



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

June 19 - July 2, 2026

Freedom of Expression

Hearings and interviews over Sound Cannon allegations

The investigation by the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade into allegations of possible use of a sonic weapon during the protest held on 15 March 2025 began just two days after the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, stated in a televised appearance that the gathered citizens that day "for some strange reason were moving left and right," claiming that it had been "proven that no sonic weapon was used" and that allegations about its use represented an attempt to justify the failure of the protest, while also expressing an expectation that "one day all details" of the protest events would be revealed.

The Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade announced that it would prosecute four groups of individuals in connection with the events of the 15 March protest, based on the claim that the use of a sonic weapon had been a pre-planned simulation aimed at falsely accusing state authorities of its use. The Prosecutor's Office stated that during a search of the Faculty of Philosophy premises, documentation was found mentioning a "sonic cannon," and that there were grounds for suspicion that certain individuals had been preparing a staged use of such a device in order to provoke panic, unrest, and endanger state security. At the same time, the police were ordered to identify persons involved in the alleged organisation of the event, as well as to conduct interviews with all individuals who publicly claimed that a sonic weapon had been used during the protest.

As part of the pre-investigation procedure, police conducted interviews with several individuals who had publicly spoken about the event or provided information regarding the possible use of such a device. Among those questioned were military analyst Aleksandar Radić, lawyer Aleksandar Olenik, the president of the Serbia Centre party Zdravko Ponoš, and the editor-in-chief of the Beta news agency, Dragan Janjić, who gave statements in their capacity as citizens. Military analyst Aleksandar Radić was on Monday, 22 June, taken out of the building where his wife's apartment is located, accompanied by police, and was later released after several hours of searches of the apartment and other premises. Searches were conducted at multiple locations and apartments that could potentially be of interest to the prosecutor's office and police in relation to the alleged commission of the criminal offense under Article 320 of the Criminal Code, preparation of overthrowing the constitutional order and security of the Republic of Serbia.

Lawyer and vice president of the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina, Aleksandar Olenik, stated that police officers questioned him about his public claims regarding the possible use of a sonic weapon. Similarly, the president of the Serbia Centre party, Zdravko Ponoš, confirmed that he had been summoned to the Criminal Police Directorate. At the same time, the editor-in-chief of the Beta news agency was released after an informational interview at the Criminal Police Directorate.

What is particularly concerning are public statements by government representatives claiming that students had pre-planned to stage the use of a sonic weapon in order to portray the President of Serbia as responsible for an attack on citizens and to provoke a civil war. The Speaker of the National Assembly, Ana Brnabić, went further, stating that the aim of the alleged plan was also the “murder of Aleksandar Vučić and his family.”

Pro-government television stations also joined the narrative of attacks on citizens and students who participated in the 15 March protest. Military analyst Aleksandar Radić left Serbia after footage of surveillance showing his underage daughter was broadcast on one of these channels, TV Informer.

Relocation of journalists due to pressure and safety risks

After surveillance footage showing the underage daughter of military analyst Aleksandar Radić was aired on a nationally broadcast television channel, Radić left the country with his family. He is one of at least four journalists who were forced to leave Serbia and temporarily relocate due to serious security risks, ongoing pressure, and media campaigns conducted against them in pro-government media during the first half of 2026.

The Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) states that journalists who left Serbia had previously been exposed to prolonged targeting campaigns, threats, and pressure due to their professional work. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of certain pro-government media outlets, which, according to ANEM’s assessment, contributed to creating an atmosphere in which independent journalists are portrayed as enemies of the state.

Pressure and attacks on media and journalists

The author of the show “Dobar loš zao” and columnist for Danas, Marko Vidojković, received new death threats on the social network Facebook. Since 2019 to date, nearly 30 cases have been opened in prosecutors’ offices regarding threats against Vidojković and his colleague Nenad Kulačin, most of which have not been resolved.

During the filming of a fire at the Drugalići landfill, a journalist from TV Forum in Prijepolje, while performing her journalistic work from a public area, was subjected to disturbing remarks and obstructed by workers present at the site. Efforts were made to prevent filming of the fire at all costs, in the presence of the president of the Municipality of Prijepolje, Drago Popadić, who also requested that the journalist stop filming. Cameraman Miloš Vulović was pushed by workers, although he was in a public area, far from the entrance gate to the landfill itself. On several occasions, the camera was physically blocked in an attempt to prevent recording.

Photojournalists Gavriilo Andrić and Marija Stojnić, together with an architecture student, were detained on the day of the Serbian Progressive Party rally held on 27 June in Belgrade, in connection with a banner reading “Students are fighting for you.” According to media reports, the three were detained near a banner hung on the exterior of a building facing Branko’s Bridge. The banner, which read “Students are fighting for you,” was placed while traffic on the bridge was stopped to allow a column of Serbian Progressive Party supporters to pass on their way to a rally in front of the National Assembly. All three were released from police custody the same evening without being required to give formal statements to the authorities.

A journalist from the weekly Vreme, Davor Lukač, was not allowed to report from a military exercise at Pasuljanske Livade, despite having properly accredited to cover the event. Unknown men approached journalists from the Center for Investigative Journalism of Serbia (CINS) who were working on promoting a new story and distributing printed versions of part of their investigation in front of the EXPO company headquarters on Kralja Milana Street in Belgrade. The men asked the journalists to move from their location, commenting that what they were doing was “not fair or friendly,” and that what was written in the distributed material was “not true.” It is particularly concerning that one of the men, after the other two had left, approached very close to the journalist who was recording the event, demanded to see the footage, and insisted that it be deleted, claiming he had not given permission to be filmed.

Freedom of Assembly

Fifteenth arrest of a student from Niš

After spending the night at a police station, law student Mateja Nikolić was questioned at the Misdemeanour Court and released. He is charged with insulting an official in the performance of official duties, while students in the faculty blockade stated that the arrest was another attempt at intimidation and that since the beginning of the student blockades Nikolić has been arrested fifteen times. The student is charged under Article 22 of the Law on Public Order and Peace, and the arrest occurred in front of the premises of the pro-government Niš TV, at the moment when Ana Brnabić was a guest there. Nikolić himself, after being released, explained that the disputed incident occurred after he asked a police officer “why he was bothering him,” which led to the charge of insulting an official in the performance of official duties.

Andrej Tanko found guilty of obstructing an official

The Basic Court in Pančevo found student Andrej Tanko guilty of the criminal offense of obstructing an official in the performance of official duties, following proceedings related to an incident at a protest in Pančevo on 13 August 2025. The court imposed a suspended house arrest sentence of six months, with the condition that the sentence will not be enforced if he does not commit a new criminal offense within two years.

According to the case file, Tanko sprayed police officers with a liquid of unknown composition during the protest, while the defense argued that it was water and that there was no attack on officials, but rather a performative act. During the trial, the defense challenged the evidence and argued that the proceedings were politically motivated, while the prosecution maintained that the offense had been proven. The defense announced an appeal against the verdict.