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**TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL
OF THE REPUBLIC BROADCASTING AGENCY
NENAD CEKIĆ AND
MEMBERS OF THE AGENCY'S COUNCIL**

**TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE
NIKŠA STIPČEVIĆ AND
MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

COMPLAINT ABOUT THE WORK OF THE INFORMATION PROGRAM OF THE BROADCASTING SERVICE OF SERBIA

AND

MOTION FOR THE DISCHARGE OF DIRECTOR GENERAL ALEKSANDAR TIJANIĆ

“Director General of RTS¹ Aleksandar Tijanić submitted a motion to the Special Prosecution for Organized Crime, Republic Public Prosecution and the Interior Ministry, for charges to be pressed against Vladimir Popović, known by his nickname Beba, former Head of the Communication Bureau of the Serbian Government and unnamed ministers who were members of the Serbian government in 2003, as well as police and state security officials at the time, for the reasons of:

1) not reporting the preparations and not preventing the felony of organizing a murder, multiple attempts of murder and the murder of Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić and

2) negligence, lack of performing official duties and reckless performing of official duties which made the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić possible.

¹ The state-owned Radio-Television of Serbia

The above quote, signed and authorized by Aleksandar Tijanić, RTS Director General, was published as breaking news on all radio and television programs, including the evening news on RTS – a station which formally should represent a public broadcasting service.

Other than the breaking news on RTS, the public broadcasting service's website published the entire argumentation of these legally unconvincing charges, which obviously only served the purpose of being a background for a political pamphlet which followed in the explanation.

Based on the fact that criminal charges can never represent a political instrument of pressure, but only a legal instrument for the exposure and prosecution of felons, it is our opinion that the publishing of this illiterate pamphlet as breaking news on the public broadcasting service represents a textbook example of misuse of Director General Aleksandar Tijanić's position and therefore that it is your moral, but first and foremost legal obligation to undertake all measures required from you by the law.

In addition to this, we believe that the allegations contained in the so-called criminal charges filed by RTS Director General Aleksandar Tijanić represent merely a repeating of words by the defense of convicted murderers of Zoran Đinđić in the first instance trial before the Special Court, which leads us to a very unpleasant and frightening conclusion and question: What was it, coinciding with the appeal procedure of the convicted assassins before the Supreme Court, that made the Director General of the public broadcasting service Aleksandar Tijanić use their argumentation. Briefly: **Why did Aleksandar Tijanić misuse the public TV service in order to promote rejected arguments of persons who were once charged with, and now convicted for the murder of the Prime Minister?** Narrowing down such obstructions of state and court institutions and bringing them in connection with the beginning of the election campaign and comparisons to the Mihajlov case seems highly unlikely this time, especially taking into account the fact that this would represent a misuse of an institution financed by the citizens of Serbia.

One thing is certain – Aleksandar Tijanić has misused not only the public TV service, but also the function of director general he occupies and therefore we believe that he has to bear proper consequences.

With respect to the strict provisions of the Broadcasting Law, as well as the statutes of the Republic Broadcasting Agency and RTS and the internal rules of the RTS Board of Management, we demand from you to undertake all legal measures at your disposal and we take this opportunity to remind you that, according to the Broadcasting Law:

1) programs produced and broadcasted in the framework of the public broadcasting service are of common interest,

2) the principles of regulating broadcasting matters are, among others: freedom, professionalism and independence of broadcasting public media, as a guarantee of the collective development of democracy and social harmony,

3) the public broadcasting corporation is committed to broadcast radio and TV programs of common interest for the citizens, particularly with the view to respecting their human and citizens' rights, exchange of ideas and opinions, nurturing political, sexual, inter-ethnic and religious tolerance, as well as preserving national identity,

4) programs produced and broadcasted by the public broadcasting service must feature diversity, balance and mutual compatibility in order to promote democratic values of the modern day society, and particularly respect human rights and cultural, national, ethnic and political pluralism of ideas and opinions.

With the aim of achieving a common interest in the field of public broadcasting, aside from the common obligations of the broadcasters to the program contents, the public broadcasting service officials are obliged to ensure that the programs which are produced and broadcasted, especially political information program, be protected of any kind of influence by the authorities, political organizations or centers of economic power.

During production and broadcasting of political information program, public broadcasting service officials are obliged to respect the principle of impartiality and objectivity in the treatment of different political interests and various subjects, to pursue freedom and pluralism of expressing public opinions.

All broadcasters are obliged to respect the following standards of the program contents by:

- using international and national standards, ensuring the production and broadcasting of quality program, from a standpoint of both technical and quality standards;
- contributing to the raising of the citizens' common cultural and educational level;
- not broadcasting programs that promote violence or other forms of criminal behaviour, as well as programs that misuse the viewers' or the listeners' gullibility;
- respecting the ban on promoting political organizations aside from election campaigns and providing equal coverage, without discrimination, to registered political parties, coalitions and candidates during election campaigns.

The public broadcasting service performs the activity of producing and broadcasting radio and television program and has special obligations in the pursuing of a common interest in the field of public broadcasting service.

We would also like to remind you about the Agency's jurisdictions in:

- controlling and providing a persistent enforcement of the Law's provisions;
- overseeing the broadcasters' activities in the Republic of Serbia;
- ruling on petitions submitted by legal entities and private persons;
- undertaking appropriate measures towards the broadcasters.

The following are considered appropriate measures:

- 1) deciding on measures to be taken by the Agency in accordance with this Law;
- 2) filing misdemeanor or criminal charges, or the initiation of an adequate procedure before a competent state organ.

The Agency can initiate a procedure against the broadcaster or the broadcaster's authorized representative before a competent court or another state authority, if his actions or lack thereof have the features of a felony.

The Agency ensures that the broadcaster's programs do not contain information that promote discrimination, hatred or violence against persons or groups based on their different political opinions.

The Board of Management is independent and ensures a consistent enforcement of the Law's provisions relating to the public broadcasting service and appoints and discharges the director general of the Broadcasting Service of Serbia, by a two-third majority.

Based on the presented information, we demand that the Republic Broadcasting Agency's Council issue a measure of reprimand or warning to the Public Broadcasting Service, as well as to initiate an adequate court process against the responsible Aleksandar Tijanić, while demanding that the Board of Management calls for a meeting and discharge the Director General Aleksandar Tijanić as a matter of urgency.

You can watch the March 16th 2008 news from RTS's website by following this link: http://www.rts.co.yu/jedna_vest.asp?source=komentar&IDNews=217537.

Civic Initiatives

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Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights

Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina

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Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia

Women in Black

Belgrade Circle

Anti Trafficking Center

Civil Fund "Panonija", Novi Sad

Civic Action, Pančevo

Green Network of Vojvodina, Novi Sad