

16
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▲ Lvl. 2

State
replied

Serbia

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Serbian Weekly 'Vranjske Novine' Closed Following Administrative Harassment

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ State

CATEGORY  ▶ Harassment and intimidation of journalists

PARTNER: EFJ/IFJ, Index, RSF

Serbian weekly Vranjske novine will cease publishing, announced founder and editor-in-chief Vukasin Obradovic on 18 September. The paper claims it has been subject to intense political and economic pressures, including financial inspections allegedly aimed at compromising its finances.

According to the Independent Journalists' Association (NUNS), Vranjske novine has been subjected to political and economic pressure since its creation in 1994, as the weekly is known for revealing abuse of public office, such as corruption and organised crime. Obradovic, his family and his colleagues experienced multiple non-investigated instances of harassment and persecution, ranging from repeated direct threats, car tampering, offices robbed, to inspections and controls leading to the economic suffocation of the newspaper, peaking this year.

A recent attempt to inspect Vranjske beginning on 16 August 2017, was followed by an unexpected financial inspection on 4 September. NUNS states that although the inspections are legitimate, the question is whether they were prompted by the publication of an interview with a former Vranje Tax Authority head. Soon after the publication, Obradovic was warned off the record, to expect an inspection with the intention of harassing the newspaper. He wrote in an open letter to the tax administration authority published on 21 September, that Vranjske has been operating in accordance with the law since its creation.

Vukasin Obradovic received many awards for his investigative work. In 2009, he was awarded OSCE media personality of the year. He was also President of NUNS, between 2010 and February 2017.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



- ➔ Report published on the Mapping Media Freedom platform: “Serbia: Critical newspaper shut down following tax inspections”
- ➔ Statement by the EFJ: “Serbian weekly ‘Vranjske novine’ closed following administrative harassment”

STATE REPLIES



16 Apr 2018 | Reply from the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia

- ➔ Letter from the Permanent Representation of Serbia to the Council of Europe

FOLLOW-UPS



23 Feb 2018 | Commissioner for Human Rights: ‘Concerted efforts needed to protect media freedoms in Serbia’

- ➔ Excerpt from the Commissioner's follow-up visit report carried out from 19 to 22 February 2018