



MEDIA SCENE MONITORING IN SERBIA FOR JANUARY 2025

INTRODUCTION

The monitoring of the media scene is conducted to continuously track events and processes affecting media freedom in the Republic of Serbia. This monitoring focuses on freedom of expression; monitoring the implementation of existing regulations; the adoption of new regulations, as well as amendments to current ones, both in the media field and other areas that directly or indirectly impact media freedom; and the analysis of lawsuits considered by experts to be SLAPP suits (strategic lawsuits against public participation) targeting journalists and media outlets.

Publicly available data, information obtained from journalists, editors, and other media professionals, journalistic associations, and media organizations, as well as from governmental and non-governmental bodies, are used for monitoring.

Supported by:

This project is funded by
the European Union



**#EY
ЗА ТЕБЕ**

B | T | D The Balkan Trust
for Democracy



Norway

A PROJECT OF THE GERMAN MARSHALL FUND

I. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Ethics Exemption in Reporting on Student Protests and Attitudes Toward Journalists After Their Support

An unsigned article in the daily newspaper Novosti published passport photos of brothers Lazar and Luka Stojaković, participants in student protests in Serbia. The article's title insinuates that the protests are organized and led by Croats. The publication of passport photos, proving that the Stojaković brothers also hold Croatian citizenship, was meant to support this claim. The article omits the Cyrillic signatures of the Stojaković brothers and the fact that they are of Serbian nationality, having obtained Croatian passports due to their father's birthplace in Krajina (he fled to Serbia in 1995 during Operation Storm).¹ The article was further spread by pro-government tabloids, with support from top state officials, including the President of Serbia, who had already been promoting the narrative that the student blockades were a result of foreign (Croatian) influence.

The brothers' legal representative, attorney Ahmed Delimedžac, announced plans to file criminal charges against the media outlets and urged an immediate response from the Commissioner for the Protection of Citizens, Zoran Pašalić.²

Domestic experts pointed out that the (unauthorized) publication of personal data endangers individual security and violates numerous regulations, including the Criminal Code³ and the Code of Journalists of Serbia.

The Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection, Milan Marinović, stated that he would take appropriate measures within his jurisdiction but clarified that in cases where data processing serves public information purposes, responsibility falls to other regulatory bodies, such as the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications or the Regulatory Body for Electronic Media (REM).⁴ In contrast, Commissioner Pašalić argued that the case should indeed be handled by the Data Protection Commissioner.⁵

Non-governmental organizations within the “Three Freedoms” platform demanded that government representatives immediately cease targeting students, high school students, professors, and other citizens demanding accountability for the deaths of 15 individuals in Novi Sad. Their appeal was also directed at the national broadcaster, Radio Television of Serbia (RTS).

The appeal was as follows:

“For weeks now, we have witnessed aggressive behavior from certain drivers who have driven through crowds of gathered citizens during blockades, without any information on whether anyone has been held accountable for such actions. Today, we saw the most serious attack of this kind, which resulted in severe bodily injuries to a young woman [Sonja Ponjavić]. Although the driver was identified and detained shortly after the incident, this case is merely a consequence of the campaign that regime representatives are waging against students. From the publication of students’ personal documents in regime-affiliated media, to public targeting and discrediting of the goals and motives of student protests and blockades by SNS officials, to physical attacks on students—such as the one at the Faculty of Law in Belgrade, where seven students were injured—the violence young people are being subjected to is unacceptable, and the relevant authorities must demonstrate zero tolerance toward it. The responsibility for fostering this atmosphere also lies with pro-regime media, which target anyone who supports students and protests, as well as RTS, which, in its news programs, portrays students as paid agitators and the actors who support them as terrorists.”⁶

In the second half of January, the pro-government tabloid Informer published a photograph of a student without his consent, accompanied by a derogatory caption: “‘Student’ of African origin at a protest in front of RTS. Now even foreigners are dealing with the Serbian Constitution?!⁷

The targeted student responded:

“Dear citizens of Serbia, how are you? My name is Ibrahim, and I want to address you regarding the situation that has affected me after participating in student protests. I was in Belgrade to support our shared goals and

values. However, last night, a newspaper, I think called Informer, without consent, published my photograph from the protest, which is now being widely shared on social media, accompanied by false information about me.”⁸

The students in the blockade issued a statement expressing support for their colleague.⁹

Pro-government media outlets continued their public accusations against students involved in the blockade. Another student’s personal details (full name and place of residence) were revealed. In an interview with TV N1, the student stated that his name was broadcast on TV Informer by the editor-in-chief of the media outlet, after which he began receiving numerous threats. The threats were reported to the relevant authorities.¹⁰

According to data published in late January, pro-government tabloids were forced to remove over 100 articles that month after foreign companies hosting their websites were informed of the content of the hosted articles - namely that they contained photos of students’ personal documents, personal data, alleged health information and other.¹¹

Former editors and contributors of Student, the official publication of the University of Belgrade, expressed full support for their young colleagues who “are conducting a public lesson in the streets and university halls across Serbia, demanding truth, justice, and accountability.”¹²

The Serbian Psychological Society strongly condemned the targeting of students in the blockade, stating that it is an ethically and legally unacceptable act. It was noted that “by disclosing either accurate or inaccurate information about a student’s mental status,” there is a clear intent to “discredit a specific individual.”¹³

In order to protect the individual from discreditation, the Higher Court in Belgrade, in a first-instance ruling, issued a temporary measure prohibiting the editor-in-chief of the Informer portal from republishing information about the psychological and physical health of activist Mila Pajić. This includes information regarding psychiatric and consultative medical opinions on her mental state, hospitalization, and psychological instability. For the same rea-

son, the editor-in-chief of the Informer online portal is also prohibited from labeling Mila Pajić as an “anti-Serb,” someone who makes “anti-Serbian statements,” “celebrates Operation Storm,” or is in an emotional relationship with her professor, Dinko Gruhonjić.¹⁴

Employment Terminations in the Media Following Support for Student Protests

The association for encouragement and development of citizens, Osnažene (Empowered), announced that it had severed ties with ELLE Serbia magazine due to the dismissal of web editor Tara Đukić after she expressed support for student protests. ELLE Serbia’s publisher denied the allegations, stating that her contract was terminated following a regular six-month evaluation of editorial teams, which indicated a significant decline in her work performance.¹⁵

The European Federation of Journalists and its Serbian affiliates confirmed that the journalist had been criticized for her article on student protests, even though it was approved by the editor-in-chief. In the notice they published, it is stated that there was never any talk of the journalist performing poorly, on the contrary, she was given a salary increase as recognition for her successful journalistic work. The federation and other journalist associations in Serbia pledged to send a letter to the magazine’s management, detailing the information they possessed regarding the incident.¹⁶

Journalist Vojislava Crnjanski Spasojević, from the daily newspaper Večernje novosti, informed the public that her employment was terminated after she posted a photo on her Instagram profile from a protest organized in front of the Constitutional Court of Serbia.

About ten days before she was officially notified that, “due to technological, economic, and organizational changes at the employer, there was no longer a need for [her] position,” the journalist had publicly distanced herself on Instagram from the publication of students Lazar and Luka Stojaković’s personal documents on the Novosti portal. The official decision stated that the employer had conducted a detailed analysis of her work performance and concluded that she had achieved the lowest results. However, according to the journalist, the company’s management did not consult either her editors or the editorial board when assessing her work or the needs of the newsroom.

She added that she had never been warned about any issues regarding her work. She also reminded the public that she is a recipient of the “Journalist of the Year” award, as well as multiple editorial board awards for individual articles, the most recent of which she received in December 2024.¹⁷ The Independent Journalists’ Association of Serbia (NUNS) requested a comment from Večernje novosti, but no response was received.¹⁸

Journalist Vojislava Crnjanski Spasojević is not the only journalist whose employment at Novosti was terminated. According to the Union of Journalists and Media Workers of Serbia SO Novosti (SINOS), her colleague was also dismissed because she had posted a photo of herself at the student and civic protests on social media a few days earlier. SINOS has taken the position that they will not disclose the colleague’s name in order to avoid any pressure that she and her parents might be subjected to. “In this case, as well as the previous one, SINOS will inform the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ),” the union stated in its announcement.

Relevant media and journalist associations have expressed their support for their colleagues.¹⁹

Open letter from RTS journalist Milan Srdić and the request from the Union of Production and Technical Workers employed at RTS addressed to the main editor of the news program, Nenad Lj. Stefanović

RTS journalist Milan Srdić sent an open letter to Nenad Lj. Stefanović, the main editor of the public media service’s news program. The reason for his public appeal to his colleague via the social media platform Facebook was his dissatisfaction with how the media company he works for – which is a public media service for the citizens – reports on the student protests whose voices are also heard within their premises: “Does your stomach react when you hear the noise of 55,000 people in front of your house?” the journalist questioned in his open letter.²⁰

Due to inadequate reporting on the student protests and the inability for students’ voices to be heard on RTS, the Union of Production and Technical Workers employed at RTS also directed a request to the main editor of the news program.²¹



Security experts at Google confirm the findings of the report “Digital Prison - Surveillance and Repression of Civil Society in Serbia”

Jelena Sesar, a researcher for the Balkans and the European Union at [Amnesty International](#), stated to the portal Cenzolovka that security experts at Google confirmed the findings from the analysis published by Amnesty International on December 16, 2024. (More about the analysis in the [Monitoring of the Media Scene in Serbia for December 2024](#).)

Security experts at Google identified a significant number of additional compromised devices and removed spyware from them.²²

Jelena Sesar confirmed that Amnesty International is not in contact with the relevant prosecutor’s office. She emphasized the importance of institutions such as the Protector of Citizens and the Commissioner for the Protection of Personal Data initiating control procedures ex officio to determine whether there has been illegal conduct to the detriment of citizens.²³

The company Cellebrite contacted Amnesty International in a letter expressing concern about the published report. They committed to investigating the findings of the report, and if it is shown that there were abuses of Celleb-

rite tools in Serbia, they would be ready to suspend or revoke the licenses of all agencies involved in the abuse.²⁴

According to Jelena Sesar, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway also expressed great concern regarding the information that Amnesty International has uncovered. Amnesty International is aware that Norwegian authorities and the Ministry of the Interior have held several discussions, and that the Government of Norway has requested that UNOPS in Serbia investigate possible misuse (UNOPS was responsible for procurement on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior of Serbia, for which funds from the Norwegian donation were used).²⁵

Threats and Pressure

In the first week of the New Year, the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) expressed deep concern over the frequent threats to journalists and the violation of ethical standards in the media.²⁶

Threats directed at the editor-in-chief of In Sajder TV, Brankica Stanković

Following the announcement of a program about Zvezdan Terzić, the general director of FK Crvena Zvezda (Red Star), journalist Brankica Stanković received two concerning comments via the social media platform X (formerly Twitter). From the account [omega@m4Pk0](#), she was sent a message: "Beee ninety twoooo, police showwww, they will lie to you this Thursdayyy," and from the account [Nikola @Dzoni_Todor](#): "She will lie to you this Thursday BRANKICA THE W***E."

In May 2022, at a basketball game between the clubs Partizan and Budućnost, hooligans shouted the same slogans. As early as 2009, Brankica Stanković was targeted due to the investigative series "The Powerlessness of the State," broadcast on Television B92. The theme of the series was the activities of fan groups from various clubs. The danger she was exposed to led to this investigative journalist being assigned 24-hour police protection, which was a part of Brankica Stanković's daily life for the next seven years.

In mid-December of the same year, at a football match between the clubs Partizan and Shakhtar, a group of hooligans chanted from the stands: "You are dangerous like a snake, you will end up like Ćuruvija, Brankica you wh**e." They waved a blow-up doll that was meant to represent the journalist.

They threw the doll, kicked it, and stabbed it with a pole. Because of this incident, Miloš Radosavljević Kimi, one of the leaders of the Partizan fan group called Alcatraz, was sentenced to 16 months in prison (10 months for the criminal offense of Endangering Security, and six for the committed criminal offense of Violent Behavior). The leader of the fan group Shadows, Goran Klještan, and a member of that group, Aleksandar Perišić, received conditional sentences of 10 months in prison, with a verification period of four years. Milan Gudurić was sentenced to a conditional prison term of one year, with a verification period of five years.²⁷ All three were convicted of endangering the journalist's safety.

Threats directed at Radmilo Marković, journalist of BIRN and Vreme

Through a direct message on the social media platform X, for the second time, Radmilo Marković received disturbing messages. From the account @Viktor063162296, he was sent: "... I'll f**k you in the mouth, bastard. Since you get f**ked in the ass, try a little in the mouth too. Ask your mommy how that is, she's so pathetic and now we have a mistake of nature," and "Open your mouth so I can tell you who the supreme commander of the loyalists is. You'll find out when the time comes, you autonomous commune-ustasha dog." Marković also received disturbing messages in April 2024.

Threatening messages sent to the Slavko Ćuruvija Foundation

In early December, a threatening message was sent to the Slavko Ćuruvija Foundation via the social media platform Facebook: "AND WHY DOES THIS CONCERN YOU FROM ĆURUVIJA? BE CAREFUL, THERE ARE MORE EASTER SUNDAYS TO COME, GILDED HANDS." (More in the [Monitoring of the Media Scene for December 2024](#).) A month later, from the same profile, new disturbing messages were sent: "May the hands of the one who struck Ćuruvija be gilded." The threats were urgently reported to the Special Prosecutor's Office for High-Tech Crime.²⁸

Harassment of the editor and journalist of the portal Alternativa, Ana Marija Ivković

Journalist Ana Marija Ivković reported the harassment she experienced while walking in the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica. An unknown man, as she stated, approached her in English and asked whether she was Serbian or Albanian. After that, he requested her identification card. When she refused to give him her personal documents, she asked him if he was a policeman. Responding in the negative, he continued to follow her. He was persistent and only gave up after the journalist took out her mobile phone to record him.²⁹

Ana Marija Ivković reported the incident to the Kosovo Police, who took the position that there were no elements for action but informed her that they would work on identifying the man who followed her.³⁰

Threats directed at journalists of the weekly Radar and the portal Glas Šumadije

The editorial office of the weekly Radar reported threatening comments that they continuously receive from the same IP address, almost every month. Through a Facebook profile named Han Stjenice, threatening messages were sent to the editorial office of the portal Glas Šumadije via the Messenger app, which they urgently reported to the relevant prosecutor's office through NUNS.³¹

Publication of personal data of the journalist from Telegram.hr, Mateja Devčić

In the TV Informer program, Vojislav Šešelj published the personal data (as well as the address of the hotel where he stayed) of the journalist from the portal Telegram.hr, Mateja Devčić, claiming that the aforementioned journalist is active as one of the foreign "trainers" of the protest leaders. The network Safe-Journalists condemned the manipulations that the Serbian authorities, starting from the very top, use against journalists and students during protests in Serbia.



Targeting Zoran Kesić, journalist, TV host and comedian

In early January, Veran Matić, a member of the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists and president of the governing board of the Association of Independent Electronic Media, filed a criminal and misdemeanor complaint due to a multitude of graffiti (written in a short period of time) targeting journalist Zoran Kesić. In the complaint, the filer noted that he counted at least 200 graffiti just along the stretch from Slavija to Kalemegdan in Belgrade. The graffiti were written in numerous locations in the municipalities of Vračar, Stari Grad, and Novi Beograd, and varied in size from smaller, stenciled graffiti to larger ones spanning several square meters. Among other places, they were inscribed on the building of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Andrić's Endowment, the Protocol building, the Yugoslav Drama Theatre, on both sides of the Terazije Tunnel, in front of Zoran Kesić's residence, as well as in front of his parents' house.

The complaint points out that the act was obviously carried out in a group since a large number of graffiti were written in a short period at multiple locations. The message of the graffiti is as follows: "1.11.2024. Zoran Kesić, Show must go on!" The message alludes to Kesić's performance held in Sarajevo on November 1 of last year, the same day Novi Sad Railway Station canopy collapsed killing 15 and injuring 2 citizens, when he stated: "Show must go on for

those of us who remain; we mourn the victims but also insist on accountability.”

The first graffiti were noticed on December 26, 2024, and Kesić himself reported them to the police. ANEM’s complaint followed due to the fact that the relevant authorities had not taken any “visible” action to prevent the “destruction of property,” “defacing the city,” and the harassment of Zoran Kesić, his family, his team of associates, as well as other journalists and media workers. The police announced that they were “working on identifying” the individuals who participated in the graffiti writing. Two weeks after ANEM filed the criminal complaint, Kesić received a summons to appear at the relevant prosecutor’s office.³² In a statement for Danas, the responsible ministry expressed the view that the content of the graffiti does not constitute a threat or pressure, and that their reaction in this particular case is not necessary.³³

The citizens’ association “Krokodil” organized an action to remove the graffiti; however, new ones appeared over the painted-over graffiti. Zoran Kesić continued to inform the prosecutor’s office about the evidence, but by the time of writing this report, no individual had been identified or prosecuted. Journalistic and media associations condemned the targeting of Zoran Kesić and demanded an urgent response from the relevant institutions.³⁴ ANEM called on citizens to get involved in the action of removing graffiti and reporting individuals they find writing them.³⁵

Threats directed at the editorial office of the portal Magločistač

Through the Facebook Messenger app, from the account Ika Mijatov, the editorial office of the portal Magločistač received death threats: “f**ck your families we’ll kill you”. The message was immediately reported to the Special Prosecutor’s Office for High-Tech Crime in Belgrade. The editorial members were informed that the case is being handled.³⁶

The middle finger of the Minister of Finance

After Minister of Finance Siniša Mali stood up to pay the bill in a restaurant, guests began shouting: “Long live the students!” Restaurant staff joined the guests in shouting. The minister’s response was to show them his middle finger. Journalist Danica Ilić approached the minister, introduced herself, said she was a journalist, and in that capacity asked him for a statement. According to her, Siniša Mali snatched the phone from her hands and left the restaurant.

The journalist followed him outside, where the minister asked why she was filming him. The journalist reminded him that he is a public official in a public place and that she, as a journalist, has the right to ask him what he thinks about his inappropriate gesture. As they walked down the street, the minister, according to the journalist, was holding her phone. After a brief discussion about what a public function is and what journalism entails, Siniša Mali dropped the phone into a flowerpot.³⁷

Threatening stickers “The Fate of Journalists”

In early January, stickers appeared in Novi Sad featuring a skeleton with a noose beneath the words: “The Fate of Journalists.” The stickers were signed by the so-called Zentrop (in the description of their Instagram profile, they describe themselves as “a community of Serbian revolutionary nationalists.” A year ago, they held a gathering in Belgrade dedicated to Milan Nedić, a general from World War II and chief of staff of the Royal Yugoslav Army).³⁸ According to the portal Nova.rs, the stickers were mainly affixed to traffic signs and traffic lights.

The case of Jelena Spasić, journalist of the daily Kurir

Due to threatening messages directed at journalist Jelena S. Spasić in late September 2024, two men were detained for 48 hours. One of them, previously convicted of murder, was placed under house arrest. At the end of January, this individual violated the restriction on leaving his residence, and law enforcement could not locate him. This was the third case of violation of the restriction on leaving the residence recorded over the past year.

The journalist only learned by chance, while on a winter vacation with her minor children, that a dangerous individual was at large, and on February 10, she was informed that the individual had been located and placed in custody for 30 days.³⁹

The Journalists’ Association of Serbia (UNS) requested an urgent security assessment for the journalist.⁴⁰

More on the case can be found in the Monitoring of the Media Scene in Serbia for [September](#) and [October](#) 2024.

Threats directed at the authors of the podcast “Dobar, loš, zao” (Good, bad, evil)

Nenad Kulačin and Marko Vidojković received threats in the comments section below a YouTube video of their podcast episode. They were told that they would “be shaved dry so they would whine better.” In another comment, it was stated that they should be thrown “into a meat grinder and made into soap.” The threats were reported to the Special Prosecutor’s Office for High-Tech Crime. Before filing the report, the second comment was removed.

Relevant journalistic associations, media organizations, and associations strongly condemned the threats and demanded a swift response from the competent institutions.^{41 42 43}

The Case of Dinko Gruhonjić

Dinko Gruhonjić, an associate professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, journalist, and program director of the Independent Journalists’ Association of Vojvodina (NDNV), sent a letter to the top officials of Croatia requesting protection for his son, who works and studies in Zagreb. Gruhonjić sent the letter because the Serbian ambassador to Croatia made a post on Facebook that, according to Gruhonjić, contained falsehoods about his son. This information continued to be published in pro-government tabloids.⁴⁴

Harsh treatment of the TV N1 crew – cameraman Dragan Vukelić and journalist Ksenija Pavkov by the gendarmerie

TV N1 journalist Ksenija Pavkov and cameraman Dragan Vukelić were physically prevented by the gendarmerie from reporting on the police action to break up a blockade in the Rumenka settlement near Novi Sad. According to Ksenija Pavkov, a member of the intervention police grabbed the cameraman’s arm and pushed him.



Harsh police and gendarmerie interventions in front of Novi Sad City Hall

Although they repeatedly identified themselves as journalists, Dragan Prica, a journalist for Radio O21, and Ksenija Pavkov, a journalist for TV N1, were pulled and pushed by police and gendarmerie officers. Aleksandar Latas, a journalist for the newspaper Danas, was threatened with being “tied up.” TV Nova S cameraman Darko Eker was pulled by his backpack, which contained his TV equipment. Journalist Žarko Bogosavljević was thrown to the ground – all of this while they were reporting from the blockade of Novi Sad City Hall, according to an NDNV statement.⁴⁵

Private security prevented journalists from reporting from the Valjevo City Assembly

Although they had been formally invited to the event, private security prevented journalists from reporting from the press conference of the Svanuće (Dawn) councilor group in the Valjevo City Assembly. At one point, a cameraman from Valjevo Plus TV was even pushed. After opposition councilors insisted, journalists were allowed to enter the assembly. Journalist associations reacted to this incident⁴⁶, and the case was recorded in the SafeJournalists network database.⁴⁷

Only selected media invited to the IT equipment handover at Matica Srpska
The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) protested the Serbian government's decision to hand over IT equipment to Matica Srpska in the presence of only selected media. The event was attended by Serbian Prime Minister Miloš Vučević and Minister of Information and Telecommunications Dejan Ristić. According to UNS sources, only journalists from public broadcasters NS Uži-vo and Novosadska Televizija, and the Tanjug news agency were invited. UNS requested clarification from the Serbian government's Media Cooperation Office but received no response. The association called on the office to invite all media outlets to events of public importance.⁴⁸

Anniversaries of journalist murders in Kosovo

On January 11, twenty-six years had passed since the murder of Enver Maloku, a journalist, writer, and head of the Kosovo Information Center (KIC). Maloku was killed in the afternoon, just a few meters from his apartment, on the ground floor of a building in Sunčev Breg. He died shortly afterward in a hospital in Pristina. To this day, his killers have not been identified.⁴⁹

II IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING REGULATIONS

Regulatory Body for Electronic Media (REM)

The agreement on the proposers of candidates for REM Council members took place on January 20 in the premises of the National Assembly. The process resulted in a list of 18 candidates, divided into nine categories. Due to non-compliance with the Law on Electronic Media, controversial proposers and candidates were not eliminated but instead had their candidacies confirmed. After the agreement, a list of proposed candidates was formed.

A public hearing for the agreed candidates was held on January 23 before the Parliamentary Committee on Culture and Information. Candidates Dušan Aleksić, Aleksandra Krstić, and Saša Mirković requested that the Committee “annul the selection process for REM Council members in seven out of nine categories.”⁵⁰ Five days later, seven out of the eighteen shortlisted candidates (Saša Mirković, Rodoljub Šabić, Dubravka Valić Nedeljković, Aleksandra Krstić, Dušan Aleksić, Željko Hubač and Muhedin Fijuljanin) withdrew their candidacies, preventing the Serbian Assembly from legally electing the Regulatory Council. Consequently, “in two out of nine proposer groups, there will be no candidates, while in three, there will be only one candidate each, meaning that in only four categories, MPs will be able to choose between two candidates.”⁵¹

The outcome of the process is not surprising, given that ANEM had already officially objected at the end of December, pointing out illegalities in the selection process for the REM Council.⁵² Various organizations, including Civic Initiatives⁵³, citizen associations, journalist and media associations,⁵⁴ the National Convention on the European Union,⁵⁵ the Faculty of Dramatic Arts,⁵⁶ and numerous individuals, publicly highlighted these irregularities.

Considering the numerous violations of the Law on Electronic Media, it is evident that the ongoing REM Council member selection process should be halted, and a new process should be initiated.

Project Co-Financing

On January 1, the [Regulation on the Establishment and Content of the Unified Information System for the Implementation and Monitoring of Project Co-Financing in the Field of Public Information \(JIS\)](#) came into effect.

Representatives of journalist and media associations expressed concerns about certain provisions of the regulation.⁵⁷ When the regulation was adopted in December, ANEM requested clarifications from the ministry regarding the identified irregularities and inconsistencies. However, once again, no response was provided.⁵⁸

An online portal for the Unified Information System (JIS) was launched on the official website of the Ministry. The platform's rollout occurred in two phases. Phase one required mandatory data input by relevant institutions, competition-issuing bodies, and competition participants. They were instructed to appoint one or more authorized individuals to enter data and documents on the JIS web portal. Although the Ministry initially set a 15-day deadline for registration, the actual timeframe was shortened because the JIS became operational two days later than announced.

Phase two ensured functionality for publishing calls for project funding applications and allowed media organizations to submit applications for co-financing.⁵⁹

Numerous issues were observed on the portal, including spelling errors, missing audio in tutorials, poor software solutions, and unclear instructions. The most significant issue was the alteration of criteria after the process had already begun, forcing users to submit additional documentation and evidence that had not been required initially.

III NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST SLAPP LAWSUITS (STRATEGIC LAWSUITS AGAINST PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)

The organization [Human Rights Watch](#) has recorded an increase in the number of SLAPP lawsuits in Serbia. It is evident that most lawsuits are directed against the media, aiming to exert pressure on them to avoid covering certain topics. The report highlights KRIK, which has disclosed that a significant number of SLAPP lawsuits have been filed against them (a total of 14 by September).⁶⁰

Jelena Tanasković, former minister, director of Serbian Railway Infrastructure, and one of the accused in the case of the collapsed canopy in Novi Sad, filed two lawsuits in January from house arrest against the editor-in-chief, journalists of the KRIK portal, and the association that founded the media outlet.

The first lawsuit was filed over an investigative article titled [“Tanasković was not investigated for financial crime thanks to her friend’s husband, police chief Cmolić,”](#) in which the journalist examines the (lack of) action by relevant institutions regarding a criminal complaint⁶¹ filed against Tanasković by a company where she previously served as director.

The second lawsuit was filed by the former minister over an article in which the journalist informed readers that Jelena Tanasković had sued them over the aforementioned article.

In each lawsuit, the former minister is demanding 1,000,000 dinars as compensation for non-material damages due to defamation and harm to her reputation.

KRIK editor Stevan Dojčinović commented on the lawsuits as follows: “This move clearly shows that Tanasković is conducting SLAPP proceedings against us, meaning she wants to bury us in lawsuits so that we stop writing about her.”⁶²

Support:

This project is funded by
the European Union



**#EY
ЗА ТЕБЕ**

B | T | D The Balkan Trust
for Democracy

A PROJECT OF THE GERMAN MARSHALL FUND

 **Norway**

Lead

Partners:



Centar za razvoj lokalnih medija

INS AJDER

This publication was released with the financial support of the European Union, Norway, and the Balkan Trust for Democracy, a project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. The content is the sole responsibility of the Association of Independent Electronic Media and does not necessarily reflect the official views of the European Union, the Government of Norway, the German Marshall Fund, or the Balkan Trust for Democracy.

Endnotes

- 1 [„Novosti“ ugrožavaju bezbednost studenata](#), article published on January 3, 2025 at N1 portal.
- 2 [Advokat studenata: Krivične prijave protiv svih medija koji su objavili podatke iz pasoša](#), article published on January 3, 2025 at N1 portal.
- 3 Unauthorized collection of personal data
Article 146
(1) Whoever unlawfully obtains, communicates to another, or uses for an unintended purpose personal data collected, processed, and used under the law shall be punished by a fine or imprisonment of up to one year.
(2) The penalty from paragraph 1 of this article shall also apply to anyone who collects citizens' personal data contrary to the law or uses such collected data.
(3) If the act from paragraph 1 of this article is committed by an official in the performance of their duty, they shall be punished by imprisonment of up to three years.
- 4 [„Sramno novinarstvo, asocira na poternicu“: Mogu li Novosti krivično da odgovaraju zbog objavljivanja ličnih podataka braće Stojaković?](#), author: Željko Bošnjaković, article published on January 3, 2025 at Danas portal.
- 5 [Pašalić: Slučaj pasoša studenata koji su objavljeni u medijima nije u mojoj nadležnosti](#), article published on January 3, 2025 at Cenzolovka portal, source: RTS.
- 6 [Platforma Tri slobode traži od predstavnika vlasti da prekinu sa govorom mržnje i progonom studenata i studentkinja](#), article published on January 16, 2025 at Slavko Ćuruvija Foundation portal.
- 7 [Studenti u blokadi osudili rasističke izjave tabloida i Jelene Karleuše](#), article published on January 19, 2025 at Danas portal.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 [Prorežimski mediji objavili identitet i mesto gde živi: Studentu Milošu su počele da stižu jezive pretnje](#), author: Ksenija Pavkov, report published on January 21, 2025 at N1 portal.
- 11 [Tabloidi zloupotrebljavaju čak i mentalno zdravlje za omalovažavanje studenata i kritičara vlasti](#), author: Danica Đokić, article published on January 23, 2025 at Cenzolovka portal.
- 12 <https://magazinstudent.rs/2025/01/28/pravo-na-pobunu-podrška-studentima-od-bivših-studentovaca/>, letter published on January 28, 2025 at Student portal.
- 13 [Društvo psihologa Srbije najoštrije osuđuje pojavu targetiranja studenata u blokadi na bilo koji način](#).
- 14 <https://yih.rs/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/270125-YIHR-Visi-sud-privremena-mera-Mila-Pajic.pdf>
- 15 [Urednica dobila otkaz u ELLE: Izdavač demantuje da je razlog podrška studentima](#), article published on January 15, 2025 at N1 portal.
- 16 [Serbia: IFJ and EFJ sound alarm about press restrictions and dismissals](#), article published on January 31, 2025.
- 17 [Otkaz novinarki Novosti Vojislavi Crnjanski Spasojević zbog fotografije sa protesta](#), author: A. R., article published on January 21, 2025 at Danas portal.
- 18 [„Novosti“ ćute o otpuštanju Vojislave Crnjanski Spasojević](#), article published on January 22, 2025 at NUNS portal.
- 19 [ANEM: Eksplozivna atmosfera zahteva efikasniji odgovor institucija](#), statement published on January 27, 2025 at Cenzolovka portal, source: ANEM.
- 20 [Otvoreno pismo novinara RTS-a uredniku informativnog programa](#), article published on January 20, 2025 at N1 portal.
- 21 [Sindikatski zahtev od Nenada Lj. Stefanovića da naloži izveštavanje sa studentskog protesta](#), article published on January 22, 2025 at NUNS portal.
- 22 [Upotreba špijunskog softvera nastavljena i posle otkrića Amnestija da policija i BIA nadziru aktiviste i novinare](#), author: Jelena L. Petković, article published on January 31, 2025 at Cenzolovka portal.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 [NUNS: Zaštita novinara, privatnosti i novinarska etika pale na ispitu u novoj godini](#), statement published on January 4, 2025 at NUNS portal.
- 27 [Trojica oslobođena za pretnje Brankici Stanković](#), article published on October 9, 2015 at NUNS portal.

- 28 [Pretnje smrću i fizičkoj bezbednosti novinara, Slavko Ćuruvija Fondacija](#), Beograd, 13.01.2025, article published on January 13, 2025 at SafeJournalists portal.
- 29 [Novinarka Ana Marija Ivković sa Kosova prijavila uznemiravanje, policija kaže da nema elemenata za otvaranje slučaja](#), article published on January 9, 2025 at N1 portal.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 [Pretnje Glasu Šumadije prijavljene tužilaštvu](#), article published on January 27, 2025 at RES PUBLICA portal.
- 32 [Zbog ispisivanja pretećih grafita i krivične prijave, voditelja pozvalo tužilaštvo na razgovor: Jasan politički potpis u kampanji protiv Kesića](#), author: Ivana Nikoletić, article published on January 13, 2025 at Danas portal.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 [NUNS: Zaštita novinara, privatnosti i novinarska etika pale na ispitu u novoj godini](#), statement published on January 4, 2025 at NUNS portal.
- 35 [ANEM uputio MUPu prekršajnu i krivičnu prijavu za ispisivanje uznemirujućih grafita u kojima se targetira Zoran Kesić, ali i ruži Beograd](#), statement published on January 4, 2025 at NUNS portal.
- 36 [Redakciji portala Magločistač upućene pretnje smrću, slučaj prijavljen nadležnim institucijama](#), article published on January 22, 2025 at Magločistač portal.
- 37 [Gosti u restoranu skandirali Malom “živeli studenti”, on im pokazao srednji prst](#), article published on January 25, 2025 at N1 portal.
- 38 [Nove pretnje novinarima: U Novom Sadu osvanule fotografije kostura sa omčom za vešanje i porukom kakva ih sudbina čeka](#), article published on January 6, 2025 at Nova portal.
- 39 [Veran Matić: Ugrožena je bezbednost Jelene S. Spasić beskvom Saše Mirovića iz kućnog pritvora](#), article published on January 9, 2025 at Kurir portal.
- 40 [UNS: MUP da hitno uradi ponovnu procenu bezbednosti Jelene S. Spasić](#), statement published on January 9, 2025 at UNS portal.
- 41 [Pretnje smrću i fizičkoj sigurnosti novinara, Nenad Kulačin i Marko Vidojković, Beograd, 01.01.2025](#), published on January 1, 2025 at SafeJournalists portal.
- 42 [Kulačin i Vidojković dobili jezive pretnje, pominje se i mašina za mlevenje mesa](#), statement published on January 3, 2025 at NUNS portal.
- 43 [UNS: Da Tužilaštvo za visokotehnoški kriminal pronađe ko pretili Nenadu Kulačinu i Marku Vidojkoviću](#), statement published on January 4, 2025 at UNS portal.
- 44 [HND: Pozivamo hrvatske vlasti da apel našega kolege Gruhonjića shvate ozbiljno](#), statement published on January 8, 2025 at HND portal.
- 45 [U akciji žandarmerije kod Rumenke odgurnuti snimatelj i reporterka N1](#), article published on January 25, 2025 at Autonomija portal.
- 46 [UNS: Gradska kuća u Valjevu mora biti otvorena za novinare](#), statement published on January 24, 2025 at UNS portal.
- 47 [Stvarni napadi na novinare, snimatelj TV Valjevo Plus, Valjevo, 23.01.2025](#), published on January 23, 2025 at SafeJournalists portal.
- 48 [UNS: Vlada Srbije da se ravnopravno odnosi prema medijima](#), statement published on January 3, 2025 at UNS portal.
- 49 [Istraživanje UNS-a o ubijenim i oteetim novinarima na Kosovu :: Interesi obaveštajaca upleteni u istragu ubistva novinara Envera Maljokua](#), article published on June 4, 2018 at UNS portal.
- 50 [„Poništiti proces izbora članova Saveta REM u 7 od 9 kategorija“: Zahtev kandidata na javnom slušanju](#), article published on January 23, 2025 at Cenzolovka portal, sources: N1, FoNet.
- 51 [Sedam kandidata povuklo kandidature, novi Savet REM-a po zakonu ne može da bude izabran](#), article published on January 28, 2025 at Cenzolovka portal.
- 52 [Prigovor na listu kandidata i predlagača za izbor Saveta Regulatornog tela za elektronske medije](#), article published on January 28, 2025 at Javni servis portal.
- 53 [Vlast krši zakone da održi kontrolu nad RTS-om](#), statement published on January 17, 2025 at Civic Initiatives portal.
- 54 [Ozbiljne nepravilnosti, sukobi interesa i politički pritisci tokom procesa izbora kandidata za Savet REM-a](#), article published on January 20, 2025 at Cenzolovka portal.

- 55 [Nacionalni konvent upozorava na probleme u izboru novog sastava REM-a](#), article published on January 21, 2025 at Cenzolovka portal.
- 56 [SAOPŠTENJE FAKULTETA DRAMSKIH UMETNOSTI POVODOM IZBORA ČLANOVA/ICA REM-A](#), statement published on January 21, 2025 at FDU portal.
- 57 [Da li će izmenjeni Pravilnik o projektnom sufinansiranju unaprediti raspodelu novca medijima – šta kažu medijski stručnjaci](#), author: Milica Mihajlović, article published on February 3, 2025 at UNS portal.
- 58 [Media monitoring for December 2024](#), published at Bezbedni novinari portal.
- 59 [POČINJE SA RADOM JEDINSTVENI INFORMACIONI SISTEM ZA SUFINANSIRANJE MEDIJSKIH PROJEKATA](#)
- 60 [Hjuman rajts voč: Napadi na novinare među značajnijim problemima u Srbiji u 2024](#), article published on January 16, 2025 at NUNS portal.
- 61 A criminal complaint has been filed due to the existence of grounds for suspicion that Tanasković and three other persons, in complicity, committed the extended criminal offense of Abuse of Position of Responsible Person under Article 234, paragraph 3, and the criminal offense of Forgery of a Document under Article 355, paragraph 2 of the Criminal Code. The investigation published by the defendants refers specifically to the outcome of that criminal complaint.
- 62 [Tanasković ponovo tužila KRIK – jer smo objavili da nas je tužila](#), article published on February 6, 2025 at KRIK portal.