



The UIA Institute for the Rule of Law

STATEMENT

Paris, 7 July 2025

Statement in Support of the Bar Associations of Serbia and Vojvodina

The **Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA – International Association of Lawyers)** is guided by a mission to uphold the rule of law, defend the independence of the legal profession, and safeguard fundamental rights. **Its Institute for the Rule of Law (UIA-IROL)** is an autonomous operative unit that undertakes actions in support of lawyers, judges, and democratic institutions wherever these principles are under threat.

UIA-IROL expresses its firm solidarity with the Bar Association of Serbia and the Bar Association of Vojvodina, in their concerns for the rule of law, and attacks on the rule of law, whose principled defence of the legal profession and democratic values reflects the core values of the legal community and a lasting commitment to the rule of law.

We acknowledge with grave concern the recent statements issued by both Bar Associations¹. The warnings about direct interference by high-ranking representatives of the executive and legislative branches underscore an alarming erosion of the separation of powers and judicial independence in the country, both integral to the rule of law. UIA-IROL supports the call to reject rhetoric that polarizes society and threatens open democratic discourse.

These statements, issued well before recent escalations, reflected the Bar Associations' early and principled concern about growing institutional pressure, deteriorating public discourse, and threats to fundamental legal safeguards.

Subsequent events — including reports of disproportionate use of force during peaceful assemblies, injuries sustained by civilians and members of the legal profession, and actions perceived as encroachments on academic autonomy — have further underscored the urgency of the issues raised by the legal community.

UIA-IROL also shares the Bar Associations' concern regarding the perception of unequal treatment before the law, particularly in politically sensitive cases. Maintaining public trust in the impartiality of legal institutions requires that all prosecutorial and judicial actions be clearly grounded in constitutional principles and remain free from any suggestion of political influence.

¹ Statements issued by the Bar Association of Serbia on 3 July 2025 (see [here](#)), on 19 January 2025 (see [here](#)), and on 11 December 2024 (see [here](#)), as well as the statement issued by the Bar Association of Vojvodina issued on 11 December 2024 (see [here](#)).

UIA-IROL acknowledges the collective response by the Bar Association of Serbia, including the temporary suspension of legal services, as a form of principled protest against developments deemed incompatible with the rule of law.

An independent legal profession, free from political influence, is essential to safeguarding justice and protecting the rights of all citizens—regardless of political or ideological affiliation. Both the Bar Association of Serbia and the Bar Association of Vojvodina have shown commendable integrity and commitment to the foundational principles of the legal order, even in the face of mounting pressure.

UIA-IROL calls for:

- Full respect for the independence and autonomy of the bar associations in Serbia and Vojvodina;
- An immediate end to political interference in the judiciary and prosecutorial services;
- A thorough, impartial examination of recent incidents involving the use of force against peaceful assemblies, with full respect for legal safeguards and the role of legal professionals;
- Ongoing attention and principled engagement by the international legal community to uphold democratic standards and support the independence of legal institutions;
- Continued solidarity from the global legal community with the legal profession and civil society in Serbia.

As an international voice for the rule of law, UIA-IROL stands resolutely with its colleagues in Serbia and Vojvodina. Their principled and courageous stand deserves unwavering support from all who believe in justice, democratic governance, and the independence of the legal profession.

More about UIA-IROL

The Institute for the Rule of Law of the Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA-IROL) promotes the Rule of Law and supports and defends, in particular, (1) lawyers, judges and human rights defenders who are harassed, threatened and/or persecuted in the exercise of their professions, (2) the independence of the legal and judicial professions, and (3) the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, especially in defense of human rights.

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