



YUCOM

Lawyers' Committee
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An open letter to the political parties during the election period

Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights YUCOM urges political parties to publicly announce in front of citizens and voters their stand on the realization and enjoying of human rights, primarily in prisons, as prisoners are in a way excluded from society, as well as to provide access to justice for all citizens. We have chosen these two areas because they require changes and significant progress after the elections on 16th of March.

1. In 2012, as we recall, after the formation of new government, one of the first proposals was the Amnesty Law, in order to reduce the number of prisoners in Serbian prisons. This law did not achieve the proclaimed purpose. On the other hand, providing parole and effective re-socialization of prisoners for many years have been a legitimate mean of reducing the number of prisoners. We are free to say, they did not work well. The misguided policy like this - which has on the contrary increased the number of prisoners - along with the latest policies on employment in the public sector and in prisons (with the lack of qualified employees), have dissabled the implementation of the process of re-socialization while they serve in prison and increased the number of returnee. These failures, together with the general neglect of positive values in society, resulted in increased street violence and other phenomena that undermine human rights protection system.
2. Regarding the fact that for eight years in a row Serbia announces the adoption of the Law on Free Legal Aid, which would enable access to justice for those who most need it at the expense of the state, justice is not equally available for all citizens. Citizens have expressed the urge for passing this law, when they voted in the referendum for adoption of the Constitution. Disregarding the will of the citizens is certainly unacceptable. Scheduled elections have, once again, put aside the question of adoption of the Law on Free Legal Aid, which was in the public debate, and where the final harmonization of the legislative proposal and declaration of the National Assembly was expected.

During the election period we expect all political parties to give a firm stand on the aforementioned issues which are undoubtedly in the interest of the citizens of Serbia. This way the citizens can monitor their work in the National Assembly and the Government, and see whether they stand behind their position.

Because of the experience that civil society organizations have in working with citizens and solving their problems, they have the right to ask questions and expect answers as we do right now.




Milan Antonijević
Director

