

HUMAN RIGHTS MONTHLY OVERVIEW

JUNE

20

25

MONTHLY OVERVIEW ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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Фундаменталните човекови права
на прво место: Активен придонес
за владеење на правото



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INTRODUCTION

In early June, a draft law was introduced to the Parliament of North Macedonia to designate the area around the Parliament as a security zone. This legislation was submitted through an expedited process. The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights has expressed concerns, warning that the Parliament's move to restrict the right to public assembly, protests, or demonstrations near the Parliament building could negatively impact human rights and freedoms. The Committee urges the immediate withdrawal of this draft law and emphasizes that lawmakers should always prioritize the unhindered enjoyment of human rights and freedoms when enacting legislation.

The sixth Pride Parade, known as Skopje Pride, was held on June 21st. The National Network Against Homophobia and Transphobia announced that Skopje Pride would have a new route – both symbolically and literally – and emphasized that it would be a protest rather than a celebration. There would be no entertainment program, only a show of resistance. The motto for Skopje Pride 2025 was "We will prevail together!"

In these cases, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights submitted two criminal charges to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

INTRODUCTION

In June, a joint meeting took place involving the Helsinki Committee, the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, the Administration for the Execution of Sanctions, the Volkovija Correctional Institution, the Institute for Social Activities, the Ombudsman, the Bar Association of the Republic of Macedonia, the State Council for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency and Justice for Children, and UNICEF. The meeting reaffirmed a shared commitment to a system where every child has equal opportunities, protection, and dignified treatment.

In June, a disturbing video showing physical violence against a four-year-old child surfaced on social media, along with a photo revealing visible injuries to his face and body. The Helsinki Committee condemned this act and called for the strictest punishment for the perpetrator, as well as better institutional protection for society's most vulnerable members.

At the same time, urged the public to refrain from sharing personal data, photos, and information about a child victim of violence, especially on the internet and social networks, because even with good intentions or compassion, such sharing can cause additional trauma, stigmatization, and long-term psychological effects for the child.

At the end of June, the results of legal and paralegal assistance given to 383 women were presented, including cases where lawyers were hired to represent victims in court, covering the period from July 2024 to March 2025.

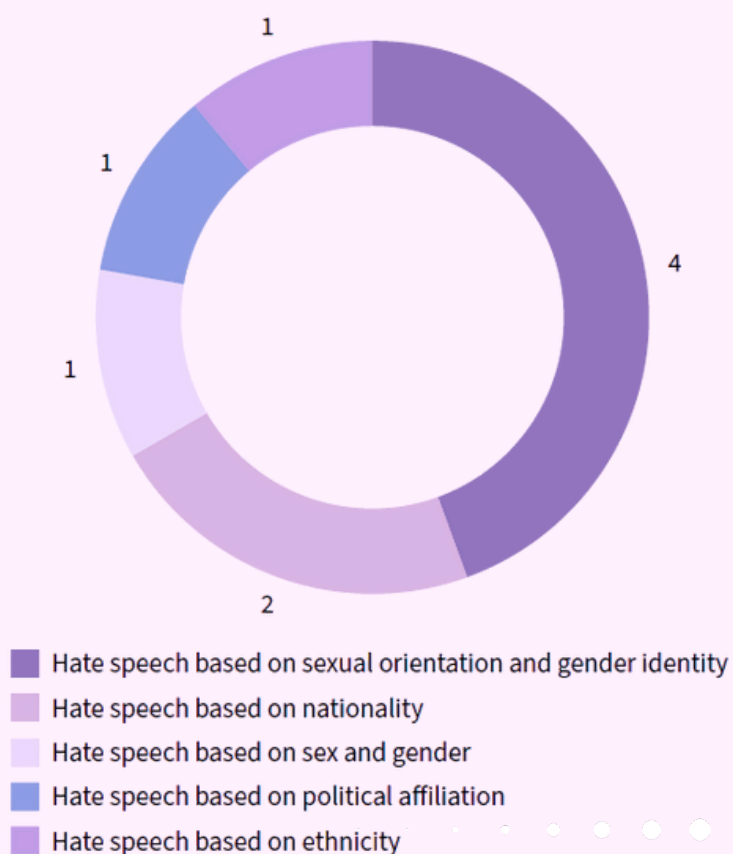
THE SITUATION WITH HATE SPEECH IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA, MONTHLY REPORT - JUNE 2025

In June 2025, a total of 8 cases involving hate speech, incitement, and discrimination or harassment were registered on the platform www.govornaomraza.mk. Of these, 4 cases (44%) involved issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity, while 2 cases (22%) were based on nationality, including elements of hate speech, incitement, and calls for discrimination and harassment.

This year's Pride Month and Pride Parade have once again highlighted prejudice and stigma against the LGBTI community. Hate speech was present on social media, with comments on posts about the Parade that inciting and calling for violence based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.

In these cases, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights submitted two criminal complaints to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION ON THE SITUATION OF HATE SPEECH IN JUNE 2025



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***8 original cases of hate speech were registered on the platform - in some cases, more than one protective feature was registered.**

THE SITUATION WITH HATE SPEECH IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA, MONTHLY REPORT - JUNE 2025

CONCLUSION

The hate speech cases registered in June 2025 highlight a concerning rise in attacks against the LGBTI community, particularly during Pride Month and the Pride Parade. Most of this content is found on social media, where calls for violence and discrimination reveal ongoing prejudice and stigma in public conversations. While filing criminal complaints is a vital step, the data and nature of these cases indicate a need for more systematic and robust institutional measures.

THE SITUATION WITH HATE SPEECH IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA, MONTHLY REPORT - JUNE 2025

RECOMMENDATION

Enhanced cooperation among institutions, civil society organizations, and the media is recommended to ensure a quicker and more effective response to hate speech online, streamline the processing of reports related to incitement to violence and discrimination, and support ongoing campaigns aimed at educating the public and raising awareness about the rights and dignity of the LGBTI community and other vulnerable, marginalized groups.

THE SITUATION WITH HATE CRIMES IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA, MONTHLY REPORT - JUNE 2025

During June 2025, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights recorded three potential incidents with a biased motive, for most of which, in accordance with other indicators (location, method of commission, involvement of minors and high school students, etc.), present a reasonable belief that they were committed due to the ethnicity of the victim, i.e., the perpetrator. Specifically, there are three potential incidents based on ethnicity. In terms of the type of violence, all three incidents contain violence. In all cases, minors appear as victims or perpetrators.

Potential incidents are included in the Report because they pertain to situations where, based on various indicators, there is reason to believe that these incidents were biasedly motivated. Among these biased indicators are: victim/witness perception; on-site commentary; ethnic differences between victim and perpetrator; patterns or frequency of previous incidents; nature of the violence; lack of other motives; and place and time. Specifically, potential incidents are included in this Report due to information received about the location (for example: an ethnically mixed neighborhood or school, bus routes utilized by members of different ethnic communities, locations where hate crimes have occurred in the past), the type (for example: a larger group of juveniles attacking one or more victims without provocation, group fights, assaults on buses or at bus stops), the time (for example: after previous fights as a form of revenge, after school, or during and after a sports match), and the property damaged during the incident (for example: places of religious ceremonies).

THE SITUATION WITH HATE CRIMES IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA, MONTHLY REPORT - JUNE 2025

Conclusions:

1. **Violence motivated by ethnicity and religion among young people remains a significant concern. An analysis of potential incidents in June 2025 indicates that young individuals, especially minors, are increasingly involved in violent acts with ethnic or religious bias, highlighting ongoing tensions in multi-ethnic settings and the inadequate preventive measures within educational and social systems.**
2. **Although there are indicators suggesting a biased motive, not all incidents are classified as hate crimes. This underscores the need for improved training and sensitization among institutions to better identify and address such acts.**

Recommendations:

- **Educational programs focused on intercultural tolerance, non-violent communication, and addressing prejudice should be implemented, involving students, teachers, and parents actively.**
- **Institutions need comprehensive training to identify biased indicators and adhere to legal protocols, ensuring victims receive fair and effective protection.**

THE SITUATION WITH CLOSED INSTITUTIONS JUNE 2025

1. General overview of activities

In June 2025, the Helsinki Committee provided free legal aid to convicted individuals in three cases.

- **Two cases: Health protection and safety of a convicted person**
- **One case: Early release from a penal institution**

2. Brief overview of legal services provided

- **Review of legal regulations and legal advice offered to convicted individuals and their families**
- **Submitted requests for free access to information to the appropriate institutions**
- **Provided legal information, advice, and referrals to clients**

Conclusions and recommendations

- **Improve medical care conditions by ensuring qualified medical personnel, regular health check-ups, and effective mechanisms for reporting and resolving health issues**
- **Encourage and expand the use of alternative measures, particularly conditional release with protective supervision, to reduce overcrowding, promote resocialization, and make rational use of resources.**

FREE LEGAL AID, MONTHLY REPORT - JUNE 2025 STATISTICAL DATA

FLA	30	
SLA	1	
Total	31	
	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Men	13	42
Women	18	58
Ethnicity		
Macedonians	26	83.5
Albanians	2	6.5
Roma	3	10
Turks	0	0
Geographical regions		
Skopje Region	23	74.5
Vardar Region	1	3
Polog Region	0	0
Pelagonia Region	2	6.5
Southwest Region	0	0
Northeast Region	2	6.5
Eastern Region	1	3
Southeast Region	2	6.5

FREE LEGAL AID, MONTHLY REPORT - JUNE 2025 STATISTICAL DATA

Legal areas	Number	Percentages
Property law	4	13
Social protection and	2	6.5
Child protection	2	6.5
Pension and disability insurance	1	3
Health insurance and	0	0
Labor relations	10	33
Gender-based and domestic	1	3
Status questions	1	3
Protection of human rights	6	19
Others	4	13

CASE STUDY SLA - REPRESENTATION IN COURT PROCEEDINGS FOR MONETARY CLAIMS ARISING FROM EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS

In June 2025, one in three applicants for free legal aid turned to the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights for labor-related legal advice. This high rate stems from numerous violations of workers' rights reported by applicants, including employers failing to pay wages in full, neglecting to pay contributions or benefits as required by law, collective agreements, and employment contracts. The workers were not provided with copies of the employment contracts (Article 15 paragraph (3)); the employer instructed the workers to perform tasks that are contrary to the law (Article 30); the employer failed to ensure safety conditions for workers' life and health (Article 42 of the Employment Act), did not inform them about safety and health measures at work, and did not train them on their implementation according to safety regulations (Article 32 of the Employment Act). The employer does not adhere to the required notice periods (Article 89 of the Employment Act).). The employer did not pay wages in full, did not pay contributions from wages and did not pay compensation in accordance with the law, collective agreement and employment contract (Article 105 of the Employment Act); The employer did not provide the employee with weekly and annual leave in accordance with the law, did not pay compensation for annual leave, and did not issue decisions regarding the right to use annual leave.

CASE STUDY SLA - REPRESENTATION IN COURT PROCEEDINGS FOR MONETARY CLAIMS ARISING FROM EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS

The employer ordered employees to work longer hours than full-time, and either failed to keep proper records of working hours and overtime or kept faulty records. Additionally, the employer did not pay a salary bonus and failed to notify the inspectorate about the introduction of overtime work (Articles 116, 117, 119, and 120 of the Employment Act). The employer also failed to comply with regulations regarding the redistribution and scheduling of working hours (Articles 123, 124, and 125).

CASE STUDY SLA - REPRESENTATION IN COURT PROCEEDINGS FOR MONETARY CLAIMS ARISING FROM EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Most claimants who raised labor rights issues reported that their employer did not pay their wages in full, did not pay contributions or benefits in accordance with laws, collective agreements, and employment contracts. We advised these workers to start a labor dispute, as pursuing their rights further typically requires court action. However, since these workers were previously employed and had wage income in the last six months, most of them did not qualify for secondary legal aid.

Given the reasons mentioned above, we once more suggest legal changes to lower the income requirements for SLA approval, particularly for workers who are unemployed and have no other sources of income at the time of application for SLA.