

Freedom on the Net 2025



header1 Key Developments, June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025

Internet freedom in Serbia declined during the coverage period as the government cracked down on widespread protests that began after the September 2024 collapse of a train station canopy in Novi Sad killed 16 people. Authorities detained social media users, including students, for content related to the demonstrations, and online journalists who attempted to cover the story encountered increased violence and harassment, both online and in person. Activists and journalists continued to be targeted for surveillance with spyware, and media outlets faced a barrage of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs). Despite these threats, Serbia still featured only limited website blocking and strong constitutional protections for journalists.

- In February 2025, Netherlands-based United Group sold subsidiary Serbia Broadband to e& PPF Telecom Group, a joint venture between companies based in Czechia and the United Arab Emirates; United Group also sold other Serbian media assets, including NetTV and TotalTV,¹ to state-owned Telekom Serbia (A4 and B6).²

- In February 2025, law enforcement officers launched a raid on four nongovernmental organizations, including the Center for Research Transparency and Accountability, which operates the fact-checking outlet Istinomer. Prosecutors claimed that the groups had laundered funds from the US Agency for International Development, but Reporters Without Borders decried the raid as a “political move” (B5, B6, and C7).³
- In April 2025, Stefan Radojičić, a student at the University of Belgrade, was detained after the progovernment outlet *The Informer* published a leaked video of a speech he gave at the university. During his detention, his phone was confiscated (B8 and C3).⁴
- A December 2024 Amnesty International report revealed that Serbian authorities routinely used NoviSpy, a unique spyware tool installed on victims’ devices while they were in police detention, and Cellebrite, a data extraction tool, to access the sensitive information of journalists and activists.⁵ In February 2025, Cellebrite stopped offering services in Serbia in response to Amnesty International’s report (B8 and C5).⁶
- In March 2025, Amnesty International found that two journalists working for the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network had been targeted with Pegasus, a spyware tool produced by the Israeli cybersurveillance company NSO Group (C5).⁷
- Between January and May 2025, the Independent Journalists Association of Serbia (NUNS) reported 15 physical attacks against journalists, including reporters who work online.⁸ In March 2025, unidentified attackers vandalized the vehicle of Rijalda Mujezinović, a Brodarevo-based journalist who had been supportive of the anticorruption protests and critical of the government on social media (C7).⁹

header2 Political Overview

Serbia is a parliamentary republic that holds multiparty elections, but over the past decade the ruling Serbian Progressive Party has steadily eroded political rights and civil liberties, putting legal and extralegal pressure on independent media, the political opposition, civil society organizations, and ordinary citizens who express dissent.

This report has been abridged for Freedom on the Net 2025 due to [ongoing budget constraints](#). Please consider making a [donation](#) to support future editions of this vital resource.

For additional background information, see last year’s [full report](#).

B1 1.00-6.00 pts0-6 pts

Does the state block or filter, or compel service providers to block or filter, internet content, particularly material that is protected by international human rights standards?	6.006 6.006
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B2 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Do state or nonstate actors employ legal, administrative, or other means to force publishers, content hosts, or digital platforms to delete content, particularly material that is protected by international human rights standards?	3.003 4.004
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B3 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Do restrictions on the internet and digital content lack transparency, proportionality to the stated aims, or an independent appeals process?	3.003 4.004
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B4 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Do online journalists, commentators, and ordinary users practice self-censorship?	2.002 4.004
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B5 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Are online sources of information controlled or manipulated by the government or other powerful actors to advance a particular political interest?

1.001
4.004

B6 1.00-3.00 pts0-3 pts

Are there economic or regulatory constraints that negatively affect users' ability to publish content online?

2.002
3.003

B7 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Does the online information landscape lack diversity and reliability?

3.003 4.004

B8 1.00-6.00 pts0-6 pts

Do conditions impede users' ability to mobilize, form communities, and campaign, particularly on political and social issues?

4.004
6.006

Score Change: The score declined from 5 to 4 due to the authorities' efforts to intimidate people who organized online and the use of extraction technology against activists. [10](#)