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**Serbia: Woman human rights defender Ljiljana Nešić, Marija Trajkovic and the Citizens' Association of Women for Peace under investigation for organised crime**

On 2 November 2022, woman human rights defender **Ljiljana Nešić** was interrogated by the police. **Ljiljana Nešić, Marija Trajkovic** and the human rights organisation the **Citizens' Association of Women for Peace** are currently under investigation for organised crime.

The [Citizens' Association of Women for Peace](#) is a human rights organisation founded in 2007 in Leskovac, Serbia. The human rights organisation runs a hot-line for women and child victims of domestic violence and works to empower women survivors. Their mission is to promote, educate and protect women's rights, with a commitment to building peace and non-violence. [Ljiljana Nešić](#) is a woman human rights defender and the president of the of Citizen's Association of Women for Peace, while [Marija Trajkovic](#) is a woman human rights defender and coordinator for the SOS hot-line.

On 2 November 2022, woman human rights defender Ljiljana Nešić was interrogated by the police due to the criminal complaints brought by Miodrag Stanković, the president of the Association of Fathers and Mothers and the Pensioners' Union, to the department for the Criminal Police for Economic Crime of Belgrade, Serbia. The woman human rights defender brought all the relevant financial documents related to the work of the organisation, including its proof of registration. Ljiljana Nešić also attached certificates from members of the organisation who provide support to women in order to verify their legitimacy and competence as professionals.

On 29 October 2022, Miodrag Stanković, filed a complaint against woman human rights defenders Ljiljana Nešić, Marija Trajkovic and the members of Women for Peace Association to the department for the Criminal Police for Economic Crime of Belgrade, Serbia. The complaint was brought on organised crime charges under Article 346 (1) of the Criminal Code of Serbia. The department for the Criminal Police for Economic Crime of Belgrade then ordered the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Leskovac to collect evidence on the work of the Women for Peace Association. Additionally, the department for the Criminal Police for Economic Crime in Leskovac was also ordered to collect evidence on the work of the Citizens' Association of Women for Peace and to interrogate Ljiljana Nešić.

On 17 September 2022, Miodrag Stanković had already filed a complaint to the basic Public Prosecutor's office in Leskovac based on the same charges against woman human rights defenders Ljiljana Nešić, Marija Trajkovic and the members of Women for Peace Association. The complaint implied the misuse of an SOS hot-line by the members of Women for Peace Association and discrimination against men. However, the Public Prosecutor's office in Leskovac rejected the complaint as unfounded.

Front Line Defenders is gravely concerned about the ongoing investigations on Ljiljana Nešić and the organisation Citizens' Association of Women for Peace and its members. Front Line Defenders

believes they are being solely targeted as a result of their legitimate work in defence of women victims of violence. Front Line Defenders considers the criminal complaint against Ljiljana Nešić and the organisation Citizens' Association of Women for Peace as intimidation and targeting, which may have a chilling effect on the environment in which human rights defenders can carry out their work in Serbia.

**Front Line Defenders urges the Serbian authorities to:**

1. Condemn and cease the ongoing criminal complaints and investigation against human rights organisation Citizens' Association of Women for Peace;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological safety and security of the human rights organisation Citizens' Association of Women for Peace;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Serbia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

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