

LIGHT

DARK



CORRUPTION BAROMETER

December 2023

“DARK” OCCURRENCES FOR DECEMBER 2023

The long list of headlines regarding dark events contains cases of high-level corruption. Often, these cases remain without epilogue before national institutions, perpetuating a state of impunity when it comes to high-ranking officials and corruption based on abuses shielded by politics and the upper echelons of power.

Will this trend of impunity continue into 2024?

*SCPC AT THE END OF
MANDATE WITH NEW CASES
OF HIGH CORRUPTION*

*NO ONE HOLDS
ACCOUNTABLE THE JUDGES
WHO SHOULD NOT BE!*

Judge Eljvedin Ferati from the Basic Court in Tetovo manipulated the grades of Tetovo University, established the Anti-Corruption Commission

Judge Eljvedin Ferati from the Basic Court Tetovo, graduated in the sixth generation of students at the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, applied for the then - Public call with a grade of 8.20, while in the diploma for completed law studies at Tetovo University, he had an average of 7.88.

The son of the Appellate Court Judge Enver Bedzeti, with the endorsement of the Minister of Justice, passed the Bar exam without a sufficient internship, and then enrolled and completed the Academy for Judges and Prosecutors

The son of the Appellate Judge Enver Bedzeti, who was saved from dismissal by the Judicial Council, passed the judiciary exam without having enough work experience as a lawyer. This concerns Jetmir Bedzeti, who enrolled without a problem in the seventh generation of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, with such a Bar exam signed at the Ministry of Justice. There are several similar cases in the eighth generation of the Academy. Recently, Jetmir Bedzeti was elected as a prosecutor at the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Tetovo.

HIGH CORRUPTION IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Anticorruption Commission: The procurement of fuel oil from "ESM" for the needs of the Negotino Thermal Power Plant reveals high corruption, urging the prosecution to address the case - The Commission for Prevention of Corruption and Confiscation acted on its own initiative regarding the procurement of fuel oil for the needs of the "ESM AD" Negotino executed by "ESM AD" Skopje, where the procurement worth 212 million euros was supposed to be carried out by the company "RKM DOOEL" from Skopje. They found circumstances that give rise to suspicions of "Dishonest conduct", "Misuse, and Abuse of official position and authority" by officials from the Ministry of Economy, the former director of "ESM", and other officials from "ESM" acting as members of the commission for fuel oil procurement for the needs of ESM/AD Negotino.

NEW FACE ON THE BLACKLIST, NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS REMAIN SILENT...

Kocho Andjusev on the US blacklist - The United States placed businessman and former Deputy Prime Minister Kocho Andjusev on its blacklist, effectively banning his entry into the United States. The ban also applies to members of his family. "While serving as Deputy Prime Minister, Andjusev abused his official position for his business interests, undermining public trust in North Macedonia's Government institutions and public processes," the State Department said in its statement.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHANGES IN THE CRIMINAL CODE CONTINUE – OUTDATED CASES OF HIGH CORRUPTION FOR THOSE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR "SKOPJE 2014". ONLY THE EXECUTORS WHO WORKED ON SOMEONE'S ORDERS ARE PROSECUTED.

WILL THIS LESSON BE LEARNED BY ADMINISTRATION EMPLOYEES?

Indictment for "Skopje 2014" without Gruevski, Stavreski, Kancheska, Todorovikj - Prosecutor Ljubomir Lape filed charges for the "Phoenix" case related to "Skopje 2014". However, it doesn't include the primary suspect Nikola Gruevski, the secondary suspect and former finance minister Zoran Stavreski, former Minister of Culture Elizabeta Kancheska-Milevska, former mayors of the Centar Municipality, Vladimir Todorovikj, and Violeta Alarova. Due to changes in the Criminal Code, their cases have expired. The only one among the suspects, now accused, is the former President of the Centar Municipality Council, Vladimir Zdravev. He is being prosecuted for money laundering. Besides him, responsibility is sought for four more individuals and six companies.

Statute of limitation for "Madjar Telekom," a case that took 12 years - The "Madjar Telekom" case, after nearly 12 years of trial in Macedonia, reached a judicial conclusion in the first instance. However, while awaiting the judges' decision in the Court of Appeals regarding the correctness of the verdict, the lawmakers passed changes to the Criminal Code. Among other things, these changes reduced penalties for criminal offenses, including "Unlawful conduct in office," the charge at the Skopje Criminal Court. After more than a decade-long judicial "tour," the case will not find resolution in Macedonia. Nor will there be any resolution for the ongoing preliminary investigation involving Macedonian politicians in the case.

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WILL THERE BE A CHANGE IN THE BEHAVIOR OF THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL?

The EU submitted 40 recommendations to the Macedonian authorities to improve the situation with the Judicial Council. Euro-ambassador Geer mentioned that the sheer number indicates deep problems -After two visits to Skopje, EU experts compiled a report on the state of the Judicial Council containing 40 recommendations for improvement. The significant count of 40 recommendations signifies substantial issues with the functioning of the Judicial Council. It influences the overall judiciary's operations, indicating a critical situation that requires urgent action to address these problems, as stated by Ambassador Geer.

CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS SOUND THE ALARM !!!

One in three citizens requested a bribe: Corruption remains the biggest problem in North Macedonia - Corruption has again topped the list of issues in Macedonian society, remaining largely unpunished, alerted the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation. Data from the center's latest research indicates that one in three citizens in the country was asked for a bribe, and one in four paid it. According to the director of MCIC, Aleksandar Krzhalovski, these figures don't correspond to the state's handling of corruption, especially considering the domestic judicial system, which has 98 verdicts for "Abuse of official position" and only four for "Giving or Receiving bribes".

HOW EXPENSIVE IS THE COST OF PUBLICLY EXPRESSED CRITICISM?

Prosecutor Lence Ristoska discriminated against, found the Commission for Protection against Discrimination - Public prosecutor Lence Ristoska was discriminated by the Public Prosecutors Council, confirmed the Commission for Protection against Discrimination. Members established that Ristoska faced discrimination in two job applications for the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Skopje. **Ristoska publicly criticized the Council's work multiple times, accusing it of being a source of influence peddling.** Due to her publicly expressed views, the Council initiated proceedings before the Ethics Council of Public Prosecutors to verify if her statements aligned with ethical principles, this procedure hasn't concluded yet.

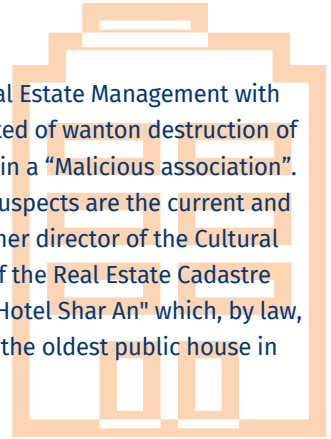
INSTITUTIONS ARE NOT PREPARED TO IMPLEMENT ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE CONFISCATION!?

The Judicial Council identified shortcomings in the confiscation of "Transmet" - the report sent to the Prosecution - The Judicial Council found shortcomings in the confiscation of "Transmet". The Council decided to send the report on the judicial proceedings regarding the unsuccessful confiscation to the Prosecution to determine if there were criminal offenses in the court processes. Although the State was supposed to gain over 14 million through the confiscation, the property gained through criminal acts hasn't been entirely secured yet. The Judicial Council noted discrepancies in the court proceedings for the confiscation of "Transmet" in the "Trust case", allowing part of the property acquired through criminal actions to be sold before the State took over, as reported by the Council's working group.

“LIGHT” OCCURRENCES FOR DECEMBER 2023

Former director of the “PUIG” and current and former directors of the “Skopje Conservatory” for a profit of three million euros destroyed the “Shar” hotel in the Old Bazaar, protected as cultural heritage

Former president of the Board of Directors at AD Construction and Real Estate Management with Residential and Business Space Skopje (former PUIG), Mujo L., is suspected of wanton destruction of cultural heritage in the Old Bazaar of Skopje, along with 10 accomplices in a “Malicious association”. The prosecution will seek measures of detention for them. Among the suspects are the current and former directors of the Skopje Conservatory Center, as well as the former director of the Cultural Heritage Protection Administration and the former director-general of the Real Estate Cadastre Agency. They are accused of illegally undermining the authentic object “Hotel Shar An” which, by law, was declared as cultural heritage within Skopje's Old Bazaar. “Shar” is the oldest public house in Skopje.



Fraudulently employed pregnant women, extracting 578,072 euros from the Fund, several arrested in the “Cicach” action in Prilep

Under the guidance of a public prosecutor from the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for prosecution of organized crime and corruption, the Financial Police Administration conducted searches at several locations in Prilep from the early morning hours, bringing suspected individuals into custody. The action resulted from a months-long pre-investigation process, codenamed “Cicach,” involving criminal offenses related to official position, public finances, payment transactions, and economy, conducted by the Financial Police Administration in coordination with the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for the prosecution of organized crime. The Financial Police Administration, following a months-long pre-investigation process under the codename ‘Cicach,’ filed a criminal complaint against multiple individuals and two legal entities due to reasonable suspicion of committed criminal offenses ‘fraud’ and ‘money laundering and other contributions from a criminal offense’ as per the Criminal Code of the Republic of North Macedonia, causing damage to the Health Insurance Fund of the Republic of North Macedonia in the amount of 35,551,472 denars,” informed the Financial Police Administration.



Supreme Court finalizes nine years imprisonment for Gruevski

The case "Placevi na Vodno" concludes its judicial trajectory. The Supreme Court announced, through a statement, that the judges rejected the former Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski's initiative, in which he requested the highest court to review the final verdict in the case. He was sentenced to a nine-year prison term, while Sasho Mijalkov received a suspended sentence. This decision exhausts all legal mechanisms in domestic courts, leaving only room for a complaint before the Strasbourg court.

STATE MARKET INSPECTORATE AT HIGH RISK OF CORRUPTION

Inspector accused of bribery

Criminal charges have been filed against an inspector from the State Market Inspectorate for receiving bribes from six individuals to abstain from performing official duties. He faces criminal charges for accepting bribes. The accused, employed in the State Market Inspectorate - an inspector in the Inspection Supervision Department in Strumica, Gevgelija, Valandovo, received a total of 21,000 denars and 150 euros from six people on six occasions from June to November 2023 to refrain from performing official duties, announced the Ministry of Interior.

Employee at "National Forests" Subsidiary "Belasica" abused their official position twice, facing criminal charges

The SVR Strumica at the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Strumica filed two criminal charges against an employee at the Public Enterprise "National Forests" Subsidiary "Belasica" - Strumica. According to the Ministry of Interior, in the first case, the suspect is accused of committing criminal offenses "abuse of official position and authority" under Article 353 and "falsifying documents" under Article 378, Paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code. It was found from the attached documentation that the suspect allowed them to cut and transport the trees, but the information in the delivery note did not match what was found at the scene. Therefore, both residents of the village Bansko are suspected of committing the criminal offense "use of a document with false content" under Article 380, Paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code.