





SOLIDARITY FOR THE RIGHTS OF ALL





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1. INTRODUCTION

November 7, 2020, the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights -YUCOM launched the first interactive map of attacks and pressures on human rights defenders in Serbia. The launch of the map was preceded by the development of the methodology that would be compatible with similar regional and international maps and serve as an international advocacy instrument for the protection and advancement of individuals, registered and informal human rights organizations in Serbia. The data collected on the basis of the adopted methodology showed the justification of the development of this instrument and confirmed the difficult position of this vulnerable group of citizens in Serbia. Through research of publicly available data and interviews with victims of pressures and attacks, 100 pressures and attacks have been registered on the map since the beginning of 2020, both on those dealing with the protection of human rights and on those who, to their actions, found themselves due in that role and suffered the consequences. For example, not all attacks on journalists and the media have been registered, but only situations in which they had the role of human rights defenders. Group attacks have been registered on the map as individual attacks on all the victims, in order to get a better overview of attacks

and pressures on specific organizations, informal groups and individuals.

Through a statistical overview available on the map, the public can gain insight into data on the gender and place of residence of the victims of the attacks, whether the repression is suffered by an individual directly, colleague or family member. Data on the attacker, type of attack and type of threatened right are also available. Based on all the data collected so far, it can be concluded that during 2020, the most vulnerable rights were freedom of expression and freedom of association, and these rights were chosen to be the focus of the first annual report on attacks on human rights defenders in Serbia in 2020. The report aims to provide the interested domestic and international public with a simple insight into the current situation and information on the position of human rights defenders in Serbia, which have not been available so far on similar maps of regional and international type.



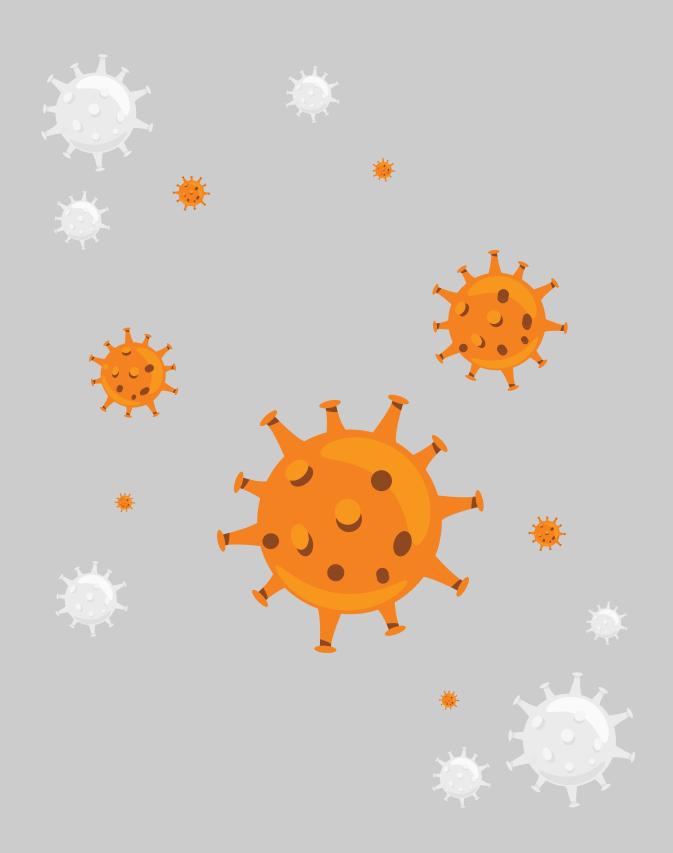
2. MOST COMMONLY VIOLATED RIGHTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

he attacks recorded during 2020 show that the most vulnerable rights were the right to freedom of expression and the right to freedom of association. The freedom of expression of activists was seriously threatened, most often as a form of retaliation for a spoken word. Although in most cases it was not a matter of direct censorship, there is a trend of systematic pressure on those who pointed out the illegalities and irregularities in the work of state bodies. In that way, an extremely unfavorable social climate was created in which those who point out omissions in work at all levels of government are marked as "traitors" by the highest officials, such as Goran Vesic, Deputy Mayor of Belgrade, or the members of the Serbian National Assembly.

Freedom of association was also not directly threatened by prescribing formal legal restrictions on association, but individuals were frequently targeted precisely because of their activities in NGOs or informal groups. In addition, the organizations were frequent targets of attacks - the most massive attack was the case of the "List of the Administration for Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing", and

there were also attacks on property (several cases of attacks on the premises of the Don't Let Belgrade D(r) own Initiative). The established anti-NGO vocabulary, which has existed in the public discourse since the 1990s, is in use again, and anonymous users often publish various lists of enemy organizations on the Internet.

The practice of the High Court in Belgrade does not support freedom of association, since in one of its judgements it took the position that a non-governmental organization has no right to protection of honor and reputation, since it operates as a non-profit association.



3.

INDIVIDUAL ATTACKS

3.1. Attacks on human rights defenders in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

In the period from March to May 2020, the state of emergency was imposed due to epidemic of COVID-19.¹ In order to prevent the spread of the infections disease, limitations of numerous human rights were imposed that were not proportionate nor necessary in a democratic society. Along with significant limitation and threatening of the citizens' rights during the pandemic of COVID-19, there was an increase in the number of attacks on human rights defenders. Although only a small number of these attacks could be directly linked with COVID-19, it could be assumed that the increase in the number of attacks was the reaction of the governing authorities on the critical work of the civil society during the course of the pandemic.²

Healthcare workers, signatories of the informal initiative United against COVID for the dismissal of the state Crisis Team for fight against COVID-19 have suffered the attacks by the governmental officials, pressures, and harassment at work places as of its announcement on July 21, 2020. The attacks

1 March 15 - May 6, 2020.

culminated on September 17, 2020, when the department chiefs of the Military Medical Academy, who supported this initiative, were <u>dismissed</u>. After formal establishing of the association United against COVID and announcement of the protest, they had a meeting on September 24 with Zlatibor Loncar, Minister of Health. According to the <u>statements</u> of the association United against COVID, only in Clinical Hospital Center Zvezdara ten doctors of various specialties who had signed the proclamation had left until September 24, 2020 due to the pressures.

One of the attacks of pro-government media was directed against the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights - YUCOM in the text "THE ROCKEFELLERS MAKE THE CRISIS TEAM IN THE SHADOW: We discover why huge amounts of money arrive to the NGOs" published in the daily newspaper Srpski telegraf and on the portal Republika, and YUCOM was accused of making the "crisis team in the shadow", and of being the initiator of United against COVID. The attack came as the reaction to the open support YUCOM showed to the group of doctors in United against COVID, due to the pressures they were exposed to.

Another attack that could be directly linked to COVID-19 was an order from the City Emergency Headquarters in Bor, dated April 6, 2020, which adopted 11 orders referring to the provisions of the Law on Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Situations Management despite the fact that there was no proclamation of the emergency situation in the Republic of Serbia, including the territory of the city of Bor, but the state of emergency was declared.

² For example, on July 14, 2020, the Platform of Organizations for Cooperation with the UN Human Rights Mechanisms sent an <u>urgent appeal</u> to Nils Melzer, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, regarding police brutality and use of excessive force during peaceful protests against the measures of the Government of the Republic of Serbia in the fight against the pandemic of COVID-19.





One of the orders foresaw the introduction of the obligation to "make available all available human resources of citizens' associations" to the City Headquarters. After the <u>analysis</u> prepared by several civil society organization that disputable provisions constituted unconstitutional and unlawful limitation of human rights, it was quickly revoked and replaced by the recommendations.

3.2. Abuse of anti-terrorism legislation to intimidate human rights defenders

On July 28, 2020, the local public was informed of the most significant attack on the human rights defenders in the previous year, when the media disclosed the request sent by the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Serbia (Administration) to the business banks working on the territory of Serbia. Namely, the Administration made this request in order to have access to the transactions on the accounts of 20 individuals and 37 civil society organizations dealing with the rule of law and protection of human rights, as well as associations of journalists. Having in mind that the Administration referred to in Article 733 of the Law on Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing in its request, thus, the individual and organizations from that list were thus labelled as suspects in money laundering, that is, financing of terrorism.

On that same day, the majority of the victims of this attack issued a joint public statement "Civil society and the media will not give up the fight for democratic and free Serbia" requesting from the Ministry of Finance and the Administration to immediately present the reasons for doubt due to which they imposed extraordinary collection of information from the business banks. The following day, the professional associations of judges and prosecutors, Judges' Association of Serbia, Association of the Prosecutors of Serbia, and Judicial Research Center (CEPRIS) issued a separate statement requesting from the Administration to present the grounds for suspicion. The individuals and representatives of the organizations addressed the banks and the Administration with the request for access the information of public importance and

3 Art. 73 of the Law stipulates that a request may be made when the Administration assesses that in connection with certain transactions or persons there are grounds for suspicion of money laundering or terrorist financing. use of personal data. The Protector of Citizens also announced the control of the work of Administration on July 29, 2020.

The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society of the Government of the Republic of Serbia issued the statement on July 30, 2020, stating that precisely the cooperation with the civil society organizations and establishing of the adequate mechanism for supervision of non-profit sector had significantly contributed to improvement of the system against money laundering and terrorist financing in the Republic of Serbia, including removal of Serbia from the gray list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). They added that it was necessary to remove all doubts in respect of transparency of the ongoing process of control and supervision, primarily in order to preserve confidence that had been successfully built in the previous period and had been the basis of quality multisector cooperation that had led to positive results for the Republic of Serbia.

On July 28, the Administration confirmed sending of the request, and on August 12, 2020, the Minister of Finance assessed its actions as lawful. The President of the Republic of Serbia said that NGOs making noise was their attempt to secure bigger foreign donations. The Administration subsequently confirmed that the public had seen only one part of the list with more than 100 organizations, and that it was not the check of those who engaged in critical thinking, but that it was part of the strategic analysis of the risk assessment.⁴

The organizations from the list informed the international public, and the European Commission reacted in the last <u>annual report on Serbia</u>, as well as the <u>US Embassy</u>, <u>Amnesty International</u> and the <u>European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights (ELDH)</u>.

After the initial reaction of the international community, the Administration gave different explanation, it was stated that the media had presented incorrect list, which was followed by the negative media campaign against the victims of this attack.⁵ After publishing of the article disclosing the list of organizations and individuals, the tabloid media had numerous articles accusing them for abuse of revenues and money laundering, and

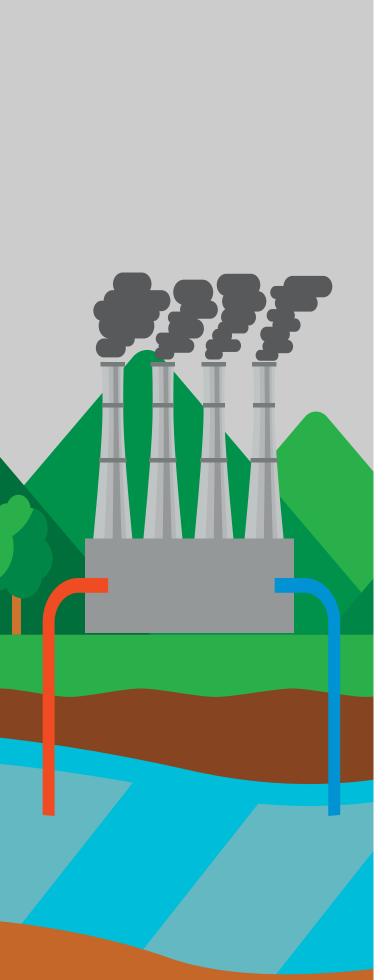
labeled them as foreign funded. In the author's article in *Srpski telegraf* on the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights - YUCOM, this organization was accused of misappropriation of money and organization of parallel institutions for fight against COVID-19, with the financial aid of the Rockefeller brothers. This campaign was joined by so-called GONGO organizations that provided full support to the Government of the RS. The support for the action of the Administration was provided by the Association of Judges and Prosecutors (UST), Council for monitoring, human rights and fight against corruption Transparency and National Avant-garde.

In the joint announcement of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, it was stated that Serbia had abused antiterrorism laws to target and limit the work of nongovernmental organizations. During implementation of the procedure against the Republic of Serbia, Special Procedures of the UN addressed the FATF, which issued the statement that the Republic of Serbia had violated the recommendation 29 of this inter-governmental organization, which defines the boundaries of authorizations of the bodies of financial information service.

Very often in the discourse of various political stakeholders, the idea could be heard that the work of the NGO sector in Serbia should be regulated in accordance with the restrictive model adopted in the Russian Federation. Serbian Radical Party, once the only significant political party that openly advocated the ban of financing of NGOs "that work against the interests of Serbia", did not win any seats in the Parliament, despite the anti-NGO rhetoric being the basis of their election campaign. However, it is particularly worrying that the abuse of anti-terrorist legislation against non-governmental organizations is characteristic to the Russian Federation, where activists are designated as foreign agents in accordance with the Law, and who are often the target of the Anti-Extremism Law in that country.

⁴ Network of organizations EU National Convent organized the event "Open about the List" on October 15, 2020, where Zeljko Radovanovic, Acting Director of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering spoke.

⁵ See: https://www.republika.rs/vesti/tema-dana/221220/stranci-odresili-kesu-miliona-evra-nvo-srbiji



3.3 Attacks on human rights defenders dealing with environmental protection

The media campaign against organizations dealing with environmental protection in Serbia began in July 2020 with articles published in high-circulation tabloids *Republika*⁶ and *Informer*, but it was mostly carried out through a series of texts⁷ published on the unregistered Internet portal *Prismotra*. In the implementation of this campaign, *Prismotra* had the support of numerous local media,⁸ co-financed from the budget of the units of local self-government, which republished their texts in full.

The mentioned texts are mostly connected by the idea that the victims of the attack, publicly criticizing the excessive and illegal emission of harmful substances from thermal power plants, mines, factories and ironworks, threatened the employment and existence of a large number of people with the aim to destroy the country economically.

As a rule, they are accused of being foreign agents, of working for foreign interests and of being paid from abroad. They are often accused of embezzling funds, while in one example the director of the association was accused of quackery and belonging to a sect.⁹ The largest number of attacks refers to the Center for Ecology and Social Development - CEKOR, while the Regulatory Institute for Renewable Energy and Environment - RERI, Civic Reversal, Movement Let's Defend the Forests of Fruska gora and Trag Foundation also suffered similar attacks. It is important to note that the Prime Minister of Serbia

- 6 Republika is the Internet portal of Srpski telegraf.
- 7 Republika: July 3, 2020 "We discover: Soros and SZS hit Kolubara"; Informer: July 14, 2020 "NGOs financed by the USA and the EU falsely attacked Chinese companies that invested 2.74 billion EUR in Serbia and employed thousands of people!"; Prismotra: August 16, 2020 What is the organization "CEKOR"? Economic killers in Serbia"; August 22, 2020 "Who is Dragana Arsic?" Fake ecologist attacks Fruska gora "; August 25, 2020 "Who pays for anti-Chinese propaganda in Serbia?" List of donations of the organization "CEKOR"; September 25, 2020 "This woman draws people into a sect! What has "CEKOR" got to do with sects? "; November 2, 2020 "These are anti-Chinese lobbyists in Serbia"; November 27, 2020 "This is the lawyer of anti-Chinese lobbyists! Who is Sreten Djordjevic?
- 8 TV Rubin, TV Novi Becej, TV Becej, TV Subotica, TV Dunav, RTV Pancevo, Vranjska TV, TV Kikinda and portals srbijadanas.com, vesti.rs, infopress.rs and association Center for information Novi Knezevac.
- 9 September 25, 2020 Prismotra: "This woman draws people into a sect! What does "CEKOR" have to do with sects? "

spoke in connection with the topic of pollution in 2016, and that he justified the import of technologies from the People's Republic of China that do not meet environmental standards in that country by the need to employ people and save the economy.

Prismotra Internet portal, which operated from the beginning to the end of 2020, was not registered as media, did not have an impressum, nor were the identities of its owner, editor or author of the texts known, which made it significantly more difficult to obtain legal protection. Prismotra was created after closing of the similar portal Istraga at the end of 2019. This portal specifically targeted not only the organizations but also the individual activists, whose edited photos were published accompanied by accusations of acting against the interests of Serbia, as well as accusations of committing serious crimes. The aim of these texts was to intimidate the victims, since based on their content it is not difficult to imagine that they could inspire individuals or groups to violence.

After the attack by the portal *Prismotra*, CEKOR issued the <u>public announcement</u> in which, among other things, it stated that by publishing the address of the organization, photos of activists and inaccurate and untrue information about their work, the integrity and safety of employees and associates were endangered. CEKOR stated that in the specific case, the competent authorities should conduct an *ex officio* investigation.

During 2020, numerous credible media sources reported the activities of Prismotra.¹⁰ Nevertheless, no information is available on whether the competent prosecutor's office has opened an investigation, either based on victims' reports or ex officio, against the unidentified persons behind *Prismotra*. Due to the aforementioned obstacles, other effective mechanisms of protection against the activities of this portal haven not been available to many victims of Prismotra. However, the domestic media, which republished *Prismotra* texts in entirety, were exposed to legal liability. Probably, thanks to that, the support of many local media weakened over time, and in the end, it almost disappeared. After the announcement of December 20, 2020, portal Prismotra would be closed, the website was suspended and published texts are available online on the websites of certain

See: http://voice.org.rs/prismotra-ekstremno-desnicarski-portal-koji-se-najvise-voli-u-zemunskoj-birtiji/; https://uns.org.rs/sr/desk/vesti-iz-medija/100466/sinhronizovani-napadi-na-novinare-i-civilno-drustvo-hajke-opskurnog-portala-prenose-rezimske-televizije.html; https://uns.org.rs/sr/desk/vesti-iz-medija/108849/novinari-aktivisti-javne-licnosti-u-srbiji-na-meti-laznih-prismotra-i-istraga.html; https://insajder.net/sr/sajt/tema/20179/

local media that re-published them.¹¹ *Prismotra* is still active on its <u>Twitter account</u> and <u>Facebook page</u>.

Without establishing the identity and responsibilities of the persons connected with this portal, there are no obstacles for a new portal of a similar character appearing soon, as the successor of *Istraga* and *Prismotra*. The consequence will not only be a threat to the safety of victims targeted by incendiary texts, but the spread of false news also threatens the freedom of expression and freedom of the media. The Protector of Citizens, who previously dealt with the issue of spread of fake news on COVID-19, and who decided to sign the agreement on establishing of the platform for recording of pressures on the journalists with several associations of journalists, has not issued any statements in this respect.

A significant attack on organizations and individuals involved in environmental protection during 2020 were the numerous misdemeanor proceedings against the activists of the movement Defend the Rivers of Stara Planina (ORSP) in connection with public gatherings organized to defend the rivers of Stara Planina from the construction of mini hydropower plants during previous years. Namely, given the relatively long duration of these proceedings, it can take several years from the committed misdemeanor to the execution of the judgment, and many previously initiated proceedings received their epilogue only during 2020. A large number of these proceedings referred to providing of non-violent resistance, i.e. blocking the work of construction equipment.

Despite the fact that the efforts of ORSP came to a successful completion with a 15-year moratorium on the construction of 84 mini hydro power plants in the area of the city of Pirot, numerous activists are facing the possibility that the fines they were previously issued with for committed misdemeanor offences would be converted into prison sentences in case of their inability to make payments. Desimir Stojanov Desko, President of the Local Community Office and the activist of ORSP is the most known example with more than 60 pending misdemeanor proceedings in regards of the Law on Public Assembly and the Law on Public Order and Peace and two criminal complaints. This movement organized the actions of collection of financial aid in order to prevent Stojanov from serving the prison sentence due to inability to pay all imposed fines. This could have a strong deterrent effect on the activists in other parts of Serbia exposed to the threat of construction of mini hydro power plants, since the ban achieved in Rakita does not apply to the entire territory of Serbia.

¹¹ E.g. https://dunavtelevizija.rs/?s=prismotra; https://www.infopress.rs/?s=prismotra;



3.4. Attacks on human rights defenders involved in civic participation in urban planning and conservation of urban green spaces

During 2020, frequent attacks on organizations and individuals who advocate for strengthening civic participation in urban planning and the preservation of urban green spaces continued. Since the most important and the most visible part of their activities includes holding protest rallies, the attacks were mostly related to the initiation of misdemeanor proceedings in connection with the Law on Public Assembly and the Law on Public Order and Peace. With these actions, the police targets the organizers of spontaneous public gatherings, which are permitted by law, but contrary to logic only when they do not have an organizer. In accordance with that, the largest portion of the procedures refers to the violation of holding a gathering without report to a competent authority, for which a fine of 100,000 to 150,000 dinars is threatened, which in case of inability to pay can be converted into a prison sentence of up to 60 days. The most frequent victims of these actions are activists of the movement Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own, thus, Dobrica Veselinovic was convicted twice¹² in 2020 for violations of the Law on Public Gatherings. Veselinovic was also <u>summoned</u> for the hearing by the prosecutor's office due to doubt that he had jeopardized the life of the President, because he had filmed in the direction of the building of the Office of the President directly before the beginning of a spontaneous gathering. The same as in case of Desimir Stojanov Desko from Rakita, Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own was forced to organize <u>collection of the financial aid</u> in order to pay the fines for the convicted activists, so that they would not have to serve the prison sentence.

Along with two attacks by Goran Vesic, Deputy Mayor of Belgrade, who used his official Facebook page to make the posts that were published by the high-circulation tabloids¹³ in order to insult

- 12 See: https://nedavimobeograd.rs/dobrica-za-placanje-kazni/; https://nedavimobeograd.rs/prikupljena-sredstva-za-placanje-kazni/; https://nedavimobeograd.rs/prikupljena-sredstva-za-placanje-kazni/; https://nedavimobeograd.rs/dobrica-veselinovic-kaznjen-za-organizaciju-skupa-solidarnosti-srce-za-davida/
- 13 See: https://www.alo.rs/vesti/politika/vesic-nacionalni-stadion-je-razvojni-projekat-beograda/336137/vest; https://informer.rs/vesti/beograd/538436/koliki-bolesnik-treba-budes-

the activists of Let Belgrade D(r)own, there were also three attempts¹⁴ to break in their premises. At the occasion of the third attempt to break in the premises of Let Belgrade D(r)own, the graffiti was painted with symbols of the hate against the LGBT community, neo-Nazi symbols and swastikas. Let Belgrade D(r)own stated that this was the consequence of negative media campaign against that organization, and that the competent authorities failed to collect the surveillance videos from the surrounding buildings that could have been very helpful for identification and arrest of the perpetrators.

Due to a high demand for the apartments and business premises in Belgrade, and the low availability of land on good locations, the construction has been spreading to the detriment of the green surfaces in the city, which are increasingly threatened. The <u>criminal proceeding was initiated</u> against the Association for the Protection of Constitutionality and Legality (UZUZ) of Sava Manojlovic and the activists of the initiative Let's save our park who took part in defense of the park in Banovo brdo – Milena Popevic and Sasa Simic, based on the private criminal complaint of the company Niva building. The Investor also <u>sued</u> Radomir Lazovic, the activist of Let Belgrade D(r)own who took part in the gatherings and broadcasted them live on the social media.

Despite the protocol signed in July 2020 between the representatives of the investor Niva building, the initiative Let's save our park and the City of Belgrade based on which the park got the status of a green surface, and the investor was obliged to withdraw the lawsuit, the proceeding against the activists continued, and the investor <u>stated</u> that they would not give up the construction after all.

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14 See: https://nedavimobeograd.u-prostorije-ne-davimo-beograd/; https://nedavimobeograd.rs/treci-napad-na-ne-davimo-beograd-za-samo-nedelju-dana-kukasti-krstovi-i-grafiti-mrznje/

3.5. Attacks on human rights defenders who defend the right to home

During 2020, the informal associations and individuals who advocate for the protection of the right to a home and fight against the forced eviction of citizens in the enforcement procedure, were under intensified attack by the authorities. Although the initiation of misdemeanor or criminal proceedings against activists in this field is not uncommon, according to the Joint Action Roof Over Your Head, at the end of 2020 there was a sharp increase in the number of randomly initiated proceedings against the activists, indicating the intention to discourage citizens from providing support for the protection of the right to home. According to the public announcement of this informal association, from the end of 2020 until February 2021, 20 criminal and 60 misdemeanor proceedings were initiated against their activists.

Most of these proceedings relate to the offence of the alleged failure to carry personal documents at the rallies the activists claim to never have been a part of. At the same time, criminal proceedings were initiated in connection with the events of two or three years ago, which are based on the testimonies of police officers and public enforcement officers. It is most often a criminal offense of Obstruction of an official in the performance of official duties under Art. 23 of the Law on Public Order and Peace, which, in addition to the criminal offense of Insulting an official in the performance of official duties under Art. 24 of the same Law, is abused to prosecute the participants in peaceful public gatherings. In July 2020, three activists who took part in this informal gathering were punished with 10,000 RSD each due to obstruction of eviction, despite allegedly not being present at the location of the eviction, while one of the activists was charged in the misdemeanor proceeding due to participation in a fight.

During 2020, the activists of the Joint Action Roof Over Your Head were the victims of two separate physical assaults. On July 6, 2020, the activists Marko Djelevic and Mihajlo Nikolic were attacked with metal rods and knuckles in front of the Faculty of Philosophy by two unknown masked attackers on his return from the protest against cutting of the trees and for preservation of the park in that city. On July 8, 2020, Miran Pogacar was arrested and he was issued determined-english trees and for preservation of the park in that city. On July 8, 2020, Miran Pogacar was arrested and he was issued determined-english trees and for preservation of the park in that city. On July 8, 2020, Miran Pogacar was arrested and he was issued determined-english trees and for preservation of the park in that city. On July 8, 2020, Miran Pogacar was arrested and he was issued determined-english trees and for preservation of the park in that city. On July 8, 2020, Miran Pogacar was arrested and he was issued determined-english trees and for preservation of the park in that city. On July 8, 2020, Miran Pogacar was arrested and he was issued determined-english trees are the preservation of the park in that city. On July 8, 2020, Miran Pogacar was arrested and he was issued determined-english trees are the preservation of the park in that city are the preservation of the park in that city are the preservation of the park in that city are the preservation of the park in that city are the preservation of the park in that city are the park in the p

had committed a criminal offence Violent behavior, and in regards to stoning the Town Hall in Novi Sad. Pogacar was the leader of the protest in front of the Town Hall, where he stated all the requests of the gathering in regards to the fight against COVID-19. After being questioned in the prosecutor's office, Pogacar was released pending trial.

.6. Attacks on human rights defenders dealing with coming to terms with the past

Attacks on organizations and individuals dealing with coming to terms with the past are usually intensified every year before and during the commemoration of the anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide (July) and the cultural exchange festival between Belgrade and Pristina "Mirdita, good day!" (May and June). During 2020, the victims of the attack were painters and theater artists who, through their art, advocated for the Serbian society to face the events in Srebrenica in 1995. Internet portal *Prismotra* published three texts targeting the director, set designer and actors of the play ", Srebrenica, when we, the murdered rise", which was performed on September 24, 2020 at the Center for Cultural Decontamination. The first text of *Prismotra* "Who is Zlatko Pakovic? The sick artist in Serbophobia " published on September 22, also contains the announcement of the play, which, along with severe insults and accusations against the director, indicates the author's intention to encourage violence and an attempt to interrupt the play. The mentioned text was published by the local media¹⁵, the work of which is co-financed from the budget of the local self-government units.

In a similar manner, two more texts were published targeting the actors and the set designer of the play: "These actors work against Serbia!"¹⁶ and "Who is Nikola Dzafo? Sacrilege of the Serbian flag, anti-Serbian plays and exhibitions ..."¹⁷ Another victim of the attack by *Prismotra* was Jelena Jacimovic, the activist of Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own due to her exhibition "Stories and memories on the genocide in Srebrenica", held in the Center for Cultural Decontamination from September 28 to October 4, 2020. Along with the attacks on the artists, the relevant texts included the attacks on the Center for Cultural Decontamination, as the space where these events were held, and as its founder, late Borka Pavicevic.

During 2020, the Humanitarian Law Center, the organization that deals with coming to terms with the

¹⁵ RTV Pancevo and TV Dunav.

¹⁶ September 28, 2020.

¹⁷ October 15, 2020.

past, experienced four attacks that were connected with their fight against denial of the genocide in Srebrenica. The first attack occurred in the premises of Belgrade Municipality of Stari Grad during promotion of the book written by a convicted war criminal Vojislav Seselj titled "There was no genocide in Srebrenica", when the attendants physically attacked and insulted Natasa Kandic, President of the Humanitarian Law Center and six activists of this and other organizations (Youth Initiative for Human Rights, Forum ZFD, Women in Black). Promotions of the book that denies the genocide were held with impermissible use of public resources in the premises of the Municipalities of Novi Sad, New Belgrade, Ljubovija, Bajina Basta, Brus, Pirot and Krusevac.

There were two attacks on the Humanitarian Law Center in the texts published on the portal *Prismotra*: "How rich is Natasa Kandic? Should this money be taken away?"¹⁸ and "Second part of the list of people who work for Natasa Kandic"¹⁹, where Natasa Kandic and the activists of this organization were accused of misappropriation and illegal spending of the received donations. On May 26, 2020, the movement Balternativa initiated the Petition for ban of this organization, as well as other organizations dealing with coming to terms with the past (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Open Society Foundation, Fund for Political Excellence, Center for Cultural Decontamination, Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies and Women in Black).





¹⁸ September 21, 2020.

¹⁹ December 19, 2020.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

iolations of the rights of activists, as well as organizations that are recognized as organizations committed to the promotion of human rights, regardless of the sphere in which they operate and whether they consider themselves to human rights defenders are, as can be seen from the statistics, numerous and diverse. These are not only the violations of individual rights, suppression of the critical voice and public debate in a democratic society, but also the creation of a completely new environment for action. In this environment, human rights defenders become doctors who sign a petition against the decisions of the state Crisis Team, actors who try to influence post-conflict reconciliation in the region, a group of citizens who protect the river from a mini hydroelectric power plant or a park in the neighborhood from deforestation. In such an environment, anyone who opposes the decisions of the executive branch and shows it publicly, becomes a traitor and is recognized as a defender of human rights.

Despite not having the same legal effect as the <u>European Convention for the Protection of</u> <u>Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms</u> or <u>International Covenant on Civil and Political</u> <u>Rights</u>, the <u>Human Rights Declaration on the</u>

Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms has established the specific mechanism forcing a state to perform a certain obligation referred to in the Declaration and has a very significant role in the legal system of each member state of the Unites Nations, along with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It represents a series of obligations that a certain state must fulfill in order to enable the work of human rights defenders, that is, in order to refrain from interfering with their work. For that reason, few countries will directly attack the work of these organizations, but there are numerous, more subtle forms of attacks that are reflected in various pressures on individuals or attacks by unidentified persons, and which have significantly contributed to the feeling of vulnerability of many activists.

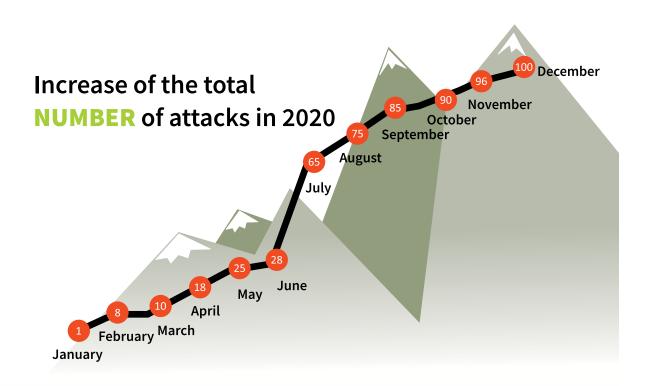
The fact that the right to freedom of expression and the right to association have been violated the most during this year does not diminish the importance of other rights that have also been violated or restricted. Special attention should be paid to the epidemiological situation, which for most of the year, for reasons of public health justified by the Constitution, significantly limited the right to freedom of assembly.

In a situation when there is not enough political will to respect international obligations, it is extremely difficult to formulate recommendations to the state, especially if we take into account that the largest number of attacks registered in our database came from state administration bodies. For this reason, the recommendations are of a general nature and aimed at creating a policy of dialogue with civil society organizations, which is only possible if all government officials urgently stop the rhetoric directed against human rights defenders.

- Urgently stop the practice of undermining of the achieved standards of human and minority rights.
- ▶ Urgently stop the practice of labeling individuals and organizations committed to the promotion of human rights as traitors, both by the executive and the legislative branch.
- ▶ Continuously work on creating a favorable social climate for the human rights defenders by undertaking of the concrete measures that would enable attacks on human rights defenders to be prosecuted in criminal proceedings, while respecting the rights of victims guaranteed by the Criminal Procedure Code.
- Continuously work on creating of a favorable social climate for human rights defenders by taking concrete measures that would enable civil and administrative proceedings in which human rights defenders appear as parties, which can be linked to their activities in in the field of human rights, in compliance with all procedural guarantees and international standards in this field.
- ▶ Administrative supervision over the work of the associations, as well as the activists who perform other activities, should be performed in accordance with the law when there is an appropriate legal basis, and in such a way that it does not interfere with an individual or organization in the process of work or implementation of activities.
- ► To inform all state administration bodies, legislative, executive and judicial branch with the Human Rights Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs

- of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the obligations Serbia has under this Declaration.
- Refrain in legislative activities from restricting the work of civil society organizations, imposing unjustified obligations or discrimination of any kind.

ANNEX I: Statistical overview of the attacks







CONTINUITY

of attacks

Individual

57%

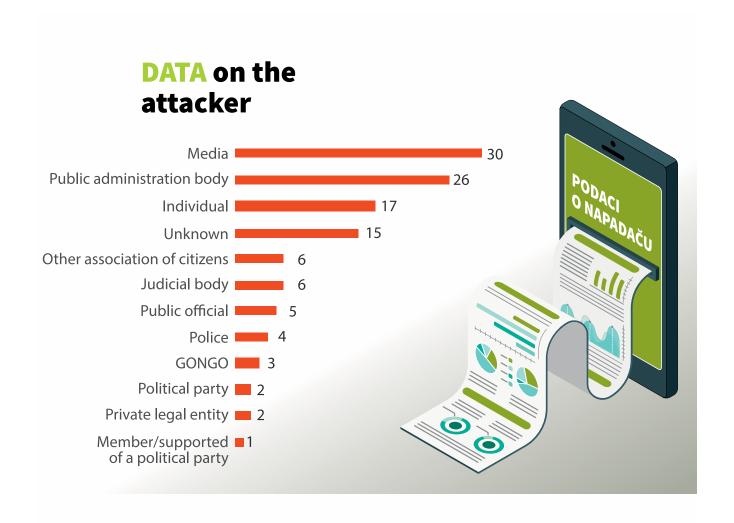
Repetitive

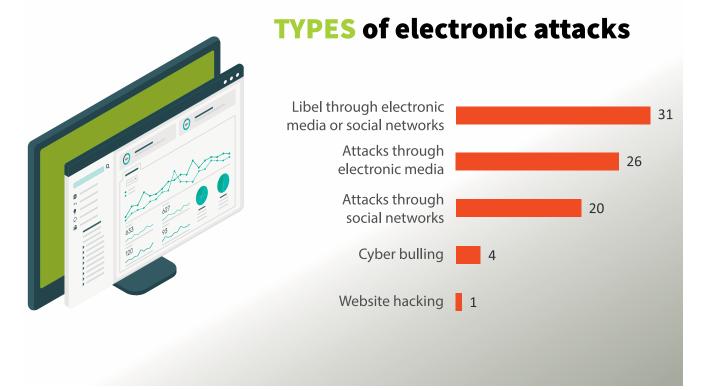
33%

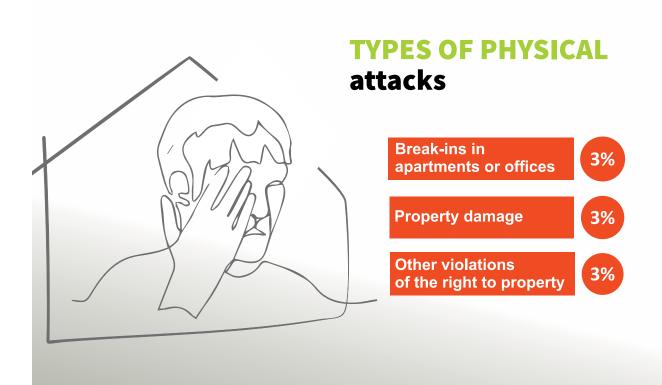
Continuous

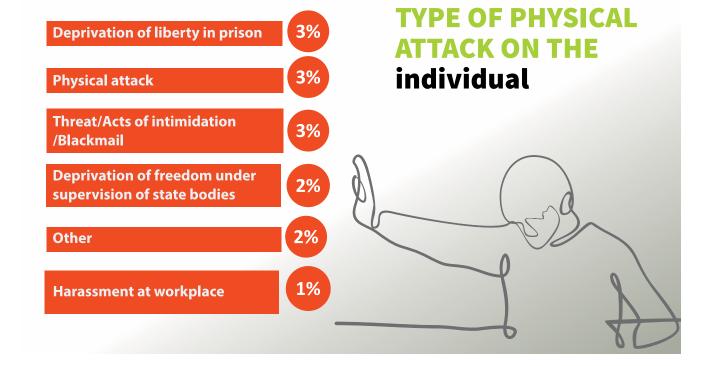
10%





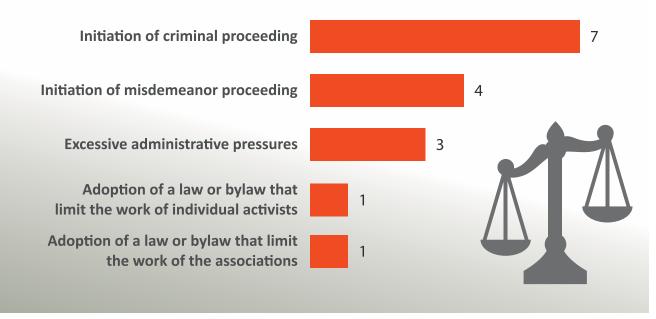






TYPES OF LEGAL ACTIONS CHARACTERIZED

as attacks or pressure





ANNEX II: List of attacks

Date	Title	Victim	Attacker	Type of attack
17/01/2020	Threats and insults at Instagram profile Da se zna!	Da se zna!	Individual, unknown	Attacks through social media
01/02/2020	Activist of Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own convicted for organization of spontaneous gathering	Dobrica Veselinovic Don't Let Belgrade D(r) own	Judicial body – prosecutor's office, court, public enforcement officer or notary public	Initiation of misdemeanor proceeding
05/02/2020	Attack at the activists of the Humanitarian Law Center at the promotion of the book of Vojislav Seselj	Natasa Kandic and others Humanitarian Law Center	Member / supporter of a political party	Physical attack (beating, violence, injuries)
17/02/2020	Activist of Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own questioned	Dobrica Veselinovic Don't Let Belgrade D(r) own	Judicial body – prosecutor's office, court, public enforcement officer or notary public	Initiation of criminal proceeding
24/02/2020	Provocations directed at the employees of Pride Info Center	Pride Info Center	Individual, unknown	Harassment at work place
27/02/2020	Attacks against the Novi Sad Pride Week	Group IZADJI (GO OUT)	Individual, unknown	Attacks through the Internet, attacks through social media
27/02/2020	Threats to Da se zna! through online violence report forms	Da se zna!	Individual, unknown	Attacks through the Internet, attacks through social media
28/02/2020	Attacks at Pride Info Center	Pride Info Center	Individual	Break-ins in the office or apartment, destruction of property
11/03/2020	Videos directed against Belgrade Centre for Security Policy [National Avant-garde]	Belgrade Centre for Security Policy	GONGO	Attacks through electronic media, attacks through social media
24/03/2020	Arrest and imposing of detention of the activist	Jovana Popovic	Public administration body	Deprivation of freedom in prison, initiation of criminal proceeding
03/04/2020	Attacks on the website of the National Coalition for Decentralization	National Coalition for Decentralization	Unknown	Hacking the website, excessive administrative pressures
03/04/2020	Accusing Belgrade Open School and Open Society Foundation for work against the Serbian Orthodox Church [Weekly publication Afera]	Belgrade Open School	Media	Attacks through social media
03/04/2020	Accusing Belgrade Open School and Open Society Foundation for work against the Serbian Orthodox Church [Weekly publication Afera]	Open Society Foundation	Media	Attacks through social media

06/04/2020	Imposing work obligations for the civil society activists in Bor	Civil society organizations	Public administration body	Adoption of a law or bylaw limiting the work of associations or individual activists, forced labor
06/04/2020	First attack on Novi Sad School of Journalism [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Novi Sad School of Journalism	Media	Libel via electronic media and social networks
09/04/2020	Apprehension of the union activist in Raca	Slavisa Pajovic	Police	Deprivation of freedom under supervision of competent bodies, initiation of criminal proceedings
13/04/2020	Attacks on Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own from Facebook page "COVID-19 Serbia"	Don't Let Belgrade D(r) own	Unknown	Attacks through social media
25/04/2020	Second attack at Novi Sad School of Journalism [portal Prismotra]	Novi Sad School of Journalism	Media	Libel via electronic media or social networks
23/05/2020	Rhetoric against the civil society organizations during the election campaign	Civil society organizations	Political party	Attacks through social media
26/05/2020	Petition of Balternativa for prohibiting of civil society organizations	Sonja Biserko	Some other association of citizens	Libel via electronic media and social networks, online petition
26/05/2020	Petition of Balternativa for prohibiting of civil society organizations	Women in Black	Some other association of citizens	Libel via electronic media and social networks, online petition
26/05/2020	Petition of Balternativa for prohibiting of civil society organizations	Center for Cultural Decontamination	Some other association of citizens	Libel via electronic media and social networks, online petition
26/05/2020	Petition of Balternativa for prohibiting of civil society organizations	Humanitarian Law Center	Some other association of citizens	Libel via electronic media and social networks, online petition
26/05/2020	Petition of Balternativa for prohibiting of civil society organizations	Sonja Liht Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence	Some other association of citizens	Libel via electronic media and social networks, online petition
26/05/2020	Petition of Balternativa for prohibiting of civil society organizations	Milan Antonijevic Open Society Foundation	Some other association of citizens	Libel via electronic media and social networks, online petition
08/06/2020	Attack at the activist of Novi Sad School of Journalism and Belgrade Centre for Security Policy [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Lazar Covs Novi Sad School of Journalism	Media	Attacks through electronic media, libel via electronic media and social networks
08/06/2020	Attack at the activist of Novi Sad School of Journalism and Belgrade Centre for Security Policy [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Belgrade Centre for Security Policy	Media	Attacks through electronic media, libel via electronic media and social networks
14/06/2020	Text and video directed against Belgrade Centre for Security Policy [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Belgrade Centre for Security Policy	GONGO	Attacks through electronic media, libel via electronic media and social networks

02/07/2020	Activist punished for prevention of eviction	Joint action A roof over your head	Judicial body – prosecutor's office, court, public enforcement officer or notary public	Deprivation of freedom in prison, initiation of misdemeanor proceeding
02/07/2020	Misdemeanor proceeding initiated against an activist	Joint action A roof over your head	Judicial body – prosecutor's office, court, public enforcement officer or notary public , Police	Initiation of misdemeanor proceeding
03/07/2020	Campaign against environmental organizations (I) [portal <i>Republika</i>]	CEKOR	Media	Libel via electronic media and social networks
06/07/2020	Physical attack on the activists in Novi Sad	Marko Djelevic Mihajlo Nikolic Joint action A roof over your head	Unknown	Physical attack (beating, violence, injuries)
08/07/2020	Attacks by Goran Vesic, Deputy Mayor of Belgrade against Belgrade Center for Human Rights and the Youth Initiative for Human Rights	Belgrade Center for Human Rights	Public official	Attacks through social media
08/07/2020	Attacks by Goran Vesic, Deputy Mayor of Belgrade against Belgrade Center for Human Rights and the Youth Initiative for Human Rights	Youth Initiative for Human Rights	Public official	Attacks through social media
08/07/2020	Apprehension and detention of an activist in Novi Sad	Miran Pogacar Joint action A roof over your head	Judicial body – prosecutor's office, court, public enforcement officer or notary public, police	Deprivation of freedom in prison, initiation of criminal proceeding
11/07/2020	Attacks against actor Milan Maric via social networks	Milan Maric	Individual	Attacks through the Internet, attacks through social media, libel via electronic media or social networks
14/07/2020	Campaign against environmental organizations (II) [Informer]	Civil movement	Media	Attacks through social media
14/07/2020	Campaign against environmental organizations (II) [Informer]	CEKOR	Media	Attacks through social media
14/07/2020	Campaign against environmental organizations (II) [Informer]	RERI	Media	Attacks through social media
21/07/2020	Attacks on United against COVID	United against COVID	Media, Public official	Attacks through social media, libel via electronic media or social networks
23/07/2020	Insults and threats against Milan Vujic	Milan Vujic	Individual	Attacks through social media, libel via electronic media or social networks
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Milan Stefanovic Protecta	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Miroslav Petrovic Rule of Law Center	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures

	List of individuals and			
28/07/2020	organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Vesna Petrovic Belgrade Center for Human Rights	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Belgrade Centre for Security Policy	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Humanitarian Law Center	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Belgrade Center for Human Rights	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Novi Sad School of Journalism	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Association Youth Center CK13	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Vojvodina Civic Center	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Bureau for Social Research	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	National Coalition for Decentralization	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Youth Initiative for Human Rights	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights - YUCOM	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Civic Initiatives	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	European Movement in Serbia	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Crta	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures

28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Protecta	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Rule of Law Center	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Ivan Ninic Rule of Law Center	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Proaktiv	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Vukasin Obradovic Civic Initiatives	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
28/07/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering	Predrag Petrovic Belgrade Centre for Security Policy	Public administration body	Excessive administrative pressures
30/07/2020	Conspiracy theories in respect of work and financing of the civil society organizations [Srpski telegraf]	Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights YUCOM	Media	Attack via electronic media
01/08/2020	Activist of Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own convicted again for organization of spontaneous gathering	Dobrica Veselinovic Don't Let Belgrade D(r) own	Public administration body, judicial body – prosecutor's office, court, public enforcement officer or notary public	Initiation of misdemeanor proceeding
01/08/2020	Attack of the deputy mayor Goran Vesic on the activists of Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own	Dobrica Veselinovic Don't Let Belgrade D(r) own	Public official	Attacks through social media
05/08/2020	List of individuals and organizations of the Administration for Prevention of Money Laundering [Nacionalna avangarda]	Several organizations of civil society and individuals	GONGO	Attacks through electronic media
09/08/2020	Beating of the activists in Novi Sad	Milan Vujic	Individual, unknown	Physical attack (beating, violence, injuries)
16/08/2020	Campaign against environmental organizations (III) [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	CEKOR	Media	Attacks through electronic media
18/08/2020	Insults against activist Sead Biberovic on Facebook	Sead Biberovic Urban In	Individual	Attacks through the Internet, attacks through electronic media
22/08/2020	Campaign against environmental organizations (IV) [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Dragana Arsic Movement Defend the Forests of Fruska gora Trag Foundation	Media	Attacks through electronic media, libel via electronic media and social networks
23/08/2020	Attack of the deputy mayor Goran Vesic on the activists of Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own	Don't Let Belgrade D(r) own	Public official	Libel via electronic media and social networks

25/08/2020	Campaign against environmental organizations (V) [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	CEKOR	Media	Attacks through social media
25/08/2020	Threats on Instagram profile Da se zna!	Da se zna!	Individual, unknown	Attacks through social media
07/09/2020	Campaign against Vojvodina Cultural Club Vasa Stajic [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Vojvodina Cultural Club Vasa Stajic	Media	Attacks through electronic media, libel via electronic media and social networks
11/09/2020	Attempt to break in the premises of Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own	Don't Let Belgrade D(r) own	Individual, unknown	Break-ins in the office or apartment, other violation of property rights, theft of flags and material
17/09/2020	Second attempt to break in the premises of Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own	Don't Let Belgrade D(r) own	Individual, unknown	Break-ins in the office or apartment, other violation of property rights, theft of flags and material
18/09/2020	Third attack on the premises of Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own	Don't Let Belgrade D(r) own	Individual, unknown	Property damaging
20/09/2020	Attack on the activists and founder of the Humanitarian Law Center [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Natasa Kandic, Ivana Zanic and Caslav Ninkovic Humanitarian Law Center	Media	Attacks through electronic media, libel via electronic media and social networks
22/09/2020	Attack on the director of the play "Srebrenica, when we, the murdered rise", Zlatko Pakovic [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Zlatko Pakovic	Media	Attacks through electronic media, libel via electronic media and social networks
25/09/2020	Campaign against environmental organizations (VI) [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Natasa Djereg CEKOR	Media	Attacks through electronic media, libel via electronic media and social networks
27/09/2020	Threats to Alma Junis, President of the Association Together from Novi Pazar	Alma Junis Association of single parents and one parent families Together	Media	Attacks through electronic media, attacks through social media
28/09/2020	Attack on the actors in the play "Srebrenica, when we, the murdered rise", [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Vahid Dzankovic, Ivan Jevtovic, Andreja Krcagin and Katarina Jovanovic	Media	Attacks through electronic media, libel via electronic media and social networks
30/09/2020	Attack on Jelena Jacimovic [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Jelena Jacimovic Don't Let Belgrade D(r) own	Media	Attacks through social media, libel via electronic media or social networks
02/10/2020	Attack on Libek [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Libertarian club -Libek	Media	Attacks through social media, libel via electronic media or social networks
05/10/2020	Attack on Centre for Contemporary Politics [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Centre for Contemporary Politics	Media	Attacks through electronic media, libel via electronic media and social networks
15/10/2020	Attack on the scenographer of the play "Srebrenica, when we, the murdered rise", Nikola Dzafo [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Nikola Dzafo	Media	Attacks through electronic media, libel via electronic media and social networks
15/10/2020	Attacks on the Center for Cultural Decontamination [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Center for Cultural Decontamination	Media	Attacks through electronic media, libel via electronic media and social networks

22/10/2020	Attack on the festival "Mirdita, good day!"	Fiona Jelici Youth Initiative for Human Rights	Individual, political party	Threats/actions of intimidations/ blackmail, attempt to interrupt the festival
02/11/2020	Campaign against environmental organizations (VII) [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Natasa Djereg, Janos Kis, Zvezdan Kalmar, Pera Markovic and Nikola Perusic, CEKOR	Media	Attacks through electronic media, libel via electronic media and social networks
15/11/2020	Threats to Irfan Ugljanin, civic activist from Novi Pazar	Irfan Ugljanin	Individual, unknown	Threats/actions of intimidations/blackmail
21/11/2020	Attack on Dinko Gruhonjic, editor of <i>VOICE</i>	Dinko Gruhonjic NDNV	Individual, unknown	Destruction of property, threats/ actions of intimidations/blackmail
26/11/2020	Court proceeding against the activists of the initiative Let's protect our park and Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own	Sava Manojlovic, Milena Popevic, Sasa Simic, Let's protect our park	Private legal entity	Initiation of criminal proceeding
26/11/2020	Court proceeding against the activists of the initiative Let's protect our park and Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own	Radomir Lazovic Don't Let Belgrade D(r) own	Private legal entity	Initiation of criminal proceeding
27/11/2020	Campaign against environmental organizations (VIII) [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Sreten Djordjevic CEKOR	Media	Attacks through electronic media, libel via electronic media and social networks
12/12/2020	Apprehension of the No Name Kitchen volunteers	Nemanja Sumanovic No Name Kitchen	Police	Deprivation of freedom under supervision of competent bodies, initiation of criminal proceedings
14/12/2020	Attack on the activities of Europolis [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Dane Pribic, Ognjen Gogic, Vladimir Jeremic and Bogdan Rasic Center for Development of Democratic Society - Europolis	Media	Attacks through social media, libel via electronic media or social networks
17/12/2020	Attack on the activists and founder of the Humanitarian Law Center [portal <i>Prismotra</i>]	Predrag Miletic, Jelena Jovanovic, Milan Gacanovic, Vladimir Milanovic, Mia Deretic, Biljana Vaskovic, Meris Musanovic Humanitarian Law Center	Media	Attacks through electronic media, libel via electronic media and social networks
21/12/2020	Attack on the activist Marija Ratkovic on the social network Facebook	Marija Ratkovic	Individual	Attacks through social media