



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

5 - 18 June, 2026

Freedom of Expression

**Pressure in Education: The case of Associate professor Vladimir
Mihic**

Vladimir Mihic, an associate professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, was not reappointed to his academic position following a decision by the Senate of the University of Novi Sad. An objection to his reappointment had previously been filed by Patrik Drid, Dean of the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, resulting in Mihic losing his position after twenty-four years of employment. Until June 2026, Mihic served as an associate professor in the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, specializing in social and political psychology, intergroup relations, public opinion, and tolerance. Since the beginning of the faculty blockades and student protests, he had publicly supported the students and, together with fellow professors, founded the informal academic network “Free University of Novi Sad,” which provided educational alternatives and legal support during the protests.

In December 2025, Mihic initiated the reappointment procedure. The Faculty of Philosophy’s expert committee issued a positive evaluation, confirming that he met all legal and statutory requirements for reappointment. In January 2026, Patrik Drid filed an objection challenging two technical aspects of the report. After corrections were made, the committee republished the report for public review. Drid subsequently filed a second objection, challenging Mihic’s teaching competence and citing his public appearances, media engagements, and social media posts supporting the student protests. Despite Drid’s objections, both the Electoral Council of the Faculty of Philosophy and the Expert Council for Social Sciences formally adopted the committee’s positive report and forwarded it to the Senate. The Senate of the University of Novi Sad overturned the committee’s assessment and, through a secret ballot, rejected Mihic’s reappointment, departing from the university’s usual practice of conducting public votes on academic appointments. The final decision was delivered to Mihic on 16 June 2026.

Mihic announced that he would pursue legal remedies, beginning with an appeal to the Provincial Education Inspectorate, arguing that the Senate’s decision contained procedural and formal deficiencies. According to him, the document provided no explanation for the rejection and did not formally approve or reject the committee’s report, but merely stated that the decision had not been adopted.

On 9 June, the Independent Trade Union of the Faculty of Philosophy organized a one-hour warning strike in response to the Senate’s decision. More than 1,000 members of Serbia’s academic community signed a statement expressing concern over the decision and broader pressures on academia. The International Society of Political Psychology also appealed to the Senate of the University of Novi Sad to reconsider its decision and reappoint Vladimir Mihic as associate professor.

Veran Matić attacked in front of the Serbian Parliament

Journalist, ANEM President, and member of the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists, Veran Matić, was attacked on the evening of 17 June in front of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. While using his mobile phone to record a public gathering of dozens of citizens wearing hats with white ribbons, an unidentified man in his twenties approached him and violently snatched the phone from his hand.

When Matić identified himself as a journalist and explained that he was documenting a public event in the public interest, the man ignored him. The phone was returned only after Đorđe Prelić, whom ANEM identified as a former leader of the Alkatraz supporters' group and one of the individuals convicted for participation in the 2009 killing of French football supporter Brice Taton, instructed that it be returned. During a brief exchange, Prelić told Matić that his reporting for TV B92 had "ruined his life," which Matić understood as a reference to the investigative television series *Insajder*.

Matić has been the target of a hostile public campaign for several months, in which Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić has also participated.

Threats against Journalists

In recent days, a series of serious pressures, threats, and discriminatory acts targeting journalists and media outlets in Serbia have been recorded, further highlighting the deteriorating state of media freedom and journalist safety that media organizations have warned about for months. The pro-government tabloid *Informer* published an article targeting university professor and journalist Dinko Gruhonjić and journalist Getoarba Mulići. The article contained offensive, ethnically charged, and inflammatory language, exposing both journalists to public vilification. The Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) also warned of new threats directed at journalist Vladimir Mitrić, a correspondent for *Večernje novosti* in Loznica, who has lived under police protection for more than two decades after surviving a brutal attack. On social media, he received a message stating that he "should have been killed with a hammer to the head." At the same time, ANEM raised concerns about severe threats, hate speech, sexist insults, and ethnically motivated targeting of journalist Kristina Demeter Filipčev from the local news outlet *Bečejski mozaik*. After publishing footage from an event in Bečej, she received numerous threatening and abusive messages on social media, including calls for violence and comments inciting ethnic hatred. Similar threatening messages were received by the local news outlet *Vranje News*, including threats directed at the children of members of its editorial staff. The impunity surrounding previous attacks has further emboldened perpetrators and contributed to an environment in which journalists are routinely exposed to threats and intimidation. In addition to direct threats, cases of restrictions on media access were also recorded. Local authorities in Zrenjanin prevented the news outlet *Volim Zrenjanin* from covering a session of the city assembly. Journalists were stopped at the entrance to City Hall and prevented from attending the session without explanation, while other media outlets were granted access. Public concern was also raised by the case of N1 journalist Danica Vučenić, who received a letter containing serious threats against her and members of her family. The letter, sent from Maribor (Slovenia) to N1's offices, contained death threats and insults and was reported to the police.

Court rules against KRIK

Judge Ana V. Milošević of the Higher Court in Belgrade ruled against the investigative outlet KRIK over seven articles published in 2021 in which journalists referred to Predrag Koluvija, who is on trial for allegedly organizing large-scale marijuana production at the Jovanjica estate, as an “accused drug kingpin.” The ruling is a first-instance judgment and KRIK has appealed. Koluvija filed three lawsuits against KRIK. One of them had already been concluded in his favor. He argued that describing him as an “accused drug kingpin” violated the presumption of innocence and caused damage to his reputation and emotional well-being. In her ruling, Judge Milošević stated that the phrase “accused drug kingpin,” despite including the word “accused,” creates the impression that Koluvija is guilty before a final court verdict has been reached. KRIK journalists currently face thirteen additional legal proceedings. Lawsuits have also been filed against the outlet by Court of Appeal judge Dušanka Đorđević, former Minister of Agriculture Jelena Tanasković, businessman Bogoljub Karić, businessman Stanko Subotić, who has been linked to organized crime, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić’s godfather Nikola Petrović, and others.

Freedom of Assembly.

Group of activists detained following protest against Israeli arms factory

Following a protest against the opening of an Israeli drone manufacturing facility in Serbia, twelve activists from the initiative “Support for the People of Palestine” were detained. Organizers stated that the participants were peacefully dispersing after the protest when police intervened, a claim supported by videos circulating on social media.

All detainees, including two students from the Faculty of Philosophy, were released later that evening. They were accused of obstructing or preventing public officials from carrying out their duties. Serbia’s Ministry of Internal Affairs did not issue a public statement regarding the detentions.

Threats against protest participants

On 7 June, the student group Glas studenata Vrbas announced on social media that an unidentified individual among a gathering of Serbian Progressive Party supporters threatened protesting students and citizens by saying they should be slaughtered. Throughout the protest of students and the counter-gathering of SNS supporters in Savino Selo near Vrbas, a unit of the intervention police was present. According to organizers, despite the threat being recorded on video and police officers being in the immediate vicinity, the officers did not react.