

# HUMAN RIGHTS IN SERBIA

UPR Info Pre-sessions

# Situation in Serbia - Availability of Universal Human Rights Protection Mechanisms to Individuals and Groups of Individuals

- Serbia received two recommendations related to the need for ratification of optional protocols to the conventions, which were not implemented.
- Individual communication to the UN treaty bodies is not effective for protection of human rights due to Serbia's arbitrary compliance with UN committee decisions on individual complaints and lack of a clear legal mechanism for their implementation.

# Recommendation



- Establish an efficient mechanism for implementing UN treaty bodies' decisions on individual communications and a functional mechanism for monitoring their implementation.

# Situation in Serbia – Safety of Journalists

- Serbia received 27 recommendations regarding the freedom of expression and freedom of media. Out of this number, 16 recommendations are related to the safety of journalists and media workers.
- Although the Republic of Serbia has undertaken some concrete steps, safety of the journalists has not improved, numerous attacks and threats on journalists are recorded continuously, and the existing protection mechanisms have not proven to be sufficiently effective and adequate.

# Recommendation and question

- Conduct prompt, impartial, thorough and effective investigations into all cases of deaths, attacks, harassment and intimidation against journalists offline and online, ensuring no impunity for perpetrators.
- What steps does the Government of Serbia intend to take to prevent various types of pressures, targeting and smear campaigns against investigative and independent journalists and media by high representatives of the executive power, members of National Assembly and pro-government media?

# Situation in Serbia – SLAPPs as a form of pressure on the media

- The number of SLAPPs has been on the rise in the past couple of years. According to the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia data, in 2021 and 2022 there have been 40 lawsuits that can be characterized as SLAPPs.
- The media are being exhausted by a large number of legal claims and the amounts requested as compensation, as well as by evidently unfounded claims. Mainly, the claimants are public officials, politicians, businessmen, and companies.

# Recommendations

- Take all necessary measures so that the legal framework foresees the additional necessary safeguards to deal with obviously unfounded or abusive court proceedings against public participation;
- Provide additional training for judges in order to build their knowledge and capacities in detecting and dealing with manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings against public participation;
- Conduct awareness raising activities that aim to explain the issue of manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings against public participation in a simple and accessible way so that such proceedings are easily recognized.

# Thank you

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- Thank you for your attention.