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Impunity persisted for crimes under international law and attacks on journalists. Misogynist hate speech increased, while ethnic division and religious intolerance deepened. The government failed to deliver promised reforms.

Background

The shaky multi-ethnic coalition government began to address past violations, including political control of the police, prosecution and judiciary, and complicity with organized crime.

Right to truth, justice and reparation

The NGO Human Rights Action urged the new Supreme State Prosecutor to revise the unimplemented 2015 War Crimes Strategy and adopt measures ending impunity. Investigations opened into one case, transferred from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Judgment remained pending after the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) concluded its consideration of Montenegro's failure to provide justice to relatives of Bosniak refugees transferred in 1992 by Montenegrin police to Bosnian Serb forces and subsequently murdered.

The Minister of Justice and Human Rights was dismissed in June for refusing to accept a government resolution recognizing the Srebrenica genocide.

Torture and other ill-treatment

The ECtHR awarded €7,500 to both Momčilo Baranin and Branimir Vukčević, finding that their ill-treatment by police during anti-government protests in October 2015 had not been effectively investigated. However, the ECtHR considered Milorad Martinović's complaint terminated, as Montenegro had prosecuted two police officers and awarded compensation. Video footage showed Martinović being attacked by around 20 unidentified riot police. In July, police wearing balaclavas and without visible identification were again filmed ill-treating an individual.

Freedom of expression

In April, police and prosecutors participated for the first time in the Commission for Monitoring Violence against the Media.

In December parliament adopted amendments to the Criminal Code strengthening protection for journalists and media workers. Twenty-five journalists reported physical or verbal attacks, including death threats.

Freedom of religion and belief

In September, former government supporters and others attempted to prevent the enthronement of the new head of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Police responded with tear gas and rubber bullets.

Gender-based violence

In April, NGOs called for a law on sexual harassment after misogynistic hate speech was directed at the Minister of Health, female politicians and other women.

The increase in domestic violence, attributed to the pandemic, continued. Few criminal prosecutions took place and shelter capacity remained inadequate.

Discrimination

In June the Council of Europe warned of growing ethnic division. Montenegrins and Serbs were prosecuted for inciting ethnic hatred. Albanians and Bosniaks claimed that Covid-19 measures to close cafes in Tuzi were discriminatory. In November Bosniak activist Sabina Talović was injured in a racially-motivated attack.

Around 30% of Roma and Egyptians living in Podgorica did not receive Covid-19-related social and economic assistance. Bijelo Polje municipality failed to provide adequate alternative housing to 26 Roma families in advance of road-widening, instead offering an inadequate payment to leave. The authorities failed to assist undocumented Roma and Egyptians at risk of statelessness.

LGBTI people's rights

In March, two women were the first of five couples to be married under the Law on Life Partnership of Same-Sex Partners. In March, a transgender member of LGBT Forum Progress was attacked by unknown assailants and seriously injured.

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