attempted to detain Danas journalist Uglješa Bokić after he photographed, on March 12, a member of the military police standing guard in front of the residential building where Vučević lives.

In addition to physical detentions and obstruction of journalists' work in the field, digital attacks on media and portals have again been recorded, including hacking attacks. The editorial office of the Portal Sečanj info was the target of a hacking attack, after which there was disruption in work and content availability. Regarding the most recent hacking attack, the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) also issued a statement, calling on the competent institutions to determine who is behind the attack and to ensure the protection of the media. Hacking attacks intensified at the beginning of 2026, and their presence continues to be recorded. At the reception desk of Radio Belgrade, a photograph of journalist and announcer Boris Miljević, with whom cooperation had previously been terminated, was publicly displayed. According to reports, the photograph was posted as an instruction to security not to allow him entry into the building. Miljević stated that colleagues informed him of this, and that upon arriving at work his access pass had been deactivated. The termination of cooperation followed after he attempted to schedule a meeting with the Director General of RTS, and he is now a former employee marked as an undesirable person.

## **Dismissals due to support for the students and speaking out about problems**

In several separate cases, pressures on employees in the public and private sectors were recorded following public statements and support for students in the blockade, union activities, or pointing out irregularities or problems at work.

Milan Rajičić, a member of parliament and candidate on the citizen group list "Zvuk pravde – zajedno za studente" for the local elections in Lučani to be held on March 29, stated that he was dismissed after 11 years of working at the insurance company Dunav Osiguranje because he appeared on an opposition election list supported by students. According to him, pressures against him began more than a month before the elections, and the dismissal was delivered immediately after the local elections were announced.

After two decades of work, lawyer Vanja Bogdanović was dismissed from Srbijavoz. The official reason given was that she was a technological surplus, while the affected employee believes the real reason was her social media posts. The First Basic Court in Belgrade issued a temporary measure reinstating Vanja Bogdanović at the public company Srbijavoz, after she had previously been dismissed following nearly two decades of work. The court assessed that there were serious doubts that the dismissal was due to organizational changes rather than pressures related to her publicly expressed views.

Marko Mićunović, a student at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade, who for three years commented on matches on Arena Sport without editorial complaints, was suddenly removed from broadcasting. According to him, the decision was communicated via message on March 1, 2026, the day his contract expired, although he had not previously received an explanation for his removal from the commentary schedule. The formal reason given was that the "quality of the commentary was in question," even though he claims he received no complaints during his work. The dismissal followed after he shared a photo with former Serbian national team player Vladimir Štimac, who is known for supporting student protests.

Two employees at Pošta Srbije were discriminated for participating in a workers' protest and supporting union demands, being offered an annex to their employment contracts that transferred them to a remote workplace. Regarding this case, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality stated that discrimination occurred at the public company Pošta Srbije and found that the institution did not follow recommendations to remedy the consequences of such actions.

In the case of the national airline Air Serbia, a former employee was subjected to the publication of personal data and details from her employment on social media, constituting a form of harassment and intimidation through doxing. The former employee worked for Air Serbia for 12 years until last year, when she reports being dismissed because she shared a drone recording from one of the major student protests on her Instagram account. She was accused of violating the ethical code and thereby undermining “work discipline” and the “work climate” in the team.

Transport provider Milomir Jaćimović had his driver’s license suspended with a three-month driving ban by the Misdemeanor Court in Belgrade. During the previous year of student protests, he supported students and citizens and offered them transport. During this period, Jaćimović’s vehicles were repeatedly confiscated, tires slashed, and bus windows damaged.

## **Public sector employees pressured and coerced by superiors to attend a political rally**

Several employees in public enterprises and state institutions in Serbia reported pressures ahead of the Serbian Progressive Party pre-election rally on March 21, 2026, at the Belgrade Arena. The Kreni-Promeni movement stated that workers in public enterprises, including Gradsko stambeno, Dunav Osiguranje, and other firms connected to the public sector, reported being pressured to participate in SNS political activities, to use official vehicles, and that even transfers or reductions in work rights were imposed on those who refused to attend the rally. It is also reported that pressures were submitted through the “Report Coercion” campaign.

Employees at the Belgrade public utility company Infostan Tehnologije claim they were organized, transported in official vehicles, and during working hours sent to Aranđelovac to participate in the pre-election campaign of the Serbian Progressive Party ahead of local elections in that city. A larger number of employees from the Public Enterprise for Underground Coal Exploitation Resavica report being pressured to attend political rallies of the ruling SNS. Employees state that they are expected to attend rallies, with threats of dismissal, removal, demotion, and negative consequences for their employment status if they refuse to participate. Testimonies emphasize that such conditioning creates an atmosphere of fear, coercion, and job insecurity.

The Kreni-Promeni movement reported that citizen complaints indicate that employees at the Lajkovac High School, the Municipality of Lajkovac, and the public utility company JKP Komunalno were coerced to attend the arena rally, and that high school students were offered 5,000 dinars to go to the SNS rally. Employees at the Central Prison in Belgrade also reported being coerced by their superiors to attend a ruling party rally.

The President of Serbia, during a pre-election rally, called on citizens to attend the large Serbian Progressive Party rally at the Belgrade Arena and stated that he respects the free will of anyone who wishes or does not wish to attend. However, anonymous reports from employees of public and state enterprises indicate that officials from the management of these enterprises pressured and coerced workers to attend the rally, sending the message that the alternative to not attending was dismissal. The reports indicate that pressures were organized “in the name of the President of the State,” and that company directors requested that a large number of employees be present at the pre-election rally.

## **Threats to professors at the University of Novi Sad through media content**

On March 10, the academic network “Slobodan univerzitet” reported that the organization Center for Social Stability, through media content including so-called documentary films, is targeting and exerting pressure on professors at the University of Novi Sad. According to members of the academic network, these materials contain false information about members of the academic community, as well as threatening messages, including claims that certain professors would be unable to advance in academic and teaching positions due to their support for students. Representatives of the academic community assessed that such messages constitute a form of intimidation and pressure on the freedom of thought and action of university professors. The Center for Social Stability is a previously known organization that brings together a network of individuals connected to the Serbian Progressive Party and state institutions and directs its resources toward targeting and threatening journalists as well as civil society organizations.

# **Freedom of Assembly**

## **Allegations of disturbing public order**

Several dozen citizens, students, and employees of the University of Novi Sad received summonses to the Misdemeanor Court in connection with the events of September 5, 2025, when the police detained a larger number of people in the Rectorate building. The court summonses state that they are accused of disturbing public order through “improper, insolent, and reckless behavior and endangering property,” including unauthorized occupation and presence in the Rectorate building and alleged vandalism of the premises with graffiti and other materials. The Free University in Novi Sad stated that it considers these misdemeanor charges a form of collective intimidation and noted that the gathered individuals, according to its claims, were seeking shelter from police use of force and tear gas.

# **Freedom of Association**

## **Attacks on students**

During the “Student in Every Village” campaign, in which students visit households across Serbia to speak with citizens, two students from the University of Novi Sad Faculty of Technology were physically and verbally attacked in Crvenka on March 17. According to students involved in the blockade, an unknown man physically assaulted them with insults during their field activities.

The verbal attacks and threats against students were further amplified by President Aleksandar Vučić, who, at a pre-election Serbian Progressive Party rally in Arandelovac, spoke about the student movement and compared it to the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pol Pot’s regime in Cambodia. Vučić stated that the word “Talib” in Pashto means “student” or “pupil” and said that the Taliban were “students” who seized power in Afghanistan with negative consequences. He also mentioned that Pol Pot’s regime, according to him, involved children and that “the largest camps and worst crimes were organized there.” Vučić expressed concern over, as he said, those who “think they have the right to prohibit political activity by those who think differently.”

In the same period, police actions against students were also recorded. Officers from the Criminal Police Directorate went to the home of Mechanical Engineering student Luka Pešić in Belgrade and conducted a search, after which he was detained. He and Political Science student Milica Kostin were later summoned to the SIV building for questioning following a report from UKP chief Marko Krič. Both students provided statements regarding allegedly placing stickers featuring the image of the UKP chief. Their homes were searched, and their phones and laptops were confiscated. After interrogation and detention, both students were placed in one-month custody.

In Belgrade on March 20, officers from the Criminal Police Directorate detained four students who were carrying money donated by citizens for student initiatives. The students were intercepted on the street, searched, and taken to a police station, where, according to reports, no clear legal basis for the actions was provided. After giving statements as citizens, the students were released, but the confiscated funds, totaling approximately two million dinars, were not returned. According to reports, no illegal items were found, nor were any specific charges or legal classifications communicated to the students.

Attacks and incidents have been recorded since the beginning of the student protests, with intensity increasing in situations where students act independently and without wider support, including activities such as the “Student in Every Village” campaign, during which they are particularly exposed and vulnerable.

## **Intimidation campaign against the CSO YIHR**

On the night of March 15–16, posters labeling the organization as a target were placed on the premises of the non-governmental organization Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR) in Belgrade. The organization accused the group Narodna Patrola of carrying out the incident, and according to the Initiative, this marks the third attack by the same group on the organization in the past three years. The Initiative considers this event part of a campaign that threatens the safety of YIHR employees and activists.