



# REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE VICTIMOLOGY SOCIETY OF SERBIA FOR THE YEAR 2024.

Belgrade, 2025.



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## **Introductory speech by the director of the Victimology Society of Serbia**



At the very beginning, I would like to thank all the people involved in the Victimological Society of Serbia-VDS, associates and members of the VDS who contributed to us having another year behind us in which the VDS consistently implemented its mission set out 27 years ago.

In 2024, our ongoing activities continued: providing support to victims, as our priority activity; publishing activity, which includes publishing the journal Temida; commemorating the European Day of Victims and organizing the VDS Annual Conference. The four-year cooperation with the organization Kvinna till Kvinna is continued, and so is the work on raising the capacity of the VDS and more thorough work on planning and implementation of ongoing activities. Long-term work on strengthening the position of VDS at the local level in 2024. also continued. Our cooperation with the City Center for Social Work – New Belgrade Department, the RS MUP, New Belgrade Police Station and the Center for the Care of the Elderly, Children and Persons with Disabilities "New Belgrade" was continued and strengthened. Among these things, we started the cooperation with schools and preschools on the territory of New Belgrade.

New experiences specific for 2024. were the following:

- In previous years, the target group of VDS was mostly adults, and in 2024, for the first time, a series of workshops for the prevention and response to gender-based violence was realized in a high school in Belgrade. Also, the VDS for the first time started with the realization of individual workshops for children, women, who come for consultations in the VDS, related to the violence they suffered. The workshops were designed based on the mapped needs of the children and proved to be a good practice for several reasons: The women were sure that their children were taken care of during the consultation, and at the same time the children had a useful and creative use of their time. On the other hand, in this way, the VDS team gained another insight related to the victimization of the mother, the child and the entire family, which was another element for designing and structuring the support plan.
- New experience and new challenges were related to the launch of the Petition for the establishment of May 3 and 4 as days of remembrance for the victims of mass murders in Serbia. The immediate reasons for starting this petition are still very painful for the VDS team and all of Serbia. We would certainly be much happier if we didn't have to launch the mentioned initiative, and accordingly our feelings were mixed when this initiative was adopted and when May 3 and 4 were declared as days of remembrance for the victims of mass murders in Serbia.
- In the previous year, VDS cooperated with Bitef Theater from Belgrade and actress Marija Maša Dakić, who donated half of the revenue generated in the pre-premiere performance of the play Prima Facie in February to VDS.

- Continuing the long-term cooperation with the Correctional Institution for Women in Požarevac, the VDS organized a humanitarian action to collect books for the institution's library on the occasion of March 8 International Women's Day. I would like to thank all the team members and friends of VDS who donated books on that occasion.

Unfortunately, the end of 2024 was marked by another mass killing in Serbia, in Novi Sad, which disturbed the whole of Serbia and unequivocally indicated that there is still a lot of work related to the prevention of various forms of suffering and work on systemic and individual support for direct and indirect victims. VDS will work in this direction in 2025.

Finally, I would like to thank all the donors and people who supported the work of VDS in different ways in the previous year.

Thank you for your trust,

Jasmina Nikolić,

Director of the VDS

## MISSION, AIMS AND TASKS

Victimology Society of Serbia - VDS was established on 12 November 1997 as an independent and non-profit association of citizens. The purpose of founding VDS was to get together as many humanistic oriented professionals as possible, who contribute with their scientific, professional and personal authority, as well as inter-disciplinary research, education and victim support to the development of victimology and improving rights of victims of crime, war and human rights violation, regardless of their gender, religious beliefs, political views or other personal features.

VDS's mission is to advocate for the improvement of rights of all victims and providing favorable social conditions in which victims would be in a position to realize their rights and satisfy their needs, as well as for establishing social structure that would enable all those whose rights are violated, to heal and reintegrate into the community.

The Victimology Society of Serbia is a member of several domestic organizations and networks: the European Movement in Serbia, the "Women Against Violence Network" and the Alliance of Associations "Network of Organizations for Post-Penal Support of Serbia". VDS is a member of a number of international and European organizations: The World Victimology Society, the European Forum of Victim Services (now Victim Support Europe), the International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Program (ISPAC), the International Network of Organizations Combating Violence with Firearms (IANSA).

The main activities of VDS are:

- Proposing amendments to laws and advocating for their implementation;
- Monitoring the status of victims in criminal proceedings
- Assistance and support to victims of crime;
- Scientific research of various forms of victimization, their consequences and ways of prevention, as a basis for further creation of appropriate policies on improving the status
- of victims of crime and war and protection of their rights;
- Advocating for raising public awareness about the situation victims endure, their rights
- and problems;
- Truth and reconciliation;
- Publishing;
- Organizing scientific and professional gatherings and
- Education.

These activities reflect the continuity of the Victimology Society's work on achieving longterm goals in terms of improving the position of victims, creating new institutions, influencing the rule of law and the prevention of crime and conflict.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE VICTIMOLOGY SOCIETY OF SERBIA IN THE PERIOD 1.1.-31.12.2024.

During 2024, VDS activities were carried out according to the VDS Work Program adopted by the Assembly of the Victimology Society of Serbia at the session held on February 28, 2024.

### General issues

#### *VDS membership*

During the reporting period, three people joined VDS, while one had her membership terminated at her personal request. Activities related to membership are self-financing, and Dr. Sanja Čopić and Milica Luković Radaković were in charge of these activities in 2024.

#### *Informing VDS member and the public about the ongoing projects and the other VDS Activities*

During the reporting period, VDS members, who are on the mailing list of the VDS info Society, received regular information about ongoing projects, publications that came out of the press, gatherings organized by VDS, activities of European support for victims, victimological and other gatherings, etc.

The website of the Society is regularly updated, where you can find all the information about the work of the Society - projects, publications, gatherings and the like. Information is available in Serbian and English. Milica Luković Radaković was responsible for maintaining the website during the reporting period, while Tatjana Orelj was responsible for administering the website.

In addition to the website, VDS has accounts on social networks: Facebook, Instagram and the X account, which contributes to increasing the visibility of the Society and its activities. VDS also has a YouTube channel.

*Facebook (FB) page VDS<sup>1</sup>* on 31.12.2024. had 2741 profiles. In the period from January 1 to December 31, 2024, 2,609 people received information about an activity of the VDS. During the year 2024, statistics record that the VDS FB profile was visited by 791 other profiles, which is an increase of 30.4% compared to 2023. It was recorded that the highest number of visitors to the VDS FB page was during February and May, and then in the period from September to December 2024. The visit to the page can be related to the fact that during February 2024, activities were devoted to the celebration of the European Day of Victims and the initiation of a petition to declare May 3 and 4 as Days of Remembrance for the Victims of Mass Murders. Various contents (posts, reels, links, video materials, as well as QR codes) were distributed through social networks with the aim of drawing the attention of the public in order to collect as many signatures as possible. The increased number of visits to the profile during September and November can be attributed to the holding of the annual VDS

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<sup>1</sup> The data was obtained based on insights into the Meta business suite, for the period 01.01.2024-31.12.2024. year. VDS does not have a paid reach, rather it is exclusively organic. Organic reach is people who see content on their feed when it's published, people who see pictures and albums, or users who see profile mentions in their feed.



conference. During the month of September, active work was done on presenting the plenary presenters and the works of the participants of the conference, and the announcements that were created during November 2024 related to the presentation of the conference. In 2024, content interaction increased: 73 compared to 2023, when it was only 9.

*Instagram profile of VDS* on 31.12.2024. had 824 followers.<sup>2</sup> Instagram profile VDS was visited 2402 times; which is an increase of 193.6% compared to 2023. The highest number of visits is recorded in February, May, July, November and December. In the period from January 1 to December 31, 2024, the reach of the VDS Instagram profile is 16913, which is significantly increased compared to the same period of the previous year. During the year 2024, 121 different posts (photos and videos) and 108 stories (a post that is available 24 hours) were published, while the content interactions are 1300 and have increased compared to the year 2023 by as much as 100%.

Web site VDS: [www.vds.rs](http://www.vds.rs)

Facebook: [viktimoloskodrustvosrbije](https://www.facebook.com/viktimoloskodrustvosrbije)

Instagram: [viktimolosko.drustvo](https://www.instagram.com/viktimolosko.drustvo)

X: [@vdsrbija](https://twitter.com/vdsrbija)

Youtube channel: [@viktimoloskodrustvosrbije-5548](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvikt1m0l0sk0drustvosrbije5548)

Posting information on social networks and presenting members of the Society in the media contributes to increasing the visibility of the Society and its activities. All activities related to informing members and the public about VDS projects and activities and updating the website and accounts on social networks are self-funded. Milica Luković Radaković and Mirela Osmanović were responsible for these activities in 2023.

### *Activities of the VDS bodies*

During 2024, a regular session of the VDS Assembly was held (adopting the VDS work report for 2023, the financial report for 2023. and the work program for 2024). The Director and the Board of Directors of the VDS performed their regular duties as stipulated by the VDS Statute. The Board of Directors had three sessions.

### *Strengthening the capacity of the VDS team*

During 2024, work was also done on strengthening the capacity of the VDS team, which was directly involved in the implementation of the activities. Capacity building was done through the participation of VDS team members in a series of workshops organized by various organizations and foundations, about which there is more information in the part of the report on the participation of VDS members at scientific and professional gatherings. In addition, at the beginning of July 2024, a meeting was organized to strengthen the team, which was organized on Fruška Gora. In order to strengthen the capacity of the team, prof. Dr. Sanja Čopić underwent training called Anti-Corruption Essentials, organized by Kvinna Till Kvinna.

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<sup>2</sup> Compared to 2023, the page was followed by 233 new followers. The VDS Instagram page is followed in the largest percentage by women, 84.8%, while 15.2% are men. Instagram records that the followers are predominantly from Belgrade and Novi Sad, then from Niš, Kragujevac and Pancevo. In addition to followers from Serbia, there are also those from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Germany and Slovenia.

## *VDS library*

During the reporting period, the book fund increased. The VDS library currently has 1875 titles in the fields of victimology, law, criminology, gender studies, truth and reconciliation, human rights, restorative justice, and other areas. In addition, the VDS library has a large number of journals, of which two are regularly received through the journal exchange: Journal of Criminology and Criminalistics, Legal Records. Some journals are donated to the VDS by its members or institutions VDS collaborates with: prof. dr Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović donates her copies of *The International Journal of Restorative Justice* to the VDS library. Finally, the VDS library also has a rich selection of audio and video materials.

The VDS library is available to all members of the Society. Since November 2007, library use has been included in the membership fee, while non-members can join the library. Since 2007, 101 people have joined the VDS library. Information about the library's work and the contents of the VDS library are available at <https://novisajt.vds.rs/vds-biblioteka/>.

Acquiring books for the library is mostly done through gifts and receiving book copies for reviews in the academic journal Temida. Library maintenance activities are self-funded and voluntary. Milica Luković Radaković was responsible for the VDS library during the reporting period.



## *Applying for projects*

One of the ongoing activities of the VDS is seeking funds for projects and further development of a long-term and more stable funding strategy. During the reporting period, VDS applied for a total of 11 projects (independently or in partnership). From that number, funds were obtained for the implementation of four projects.

## **Advocacy for raising awareness about victims' rights and their position**

### *Awards of the Victimology Society of Serbia for 2024.*

The Victimology Society of Serbia established three awards in 2009:

- Award for contribution to the improvement of victims' rights
- Award for contribution to the development of a non-conflict and comprehensive approach to dealing with war and war crimes "The Third Way"
- Award for a talented young researcher

The Award for contribution to the improvement of victims' rights is awarded to individuals or organizations who, through their activities or efforts, have made a significant and lasting contribution to the improvement of victims' rights and the achievement of the goals for which the Society was founded. In 2024, this award was given to Marija Maša Dakić, actress.

**Marija Maša Dakić** attracted the public's attention with the performance "Prima facie" directed by Anja Suša, based on the text by Suza Miller, which she performed masterfully in the Bitef Theater. With this monodrama, Maša managed to raise important issues related to the insensitivity of the justice system towards victims of sexual violence, and then, with her media appearances, support all women who have faced gender-based violence and contribute to increasing the visibility of organizations that provide help and support to women and girls who are victims of sexual violence. With this award, we want to thank Maša for everything she has done, but also to point out the great importance and changes that can be made by public figures in the field of raising public awareness regarding gender-based violence, but also to encourage speaking openly and without judgment about sexual violence against women.

The "The Third Way" award, which is awarded to individuals or organizations that have made a special contribution to the development of a non-conflictual and comprehensive approach to dealing with the consequences of war and building peace in Serbia. This year, the award was given to dr Bojan Đokić.

**Dr. Bojan Djokić** is a postdoctoral scholarship holder at the International Holocaust Research Institute, Yad Vashem, in Jerusalem. With his scientific research and activist work, he made a significant contribution to the fight for the improvement of victims' rights, the culture of remembrance and the development of a comprehensive approach to dealing with the consequences of the Second World War and armed conflicts during the last decade of the 20th century in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. In his work, he draws special attention to the problem of missing persons during armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, especially in Kosovo and Metohija, the importance of supporting the families of victims and building peace in Serbia.

The talented researcher award is given to young people for particularly high-quality scientific research work in the field of victimology, and its aim is to encourage young people to engage in scientific research work in the field of victimology. This year, the award was given to Miona Vasić and Nađa Ignjatović for well-made and successfully defended master's theses in the field of victimology at the University of Belgrade – Faculty for Special Education and Rehabilitation.

**Miona Vasić** completed and successfully defended her master's thesis entitled "*Characteristics of violent victimization of children during placement in the Spomenak home for children without parental care.*" Through this work, she demonstrated her talent for research work, especially in the field of victimological research, as well as the application of qualitative methodology. The experiences gained through this research are also valuable for her work as a professional worker-educator in the Spomenak home, which will enable her to connect theory, research and practice. We believe that this award will be an important incentive for Miona to continue to engage in scientific and research work, especially in the field of victimology, which she will do through her doctoral studies, which she is currently pursuing.

**Nađa Ignjatović** completed and successfully defended her master's thesis entitled "*Analysis of media coverage of femicide in Serbia*". Nadja showed research curiosity, good skills in applying qualitative analysis, as well as linking theory and research findings. The work

provides a good basis for further advocating for reforms in media reporting on this and other sensitive topics and forms of violence, especially against women and children. We believe that this award will be an important incentive for Nadja to continue doing scientific research, especially in the field of victimology.

### *Marking the European Victims' Day*

On the occasion of the European Day of Victims in 2024, the VDS wanted to remind that all victims and their needs must be recognized, and their rights fully respected. On that occasion, the VDS issued [a press release](#) in which special attention was drawn to the direct and indirect victims of mass murders that took place in Serbia, and in particular to the two mass murders on May 3 and 4, 2023, as well as to what must be done in order to respond to the needs of all victims, provide support, develop a culture of remembrance and prevent the recurrence of mass suffering.

Also, on the European Day of Victims, the VDS launched an initiative to declare May 3 and 4 the Days of Remembrance for the Victims of Mass Murders in Serbia. The immediate reason for starting this initiative was the mass murders in the Experimental Elementary School "Vladislav Ribnikar" in Belgrade on May 3, 2023 and in Mali Orašje and Dubona on May 4, 2023, in which 19 people, mostly children and young people, lost their lives, while 19 of them were seriously injured. In this way, the VDS wanted these two events, as well as other mass murders in Serbia, to be remembered and to send a clear message to the public and the state that something like that must not be repeated and that the victims must not be forgotten. The petition was signed by over 11,000 citizens. Based on the decision of the Government of the Republic of Serbia from September 19, 2024, May 3 and 4 were established as Days of Remembrance for the Victims of Mass Murders in Serbia. Excerpt from the explanation of the decision of the Government of the Republic of Serbia:

*"By establishing the Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Mass Murders, the state and society contribute to building a culture of remembrance for all those who suffered and send a clear message that the victims must not be forgotten, and such tragic events must not be repeated. During those two days, we would remember all those who perished in mass murders, but also all those who survived, as well as the families and other relatives of all the victims, and through various activities contribute to raising public awareness, especially young people about how to prevent such tragic events from happening again. At the same time, every year during these two days, some kind of evaluation of what was done in terms of violence prevention would be developed, and recommendations and proposals for further activities would be developed, especially in schools, but also in local governments."*



On the occasion of celebrating the European Day of Victims, in cooperation with the Center for the Care of the Elderly, Children and Persons with Disabilities "Novi Belgrade", on February 23, 2024, the VDS organized a public forum entitled "Let every victim be recognized: New Belgrade with you!" the prevention of violence and the realization of victims' rights and overcoming the consequences of victimization. A special focus during the forum was on encouraging dialogue between citizens and representatives of competent institutions, in order to assess the needs of victims and to point out the services offered in the community. More about the forum [at the link](#).



In addition to the above activities, the VDS also held an online presentation of the VDS info and victim support service: The importance of support and prevention in working with victims. The online presentation was attended by 90 male and female students from various faculties of the University of Belgrade, Niš and Novi Sad. In addition to interested students, the presentation was attended by professors, representatives of departments at faculties, as well as representatives of various student organizations. The aim of the presentation was for students,



as future experts, who will come into direct or indirect contact with victims of various criminal acts in their work, to get to know and discuss the prevention of victimization and the provision of adequate support to victims of various criminal acts. A special focus was also devoted to mass victimization and the suffering of a large number of victims in the two mass murders that shook Serbia in May 2023.



The European Victims' Day was also marked by the VDS with guest appearances by representatives of the VDS in various media (for more information, see the section on the media appearances of VDS members).

### *Annual conference of the Victimology Society of Serbia "Caring for victims and routes to recovery"*



The 14th annual conference of the Victimological Society of Serbia entitled „Caring for victims and routes to recovery” was held in Belgrade, at the Palace Hotel, on November 28 and 29, 2024. The conference brought together a large number of experts and researchers, who from the perspective of different disciplines, theoretically and practically, deal with the care of victims and providing assistance and protection to victims of crime, human rights violations

and other types of suffering, which enabled a comprehensive exchange of experiences and knowledge.

The conference brought together 91 participants from Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, Romania, Poland, Israel and Indonesia. The participants of the conference were scientists, researchers, representatives of the social protection system, the police, the judiciary, educational institutions, and civil society organizations.

The conference began with a ceremonial opening where the following spoke:

- Prof. Dr. Slobodan Savić, president of the Victimology Society of Serbia
- Asst. Dr. Snežana Vuković, Assistant in the Ministry of Education of the RS, Sector for Prevention and Protection from Violence and Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups in Education
- Asst. Dr. Dragana Ćorić, Provincial Protector of Citizens-Ombudsman
- Milka Milovanović Minić, Municipality of Novi Belgrade, Center for care of the elderly, children and persons with disabilities
- Jasmina Nikolić, director of the Victimology Society of Serbia



During the ceremonial opening of the conference, the awards of the Victimology Society of Serbia were presented, which was discussed in more detail in the previous part of the report.



A special focus during this year's conference was on identifying innovative approaches to support victims on their way to recovery and models of intervention and memorialization in the case of mass victimization. Caring for victims implies a holistic and multidisciplinary approach and finding effective ways to recovery with constant empowerment and returning activities to victims. This seems particularly important in the contemporary social context, which is characterized by different forms of victimization at different levels. Globally, wars, international terrorism and other forms of mass victimization, environmental crime, violence against women and children are part of the daily life of people all over the planet, producing numerous victims, who need help and support in overcoming the consequences of victimization and finding ways to recovery.

The working part of the conference is organized in the form of eight thematic sessions and four poster presentations. A total of 32 papers were presented in thematic sessions. Presentation abstracts, information about conference participants, members of the program and organizing committee are available in [the book of abstracts](#).



Given the timing of the conference and the topics it dealt with, the VDS Conference was a contribution to the 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women campaign, which begins on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and ends on December 10, the International Human Rights Day.



In addition to the members of the organizing committee, Tamara Stojković, a volunteer at VDS, Maja Dinić and Tara Stojković, students at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Department of Psychology, who were on professional practice at VDS, as well as Mina Jevtić, a master's student at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Department of Psychology, participated in the realization of the conference.

The organization of the XIV annual conference of the Victimology Society of Serbia was partly financed by funds from paid registration fees for participants in the conference, and partly the organization was financially supported by: the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the RS, the Kingdom of Sweden and the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation within the project Advocating for the rights of victims of gender-based violence, especially violence in the family, violence at work and in educational and other institutions, the City of Belgrade, the City Administration of the City of Belgrade, the Secretariat for Social Protection within the project Let children (p)remain winners: prevent, strengthen, support!, OSCE Mission in Serbia and UN Development Agency (UNDP).

### *Gender equality and the fight against gender-based violence and femicide in the Western Balkans*

VDS, in cooperation with the organization FemPlatz, monitored court proceedings in cases concerning femicide, attempted femicide and other forms of gender-based violence against women. The monitoring of the trial was carried out as part of the project of the AIRE Center entitled Gender Equality and the Fight against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide in the Western Balkans, which is supported by the Government of the United



Kingdom. The project aims to improve the understanding of gender-related issues within the judiciary in Western Balkan countries and thus increase access to justice for victims and survivors of gender-based violence. Monitoring of court proceedings was carried out according to the methodology developed within the project in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Montenegro.

As part of this project, during the reporting period, VDS representatives monitored seven court proceedings, five of which were related to domestic violence and two to aggravated murder. Of the seven mentioned court proceedings, two started in 2023, but the judgment was passed in 2024 (one court proceeding for domestic violence, which was conducted before the First Basic Court in Belgrade and one court proceeding for aggravated murder, which was conducted before the High Court in Pirot). The court proceedings monitored by the VDS were conducted before the First Basic Court in Belgrade (3), the Basic Court in Leksovac (2), the High Court in Pirot (1) and the High Court in Vranje (1). In the reporting period, VDS representatives attended a total of 18 hearings.

The following were directly involved in the realization of the project: Prof. Dr. Sanja Čopić, Jasmina Nikolić, Dr. Neda S. Savić, Milica Luković Radaković and Mirela Osmanović. The project lasts from September 1, 2024. until 31.03.2025.

### *National mechanism for the prevention of torture*

VDS is one of the six civil society organizations with which the Protector of Citizens concluded an agreement on cooperation in carrying out the work of the National Torture Prevention Mechanism (NPM) on September 13, 2022, which was renewed in October 2024. The signed agreement more closely regulates the cooperation that the Protector of Citizens achieves with the selected associations in the performance of NPM duties. Cooperation is carried out through the participation of representatives and permanent professional associates of the association in visits to places where persons deprived of liberty are or may be, preparation of reports or parts of reports on the visits, preparation of recommendations for the elimination of identified deficiencies in the work of institutions where persons deprived of liberty are or may be, providing expert findings and opinions on the state of health, especially physical injuries and mental pain suffered as a consequence of any form abuse. Also, cooperation is reflected in the preparation of reports or parts of thematic reports on the situation in the area of the position of persons deprived of liberty, the preparation of analyzes and/or opinions on regulations or draft regulations regulating the position, rights and obligations of persons deprived of liberty. During the reporting period, VDS members were not engaged in visits to places where persons were deprived of their liberty.

For the members of the NPM team, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), in cooperation with the Protector of Citizens, organized training on monitoring gender-based violence in places where persons deprived of their liberty are found. The training took place from March 25 to 27, 2024. After the training, a follow-up webinar was organized on October 23, 2024. Milica Luković Radaković attended the training and webinar on behalf of VDS. Also, the Council of Europe office in Belgrade, in cooperation and consultation with the NPM, on October 29 and 30, 2024, organized a two-day training for employees and members of the NPM on the topic "Communication skills in working with people with disabilities in mental development and mental functioning and dementia". Milica Luković Radaković attended the training on behalf of VDS.

### *Advocacy for the rights of victims of gender-based violence in general and especially violence in the family, at the workplace and in educational institutions*

During 2024, activities continued on a four-year project entitled *Advocating for the rights of victims of gender-based violence in general and domestic violence in particular, at the workplace and in educational institutions*, which is being implemented in cooperation and with the financial support of the Kingdom of Sweden and the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation. The project aims to act in the direction of changes in relevant policies, legislation and practice in order to improve the position of victims of gender-based violence in Serbia in general, and especially women victims of domestic violence, in the field of work and employment and in educational institutions.

During the reporting period, the following activities were carried out, mostly those that are permanent activities of VDS aimed at achieving the goals for which the Company exists, and about which there is more information in the corresponding parts of this report:

- Organization and implementation of the XIV annual conference of the Victimology Society of Serbia-VDS entitled Care of victims and paths to recovery, which was held in Belgrade on November 28 and 29, 2024, and which represented a contribution to marking the campaign of 16 days of activism against violence against women.
- Commemoration of the European Day of Victims.
- Monitoring of court proceedings in cases of domestic violence and monitoring of court proceedings for damages in the case of the murder of nine children and one adult in "Vladislav Ribnikar" Elementary School in Belgrade.
- Preparation and submission of comments on the Draft Law on Amendments to the Criminal Code and the Draft Law on Amendments to the Criminal Code.
- Organization and implementation of trainings and workshops: Training to strengthen the capacity to respond to sexual violence at faculties; Training for working with victims of violence; Gender discrimination in the labor market: forms, support for victims and legal regulations;
- Preparation and printing of information material [Gender discrimination in the labor market and abuse at work: how to recognize?](#)
- Organizing regular meetings with representatives of institutions and organizations at the local level and strengthening strategic cooperation important for the work of the VDS info service for victims and support for victims and improving the position of victims of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence.
- Victim support within the VDS info service and victim support.
- Support to the families of those killed in mass murders in May 2023 and participation in the memorialization process
- Preparation and writing of the annual report on the work of the VDS.

Jasmina Nikolić, Milica Luković-Radaković, Mirela Osmanović, prof. Dr. Sanja Čopić and Prof. Dr. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović. The project started on September 1, 2022. year and will last until May 30, 2026. year.

## Advocacy for changes of laws and practice

### *Participation in the working groups of the National Convention on the European Union (NCEU)*

The VDS is an active member of two working groups within the National Convention on the European Union (NCEU): the Working Group in charge of monitoring the negotiations in Chapter 23 and the Working Group in charge of monitoring the negotiations in Chapter 24. During the reporting period, the VDS, through regular information, followed the work of the NKEU Working Groups for Chapters 23 and 24. of the Code, the VDS joined the comments prepared by the Autonomous Women's Center (AŽC) on behalf of the Association of Women's Non-Governmental Organizations "Women's Network Against Violence" and made additional proposals for amendments to the CPC aimed at improving the criminal procedural protection of injured parties and witnesses in criminal proceedings, as well as establishing a better basis for providing the necessary help and support after and independently of the proceedings.

### *Preparation of comments for strategic documents*

VDS joined the comments on the draft laws on amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) and the Criminal Code prepared by the AŽC on behalf of the Association of Women's Non-Governmental Organizations "Women Against Violence Network". The VDS prepared additional comments on the Draft Law on Amendments to the Criminal Procedure Law, which were included in the summary comments prepared by the AJC, and which were also sent as separate comments to the VDS. Prof. Dr. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović participated in the public debate on the drafts of these two laws, which was organized on February 28, 2023 in Belgrade.

### *The VDS Research Group on Femicide and its work within the European Observatory on Femicide*

The European observatory for femicide is one of the most important results of the activities of the Femicide project throughout Europe (implemented within the European Program of Cooperation in the Field of Science and Technology (COST) - 2013-2017), in which Serbia participated (the Steering Committee of the project included: Prof. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, Ph.D., Sanja Čopić, Ph.D. and Ljiljana Stevković, M.Sc.). The European Observatory on Femicide (EOF) was established in 2018. The mission of the EOF is the prevention of femicide through data collection, through data visibility and awareness raising, namely: through the creation of a unique European data collection system that will ensure the measurement and comparison of the extent of femicide across Europe and raising the awareness of the public and experts, and through the analysis of individual cases of femicide across Europe in order to identify failures in responding to violence against women. See more about EOF at <https://eof.cut.ac.cy/>

The EOF has four bodies: Coordinators who change every two years, the Council, National Research Groups and two thematic groups (for quantitative and qualitative research). The role of the research groups is to work together with the EOF to collect and analyze data on femicide - data collection for a pilot study is underway. The research group for Serbia consists of members of VDS: Prof. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, Ph.D. Sanja Čopić, Ph.D. and Ljiljana Stevković, Ph.D. The research group for Serbia has been involved in EOF from the beginning.

During 2024, the research group for Serbia carried out the following activities:

- Continuation of data collection on cases of femicide during 2024 and after the end of the EOF pilot study, according to the same methodology that was applied for the purposes of the pilot study. The key sources of data are media texts of printed and electronic media about the murders of women in the context of family-partner relations.
- Mr. Ljiljana Stevković participated in the memorial webinar in honor of the suddenly deceased prof. Dr. Christian Kout, where her entire work in the field of gender-based violence was presented. Also, she participated in the online meeting of the focal point of the European Observatory on Femicide, where the previous achievements and plans for the future activities of the Observatory were presented.

## Research

### *Analysis of support for victims of armed violence in the Western Balkans*

The Analysis of Support to Victims of Armed Violence project in the Western Balkans is part of the UNDP-SEESAC IPA/2021/425-067 project "Support to the improvement of the fight against the illegal possession, abuse and trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the Western Balkans". The aim of the project was to provide recommendations for the improvement of victim support mechanisms in the jurisdictions of the Western Balkans. As part of the project, research was conducted with the aim of analyzing the legal, political and institutional framework for the support and protection of victims of violence with the use of firearms in the Western Balkans and the development of evidence-based recommendations for improving the position of victims. The research consisted of two parts: a desk analysis, i.e. an analysis of the legal and political framework relevant to the support and protection of victims of violence with the use of firearms, and an empirical research aimed at obtaining data on existing support services in jurisdictions in the Western Balkans. The research included the following jurisdictions: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia.

The following activities were carried out within the project:

- A research methodology was developed, including instruments for data collection within both parts of the research.
- Desk analysis of the existing legal and political framework for the support and protection of victims of violence with the use of firearms in all the aforementioned jurisdictions in the Western Balkans.
- Empirical research of existing support services in jurisdictions in the Western Balkans.
- Data analysis and research report writing.
- Developing and writing recommendations for improving the legal and institutional framework for the protection of victims of violence using firearms in the Western Balkans.

The following were directly involved in the implementation of the project: prof. Dr. Sanja Čopić, Dr. Mirjana Dokmanović, Dr. Jasmina Nikolić, prof. Dr. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, Milica Luković Radaković and Mirela Osmanović. The following contact persons were engaged for data collection within the empirical part of the research: Valmora Gogo and Dajana Dobrozi (Albania), Gentiana Murati (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo), Maja Raičević (Montenegro) and prof. Dr. Nataša Peovska (North Macedonia). The project was implemented in the period from March to November 25, 2024.

### *Developing evidence-based recommendations to more effectively prevent and reduce the risk of gender-based violence with the use of firearms*

In order to develop recommendations for more effective prevention and reduction of the risk of violence in the family-partner context with the use of weapons, and the possible reduction of femicide, which will be based on evidence, research is being conducted as part of this activity. The aim of the research is to obtain data on the response in cases of violence in the family-partner context with the use of weapons that resulted in the murder of a woman

(femicide), in order to: assess whether and which measures provided by the positive regulations of the Republic of Serbia can result in more effective and long-term protection of victims and in the event that the legislative framework and existing institutional mechanisms that could ensure this do not exist or are not adequate enough, identify what needs to be done. During the reporting period, a research methodology was developed, according to which it is planned to collect data using a qualitative method, through focus group interviews with representatives of the following institutions/bodies: police, primary and higher public prosecutor's offices, primary and higher courts, and the center for social work from the territory of four appellate courts: Belgrade, Niš, Novi Sad and Kragujevac.

The activity is carried out within the UNDP project called Reduce Risk-Increase Safety III and lasts from October 2024 to March 2025. Prof. Dr. Sanja Čopić and Jasmina Nikolić.

### *Joint research agenda on sexual violence against children in low- and middle-income countries*

In the period from 30.11. From 2023 to the end of 2024, as an organization - member of the Advisory Board, was involved in activities to determine priorities in the research of sexual violence against children in low- and middle-income countries. The advisory board was composed of a number of experts in the field of sexual violence against children, who represented various institutions and organizations. The coordinator of the project was the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI), and its result is an extensive report that will be available to the public in 2025.

In the work of the Advisory Board of this project, the Victimology Society of Serbia was represented by prof. Dr. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović.

## Education

### *Training for working with victims of violence*

Training for working with victims of violence is accredited by the Republic Institute for Social Protection. During 2024, training was carried out for two groups of participants (37 in total). The trainings were conducted as part of the projects: Advocacy for the rights of victims of gender-based violence in general and domestic violence in particular, in the workplace and in educational institutions, which is realized in cooperation and with the financial support of the Kingdom of Sweden and the Foundation Kvinna till Kvinna and Da children (p)remain winners: prevent, empower, support!, which is financed by the City of Belgrade, the City Administration of the City of Belgrade, the Secretariat for Social Protection. The first training was organized in September 2024 for representatives of organizations that are part of the Association of Women's NGOs "Women Against Violence Network", which was attended by 13 people. The second training was organized in October 2024 for participants from the social protection system, preschool institutions and schools, with a focus on psychological and pedagogical services, which was attended by 24 people. The aim of the training was to acquire the necessary basic knowledge and skills for working with victims of violence. Through this training, the participants acquired the necessary skills and knowledge that will enable them to recognize a victim of violence, to recognize and understand the victim's needs, to accordingly provide the victim with the necessary information, emotional support and other types of assistance, as well as to refer the victim to other competent services or organizations depending on the previously identified needs. During the second training, a special focus was on working with children as victims of violence. The following participated in the implementation of the training: Jasmina Nikolić, prof. Dr. Sanja Čopić and Milica Luković Radaković.

### *Training to strengthen the capacity to respond to sexual violence at faculties in Serbia*

Training to strengthen the capacity to respond to sexual violence at colleges in Serbia was developed as part of the project Sexual violence at universities in Serbia: Raising awareness and developing innovative mechanisms to support victims, which was conducted by the Victimology Society of Serbia in the period from 2020 to 2022. During May 2024, one training was conducted as part of the project entitled Advocating for the rights of victims of gender-based violence in general and domestic violence in particular, violence at work and in educational and other institutions, funded by the Kingdom of Sweden and the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation. The participants of the training were students and employees (teaching and non-teaching staff) from the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad. The training was conducted online (via the Zoom platform). The training was attended by 23 participants (15 students, six teaching and two non-teaching staff representatives). The goal of this four-day training was to strengthen the capacity of employees and students at the faculties to respond adequately to sexual violence at the faculty. The training was carried out by prof. Dr. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, prof. Dr. Sanja Čopić, Jasmina Nikolić and Milica Luković Radaković, while the assistant was Mirela Osmanović.

### *Gender discrimination in the labor market: forms, support for victims and legislation*

As part of the project Advocating for the rights of victims of gender-based violence in general and domestic violence in particular, violence at work and in educational and other institutions, funded by the Kingdom of Sweden and the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, a workshop entitled Gender discrimination in the labor market: forms, support for victims and legal regulations was developed and organized. The aim of the workshop was to increase the capacity of participants



for prevention and reaction to gender-based discrimination in the labor market. The workshop is organized online, via the Zoom platform, for two groups of participants: May 15 and 16 and July 17 and 18, 2024. 22 participants underwent the training. The trainings were attended by representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs, the Labor Inspectorate, the Department of Labor Inspection from Užice and Kikinda, representatives of the Union of Employers of Serbia, Trade Union "Sloga", Trade Union of Doctors and Pharmacists of Serbia, UGS "Nezavisnost", Association of Lawyers AEPA / Law Academy of Serbia, ADRA, Foundation "Center for Democracy", lawyers, one licensed mediator and two undergraduate and doctoral students at the University of Kragujevac - Faculty of Law. The training was carried out by Jasmina Nikolić, prof. Dr. Sanja Čopić and Milica Luković Radaković, while Mirela Osmanović was an assistant.

### *Workshops for the prevention and recognition of violence for children*

During October and November 2024, VDS conducted workshops called Workshops for the Prevention and Recognition of Violence for Children for male and female students in the Railway Technical High School. The workshops were organized with the financial support of the British Serbian Charitable Fund. VDS received a recommendation from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia for conducting workshops. The workshops aimed to inform the participants about the causes and forms of violence in general and gender-based violence in particular and methods of prevention, as well as to raise their capacities for prevention and support through the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and changing attitudes about gender roles. A total of 8 workshops were conducted in the duration of one school hour and they were realized in the Sociology with Citizens' Rights class taught by Professor Nada Banjanin Đuričić, who is a member of the VDS. The implementation of the workshops was supported by professional workers of the pedagogical and psychological service of the Railway Technical School, pedagogue Milena Rakita and psychologist Jelena Milić. The workshops were realized by Jasmina Nikolić, Milica Luković Radaković and Mirela Osmanović.



The second series of workshops began in "Marko Orešković" Primary School in December 2024. Unfortunately, the realization of the workshops was interrupted because we encountered mistrust and misinterpretation of certain parts of the workshops by a number of parents.



## Providing support to victims of crime

### *VDS info and victim support service*



The VDS info and support service for victims is the first general service for victims of crime, which was founded in 2003 within the Victimology Society of Serbia. The target group of the service for victims consists of all victims of crime, women and men, members of all ethnic groups, regardless of any personal characteristics (LBGT, sick, people with disabilities, etc.). Help and support are provided to both direct and indirect victims (family members of

direct victims and other persons indirectly injured by criminal behavior). Also, the target group includes victims of crime who appear in court as witnesses or in some other role, as well as victims of violence who are in prison, former, future and current prisoners and that is related to their rights and victimization.

Services provided to victims within the Service are:

- Emotional support;
- Information (on psychological reactions and recovery dynamics, practical information for re-establishing life courses after a traumatic event, information on victims' rights and the ways they can exercise them, on the possibilities of using restorative approaches, especially mediation and other ways of peaceful problem solving, etc.);
- Referral to specialized (state and civil) services and organizations or individuals in Belgrade and Serbia, depending on specific needs;
- Support in court, in contacts with state institutions and in the mediation process.

All types of help and support for victims are free of charge. The basic working principles of the Service, which are also the working principles of all organizations of this type gathered around the organization European Support for Victims, are trust, respect for the victim, her rights, needs and feelings, confidentiality of information and the autonomy of the victim's will. The help and support provided within the VDS info and victim support service is based on an empowering and supportive attitude towards the victims, which can be significant for their recovery, but also for activation in searching for a solution to the problem they are facing.

The working hours of the Service were every working day from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Tokom izveštajnog perioda realizovane su sledeće aktivnosti:

*Providing support to victims* - during 2024, 124 victims of various forms of victimization contacted the *VDS info and victim support service*. A total of 433 contacts were made, which means that a certain number of victims contacted the Service more than once. Of the total number of victims, 105 were female, and 19 of them were male. The most common forms of victimization for which the victims turned to the Service were: domestic violence (56.5%), workplace violence (19.4%) and violence outside the workplace and family (12.1%). Other forms of victimization for which people turned to the Service are: persecution, dissatisfaction with the work of institutions, violations of civil rights, misuse of personal data - a total of 5.6%.

Finally, in 3.2% of cases, the reason for the appeal was post-penal reception and assistance. During the reporting period, 14 people were referred to the *VDS info and victim support service* by the City Center for Social Work, New Belgrade Department (11); Palilula Department (2) and Čukarica Department (1); Four people were referred by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Police Station Novi Belgrade.

In 2022, VDS piloted the program *"From victim to winner: Using one's own capacities to get out of violence"*. In 2024, 7 women, victims of domestic violence, were successfully worked on this program, which involves providing individualized continuous psychosocial support. Based on the needs of each individual victim, a program and guidelines were designed to strengthen one's own competencies to get out of violence. The victims were worked on recognizing violence, strengthening self-confidence, self-care, developing the ability to peacefully resolve conflicts, setting boundaries in relationships with family members, mastering techniques for getting rid of anxiety, frustration and anger, etc. The victims were also informed about the criminal procedure and ways of exercising their rights at the court and other organizations and institutions at the local level. Depending on the assessment, a follow-up meeting with the victim is scheduled, a plan is made and guidelines are given for them to think about and implement, which are discussed during the next meeting.

As part of the *VDS info and support for victims service* during 2024, 10 victims of various criminal acts were continuously worked on with the aim of providing support during court proceedings. Support during court proceedings included informing victims about court proceedings, their rights and ways to exercise them, as well as empowering victims to go to court, testify and meet the abuser, and support during the trial itself (support in court).

Also, within the Service, and as one of the activities of the project *Let children remain winners: prevent, empower, support!* with six children of women who were victims of domestic violence, ten workshops were held for mapping needs and a plan was drawn up for further work in the event of a return visit. It is planned that this activity will continue even after the end of the project, as an integral part of the work of the Service.

Since during the reporting period, the joint telephone line for women with experience of domestic and/or intimate partner violence of the Association of Women's NGOs "Women's Network Against Violence" began to operate, the Service provided support for two women who contacted through the joint telephone line during the VDS duty. About the operation of the joint telephone line for women with experience of domestic and/or partner violence, see the section *Establishing a national telephone SOS line for women with experience of gender-based violence, which will work according to feminist principles*.

In order to increase the visibility of the Service, a report on the work of the Service *VDS info and support for victims* is posted every month on the social networks Facebook and Instagram and on the VDS website. The reports are available [at the link](#). Also, examples of addressing the Service, as well as other materials intended for victims and potential victims, were regularly posted. You can see more about the activities and visibility of the social networks of the Victimology Society of Serbia in the Statistics on Social Networks section of the report.

The work of the Service and the services provided were also promoted through information materials (leaflets) that were designed, printed and distributed, and more will be said about it in the part of the report related to the project *Let children remain winners: prevent, empower, support!*

During the reporting period, the victims were supported by: Milica Luković Radaković, Mirela Osmanović, volunteers Marija Stupar and Tamara Stojanović.

Support for victims was provided within the project *Let children remain winners: prevent, empower, support!*, which was financed by the City of Belgrade, the City Administration of the City of Belgrade, the Secretariat for Social Protection, as well as within the project *Advocating for the rights of victims of gender-based violence in general and especially violence in the family, at the workplace and in educational institutions* (the Kingdom of Sweden and the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation), within which the emphasis was on providing support to victims of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence. Work on providing support to victims was also supported within the project *Establishing of a national telephone SOS line for women with experience of gender-based violence, which will work according to feminist principles*.

### *Establishing a national telephone SOS line for women who have experienced gender-based violence which will work according to feminist principles*

During the year 2024, VDS continued to coordinate the Belgrade region for the sixth year in a row as part of the Association of Women's Non-Governmental Organizations "Women Against Violence Network" (MŽPN)<sup>3</sup> and the activities planned in the Belgrade region as part of the project Formation of a national telephone SOS line for women with experience of gender-based violence, which will work according to feminist principles. The project aims to reduce violence against women and girls in Serbia by establishing support services, raising public awareness and education, monitoring and improving policies and public administration, and advocating policies and laws. The specific goals of the project are: to increase the influence of the Ministry of Education and Culture on the public, national and local policies through participation in decision-making, access to funds and implementation of activities; better position of the members of the Ministry of Education and Culture as service providers; establishment of a common SOS line (national SOS phone) coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Culture as a leading service for women with experience of violence in Serbia. Financial support is provided by KAC through the Trag Foundation.

Key activities during the reporting period were:

- The VDS representative, Milica Luković Radaković, participated in several meetings of the working group for the formation of the national SOS telephone line of the MoŽPN, which were held online.
- On May 16, 2024, on the International SOS Telephone Day, a joint telephone line for women with experience of family and/or partner violence of the Association of Women's Non-Governmental Organizations "Women Against Violence Network" was launched. The phone number is 0800 300 339 and is free for calls from all mobile and landline operators. Organizations participating in the operation of the common line (14) are on duty for four hours in the period from 12:00 to 16:00, according to a predefined schedule. In order to present and promote the common telephone line, a press conference was organized in the Media Center in Belgrade, where one of the speakers

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<sup>3</sup> VDS coordinates the Belgrade region, which consists of the following organizations: ASTRA, Athens, Autonomous Women's Center, Roma Center for Women and Children Daje, ...Iz kruga-Belgrade and VDS.

was the director of VDS, Jasmina Nikolić. Also, for the purposes of keeping records on the number of people and calls made through the common line, a database was created.

- From September 17 to 20, 2024, Training for working with victims of violence was held for representatives of the Association of Women's Non-Governmental Organizations of the MoJPN. See more about this in the section of the report on education.
- On October 25, 2024, members of the Belgrade Region of the Ministry of Education and Culture organized a round table on the topic of Challenges and opportunities in strengthening the support system for women with experience of family and/or partner violence in the area of the City of Belgrade. In addition to representatives of organizations from the Belgrade region, the round table was also attended by representatives of centers for social work, the police and municipal legal aid services.

Jasmina Nikolić and Milica Luković Radaković were directly involved in the implementation of the project.

### *Let children remain winners: prevent, empower, support!*

During the reporting period, the Victimological Society of Serbia-VDS implemented a project called "*Let children remain winners: prevent, empower, support!*", which was financed by the City of Belgrade, the City Administration of the City of Belgrade, and the Secretariat for Social Protection. The general goal of the project is the prevention of victimization and revictimization by domestic violence through information, education and support activities for potential victims and victims of domestic violence. The specific goals of the project related to strengthening the capacity of employees in the local community (including the school) for prevention, intervention and prevention of revictimization in cases of domestic violence; rational use of existing resources for prevention and intervention in cases of domestic violence at the local level in general and especially related to sensitive groups such as children, the elderly, people with disabilities and Roma, and raising the capacity of victims and their children to recognize, respond and use their own capacities to respond to domestic violence and other types of violence.

The main activities within the project were:

- Providing support and legal assistance to victims of violence, implementation of the "From Victim to Winner" program and implementation of individual workshops for children of women who are included in the "From Victim to Winner" program;<sup>4</sup>
- Meeting with representatives of psychological and pedagogical services of schools (hereinafter referred to as PP services) with the aim of expanding cooperation at the local level through the establishment of cooperation with schools related to the prevention of domestic violence through activities of information, education and providing support to potential victims and victims of domestic violence, with a special emphasis on children;
- Realization of training of social service providers to work with victims of violence with a special emphasis on the support system and practical guidelines for working with child victims;<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See on pg. 23-25

<sup>5</sup> See on pg. 21

- Raising the capacity of employees in CSW, RS MUP, schools and PP services through participation in the 14th annual VDS conference;
- Organization and implementation of the forum entitled "Let children (p)remain winners: prevent, empower, support!" New Belgrade with you! The purpose of the forum was to inform citizens about the phenomenon of violence in general, and violence against children in particular, the possibilities of reporting, the ways in which institutions act after reported violence, what services and types of support exist in the local community for victims in general and especially for child victims of violence. In addition to interested citizens, representatives of the City Center for Social Work, New Belgrade Department also took part in the forum; The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RS, PS Novi Belgrade, the Center for the Care of the Elderly, Children and Persons with Disabilities, "New Belgrade", the Center for Social Integration of Children and Youth Zvezda, teaching staff and representatives of the psychological-pedagogical service and students of the Railway Technical School, students of the University of Belgrade-Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation, Department of Prevention and Treatment of Behavioral Disorders and the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade, then representatives of the psychological-pedagogical service from elementary and secondary schools from the municipalities of Novi Beograd and Čukarica, as well as representatives of the VDS.



- Designing and printing information leaflets and posters that were placed in the CSR Department of Novi Beograd and the premises of the local community of Gazela in the territory of the municipality of Novi Beograd. The aim of the informative material (leaflet) is to inform victims about the support provided by the VDS, that is, the VDS info and support service for victims, but also to make it easier for experts to refer victims to the Service. The leaflet contains information related to the help and support that people who contact the VDS info and victim support service can get. Info-material was distributed to the participants during the forum.





The following were directly involved in the implementation of the project: Jasmina Nikolić, Milica Luković Radaković and Mirela Osmanović. The project was implemented in the period from July 1, 2024. until 31.12.2024. year.

*Supporting the families of those killed in the mass murders in May 2023 and participating in the process of establishing a memorial center and developing a culture of remembrance*

During the year 2023, on May 3 and 4 to be exact, two mass murders took place in Serbia - one at the "Vladislav Ribnikar" Experimental Elementary School in Belgrade, in which a student (13) killed nine children and one adult, and on the same occasion wounded five children and one adult, and in the villages of Malo Orašje and Dubona in the municipalities of Smederevo and Mladenovac, where nine young people were killed and twelve were injured. In relation to these events, VDS undertook the following activities:

- On the occasion of the European Day of Victims, the VDS launched an initiative to make May 3 and 4 the Days of Remembrance for the Victims of Mass Murders in Serbia. For more information, see the report in the section on the Commemoration of the European Day of Victims.
- Two members of the VDS (Jasmina Nikolić and Prof. Dr. Sanja Čopić) are involved in the work of the Multidisciplinary Team for the establishment of the Memorial Center in memory of the victims of the mass murder at the "Vladislav Ribnikar" Experimental Elementary School in Belgrade (hereinafter: MD Team). During the reporting period, they: participated in the regular meetings of the MD team related to the planning of the first anniversary of the mass murder in "Vladislav Ribnikar" Elementary School; participated in devising questions for the Meeting and Remembrance Forum, in which citizens had the opportunity to think and discuss some important issues related to the May 3 tragedy and the development of a culture of remembrance during the first anniversary (May 3, 2024); in the period from June to September 2024, participated with members of the MD team in intensive consultations with experts from abroad in order to develop the methodology of the consultation process in connection with the establishment of the Memorial Center; worked on developing the methodology of the consultative process for the establishment of the Memorial Center; participated in regular meetings of the MD team related to the further design of the memorialization process, including the preparation of materials for writing the competition program for the Memorial Center. Over 30 MD team meetings were held during the reporting period.
- Prof. Dr. Sanja Čopić was appointed as a member of the Working Group for the establishment of a Memorial Center in memory of the victims of the mass murder at the "Vladislav Ribnikar" Demonstration Elementary School in Belgrade on May 3, 2023 (Decision of the Government of the RS 05 No. 02-2049/2024 of March 8, 2024). She and Jasmina Nikolić participated in the work of the Working Group; a total of 18 sessions were held during 2024. The sessions discussed issues related to the first commemoration, the process of establishing the Memorial Center, the VDS initiative to establish the Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Mass Murders, the celebration of the week of solidarity and unity in schools in Serbia (which is included in the calendar for the school year 2024/2025), the method of media reporting on mass murders, and the like.
- Monitoring the court proceedings for damages to the families and the criminal proceedings against the parents of the boy who committed the murder, and providing support to the families during the proceedings. In addition, the proceedings (attendance at one hearing) in the case of mass murder that took place on May 4, 2023 in Mali Orašje and Dubona were monitored.
- Facilitating the participation of the parents of the two girls who were killed on May 3 and MD team coordinators at the XIV annual VDS conference held on November 28 and 29, 2024, which gave them the opportunity to meet experts in the field of victim support.

- Analysis of the comments of citizens who signed the petition to declare May 3 and 4 the Days of Remembrance for the Victims of Mass Murders and preparation of the work for the XIV annual conference of the VDS.

Jasmina Nikolić and prof. dr Sanja Čopić were directly involved in this activity.



## Publishing

### *Journal on victimization, human rights and gender Temida*



Immediately after its foundation, in 1998, the Victimology Society of Serbia launched a magazine on victimization, human rights and gender, named after the Greek goddess of justice, Themis. The first sample edition of the magazine was published in May 1997. This is the first and still the only magazine with this issue in Serbia, which is recognized as such not only in the region of the former Yugoslavia, but also beyond. Since 1998, Temida magazine has been published regularly. Temida magazine is in open access mode. Temida publishes works in Serbian and English. Since 2023, the co-creator of Temida magazine is the University of Belgrade - Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation.

According to the categorization of scientific journals of the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation for the year 2024, the scientific journal Temida is

categorized as a national journal of international importance (M24).

Temida has been in the international DOI number system since 2007. Temida has been referenced in DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals) since 2010, in the EBSCO research database since 2013, and in 2015 it was included in the citation index in the Web of Science - Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), which enables searching, finding and citing journals included in this edition.

During 2024, three issues of Temida were published:

- Number 1: Crime, victims and social reaction
- Number 2: Support for victims and prevention of victimization: Challenges and perspectives
- Number 3: Mass victimization and victim support

During the reporting period, the presentation of issue 1 for 2024 was organized under the title Crime, victims and social reaction, which was dedicated to prof. Dr. Biljani Simeunović-Patić (1970-2023). The presentation was organized on October 21, 2024 in the premises of the Institute for Criminological and Sociological Research, where the following spoke:

- Dr. Ivana Stevanović, director of the Institute for Criminological and Sociological Research and member of the Temida Editorial Board
- Prof. Dr. Sanja Čopić, University of Belgrade-Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation and Victimology Society of Serbia, chief and responsible editor of the scientific journal Temida
- Dr. Olivera Pavićević, Institute for Criminological and Sociological Research
- Dr. Aleksandra Bulatović, University of Belgrade - Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory
- Prof. Dr. Aleksandar Jugović, University of Belgrade - Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation

- Prof. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, Ph.D., retired full professor of the University of Belgrade - Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation and member of the Temida Editorial Board



During 2024, the Bibliography of the scientific journal Temida for the period 1998-2022 was compiled. The bibliography was prepared by Vesna Magžarac, higher diploma. librarian for the editorial office of the mutual database, Department of Serial Publications-Analytics, National Library of Serbia, and member of VDS. The bibliography is available at <https://vds.rs/File/Knjiga%20Bibliografija%20casopisa%20TEMIDA.pdf>

In addition, the activities related to Temida magazine were:

- Regular communication between the members of the Editorial Board of Temida magazine.
- Regular meetings of the editor-in-chief and editor-in-chief, deputy editor-in-chief and editor-in-chief and secretary of Temida magazine were held.
- Participation of the deputy chief and responsible editor and secretary of Temida magazine at the Regional Webinar for editors and publishers of open access scientific journals, which was held on March 1, 2024 within the Horizon Europe project DIAMAS, where a report on the state of institutional open access publishing in Europe was presented.
- Participation of the deputy editor-in-chief and secretary of Temida magazine in the webinar Seeking to make the life of the learned society publisher easier, which was organized within the framework of the DIAMAS and PALOMERA Horizon Europe projects, where both projects were presented and where there was talk of strengthening cooperation between scientific societies with the aim of easier and more efficient solving of problems and challenges in the field of scientific publishing in open access.
- The participation of the secretary of the journal Temida in the workshop on Open Journal System, within the Horizon Europe DIAMAS project, which was held on October 30, 2024 and where the experiences of journals in open access, from the region and in the rest of Europe, were presented, and in connection with the use of the OJS

system, which is becoming a necessity for journals that aspire to remain at the level of serious, highly valued scientific journals.

- Regular promotion of Temida on social networks and by sending calls for papers to the mailing lists of scientific institutions and universities in the country and abroad, as well as prominent scientists and professionals dealing with victimological topics, human rights and gender issues.
- The Temida page on the VDS website is regularly updated, where you can find all key information about the magazine, its history, editorial policy, instructions for authors, as well as entire issues in pdf format.
- The Temida page on the Wikipedia website is regularly updated
- The evaluation process by Thomas Reuters for the inclusion of Temida in the Web of Science (Social Sciences Citation Index) is still ongoing.

During 2024, two legal entities and two natural persons subscribed to the magazine. The exchange of Temida magazine with two magazines from the country and abroad continued.

For issuing numbers in 2024, VDS received financial support from the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the RS.



## Other publications



[Bibliography of the scientific journal Temida for the period 1998-2022.](#) The bibliography was prepared by Vesna Magžarac, higher diploma. librarian for the editorial office of the mutual database, Department of Serial Publications-Analytics, National Library of Serbia, and member of VDS. The bibliography of the scientific journal Temida is special in terms of material content, and comprehensive in terms of material coverage, which means that it includes all printed articles and contributions in the period 1998-2022. The bibliography contains a total of 860 bibliographic items and covers the publication period from 1998 to 2022 (25 years).

Information leaflet [Gender discrimination in the labor market and abuse at work: how to recognize?](#) which is intended for all individuals who face obstacles during employment or during the employment relationship. The purpose of the leaflet is to help them distinguish gender discrimination from other related irregularities related to work and employment and to empower them in the struggle to realize their rights.





## Other activities

VDS donated books and various editions of the scientific journal Temida to the library of the Railway Technical School in Belgrade.



On the occasion of March 8, VDS organized a book collection campaign for the Penitentiary Institute for Women in Požarevac and handed them 400 books for their library.

On January 26, 2024, the play Prima Facia, by the Australian writer Suzie Miller, premiered in the Bitef Theater. At the suggestion of producer and actress Maša Dakić, director Anja Suša, as well as the production of the play, Bitef Theater directed the revenue from the tickets sold for the pre-premiere performance of the play to VDS. The play aims to inform, warn and potentially change the perspective of looking at cases of sexual abuse in the long term. The play was awarded Tony and Oliver awards on Broadway and the West End and is the most exciting and significant theatrical event on the two biggest theater stages of the past season: in New York and London.





On the occasion of the New Year's holidays, VDS employees organized and distributed packages for the children of women victims of domestic violence, who continuously contacted the *VDS info and victim support service* during the year. A total of 10 packets were distributed, for seven girls and three boys.

## **COOPERATION WITH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, ASSOCIATIONS AND INDEPENDENT BODIES, PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS**

The Victimology Society of Serbia is the scientific base of the University of Belgrade - Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation (FASPER). During the 2023/2024 school year. and 2024/2025. members of VDS, prof. Dr. Slobodan Savić and Assoc. Nikola Petrović, Ph.D., were guests at lectures at FASPER on the subjects Victimology and Violence against Children.

During 2024, the professional internship at VDS was: Maja Dinić, Tara Stojković and Kristina Trajković, students at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Department of Psychology.

## **PARTICIPATION OF VDS MEMBERS IN THE WORK OF BODIES AND BODIES OF INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC ORGANIZATIONS AND NETWORKS**

Jasmina Nikolić, director of the VDS, participated in the work of the Steering Committee of the Association of Women's Non-Governmental Organizations "Women Against Violence Network", as a member.

Jasmina Nikolić was appointed as a member of the Multidisciplinary Team for the establishment of the Memorial Center in memory of the victims of the mass murder at the "Vladislav Ribnikar" Demonstration Elementary School in Belgrade on May 3, 2023.

Prof. Dr. Sanja Čopić was appointed as a member of the Working Group for the establishment of a Memorial Center in memory of the victims of the mass murder at the "Vladislav Ribnikar" Demonstration Elementary School in Belgrade on May 3, 2023 (Decision of the Government of the RS 05 No. 02-2049/2024 of March 8, 2024).

## **PERSONS WHO WERE ENGAGED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF VDS ACTIVITIES IN 2024**

During the reporting period, the following were engaged in the implementation of projects and ongoing activities of VDS:

- 3 people in permanent employment - Jasmina Nikolić, VDS director, Milica Luković Radaković, assistant and head of the VDS info and victim support service, Mirela Osmanović, assistant.
- 4 people were engaged under the contract on the author's work - prof. Dr. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, prof. Dr. Sanja Čopić, Dr. Mirjana Dokmanović and MSc Ljiljana Stevković.
- 2 volunteers – Marija Stupar and Tamara Stojković.
- 1 accountant – Petra Dragišić, agency Orenda d.o.o.
- 1 person who administers the VDS website - Tatjana Orelj.

Also, we would like to point out the involvement in certain project and other activities of the following members of the VDS: Nada Banjanin Đuričić, Dr. Neda Savić and Vesna Madžarac, for which we thank them.

## **PARTICIPATION OF VDS MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS AT PROFESSIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS AND SEMINARS IN THE COUNTRY AND ABROAD**

**(On behalf of VDS or with presentations of VDS activities and related victimological topics)**

### Prof. Dr. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović

- Reception on the occasion of the Independence Day of Mexico, organized by the Embassy of Mexico, Hotel Metropol, Belgrade, September 12, 2024.
- Think tank on education - open forums: presentation at the forum entitled University and Discrimination, Rectorate of the University of Belgrade, October 9, 2024.
- Final conference of the project "Support to victims and witnesses of criminal acts in Serbia", OSCE, Belgrade, October 11, 2024.
- Participation in the Second Regional Forum on Femicide Prevention, organized by FemPlatz, October 22, 2024.

### Jasmina Nikolić

- Victim Support Europe Annual Conference 2024 'The Bridge Over Troubled Water: Celebrating and Strengthening Victim Support', 22-23. May 2024, Zagreb, Croatia.
- Kvinna til Kvinna networking meeting, June 2024, Vrnjačka Banja
- Final conference of the project "Support to victims and witnesses of criminal acts in Serbia", OSCE, Belgrade, October 11, 2024.
- Assembly of the Alliance of Women's NGOs Network of Women Against Violence, October 2024, Belgrade.
- Promotion of the publication Women's Rights in Western Balkans 2024 (Women's Rights in the Western Balkans 2024), an event organized in cooperation with the Delegation of the European Union in Belgrade and Kvinne till Kvinne within the 16 Days of Activism, December 2024, Belgrade

### Prof. Dr. Sanja Čopić

- Focus group on legal assistance for victims during court proceedings, Autonomous Women's Center and USIAD, Belgrade, May 23, 2024.
- Round Table Sexual Harassment: From Theory and Understanding to Supporting Victims, Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade, September 26, 2024 (presentation of paper: Sexual Violence at Colleges in Serbia: Research Challenges and Key Results).
- Roundtable organized by UNDP on domestic violence with the use of firearms, October 3, 2024 (online).

### Milica Luković Radaković

- Tribune Report, stop: Let's recognize and help, March 7, 2024, Modern Gallery of the Lazarevac Culture Center.
- Expert gathering entitled The family facing the challenges of modern society - opportunities for support and improvement of cooperation, SOS Children's Village Serbia in cooperation with the Municipality of Novi Belgrade and the Center for the Care of the Elderly, Children and Persons with Disabilities, May 15, 2024, Belgrade.
- Victim Support Europe Annual Conference 2024 'The Bridge Over Troubled Water: Celebrating and Strengthening Victim Support', 22-23. May 2024, Zagreb, Croatia.
- Webinar "From silence to solution: Case law regarding harassment of women in the workplace", AIRE center, June 17, 2024, online.



- Round table organized by the Valjevo Committee for Human Rights, July 29, 2025, Belgrade.
- Seminar "Advocacy for increasing the availability of free legal aid for women who survived gender-based violence", Phenomena, 26-28. August, Kopaonik.
- Manifestation "I am a child from this planet", Center for the care of the elderly, children and persons with disabilities "Novi Belgrade" and the Association for Helping Mentally Underdeveloped Persons "Novi Belgrade", October 8, 2024, Belgrade.
- Tribune "Violence is not power", Belgrade Center for Persons with Disabilities in cooperation with the Municipality of Novi Beograd and the Center for Care of the Elderly, Children and Persons with Disabilities, December 9, 2024, Belgrade.
- New Belgrade winter fairy tale, Municipality of Novi Belgrade and the Center for the Care of the Elderly, Children and Persons with Disabilities, December 21, 2024, Belgrade.

#### Mirela Osmanović

- Meeting of the Belgrade Region Network of Women Against Violence, February 29, 2024. (online).
- Training "Security and the Digital Age from a Feminist Perspective", Alternative Center for Girls, March 19-22, 2024, Zlatibor
- Tribune "Over coffee with a psychologist: One year since the mass murders in Ribnikar, Mali Orašje and Dubona", Hemofarm Foundation, April 24, 2024, Belgrade
- Seminar related to the concept of "alienation from parents" and related concepts, Autonomous Women's Center, May 24-26, 2024, Belgrade
- Team building meeting, Network of Women Against Violence, Palić, 26-28. 06. 2024
- Webinar "From silence to solutions: Judicial particie onharassment of women in the workplace", The Aire Centre, 17.06.2024, online
- Meeting at the Embassy of Canada with the commissioner for the protection of equality, Brankica Janković, 23.07. 2024, Belgrade
- Seminar on femicide, Autonomous Women's Center, September 27-29, 2024, Belgrade
- The event "I am also a child from this planet", Center for the care of the elderly, children and persons with disabilities "Novi Belgrade" and the Association for Helping Mentally Underdeveloped Persons "Novi Belgrade", 05.10.2024, Belgrade

### **MEDIA PRESENTATION OF MEMBERS OF VDS**

#### Prof. Dr. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović

- TV Una, Afternoon, Topic: European Day of Victims, 22.02.2024.
- K1, Uranak, Topic: Remembrance Week, 05/09/2024.

#### Prof. Dr. Sanja Čopić

- RTV Vojvodina, Dnevnik, Topic: European Day of Victims, 22 February 2024.
- Radio Novi Sad 1, News, Topic: European Day of Victims, 22.02.2024.
- New. S, Među nama, Topic: European Day of Victims, 22.02.2024.
- Blic TV, Morning, Topic: Femicide, 13.03.2024.
- RTS, All colors of life, Topic: About the position of victims of violence, 24.03.2024.
- TV N1, New Day, Live Day, Topic: Memorial Center Working Group, 21.03.2024.
- Insider, Marker, Topic: Memorial Center Working Group, 21.03.2024.
- New magazine, Topic: Memorial Center Working Group, 28.03.2024.
- TV Nova S, Wake up (awakening), Topic: Anniversary of mass murders, 05/03/2024.
- AL Jazeera TV, Topic: Anniversary of Mass Murders, 05/03/2024.

- TV Una, Reaktor, Topic: Anniversary of mass murders, 05/03/2024.
- Radio Belgrade 2, Said and kept silent, Topic: Anniversary of mass murders, 05/07/2024

#### Jasmina Nikolić

- N1, Live Day, Topic: European Day of Victims, 23.02.2024.
- Prva TV, At the crime scene, Topic: Petition, 26.02.2024.
- Una TV, Afternoon, Topic: European Day of Victims, 27.02.2024.
- Kurir TV, Morning program, Topic: European Day of Victims, 28.02.2024.
- Blic TV, News, Topic: Domestic violence, 16.07.2024.
- K1, Hour 1, Topic: Victims of violence and discrimination: How long does recovery take, 02.12.2024.

#### Milica Luković Radaković

- Radio Belgrade, Said and kept silent, Topic: European Day of Victims, 22.02.2024.
- Blic TV, Morning on Blic Topic: Petition, 22.03.2024.
- The machine. RS, Topic: Petition, 22.03.2024.
- Euronews, Euronews Day, Topic: Petition, 04.04.2024.
- Dnevni list Danas, Danas, Topic: Petition, 16.4.2024.
- Radio NS, Radio NS (morning program), Topic: Petition, 25/04/2024.
- Blic TV, Morning on Blic, Topic: Anniversary of mass murders, 05/03/2024.
- Blic TV, Blic day, Topic: Adoption of the initiative to declare May 3 and 4 as days of remembrance for the victims of mass murders in Serbia, September 20, 2024.

## **DONORS**

During the reporting period, the implementation of projects and other activities of VDS was supported by:

- Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of RS
- Secretariat for Social Protection of the City of Belgrade
- The Kingdom of Sweden and the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation
- OAK through the Trag Foundation
- United Kingdom Government through the AIRE Centre/FemPlatz project.
- UNDP/SEESAC
- British Serbian Charitable Fund.

We would also like to thank the donors on this occasion.

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- Membership fees
- Subscription to the scientific journal Temida.

In Belgrade, January 2025