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Actions of police at protests in Belgrade during August (foto: Gavriilo Andrić)

MONITORING OF THE MEDIA SCENE IN SERBIA FOR AUGUST 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.

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I FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The international organization Reporters Without Borders warned the public that violence against media workers in Serbia has reached a “tragic record.” In less than two months, 34 physical assaults on media professionals were documented, carried out by political activists and police officers. According to the organization’s statement, fourteen of the attacks were committed by violent supporters of the Serbian Progressive Party (the same groups who also assaulted peaceful demonstrators, and at times even police officers), while the remaining twenty attacks were carried out by police officers. Reporters Without Borders called on European Union member states and the European Parliament to send a clear signal to the Serbian authorities that their passivity, and possible complicity, is incompatible with Serbia’s ambition to join the EU.¹

Since the beginning of the year, notes the Independent Journalists’ Association of Serbia (IJAS/NUNS), August recorded the highest number of attacks on journalists as well as the highest number of threats and pressures directed against them — a total of 46 incidents targeting media workers. Journalists covering civic protests were the most exposed to physical assaults. Particularly alarming is the data concerning police conduct: out of 25 recorded physical attacks, fourteen were committed by police officers, IJAS reported.²

According to the Slavko Ćuruvija Foundation, in August alone, journalists and media outlets were subjected to no fewer than 137 attacks by high-ranking state officials, carried out both during public appearances and through social media. In these smear campaigns, apart from the President of Serbia and the Speaker of the National Assembly, almost all members of the Government of the Republic of Serbia took part, including the Minister of Information and Telecommunications, Boris Bratina, the Foundation reported.³

The editor-in-chief of Informer TV, Dragan J. Vučićević, broadcasted and commented on intimate photographs of Nikolina Sinđelić, a student and activist who had publicly testified about police violence she said she suffered after the protest of 14 August, inside the garage of the Government of Serbia building. According to her, Marko Kričak, commander of the Special Protection Unit (JZO), threatened her with rape, beat her, and slapped her. Through her lawyer, she filed criminal charges against Kričak.

On that same day, Nikolina Sinđelić was not the only one taken into the Government building garage. According to investigative portal BIRN, during the 14 August protest, members of the JZO arrested and “dragged” at least fifteen people into the Government building garage. Based on interviews and testimonies of nine individuals, BIRN concluded that the majority — most of whom had not known each other previously — gave almost identical accounts of the conduct of JZO officers and their commander.⁴

The professional community strongly condemned the conduct of editor-in-chief Vučićević, emphasizing that sharing intimate material constitutes a violation of the right

to privacy, dignity, and protection from secondary victimization, and that his actions are in direct breach of both the journalistic code of ethics and the provisions of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia.⁵

On the same media outlet, at the end of August, a series of malicious and tendentious claims were made against several civil society organizations, including details of their sources of funding, the projects they carried out, and the sums they received for them. Particularly concerning was the publication of bank account transaction details. Among the targeted organizations were the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia and numerous independent local media outlets.⁶

Regarding targeting practices, the Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) strongly condemned attacks on lawyer Ivan Ninić, who is actively providing legal support to students and activists exposed to various forms of pressure from the authorities and openly criticizing human rights violations and abuse of institutions. On social network X, a video claimed he was a CIA agent and alleged that "after a year of monitoring, Serbian services had gathered evidence of his collaboration with Albanian occupiers in Kosovo and Metohija." In the same video, TV channels N1 and Nova S were portrayed as media tasked with destabilizing Serbia. ANEM reminded that "in a similar manner, through media lynching and the broadcasting of a spot full of lies, Kosovo politician Oliver Ivanović was targeted — and was soon after assassinated in 2018."⁷

II ATTACKS, THREATS, AND PRESSURES

Physical assault on Darko Simić, journalist of YouTube channel Political Globe of Serbia

Journalist Darko Simić, wearing a visibly displayed press badge, was [attacked](#) during a civic protest in New Belgrade. At the time of the assault, he was recording events near the premises of the Serbian Progressive Party. As participants in the protest approached in a column, a man from a group organized to “guard” the party offices rushed toward the journalist, punched him in the face, and shouted: “What are you filming?”⁸

According to the Independent Journalists’ Association of Serbia, Simić immediately turned to a nearby police officer, who told him to report the incident at the nearest police station. After some time, however, the officer did take Simić’s information, stating that further steps would follow.⁹ ANEM informed the public that video footage of the attack was forwarded to the contact point at the Third Public Prosecutor’s Office.¹⁰

Attacks on journalists during protests in Vrbas and Bačka Palanka

At the “This is Our Town” protest in Vrbas on 12 August, N1 media cameraman’s assistant Andrej Stamenković and Mašina portal editor-in-chief Marko Miletić were assaulted. Supporters of the ruling party hurled frozen bottles, stones, and pyrotechnics at demonstrators.¹¹ Stamenković was hit with stones on the shoulder and stomach, while Miletić was struck with a frozen bottle and fireworks. A [video](#) published by Mašina shows Miletić telling police officers on the scene that he was injured and repeatedly asking them to stop the violence against citizens — to which they did not respond.¹² N1 reported that police officers remained entirely passive, despite the journalists wearing clear press identifiers.¹³

In Bačka Palanka, journalist Jovana Danilov of Bap Vesti was attacked. According to IJAS, she was brutally threatened by ruling party sympathizers and pelted with various objects. Present police officers did not intervene.¹⁴

Condemning police conduct, journalist associations and media organizations expressed strong solidarity with their colleagues,¹⁵ demanding prosecution of the attackers and reminding of the crucial role that journalists and photographers play in ensuring timely and objective reporting on events shaping the times we live in.¹⁶

Attack on reporter Marko Dragoslavić

While photographing construction works carried out without the necessary inspection permits, reporter Marko Dragoslavić was brutally assaulted by an unknown man.¹⁷ The physical attack was preceded by the threat: “We’re going to kill you now.” At the same time, another individual hit the journalist with a vehicle. While fleeing, Dragoslavić sought refuge in a nearby flower shop. The attacker caught up with him, pushed him to the ground, slapped him, punched him in the head, pressed his chest with his knees, strangled him, and spat on him.¹⁸

The case was reported to the police. Officers arrived at the scene, filed a report, and offered medical assistance. Hours later, a man suspected of the attack was arrested.¹⁹

Organizations advocating for the safety of media workers strongly condemned the assault and demanded the immediate prosecution of the perpetrator.²⁰

Attacks on Journalists During the “Serbia, Wake Up!” Protests

During the protests held under the slogan “Serbia, Wake Up!” on 13 August 2025, in numerous cities across Serbia (organized in response to the incidents that occurred the previous evening in Vrbas and Bačka Palanka), several media workers were injured.²¹

The Journalists’ Association of Serbia (UNS), applying the mechanism of the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists, reported the attack on Nikola Bilić, editor-in-chief of the 192 portal. Prior to the attack, Bilić was sitting with his wife in a café in Novi Sad. He stood up to film student protest organizers, behind whom a group of masked men was throwing firecrackers. While filming, he was struck from behind. As he bent down, unknown individuals, some wearing masks, began beating him first with fists and then with metal bars.²² During the attack, his mobile phone was stolen.²³

According to the UNS report, Bilić called both the police and emergency services, but neither responded. Accompanied by a friend, he went to the police station to report the assault. After being contacted by the police, the emergency service arrived, examined the journalist, and referred him to the Emergency Center. According to UNS, the case has been taken over by the Higher Public Prosecutor’s Office in Novi Sad.²⁴

Žarko Bogosavljević, editor of the Razglas media outlet, was recording incidents taking place outside the SNS premises on Stražilovska Street. A group of masked youths armed with wooden planks charged down the street. In his statement to UNS, Bogosavljević said that he was struck by one of them who rushed at him. Fortunately, in addition to a press vest, Bogosavljević was wearing protective equipment — a helmet and a bullet-proof vest — which shielded him from serious injury.²⁵

Journalist Žarko Bogosavljević is a frequent target of attacks. According to ANEM’s records, since the beginning of the protests, he has been threatened and attacked more than thirty times (see [Media Scene Monitoring in Serbia for July 2025](#) for details).

Outside the SNS premises on Stražilovska Street, portal Zoomer reported that their journalist Marina Nenadović was also attacked. According to the outlet, she was struck on the shoulder with a stone and burned by a firework launched from the direction of the party offices. Later, she was also subjected to force by police officers. As they pushed the crowd back, one policeman grabbed her arm and shoved her, disregarding the fact that she was on duty, clearly identifiable in a press vest and with visible credentials.²⁶

Photojournalist Vojin Ivkov described the assault he suffered while reporting from Novi Sad for Cenzolovka as the most severe beating in his 16–17 years of covering protests. According to his account, the perpetrators of the violence were police officers.²⁷

Photojournalist Gavriilo Andrić was attacked in central Belgrade. According to Zoomer, with whom Andrić collaborates, a police officer struck him and knocked him to the ground. His press vest, helmet, visible credentials, and the fact that he was in the company of other journalists — at a distance of about 100 meters from demonstrators — did not protect him.²⁸



New necessary equipment for journalists - helmet (selfie: Žarko Bogosavljević)

In downtown Belgrade, journalists Teodora Šulj (Zoomer) and Ana Milosavljević (Mašina) were attacked. Police officers pushed them and prevented them from filming their intervention against a citizen they had knocked to the ground. Apart from being obstructed in their reporting, the Zoomer newsroom reported that both journalists later received direct Instagram messages telling them that, for covering the protests, they “should be hanged.”²⁹

Police officers also attacked a student of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, who was reporting as a photojournalist for several student outlets. When officers realized he had filmed a colleague dragging a young woman by the hair — thus exceeding his legal authority, Serbian and regional journalist associations reported — they grabbed the photojournalist, beat him, seized his camera’s memory card, and eventually broke it.³⁰

That same evening, in Belgrade’s Kralja Milana Street, Gendarmerie officers attacked a student reporting for the student info-portal Puls generacije. While recording a policeman assaulting a female protester, he was struck with a baton, damaging his equipment. Even after being hit on the back of the head, he continued recording. Another officer joined in and managed to knock the phone from his hand. The device fell to the ground and was smashed by a policeman.³¹

Mašina editor-in-chief Marko Milić was also targeted. While reporting from protests in New Belgrade and Zemun, Gendarmerie officers repeatedly shoved him with their shields, despite the fact that he was clearly identifiable as a journalist.³²

Numerous journalist and media organizations from Serbia and the region reacted to the attacks on journalists during the night of 13–14 August. They described the events as the culmination of the violence that media safety associations had been warning about for months. The organizations demanded the immediate prosecution of attackers. In their statement, they emphasized that out of ten recorded cases of assaults, six were committed by police officers. They called on the Ministry of the Interior to investigate cases of abuse and excessive use of force by police, and they also lodged a protest against discriminatory practices toward the media during the press conference organized by the Ministry on 14 August.³³

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) joined appeals from UNS and NUNS urging the police to stop the violence against journalists and guarantee their safety while reporting from protests. EFJ General Secretary Ricardo Gutiérrez stated that Serbian authorities were actively engaged in the brutal repression of journalists. According to EFJ’s press release, the federation is documenting cases of violence against journalists with the help of its partners in Serbia, that perpetrators have been identified, and that they will be held accountable.³⁴

Television channel N1 asked the European Commission when it would become more actively involved in the protection of human rights and journalists’ rights in Serbia. In its response, the European Union stated that it strongly condemns all forms of violence, including threats against journalists. It emphasized the importance of providing independent media with the conditions necessary to act as watchdogs over those in power, in order to strengthen transparency and accountability of public officials and institutions.³⁵

Physical Assault on Vuk Cvijić, Radar Journalist

On 15 August, journalist Vuk Cvijić was attacked while reporting from a protest in front of the General Staff building in Belgrade. He stated that before the attack, he and his friends and colleagues were standing peacefully in front of the police cordon, with no incidents occurring nearby.³⁶

A uniformed riot police officer approached him from behind and sprayed his neck and the right side of his face with an unknown liquid.³⁷ After some time, Cvijić felt a burning sensation on his skin, followed by temporary blindness that lasted for at least an hour. He received professional medical assistance at the hospital, but continued to feel the effects of the attack until the early morning hours.³⁸

According to TV Nova journalist Marko Novičić, who witnessed the event, Cvijić appeared to be the sole target. Novičić told Radar: “That’s what led me to conclude that he was not chosen at random, but was deliberately attacked by that uniformed officer.”³⁹

The attack was strongly condemned, and Cvijić received widespread support from colleagues.⁴⁰

It was also noted that this was the second time in two months that Vuk Cvijić had been attacked by members of the Ministry of Interior. For details on the previous incident, which occurred in front of the Faculty of Law, see [Media Scene Monitoring in Serbia for July 2025](#).

Journalists, Police Officers Are Here. Do You Feel Safe?

During the citizens’ protest held in downtown Belgrade on 14 August, the police cordon positioned near the General Staff building moved, leaving supporters of the ruling party a clear path toward the journalists. Shouting “Come on, film now, film now,” and “Film now, you journalistic pussies,” SNS supporters rushed at the journalists, forcing them to flee.⁴¹ Several reporters from the newsrooms of Zoomer, Mašina, N1, Nova S, Puls generacije, Blokadar and Danas were attacked. According to the Independent Journalists’ Association of Serbia (NUNS), none of them sustained injuries.⁴²

The SafeJournalists network database recorded an attack on photojournalist Relja Jarkovački on the same day. Like his colleagues previously mentioned, Jarkovački was clearly identifiable by a press vest and press credentials. According to the database, the head of a police unit tore off his press ID, accusing him of not being a journalist. Jarkovački was told that he was not allowed to film the police, even though he was on assignment and attempting to document their presence behind trees and in bushes between nearby buildings.⁴³

In August, journalist Marija Čolaković was also attacked. According to the SafeJournalists database, she was beaten with telescopic batons by police officers. Čolaković, wearing a press vest and carrying press credentials, sustained visible injuries to her arms and legs.⁴⁴

During protests in Čačak, while covering the march of dissatisfied citizens toward the home of the local police chief — whose resignation was demanded after he allegedly punched a demonstrator in the stomach during a previous protest, while two officers were restraining him — Nenad Nešović, editor-in-chief of the portal N2, was hit with eggs thrown from a nearby residential building.⁴⁵



Journalist Lea Apro after police attack in Novi Sad
(photo: Žarko Bogosavljević)

Attack on Journalists While Covering the Attempted Blockade of the Courthouse in Novi Sad

As police officers pushed citizens away from the entrance to the courthouse in Novi Sad, to secure access for employees, N1 journalist Lea Apro and Razglas editor-in-chief Žarko Bogosavljević — both wearing press vests and carrying press IDs — were attacked by police officers. Despite repeatedly stating that they were on journalistic duty, the officers struck them with hands and shields.⁴⁶

In a statement to UNS, Apro said she felt pain in her arm as a result of the attack and would seek medical attention. Bogosavljević recounted that other colleagues had also been assaulted, but that Apro and he, being in the front row, were the most exposed.⁴⁷

The professional community expressed support for the attacked journalists and demanded that police officers cease their aggressive behavior toward media workers.⁴⁸

The Case of Ljubomir Stefanović, Editor-in-Chief of the YouTube Channel Slavija info

After Ljubomir Stefanović, editor of the YouTube channel Slavija info, posted the question “Is this true and even possible?” on social network X — commenting on an alleged decree by which the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, pardoned himself and members of his family in case of the commission of any criminal offense prior to the date of the decree — police searched Stefanović’s apartment, seized two mobile phones, and brought him to the police station, where he was held in custody for 48 hours. Police also searched his sister’s apartment, seizing two desktop computers and two laptops. Stefanović was charged with the criminal offense of Forgery of a Document.⁴⁹ Following an appeal against the detention order, filed by his defense attorney Nikola Lakić, Stefanović was released.⁵⁰

In his statement, the defense attorney emphasized that his client had not committed any criminal offense and pointed out that the disputed document had not been used in any procedure. Furthermore, he argued that the Second Basic Public Prosecutor’s Office in Belgrade was not competent to conduct the proceedings.⁵¹

Reacting publicly, the Independent Journalists’ Association of Serbia stressed that, during the imposition of police custody and in the execution of any other legally prescribed measures, all procedures must be respected and strictly followed. According to NUNS, arbitrary apartment searches, the ordering of police custody, and the seizure of communication devices — all of which Stefanović faced — represent a gross violation of citizens’ rights, warning that if such practices continue, working as a journalist will become impossible.⁵²



photo: Gilles Lambert on Unsplash

Stefanović had previously stated that he was subjected to pressure because of his editorial policy. In October of the previous year, he informed the media that he had been forcibly and unlawfully taken to the premises of the Security Information Agency (BIA), where he spent four hours. During that time, he said, he was not allowed to contact his lawyer, and both his mobile phone and car keys were temporarily seized. According to Stefanović, in the past five years he has spent more than 197 hours in detention at Serbian border crossings and has been stopped and searched nearly 90 times. His minor son had witnessed some of those stops and searches. Stefanović also filed a criminal complaint against the director of BIA and 11 unidentified BIA members, on suspicion of Abuse of Official Position (Article 359 of the Criminal Code), Negligent Service Performance (Article 361, paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code), and Unlawful Deprivation of Liberty (Article 132, paragraph 2 of the Criminal Code). The complaint was dismissed.

NUNS and several civil society organizations filed a criminal complaint on suspicion that during Stefanović's detention at the Voždovac police station, Cellebrite software — used to unlock phones and extract data — had been deployed on his mobile device, thus opening the possibility for the installation of NoviSpy spyware. The prosecution is still examining these allegations.

For more information on the case of Ljubomir Stefanović, see Media Scene Monitoring in Serbia for [October](#) and [December](#) 2024.

Threats to N1 Journalists and Obstructions During Protest Coverage in Vrbas

At the protest in Vrbas, while reporting live on air, N1 journalist Jelena Mirković and cameraman Denijal Dabić were targeted with at least five laser beams by supporters of the ruling party positioned near the SNS offices. Accompanied by insults and derogatory remarks, the journalist and cameraman were called “Ustaše.” Among the SNS supporters present were men dressed in black T-shirts, wearing black caps and balaclavas.⁵³ According to the journalist's statement to the Association of Independent Electronic Media, the insults also targeted members of their families, which was particularly distressing. One of the group's “leaders,” she said, made a throat-slitting gesture toward her.⁵⁴

Journalists' associations and media organizations expressed support for their colleagues. They demanded an urgent response from competent state authorities, and called on the police to provide journalists with conditions to report from the field without obstruction.⁵⁵

Confiscation of Phone from Kompas Journalist Danica Ilić

Danica Ilić was on journalistic duty, intending to record President Aleksandar Vučić's address to SNS supporters gathered in front of the party offices on Knez Miloš Street in Belgrade. She was wearing clearly visible press insignia (a press vest and ID). After the president finished his speech, while filming him stepping down from the stage, she called out to him, asking for a statement. To draw his attention, she referred to their acquaintance from the time when Vučić was Minister of Information and she was a radio journalist. As he walked toward the party offices, the president signaled with his hand that she could approach him. When Ilić followed, she said, a group of men in black T-shirts blocked her path, forming a cordon around the president. She asked who they were and why they had no visible IDs. As she attempted to pass, a particularly large man stepped out of the circle and, as she described it, "with all his strength" snatched her phone and appeared to throw it beneath a nearby TV van. Her attempts to recover the phone were unsuccessful. Throughout, the men forming the cordon trampled her hands, lied to her, and otherwise humiliated her. She realized how unsafe her situation was. "Five meters away from the president of the state, I felt extremely unsafe. I have worked in China, Sri Lanka, Mauritania, Algeria, Morocco, and Turkey. Never have I felt so unsafe at my workplace as I did last night. Five meters from the president of the state."⁵⁶

This was not the first time that journalist Danica Ilić was prevented from doing her work. Earlier in the year, the Minister of Finance had forcibly taken her phone while she was trying to get a statement from him (see [Media Scene Monitoring in Serbia for January 2025](#) for details).

The professional community reacted sharply to the ordeal she faced while carrying out her duties.⁵⁷

Threats Against Takt info Journalist Nusreta Brunčević

The SafeJournalists database recorded an incident involving Takt info journalist Nusreta Brunčević, who was threatened by a police officer.⁵⁸

During a police intervention against demonstrators at the courthouse entrance in Novi Pazar, Brunčević overheard one officer making inappropriate remarks to female students in the front rows. After hearing his comments, she asked the officer to identify himself, noting that he was not wearing a name tag. Initially, he refused, later providing only his first name but withholding his surname. According to Brunčević, the officer then told her she was "irrelevant" and added: "We'll see each other." When she asked if she had heard correctly, he mockingly confirmed it. When Brunčević reported the case to the commanding officer, he told her that she should leave the scene.⁵⁹

Threats to A1 TV Newsroom in Novi Pazar

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia reported threats received by the A1 TV newsroom in Novi Pazar via their Instagram account. Under a video excerpt from an interview conducted by editor-in-chief and journalist Enes Radetinac with Dr. Rešad ef. Plojović, the following threat was posted:

"First kill these media outlets, then dealing with the people will be easy."⁶⁰

The incident was recorded in the SafeJournalists database.



Police cordon at a protest (photo: Gavriilo Andrić)

Threats to Journalist Nenad Kulačin, Co-Author of the Podcast Dobar, loš, zao (The Good, the Bad, the Evil)

Journalist Nenad Kulačin received direct threats in an Instagram message sent to the account of his podcast Dobar, loš, zao. The threats came in response to a story featuring a segment from the latest episode. The message read:

"You Ustaša scum, I'll shove it up your Ustaša mother and father and everything you've got, you Ustaša idiot!!! Fuck your dead bastard child, you Ustaša shit..."⁶¹

The threats were reported to the Special Prosecutor's Office for High-Tech Crime.⁶²

The podcast's authors have been receiving threats for years. Supported by PEN Center, Marko Vidojković decided to leave Serbia, while Kulačin, for family reasons, chose to

remain in the country.⁶³

Campaign Against a Cartoon

After a [cartoon](#) by Predrag Koraksić Koraks appeared on the front page of the daily newspaper Danas, the editorial office received threats via the Messenger app. They were told that a “bomb or a rocket launcher would hit them and blow them to pieces,” and that “someone would soon pay them a visit at home.”

This was followed by a series of articles in pro-government tabloids, the content of which did not differ much from the threats themselves. Koraks was accused of inciting the death of the president and of calling for terrorism. The author himself explained that the message of the cartoon was an allusion to the mental state of the President of Serbia, but tabloids persisted in demanding that the prosecution take action over the illustration.⁶⁴

The threats were reported to the Special Prosecutor’s Office for High-Tech Crime.⁶⁵ The expert public did not fail to respond.⁶⁶



Cartoon “Vučić exploding”
(author: Predrag Koraksić Koraks)

Threats Directed at Journalists of the Autonomija Portal

The editorial staff of the portal Autonomija received a threatening message via their official Facebook page. In the message, the portal's journalists were called "commie-Ustašas" and were told that "for their publications, they would each receive a reward of two 9.2 mm rounds."⁶⁷

The Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina (NDNV) informed the public that, prior to the threatening message, Autonomija had been reporting on incidents that occurred during the opening of an exhibition in Bački Petrovac, as well as on a conflict in Liman between citizens and individuals who were vandalizing public property.⁶⁸

The NDNV and ANEM associations reported the threat to the competent public prosecutor's office.⁶⁹

Here too, the expert community reacted strongly.⁷⁰

Threats Against Sanja Ignjatović Eker, TV Nova Correspondent

After reporting from a protest in Novi Sad on August 14, Sanja Ignjatović Eker, TV Nova's correspondent from that city, began receiving horrifying threats via social networks. The threats targeted both her personally and her family.⁷¹ One message referring to her child read:

"N1 will become N6 for your child... You'll soon learn what N6 means, we'll explain it to you, you Jewish bastard."⁷²

According to TV Nova, the threats were preceded by a series of insults directed at the journalist by TV Informer. The editorial office pointed out that the initial impulse for such verbal attacks came from the President of the Republic of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, who phoned in during a live Informer broadcast, and from the Minister of Internal Affairs, Ivica Dačić, at a press conference held later that same evening.⁷³

In cooperation with NUNS, the threats against Sanja Ignjatović Eker were reported to the Special Department for High-Tech Crime.⁷⁴

The journalist received strong support from colleagues and the professional community.⁷⁵



Verica Marinčić (photo: private archive)

Threats Against Journalists from Magločistač, IN Media, Južne vesti, N1, Nova, Danas, and Insajder

The editorial office of the portal Magločistač received an online threat. In a comment below one of their news articles, journalists were told:

“I’ll f*** your children, slaughtered and with their eyes gouged out, you and Magločistač.”⁷⁶

(This is not the first time that journalists of Magločistač have faced threats. As in the two previous cases—in 2017 and in January of this year—the Special Prosecutor’s Office for High-Tech Crime was informed of the incident.)⁷⁷

Three days after the threat to Magločistač, the editorial office of IN Media received, allegedly from the same individual, the following message:

“I’ll pump your slaughtered children, you stinking scum. A gang of shameless hooligans. There will be a civil war and, God willing, my hands will be bloody.”

The threats were reported to the competent prosecutor’s office.⁷⁸

Verica Marinčić, editor-in-chief of IN Media, has for a long time been subjected to pressure, insults, threats, and even physical attacks. The assault she endured in February this year, together with her colleague Miodrag Blečić, resulted in a court ruling. (More about this case can be found in the [Media Scene Monitoring Report for February 2025](#).)

The attacker admitted before the court to committing the criminal offense of Endangering Security. He was found guilty and sentenced to a suspended six-month prison term, provided he does not repeat the offense within the next two years. He was also issued a restraining order prohibiting him from approaching or contacting the victims for one year.⁷⁹ Commenting on the verdict, the journalist repeated what she had told the

police and prosecution: she does not blame the attacker himself, but rather the “whole array” of political figures and tabloids who together construct the narrative that the attacker adopted.⁸⁰

In August, threats were also made against the newsroom of Južne vesti. An anonymous user left the following comment:

“You’re ripe for a firing squad.”⁸¹

TV N1 journalist Žaklina Tatalović received threats via Messenger. In a message sent by a person who had previously tried to contact her, she was told that they would “meet in front of N1,” and that “they” (meaning journalists) would be blocked, shut down, and set on fire. The threats were reported to the Special Prosecutor’s Office for High-Tech Crime.⁸²

N1 journalist Mladen Savatović received the following threat via Facebook:

“I’ll beat up that gay Savatović the moment I run into him somewhere.”

In cooperation with NUNS, the threats against N1 journalists were reported to the Special Prosecutor’s Office for High-Tech Crime.⁸³

Brankica Stanković, editor-in-chief of Insajder, together with journalists from N1, Danas, and Nova S, received the following message on the social network X:

“And so, one way or another, N1 has begun to burn. Danas and Nova should get ready. Let’s not have Charlie Hebdo repeat itself in the middle of Belgrade. Insajder, Brankica, we have special plans for you. You’re as poisonous as a snake...”

The Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) filed a report on the matter with the competent state authorities.⁸⁴

All of the above threats were condemned in the strongest terms by the professional community.⁸⁵

Obstruction of TV N1 Crew Reporting from the Protest in Front of the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad

During the protest in front of the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, a member of the Gendarmerie demanded that the cameraman of TV N1 turn off his spotlight, claiming that the light, directed at the police officers, was disturbing them in the performance of their duties. Savatović explained to the officer that he and his colleague were a reporting crew on assignment, and that the spotlight was essential for their work. The officer, however, paid little attention to his explanation and told them they would be arrested.⁸⁶




photo: This guy shoots on Unsplash

Hacker Attack on Beta News Agency's Daily European Service (DES) and on Epicentar Press

The Daily European Service (DES) database of the Beta news agency, specialized in European policies and Serbia's EU integration process, was hacked. This was a so-called ransomware attack, in which access to a computer system or stored data is restricted, followed by a demand for ransom in exchange for restoring access.⁸⁷ The legal representative of Beta stated that no ransom would be paid, since there were no guarantees that the service would be restored even after payment.⁸⁸

The damage was repaired shortly after the incident, and future content will be produced via Beta's website.⁸⁹

NUNS reported the case to the Special Prosecutor's Office for High-Tech Crime, while journalists' associations demanded an urgent response from the competent institutions.⁹⁰

In addition to Beta, Epicentar Press from Čačak was also targeted by a hacker attack. The portal was down for 24 hours, and their official Facebook page was repeatedly "taken down."⁹¹

Editor-in-chief Milena Gavrilović announced that their provider had informed them about the presence of compromised files on the website's account, which led to its temporary suspension. The editorial office emphasized that they would continue to inform the public about events in the city and the country in an objective and timely manner.⁹²

The case was reported to the competent state authorities in cooperation with the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia.⁹³ The professional community reacted, reminding the public of the importance of safeguarding the independence of local media.⁹⁴

Dismissed Criminal Complaint Filed over Threatening Messages Sent to Vojin Radovanović, Journalist with the Daily Danas

In November last year, the Journalists' Association of Serbia filed a criminal complaint against Slobodan Šolević, a member of the Belgrade City Council, for insulting and threatening messages he sent to Danas daily journalist Vojin Radovanović. The Prosecutor's Office concluded that there was no evidence to substantiate grounds for suspicion that Šolević had committed the criminal offense of Endangering Safety.⁹⁵

The incident in which Šolević directed threats and insults at Radovanović occurred, according to Radovanović's statement before the Prosecutor's Office, in the Belgrade City Assembly. Properly accredited, the journalist was reporting from a scheduled session of the Assembly. Upon noticing Simo Spasić, President of the Association of Families of Kidnapped, Missing and Murdered Persons in Kosovo and Metohija, shouting into a megaphone and refusing security's order to leave the Assembly building, Radovanović began recording. As he described, at one point Šolević appeared and asked him whether he was filming because Spasić needed the footage. The journalist explained that he was carrying out his professional reporting duties, at which point Šolević began demanding that he delete the footage. He got in the journalist's face, cursed at him, and issued threats. Security, to whom Radovanović appealed, acted as if they saw nothing. Their statement given to the police likewise claimed they had noticed nothing.⁹⁶

The footage Radovanović recorded during the incident was submitted to the competent state authorities. The Prosecutor's Office held that the video did not show the actions Radovanović described, that the alleged threats were not audible, and that Radovanović did not bear any visible sign of his journalistic profession. The Belgrade City Assembly failed to provide the security camera recordings requested by police, explaining that they had been automatically deleted due to the passage of time.⁹⁷

Šolević denied the allegations that he had threatened Radovanović. According to his statement, the journalist did not wear any visible press insignia, so he did not know he was on professional duty. In his testimony before the Prosecutor's Office, Šolević claimed his intent had been to stop Simo Spasić from making noise, and that he had merely asked Radovanović not to film in order to prevent a possible incident.⁹⁸

Rejection of Objection Filed over the Attack on Cameraman Mirko Todorović

The Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Novi Sad dismissed the objection filed by cameraman Mirko Todorović against the decision to reject the criminal complaint submitted against Vuk Raonić. The attack occurred in November last year. The cameraman was reporting from a protest in front of the premises of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) when Raonić rushed at him and knocked him to the ground. (More on this case can be found in the Media Scene Monitoring in Serbia, July 2025 edition.)

A Stone in the Expensive Shoe

The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) and the investigative portal KRIK published an audio recording and transcript of a conversation which, according to their source and documentation obtained, allegedly took place between United Group CEO Sten Miler and Telekom Srbija CEO Vladimir Lučić. During the conversation, Telekom's director told Miler that the President of the Republic of Serbia had requested the dismissal of Aleksandre Subotić, CEO of United Media — a company within United Group that operates outlets such as N1, Nova S, Danas, Radar, Forbes Serbia, Sport Klub, and others. According to KRIK's report, Miler explained to Lučić that he was aware the President was dissatisfied that Aleksandra Subotić had not yet been dismissed, but that he needed more time to carry out her removal. He added that in order to dismiss her, he first needed to make the company "very small in Serbia," and then "separate it." The article further states that Lučić informed Miler that the President of Serbia had also discussed Subotić's dismissal with Nikos Stathopoulos, Chairman for Europe at BC Partners — the majority owner of United Group.⁹⁹

As reported by KRIK, Vladimir Lučić later denied, while answering journalists' questions, that he had ever discussed the dismissal of Aleksandra Subotić with Miler or that the President of Serbia had requested it,¹⁰⁰ claiming instead that the meeting was of a purely business nature and focused on pointing out irregularities in United Media's operations.¹⁰¹

The Office of the President of the Republic of Serbia denied the information published by OCCRP and KRIK. Aleksandra Subotić told KRIK that any discussion about her dismissal was a clear attempt by the authorities to undermine media freedom in Serbia.¹⁰²

Following the publication of the recording, editors of N1, Nova, Danas, and Radar held a meeting where they decided to request from the United Group Board of Directors an internal investigation into Miler's statements as heard in the published conversation, and urged Stathopoulos to inform the public about the nature of his relationship with Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić.¹⁰³

United Group confirmed that Miler and Lučić had indeed held a conversation. According to the company, it was a business communication related to transactions from earlier that year, in which United Group sold various assets to Telekom Srbija. The conversation was described as an illegally recorded business exchange that had not been published in full and therefore did not reflect the true nature of what Miler and Lučić discussed. The company denied allegations that Telekom Srbija, directly or indirectly, exerted pressure on United Media regarding the status of Aleksandra Subotić, emphasizing that Subotić holds a managerial position and is not involved in editorial policy.¹⁰⁴

During Sten Miler's visit to Belgrade, N1 journalist Ana Novaković attempted to per-

sonally ask the United Group CEO questions prompted by the published recording. At the hotel where he was staying, when she approached him, the hotel's head of staff grabbed her phone and refused to return it until she left the premises. According to Nova.rs, shortly afterwards, a Telekom lawyer, who was also Miler's legal representative, appeared. They demanded that the journalist delete her footage. When Novaković refused, they withdrew the demand. According to her testimony, the lawyer warned her that she had allegedly committed a number of criminal offenses, which could result in her dismissal. On the same occasion, in addition to Ana Novaković, Nova.rs reporter Jovan Mladenović was also held back.¹⁰⁵

Journalists' associations and media organizations condemned the (physical) obstruction of the journalist in her attempt to question Miler about possible interference in the editorial policies of the media.¹⁰⁶



III MONITORING THE PROCESS OF ADOPTING NEW LAWS

The process of amending the Criminal Procedure Code and the Criminal Code will be addressed in the Media Scene Monitoring for September, as the Ministry of Justice launched (or continued) a public consultation on these laws through e-consultations on September 10, 2025.

IV IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING REGULATIONS

Project Co-Financing

The Association of Independent Electronic Media, the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia, the Journalists' Association of Serbia, Local Press, and the Media Association submitted to the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications a proposal to amend the rules governing project co-financing of media content. The proposals were developed following consultations among representatives of these associations, members of this year's competition commissions, and representatives of the Press Council.¹⁰⁷

According to the findings of the Association of Independent Electronic Media, 19 local self-governments, out of 174 competitions announced for the co-financing of media content, failed to allocate the funds intended for the media.¹⁰⁸

In cooperation with the Journalists' Association of Serbia, the Association of Independent Electronic Media prepared the Analysis of the Project Co-Financing Process for the Production of Media Content in Serbia in 2025. The findings showed that the already problematic process of project co-financing of media content has regressed several steps.

The key conclusions reached are as follows:

- The actual purpose for which the allocated funds are used remains highly questionable.
- The greatest problem, as in previous years, lies in the composition of the commissions. (Although the 2023 legislative amendments were intended to improve the process of selecting commission members, the authorities continued to find ways to favor certain candidates.)
- Reactions from relevant journalists' and media associations to the irregularities observed during the monitoring of the project co-financing process have had no effect.
- The Unified Information System, which became operational in 2025, has not contributed to simplifying or improving the project co-financing procedure.¹⁰⁹

ANEM published a database of competitions for project co-financing of media content of public interest in Serbia in 2025. The database contains information and documentation for 174 competitions announced by the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications, the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, and local self-governments.¹¹⁰

V SLAPP LAWSUITS AGAINST JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA

The Commercial Court in Belgrade issued a first-instance judgment dismissing the lawsuit filed by the publisher of the daily Kurir, which sought to oblige the publishers of the KRIK portal and the daily Danas to compensate the plaintiff for the damage allegedly caused by the publication of the analysis “Front Pages 2023: Six Newspapers, Over 1,150 Manipulations” by the Raskrikavanje portal. In both the lawsuit and the proceedings, the plaintiff argued that the defendants were competitors and that by publishing articles about the reporting practices of the daily Kurir, they engaged in acts of unfair competition. The lawsuit demanded compensation for non-pecuniary damages in the amount of RSD 11,000,000.¹¹¹

The publisher of Kurir lodged an appeal against the court’s decision.

In May of this year, proceedings were finally concluded in a case initiated by the same daily’s publisher against the “Crime and Corruption Reporting Network” (KRIK), the Slavko Ćuruvija Foundation, the publisher of the portal Cenzolovka, the company “Dan graf” d.o.o. Belgrade, the publisher of the daily Danas, and the association “Center for Intercultural Communication.” The lawsuit concerned the publication of the analysis “On the Front Pages of Five Newspapers Nearly 1,200 False and Unfounded News Reports in 2020” by KRIK’s Raskrikavanje portal. (See more in the Media Scene Monitoring in the Republic of Serbia for May 2025.)

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