

ELECTIONS

UNDER THE MAGNIFYING GLASS



days
until the
elections

Civic Initiatives will continuously monitor and record cases of violations of freedom of expression, assembly and association during the pre-election campaign. We will point out all omissions and illegal actions during the election campaign, including cases of abuse of: public resources and public office for campaigning. We will report on all these issues on a weekly basis to the interested public.

The beginning of the collection of citizens' signatures in support of electoral lists was marked by, at the very least, surprising developments. On the one hand, the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) managed to collect nearly 225.000 signatures within an exceptionally short period of time. The President of the Republic announced that 170.000 signatures had been collected in just three hours. On the other hand, citizens stood in seemingly endless lines for days in order to lend their support to the student electoral list. The collection of signatures for the student list did not proceed nearly as quickly, given that a large number of notaries were unavailable due to the volume of work, meaning that in most cases only one notary was available to certify signatures for the students. In addition to public notaries, municipal officials may also be authorized to certify signatures. The speed with which the ruling party collected more than 200.000 signatures indicates that the majority of available resources, not only those of public notaries' offices, but also those of municipalities across the country, were mobilized in the service of the ruling party. This potentially constitutes yet another instance in a series of abuses of public resources by the SNS.

The President of the Republic, who is also the lead candidate on the electoral list of the ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), has announced increases in salaries and pensions in the coming period, as well as that fuel prices will not increase. This announcement comes at the very beginning of the pre-election campaign, once again demonstrating the use of public funds as a means of gaining political points by the President of the Republic. The fact that the President is simultaneously the ruling party's candidate for Prime Minister and the lead candidate on its electoral list prompted the Bureau for Social Research (BIRODI) to call on the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption to initiate, ex officio and without delay, proceedings against Aleksandar Vučić for potential violations of the Law on the Prevention of Corruption, which prohibits public officials from placing private interests above the public interest.



The Republic Election Commission (RIK) rejected as unfounded citizens' complaints concerning a potential conflict of interest in relation to the electoral list "Aleksandar Vučić – United Serbia." In the meantime, President Vučić stated that he would resign as President on September 27, and that, from that point onward, he would enter the campaign, as he put it, as an "ordinary citizen". This statement was characterized by RIK member Sofija Mandić as an admission by the President that he is currently in a position of conflict of interest.

Freedom of Expression

The Kreni-Promeni movement reported that, with the start of the pre-election campaign, a series of testimonies emerged from employees in both the public and private sectors concerning political pressure, blackmail, and the collection of so-called "secure votes" for the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS). According to the movement, these testimonies reveal the same pattern: people are being asked to provide signatures, attend party rallies, and commit to casting "secure votes," while those who refuse are threatened with losing their jobs. One of the testimonies also states that employees were told they would be provided with pre-filled ballot papers. Such pressure has reportedly been documented at the public utility company JKP "Infostan tehnologije," "Simp" in Bujanovac, a healthcare institution in Kragujevac, the "Poštanska štedionica" bank, the "Snežana" kindergarten in Senta, the "Srbija Kargo" company, the PIO Fund office in Karaburma, the "DTL Tekijanka" company, "Almex" DOO Pančevo, and even at a market in Mirijevo, where citizens were allegedly threatened that they would have to vote for the SNS in order to keep their market stalls.

Freedom of Association

Students in Blockade have reported that, in early September, three associations whose names include the words "Students Are Winning" were registered with the Serbian Business Registers Agency (APR), apparently modeled on the name of a student electoral list: "Student List of Serbia – Students Are Winning," "Students Are Winning," and "Belgrade Student List – Students Are Winning." The same person is listed as the representative of all three associations. Students in Blockade stated that the latest amendments to the electoral laws have opened up the possibility for a single person to endorse multiple electoral lists.



They also expressed concern that such “phantom” lists could appear in the upcoming parliamentary elections, using the word “students” in their names with the aim of confusing voters. A similar tactic was used in the local elections held in March 2026. Fake or “phantom” electoral lists are electoral lists that formally participate in elections but lack a genuine political organization, political platform, and/or campaign. They typically emerge shortly before elections, during which they present themselves publicly as opposition forces; they almost never cross the electoral threshold, and disappear after the elections, with their members no longer visible on the political scene. Their primary purpose is to influence the electoral process in favor of another, usually the governing political option, most commonly by confusing voters, fragmenting the vote, or creating the appearance of political pluralism.

Students of the Faculty of Law at the University of Belgrade announced that one of their fellow students had been summoned by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MUP) one day after the student electoral list was submitted to the Republic Electoral Commission (RIK). The students said they were not surprised that pressure was continuing during the pre-election campaign.

Police officers from the Economic Crime Department arrived at a warehouse where promotional materials for future actions by students participating in the blockades are being stored. The students stated that the officers arrived without a warrant and entered private property. They said that such intimidation tactics would not discourage them.

Actor Bojan Dimitrijević, who is also a candidate on the Student List, posted footage of a drone that had been flying for some time in front of the terrace of the apartment where he lives with his wife, actress Jelena Stupljanin, who has also publicly expressed her support for the student protests and blockades. The repeated flying of a drone in front of the home of an election candidate constitutes a serious form of intimidation and targeting of political opponents, and illustrates the atmosphere in which the pre-election campaign is expected to develop.