
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 21 - September 03, 2026

Freedom of Expression

Female professors of the Faculty of Philosophy reported discrimination

Ten female professors of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Novi Sad filed a complaint to the High Court against this higher education institution and its dean, Milivoj Alanović, due to discrimination. One of the professors, Tatjana Đurin, argues that the reason for the lawsuit is the dean's refusal to put a proposal for his dismissal from that position on the agenda of the session of the Teaching and Research Council, and that the reason for this is the political commitment of the professors who made the proposal. The dean refused to put this proposal on the agenda of the session three times, and in the explanation for that it was stated that the female professors who submitted it supported the students and that due to their participation in the protests, they cannot objectively look at the factual situation and make decisions that are of general interest to the faculty. The female professors are seeking judicial protection because they believe that the dean, based on personal political beliefs that manifested themselves through their public and social involvement, deprived them of their rights as members of the Teaching and Research Council.

Pressures on citizens

Igor Udovicic, a driver at the Gerontology Center in Vrbas, was transferred to another job on the grounds that there is no need for full-time work at the center, which has 120 users. He claims that this decision was made because of his support for the students and that the reason was that he told the director that he had no right to force the workers to go to the meeting. He states that the director then hit him with the door, and then called the police. At the same time, he asked the Gerontological Center for information of public importance about why employees were not paid overtime.

Goran Petrović, the husband of Police Major Katarina Petrović, was sentenced to a disciplinary measure that entails the loss of the acquired rank/title and the determination of an immediately lower rank/title in professional training. He was disciplined for posting the cartoon on his private and locked Facebook account.

Petrović published a cartoon by the satirist Andrzej Krajewski, which was created in the 80s of the last century during the state of emergency in Poland, which shows a policeman in full gear, who runs to embrace a child on the doorstep of a family home, while red boot marks remain behind him. Let us remind you, Katarina Petrović is a policewoman who was suspended for publicly announcing that the godfather of the state president caused a traffic accident and that on that occasion the presence of narcotics was found in his system.

These cases show that employees in the public sector are exposed to pressure and persecution because of publicly expressed opinions and critical attitudes towards the current government.

Threats to journalists

Journalists from Glas Šumadije and Liquidno were attacked during the visit of Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić to Kraljevo. The journalist of the Glas Šumadije portal, Jovana Ristić, and the journalist of the LiKVidno portal, Nenad Simović, were brutally attacked by unknown men in black at the entrance to the rally. Regardless of the fact that the journalists had accreditation, they were insisted to leave the meeting. In addition to being attacked, newspapers were denied the right to report from a public meeting, which directly threatens citizens' freedom of information.

An unknown person sent threatening messages to the editor of Forbes Serbia Ivan Radak, the president of NUNS Željko Bodrožić, but also to the journalists of N1. In the comments on the text about the threats, Ivan Radak is told: "We don't threaten, we will get the job done", and to NUNS president Željko Bodrožić under the news "Bodrožić: As a society we have completely gone to hell", it is stated: "In case of rebellion and conflict, you will be our favorite toy". The same person also left a message directed at the journalists of N1: "Threats, what do you do every day to people who disagree with you, your mother's mother. I live for the day that you start a riot, so that I can legally demolish you and eradicate you. You are a blockader." The new messages show how the absence of an effective response and an atmosphere of impunity can encourage further threats.

Lies and insults were directed at the editor of the eStvarnost portal and member of the UNS Management Board, Dragan Todorović, as well as threats against the "Razglas News" journalist Žarko Bogosavljević. In posts on Facebook, Todorović was accused of being a traitor and a foreign agent, a narrative that can often be heard in the public speech of high-ranking state officials. "Razglas News" journalist Žarko Bogosavljević states that an unknown person sent this newsroom a message on Instagram, in which she first referred to the articles about Ratko Mladić published on this portal, and then sent threats to him as well. This person was warned that the case would be reported to the police, but despite this, she continued with threats and insults.

Suspended Instagram page "No Censorship" due to false reports

According to a notice received by the Uncensored site from Meta, the account has been suspended due to an alleged violation of intellectual property rules. The editors of "Bez Censure" state that the reports come from suspicious and, according to the information they have, fake email addresses, and their intensity and the way they are submitted indicate a coordinated attempt to remove their content from social networks. At the beginning of this year, many critical and professional media, organizations and individuals were the target of bot attacks on Instagram, after which Meta temporarily suspended their profiles, but they were restored shortly after public reaction and technical support. Complaints against the page "Bez censure" clearly represent a similar type of attack with the same goal, and it is indicative that this is happening right before the announcement of elections in Serbia.

Freedom of Assembly

Invitations to activists for an informative interview before the meeting

Members of the Bravo movement, Brajan Brković and Miran Pogačar, as well as dozens of activists from Novi Sad, received invitations to informational interviews at the police station. September 4 - when Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić announced a rally in Novi Sad, which has since been cancelled. Members of the Bravo movement point out that targeting their members is a regular practice, but that they have nothing to hide. Calling for information talks is an attempt to intimidate activists and discourage citizens from organizing another rally that day, which is allowed according to the Law on Public Assembly and the police is only obliged to guarantee the safety of two rallies taking place in the same place.

Indictments filed against four Užice residents

The Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Užice filed indictments against four Užice residents who participated in the blockade of the main road towards Požega and Zlatibor on July 6, 2025. Charges were brought against the councilor of the opposition group of citizens "Užička akcija" and lawyer Radovan Novaković, professor and civil activist Branko Nikolić, student activist Pavle Cicvarić and Dejan Ćosić, who are suspected of attacking the police. They were arrested a year ago, after blocking the highway, and are among the thousands of citizens who were detained or arrested last year for exercising their right to freedom of assembly.

The Pride Caravan Rally was held amid threats and tensions

The final rallies as part of the Pride Caravan action, organized by the Association Da se zna!, were held in Šabac and Loznica, ending this year's series of six Pride protests organized across Serbia ahead of Belgrade Pride. Activists of the Association Da se zna! days before their arrival in Šabac and Loznica, they were exposed to threats of violence and death. Due to the safety risk, both caravans had to be shortened. In Loznica, a firecracker was thrown, while one person ran into it with the intention of physically attacking the crowd, which is why the participants of the Pride caravan had to leave the location of the meeting.

Tensions and violence at rallies caused by SNS supporters

In Užice, citizens and activists gathered on the town square in front of the meeting of the Serbian Progressive Party, where the arrival of the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, was announced. There was a conflict between the two parties, when the SNS crowd started chasing and beating individual citizens. Marko Miletić, a journalist from the Mašina portal, explained that citizens in Užice tried to hold their pre-arranged meeting at 3 pm, but the police prevented people from coming to this counter-meeting. Miletić was violently attacked by a member of the Police Intervention Unit, who gripped his hand tightly, stole the mobile phone he was using to record, and then roughly pushed him away. This event represents another example of the pattern of attitudes towards independent and professional journalists - they are prevented from following SNS events in public places, they are disturbed while reporting, their equipment is taken away, and in the end they are physically attacked either by thugs who support SNS, or members of the police, and responsibility for the attacks is usually absent.

In Veternik, there was a conflict between two groups of citizens, at the place where the citizens organized a meeting marking one year since the attack on the citizens in the same location. Supporters of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) were at the location before the start of the rally. One of the participants of the rally states that SNS supporters aggressively provoked and snatched banners from the gathered citizens, and that's how a fight broke out. The citizens moved from the original location to the roundabout in order to avoid contact with SNS supporters, but they followed them. Some witnesses claim that there were several attacks on citizens, including slapping, blows to the head and kicking, as well as that the police did not react at certain moments, but mostly observed the event, which was also the case during last year's attacks on citizens by SNS supporters during the summer.

Freedom of Association

Spying of student activists by advanced spyware

Ela Zeković, a student at the Faculty of Political Sciences, said that 14 students, members of the movement's operational teams, were spied on by advanced spy software and that it all started when the Apple company sent a message to users that, as she claims, they were the target of an attack. She further points out that colleagues in operational teams who communicate directly with citizens are also targeted. Student Jelena Kontić, one of the victims of eavesdropping, pointed out at a conference of blocked students that Pegasus was installed on her phone without her knowledge. This is the first case of installing this spyware in 2026 in the world. Two students were also targeted with NoviSpy spyware, which is a new spyware registered for the first time in Serbia in 2024. The devices of other targeted students, activists and opposition politicians were infected with the so-called "zero click" technology that enables the installation of spyware remotely, without direct contact with the phone. Such advanced technology allows access to all data on the device - messages, pictures, contacts, can turn on the camera and microphone and screenshot the screen without the user's knowledge and send the data to an unknown sender. This form of repression is a gross violation of the laws of the Republic of Serbia and represents a dangerous form of persecution of activists and citizens who are active participants in the socio-political life of the country.

Obstruction of submission of candidacy for the Student Parliament

Students of the informal student group "Agrarian Reform" state that representatives of the Student Parliament and members of the election commission of the Faculty of Agriculture in Novi Sad are trying in every way to obstruct the candidacy of their list in the elections for the Student Parliament. They were given only three days to collect 10 percent of the signatures from the total number of students, which is about 260 signatures, and everything culminated in the decision of the president of the Student Parliament and member of the election commission, Žarko Miskin, not to allow the representatives of this list to be in the room where the signatures are submitted. The obstruction represents an attempt to prevent students in the blockade from uniting and acting through the student parliaments, in which representatives of the same student associations have been sitting for years.