



**Lawyers' Committee for
Human Rights
YUCOM**

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Announcement

Attorneys with the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights have filed, in the name of the damaged parties, charges to the Basic Court in Užice against several persons for the felonies of violent behavior and violation of freedom of exercising religion and performing religious rites. By doing so, YUCOM, in the name of the damaged parties, took over the handling of the charges first submitted to the former District Prosecution in Užice in 2008 by the religious community "Jehovah's Witnesses". The District Prosecution in Užice first transferred the case to the Municipal Prosecution which, after two years, delivered a notification to the damaged parties about dropping the charges due to lack of evidence.

Namely, in March 2008, around 500 inhabitants of the Bare settlement in Bajina Bašta who were joined by several hundred people from neighboring cities, gathered in front of the building where a religious rite of the religious community "Jehovah's Witnesses" was being performed. With the intention to interrupt the religious gathering, they have thrown rocks at the building in which the gathering was organized and shouted threatening slogans based on religious hatred and intolerance. When members of the "Jehovah's Witnesses" were forced to leave the building, some of those present inflicted light bodily injuries to the members of this religious community and then unauthorizably stormed the building and caused material damage, burned publications and broke the glass on a parked automobile.

Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights expresses its concern because of the stalling by the Basic (formerly Municipal) Prosecution in Užice pertaining to the acting upon sensitive felonies such as violent behavior and violation of freedom of confessing faith and performing religious rites. We would like to remind that the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia guarantees the freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as well as that it prohibits causing of racial, national and religious hatred.

Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights -YUCOM

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