



# YUCOM

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## INVESTIGATE THE FAILURE OF POLICE WORK WHILE SECURING INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights - YUCOM appeals to be urgently investigated irregularities and illegalities in the work of police officers while they were securing a public assembly, inauguration of the President of the Republic of Serbia on 31 May 2017.

The Police Act and the Ordinance on the manner of the police work stipulate **police service standards**, which, among other things, include: the duty to serve citizens and their community, to respect legality and repress illegality, to provide exercising human and minority rights and freedoms and adhere to professional behavior and integrity. In addition, the Constitution guarantees **freedom of expression and freedom of the media**, which include free and objective media coverage in order to enable public to access to accurate and timely information.

Regarding the attack on the journalists of daily newspaper *Danas*, *Vice* and radio *Belgrade* who were reporting that day, as well as the passive role of the police and failing to provide necessary protection, we emphasize that this is a public assembly of a great public importance, and non-acting of the police indicates the risk of violating fundamental human rights of citizens of the Republic of Serbia - the right to mental and physical integrity, the right to be informed and the right to freedom of media.

In this way, **the Ministry of Interior has failed to protect journalists who were reporting on the inauguration of the President of the Republic of Serbia**, as citizens, as well as persons performing activities in the public interest (reporting) and the Mol performed activities contrary to statutory principles stipulated by the Law. Concerning the large number of police officers who were securing the public assembly, it can be questioned efficiency of the police and its capacity to protect the citizens of the Republic of Serbia.

In addition to attacks on journalists, there were irregularities regarding behavior of police officers in civilian clothes. Despite the duties of a police officer in civil clothes, envisaged by the law, to legitimize themselves before exercising police powers by showing an official badge and official IDs, **police officers in civilian clothes mostly did not legitimize themselves while they were maintaining order during the public assembly**, unless someone expressly requested it.

Redirecting citizens to use alternative path routes, also shows inadequate police behavior as the citizens did not know either who redirects them or the reasons why they were restricted to pass. Acting in this manners violates the freedom of movement of citizens guaranteed by Article 39 of the Constitution and Article 2 of The European Convention on Human Rights, which includes the right of everyone to freely move within the borders of the Republic of Serbia. Pursuant to the above, we strongly condemn the behavior of members of the Ministry of Interior who were securing the public assembly on the occasion of the inauguration of the President of the Republic of Serbia on 31 May 2017 and we demand from the Mol to adequately investigate attacks on journalists, as well as not to react in the future in the manner as they did on this occasion, and to investigate how these police officers exercised their powers on 31 May 2017 as they were securing above-mentioned assembly and during events that immediately followed.

YUCOM's team

