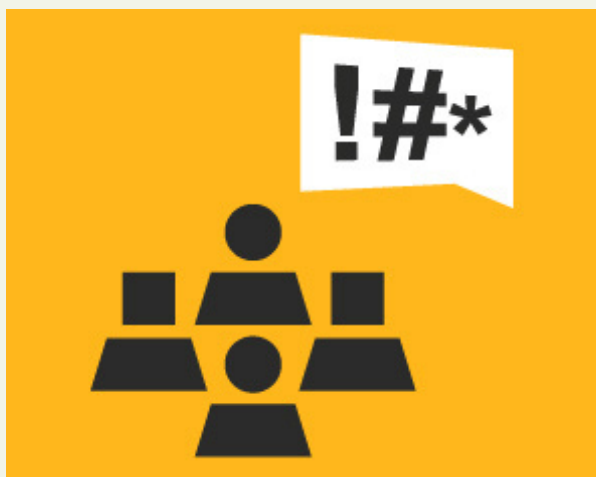




NEWSLETTER

OVERVIEW OF THE STATE OF MEDIA FREEDOM AND SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS IN
THE WESTERN BALKANS IN JUNE 2026

NUMBER OF CASES RECORDED IN THE SAFEJOURNALISTS DATABASE IN JUNE



Albania: 1
Bosnia and Herzegovina: 1
Croatia: 4
Kosovo: 5
Montenegro: 2
North Macedonia: 0
Serbia: 21



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ALBANIA

SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

In June, **one new case** was recorded in the SafeJournalists database - one actual attack on journalists.

Actual attack against journalists

On 21 June 2026, journalist Osman Stafa reported being verbally intimidated and lightly injured in central Tirana. He stated that he was targeted with serious insults related to his work while accompanying two foreign journalists and a translator, and subsequently filed a complaint with the police. The circumstances remain under investigation. Following the incident, the SafeJournalists Network issued a public statement expressing concern, calling for a prompt, impartial and effective investigation, and stressing that journalists must be able to report on matters of public interest without intimidation or violence.

WOMEN JOURNALISTS

Following public attacks by MP Ardit Bido against BIRN Albania Executive Director Kristina Voko after a parliamentary hearing, the SafeJournalists Network and partner organizations issued a joint statement condemning ethnic targeting and the delegitimization of a civil society representative. The statement called for the withdrawal of the posts and a public apology and stressed that public officials must not use ethnic framing or public targeting to undermine journalists, media accountability organizations, or civil society actors participating in democratic processes. MP Bido refused to apologize and issued other posts targeting Ms Voko.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Prime Minister Edi Rama's challenge to RSF's 2026 press freedom assessment shifts the debate from structural media freedom concerns to a narrower dispute over visibility and airtime. By using AI-based monitoring to argue that opposition voices dominate media coverage, Rama presents media pluralism as a question of who appears more often in the news. But visibility does not prove editorial independence: Albania's media freedom problems remain tied to ownership concentration, opaque financing, political and economic pressure, selective access to information, and journalist safety. In the EU accession context, these structural conditions remain the real test of media freedom in Albania. Read more here.

On 11 June 2026, Albania's major television broadcasters jointly called on the High Judicial Council (KLGJ) to ensure greater media access to court proceedings, arguing that existing rules are being applied in ways that unjustifiably restrict camera access and judicial transparency. The broadcasters requested a clearer interpretation of the Council's guidelines, stressing that open hearings should remain the rule and that restrictions on media coverage should be reasoned, proportionate, and assessed on a case-by-case basis. A full assessment of the letter's claims against European standards would require closer legal analysis, but a preliminary reading suggests the elements rest on differing footing. Read more here.



Prime Minister Edi Rama's 20 June speech reframed the so called Flamingo Revolution, popular citizens protest, less as a response to governance, environmental, and transparency concerns around Zvërmec/Narta, and more as a symptom of algorithmic politics. By describing Albania as caught in a “digital cyclone” and protesters as part of a “proletariat of the algorithm,” Rama shifted attention from the substance of the mobilisation to the way anger, images, livestreams, foreign attention, and symbolic links to Kushner-Trump circulated online. The key concern is that this framing makes public visibility itself politically suspicious: journalists, freelancers, citizens, and independent media documenting events can be blurred with activism, amplification, or manipulation. For media freedom, the risk is that reporting from the ground is treated not primarily as public-interest documentation, but as part of an unstable digital ecosystem that power can dismiss as emotional, contaminated, or algorithmically driven.

The Flamingo Revolution exposed how Albania's media trust crisis is no longer abstract: many protesters turned to phones, livestreams, social platforms, independent outlets, local media and freelancers because they perceived mainstream television as late, selective, or aligned with political and economic interests. The slogan “Bojkotoni mediat!” captured anger toward a media system seen as captured or delegitimising civic mobilisation, but it also created risks for journalists on the ground, who can become targets of collective blame for editorial choices, ownership interests, or studio narratives they do not control. The deeper issue is a triangular crisis: citizens distrust major media, field reporters carry the safety consequences of that distrust, and political actors benefit when attention shifts away from protest demands and toward narratives of manipulation, foreign influence, or disorder.



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

In June, the BH Journalists Association (BHJA) registered **one new case** in the SafeJournalists database - a threat to media outlets and organisations.

On 12 June, lawyer Mimes Ajanović filed a defamation lawsuit against the BH Journalists Association following its public statement condemning the targeting and discrediting of investigative journalists Anisa Mahmutović and Adis Mujdanović. The lawsuit raises concerns over the use of defamation proceedings against organisations advocating for media freedom and journalists' rights. In response, the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) expressed full solidarity with BHJA and the two journalists and informed both the Council of Europe Platform for the Safety of Journalists and the Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR) mechanism, which will continue monitoring developments in the case.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

- Following the filing of the lawsuit, BHJA called for the dismissal of Mimes Ajanović from his position as Chair of the Human Rights and Freedoms Commission of the Tuzla City Council. The Association argued that initiating legal proceedings against a journalists' organisation for carrying out its legitimate advocacy role is incompatible with the mandate of a public official responsible for protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- BHJA warned against emerging initiatives by several municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to introduce rules requiring prior approval for public communication by municipal employees and officials. Such measures risk institutionalising political control over information, undermining transparency, restricting freedom of expression and limiting the public's right to access information of public interest. BHJA stressed that local authorities must respect constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression and refrain from adopting regulations that could facilitate censorship.
- On 23 June, BHJA participated in the kick-off conference launching the project "*Partnership for Equality: No to Hate Speech and Divisive Narratives in Bosnia and Herzegovina*". The project aims to strengthen social cohesion and foster public communication free from hate speech through cooperation between media organisations, civil society, public institutions and international partners. Activities will focus on improving responses to hate speech in the media and digital space, strengthening institutional prevention and response mechanisms, and addressing the gender-specific impact of hate speech, particularly on women and girls. The initiative is funded by the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and implemented by UNESCO, UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina and UN Women BiH in partnership with the Ministry of Communications and Transport of BiH.



The developments registered during June illustrate the persistent challenges facing media freedom in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Legal pressure on organisations defending journalists, alongside attempts to restrict access to public information at the local level, underscores the need for stronger institutional safeguards for freedom of expression. At the same time, initiatives promoting cooperation in addressing hate speech and protecting democratic public discourse remain essential for creating a safer environment for journalists and independent media.

CROATIA

SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

In **June**, SafeJournalists recorded **four incidents** against journalists and media outlets in Croatia – three other threats to journalists and one threat against the physical safety of journalists.

18. June – Večernji list journalist Milena Zajović was publicly targeted by Most party leader and MP Nikola Grmoja after publishing an opinion piece critical of his political statements. Grmoja posted the journalist's photograph on Facebook, questioned her professional integrity by calling her "an activist pretending to be an independent journalist," and continued his attacks even after the Croatian Journalists' Association (CJA) condemned his conduct. The CJA warned that such public discrediting of journalists constitutes political pressure on the media and fuels online harassment against journalists.

19. June – Journalist Nevena Trgovčić, a member of the Istria Branch of the Croatian Journalists' Association, became the target of an online smear campaign after Ivan Vidović, Most's coordinator for Istria and a member of the Umag City Council, republished excerpts from a six-month-old interview she had conducted with the organiser of the International Street Wizards Festival. The interview was presented as evidence of an alleged ideological agenda, triggering a wave of online abuse. Following the post, Trgovčić was publicly discredited because of her journalistic work, while the comment section filled with hate speech, dehumanising language and calls for violence directed at the interviewee, creating a hostile environment and further fuelling the campaign against the journalist.

25. June – Kristian Stepčić Raisman, journalist and deputy editor-in-chief of the local news portal Labinština.info, was publicly targeted by the Mayor of Labin, Donald Blašković, after publishing an article questioning the possible expansion of paid parking zones based on publicly available city documents. The mayor accused the journalist of lying, unprofessionalism and malicious intent on social media, while suggesting that future cooperation between the City of Labin and the media outlet would depend on a public apology. His post triggered a wave of hostile comments targeting the journalist, after which the article was removed from the portal by the editor-in-chief.

26. and 29. June – Journalist Gabrijele Radanović received new threats on 29 June from Dražen Travaš, who has been harassing her for several years. In a Facebook post, Travaš wrote, among other things, that he would "eat her." When another user asked, "What did she do to you?", he replied: "Nothing compared to what I'll do to her." The threat was reported to the police, and the post was subsequently removed. However, another post remains on Travaš's Facebook profile in which he published a photograph of the journalist and wrote, among other things: "The one who sued me, and I'll strip her to the bone." Travaš is already facing criminal proceedings and was recently found guilty in a first-instance judgment of a criminal offence against honour and reputation. Despite the ongoing legal proceedings, the harassment of the journalist has continued.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

18 years since the attack on Dušan Miljuš: Those who ordered the attack remain unknown

Eighteen years after the brutal assault on investigative journalist Dušan Miljuš, those who ordered the attack have still not been identified. Miljuš was ambushed and severely beaten with batons outside his home in Zagreb on 2 June 2008, suffering serious head injuries, a fractured arm and a concussion. Although the perpetrators were initially detained, the prosecution later dropped the case due to a lack of evidence, and no one has ever been held accountable for ordering the attack. Reflecting on the anniversary, Miljuš said he no longer believes the masterminds will ever be identified, despite official claims that the investigation remains open.

Far-right group stages another protest near journalist Boris Dežulović's family home

Far-right activist and president of the Autochthonous Croatian Party of Rights (A-HSP), Dražen Keleminec, organised another protest near the home of the elderly parents of *Novosti* columnist Boris Dežulović in Split, marking the second such gathering in four months. Accompanied by around fifteen supporters, Keleminec marched towards the family home carrying flags and using loudspeakers, before being stopped by police approximately 100 metres away. During the gathering, Keleminec verbally confronted police officers and announced that future protests would be organised without prior notification to the authorities. Although prevented from approaching the house, his actions caused further distress to Dežulović's elderly parents, aged 88 and 86. The demonstration forms part of an ongoing campaign of intimidation targeting the journalist because of his work, extending pressure to members of his family.

CJA questions court's refusal to allow journalist to photograph public hearing

The Croatian Journalists' Association (CJA) has criticised the decision of the President of the Municipal Court in Virovitica to deny *Telegram* journalist Drago Hedl permission to photograph a public court hearing involving prominent HDZ politician Josip Đakić. CJA argues that the decision appears arbitrary, particularly as another journalist was granted permission to photograph the same hearing under virtually identical circumstances. In a letter to the court, CJA requested an explanation of the criteria used to assess the public interest and warned that such inconsistent treatment undermines equal access for journalists and restricts media coverage of proceedings of significant public interest. The President of the Court rejected the criticism, maintaining that both decisions were legally justified and that the denied request had not met the requirements set out in the Croatian Criminal Procedure Act. He also stressed that the journalist was still allowed to attend and report on the hearing despite not being permitted to take photographs.

Independent News Portal Denied INmusic Festival Accreditation Over Editorial Refusal

The independent news portal Ravno do dna was denied press accreditation for the 2026 INmusic Festival after refusing the organiser's request to publish an additional promotional article as a condition for receiving accreditation. The Croatian Journalists' Association (CJA) condemned the decision, stating that making press accreditation conditional on the publication of specific content represents an unacceptable interference with editorial independence and a form of pressure on the media. The CJA stressed that such practices undermine journalists' ability to report professionally on events of public interest.



KOSOVO

SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

During June 2026, **five incidents** affecting journalists, media outlets, and media organizations were recorded in Kosovo. These cases included obstruction of reporting, physical attacks, threats, and pressure campaigns, followed by concerns related to trends of serious pressures related to working conditions and editorial independence of media and journalists.

Attacks and Threats Against Journalists

A reporting team from the online media outlet *Shënjestër.net* was obstructed while covering a public event. According to reports, a member of the Kosovo Police assigned to the close protection unit of the acting Prime Minister physically pushed a member of the media crew and threatened him with arrest.

Journalist Blerta Zuka and camera operator Enkelej Shaljani of TV Dukagjini were physically attacked while reporting in Gjilan. According to reports, an employee of a company carrying out construction works in the city physically pushed the media team and prevented them from continuing their work.

Journalist Hateme Smajli and the newsroom of *Gazeta Infokus* were subjected to a campaign of threats, pressure, and intimidation following the publication of investigative reports concerning land privatization in the Municipality of Ferizaj. Threats were reportedly made through social media and phone calls to the newsroom.

Getoarbë Mulliqi, Executive Director of the Association of Journalists of Kosovo (AJK), and journalist and university professor Dinko Gruhonjić were targeted by a Serbian tabloid following the publication of an analysis on media reporting about dealing with the past in the Western Balkans. The coverage included derogatory and ethnically charged language directed at the authors.

A discussion at the Independent Media Commission (IMC) raised concerns after Deputy Chairperson Drita Morina proposed that the possible closure of the television programme *Debat Plus* on TV Dukagjini be considered at a future Commission meeting. The proposal followed a series of recent sanctions and fines imposed on media outlets by the IMC. The case sparked concerns regarding the Commission's role in regulating media content, particularly in relation to debates and statements made by programme guests, as well as broader implications for media freedom, freedom of expression, and media pluralism in Kosovo.

Court Developments

In June 2026, the Basic Court in Prishtina sentenced an individual to a four-month suspended prison sentence, with a one-year probation period, for threatening KTV journalist Ardit Kika. The court also imposed a six-month ban on the use of social media. The defendant pleaded guilty to the criminal offence of making threats against the journalist. The case stemmed from online threats directed at Kika following his reporting on an alleged fake military drone factory in Gjilan. The ruling represents a judicial response to threats against journalists and media workers and forms part of broader efforts to address attacks targeting the media sector in Kosovo.



OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

In relation to other forms of pressure and intimidation of journalists, we single out several months-long trends of heavy pressures on journalists employed in the public media broadcaster RTK. These pressures resulted in several months of non-payment of salaries, but also in resignations given by journalists under pressure.

Employees of the public broadcaster *RTK* experienced delays in salary payments, affecting approximately 700 staff members. The situation raised concerns regarding working conditions, financial security, and the editorial independence of the public broadcaster.

Journalist Ariinda Sejda announced her resignation from RTK after ten years of employment, stating that she could no longer practice journalism in accordance with her professional convictions, ethical standards, and responsibility to the public. The case prompted discussion regarding working conditions and editorial independence within the public broadcaster.

MONTENEGRO

SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

In June, **two new incidents** were recorded in the SafeJournalists database – both other threats to journalists.

On 9 June, Vijesti journalist Jelena Jovanović reported a new wave of threats and insults on social media following her television appearance, during which she reiterated that she would not reveal her confidential sources regarding information obtained from Sky ECC communications. The campaign, initiated by the social media profile “Niko Kater”, accused her of links to a criminal group, labelled her a traitor, and included calls for her to disclose her sources and personal property. Jovanović had previously reported the same individual to the authorities over similar online harassment.

On 17 June, investigative journalists of the Centre for Investigative Journalism of Montenegro (CIN-CG), Andrea Perišić and Đurđa Radulović, learned that the Director of the National Security Agency had filed a criminal complaint against them over an article examining the agency’s recruitment practices. The complaint alleges the disclosure of classified information, an offence punishable by one to eight years in prison. During police questioning, the journalists were also asked to reveal their confidential sources, which they refused to do.

Court Developments

In June, photojournalists Boris Pejović (Vijesti) and Stevo Vasiljević (Pobjeda) appealed the Basic Court in Berane’s acquittal of Danko Femić, who had been charged with coercion following an attack on the two journalists while they were reporting on the removal of a monument to Chetnik commander and convicted war criminal Pavle Đurišić in August 2025. Both appeals argue that the court committed serious procedural violations, misapplied the Criminal Code, and failed to properly assess the evidence, requesting that the judgment be overturned and the case returned for a retrial.

A hearing in a civil lawsuit filed by Vijesti and Monitor journalist Dragana Šćepanović against the company owning the Aktuelno news portal was postponed after the portal’s editor failed to appear before the Basic Court in Kolašin. Šćepanović is seeking damages over a series of articles containing insulting and defamatory statements published after her reporting on the business operations of Ski Resort Kolašin 1450. The hearing was adjourned until 16 September.

On 15 June, the Higher Court upheld the conviction of former RTCG Council Chair Veselin Drjević and three former Council members for abuse of office over the unlawful reappointment of Boris Raonić as Director General of the public broadcaster in 2023. The ruling, which imposes suspended seven-month prison sentences, is now final after the court dismissed appeals by both the prosecution and the defence.



OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Media Freedom Indicators and Journalists' Safety Index Findings

TUMM presented the 2025 Media Freedom Indicators and Journalists' Safety Index, marking the tenth consecutive year of monitoring. Montenegro remained third in the region with a score of 3.14, but continued its downward trend compared with previous years. According to the report, 33 attacks and threats against journalists and media outlets were recorded in 2025, a 40% increase from the previous year, while TUMM has documented 13 new cases during the first half of 2026. The report identifies attacks on journalists, weak implementation of media legislation, poor working conditions and inadequate social dialogue as the main factors behind the decline.

NORTH MACEDONIA

SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

In June 2026, **no physical attacks, direct or other types of threats against journalists were registered** in North Macedonia.

On the other hand, in terms of events that represent a kind of pressure and disruption of the work of the media, media freedom in North Macedonia was increasingly challenged by a pattern of public pressures, disqualifications and labeling of journalists and media by political actors. The media environment was marked by increased political pressure through public statements and press releases exchanged between the two largest political parties, VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM. These exchanges frequently involved huge pressure on some media, through different types of accusations, discrediting, and public criticism of specific media outlets and journalists perceived as favoring one political side or the other. The Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM) and the Independent Union of Journalists and Media Workers (SSNM) expressed concern that such rhetoric contributes to political pressure on the media, undermines editorial independence, and fosters a polarized environment that may discourage independent and professional journalism.

The overall situation remains under close monitoring by press freedom organizations and journalist associations.

SERBIA

SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

In June 2026, the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) recorded a total of **21 cases involving journalists and media workers**. A total of 10 physical attacks were recorded, along with seven cases involving death threats and threats to the physical safety of journalists, and four cases involving other types of threats.

The number of recorded attacks is rising again, while the threats directed at journalists were brutal and highly dangerous. Of particular concern are organised campaigns targeting not only journalists and media outlets, but also other citizens and students in connection with alleged dissemination of false information about police action and the "preparation of a simulation of the use of a sonic cannon". Organised by the public prosecutor's office and representatives of the authorities, and supported by the propaganda machinery of tabloid media, highly dangerous narratives were created and actions were taken against individual journalists and media outlets.

Dangerous Threats Against Journalists and Newsrooms

A letter sent from Slovenia arrived at the address of N1 television, containing a threat to kill the loved ones of journalist Danica Vučenić. Among other things, the letter stated: "We will kill your loved ones, you mare." The journalist has previously faced various forms of threats and pressure, especially different forms of targeting campaigns in pro-regime media.

After Bečejski mozaik reported from a public gathering, a series of brutal threats and insults against editor and journalist Kristina Demeter-Filipčev followed on the social media pages of this portal. The messages contained threats of violence and hanging, hate speech and incitement of ethnic hatred. Among the messages sent were threats such as "this is how you will hang too", "f*** you, the journalist, and the students... all under the sword", as well as ethnic insults and messages questioning the journalist's origin and ethnicity.

Journalist Vladimir Mitrić, correspondent of Večernje novosti from Loznica, received a threat on Insider's Facebook page, where the programme "Press, Don't Shoot" was announced. In a comment, Mitrić was told that he "should have been killed with a sledgehammer to the head a long time ago". Vladimir Mitrić has lived and worked under police protection for more than two decades, after surviving an attempted murder in 2005, when he was brutally attacked with a baseball bat by a former police officer.

The N1 newsroom received very serious threats in a comment on a published article. The same comment also contained a threat against Veran Matić. The threat read as follows: "Again these Ustashas* from N1, monkeys, bastards, horses, pigs, lying, you should be set on fire, you Ustasha cattle, this thief Matić, f*** your Ustasha origin, you thief, lying water fan, we f*** your children, we will take your head off, Ustasha bastard, liar, we f*** your loved ones." The threats were immediately reported to the competent Special Public Prosecutor's Office for High-Tech Crime.

In a comment on a news item about the attack on Veran Matić in front of the National Assembly of Serbia, a person signed as "Srbin" sent a series of brutal insults and threats to Matić and the N1 newsroom, including calls for violence and direct death threats.

*The Ustaša (Ustash) was a Croatian fascist and ultranationalist organization active before and during Second world war.



Threats were sent via social media to journalist and editor of portal Pravo u centar from Lazarevac, Marija Popović. From the profile Stojan Marković, with a profile photo showing a person in the uniform of the Serbian Army, the editor of the local media outlet from Lazarevac received a Facebook message saying: “And since I am a military person who never retires, I will shoot at you for 30 minutes, and and then throw you in the sewer.”

The Vranje News portal from Vranje received a disturbing message from an account from which other local media outlets, including Magločistač from Subotica, IN Medija from Inđija and the Južne vesti newsroom, had previously received threats and disturbing messages. A disturbing comment of highly inappropriate content, directed against the children of newsroom members, arrived from the email address cveticaninzeljko06@gmail.com, as Vranje News announced on its Facebook page.

Physical Attacks on Journalists

Veran Matić, journalist and president of the Managing Board of ANEM, was physically attacked on 17 June, at around 8 p.m., in the area in front of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia in Belgrade. Matić was attacked while filming with his mobile phone a public gathering of several dozen citizens wearing hats with white ribbons. While he was moving towards the steps leading to the main entrance of the National Assembly, an unknown young man approached him, tried to prevent him from filming and snatched the phone from his hand. The phone was returned to him only after an order was given by a man whom Matić recognised as Đorđe Prelić, known as a former leader of the Alcatraz supporters’ group. After the incident, Matić approached security in the National Assembly building, but they refused to react and referred him to the police.

During the night of 21 June, a car owned by David Gruhonjić, son of University of Novi Sad professor, programme director of the Independent Journalists’ Association of Vojvodina (NDNV) and journalist Dinko Gruhonjić, was vandalised. The severe damage to the vehicle represents yet another in a series of security threats that cannot be viewed separately from the long-standing, organised campaign of persecution against Dinko Gruhonjić. The car’s windows, mirrors and other parts were destroyed.

Freelance journalist and photojournalist Marko Dragoslavić was physically attacked on 24 June while reporting, as he stated, from an illegal construction site in Milan Rakić Street in Belgrade. An unknown person approached him from behind and punched him several times in the head. Although, according to Dragoslavić, he said that he was a journalist, the attacker replied that he “didn’t give a f***” and that he would kill him.

A journalist from TV Forum in Prijepolje was subjected to disturbing remarks and obstruction by workers present on 30 June, while filming a landfill in Druglići near Prijepolje. Several persons tried at all costs to prevent her from filming the fire, while the president of the Municipality of Prijepolje, Drago Popadić, in particular demanded that the journalist stop filming the fire. Local construction contractor Halil Rovčanin got disturbingly close to her face and threatened her, further endangering her safety.

Attacks, Threats and Obstruction of Journalists in Connection with the SNS Rally in Belgrade on 27 June

During the Serbian Progressive Party rally held on 27 June, in Belgrade, three photojournalists - Gavriilo Andrić, Nađa Gavrilović and Marija Stojnić - were taken to the Savski Venac police station after documenting the action of unfurling a banner reading “Students are fighting for you too”. The photojournalists had previously been physically attacked by an unknown person at the moment they entered the building on which the banner had been hung, but the incident ended without serious consequences. After leaving the building, they were detained by police officers, and the police assessed, although there was no legal basis, that they should be taken to the Savski Venac police station, from where they were released several hours later without giving a statement.

Nova TV journalist and reporter Dunja Ranković was exposed to insults, heckling and a physical attack during a live broadcast from an event organised by the Serbian Progressive Party in Belgrade. Immediately before the live broadcast, when she placed the recognisable microphone windscreen on the microphone, dozens of shouted insults followed, and near the end of the live report, a man approached her and threw a water bottle at her. Fortunately, the journalist avoided being hit, while the attacker continued insulting and swearing at her even after the live broadcast ended.

In Niš, on 27 June, Nova TV reporter Ivana Marković was prevented from reporting on the departure of buses to the SNS rally in Belgrade. While the crew was filming a conversation with people, a Niš express bus company driver approached them, asked which television station they worked for, and then, after hearing the answer, hit the journalist on the hand, pushed the microphone and camera, and insulted them.

An Insajder reporting team was obstructed on the same day at the rally by an unknown person who prevented them from doing their job by blocking the filming area with an open umbrella. Without communicating, that person used an open umbrella for more than 15 minutes to block the area that the cameraman wanted to film. Only after some time, when the cameraman and journalist Vojin Radovanović gave up trying to do their job and packed away their equipment, plainclothes police officers approached and removed the person.

Campaign by Government Representatives and Tabloids Against Journalists Over the Alleged “Simulation of the Use of a Sonic Cannon”

As part of an orchestrated campaign in which the public prosecutor’s office also took part, Radar journalist Milan Radonjić became the target of a targeting campaign because of Radar’s cover story titled “The Day Vučić Shot the People in the Back”, which dealt with the use of sonic weapons during the peaceful student gathering on 15 March 2025. After the Higher Public Prosecutor’s Office informed the public that the Service for Combating Terrorism had been ordered to identify those who allegedly “prepared a simulation of the use of a sonic cannon”, and within that framework to “interview all persons who publicly made those claims”, an attack on critical journalists and media outlets began as if on command. The peak of the pro-regime machinery that day was a special programme on the First Channel of RTS, in which Deputy Chief Public Prosecutor Miodrag Marković explained that four groups would be questioned, and that “the third group consists of persons who represented media support, those who posted on social networks or in certain media”, adding: “Their identity is more or less known.” The culmination of the propaganda narrative came the following day, in a special TV Informer programme titled “The Attempted Shooting of Aleksandar Vučić”, in which “traitors” and “destroyers of Serbia” who were allegedly “planning a civil war” were discussed for four and a half hours. Radonjić’s article and photograph were shown intensively. Guests included Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić, Speaker of Parliament Ana Brnabić and convicted war criminal Vojislav Šešelj.



Vojkan Kostić, editor-in-chief of the Beta News Agency, while reporting as a journalist on the search of the apartment of military analyst Aleksandar Radić on 22 June 2026, was served with a summons to report to the Criminal Police Directorate on suspicion of activities linked to alleged preparation of acts against the constitutional order and security of Serbia. Kostić happened to be on the scene and was performing a journalistic assignment, following military analyst Aleksandar Radić, who had been summoned to attend the search of his apartment on suspicion of committing the criminal offence of preparing the violent overthrow of the constitutional order. Police officers were initially very unpleasant towards Kostić, and he understood their messages as intimidation and a warning that, if he continued reporting, he too could become suspected of a criminal offence.

At the order of the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade, police officers summoned Dejan Zlatanović, owner and editor of the portal Srbin info, for an informational interview over suspicions of allegedly spreading false news about the use of a sonic cannon by state authorities at the protest held on 15 March 2025. Officers of the Criminal Police Directorate questioned Zlatanović for more than an hour about his reporting from the student protest.

Campaigns Against Journalists and Other Attacks

After the publication of an analysis on media reporting related to dealing with the past in the Western Balkans, professor, programme director of the Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina (NDNV) and journalist Dinko Gruhonjić, and research associate and executive director of the Association of Journalists of Kosovo (AJK) Getoarbe Mulici, were subjected to verbal attacks, hate speech and severe targeting. The campaign began with an article published in the tabloid Informer under the headline "Dinko and the 'Shiptar' Journalist Supported the Blockaders and Attacked Serbia", in which the authors were subjected to derogatory, ethnically charged and inflammatory labelling. Of particular concern was the subsequent statement by the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications of the Republic of Serbia, which referred to the analysis and mentioned its authors in an extremely negative context.

Radar journalist Vuk Cvijić was removed from a session of the Teaching and Scientific Council of the Faculty of Medicine in Belgrade. Cvijić came as a journalist to the public session of the Teaching and Scientific Council of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Belgrade, and the security present did not prevent him from doing so. However, after some time, two security officers asked Cvijić to leave the hall and told him that he could follow the session from outside, because the event was being recorded, after which Cvijić left the room.

Journalist Jelena Zorić was the target of an online scam orchestrated by unknown individuals who misused her identity. According to information published by BIRN Serbia, the scam involved sponsored online advertisements directing users to manipulate content posted on a website designed to imitate the appearance of the BIRN website. The fraudulent article promoted a fictitious investment fund with the aim of persuading citizens to provide their personal information and invest money. The scammers used a fabricated quote falsely attributed to journalist Jelena Zorić, as well as an AI-generated fake photograph depicting her.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

A New Attempt to Establish the REM Council

On 25 June, the Committee on Culture and Information of the National Assembly adopted a conclusion suspending the procedure for proposing the ninth member of the Council of the Regulatory Body for Electronic Media (REM), nominated by national minorities, and invited the four members who had submitted resignations - Rodoljub Šabić, Mileva Malešević, Ira Prodanov Krajišnik and Dubravka Valić Nedeljković - to take up their positions in REM.

Before the vote on suspending the procedures, committee chair Nevena Đurić explained that the calling of regular elections for national minority councils was approaching and that, in such circumstances, “there are justified reasons” to wait with the selection of candidates for the ninth member of the REM Council “until the new compositions of the national minority councils are constituted”. The Committee also accepted the proposal that the newly formed REM Council draft a new REM Statute.

In response to the Committee’s conclusion, the REM Council members who had resigned issued a statement saying that it was good that the Committee’s conclusion confirmed that the authorities had given up on the persistent unlawful and discriminatory favouring of one candidate, and that they hoped for a transparent and inclusive procedure for drafting the new REM Statute. However, they also stated that the invitation contained in the conclusion was based on an incorrect interpretation of the provisions of the Law on Electronic Media, both those concerning the legal consequences of submitted resignations and those concerning the postponement of elections, specifying that Article 18 of the Law clearly defines how a resignation is submitted and when it takes effect. They believe that such an interpretation changes explicit legal provisions, which cannot legally be done through a Committee conclusion, which in itself is not sufficient for their further action, because the Committee is not competent to resolve the legal uncertainties that have arisen — only the National Assembly is. Only if the disputed issues are resolved in accordance with the law would the conditions be created for them to assume the functions to which they were elected.

Following the publication of the statement, Nevena Đurić, chair of the parliamentary Committee, submitted to the National Assembly a proposal for the adoption of an authentic interpretation, stating that the provision of Article 18 of the Law on Electronic Media should be understood to mean that a resignation can be considered a declaration of will given after assuming the office of REM Council member, and not the resignation itself submitted to the National Assembly.