



Asocijacija nezavisnih elektronskih medija
Association of Independent Electronic Media
+381 11 32 86 355
+381 11 26 22 467
anem@anem.org.rs
www.anem.rs

Statement by ANEM

ANEM CALLS ON OFFICIALS TO PROTECT B92 JOURNALISTS AND ENSURE THEM ADEQUATE WORKING CONDITIONS

BELGRADE, December 7, 2009 – The Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) strongly protests against new attacks on ANEM member station *RTV B92*, and threats against journalists and the authors of *TV B92's* program "Insider". ANEM demands that the officials protect the threatened journalists and immediately apprehend and punish those responsible for threats against the author of "Insider", Brankica Stankovic, and her team, and publicly announce the results of the investigation as quickly as possible.

Threats of rape, throat-slitting and murder followed after the airing of the program " (Lack of)Power of the State" on last Thursday, which dealt with leaders of extreme groups of football fans whose banning was recently demanded by the public prosecutor. The program broadcast by *B92* described more than one hundred criminal charges against the leaders of football fan groups filed by the police in recent years – and revealed to *B92* in accordance with the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance – which have usually not resulted in effective legal verdicts.

Despite the announcement of the Serbian president Boris Tadic that the state would not tolerate violence of hooligans and criminals and that it had taken all necessary steps to protect journalists, and the one of Minister of Internal Affairs, Ivica Dacic, that the police had done everything in its power to apprehend the authors of the threats, no results have been achieved yet. Threats against journalists became even more brutal, vulgar and crude. The threats are being sent via social networking groups on the Internet and written on the buildings where journalists live and other places in Belgrade.

ANEM reminds that the employees of *B92* have been victims to continuous pressure for almost two years and that during all this time the building they work in, and in many cases some journalists as well, have been under physical protection of the police. Due to its fight for the freedom of expression, democratization of the society, the rule of law and more efficient institutions, *B92* has been targeted in every incident in Belgrade and Serbia. Pressure was also felt during the riots in Belgrade after the unilateral declaration of Kosovo independence; during the protests against the arrest of Radovan Karadzic when *B92's* cameraman was seriously injured; during the events regarding the announced but later canceled Pride Parade due to threats by extreme groups; during the recent series of attacks on foreigners and brutal murder of the French citizen Brice Taton in downtown Belgrade. Criminal proceedings against members of an extreme group of football fans charged with this murder have already begun.

ANEM fully supports the colleagues from *B92* and calls on the Serbian officials to provide adequate working conditions for *B92* and all other media outlets in Serbia that are necessary to achieve democratization of the society and protect the freedom of expression. These conditions must entail the right to inform the public without fear for own life and life of loved ones. ANEM points out that, apart from the announcements given by top officials in recent days, it is necessary to take specific actions to stop and prevent the violence. ANEM calls on the officials to demonstrate their ability to fight the perpetrators of such behavior.

President of ANEM, Sasa Mirkovic