

HUMAN RIGHTS IN SERBIA

2019



The Belgrade Centre for Human Rights was established by a group of human rights experts and activists in February 1995 as a non-profit, non-governmental organisation. The main purpose of the Centre is to study human rights, to disseminate knowledge about them and to educate individuals engaged in this area. It hopes, thereby, to promote the development of democracy and rule of law in Serbia.

Since 1998 Belgrade Centre for Human Right has been publishing Annual Human Rights Report. This Report on Human Rights in Serbia analyses the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Serbia with respect to the civil and political rights guaranteed by international treaties binding on Serbia, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) and its Protocols and standards established by the jurisprudence of the UN Human Rights Committee and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).

Where relevant, the Report also reviews Serbia's legislation with respect to standards established by specific international treaties dealing with specific human rights, such as the UN Convention against Torture, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

For its achievements in the area of human rights, the Centre was awarded the Bruno Kreisky Prize for 2000. The Belgrade Centre is member of the Association of Human Rights Institutes (AHRI).

The social and political circumstances in Serbia in 2019 were not in the least conducive to the realisation of human rights for many reasons. Populist rhetoric and persistent warnings that the security of the state was jeopardised created a climate of fear among the citizens and increased the experts' reluctance to criticise the public authorities' decisions in their respective fields, but they also led to large-scale civic resistance. Political influence on nearly all walks of life predominated, institutions continued crumbling, as did tolerance, while the situation of particularly vulnerable categories of the population was exacerbated by lack of solidarity.

The civic protests staged across Serbia throughout the year provided a ray of hope that the leading politicians would hear the voice of the citizens. That ray was, however, dimmed by the unsuccessful attempt of a dialogue between the government and the opposition on election conditions in the run-up to the 2020 parliamentary elections.

The year 2019 was marked by increasingly frequent attacks by representatives of the legislative and executive authorities on individuals, civil society activists, judges and prosecutors, independent media and investigative reporters and journalists covering and reporting on the work of the state authorities, on trade unions alerting to work-related problems, university professors and students, simply, on anyone who did not share their opinions and who was prepared to publicly criticise them. Especially dangerous were the attacks on and criticisms of judicial professionals, which gained in intensity over the previous year and gravely undermined the principles of the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary.

SOME OTHER PUBLICATIONS OF THE BELGRADE CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Series HUMAN RIGHTS

Vojin Dimitrijević – Milan Paunović – Vladimir Đerić,
Human Rights – A Textbook (in Serbian), 1997

Andraž Zidar, *Lustration* (in Serbian), 2001

Christian Tomuschat, *Human Rights between Idealism and Realism*
(in Serbian), 2006

Karen Reid, *A Practitioner's Guide to the European Convention on Human Rights*
(in Serbian), 2007

Philip Leach, *Taking a Case to the European Court of Human Rights*
(in Serbian), 2007

Ivan Janković, *Prohibition of Ill-treatment – Manual for Police Officers and Prison Staff*, (in Serbian) 2010

Series DOCUMENTS

Vesna Petrović (ed.), *Selected Decisions on Human Rights IV – Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights Regarding Minors*, 2006.

Raija Hanski and Martin Scheinin, *Leading Cases of the Human Rights Committee*, 2007

Series TEXTBOOKS

Antonio Cassese, *International Criminal Law* (in Serbian), 2005

Vojin Dimitrijević – Obrad Račić – Vladimir Đerić – Tatjana Papić – Vesna Petrović – Saša Obradović, *Public International Law* (in Serbian),
Second edition 2007

Vojin Dimitrijević – Tatjana Papić – Vesna Petrović – Dragoljub Popović,
International Human Rights Law (in Serbian), Third edition 2012

Series REPORTS

Human Rights in FRY – A Comprehensive Report for 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002
(in Serbian and English), 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003

Human Rights in Serbia and Montenegro 2003, 2004, 2005
(in Serbian and English), 2004, 2005, 2006

Žarko Marković (ed.), *Treatment of Persons Deprived of Liberty*
(in Serbian and English), 2010

Human Rights in Serbia 2006, ..., 2019
(in Serbian and English), 2007, ..., 2020

Right to Asylum in the Republic of Serbia 2014 ...,2019
(in Serbian and English), 20015, ..., 2020

OCCASIONAL PUBLICATIONS

Konstantin Obradović, *Responsibility of States for International Delicts* (in Serbian), 2000

Thomas Buergenthal, *A Lucky Child*, (in Serbian), 2010

In memoriam – Vojin Dimitrijević 1932-2012, 2012.