

BiH Civil Society Initiative for UPR

March, 2019

Joint Submission of the *BiH Civil Society Initiative for UPR* for the 3rd Universal Periodic Review on the State of Human Rights Situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

- (1) The *BiH Civil Society Initiative for UPR* is an informal coalition of twelve civil society organisations from across Bosnia and Herzegovina which act in various fields of promotion and protection of human rights.¹ In December 2018, Sarajevo Open Centre gathered potential members of the Initiative by targeting expert human rights organizations in different fields. The Initiative was established in December 2018, and started the work on reporting in January 2019. The methodology included choosing the recommendations from the previous 2nd cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), desk research of the recommendation status, researching the measures and activities necessary for the realization of the recommendation, measure realization status and the activities of the recommendation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the recommendations for the relevant institutions. Considering that the members of the coalition have been acting in the field of human rights protection and promotion in BiH for a number of years, apart from desk research, they have also used the information gathered during their work with the target groups.
- (2) In the period 2015-2019, Bosnia and Herzegovina faced many challenges which had an effect on the protection of human rights of the BiH citizens. Numerous irregularities and complaints on the election process occurred during the previous general and local elections, as well as during the last elections. Failure to comply with the verdicts of the European Court of Human Rights is a clear indicator that the governing structures in BiH are not ready for the constitutional amendments and the amendments to the Election Law in order to implement these rulings. Additionally, freedom of assembly is still seen as a security threat, instead of as a human right, at all levels of BiH government. Also, the greatest issues for media freedom are threats and attacks on the journalists and media, and the political pressures which are manifested in different ways. The legal framework which guarantees women's human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina is fragmented, which does not contribute to the safety of women and girls in the society, and it also signifies the lack of harmonization with the international documents. The conclusion of this report is that the state and its institutions achieved very little progress (or no progress at all) regarding the implementation of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review. With this report, we encourage the UN Human Rights Council and all the member states to apply democratic pressure on the local decision makers, using their recommendations and activities in their embassies in BiH, and to support the efforts of the citizens and the civil society to ensure the respect for the human rights of all BiH citizens.
- (3) Within the content of this submission, the referenced number of the recommendation for Bosnia and Herzegovina from the 2nd UPR cycle on which the paragraph is referring to is indicated and bolded at the beginning of each paragraph.

¹ Members of the BiH Civil Society Initiative for UPR are: Sarajevo Open Centre, BH Journalists, Civil Rights Defenders, CURE Foundation, Transparency International in BiH, Association Zemlja Djece, CA Why Not, Civil Society Promotion Center, Association Vaša prava BiH, TRIAL International, My Right – Empowers People with Dissabilities, and CA for Promotion of Roma Education “Otaharin”.