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Members of ANEM at a recent meeting in Belgrade (photo: ANEM/Tanja Drobniak)

MONITORING OF THE MEDIA SCENE IN SERBIA FOR MAY 2026

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.

The text of 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

According to the 2026 World Press Freedom Index compiled by the international organization Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Serbia marked World Press Freedom Day from a lower position than it had occupied in previous years. Ranked 104th out of 180 countries and territories, Serbia was the lowest-ranked country in the region and among the lowest-ranked countries in Europe (see [Monitoring of the Media Scene in the Republic of Serbia for April 2026](#)).

At the World Congress of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), a resolution entitled “On the Escalation of Attacks, Media Capture and the Deterioration of Media Freedom in Serbia” was adopted. Submitted by the Independent Journalists’ Association of Serbia (NUNS), the resolution warned of the dramatic situation facing the media and journalists in Serbia. It highlighted the sharp increase in attacks, threats and various forms of pressure against journalists; the fact that senior state officials and members of the ruling party regularly engage in verbal attacks against journalists; the failure of the police to respond adequately, or their direct use of force, making them a source of danger to journalists; the labour-related and legal pressures journalists face, including SLAPP lawsuits; the installation and attempted installation of spyware; the serious deterioration of media pluralism and editorial independence (illustrated by the alleged involvement of the authorities in the relationship between the state-owned telecommunications company Telekom Srbija and United Media); as well as the fact that the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media (REM) remains incomplete and non-functional.¹

In light of these circumstances, the resolution calls on the Serbian authorities to promptly, objectively and effectively investigate every case of threats and attacks against journalists and media outlets; to ensure police protection for journalists while performing reporting assignments in the field; to halt smear campaigns and other forms of verbal violence carried out by public officials against media professionals; to publicly and unequivocally condemn hate speech and threats; and to prevent the use of state-owned companies as instruments of political and economic pressure on independent media. The resolution also calls on the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations, and other international partners to employ all available mechanisms to ensure that Serbia complies with its obligations regarding media freedom, media pluralism, the safety of journalists and their labour rights. In addition, the resolution requests that the IFJ Executive Committee continue to treat media freedom and journalists’ safety in Serbia as one of its priorities and maintain continuous dialogue on these issues with European and international institutions, including the European Union, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and relevant United Nations bodies.²

The dramatic increase in attacks against media professionals and media outlets compared to 2024 was also documented in the Annual Report of the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists for 2025. The report relies on data provided by the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office, the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) and the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS).³

According to data from the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office, a total of 134 cases were opened concerning criminal offences committed against journalists. Compared to the 65 cases recorded in 2024, this represents an increase of 106.15%. There were 28 physical attacks, compared to six in 2024, marking an increase of 366.67%. Only three convictions were handed down (compared to one in 2024 and twelve in 2023). The largest share of cases (48.51%) was handled by the Special Public Prosecutor's Office for High-Tech Crime, whereas in 2024 that proportion stood at 67.69%.⁴

The NUNS database recorded 380 attacks, compared to 168 in 2024, representing an increase of 126.19%. The number of physical attacks rose to 116, compared to 18 in 2024, an increase of 544.44%.⁵

According to the UNS database, 261 attacks were recorded, compared to 150 in 2024, representing an increase of 74%. The number of physical attacks rose to 60, compared to 13 in 2024, an increase of 361.54%.⁶

Ten international organisations working to protect journalists and defend press freedom⁷ sent letters to ministers responsible for European affairs across Europe in order to inform them of the findings gathered during their fact-finding missions to Belgrade, as well as of data concerning physical, legal and online attacks against journalists recorded on international monitoring platforms. Their conclusion was that the situation in Serbia has significantly deteriorated since November 2024, when the protests began.⁸ The ministers were urged to support European Commissioner Marta Kos's call to suspend European Union funding to Serbia as a response to the country's continued democratic backsliding and its close relationship with Russia. The organisations also called on the ministers to publicly and urgently demand that the Serbian authorities take all necessary measures to stop repression and violence against journalists and the smear campaigns targeting them; ensure that all crimes committed against journalists are prosecuted; reform law enforcement institutions; improve journalists' protection during protests; end arbitrary surveillance of journalists; establish meaningful institutional and legal safeguards to ensure their protection; and address the problem of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs).⁹



Representatives of media associations with Michael O'Flaherty (photo: CoE Commissioner's Office)

The deterioration of the situation concerning Serbia's state human rights institutions was also noted by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Michael O'Flaherty. During his visit to Serbia, where he met with representatives of civil society, the media and the academic community, he stated that the situation was worse than it had been during his previous visit in April 2025.¹⁰ In his official statement, the Commissioner stressed that the decline in the integrity of these institutions must be halted without delay. He emphasized the importance of independent human rights institutions and agreed with the assessment expressed by several of his interlocutors that, in the areas covered by his visit, the Protector of Citizens (Ombudsman) was failing to fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to that institution under its mandate. The Commissioner also expressed concern over physical attacks against journalists and threats to the safety of journalists and their family members, pointing out the inadequate response of the police. His statement referred to data from the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists, according to which, of approximately 200 attacks against journalists recorded during 2024 and 2025, only five resulted in final court judgments. The statement also highlighted the vulnerability of media outlets and media professionals resulting from the large number of SLAPP lawsuits filed against them, as well as the fact that state funding for the media and government advertising are predominantly directed towards media outlets close to the authorities.¹¹

ANEM on the Self-Protection of Media and Media Professionals

The Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) organized a discussion on the threats posed to the safety of media professionals through digital surveillance, particularly the installation of spyware on mobile phones. Participants were once again reminded that they are under no obligation to unlock their mobile phones at the request of police officers, and that any summons to appear at the premises of the Security Information Agency (BIA) cannot be issued arbitrarily but must follow a clearly prescribed legal procedure.¹²

Representatives of ANEM emphasized the importance of solidarity and cooperation among media outlets so that they can provide one another with assistance and support, particularly at a time when media freedom and the safety of media professionals are under such serious threat. In this regard, ANEM informed the public that its membership had grown to forty-five member media outlets.¹³ The fact that the 24-hour hotline established to assist media professionals received more than 600 calls during 2025 concerning threats to journalists' safety, and 380 calls during the last ten months alone, up to the end of April, speaks for itself.¹⁴



Media representatives in conversation with ANEM experts (photo: ANEM/Tanja Drobnjak)

Stars Above the Mud

The public—not only media professionals—reacted with outrage and unequivocally condemned the disgraceful message posted on the social network X by Predrag Azdejković, a member of the Radio Television of Serbia (RTS) Management Board, on the very day the public learned of the death of the renowned Serbian cartoonist Predrag Koraksić Koraks. His post read: “Petričić should get ready...” The message was interpreted as a threat directed at another distinguished cartoonist, Dušan Petričić, who has long been subjected to threats and intimidation.¹⁵ For more information on the threats against Petričić, see [Monitoring of the Media Scene in the Republic of Serbia for December 2025](#).

An Alpaca Sweater

At the end of May, it was confirmed that an agreement had been reached for the sale of Adria News S.à r.l., the company managing the regional media network Adria News Network (ANN), to the international investment group Alpac Capital. The Adria News Network (ANN) includes the television channels N1 and Nova, the daily newspaper Danas, the weekly magazine Radar, and the Montenegrin daily Vijesti.

The news of the sale of Adria News Network (ANN) to European Future Media Investments, managed by the Portuguese investment group Alpac Capital, the majority owner of Euronews, was first reported by the investigative journalism portal Raskrikavanje, citing the final draft of the agreement, which had not yet been signed but to which the outlet had obtained access.¹⁶ The Portuguese newspaper Expresso, referring to the same document, reported that the agreement obliges the purchaser to safeguard and respect editorial independence. However, it also noted that the agreement contains no mechanism for sanctioning any breach of that contractual obligation.¹⁷

Following the publication of reports about the possible sale, a coalition of twenty-seven civil society organisations and media associations¹⁸ expressed deep concern, warning that such a transaction could constitute one of the most significant threats to media pluralism in Europe, with far-reaching consequences. In their statement, the organisations stressed the need to examine Alpac Capital’s previous business activities.¹⁹ They reminded the public that Alpac Capital acquired a majority stake in Euronews in 2022, while investigative reports published by Direkt36 and Le Monde indicated that the acquisition had been financed in part through Hungarian state capital and companies closely associated with Viktor Orbán. Besides noting that the broadcasting licence for Euronews Serbia, under Alpac Capital’s ownership, had been granted to Telekom Srbija, the statement also referred to the recording of a conversation between Stan Miller, CEO of United Group, and Vladimir Lučić, CEO of Telekom Srbija. The transcript and audio recording of that conversation were published in August last year by OCCRP and KRIK. During the conversation, the participants discussed a strategy for weakening N1, as well as the request made by the President of the Republic of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, that Aleksandra Subotić, CEO of United Media, be removed from her position.²⁰ Alpac Capital re-

sponded by stating that it believes in “neutral, fact-based and independent journalism, combined with stable and sustainable business operations and financial performance.”²¹ At the same time, media experts and civil society representatives stressed the importance of considering the broader political and media environment in which independent and professional media outlets in the region have long been operating under pressure.²²

For more information on the departures of journalists from Euronews Serbia due to what they described as changes in editorial policy, pressure on editors and journalists, unjustified alterations of news reports, shortened interviews, cancellation of scheduled guest appearances, suppression of certain topics, bans on inviting particular interviewees and similar practices, see [Monitoring of the Media Scene in the Republic of Serbia for June 2025](#). For more information on the recording published by OCCRP and KRIK, see [Monitoring of the Media Scene in Serbia for August 2025](#), [December 2025](#), and [April 2026](#).

NIN Returns Under Politika’s Wing

NIN Publishing Company d.o.o. announced that it had transferred ownership of its entire publishing portfolio and all rights to the NIN brand to Politika Newspapers and Magazines d.o.o.²³ In this way, NIN returned to the ownership of Politika, from which it had separated in 1995.²⁴

Commenting on the change of publisher, Milan Ćulibrk, NIN’s former Editor-in-Chief, stated that such a development had been expected ever since Ringier Serbia d.o.o. transferred its ownership stake to Jelena Drakulić Petrović. According to Ćulibrk, this represented an “intermediate step” taken by Ringier in order to avoid “the reputational risk of handing over what had until then been a professional and independent publication into the hands of the authorities.”²⁵

Whose Our Portal?

Ana Mihajlovski Grubin, Editor-in-Chief and owner of the news portal Naš portal, announced that she was stepping down from all positions within the outlet because, as she explained, she could no longer guarantee the newsroom’s editorial autonomy, professional standards or the conditions necessary for independent journalistic work. According to media reports, Mihajlovski Grubin declined to comment either on the reasons behind her decision or on who, in her view, might have endangered the portal’s editorial independence.²⁶

Bratina

Dragan J. Vučićević, Editor-in-Chief of Informer TV, claimed that “Roma blockaders” who steal copper cables were responsible for the suspension of railway traffic throughout Serbia on 23 May, the day of the large-scale citizens’ protest held at Slavija Square.

Vučićević’s attempt—which was met with sharp public criticism²⁷—to equate Roma

with criminal behaviour and then use the term “blockaders” as a derogatory synonym for such behaviour was described by Minister of Information and Telecommunications Boris Bratina as an expression of media pluralism.

The Minister stated:

“I strongly condemn the continued attacks against Informer Television and its Editor-in-Chief Dragan J. Vučićević, considering that these pressures are aimed at suppressing media freedom and targeting anyone who dares to express views different from those accepted by ideologically like-minded circles.”²⁸

What Are You Bathing In?

The Council of the Agency for Audiovisual Media Services (SAMU) adopted a decision restricting the reception and retransmission of the entire programme of Informer TV for a period of six months due to a violation of Article 7(1) of the European Convention on Transfrontier Television. That provision requires programme content to respect human dignity and the fundamental rights and freedoms of others, and prohibits content that incites hatred, discrimination or intolerance.²⁹

According to the Agency’s statement, Informer TV broadcasts content that insults the dignity of the Montenegrin people, denies the Montenegrin national identity, promotes hate speech and discrimination, and demeans the dignity of the citizens and institutions of Montenegro. The documentary “Referendum – The Story of an Invented Freedom” was identified as only one of several examples of content violating professional and regulatory standards, rather than an isolated incident. As a result of broadcasting this documentary, the Agency initiated ex officio proceedings, pursuant to the Law on Audiovisual Media Services, against TV Adria and TV Prva, both broadcasters registered in Montenegro.³⁰



The Prosecution's Move

Following the attack on Insajder TV journalist Nataša Mijušković, the First Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade filed an indictment against Jelenko Pijevac. The attack occurred in November 2025, during the first day of the hunger strike launched by Dijana Hrka, the mother of Stefan Hrka, one of the victims who lost his life in the collapse of the railway station canopy in Novi Sad. For more information on the attack against Nataša Mijušković, see [Monitoring of the Media Scene in Serbia for November 2025](#).

The Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Zaječar rejected the appeal against the decision dismissing the criminal complaint filed by Miljko Stojanović, a journalist with Glas Zaječara, concerning the attack he suffered at the hands of police officers while reporting from a protest held in October of the previous year (see [Monitoring of the Media Scene in Serbia for October 2025](#)). Stojanović filed the criminal complaint against the Head of the Zaječar Police Department and a traffic police officer from the Zaječar Police Department, alleging reasonable suspicion that they had committed the criminal offence of Torture and Ill-Treatment, as defined in Article 137, paragraph 3, in conjunction with paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code.³¹

The appeal against the dismissal emphasized that: the public prosecutor had failed to establish the facts fully and accurately; substantive law had been applied incorrectly; the evidence had not been properly assessed; the prosecutor ignored the fact that Stojanović had been present at the scene in his capacity as a journalist; no explanation had been provided as to how the journalist sustained his injuries, despite evidence contained in Stojanović's testimony and the expert medical report; contradictions between the injured party's statement, witness testimony and police officers' statements remained unresolved; and eyewitnesses visible in the video recordings of the incident had never been questioned (in a statement given to ANEM, Stojanović's legal representative added that five notarised eyewitness statements had also been submitted together with the appeal).³²

The Basic Public Prosecutor's Office based its decision on a report prepared by the Ministry of the Interior's Internal Control Sector, according to which no irregularities had been found in the conduct of the police officers, as well as on a forensic medical expert opinion concluding that there was no evidence of conduct that could be classified as ill-treatment, torture or a violation of human dignity.³³

II ATTACKS, THREATS AND PRESSURES

The Targeting of Veran Matić

The Press Council's Complaints Commission unanimously found that Večernje novosti, Alo, 24sedam, and Užice Oglasna tabla had violated the Code of Journalists of Serbia³⁴ by publishing the article entitled "The Stages of a Colour Revolution Under the Patronage of Tycoon-Owned and Militarised Media: The Same Pattern Two Decades After 5 October" (Užice Oglasna tabla republished the article from Večernje novosti), as well as the article "Propaganda and Colour Revolutions: How Militarised Media Created Chaos in Serbia on Two Occasions" (Alo republished the article from 24sedam). According to the Commission's decision, the publication "resembles a political pamphlet far more than a journalistic article."

The decision further states:

"The Commission once again emphasizes that this is a well-established narrative that places journalists in real physical danger, portraying them as a subversive force conducting a so-called colour revolution financed by suspicious foreign centres of power. (...) Such reporting is contrary to the fundamental principles of journalism, which require journalists to publish accurate and verified information, report impartially, clearly distinguish facts from commentary, assumptions and speculation, and refrain from publishing defamatory allegations and rumours."³⁵



Veran Matic with ANEM members
(photo: ANEM/Tanja Drobnjak)

Expressing concern for Veran Matić's safety, members of the Commission stated that, following the established pattern of targeting, "a target is being placed on Matić's forehead." Filip Švarn warned that "this appears to be preparation for something directed against Veran," while Jelena Petković described the articles as "frightening and dangerous," not only for Matić but also for ANEM's member media outlets.³⁶

The Case of Predrag Simonović

After Predrag Simonović—a columnist for the weekly Radar, a retired police officer, and a former member of the Ministry of the Interior's Working Group within the Commission for the Investigation of the Murders of Journalists—was granted access to the case file concerning the criminal complaint he had filed after receiving a comment beneath his article entitled "A New Criminal Police Directorate Takes the Stage – Personnel Solve Everything", he learned the identity of the person who had posted the disputed comment. The comment, stating that Simonović "walks alongside the frozen Danube in this winter weather," had prompted him to file a criminal complaint on the grounds that it endangered his personal safety. Simonović discovered that the comment had been posted by a former member of the Security Information Agency (BIA) whom he had met before publishing his book *Operativac (The Operative)*.³⁷ According to Simonović, the former BIA officer invited him to an "informal" meeting during which he suggested that the book would have been "better" had certain reports been omitted and advised him to turn to the Church. On that occasion, he gave Simonović three icons—one for him, one for his wife and one for his underage daughter, whom he addressed by name. Simonović reported this conversation to the competent public prosecutor's office. However, the prosecution concluded that the reported conduct did not contain the elements of a criminal offence.³⁸

A Shield Instead of a Baton

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) condemned the attack on Aleksandar Blanuša, Editor of the local news portal Volim Zrenjanin. The incident occurred in Zrenjanin, in front of stands set up by the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS). According to Blanuša's statement to UNS, a confrontation broke out at the city's main market between supporters of the ruling party and activists of the United Phantoms Movement. When Blanuša attempted to obtain a statement from Zrenjanin Mayor Simo Salapura, SNS activists and supporters began pushing him, tripping him and otherwise obstructing him while he was performing his journalistic duties.³⁹

The editorial staff of the Zoomer portal also reported that one of its journalists was pushed with a riot shield by a police officer⁴⁰ while filming a police intervention following the conclusion of the protest held at Slavija Square on 23 May. According to the SafeJournalists Network's database of attacks against journalists, the journalist was standing in Kralja Milana Street when an armoured police officer prevented her from recording the police operation by pushing and striking her with his shield. She was not injured, and the incident was not officially reported.⁴¹ Footage published by Zoomer also shows police officers striking a young man with batons.⁴²

Threats and Hardship

Beneath an Instagram post in which the editorial staff of the independent media outlet Mašina invited readers to support its work through donations, a user operating under the account Batko97 posted the following threat: "I'm donating a bullet to your forehead—that's the only donation you'll get."⁴³ The threat was immediately reported both to the contact points for the safety of journalists and to the Special Department for Combating High-Tech Crime.⁴⁴ The incident prompted strong condemnation from the professional community.⁴⁵

The Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) also condemned threatening messages received by journalist Srđan Nonić through the Facebook page Niška inicijativa. Using the account Sale, an individual sent Nonić the following message: "You're filth. You should be hanged! Filthy scumbag." ANEM further reported that, after receiving these messages, Nonić was also subjected to an equally disturbing telephone call. The caller threatened him with physical violence, stated that he knew the address where Nonić lived with his family, and added that he himself lived in their immediate neighbourhood.⁴⁶ The case was reported to the competent state authorities.⁴⁷

High Pressure

The practice of preventing journalists from reporting on events continued throughout May. Journalists and camera crews were denied access to a session of the Teaching and Research Council of the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, where a proposed compromise between the Faculty, the Ministry of Education, the University, and the newly established Faculty of Serbian Studies was to be discussed.⁴⁸ Although she had submitted an accreditation request the previous day, Ljiljana Stojanović, a journalist with the news portal eStvarnost, was not allowed to report from a session of the Municipal Assembly of Aranđelovac.⁴⁹ Likewise, despite having been duly accredited, a reporter from N1 Television was prevented from covering the inaugural session of the Municipal Assembly of Kula.⁵⁰

Following repeated questions posed live on air by N1 journalist Tatjana Aleksić regarding whether her appointment had been made in accordance with the law and whether she intended to stand as a candidate for the position of Vice-Dean, Professor Valentina Arsić Arsenijević, Acting Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Belgrade, responded by attacking the journalist personally, stating:

“You are extremely malicious—a malicious journalist—and I intend to report this to your editor. You are completely legally illiterate to make such claims. You are an absolute and complete amateur, both when it comes to the law and, frankly, bordering on incompetence in your own profession as a journalist.”⁵¹

Photo: Mašina



III MONITORING THE ADOPTION OF NEW LEGISLATION

During May, there were no significant developments regarding the adoption of new legislation.

IV IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING LEGISLATION

Project Co-financing of Media Content

The Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) organized a two-day discussion on the system of project co-financing of media content. Representatives of forty local media outlets exchanged experiences and agreed that the current project co-financing system has become devoid of purpose, as funding is allocated only to selected media outlets and non-governmental organisations. According to the participants, members of project evaluation commissions often lack the necessary expertise, while the inadequate scoring system substantially contributes to this problem. Many media outlets have become discouraged from applying for public funding. Submitting applications to



Photo: Unsplash/Mathieu Stern

calls under which they have never received financial support has become, in their view, nothing more than a waste of time and resources.⁵²

According to an ANEM analysis published in May, the project co-financing mechanism has indeed become largely meaningless. According to the analysis, publishers of tabloid newspapers known for repeatedly violating the Code of Journalists of Serbia⁵³—Alo and Informer (through Alo Media System and Insajder Tim, together with their affiliated companies)—received more than RSD 58 million in public funding. Media publishers owned by Radoica Milosavljević received more than RSD 50 million for the media outlets RTV Kruševac, TV Pirot, TV Leskovac, RTV Caribrod, and TV Požega. Zaple Media Group, a company that launched several local media outlets at the beginning of 2026, all headed by the same Editor-in-Chief, Gradimir Banković, an associate of the Centre for Social Stability, received funding for two projects—one in Užice, worth RSD 2.1 million, and another in Požega, worth RSD 1 million.⁵⁴

According to information published by the daily newspaper Danas, the unregistered broadcaster Niš TV, whose publisher is Ini Media, has received at least RSD 23 million⁵⁵ from public sources since it began broadcasting. The station launched its programme with an appearance by the President of the Republic of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić.

An analysis published by the media watchdog portal Cenzolovka showed that, over the ten years since the introduction of project co-financing, publishers of pro-government media outlets—including Informer, Srpski telegraf, Alo, Kurir, and Večernje novosti, together with their affiliated media—received more than EUR 2.8 million through media co-financing competitions organised by local self-government units, the Ministry of Information, and the Provincial Secretariat. The breakdown is as follows: Informer received approximately RSD 82 million (more than EUR 690,000); Večernje novosti and Radio Novosti received more than RSD 77 million (approximately EUR 654,000); Alo received just under RSD 73 million (approximately EUR 613,000); Kurir and Espresso received approximately RSD 61 million (around EUR 514,000); Srpski telegraf and the Republika portal received approximately RSD 44 million (around EUR 370,000).⁵⁶

The Ministry of Information and Telecommunications (MIT) blocked, within the Single Information System (JIS), the possibility for Slavoljub Ristić and Biljana Ratković Njegovan to continue being appointed as members of project evaluation commissions, on the grounds that they hold public office.⁵⁷

For more information on ANEM's letters requesting certain local self-government units to revoke decisions appointing Slavoljub Ristić and Biljana Ratković Njegovan to project evaluation commissions because they perform public functions, as well as ANEM's request to the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications to block their appointment through the Single Information System (JIS), see [Monitoring of the Media Scene in the Republic of Serbia for March 2026](#).



V SLAPP LAWSUITS AGAINST JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA OUTLETS

The Second Basic Court in Belgrade delivered a first-instance judgment in proceedings brought against the Slavko Ćuruvija Foundation following lawsuits filed by former members of the State Security Department—Miroslav Kurak, Ratko Romić, and Milan Radonjić. The lawsuits concerned a [public statement](#) issued by the Foundation expressing disagreement with the decision of the Belgrade Court of Appeal to finally acquit Kurak, Romić and Radonjić of charges relating to the murder of journalist Slavko Ćuruvija.⁵⁸

The court partially upheld the plaintiffs' claims. Each plaintiff had sought RSD 500,000 in compensation for non-pecuniary damage resulting from the alleged violation of their honour and reputation. The court awarded RSD 200,000 to each plaintiff. Including litigation costs, the first-instance judgment ordered the Slavko Ćuruvija Foundation to pay the plaintiffs a total of RSD 1,035,000.⁵⁹

The Foundation appealed the judgment, maintaining that the disputed statement constituted nothing more than criticism of the judiciary and arguing that the first-instance court had failed to take into account the evidence and legal arguments presented by the defence during the proceedings. Among the evidence ignored by the court was a Supreme Court judgment establishing that the final judgment of the Belgrade Court of Appeal—the judgment referred to in the Foundation's statement—had involved a serious violation of the provisions of criminal procedure in favour of the plaintiffs.⁶⁰

The professional community described the judgment as a failure of the judiciary, a restriction on freedom of expression, and yet another step backwards in the pursuit of justice.⁶¹ The National Working Group on Combating SLAPPs stated that the judgment represented: *“a textbook example of a SLAPP lawsuit—a Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation—whose purpose is not the protection of rights, but rather the intimidation, financial exhaustion and deterrence of organisations, journalists, activists and other actors from speaking publicly on issues that are unquestionably of public interest.”*⁶²

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- 1 [„Na Kongresu IFJ u Parizu usvojena rezolucija o eskalaciji napada i urušavanju medijskih sloboda u Srbiji”](#), text published on 6 May 2026 on NUNS website.
- 2 Same
- 3 [„Izveštaj o radu Stalne radne grupe za bezbednost novinara za 202May godinu”](#), authors: Tatjana Vasiljević Veljković, Miroslav Janković and Dragana Bjelica
- 4 Same
- 5 Same
- 6 Same
- 7 The list of organisations: Free Press Unlimited (FPU), ARTICLE 19, Europe Association of European Journalists (AEJ), Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF), European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), Index on Censorship International Press Institute (IPI), Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa (OBCT), Reporters Without Borders (RSF).
- 8 [„Serbia: 10 organisations ask Ministers for European Affairs to draw a red line on media freedom”](#), letter published 11 May 2026 on Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR) website.
- 9 Same
- 10 [„Serbia: authorities should ensure safety of demonstrators and improve working environment for civil society and human rights defenders - Commissioner for Human Rights”](#), text published on 28 April 2025 on Council of Europe website.
- 11 [„Serbia: Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights observes deteriorating human rights situation”](#), statement by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Michael O’Flaherty published on 22 May 2026 on Council of Europe website.
- 12 [„Izazovi i pretnje po bezbednost novinara u Srbiji: Šta su problemi i kako se zaštititi”](#), text published on 15 May 2026 on ANEM website.
- 13 [„Skupština ANEM: Osnaživanje medijske scene može dovesti do bitnih društvenih promena”](#), text published on 14 May 2026 on ANEM website.
- 14 [„Međunarodni dan SOS telefona: Više od 600 poziva preko Sigurne linije za novinare u 202May godini”](#), text published on 16 May 2026 on ANEM website.
- 15 [„ANEM: Osuda neprimerene poruke Predraga Azdejkovića i poziv UO RTS da reaguje”](#), ANEM statement published on 19 May 2026 on their website; [„NUNS: Neprimerena poruka člana UO RTS-a o Dušanu Petričiću nedopustiva je i opasna”](#), statement published on 19 May 2026 on their website.
- 16 [„Vlasnici Euronews-a kupuju N1, Nova S i još desetak regionalnih medija za 30 miliona evra”](#), authors: Vesna Radojević and Stefan Kosanović, text published on 14 May 2026 on Raskrikavanje website.
- 17 [„Portugalski Expresso: Ugovor ne garantuje uređivačku nezavisnost medija Junajted grupe”](#), author Marija Vučić, text published on 20 May on Cenzolovka website.
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51 [„N1 Studio live”](#) aired on 12 May 2026 on TV N1.

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