

Contribution to European Commission's Rule of Law report

2025



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
Regional Office Europe

RULE OF LAW & HUMAN RIGHTS

The 'rule of law' is a concept at the heart of the United Nations' mission. It refers to a principle of governance which is consistent with international human rights standards ([S/2004/616](#)). There is no rule of law within societies if human rights are not protected and human rights cannot be protected in societies without a strong rule of law. This interlinkage is reiterated by the UN Secretary-General in his [New Vision for the Rule of Law](#): *"Human rights and the rule of law are mutually reinforcing – the advancement of the rule of law is essential for the protection of all human rights, and human rights are central to the rule of law."*

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), also known as UN Human Rights Office, is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote and protect the enjoyment and full realization, by all people, of all human rights. As part of its mandate, OHCHR works to mainstream human rights to strengthen the rule of law ([Management Plan 2024 - 2027](#)).

Established in 2009, OHCHR Regional Office for Europe (ROE) aims to advance the protection and promotion of human rights in the European Union and its member States. ROE works to mainstream international human rights standards to strengthen the rule of law in the EU by engaging in and contributing to the European Commission's Rule of Law Report. ROE furthermore promotes the UN human rights mechanisms and processes by giving their work visibility at the regional level.

OHCHR ROE'S CONTRIBUTION

The contribution by OHCHR Regional Office for Europe (ROE) is grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and nine international human rights treaties:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CAT)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CERD)
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMW)
- International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CPED)

The current submission consists of a compilation of findings and recommendations contained in reports of UN international human rights mechanisms including human rights treaty bodies, special procedures and the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council. It also includes statements and reports by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and his Office.

UN HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISM

Each of the nine international human rights treaties creates a **human rights treaty body or committee of independent experts** to monitor the implementation of the provisions of the treaty. With the support from OHCHR, the treaty bodies:

- consider reports submitted by State parties detailing how they are implementing the treaty;
- adopt general comments interpreting the treaty provisions, and organize discussions on themes related to the treaties; and
- consider complaints (communications) from individuals alleging that their rights have been violated by a State party, provided that the State has accepted the complaints procedure.

The **UN Human Rights Council (HRC)** is a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly and the main intergovernmental body within the UN responsible for human rights. It meets at the UN Office at Geneva in three regular sessions each year, and may convene special sessions to respond to urgent human rights situations. The HRC benefits from substantive, technical, and secretariat support from OHCHR.

The **special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council** are independent human rights experts with mandates to report and advise on human rights from a thematic or country-specific perspective. As of November 2024, there are 46 thematic and 14 country mandates. With the support of OHCHR, special procedures undertake country visits, act on individual cases of alleged violations and concerns of a broader nature by sending communications (letters of allegation) to States and other entities; contribute to the development of international human rights standards; and engage in advocacy.

The **Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the UN Human Rights Council** is a State-led mechanism that conducts a peer review of the human rights situation of each UN Member State once every 4.5 years. It is carried out by the UPR Working Group of the Human Rights Council. In each review, the State under review reports on the actions it has taken to improve its human rights situation and overcome challenges to the enjoyment of human rights. It also receives recommendations from UN Member States for improvement. In addition to the national reports of States under review, the UPR is informed by compilations of stakeholder information and UN system reports.

In recent years, States have established **National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMIRF)**, some of whom with the technical assistance of UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). This mechanism, which is often based within the ministry of foreign affairs, has a mandate which includes following-up on all treaty body obligations, UPR recommendations, as well as recommendations from other international and regional human rights mechanisms, and generally works closely with government ministries, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations. (See: [National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up: A Study of State engagement with International Human Rights Mechanisms; A Practical Guide to Effective State Engagement with International Human Rights Mechanisms](#))

The **Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** also known as **UN Human Rights Office** is the main human rights entity of the UN to protect and promote all human rights for everyone everywhere. The High Commissioner for Human Rights leads OHCHR. He is the principal human rights official of the United Nations.

INSIDE THE CONTRIBUTION

SERBIA

- Period of contribution: January - December 2024
- Contents of contribution:
 - The Human Rights Committee (CCPR) adopted its concluding observation on Serbia on 15 March 2024 and published its report ([CCPR/C/SRB/CO/4](#)) on 1 April 2024.
 - The Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression visited Serbia and Kosovo from 28 March to 6 April 2023. At the end of the visit, the Special Rapporteur shared a [preliminary statement](#) and subsequently, published the official report ([A/HRC/56/53/Add.2](#)) at the 56th session of the UN Human Rights Council (18 June -12 July 2024)
 - The special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council sent a letter of allegation ([SRB 1/2024](#)) to Serbia dated 20 February 2024 concerning denigrating statements against election observers and members of civil society, in particular the NGO CRTA, in Serbia by members of the Parliament and other leading political figures, after the NGO published a report that may point to election fraud and electoral engineering during the December 2023 Belgrade city assembly elections. A [response](#) was received.
 - The special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council sent a letter of allegation ([SRB 2/2024](#)) to Serbia dated 30 April 2024 concerning five different criminal complaints submitted to the Special Prosecutor for High Tech Crime and one to the Basic Prosecutor office in Novi Sad because of direct threats directed to Ana Lalic Hegedis and Dinko Gruhonjic, journalists and leaders of the Vojvodina Association of Independent Journalists (IJAV).
 - The special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council sent a letter of allegation ([SRB 3/2024](#)) to Serbia dated 1 July 2024 on the situation of Mr. Mansoor Ahmed Saad Adayfi, a Yemeni citizen currently a resident of Serbia. Mr. Adayfi arrived at the detention facility at the U.S. Naval Station Guantánamo Bay in February 2002 aged 23. Mr. Adayfi was cleared for release by the Periodic Review Board in October 2015 and transferred from the detention facility to Serbia in 2016, following over a decade of alleged arbitrary detention and torture, inhuman and degrading treatment sustained in U.S. custody.
 - The High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a [statement](#) dated 23 May 2024 welcoming the UN General Assembly resolution ([A/RES/78/282](#)) to commemorate 1995 genocide in Srebrenica and designate 11 July as the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica.
- Forthcoming relevant information (January - May 2025): N/A
- Resources:
 - [Rule of Law in Europe | OHCHR](#)
 - Country page on [Serbia](#)
 - [Universal Human Rights Index \(UHRI\)](#) allows you to explore over 230.000 observations and recommendations made by the international human rights protection system (treaty bodies, special procedures and the Universal Periodic Review)

Pillar I: JUSTICE SYSTEM

There is no true respect for the rule of law without a judicial power guaranteeing compliance therewith. Judges guarantee compliance with laws and with it the reality of democratic coexistence. The duty to promote equality among all persons, especially to ensure that everyone has the right to access justice on an equal basis with others, rests with the judiciary. Guaranteeing access to justice is indispensable to democratic governance and the rule of law, as well as to combating inequality and exclusion.

Respecting the rule of law through fostering the separation of powers and the independence of justice ensures protection of human rights. The judiciary is the ultimate guarantors of human rights. However, at the same time, judges, prosecutors and lawyers are subject to attacks and violations of their rights, including threats, intimidation, external interference in conducting their professional activities, arbitrary detention, prosecution, and killings. These attacks threaten the impartiality and independence of the judiciary and the legal profession and in turn, deter their role as guarantors of human rights and the rule of law.

For more info:

- [Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary](#)
- [Human rights in the administration of justice: a manual on human rights for judges, prosecutors and lawyers](#)
- [International principles and guidelines on access to justice for persons with disabilities](#)
- [General Recommendation No. 33 on women's access to justice \(CEDAW/C/GC/33\)](#)
- [Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers](#)

Independence – High Prosecutorial Council

- While welcoming recent constitutional and legislative reforms to strengthen the judicial sector, including measures to strengthen the independence of the judiciary and the public prosecution service, the Human Rights Committee is concerned that prosecutors do not have a majority of votes on the newly established High Prosecutorial Council, which may undermine its independence ([CCPR/C/SRB/CO/4](#)).
- The Human Rights Committee recommended that Serbia should ensure effective implementation of the safeguards for judicial and prosecutorial independence contained in recently adopted constitutional and legislative reforms, in line with article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and relevant international standards, and consider amending the existing framework to ensure that prosecutors have a majority of votes on the newly established High Prosecutorial Council ([CCPR/C/SRB/CO/4](#)).

Pillar II: ANTI-CORRUPTION

Corruption has a destructive effect on State institutions and it undermines the functioning and legitimacy of institutions and processes, the rule of law and ultimately the State itself. In particular, corruption effects on the capacity of States to respect, protect and fulfil human rights particularly of those persons and groups in situation of vulnerability and marginalization.

Corruption pose a major challenge to many societies as they divert public revenues and cripple public budgets that should provide healthcare, housing, education, and other essential services, they undermine States' ability to meet their minimum core obligations and their pre-existing legal obligations to maximize all available resources to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.

For more info:

- [Corruption and human rights | OHCHR](#)
- [OHCHR Key messages on the negative impact of corruption in the enjoyment of human rights](#)

The institutional framework capacity to fight against corruption – independence and of Agency for the Prevention of Corruption

- While noting the legislative framework in place to combat corruption, including the Law on Public Procurement and the Law on Prevention of Corruption, as well as the mandate and budget attributed to the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption, the Human Rights Committee is concerned by information provided by the State party indicating that the Agency has filled no more than 40 per cent of the staff positions allocated to it and regrets the lack of information provided on mechanisms aimed at guaranteeing the Agency's independence. ([CCPR/C/SRB/CO/4](#))
- While noting the statistical information provided on corruption-related complaints, investigations, prosecutions and convictions during the reporting period, the Human Rights Committee is concerned by the lack of information provided on cases involving corruption committed by high-level public officials and politicians, and by reports indicating that high-profile convictions are rare (arts. 2 and 25). ([CCPR/C/SRB/CO/4](#))
- The Human Rights Committee recommended that Serbia should strengthen implementation of its legal framework for combating corruption by taking appropriate measures to support the investigation and prosecution of all cases of corruption, particularly those involving high-level public officials and politicians, including by strengthening the mandate, staffing and independence of the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption and other relevant entities, ensuring the enforcement of transparency requirements in public procurement processes and guaranteeing effective protection for whistle-blowers. Furthermore, it should ensure that public officials found guilty of corruption are sanctioned commensurately with the gravity of the offence. ([CCPR/C/SRB/CO/4](#))

Pillar III: MEDIA FREEDOM

Free, independent, plural and diverse media are a core component of the right to freedom of expression, a cornerstone of democratic societies and plays an essential role in strengthening the rule of law. Journalists and the media are crucial to ensure transparency and accountability for public and governmental authorities.

For more info:

- [OHCHR and the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity](#)
- [Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression](#)
- [General comment No.34 on Article 19: Freedoms of opinion and expression \(CCPR/C/GC/34\)](#)

Framework for journalists' protection

- The special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council sent a letter of allegation ([SRB 2/2024](#)) to Serbia concerning five different criminal complaints submitted to the Special Prosecutor for High Tech Crime and one to the Basic Prosecutor office in Novi Sad because of direct threats directed to Ana Lalic Hegedis and Dinko Gruhonjic, journalists and leaders of the Vojvodina Association of Independent Journalists (IJAV):
 - Between 6-8 March 2024, Ms. Lalić Hegediš took part in the Rebedu Festival in Dubrovnik, a self-defined meeting of 'anti-nationalist and anti-fascist minds', where she spoke about alleged persecution faced by people in Vojvodina and reported on the threats she had received after her arrest in 2020. She also spoke in a sarcastic way about the emerging nation in the Serbian province of Vojvodina. Since this event, Ms. Lalić Hegediš has been receiving online insults and threats, some of a sexual nature, as well as death threats.
 - Since 14 March 2024, Mr. Dinko Gruhonjić has been subjected to a public smear campaign, and has also been receiving online threats, including threats of physical violence. According to reports, the series of threats against and smear campaign against Mr. Gruhonjić stems from a manipulated video montage from Mr. Gruhonjić's participation in the Rebedu Festival in 2023, which falsely implicated him in expressing the approval of sharing a name with Dinko Šakić who was found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Second World war.
 - Between 10-15 March 2024, the IJAV filed a total of five complaints with the Special Prosecutor for High Tech Crime in response to the threats received by the journalists. On 20 March 2024, the IJAV filed another complaint with the Basic Prosecutor's Office in Novi Sad in response to the threatening graffiti incident at Mr. Gruhonjić's private residence. According to reports, the prosecution has formed cases in response to the complaints. This is not the first time that Mr. Gruhonjić has been threatened as a result of his work as a journalist. Over the last three years, he has been violently threatened four times in addition to the recent spike of threats. None of the perpetrators have been identified or brought to justice.

Media authorities and bodies – Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media

- The Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression noted that despite its mandate and the legal means at its disposal, the Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media has consistently failed to act promptly and effectively to stop the spread of harmful speech, even when it has reached the level of incitement to violence, hostility and discrimination (see, [A/HRC/56/53/Add.2](#), paras. 30 – 42)
- The Human Rights Committee welcomed the adoption, in October 2023, of the Law on Public Information and Media and the Law on Electronic Media, which included measures to strengthen the independence of the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media. However, the Committee remains concerned about insufficient media pluralism and reports of unequal access to public funding and to State officials for outlets considered critical of the Government. ([CCPR/C/SRB/CO/4](#))
- In accordance with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Committee's general comment No. 34 (2011) on the freedoms of opinion and expression, the State party should:
 - (a) Ensure the prompt, independent and impartial investigation of all reported cases of violations of freedom of expression, including violent attacks on journalists, media workers and human rights defenders, prosecute suspected perpetrators and, if found guilty, punish them with appropriate penalties, and provide victims with effective remedies;
 - (b) Promote media pluralism by fostering a media environment in which independent and State-controlled media are afforded equal opportunities to access public funding and to report on information of public interest, and by ensuring effective enforcement of laws relating to the transparency of media ownership;
 - (c) Ensure the independence of regulatory institutions, such as the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media, through effective enforcement of the legal and regulatory framework;
 - (d) Ensure that safeguards are in place to prevent the use of strategic litigation or anti-money-laundering and terrorism legislation to unduly target or restrict the activities of civil society organizations, activists, human rights defenders and journalists;
 - (e) Ensure the effective implementation of prevention and response frameworks in order to promote the safety of journalists. ([CCPR/C/SRB/CO/4](#))

Lawsuits

- The Special Rapporteur is disappointed that impunity for past crimes, including murders of journalists in the 1990s, has remained unaddressed. In February 2024, the Court of Appeal acquitted the four individuals accused of the murder of Slavko Ćuruvija, a particularly emblematic case, in a terrible blow to his family's quest for justice. The cases of Radoslava "Dada" Vujasinović, an investigative journalist killed in 1994, and Milan Pantić, a crime reporter killed in 2001, are still at the preliminary investigation stage. ([A/HRC/56/53/Add.2](#))

Pillar IV: CHECKS AND BALANCES

Civic space is the environment that enables civil society to play a role in the political, economic and social life of our societies. In particular, civic space allows individuals and groups to contribute to policy-making that affects their lives, including by: (1) accessing information; (2) engaging in dialogue; (3) expressing dissent or disagreement, and (4) joining together to express their views. An open and pluralistic civic space that guarantees freedom of expression and opinion as well as freedom of assembly and association, is a prerequisite for making development and peace sustainable.

For more info:

- [OHCHR and protecting and expanding civic space](#)
- [Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders](#)
- [The Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms](#)

The enabling framework for civil society – general

- The Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression noted with deep concern that safe civic space for the expression of diverse views is shrinking in Serbia because of the toxic state of public discourse, described by a range of stakeholders – from State institutions to civil society representatives and journalists – as “polluted”, “divisive”, “intolerant” and “aggressive”. ([A/HRC/56/53/Add.2](#))
- The special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council sent a letter of allegation ([SRB 1/2024](#)) to Serbia concerning denigrating statements against election observers and members of civil society, in particular the NGO CRTA, in Serbia by members of the Parliament and other leading political figures, after the NGO published a report that may point to election fraud and electoral engineering during the December 2023 Belgrade city assembly elections.
 - On 18 January 2024, an MP from the ruling party, Vladimir Đukanović, posted on Twitter saying that "Those working for CRTA should be arrested for misleading the public about the alleged theft as well as for disturbing the public. In addition, CRTA, as a lobbyist organisation, should be banned."
 - The discrediting narrative, labelling CRTA as thieves has been later reproduced and repeated by other high-ranking Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) MPs, stating among other things that CRTA members should be arrested and brought before justice, and that “non-governmental, or better yet, anti-governmental organisations should have been warned, long ago, that their activity goes beyond what they were registered for.”
 - In another statement on 17 January 2024, the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić commented in a live programme on TV Pink, apparently quoting a question by a German MP, referring to the source of funding of CRTA. Reportedly, this question at the EU Affairs Committee was not asked.

The enabling framework for civil society – negative narratives/smear campaigns

- In various meetings with the Special Rapporteur, interlocutors described a dangerous “us versus them” narrative, which often started with negative statements by high-ranking government officials, was amplified by tabloids and nationwide television programmes and led to threats from “unknown sources”, especially on social media. Such a pattern was evident, for instance, in the aftermath of the tragic shooting of 18 children and young people in May 2023. Following the killings, there were weekly public protests calling for accountability, better arms control and robust action against incitement to hatred and violence in the tabloid media, but the protests were attacked by government officials and tabloid media outlets for being “pro-Western” and provoking “chaos and the burning down of the Assembly”. Some of the protesters, including family members of the survivors, and independent media outlets became targets of vilification campaigns. ([A/HRC/56/53/Add.2](#))
- The Special Rapporteur acknowledges the efforts made by the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, in particular the protocol that it has developed for State authorities to condemn toxic political discourse. She notes that the code of conduct for parliamentarians emphasizes the duty of parliamentarians to desist from incitement to hatred or violence. However, the measures have failed to have the desired effect in the absence of unequivocal political commitment from the highest levels of government to enforce them. ([A/HRC/56/53/Add.2](#))

Others - surveillance

- The Human Rights Committee is concerned that draft legislation introducing mass biometric surveillance through facial recognition technology may not be compatible with the right to privacy guaranteed under article 17 of the Covenant, in particular with regard to the criteria of necessity and proportionality. The Committee is also concerned by the lack of information provided by the State party regarding the legal safeguards, such as independent oversight mechanisms and judicial review, for its surveillance regime, including online surveillance. The Committee is also concerned about reports of personal data from criminal investigations being leaked by the authorities to certain media outlets and regrets the lack of information provided by the State party in this regard (arts. 2, 17 and 26). ([CCPR/C/SRB/CO/4](#))
- The State party should ensure that draft legislation on the introduction of mass biometric surveillance is fully compatible with the Covenant, particularly article 17, ensuring that such legislation is drafted by means of an inclusive and participatory process involving all relevant stakeholders, including the Ombudsman and civil society organizations. The State party should ensure that adequate legal safeguards, including judicial review, are in place for its surveillance regime, including online surveillance, that personal data gathered in the context of criminal investigations remain confidential and that reports of personal data from criminal investigations being leaked by the authorities to media outlets are fully and independently investigated. ([CCPR/C/SRB/CO/4](#))

Independent authorities (NHRIs)

- The Human Rights Committee, while welcoming the adoption, in November 2021, of the Law on the Protector of Citizens, which includes measures to establish a clear and transparent process for the appointment of the Protector, the Committee regrets the lack of information provided by the State party on measures taken to establish a clear, transparent and participatory selection and appointment process for the membership of the Protector's decision-making body (art. 2). ([CCPR/C/SRB/CO/4](#))
- The State party should establish, in relevant legislation, regulations or binding administrative guidelines, a clear, transparent and participatory selection and appointment process for the membership of the Protector's decision-making body, including by promoting the participation of candidates from a wide range of societal groups. ([CCPR/C/SRB/CO/4](#))

SPECIAL THEME - Transitional Justice

The rule of law is fundamental to lasting peace and security. It is the foundation for conflict prevention, peace-making, peacekeeping, sustaining peace and peacebuilding. A holistic approach to transitional justice, including criminal accountability, truth-seeking, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence, will help build the foundation for reconciliation and lasting peace. The right to the truth implies knowing the full and complete truth as to the events that transpired, their specific circumstances, and who participated in them, including knowing the circumstances in which the violations took place, as well as the reasons for them. The right to the truth is closely linked to the rule of law and the principles of transparency, accountability and good governance in a democratic society.

For more info:

- [Transitional Justice | OHCHR](#)
- [Special Rapporteur on truth, justice and reparation](#)

- In his [statement](#), the High Commissioner for Human Rights welcomed the resolution which is further recognition of the victims and survivors and their pursuit of justice, truth and guarantees of non-recurrence. It is also an important step towards promotion of a culture of remembrance and peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in the region.
- He furthermore stated that he firmly stands against the denial of the genocide perpetrated in July 1995 in Srebrenica and of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed across Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 1992-1995 conflict, and other attempts to rewrite the history of these events painstakingly documented through the judicial process.

SPECIAL THEME - Freedom of assembly

Freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly are fundamental to society – particularly when there is sharp disagreement on major issues. Any restrictions to freedom of expression and right to peaceful assembly must be strictly guided by the principles of legality, necessity and proportionality. These standards must also be applied without discrimination. It must be clear that legitimate exercises of the freedom of expression cannot be conflated with incitement to violence and hatred. The exercise of these rights and freedoms is essential to the functioning of a democratic society and the equitable application of the rule of law.

For more info:

- [The right of peaceful assembly | OHCHR](#)
- [Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and of association](#)
- [General comment No. 37 \(2020\) on the right of peaceful assembly \(article 21\) \(CCPR/C/GC/37\)](#)

- The Human Rights Committee is concerned that the notification requirements set forth in the Law on Public Assembly of 2016 constitute a de facto authorization regime that is not in conformity with the Committee's general comment No. 37 (2020) on the right of peaceful assembly. Furthermore, while noting the delegation's assurance that spontaneous assemblies are not prohibited, the Committee is concerned that the definition of spontaneous assemblies in that Law, which stipulates that to qualify as spontaneous such gatherings must not have been convened and must not have an organizer, is imprecise and has reportedly been used inappropriately to prosecute and fine persons participating in such gatherings based solely on comments made on social media (art. 21). ([CCPR/C/SRB/CO/4](#))
- In the light of the Committee's general comment No. 37 (2020), which provides guidance on ensuring that requirements for the notification of assemblies and the regulation of spontaneous assemblies are compatible with the provisions of the Covenant, the State party should review the Law on Public Assembly of 2016 and consider amending its legislation and practices to ensure that individuals fully enjoy their right of peaceful assembly and to guarantee that any restrictions of that right comply with the strict requirements under article 21 of the Covenant. ([CCPR/C/SRB/CO/4](#))
- The State party should:
 - (a) Undertake prompt, thorough and independent investigation of all allegations of excessive use of force by law enforcement officers while policing assemblies, and ensure that suspected perpetrators are prosecuted and, if found guilty, punished appropriately, and that victims are provided with adequate compensation;
 - (b) Ensure that members of law enforcement and security forces receive specific training on non-violent methods for policing assemblies, in addition to training on international standards for the appropriate use of force, including the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and the United Nations Human Rights Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement;
 - (c) Ensure that law enforcement officers tasked with policing assemblies are clearly identifiable, including through strict enforcement of Decree No. 63 of 28 July 2023 on types of weapons, ammunition, means of coercion and equipment for police officers. In this regard, the State party is encouraged to expedite the adoption of the bylaw currently being prepared to enhance the rules regarding the use of identifying insignia on police uniforms.

