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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Public warning to the State Prosecutorial Council, the Republic Public Prosecutor and the High Judicial Council: Stop state capture in the judiciary**

Civil society organizations are calling on the State Prosecutors' Council, the Republic Public Prosecutor and the HJC to do their work and stop further falling apart of institutions through the tabloids.

The actions of the Republic Public Prosecutor, based solely on the writing of the tabloid, without any verification, indicate a lack of confidence in the institution and in the members of the institution he is in charge of.

This type of act could not be interpreted in another way than placing the Republic Public Prosecutor in the position of attacking individual members of the State Prosecutors' Council, before determining whether they had committed a violation of ethical standards.

Any distrusts as to the impartiality of judicial office-holders require the immediate reaction of the competent authorities. However, published reports of the "Ethics Committee Opinion" indicate that their prompt reaction has given the impression in public that responsibility has been established and the whole thing is left to the created constructions, tabloids and gongs.

The procedures have been relocated from the institutions to the tabloid's media mudslide and lead to the collapse of the credibility of the State Prosecutors' Council and the High Court of Justice, as well as endangering the security of judicial functions.

We warn that the possible aim of such proceedings is to dismiss all judicial office-holders who dare to publicly express critical viewpoints on activities within the profession.

This case prompted us to point to the phenomenon of a "trapped state in the judiciary", that is, institutions are being abused in the interest of a narrow group of authorities, rather than working in the interests of citizens' rights.

The overall result is a further collapse of trust in a key segment of society, the **JUDICIARY**.

The Republic Public Prosecutor, the DVT and the HJC are obliged, under the Constitution, to ensure the independence of the prosecution and the independence of the judiciary and judges so that the public can gain confidence in these institutions and citizens exercise their rights.

The Republic Public Prosecutor, the State Prosecutors' Council and the High Judicial Council are, according to the Constitution, obliged to ensure the independence of the prosecution and the independence of the judiciary and judges in order the public gain confidence in these institutions and citizens exercise their rights.

Signatories:

1. Slavko Curuvija Foundation
2. Serbia on the move
3. CRTA - Centre for Research, Transparency and Accountability
4. Youth Initiative for Human Rights
5. Civic Initiatives
6. Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights YUCOM
7. Belgrade Centre for Human Rights
8. The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights
9. Policy Center
10. Transparency Serbia
11. Belgrade Center for Security Policy
12. Committee for Human Rights Nish
13. Catalyst Balkans
14. Open Society Foundation, Serbia
15. Human Rights Committee Negotin
16. Partners Serbia
17. New optimism
18. European Movement Serbia
19. National Decentralization Coalition