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- PRESS RELEASE -

How long will the discriminatory practice of electing and appointing the directors of BiH police agencies be tolerated?

The expertise and professionalism of persons in managerial positions of police agencies in BiH are assessed by the Independent Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH, which still does not give up the dominant national principle when electing them. Such discriminatory practice is unacceptable in a democratic society and also undermines the rule of law. Despite the fact that this provision is not, nor can be officially declared, in practice it discourages and prevents much professional and high-quality staff from other constituent peoples, but also those who do not belong to one of the national corpses, to apply for certain managerial positions in police bodies.

This approach to the election has been visible since 2008, ie after the last attempt to reform the police in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As is well known, the reform process, which was led under the auspices of the European Union, ended up with the withdrawing of European officials from its three favorable principles, taking into account the different political interests that prevented the declared reform objectives from being met.

Instead of realizing the goals such as increasing citizen security, improving efficiency and improving capacity to fight terrorism, rationalizing police services and increasing policing standards, the reform has come to an end with an unproductive political compromise. As a result, in addition to the existing police agencies at the BiH level (State Investigation and Protection Agency and the Border Police), additional police bodies such as the Directorate for Coordination of Police Bodies, the Agency for Forensic Testing and Expertise, the Agency



for Education and Professional Training and the Police Support Agency of BiH have been established. As far as discriminatory practices are concerned, it is evident that since 2008, did not come to the rotation of leaders in the national perspective at the head of these police agencies, and people of the same nationality were chosen for these positions.

We have witnessed that such practice continued during the recently completed competition for the selection of the Director of the Border Police and Directorate for Coordination of Police Bodies. The continuity of appointing police officers of the same nationality has not been the subject of serious debates within the executive and legislative authorities in BiH, or within qualified and professional public.

In accordance with the existing practice, Zoran Galić, a representative from the Croatian people, was elected as the Director of the Border Police for two terms, and his predecessor was Vinko Dumančić, also a representative of the same people. In the Directorate for Coordination of Police Bodies, the mandates for the position of the Director were entrusted exclusively to the representatives of the Bosniak people. As is well known, Mirsad Vilić was re-elected as Director of the DCPB, and his predecessor, Himzo Selimović, held that position until 2014.

The national context also prevails in other agencies, so the position of the director in the last three mandates in the State Investigation and Protection Agency and the Agency for Forensic Testing and Expertise was exclusively performed by representatives of the Serbian people. Directors of the State Investigation and Protection Agency were Mirko Lujčić and Goran Zubac, while the current director of the Agency is Perica Stanić. Since the founding of the Agency for Forensic Research and Expertise, only representatives of the Serbian people are in the leadership position. Ljiljana Trišić, the first appointed director of the Agency, was re-elected for the second term, and currently this position is performed by Nedžo Kojić. Since its establishment, at the head of the Agency for Education and Professional Training, the director in its second mandate is Branko Vukoja, a representative of the Croatian people. For the position of the director of the Police Support Agency, the mandates were entrusted to the Bosniaks, so Rahmija Hodžić and Jasmin Pilica previously performed this function, while Husein Nanić is currently in the position of director.



Therefore, in Bosnia and Herzegovina an informal practice which implicate that the positions of the head of the police agencies are subject only to the national principle, which implies the existence of discrimination and human rights violations. At the same time, the established principle creates the basic assumptions that the selection of leadership positions in police structures is not primarily based on abilities and qualifications, but the eligibility of candidates is primarily determined by ethnicity.



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