



# **BEZBEDNI NOVINARI**

  
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Zoomer journalist Darko Gligorijević released from custody (photo: Gavriilo Andrić)

## **MONITORING OF THE MEDIA SCENE IN SERBIA FOR JUNE 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.

This Monitoring Report was prepared by expert monitoring team from the “Savović” Law Office in cooperation with ANEM.

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# I FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

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## **Anniversary of the Murder of Milan Pantić**

June marked the twenty-fourth anniversary of the brutal murder of journalist Milan Pantić, who was attacked from behind and killed in the entrance of his apartment building. On the day of the murder, Pantić was returning home from a grocery store. He died on the spot from multiple blunt force blows to the head. The perpetrators and those who ordered the killing have still not been identified.

Shortly before his death, Pantić had been reporting on issues that are widely believed to have provided the motive for his murder—economic crime and the privatization of the Jagodina Brewery and the Popovac Cement Factory.<sup>1</sup>

In 2021, Veran Matic, Chair of the Commission for Investigating the Murders of Journalists, stated that “there are names of individuals” responsible for Pantić’s murder, but that the prosecution did not have sufficient evidence to file an indictment. According to Matic, the crime scene was contaminated shortly after the murder occurred.<sup>2</sup>

On November 9, 2023, the Organized Crime Prosecutor’s Office returned the case files to the Higher Public Prosecutor’s Office in Jagodina for further action. This development was previously reported in the [February 2024 edition of the Monitoring of the Media Landscape in Serbia](#).

## **Escalation of Attacks on Journalists and the Position of the Committee to Protect Journalists**

[The Committee to Protect Journalists \(CPJ\)](#), an independent nonprofit organization advocating for press freedom worldwide, reacted to the rising number of attacks on journalists in Serbia. Prior to publishing its statement, CPJ sent inquiries to the press office of the Presidency and to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Serbia—none of which were answered.<sup>3</sup>

The CPJ pointed out that protests in Serbia, initially sparked by demands to identify those responsible for the collapse of the Novi Sad railway station on November 1, 2024, had evolved into a broader social movement against corruption and the increasingly authoritarian rule of President Aleksandar Vučić. According to CPJ, journalists are facing an increase in physical assaults, threats, online harassment, smear campaigns, and cyber surveillance—often incited by Vučić’s supporters, government officials, and pro-government media outlets.<sup>4</sup>

## **Resolution on the Escalation of Threats and Persistent Impunity for Attacks on Journalists in Serbia**

The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) adopted the Resolution on the Escalation of Threats and Persistent Impunity for Attacks on Journalists in Serbia. The resolution was submitted by the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (IJAS/NUNS) and the Sectoral Union of Culture, Arts and Media "Independence".

The resolution strongly condemns the ongoing attacks on journalists and the prevailing impunity. Serbian authorities—particularly the Republic Public Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry of Internal Affairs—are urged to act promptly and transparently in all cases of attacks on journalists and to regularly inform the public about these cases. The resolution also calls on the European Union, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, and other international stakeholders to intensify pressure on Serbia to fulfill its obligations under international media freedom standards. Full solidarity is expressed with professional and independent journalists and media organizations in Serbia. The resolution supports efforts by EFJ member organizations to monitor, report, and seek justice in all cases of violations of journalists' rights. It also urges the EFJ Steering Committee to ensure that these issues remain on the agenda of European institutions and are regularly addressed in dialogue with the EU and other relevant actors. Serbian media outlets, including public service broadcasters—especially those receiving public funding and/or operating under foreign licenses—are called upon to respect editorial independence, protect journalists from political interference, and ensure that staffing decisions are not used as a means of repression or to suppress media freedom.



## Meetings of the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists

On June 13, in Belgrade, with the support of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, a meeting of the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists was held with journalists and prosecutors from Belgrade. Representatives of journalistic and media associations pointed out the problems journalists face on a daily basis and the institutions' unwillingness to address them. Particular attention was given to the installation of spyware on the phones of journalists and activists, attacks on journalists and freelance reporters while reporting, and police officers who, although witnesses to such attacks, failed to respond. The participants also discussed the sharp increase in the number of attacks on journalists and other media professionals, and the general erosion of institutions.<sup>5</sup>

Prior to the meeting in Belgrade, a session of the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists was held in Požega, also with the support of the OSCE Mission to Serbia. The meeting was attended by representatives of journalist associations NUNS and UNS, representatives of the media outlets Nova S, N1, Epicentar, Ozon Press, and ANEM, as well as prosecutors from Užice, Čačak, and Požega, and representatives of the police departments of Požega and Užice. The meeting focused on specific cases of endangerment to journalists' safety, in which the police response was inadequate and the prosecutors' response insufficiently effective in terms of prosecuting the perpetrators.<sup>6</sup>

Veljko Lazić from the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Užice presented the results of the proceedings in the case of the attack on TV N1 cameraman Marijan Vučetić in the village of Makovište near Kosjerić. (More on this incident is available in the [Monitoring of the Media Scene in Serbia for May 2025](#).) Following investigative procedures, an indictment proposal was submitted to the Higher Court in Užice for the criminal offense of Violent Behavior at a Public Gathering in conjunction with the offense of Endangering Safety.<sup>7</sup>



Meeting of the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists  
(photo: OSCE/Miroslav Janković)

## Old Photograph, New Campaign

In the second half of June, a malicious media campaign was launched based on the misuse of a photograph by Miroslav Janković (OSCE). The photo was taken at the offices of NDNV in Novi Sad two years ago, during a meeting of the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists. The meeting, organized by ANEM within the project System of Violence Prevention and Protection of Journalists, was supported by the European Commission through the Support Program for Independent Media in Serbia. The photograph features Slobodan Josimović, Public Prosecutor at the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Novi Sad; Boris Majlat, Chief Prosecutor for High-Tech Crime; and journalist Dinko Gruhonjić.<sup>8</sup>



Prosecutors Majlat and Josimović with journalist Gruhonjić (photo: OSCE/Miroslav Janković)

In addition to Veljko Milić and Veran Matić, representatives of NDNV and ANEM, the meeting was attended by representatives of media associations, as well as the following members of the Republic Public Prosecutor's Office: Boris Majlat (Special Prosecutor's Office for High-Tech Crime in Belgrade), Ksenija Bašić and Slobodan Josimović (Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Novi Sad), Dragan Crnomarković (Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Novi Sad), and Branka Milosavljević (Appellate Public Prosecutor's Office in Novi Sad). Also present were representatives of the Novi Sad Police Department, Žarko Rokvić and Zoran Alan, as well as local journalists who had experienced various forms of violence and threats in their work. Miroslav Janković, the author of the mentioned photograph, also actively participated in the meeting. Upon conclusion of the meeting, the key information presented—as well as the photographs taken—were made publicly available.<sup>9</sup>

In the campaign that reframed the event based on the misused photograph, it was claimed that the photo was “not just a casual snapshot” but rather “an introduction to a deep organizational scheme in which the judiciary, especially the prosecution, instead of serving the citizens, is used to advance Western interests.”<sup>10</sup> Articles published during the campaign leveled numerous accusations against members of the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists: journalist Veran Matić; Branko Stamenković (Public Prosecutor at the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office); Boris Majlat (Head of the Special Department for High-Tech Crime at the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade); Slobodan Josimović (Prosecutor at the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Novi Sad); and journalist Dinko Gruhonjić.

Members of the Working Group from journalistic associations issued a statement saying that the campaign is based on blatant falsehoods and unfounded fabrications, and is filled with hate speech. They called on the OSCE, as an observer in the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists, and the European Commission, which has monitored the Group's work for years, to protest by all available means in order to stop the orchestrated attack.<sup>11</sup>



## A New Media Association?

An advertisement published in the daily newspaper *Informer* announced that 135 pro-government journalists are calling for the establishment of a new association, the “Association of Journalists of Serbia” (ANS). The signatories include journalists from tabloids such as *Informer*, *Alo*, *Kurir*, *Srpski Telegraf*, *Novosti*, and pro-government media including *Pink*, *Prva*, *B92*, *Happy*, *Studio B*, *Euronews Serbia*, and others. Among the signatories is also an editor from the RTS daily news program.<sup>12</sup>

Reacting to NUNS’s decision to, in line with its established practice during mass protests, open its premises to fellow reporters during the “See You on Vidovdan” protest to facilitate their journalistic work, ANS issued a [statement](#) sharply condemning what it described as a “scandalous decision” that amounts to “logistical support to the organizers of political unrest, blockades, and violence—who are increasingly being referred to as blockade-terrorists.”

The ANS statement reads:

With this decision, NUNS has not only sided with the organizers of destabilization and unconstitutional actions, but has effectively become an accomplice in the attempt to paralyze the state, all under the guise of defending media freedom. Never before has NUNS shown the slightest interest in ‘opening its doors’ to colleagues during major national events—but apparently, the comfort and refreshment of journalists becomes a concern only when the target is the Republic of Serbia.

Domestic and international journalist associations and networks responded to the unfounded accusations made against NUNS. The ANS statement was strongly condemned by the SafeJournalists network, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), ANEM, and others,<sup>13</sup> who demanded an immediate end to the dissemination of hate speech that endangers the safety of NUNS members.



## II ATTACKS, THREATS, AND PRESSURE

### Police Detention of Zoomer Portal Journalist Darko Gligorijević

In early June, journalist Darko Gligorijević was placed in police custody on suspicion of having violated Article 7 of the Law on Public Order and Peace during an incident that occurred in the Student City area on June 5.<sup>14</sup>

Gligorijević had recorded the incident on his mobile phone in his capacity as a journalist, and the footage was later posted on the Instagram account of the Zoomer portal. The following afternoon, without a legally required summons, officers from the Ministry of Interior (MUP) arrived at the newsroom and took Gligorijević to the police station. According to the newsroom, four plainclothes officers entered the premises. None of them identified themselves, and only one displayed a badge. They insisted that the journalist accompany them immediately and bring his phone. Although no warrant was shown, the phone was later seized on the basis of what the journalist was told was a verbal order from the prosecutor's office.<sup>15</sup>

After giving a statement as a citizen, Gligorijević left the New Belgrade police station. Half an hour later, his lawyer Nina Nicović—who had been present during his questioning—received a phone call instructing both her and Gligorijević to return so he could amend his statement. Upon returning, he was placed in custody under suspicion of having disturbed public order and peace by yelling and shouting.<sup>16</sup> The next day, he was questioned before a misdemeanor judge and released, with the information that the case would proceed through regular misdemeanor proceedings.<sup>17</sup> His phone was not returned, as authorities stated they were awaiting forensic analysis.

Regarding the accusation of yelling and shouting, Gligorijević told Raskrikavanje: “It’s physically impossible for me to be yelling and filming at the same time, because in that case I would be the loudest person in the video—since I’m holding the phone here (he gestures high above his head).”<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the obvious procedural violations during Gligorijević’s apprehension, another troubling aspect is that he was initially told he was being questioned as a citizen (i.e., a witness), only for the Ministry of Interior to later issue a contradictory statement listing the initials and birth year of the detainees—details that match Gligorijević’s.<sup>19</sup>

Commenting on the detention, his lawyer Nina Nicović stated:

“It was a good decision on the part of the presiding judge to determine that there were no grounds for urgent action regarding whether the accused actually committed the alleged offense—especially in the case of the journalist being accused of shouting and causing a disturbance. Since he was recording the event the entire time, his voice would have been the one most clearly heard on the microphone if he had truly been shouting... I believe he should have been released last night. I see this as an abuse of authority throughout the entire procedure. This is a classic SLAPP case against a journalist, who was

simply doing his job. If there is video evidence showing that he did nothing wrong, then I consider this a misuse of both judicial and police procedures to justify his detention.”<sup>20</sup>

The professional community responded strongly. Journalist associations condemned the detention as unacceptable and demanded the immediate return of the journalist’s property and an end to the practice of procedural abuse.<sup>21</sup>

As part of the same police action during which Gligorijević was detained, at least 18 students were also taken into custody. Ivan Ninić, the attorney representing one of the detained students, pointed out serious procedural violations that occurred during the arrests:

“Police confiscated a student’s phone, browsed through it without a court order, and then handed over footage to Pink and Informer, creating the conditions to stigmatize the students. Once this image is crafted, the authorities storm their homes, handcuff them, and record everything... Again, Serbia presents them as criminals who belong behind bars—even though there is not only no crime, but not even a misdemeanor.”<sup>22</sup>

## Physical Attack on YouTuber Neven Krstić

In early July, Neven Krstić attempted to [film a video](#) for his YouTube channel Neven-Clips in Pionirski Park—a zone increasingly dangerous for journalists and independent reporters investigating issues related to the camp, its organizers, and the identities of those residing there, which are all matters of legitimate public interest. According to ANEM, the physical assault on Neven Krstić marked the eleventh attack on media workers and freelance reporters in Pionirski Park.<sup>23</sup>

Krstić told Insajder journalists that he initially had no intention of entering the park. He asked nearby police officers whether entry was permitted and if they could accompany him, explaining that he had noticed some individuals in the park giving him hostile looks. As he approached the gate, an unknown man suggested they enter together. Krstić, his cameraman, and the man entered the park. The unknown man soon disappeared, and individuals from the park closed the gate behind them. After a brief conversation with one man—whom Krstić described as “reasonable”—a figure he referred to as the “main guy” appeared and showed clear hostility toward him.<sup>24</sup> He began to verbally insult Krstić, and was quickly joined by others. When the cameraman turned toward them, the group first withdrew, then closed in and attacked both Krstić and the cameraman. The cameraman was kicked until he fell to the ground, while Krstić was struck in the head and stomach. Their equipment was damaged. Krstić managed to leap over the fence and began shouting for the police. At that moment, there were visibly fewer police officers in the vicinity, and according to Krstić, they did not intervene.<sup>25</sup>

After the attack, Krstić and the cameraman sought medical assistance (Krstić required stitches).<sup>26</sup>

The professional community called for the identification and punishment of the attackers, as well as a prompt internal police investigation to determine why the police officers present failed to prevent the assault or offer Krstić and his cameraman proper protection.<sup>27</sup>

## Attack on the Property of Vreme Journalist Tijana Stanić

While reporting from the local elections in Kosjerić, Vreme journalist Tijana Stanić had two tires slashed and the side mirrors of her car broken. The newsroom expressed suspicion that individuals close to the ruling party were behind the attack on their journalist's property, citing the fact that the car had been parked "near a company identified by citizens as a vote-buying hub, that journalists had verbal confrontations with masked 'government sympathizers,' and that police officers on the ground refused to intervene."<sup>28</sup>

Stanić's vehicle was parked midway down a dead-end street that ends at the entrance to a company where, according to publicly available information, copies of election site records were being delivered. The area had been crowded throughout the day. According to Stanić, people began gathering after word spread that "suspicious individuals" were seen entering the company premises. Citizens moved to block the entrance in an attempt to learn what was going on. Police forces rotated on the scene, and were later joined by members of the Gendarmerie. At one point, the police began pushing back the crowd to clear a path for a convoy of vehicles leaving the company yard. The journalist's car was "trapped." After retrieving an external battery from the car with a colleague from N1 TV, it became clear whose car it was. Stanić said she had a bad feeling, and her colleague had a verbal altercation with a masked man. After completing her journalistic task—filming and photographing the events—Stanić returned to the car. When she asked police officers to help her move the vehicle, the response was: "Now you ask."<sup>29</sup> That's when she noticed the damage: two tires had been slashed with a knife, and the side mirrors smashed. The journalist reported the incident to the local police station.<sup>30</sup>

The professional community demanded an immediate response from the competent authorities.<sup>31</sup>



Slashed tires on Vreme reporter's car  
(photo: Vreme/Tijana Stanić)

## **Obstruction of Danas Journalist Uglješa Bokić While Reporting from a Citizen Gathering in Front of the SNS Offices in Novi Sad**

While covering a gathering of citizens on the night between June 8 and 9, in front of the SNS headquarters in Novi Sad, Danas journalist Uglješa Bokić saw the newly appointed Chief of the Novi Sad Police Department, Nevenko Marić, in the parking lot. As Marić had only recently assumed the post, the journalist decided to not only inform the public of his presence but also take a few photos for the newsroom archive.<sup>32</sup>

The police chief objected to being photographed. One of the two men accompanying Marić approached Bokić, covered his camera, and told him to stop filming. According to Bokić, the man shoved him with his shoulder and then—lightly, more as a “warning”—struck him in the thigh with his knee. At the chief’s request, Bokić identified himself. However, the men accompanying Marić did not, despite the journalist’s insistence. Bokić wanted to know whether they were police officers or civilians, but the chief said there was no need for identification.

The incident was captured on [video](#) by the journalist.<sup>33</sup>

Bokić reported the case to the Internal Affairs Sector as abuse of official position and misconduct by Ministry of Interior personnel. A criminal complaint was submitted to the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office in Novi Sad. At the same time, Bokić requested that disciplinary proceedings be initiated against the police chief and that the identities of the two men accompanying Marić be disclosed.

The professional community strongly condemned the behavior of Ministry of Interior personnel, demanding that journalists not be obstructed while reporting, and that all involved officers properly identify themselves during such incidents.<sup>34</sup>

## **Attack on Photojournalist Gavriilo Andrić**

Photojournalist Gavriilo Andrić was attacked on two separate occasions in June. The first incident occurred on the day of the local elections in Kosjerić, and the second took place two days later in front of the Sava Center during a planning meeting for EXPO 2027.<sup>35</sup>

In Kosjerić, Andrić was physically assaulted by Dragan Tripković, a Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) official and director of the Kosjerić Tourist Organization. Although the assault took place in front of the police station and in the presence of multiple officers, no intervention followed. According to Andrić, he attempted to report the attack immediately but was told he could do so later. When he went to the station, the duty prosecutor stated that the offense would not be prosecuted ex officio and advised him to file a private criminal complaint.<sup>36</sup>

During a police intervention against demonstrators attempting to unfurl a banner reading “Exposed – Same Thieves, Bigger Stage” in front of the Sava Center, Andrić was



prevented by two officers from photographing the event. One of them swung at Andrić, and when he missed the camera, he grabbed his backpack and pulled him back, demanding his ID. Despite showing his press credentials, the officer refused to let him do his job and ordered him to leave the scene.<sup>37</sup>

Journalist associations strongly condemned the incident and called on the Ministry of Internal Affairs to initiate proceedings against the police officer who used force against the photojournalist.<sup>38</sup>

## **Physical Assault on Activist, Photographer, and Ozon Press Correspondent Aleksa Pavlović**

Aleksa Pavlović, activist, photographer, and Ozon Press correspondent from Kosjerić, reported being physically assaulted in a public space near an SNS stand. At the time of the assault, he was not on a journalistic assignment. However, the case is recorded in this Monitoring Report because the alleged assailant was identified by Pavlović as a member of the Serbian Progressive Party and president of the local community council in Kosjerić— the same individual who had attacked N1 TV cameraman Marjan Vučetić roughly ten days earlier. According to Pavlović, he was attacked after casually commenting on the prior assault against the N1 cameraman, without any provocation, while passing by.<sup>39</sup>



Aleksa Pavlović  
(photo: OSCE/Miroslav Janković)

## Threatening and Offensive Chants Against Insajder Editor-in-Chief Brankica Stanković

In the first half of June, during basketball games held on June 10 and 12 at the Štark Arena in New Belgrade, threatening and offensive chants targeting Brankica Stanković were once again heard from the stands. The incident was reported to the Third Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade. Stanković has been the target of such chants and threats from hooligans since 2009, when Insajder aired its investigative series [\(Im\)potence of the State](#).<sup>40</sup>

After the most recent incident, Insajder journalists contacted the First Basic Public Prosecutor's Office to request information about an earlier case of threats and insults made against Stanković during the May 2022 basketball match between Partizan and Budućnost. According to the information received, that case has been with the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office since May 2022. Although the prosecutor's office had requested that the perpetrators be identified by police, that has not occurred. In response to renewed requests to identify those responsible using security camera footage, police submitted a report stating that only one individual had been identified, while efforts to locate others are ongoing. The Insajder newsroom expressed concern that this demonstrates "the state retreating in the face of crimes committed by hooligans."<sup>41</sup>

The Third Basic Public Prosecutor's Office has since opened a case and issued a summons to Brankica Stanković to collect necessary information.<sup>42</sup>

The professional community harshly condemned the ongoing threats against the journalist and criticized the silence of Ostoja Mijailović, President of the Board of KK Partizan and a leading figure in the ABA League, under whose auspices the matches were held.<sup>43</sup>

## Threatening Messages Sent to Glas Zaječara Journalist Anđela Risantijević

While answering questions from citizens in a live broadcast on the official Facebook page of Glas Zaječara, journalists Anđela Risantijević and Miljko Stojanović were subjected to verbal abuse by an unknown woman. When Risantijević warned her, the woman began sending her private messages filled with severe insults and threats, including disturbing references to the journalist's deceased sisters.<sup>44</sup> Risantijević reported the incident to Facebook and the competent prosecutor's office, where she was told that the message stating she would "be eaten by worms" did not constitute a concrete threat.<sup>45</sup>

Miljko Stojanović also received threats via Facebook, including messages that warned his "time was running out" and that "the reckoning was coming."<sup>46</sup>

Glas Zaječara journalists have previously been exposed to threats and pressure. In May, NUNS reported that the Facebook page Zaječarski blok repeatedly published a video in which Stojanović and Risantijević were targeted. (See more in the [May edition of the Media Scene Monitoring Report](#).)

Journalist associations publicly condemned the threatening and offensive messages, voiced support for their colleagues, and called on relevant institutions to urgently identify and prosecute those responsible.<sup>47</sup>

## **Threats Against Radar Editorial Staff**

An anonymous individual using the name “Milorad5” has been posting negative comments below articles published by Radar for an extended period. In June, two of these comments—posted in response to two articles—took on a threatening tone and appeared intended to intimidate. The editorial team reported the messages to the competent prosecutor’s office.

Throughout its work, Radar has reported several cases of threats, none of which have been resolved to date. In response, NUNS pointed to the authorities’ repeated excuse of “technical challenges with IP addresses.” In its statement, NUNS stressed that all forms of journalist intimidation must be treated with the utmost seriousness, as attacks on journalists are attacks on freedom of expression and the public’s right to be informed.<sup>48</sup>

## **Threats Against the Daughter of Nenad Kulačin, Co-host of the Podcast Dobar, loš, zao**

Via the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), heinous threats were sent to the daughter of journalist Nenad Kulačin from the account @Alek\_Patriota.

Kulačin and his family have been subjected to threats and pressure for years. The SafeJournalists Network, the Media Freedom Coalition, and the Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) strongly condemned the threats, noting that institutional inaction and the resulting impunity have long-term and devastating consequences for society as a whole.<sup>49</sup>

## **Threats Against Journalist Dragan Karalazić of Podrinske**

Dragan Karalazić, author of the article “Twilight Zone in Mali Pariz” and journalist at Podrinske, received an insulting and threatening comment on the outlet’s Facebook page: “You need a kama [Serbian word for a combat knife].” NUNS reported the threat to the competent authorities and reminded the public of previous threats faced by members of the Podrinske newsroom, highlighting the case of wanted posters featuring the name and photo of journalist Isidora Kovačević. (More details are available in the [May edition of the Media Scene Monitoring Report](#).)<sup>50</sup>

## Obstruction of Reporting Radio Goraždevac Journalist Damjan Protić

While attempting to photograph workers hired by the Municipality of Peć, accompanied by members of the Kosovo Police, who were painting over graffiti, journalist Damjan Protić experienced what he described as inappropriate behavior by four police officers—two in plainclothes and two in uniform. According to Protić, the officers first demanded identification and then verbally attacked him, ordering him to leave the scene. Although they referenced legal grounds, they did not provide a specific reason for why Protić had to withdraw.

According to Radio Goraždevac, the graffiti included messages such as “Delije Sever,” “4S – Only Unity Saves the Serbs,” and “Goraždevac.” One message, written in Albanian, read “[Hak marja](#)” (“Revenge”). Locals believe this particular graffiti appeared on the night when monuments to children killed on the Bistrica River and to NATO bombing victims were desecrated. The outlet emphasized that previous graffiti such as “UÇK” had created a sense of insecurity among the Serbian population. Nevertheless, local authorities had not considered this a sufficient reason to remove them.<sup>51</sup>

Journalist associations voiced strong support for Protić and his newsroom.<sup>52</sup>

## Obstruction of N1 Television Crew Filming in Front of Pionirski Park

N1 Television published footage showing an unknown woman pushing cameraman Igor Skendžić’s camera, thus preventing the N1 crew from filming a segment about the upcoming Vidovdan rally in front of Pionirski Park. Journalist Žaklina Tatalović was also present at the scene.<sup>53</sup>

The incident drew a strong reaction from the expert community.<sup>54</sup>



## On Vidovdan, Pressure and Attacks — After Vidovdan, Batons Against Journalists

During the coverage of the unrest that followed the “See You on Vidovdan” protest, several media workers were injured by police officers.

Despite wearing press identifiers (press vests and ID badges), TV N1 camera assistant Jovan Pavlović and FoNet cameramen Darko Pavlović and Zoran Drekalović were struck with batons.<sup>55</sup>

Jovan Pavlović was pushed from behind in the crowd, tripped, and fell to the ground. As a police cordon passed by, one gendarme turned back several steps and struck him twice with a baton while he was still on the ground — despite Pavlović stating he was a journalist. He was diagnosed with a contusion on the left shoulder area at the University Clinical Center of Serbia.<sup>56</sup>

Darko Pavlović was struck multiple times with a baton on his back and sprayed with pepper spray. According to FoNet, he avoided serious injury thanks to his backpack containing equipment and a tripod.<sup>57</sup>

Zoran Drekalović was struck with a baton on the arm holding his camera and knocked to the ground by a police shield.<sup>58</sup>

The Danas daily reported that their journalist Vojin Radovanović was physically prevented from filming an arrest. A plainclothes gendarme pushed him and grabbed his arm. As Radovanović attempted to walk away, the officer kicked him in the backside.

Journalist and media associations strongly condemned the police violence and demanded accountability for the attacks on journalists and camera operators.<sup>59</sup>

Earlier, during the “See You on Vidovdan” protest, a group identified as “Students Who Want to Learn” — described as government supporters — gathered in Pionirski Park. A man from this group interfered with several reporting teams, including those from Insajder, TV N1, and Danas.

Insajder journalist Teodora Vasiljević stated that the man “practically shoved a phone in her face.” When she responded to his question about her student status by explaining her journalistic role, the man continued accusing the journalists of provocation and demanded that they leave. Even after leaving the fenced area near the Parliament, the man followed, recorded, and harassed them.<sup>60</sup>

The same individual blocked journalist Nenad Nešić from going live for N1, repeating phrases like “Why are you provoking?” and “Why are you spreading lies?”<sup>61</sup>

Journalist Vojin Radovanović was also followed and filmed while being accused of being a provocateur and called a “Nazi.”<sup>62</sup>

The same man disrupted TV crews from Newsmax, Al Jazeera Balkans, and FoNet as well.<sup>63</sup>

According to media reports, the police responded only after Veran Matić, a member of the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists, arrived at the scene.<sup>64</sup> Matić

stated that he attempted to contact the Ministry of Interior's focal points for journalist safety, but they were unavailable. He then called the Ministry's emergency service to report the incidents. After some time, officers from the Public Order Department arrived and ordered the man to return to the designated area.<sup>65</sup>

Journalist and media associations strongly condemned the aforementioned attacks.<sup>66</sup>



Police attack on Zoran Drekalović  
(photo: FoNet)

## Termination of Employment of Euronews Journalists

In June, the employment of at least twelve Euronews journalists was terminated. Marija Šehić, whose employment contract was terminated,<sup>67</sup> and Pavle Kosić, who was laid off due to being declared redundant,<sup>68</sup> spoke publicly about changes in editorial policy, pressure on editors and journalists, alterations to news segments, shortening of interviews, cancellation of scheduled guest appearances, the omission of certain topics, bans on inviting specific guests, and other issues.

The employment of journalist Milan Šarić was also terminated. As he told the portal Raskrikavanje, he was handed a dismissal notice without prior warning after anchoring a news broadcast. A new internal job classification system was cited as the basis for the layoffs. Šarić noted that the bulletin board displaying the new system was put up on June 15 — three days after Marija Šehić received her dismissal.<sup>69</sup>

The professional community had previously expressed deep concern over the pressure faced by Euronews staff for months. The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) and the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) stated that employees were subjected to censorship, unprofessional demands, bans on asking government officials specific questions, and disciplinary measures for refusing to comply. Due to being prevented from doing their jobs freely, several journalists voluntarily left the media outlet.<sup>70</sup> More on this can be found in the [April](#) and [May](#) 2025 editions of the Serbia Media Scene Monitoring report.

Following the June layoffs, journalistic associations reacted. NUNS stated that the dismissal of journalist Marija Šehić was “baseless and an act of retaliation for opposing violations of professional standards, pressure, and harassment of journalists at this media outlet since the appointments of Minja Miletić as regional director and Dragana Pejović as editor-in-chief.”<sup>71</sup>

In a joint statement signed by the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), the “Nezavisnost” Trade Union, NUNS, and UNS, concerns were raised over the fact that the layoffs resulted from non-transparent, ad hoc evaluation criteria, carried out in a highly questionable manner — without proper explanation or evidence, and without giving employees the opportunity to adequately respond. The statement added that the Council of Europe's Platform for the Protection of Journalism had been informed about the events at Euronews and that an investigation into the management's conduct was requested.<sup>72</sup>

In its own statement, Euronews denied the allegations made by journalists' associations, claiming that they had been “under constant attack for weeks by false accusations, defamation, and baseless claims regarding ‘harassment’, bans on questioning authorities, and censorship.”<sup>73</sup>

Regarding Marija Šehić's dismissal, the outlet's management stated it followed “numerous warnings issued to the journalist and her systematic repetition of mistakes.”<sup>74</sup>

In solidarity with all colleagues whose employment had been terminated, NUNS and UNS organized a public gathering under the slogan “Stop the Persecution of Journalists.”<sup>75</sup>

## KRIK's "Database of Politicians' Assets" – Journalistic Professionalism vs. Political Unprofessionalism

The investigative portal KRIK published a new Database of Politicians' Assets, which includes information about real estate (without precise addresses, only street names or city districts were mentioned to give readers an idea of the properties' value), vehicles, and companies owned by current and former ministers and other public officials, along with data on how these assets were acquired.<sup>76</sup> According to the project description, the information in the profiles of both current and former officials is based on official documents, and a certified real estate agency was hired to estimate property values. All listed politicians were given the opportunity to respond to the findings, and their responses were included in their profiles.<sup>77</sup>

Following the publication of the database, several state officials reacted. Defense Minister Bratislav Gašić denied the allegations presented in the database, claiming they were an attempt at "criminalization and dehumanization" of Serbian Progressive Party officials.<sup>78</sup>

Minister for Public Investment Darko Glišić, who had previously blocked KRIK journalists and refused any communication, made serious accusations against the newsroom. He singled out and made particularly misogynistic remarks about journalist Sofija Bogosavljev, the author of an article about property purchased by his former partner during their relationship. Glišić called the journalists "liars from the Kavac cartel mouthpiece, spouting all kinds of nonsense," and described them as "voyeurs" using "dirty tricks."<sup>79</sup>

In response, the newsroom stated that the way Minister Glišić described their previous meetings "practically confirms that KRIK journalists are being followed."<sup>80</sup>

Speaking to Cenzolovka, KRIK's deputy editor-in-chief Bojana Jovanović said:

"Officials have no problem insulting journalists and making false accusations, creating a truly hostile environment. The false claim made yesterday by Minister Darko Glišić that we are a 'Kavac cartel outlet' is a clear act of targeting and endangering all of us at KRIK, as it falsely associates us with a criminal group currently at war with rival factions. This is just one of many problems we face. All of this is extremely stressful and exhausting, affecting our health and our ability to do our jobs, because we're forced to defend ourselves and deal with these attacks instead of focusing on our investigations."<sup>81</sup>

Journalists' associations and media organizations expressed their support for KRIK and emphasized the professionalism of its reporters. The minister was contacted for comment but refused all communication with KRIK journalists. His accusations and insults were denounced as dangerous targeting that threatens journalists' safety and hinders their work.<sup>82</sup>

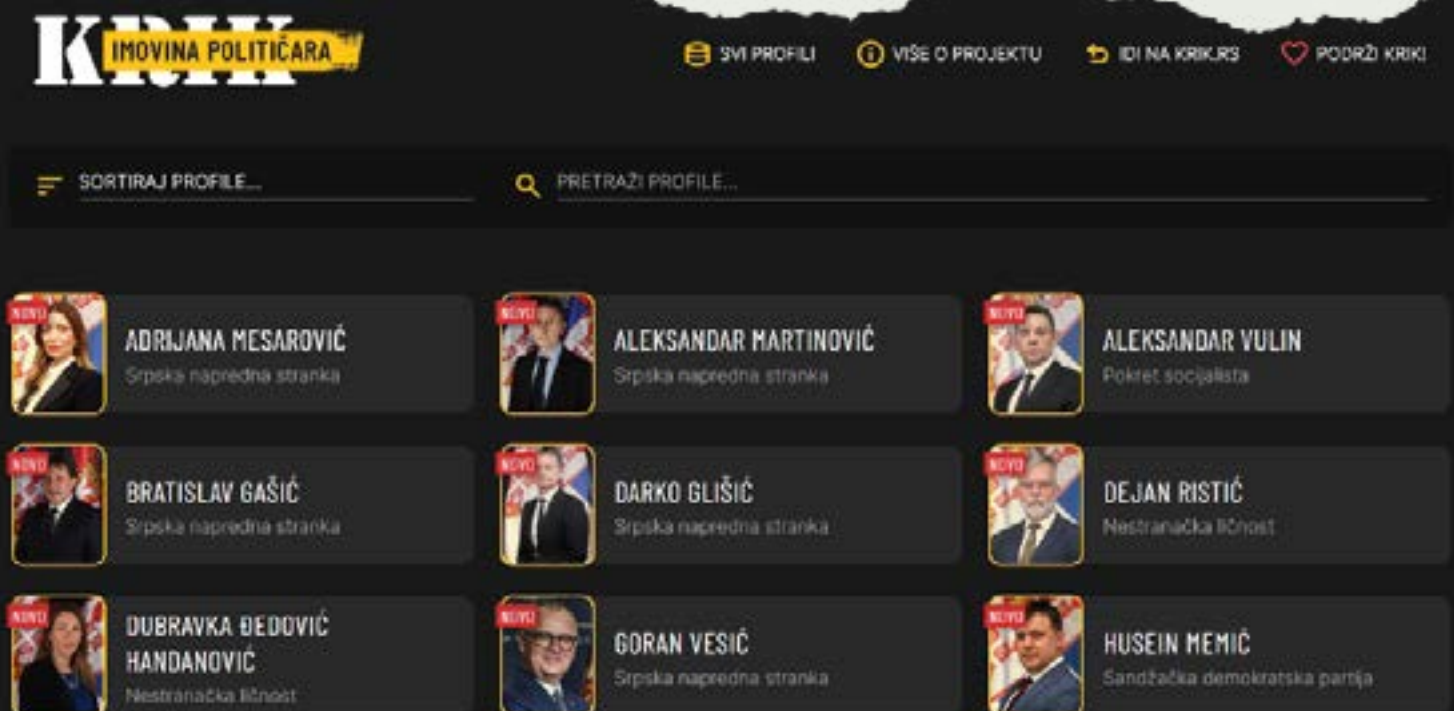


Speaking on Happy TV about KRIK's reporting, Glišić announced a "multimedia spectacle" to take place in the following two weeks.<sup>83</sup>

Shortly afterward, in the second half of June and just three days before the "See You on Vidovdan" protest, Ivan Matović, a city council member from the opposition party Novo lice Srbije in the Kraljevo city assembly, was arrested. Also detained were Novica Antić, former president of the Military Union of Serbia, retired first-class captain Branko Momčilović Majkan, retired warrant officer Vidan Koljajić, former union member Aleksandar Ivanović, and former police officer Srđan Gajović. Except for Gajović, all of them had been present on June 21 at the Turist hotel restaurant in Kraljevo, where they reportedly discussed the upcoming protest. Their arrests followed the broadcast of their wiretapped conversations on Informer TV and other pro-government media outlets.<sup>84</sup>

Ivan Matović has been charged with the criminal offense of inciting the violent overthrow of the constitutional order. In his testimony before the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade, Matović claimed that his arrest was orchestrated by the current Minister for Public Investment, whom he says has been pressuring him for years. One of the motives behind the "revenge," Matović believes, is Glišić's suspicion that he (Matović) was the source who gave KRIK information about Glišić's former partner, who purchased three apartments during their relationship—properties whose value far exceeds what she could have afforded on her reported income at the time.<sup>85</sup>

At the time of writing this Monitoring report, all of the arrested individuals remain in custody, except for Vidan Koljajić and Aco Ivanović, who have been released pending trial.<sup>86</sup>



## Daily Nova and the Ongoing Hostility Toward Investigative Journalism

After Nova daily began publishing a series titled Nova BAZA, which focuses on the conduct of high-ranking officials in the judiciary and prosecution service,<sup>87</sup> Minister of Justice Nenad Vujić issued a statement. Although the published information is, according to journalists, publicly available—and despite the European Court of Human Rights having held that judges, due to their public role, can be subject to criticism that is proportionate and specific to their function<sup>88</sup>—the Minister declared that the database is “in contradiction with the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, and is not protected under the right to freedom of expression.”

He called on the public prosecutor’s office and the Ministry of the Interior to identify and prosecute those involved in what he described as “smear campaigns” against judges and prosecutors.

## Journalism That Is Not Journalism

The Basic Court in Novi Sad has issued an interim measure prohibiting the Center for Social Stability (Centar za društvenu stabilnost), based in Novi Sad, from using the following claims in its films and other video content published on TV, YouTube, and social media: that prosecutor Željko Veljković is an “auto-chauvinist journalist who insults and belittles his own people,” that he performs his duties to win favor with foreign diplomats and funders, and that prosecutors Željko Veljković and Jelena Obućina are part of an “auto-chauvinist trio” who spread fake news.<sup>89</sup> The interim injunction has become legally binding.

Subsequently, the same court adopted another interim measure banning the Center from publishing claims in its media productions that N1 and Nova S are “toxic broadcasters,” that they incite discrimination, violence, and hatred, lie, provoke chaos, call for the most horrific violence, manipulate the public, and aim to trigger civil unrest and destabilize the country.<sup>90</sup> The organization has appealed this ruling.

These interim measures stem from lawsuits filed by the publishers of Nova S and N1, as well as journalists Željko Veljković and Jelena Obućina, in response to the film *Zlo doba* (“Age of Evil”), which aired on television channels B92, Pink, Happy, Studio B, K1, Tanjug, and was also published on the YouTube and X accounts of the Center for Social Stability.<sup>91</sup>

In addition to *Zlo doba* (aired in April this year), the Center also released a series titled *Dossier NGOs: The Black Swan Effect*, broadcast on B92 and Prva TV, targeting investigative portals KRIK and BIRN, as well as the organization CRTA.

In response to the problematic content of the series, CRTA<sup>92</sup> issued a public statement, and KRIK’s editor-in-chief announced that a lawsuit would be filed.<sup>93</sup>

# III.SUFFERING OF JOURNALISTS IN KOSOVO

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Journalists from the German newspaper Stern, Gabriel and Volker Kremer, along with their driver and interpreter Sanolj Aljit, were killed on June 13, 1999, at the Dulje Pass. They were traveling from Prizren to Macedonia in order to send photographs and reports to the editorial office in Hamburg. An investigation by Stern places suspicion for the murder on Aleksandar T., a Russian citizen for whom an international arrest warrant has been issued.<sup>94</sup>

Bardhyl Ajeti, a journalist for the daily newspaper Bota Sot, was attacked in early June from a car while he was driving from Priština to Gnjilane. Ajeti died three weeks later, on June 25, in a hospital in Milan where he had been transferred.<sup>95</sup>

## IV MONITORING THE PROCESS OF ADOPTING NEW LAWS

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Journalists' and media organizations and unions criticized the process of amending the Law on Public Information and Media, the Law on Electronic Media, and the Law on Public Media Services (adopted on June 16) as non-transparent.<sup>96</sup>

Key objections from these organizations and unions concerned the fact that the process was carried out under urgent procedure, with no public debate held and with very limited involvement from expert stakeholders. The organizations emphasized that alignment with European Commission recommendations, while cited as a reason for urgency, cannot justify a process conducted in a way that "undermines trust in democratic processes and institutions."<sup>97</sup>

The organizations and unions welcomed the final inclusion of proposals to amend provisions regulating the presumption of innocence and reporting on criminal proceedings (Articles 84 and 85 of the Law on Public Information and Media), which eliminated proposals that could have harmed investigative journalists.<sup>98</sup>

However, serious unresolved issues remain—issues that open the door to abuse, non-transparent spending of public funds, and favoritism toward certain media. The organizations pointed out that clear criteria for public procurement in the media sector were not introduced. Such criteria must be grounded in the public interest and professional standards.<sup>99</sup>

Amendments to the Law on Electronic Media failed to address issues related to media reporting during election campaigns, which, according to the organizations and unions, leaves room for covert political advertising, misuse of official positions for campaigning, and manipulative political marketing outside the bounds of regulation.<sup>100</sup>

Provisions relating to public service broadcasters still contain deep systemic flaws, the organizations noted: the Management Board does not have a decisive role in appointing editors; the role of the Audience Rights Ombudsman remains "marginalized"; and "new rules on budget financing leave room for political abuse."<sup>101</sup>

The decision not to increase the license fee for public service broadcasters was described as a "populist move with serious consequences for the operation and quality of programming, particularly that of the provincial public service broadcaster."

Organizations and unions recalled that, within the working group on amendments to the Law on Public Media Services, "they were unable to persuade authorities that sustainability required raising the license fee from 350 to at least 500 dinars—the same level it was over 15 years ago".<sup>102</sup>



# V IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING LEGISLATION

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## Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media (REM)

The organization Civic Initiatives and the Slavko Ćuruvija Foundation submitted a request to the Committee on Culture and Information to suspend the procedure for finalizing the list of candidates and nominating organizations for the REM Council, “until numerous irregularities are resolved.”<sup>103</sup>

The Independent Journalists’ Association of Serbia (NUNS) also addressed the Committee, filing objections to the REM Council election process. These objections were directed at the Association of Journalists of Vojvodina, Association of Journalists of Niš, and the Professional Association of Journalists of Serbia (PROUNS), stating that these groups did not meet the criteria to qualify as authorized nominators. NUNS also objected to the candidacy of Nada Vujović, as she was nominated by the aforementioned associations.<sup>104</sup>

The Journalists’ Association of Serbia (UNS) filed its own complaint to the Committee, citing unlawful conduct and violations of the Law on Electronic Media in the nomination and selection process.<sup>105</sup>

On June 13, seventy-two authorized nominators and twelve candidates submitted a letter to the Committee on Culture and Information, withdrawing from the REM Council selection process. The letter stated that the decision was made “after none of the thirty objections submitted by legitimate nominators were accepted—objections that pointed to serious violations and misinterpretation of core legal provisions.”<sup>106</sup> A day earlier, six film associations and the Association of Dramatic Artists of Serbia, along with four of their candidates, also withdrew from the process.

On the same day that the withdrawal letter was sent, a meeting of the Committee on Culture and Information was held with the remaining authorized nominators. At that meeting, ten candidates were agreed upon in five categories.<sup>107</sup>

In the absence of opposition representatives, the Committee on Culture and Information held a session in the National Assembly at which it adopted the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications’ interpretation regarding the application of the Law on Electronic Media in the candidate nomination process for the REM Council.<sup>108</sup>

## VI SLAPP LAWSUITS TARGETING JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA

According to media reports, former officials and members of the State Security Department Milan Radonjić, Ratko Romić, and Miroslav Kurak filed a total of 22 lawsuits against individual journalists and media outlets.

They filed claims for non-material damages for alleged defamation and harm to their reputation, including against the Slavko Ćuruvija Foundation, over a statement in which the Foundation expressed disagreement with the ruling of the Belgrade Court of Appeals, which acquitted the plaintiffs of charges in the murder case of journalist Slavko Ćuruvija.

All three plaintiffs filed their lawsuits separately, although the lawsuits against the Foundation concern the same statement. The amount claimed for damages in each case is 500,000 dinars.

In response to the Court of Appeals decision, lawyer Aleksandar Olenik [posted](#) the following on his personal X account:

“One of the judges who acquitted the murderers of Ćuruvija is Dušanka Đorđević, formerly of the BIA and wife of the former head of the 6th Department of State Security, now lawyer Aleksandar Đorđević, aide to Mira Marković. The presiding judge, Nada Hadži Perić, also took part in the acquittal of the assassins of Vuk Drašković, the same team from BIA.”

Due to this post, Romić, Radonjić, and Kurak filed separate lawsuits against Olenik.

The lawsuit filed by Milan Radonjić was dismissed in the first instance as unfounded. The plaintiff has the right to appeal the decision. The ruling by the Second Basic Court in Belgrade stated:

“In a case such as the murder of Slavko Ćuruvija, which attracted significant public attention, there is strong public interest in information related to the functioning of the judiciary and the actors involved. If accurate, information regarding a judge’s ties to a former head of the State Security Service may be relevant to the public’s perception of judicial independence and impartiality.

The content of the contested post clearly shows that it primarily addresses the alleged connection between the judge and the former security official. Consequently, the main aim of the post is to criticize or question judicial integrity, not to directly defame the plaintiff.

Although the plaintiff is mentioned in the context of being acquitted in the Ćuruvija murder trial, this is presented as part of a broader point about the judiciary. Mentioning his acquittal serves to illustrate concerns about the judicial system rather than to brand him a murderer.

The fact that the plaintiff was acquitted is relevant, but it does not mean that referring to that context inherently damages his reputation—especially given that the primary focus of the post is on a third party (the judge) and issues of public concern. In a democratic society, freedom of speech and the media includes the right to critically assess public institutions and officials. Judges are public officials, and their work is subject to public scrutiny. Information relating to their objectivity and integrity, especially in high-profile cases, is generally considered to be in the public interest. Although the plaintiff is mentioned in a negative context (‘acquitted killer of S.Ć.’), this is a secondary effect of a post primarily focused on another individual and on matters of public concern. Furthermore, the plaintiff—who bears the burden of proof under Article 231 of the Civil Procedure Law—failed to demonstrate that the post in question actually harmed his reputation or honor. Mere subjective feelings of offense are not sufficient; the plaintiff had to prove that the post objectively diminished his reputation in the eyes of others or the public, and that its primary intent was to portray him as a murderer and thus cause him harm, rather than to critique the judiciary or the judge.

Although the plaintiff has been acquitted, he was a central figure in a high-profile case that drew public interest, and his connection to the event—even though he is not a public official—places him in a position where the public has a legitimate interest in information related to the case.”<sup>109</sup>

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