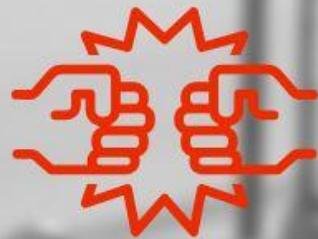


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CORRUPTION



CORRUPTION BAROMETER

2025



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In the Western Balkans



““*Light & Dark*””

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TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL
MACEDONIA

January, 2026

“DARK” OCCURRENCES 2025

“DARK” OCCURRENCES FOR JANUARY 2025

Reforms in the Judiciary Are Necessary

Dismissed Judge from Veles and Pharmacy Chain Owners Accused of Forgery - The Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Kavadarci has filed charges against a judge from the Basic Court in Veles, a married couple who own a pharmacy chain, and a legal entity. They are accused of forging an official document and using a document with false content. The primary defendant, while handling a case in which the other accused were plaintiffs, issued a ruling in their favor, granting them ownership rights over commercial property and land beneath a building. Despite the ruling not being final or enforceable, and the defendants having filed timely appeals, the judge, deliberately influenced by the co-defendants, certified the ruling with an official stamp, falsely marking it as final and enforceable. She then personally handed over the fraudulent document to the manager of the legal entity instead of delivering it through official court channels.

Hundreds of millions of euros in budget [damage](#), minimal asset confiscation - Over the past decade, the budget has suffered losses amounting to a total of €244 million, according to an analysis by *Radio Free Europe* of 30 high-profile court cases. Prosecutors requested the confiscation of assets from around ten defendants, worth approximately €62 million, but the court approved confiscations in only five cases, amounting to €49 million. The decision regarding the apartments of former Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski is still pending from the Government. If the court had approved the full confiscation requested by prosecutors, the *Agency for Confiscated Property* would have assets worth nearly €62 million "on paper," according to *Radio Free Europe*'s analysis. Out of the 30 analyzed court cases, the court ruled in only five that €49 million of the requested €62 million should be confiscated. Had these funds been recovered, the state could have, for example, covered the interest on the Hungarian loan for the first three years or built at least 30 new schools. These confiscation rulings, despite being final for years, have not yet been fully executed or collected. The cases in question include "*Empire*", "*The Vodno Plots*", "*Trust*", and "*Diamed*".

New Audit Reports from the State Audit Office (SAO): [Pension](#) and Disability Insurance Fund of North Macedonia, Protection and Rescue Directorate of North Macedonia, and Dermatology Clinic - Deficit in the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund – "Fictitious" Employments Discovered the *State Audit Office* conducted an audit of the [Pension](#) and Disability Insurance Fund for 2023, issuing an adverse opinion on the accuracy and objectivity of its financial position. The report highlights ongoing financial issues, including the discovery of fictitious employments. **Neglected Property and Lack of National Strategy in the Protection and Rescue [Directorate](#) of North Macedonia (PRD)** The audit of the Protection and Rescue Directorate of North Macedonia revealed: Unregistered properties from allocated assets, Abandoned and non-functional shelters, Outdated, non-operational, and unmaintained equipment, No national strategy for protection and rescue since 2018, Lack of criteria for purchasing firefighting equipment, Insufficient pilots for aerial firefighting, Unjustified hiring of an insurance broker for aircraft. These findings indicate significant deficiencies in emergency preparedness and resource management. **Financial and operational challenges in the [Dermatology](#) Clinic** - The audit identified weaknesses in healthcare service and medicine management, creating financial and operational challenges for the *Dermatology Clinic*. The SAO issued an adverse opinion on the accuracy and objectivity of financial reports and the compliance of transactions with legal regulations for Fund Account 737. For Own Revenue Account 531, the SAO issued an unqualified opinion on financial accuracy but a qualified opinion regarding compliance with legal regulations.

Officials ignored the warnings from the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption Talat Dzaferi [sanctioned](#) for holding two incompatible positions - The State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) sanctioned former Speaker of Parliament Talat Xhaferifor illegally holding two incompatible positions simultaneously. The case was initiated by the political party *Levica*, which filed a complaint in June 2024, alleging a conflict of interest. Dzaferi was serving as both Prime Minister and Member of Parliament, a violation of legal and ethical standards.

Citizens rate judicial services a "Three" – Judges satisfied, the Minister of Justice calls numbers alarming - On a scale from one to five, citizens who have participated in court proceedings—whether as parties in a case, defendants, users of administrative court services, lawyers, public prosecutors, or journalists—have rated judicial services with an average score of three. This was revealed in a survey conducted by the Coalition "All for Fair Trials" at the request of the *Judges' Association*. 9% of the 1,100 respondents reported being asked for a bribe. One-third of these cases involved direct requests from judges, while the rest came from other court staff. Citizens are most dissatisfied with the speed of court proceedings, which is impacted by an increased case load and a shortage of judges—a concern previously highlighted by the Coalition. While judges expressed satisfaction with the findings, the Minister of Justice described the numbers as concerning and indicative of deep-rooted issues in the judicial system.

“DARK” OCCURRENCES FOR FEBRUARY 2025

Investigation for bribery and embezzlement in SGCA - The Public Prosecutor's Office of Skopje has issued an order to conduct an investigation against two individuals, including the former director of the Service for General and Common Affairs (SOZR) of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, Pece Mircevski, who is suspected of receiving bribes and embezzlement in the service, as well as the owner and manager of a legal entity suspected of giving bribes.

Misuse with the reconstruction and lighting of the Government building - The Public Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime and Corruption has filed an indictment against one person and a motion for indictment against four people for abuses related to the reconstruction of the facade and the lighting of the Government building, which was part of the "Skopje 2014" project. The indictment, according to the Prosecutor's Office, is based on evidence from the period of February – April 2013, with a financial loss to the state budget of approximately 3 million euros. Among the accused are the head of the construction company "Bauer BG" and the former director of the Service for General and Common Affairs of the Government, Vase Donev.

It's cheaper for many former and current officials to pay a fine than to declare assets on the Anti-Corruption Commission's List - About eighty former and current officials will pay fines after the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) determined that they failed to declare their property status, did not submit the requested documents within the specified deadline, or did not recuse themselves in certain procedures. "By publishing this information, the SCPC aims to inform the public and encourage citizens, as well as institutions, to adhere to legal norms. We expect that by fulfilling this legal obligation, trust in monitoring and control processes will increase, as well as strengthen efforts for the effective prevention of corruption and conflicts of interest in the Republic of North Macedonia. The SCPC believes this measure is extremely important for increasing transparency and accountability of every institution in the fight against corruption," states the SCPC announcement.

Former Director of the Skopje Prison allowed five high-risk convicts to temporarily roam freely - Five convicts from the Shutovo Orizari prison were unlawfully temporarily released for 8 to 10 hours, a privilege granted by the former director Filip Andov, who is suspected, along with nine other individuals, in a case being handled by the Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime and Corruption. They are being prosecuted for "Illegal release of a person deprived of liberty" and the criminal offense "Abuse of official position and authority." "The first suspect, by abusing his official position with the intention of granting unlawful benefits to five convicts, allowed and ordered that high-security risk prisoners, on multiple occasions, receive benefits that, according to judicial decisions, were not entitled to," the Public Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime and Corruption reports.

SCPC: A member of the AEC Commission did not meet the requirements, but the person was appointed to the position by the Assembly - Despite lacking the necessary education and required work experience, this person became a member of the Commission in the Agency for Electronic Communications. The State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, following a prior report, found that the individual appointed to this high position by the Assembly did not meet some of the conditions. "The diploma from the Faculty of Public Administration with the professional title of graduated public administrator does not fall within the fields of informatics, telecommunications, law, or economics," said Cveta Ristovska, a member of the SCPC. Due to suspicions of violations of the Law on Electronic Communications, the SCPC will inform the parliamentary committee for elections and appointments.

SAO: Weaknesses identified in the operations of the Central Registry - The audit of the Central Registry's operations revealed irregularities, including the sale of passenger vehicles without government approval, discrepancies in revenue records, and malfunctioning registers. Additionally, issues with debts, irregularities in employment, and legal ambiguities affecting the institution's effectiveness were identified.

Audit with serious remarks for the Employment Agency in the 2023 report - Serious weaknesses in the implementation of employment measures and problems in the allocation of funds are noted in the 2023 report by the State Audit Office. Auditors found that these measures were not being implemented according to the principle of balanced regional development.

Lack of inspection oversight reduces the effectiveness of controls in student dormitories - The State Audit Office identified serious weaknesses in the implementation of inspection oversight in student dormitories and educational institutions. The lack of regular and extraordinary inspections, staffing issues, and the failure to implement recommendations from previous audits have led to reduced effectiveness of control processes and risks of improper functioning of the institutions, according to the audit report.

Transparency International: Macedonia's fight against corruption drops 12 places - With only two fewer points than in 2023, North Macedonia finished 2024 with a drop of 12 positions on Transparency International's corruption perception index. According to the 2024 Corruption Perception Index, the country is ranked 88th out of 180 countries with 40 points. In 2023, the country was ranked 76th, largely due to criticism of changes to the Criminal Code, but this year's decline is attributed to scandals within the judiciary, the Judicial Council, and the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors. "Impunity for high-level corruption linked to individuals in public positions, indications of political influence in the judiciary, poor control by the Judicial Council over judges, and the European Union's evaluation mission recommendations, as well as the violation of the law with the selection of candidates for the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors during elections, are just some of the scandals that have shaken the judiciary," said the president of Transparency International - Macedonia, Blagoja Pandovski.

"DARK" OCCURRENCES FOR MARCH 2025

Something is rotten in North Macedonia

The investigation locates "chain failures and illegalities" that led to the fire in Kočani - State Prosecutor Ljupčo Kocevski revealed to the public all the unlawful actions discovered so far related to the fire in Kočani. He stated that the failures date back more than 10 years. A member of the DNK group, who had a concert, is suspected of bringing in pyrotechnics to discotheque "Pulse." The Basic Public Prosecutor's Office - Kočani has ordered an investigation against 27 individuals and three legal entities, suspected of having committed serious crimes against public safety with the fire at "Pulse." All the suspects in the investigation have been secured. The Kočani prosecutor's office is requesting detention for all suspects except for three who are hospitalized. The Prosecutor's Office announced that all the suspects, from 2012 to March 16, 2025, jointly, but each within the scope of their position and responsibilities, failed to act in accordance with regulations for protective measures, thus creating a danger to everyone.

"Fuel Oil theft!" – The Prosecutor's Office continues the investigation against 13 suspects – The Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime and Corruption continues the investigation involving businessmen and fuel traders, who, in cooperation and with assistance from directors and employees at power plants in North Macedonia, manipulated the tendering process for the procurement of fuel oil at the Negotino TPP. This occurred between 2021 and 2023, while the state budget was damaged by 167.5 million euros.

Kriva Reka "swims" in the deadliest poison – cyanide, instead of state action, there are party squabbles – Instead of urgent state action, there are party disputes and accusations regarding the ecological disaster in Kriva Reka in the city of Kriva Palanka, where increased levels of cyanide and lead have been detected after wastewater from the Toranica mine flowed into the river, turning it grey. Only toxicologists are reacting. They say cyanide is one of the deadliest poisons. It affects cellular respiration, meaning it prevents oxygen exchange from entering the cells, thereby killing the cells. Since it is in the water, it will affect all living organisms in the river, which is an ecological catastrophe. The risk of soil and food contamination is high.

A manager demanded a 13,000-euro [bribe](#) for approval of an apartment construction project – The Corruption Unit of the Department for Combating Organized and Serious Crime informed the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for the Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption that the accused, the head of the Department for Urban Planning, Communal Services, Local Economic Development, and Environmental Protection in the Municipality of Mavrovo and Rostuša, demanded a bribe of 13,000 euros and promised that an urban planning project for building apartments and accommodation facilities would be approved. The bribe was to be paid in several installments.

"Gorica" in Ohrid continues to be cemented despite UNESCO's warnings: The [institutions are silent](#), and builders keep digging – Despite clear recommendations from UNESCO to immediately halt urbanization in sensitive areas around Lake Ohrid, such as the Gorica hill and the Studenčko Swamp, construction activities persist. The latest warning comes from the SOS Ohrid organization, which alerts that despite reactions from international bodies, the state is taking no action. In a statement to the media, activists remind that the Reactive Monitoring Mission of UNESCO, which visited Ohrid in March 2024, registered new construction on Gorica Hill. This involves the construction of a hotel complex, without prior notification to the World Heritage Centre, which constitutes a direct violation of Paragraph 172 of the operational guidelines of the World Heritage Convention.

SCPC: Institutions with [low integrity](#) – In the interest of objectivity and assessing achievements, the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) presented the ranking list of the most successful and highest-ranked institutions based on the implementation of the integrity system. At the top, the State Audit Office ranked highest with 82%, followed by the Court in Kavadarci with 65%, while the Civil Court in Skopje received a low score of 20%. In the anti-corruption investigation, the main flaws identified include the lack of internal acts on conflict of interest – missing in half of the state institutions, and the same percentage does not have regulations for receiving gifts and hospitality. There is also an absence of integrity training and low certification in ISO standards.

"DARK" OCCURRENCES FOR APRIL 2025

From top marks for the SCPC to [suspect](#) in "Additive" – SCPC President Tatjana Dimitrovska allegedly leaked official secrets to a defendant via Messaging Apps - Just three months after her appointment, Tatjana Dimitrovska, President of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), allegedly began committing the offense for which she is now under suspicion. She is accused of leaking official secrets via messaging applications to a defendant in the "Additive" case. At a time of widespread public distrust in the judiciary, the SCPC was seen as a rare bright spot in the fight against corruption. The [new composition](#) of the Commission inherited a reputation built by its previous members. However, the situation now appears to be at a turning point. The Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecuting Organized Crime and Corruption issued an order to initiate an investigative procedure against three individuals as part of the ongoing "Additive" case. Among them, as the third suspect, is SCPC President Tatjana Dimitrovska. The evidence leading to her has reportedly emerged from extracted electronic data collected during the investigation so far.

They took [bribes](#), then prepared fake documentation for alleged examinations, checkups, and reports to grant disability pensions and personal care assistance – a former ENT doctor from Skopje at the center of the scheme - A former doctor from the Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) Clinic in Skopje is at the center of a criminal scheme involving the issuance of disability pensions and personal care assistance through fraudulent means. According to statements from the involved institutions, she organized two criminal groups that received bribes in exchange for falsifying medical documentation and managing procedures for obtaining social welfare benefits. The scheme involved doctors from ENT, Neurology, the Public General Hospital in Veles, Psychiatry, as well as expert evaluators, members of the Commission for Work Capacity Assessment, a lawyer, and other officials. The process of obtaining personal care assistance benefits was routed through Veles. Applicants would pay bribes to general practitioners in the city. Medical documentation—including fake referrals, exam reports, discharge summaries, medical

assessments, follow-up reports, psychological tests, expert opinions, certificates for medical aids, and other medical paperwork—was created and issued without the patients ever appearing for medical examinations.

Major quick loan [fraud](#): 43 people falsified citizens' personal data with help from a Health Insurance Fund Employee - A group of 43 individuals is suspected of committing large-scale fraud involving fast loans, using falsified personal data of citizens. According to the official statement, some of the suspects—contrary to legal requirements and without the citizens' consent—used other people's personal information to forge public documents and alter genuine ones, intending to use them as authentic. By entering false data into the information systems of various fast-loan companies, and by forging electronic signatures, the suspects took out loans in the names of unsuspecting individuals, creating obligations for them to repay funds they never actually borrowed. Part of the scheme included fabricating employment data for unemployed individuals, presenting them as employed and creditworthy. Based on this false information, they secured loans from financial institutions—loans which later became uncollectible. A crucial part of the operation was the involvement of a suspect employed at the Health Insurance Fund of North Macedonia. He allegedly provided access to resources, including the EZBO number (a unique health ID number), which he obtained using his computer and the Fund's internal electronic system. The falsified data was then used to apply for multiple loans from different lenders in a single day, allowing the perpetrators to gain significant financial benefits. The money was withdrawn from accounts and mostly handed over to the suspected organizers of the fraud.

Geriatrics Director took €20,000 [bribe](#) to admit an Immobile patient - Together with an intermediary, the director of the Geriatric Hospital, Muhsin Arifi, allegedly demanded and received a bribe in order to admit a sick and immobile person into a geriatric care facility. According to a statement from the Ministry of Interior and the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecuting Organized Crime and Corruption, the bribe amounted to €20,000.

Bodyguard inspector for Prime Minister Mickoski arrested for attempting to sell classified documents for €50,000 - The suspect, Angel Samarakov—a senior inspector with the Unit for Personal Security of Prime Minister Hristijan Mickoski—was caught in a parking lot in front of a hotel in Veles while attempting to sell classified documents for €50,000, according to the Public Prosecutor's Office. “The suspect, acting in his official capacity, met with an uninvited individual—a witness in the proceedings—on the evening of March 30, 2025, in the parking area of a hotel in Veles. He showed the witness official Ministry of Interior documents considered to be classified. He allowed the witness to record the documents while explaining the content and purpose of each. Motivated by personal gain and intending for the documents to be shared on social media, the suspect made the classified materials accessible, seeking to obtain €50,000 from the individual whom the documents concerned,” the prosecution stated.

Nearly half of the courts were [inefficient](#) last year – Judicial Council adopts 2024 court performance report - Nearly half of the courts in the country were inefficient in 2024. Out of 34 courts, 18 were efficient, while 16 were not—among them three appellate courts, 12 basic courts, and the Higher Administrative Court. This was announced during a session of the Judicial Council, where the annual report on the work of the courts for 2024 was reviewed. According to rapporteur Pavlina Crvenkovska, the courts in the country began last year with 131,005 unresolved cases and received an additional 569,958 new cases, bringing the total caseload to 700,739. Of these, 566,010 cases were resolved, leaving 134,729 unresolved. “The courts failed to handle the incoming caseload and increased the backlog by 3,724 cases,” Crvenkovska emphasized.

Auditors found [irregularities](#) and systemic weaknesses in the work of the Basic Court in Gostivar - According to the findings, the court lacks provisions for determining the salaries of employees performing technical and support tasks. There are inconsistent conditions for filling a single job position due to differing regulations applied by the courts, leading to confusion and inability to act effectively. Furthermore, there is no prescribed format or content for managing court deposit forms, and there is a legal and sublegal regulatory mismatch in defining the ownership of unclaimed deposited items after a ten-year period from submission. Auditors also found an absence of documentation proving ownership or rights of use for the court's real estate. **Audit: Systemic weaknesses and irregularities in the Bureau for**

Development of Education - Among the systemic weaknesses identified in the latest audit report of the Bureau for Development of Education are: holding a leadership position for over five years as an acting director; imprecise methods for calculating compensation for external collaborators; and a lack of financial resources for teacher training in both primary and secondary education. In 2023, the Bureau was led by two directors, neither of whom had been officially appointed through a public announcement. The previous director had led the institution for more than five years without a formal appointment. **State Audit uncovers weaknesses in Public-Private Partnerships: oor results for High Costs** - A state audit of public-private partnership projects from 2017 through last year reveals significant weaknesses in legislation, institutional capacity, and contract negotiation. A total of 68 contracts were identified, though auditors note the number may be higher due to poorly kept records. Of 25 analyzed procedures, the state collected about €1.5 million, while private partners earned €3 million. The private sector invested a total of €37 million, while the state's contribution—consisting of permits, land, and facilities—could not be quantified in monetary terms. Not all contracts were properly written. One was signed for a duration of 96 years, exceeding the legal limit of 35 years. In some cases, the state was also required to pay penalties. "Ongoing legal proceedings show the public partner as a defendant in lawsuits totaling approximately €3.9 million," the report states.

"DARK" OCCURRENCES FOR MAY 2025

Administered therapy that worsened the condition of cancer patients – details of the indictment against the directors and doctors from the Oncology Clinic - The Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Skopje has completed the investigation and submitted two indictments to the Basic Criminal Court Skopje in the case "Oncology." The first indictment, which concerns the financial operations of the Clinic, involves two individuals. The first defendant, in the capacity of an official – Medical Director, and the second defendant, in the capacity of Organizational Director of the Clinic, are charged with prolonged criminal offenses – Abuse of Official Position and Authority, Fraud in Office, and Embezzlement in Office. Most of the actions were committed as co-perpetrators during the period from 2018 to 2022. The criminal offense of Abuse of Official Position was committed by exceeding the limits of their official authority and failing to perform their official duties in the procedures for the procurement of medications, acting contrary to the Law on Health Protection, the Law on Health Insurance, the Statute of the Clinic, the Law on Budgets, and the Law on Public Procurement. Through these actions, they obtained significant material benefit for another party and caused damage to the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia in a total amount of over 2.2 billion denars.

The Administrative Court annulled the decision to appoint Dukovska as Constitutional Court judge - An improperly conducted selection procedure, during which the Judicial Council did not review all candidates equally and did not adhere to the criteria outlined in the Law on the Judicial Council, is the reason why the Administrative Court annulled the decision to appoint Elizabeta Dukovska as a judge of the Constitutional Court. According to the court ruling, in this particular case, the Judicial Council made the decision to appoint a judge to the Constitutional Court without fully reviewing all nominated candidates. Due to a lack of materials and information about the candidates, Council members were unable to conduct a thorough analysis of their expertise and contributions to legal theory. Although the Law on the Judicial Council requires the fulfillment of specific criteria for selection, these were not formally verified before the vote.

Lack of transparency in the negotiation process – Reaction from the Platform of Civil Society Organizations for the Fight Against Corruption regarding the agreement between Macedonia and the UK - The Platform of Civil Society Organizations for the Fight Against Corruption has raised concerns about the lack of transparency in the negotiation process of the agreement between the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Government of the United Kingdom regarding a partnership for the implementation of infrastructure projects—referred to by the Government as a "Government-to-Government Agreement." This is already the second agreement of this kind, and just like the one signed with the Republic of Hungary, it has been concluded without the public being previously and promptly informed about the details and the conditions being accepted.

The Platform believes that just as there should be full transparency in the spending of funds from this credit framework, the Government should also have ensured transparency in the negotiation process and in the terms included in the agreement, which the Government approved at its session on May 20, 2025, and signed on May 22 in London.

Politically exposed persons failed to declare company ownerships in conflict of interest declarations
- **Research by the Center for Civil Communications** - The Center for Civil Communications conducted a [study](#) analyzing potential conflicts of interest and abuse of power in public procurement involving politically exposed persons. The analysis reveals that through the Register of Beneficial Owners, company ownerships by politically exposed persons (mayors and ministers) were discovered that had not been declared in their interest statements submitted to the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC). Out of 360 former and current officials analyzed, 41 were identified as beneficial owners of companies. Of those, 23 officials had either fully or partially concealed their ownership stakes from the SCPC. Companies owned by mayors and former ministers received contracts for public procurement, concessions, and licenses awarded by state institutions.

Most human rights violations last year were related to issuing travel documents and the judiciary - According to the annual report, the highest number of human rights violations last year occurred in the area of civil status, primarily related to the inability to obtain personal documents—specifically travel documents. The judiciary is also identified as a problematic area, with the most violations and complaints filed by citizens. There were also complaints regarding the work of bailiffs. Consumer rights issues were also highlighted as problematic, emphasized the Ombudsman, Naser Ziberi. He reported that over 2,700 complaints were submitted by citizens last year. The Ombudsman handled 3,120 complaints in total, considering that a portion of complaints are carried over from the previous year.

€8.5 Million spent on digitalizing Civil Registry, yet some citizens still receive typewritten certificates
- The State Audit Office points out that the digitalization of the civil registry is still not complete, even though it began more than a decade ago and over 520 million denars (approximately €8.5 million) have been invested in it. According to the Audit Office, the lack of a clear strategy, control mechanisms, and qualified human resources is hindering improvements in services for citizens and increasing the risk of misuse of personal data and the loss of archival material of lasting value.

Suspicious financial reports and procurement at the Hematology Clinic - The State Audit Office issued an unfavorable opinion regarding the accuracy and objectivity of the financial statements of the Hematology Clinic and a qualified opinion on the compliance of financial transactions with relevant legal regulations for the year 2023. “It was found that received and used medications for rare diseases and donated medications were not recorded in the accounting system. In some of the conducted public procurement procedures, there was improper application of the Public Procurement Law and non-chronological payment of undertaken obligations.”

State Audit Office: No Municipality in urban centers meets green space standards - Out of 34 municipalities with urban centers, the general urban plans (GUPs) of 22 municipalities do not meet the recommended green space standard of 25 square meters per capita, according to the latest report by the State Audit Office.

Bribes of around one hundred euros for issuing residency certificates to foreigners in Central Skopje
- Several officials from the Department for Foreigners within the Administrative Services of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) are under investigation for abuse of office and issuing documents for regulated residence in North Macedonia to foreign nationals. The illegal “services” were carried out in the offices of the MoI’s Administrative Services, where several police employees have been detained. According to initial information, the suspects issued residency certificates and documents without conducting the legally required background checks, in exchange for bribes of approximately one hundred euros per case. To bypass legal procedures, a scheme was set up for the issuance of fake documents, which were sold for a corresponding fee.

“DARK” OCCURRENCES FOR JUNE 2025

€8.5 Million spent, but only half of civil registry data digitized; certificates printed even at 10 pm
Audit Office finds corruption - “Despite the fact that the digitization of civil registry books began more

than a decade ago and over 520 million denars have been invested, the audit determined that the process is still not complete. Only 52% of records have been scanned, and 49% of the planned activities have been entered into the electronic register," stated the State Audit Office (SAO). **SAO identifies financial weaknesses in the Municipality of Centar** - The State Audit Office identified serious weaknesses in the financial operations of the Municipality of Centar for 2023. According to the report, the municipality has uncollected receivables exceeding €4.4 million, without a defined maturity structure or legal mechanisms for collection. Furthermore, numerous irregularities were found in the area of public procurement, violating the principles of competition and transparency as stipulated by the Law on Public Procurement, the report states. **SAO: Regional development with no results – public investments stuck in local priorities** - The State Audit Office conducted a performance audit on the topic "Effects of Public Investments on Balanced Regional Development," aiming to determine whether public investments are efficiently and effectively planned and implemented, and whether they contribute to sustainable long-term regional development. The audit revealed the absence of clear criteria for regional projects, allocation of funds through line ministries instead of through the Program for Balanced Regional Development, distribution of funds to municipalities and projects without public calls in a non-transparent manner, and a lack of a system for project evaluation and sustainability. These issues negatively impact the effectiveness of public investments in regional development. **SAO: ELEM TURS facing major losses and outdated facilities** - The State Audit Office published an analysis of the financial statements and operations of ELEM TURS DOOEL Skopje for 2023, identifying serious financial and management issues. According to the auditors, the company is facing accumulated losses of approximately 1.2 billion denars and debts exceeding 268 million denars. The report emphasizes that outdated accommodation facilities, irrational spending, and inadequate management are severely undermining the company's stability. Particularly concerning are the lack of insurance for property and assets, as well as the excessive outsourcing services with payments beyond contractual obligations.

Courts lagging behind, 150,000 cases remain unresolved - Courts in Macedonia are falling behind in their work. After the first three months of the year, they failed to resolve both the backlog and newly received cases, leaving nearly 145,000 cases still pending before judges. According to the report from the Judicial Council, out of a total of 34 courts, only the courts in Shtip, Veles, Radovish, and Vinica are up to date with their caseloads. The Council explains that due to the numerous holidays in January, it is common for courts to struggle with their caseloads during the first quarter. However, they emphasize that the main issue lies in the lack of judges and administrative staff.

Annual Report of the Public Prosecutor's Office: increase in serious murders and traffic offenses - With reduced staffing capacity and an increased workload — this is how public prosecutor's offices operated during 2024, according to the [Annual Report](#) on their work, published by the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia. According to the report, in 2024, the basic public prosecutor's offices in the country handled cases involving a total of 37,255 perpetrators of criminal offenses, of which 25,909 were newly reported offenders. The Prosecution notes that a comparison of the data shows a significant increase in the number of newly reported offenders in 2024 compared to 2023 — by approximately 10 percent.

Ohrid: NGOs raise concerns while illegal construction continues - Silence follows warnings from non-governmental organizations about [illegal construction](#) at multiple locations in Ohrid. With the upcoming decision of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee—expected in less than a month—on whether the [Ohrid Region](#) will be placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, the NGO Front 21/42 warns that relevant institutions show neither awareness of the value of world heritage nor responsibility toward future generations.

€94 Million embezzled through tax fraud - The Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecuting Organized Crime and Corruption is conducting proceedings in the "Krmzov" case against 23 individuals and 15 legal entities, suspected of organized crime, tax fraud, money laundering, and mismanagement. According to initial estimates, the damage amounts to around €90 million, with the illegal activities carried out through fake contracts, VAT manipulation, and real estate transactions.

"DARK" OCCURRENCES FOR JULY 2025

The President of the SCPC illegally accessed the classified information system a colleague took the exam on her behalf to obtain a "State Secret" Certificate - The Prosecutor's Office announced that an indictment has been filed against the President of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC), Tatjana Dimitrovska, for disclosing official secrets to a defendant in the "Additive" case. She allegedly extracted and photographed data from the Commission's files related to the procurement of additives in the state energy sector and the purchase of fuel oil by Nebojša Stojanović, a defendant in the "Additive" case and former director of the Negotino thermal power plant. However, what is particularly shocking is that, during the investigation, an inspection of Dimitrovska's official phone revealed that she and another state official, an auditor had committed forgery and illegally accessed the classified information system. Dimitrovska "hired" a fellow auditor (prior to her role as SCPC president, she had been an auditor at the State Audit Office), who used her passwords and codes to access the system, attend lectures, and take exams in her name so that she could obtain a "state secret" certificate.

Old wounds in the new European Commission Report on North Macedonia - Respect for the principle of separation of powers, prevention of further negative consequences from the amendments to the Criminal Code, effective implementation of anti-corruption reforms, and an independent judiciary... These are just some of the recommendations in the European Commission's [2025 Annual Rule of Law Report](#). "North Macedonia" continued to implement judicial reforms, but interference and pressure from other branches of government raise serious concerns regarding judicial independence," the report states. The [European Commission](#) notes that the current legal grounds for the potential dismissal of the Chief Public Prosecutor include broad definitions, such as "inappropriate behavior that undermines the reputation of the public prosecution" which create room for legal uncertainty and political influence in the process of dismissing the Chief Prosecutor. The Commission also expressed concern over several cases related to respect for judicial independence and the principle of separation of powers. One example cited was government-level announcements about the possible "dissolution" of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors.

Doctors, lawyers, and other officials involved in a criminal network for disability pensions and caregiver allowances - A total of 36 individuals have been suspected of abuse in the process of granting rights to caregiver allowances and disability pensions. Following a months long investigation, the Prosecutor's Office claims that the suspects, as part of two criminal groups, acted as intermediaries and enabled the illegal acquisition of disability pension and caregiver benefits, charging between 150 and 5,000 euros for their services. Ten individuals are charged with criminal association, bribery, and offering or receiving rewards for unlawful influence. Five others are accused of criminal association and accepting bribes, while the remaining 19 face charges for giving bribes and offering rewards for unlawful influence.

Audit uncovers serious systemic weaknesses in the operations of the Health Insurance Fund in 2023 - Insufficient oversight and IT weaknesses threaten the healthcare system and public finances. The State Audit Office has identified serious systemic weaknesses in the operations of the Health Insurance Fund for the year 2023, pointing to the absence of a unified, integrated system for referrals, medical reports, and billing. The lack of adequate controls creates a risk of misuse of public funds and undermines the efficiency of healthcare services, according to the 2023 audit report. **State Audit Office identifies financial and systemic irregularities at the State Attorney's Office** - In its final reports on the State Attorney's Office of the Republic of Macedonia, the State Audit Office points to multiple financial and systemic irregularities. A lack of transparency and irregularities in public procurement procedures have been noted, as well as issues with hiring individuals under service contracts for positions that are already defined in the

official job classification system. The systemic weaknesses include undefined procedures for performance evaluation and disciplinary measures for state attorneys, unclear rules on compensation for living away from home, and ambiguities in the processes of advance payments and reimbursement of expenses. **State Audit Office: The Public Enterprise for Management of Sports Facilities has not legally existed since 2017, yet still operates** The State Audit Office is unable to confirm the financial position of the Public Enterprise for Management of Sports Facilities because, for several years, no inventory of assets, receivables, and liabilities has been conducted. Additionally, there has been no reconciliation between accounting records and the actual condition established through inventory. A large portion of the documentation has been lost due to flooding in its offices or seized during investigative procedures by the competent authorities. **Insufficient healthcare budget and delays in hospital construction noted in the 2023 Audit Report** - The audit of the Ministry of Health for 2023 revealed that 23 healthcare programs were implemented with insufficient funding, which negatively affected the liquidity of public healthcare institutions, caused shortages of medicines during certain periods, and exposed weaknesses in internal controls, according to the State Audit Office's report. Additionally, capital projects including the construction of new clinical centers are experiencing long-term delays and financial implications affecting the overall project costs. These issues directly impact the accessibility and quality of healthcare services for citizens. **Audit of the basic court in Prilep: No internal audit unit and no provisions for determining salaries**-There is no established accounting system, and data in the AKMIS application regarding seized funds, valuables, and other confiscated items is incomplete. Moreover, no inventory of such items has been conducted. The inventory of cash and liabilities was not carried out in accordance with the regulations set by the Rulebook on Accounting for Budgets and Budget Beneficiaries.

SCPC identified a violation of the law on prevention of corruption and conflict of interest by a professor and deputy director at the Institute of Animal Husbandry- The State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) has determined a violation of the Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest involving a professor and deputy director of the Institute of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries at the "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" University. Commission member Zoran Bogoevski stated that the SCPC found that the official committed a violation under the law. Specifically, there were business activities between the Institute and a certain legal entity that was subject to inspection by the Inspectorate. During the inspection, the Inspectorate determined that one of the co-owners of the legal entity, according to data from the Central Registry, was the spouse of the official employed as a professor at the Institute.

"DARK" OCCURRENCES FOR AUGUST 2025

Although the return of harsher penalties for corruption in the Criminal Code was announced before the elections, this did not happen - On February 12, the Constitutional Court, with a majority vote of the then nine judges, decided to initiate proceedings on the constitutionality of the amendments to the Criminal Code, which in 2023 represented an intrusion into the judiciary in order to clear former officials of corruption charges. Before annulling or repealing the amendments, the Constitutional Court first sent a report to the Parliament, stating that there were doubts about the constitutionality of the law. The Court gave the Parliament a deadline to intervene and amend the disputed provisions—specifically, to restore within six months the deleted penalties for corruption, which had led to the expiration of all cases from the former Special Prosecutor's Office, resulting in the accused being granted amnesty and citizens now having to pay hundreds of thousands of euros in legal fees. If the Government and Parliament failed to do so, the Constitutional Court was expected to prepare a report to annul or repeal those provisions, or the entire law amending the Criminal Code, which was adopted on September 3, 2023. **On August 12, 2025, the six-month deadline given by the Constitutional Court to the Parliament to correct the disputed legal provisions amending the Criminal Code expired.**

Municipalities Spent €190 Million Last Year; In About Ten Local Governments, One Company Won Half of the Tenders - The latest research conducted by the Center for Civil Communications reveals that the eighty municipalities and the City of Skopje signed a total of 4,006 public procurement contracts in the past year, worth 11.7 billion denars, or approximately 190 million euros. In around ten municipalities, a single company won half or more of the total number of public procurement contracts. The Center points out that there are about ten municipalities where just one company was awarded half of all the municipality's procurements for 2024. These municipalities include: Želino, Dojran, Vrapčište, Strumica, Butel, Kruševo, Staro Nagoričane, Zelenikovo, Lipkovo, Mogila, Aračinovo, Bosilovo, and Vinica.

Fund for Innovation Financed 48 AI Projects Worth Over €6 Million, None Operational - The State Audit Office conducted a performance audit of information systems on the topic “Opportunities for the Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Public Sector” to assess whether the public sector is prepared to use artificial intelligence (AI) in its activities. The audit noted numerous shortcomings and insufficient development of AI in the country and within the public sector. It highlighted that none of the 48 state-funded AI projects, with a total value of over €6 million, are currently operational. **State Audit Office: Public Enterprise “National Forests” Drowning in Debt**

The State Audit Office found that the Public Enterprise “National Forests” is struggling with serious financial difficulties. The enterprise is using loans to pay salaries, while employees have failed to fulfill their contractual duties. According to the latest audit report, the company has accumulated obligations exceeding €17 million and is constantly dependent on revolving short-term loans for salary payments. This situation has resulted in reduced liquidity and increased risks to the sustainability of its operations. **State Audit Office: Non-Functional Facilities, Outdated Equipment, and Lost Revenue Potential at “Boris Trajkovski” Sports Center**

The State Audit Office also conducted an audit of the Company for Construction, Management, and Leasing of the Multipurpose Hall “Boris Trajkovski” for the year 2023. The findings included non-functional facilities and equipment, a closed aqua park, uncertainty regarding the future of the solar power system, and missed opportunities for generating additional revenue.

So Far, 577 Institutions Have Reported Their Vehicles to the Anti-Corruption Commission, Over 900

Still Haven’t - According to data received by the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) from the Central Registry, there are 1,511 legal entities that manage state-owned capital—this includes ministries, municipalities, agencies, directorates, funds, and other institutions established by the state. An additional 142 state institutions have recently submitted data to the SCPC regarding the official vehicles they possess, bringing the total number of public institutions that have fulfilled this obligation to 577. The deadline for reporting the vehicles was August 20, meaning these 142 institutions submitted their data late. Still, this indicates that over 900 institutions have yet to submit any data, meaning only about one-third have fulfilled their legal obligation.

Individual Held Two Incompatible Positions in Bitola, Paid Fine but Refused to Step Down from Either - The Anti-Corruption Commission took action on a case it initiated ex officio concerning an individual who was holding two incompatible public functions. As stated during a session, the individual was simultaneously a member of the Management Board of one public enterprise and a member of the Supervisory Board of another public enterprise, both based in Bitola. Holding both positions at the same time is in violation of Article 44 of the Law on Prevention of Corruption, and constitutes a misdemeanor punishable under Article 105 of the same law. The individual was issued a misdemeanor payment order and was instructed to resign from one of the two functions. While the fine was paid, the person failed to submit proof of resignation from either of the positions, according to the Commission.

“DARK” OCCURRENCES FOR SEPTEMBER 2025

More than half of institutions failed to submit data on official vehicles to the State Commission for Prevention Corruption (SCPC)

According to the Electoral Code, public funds, public enterprises, and all other legal entities managing state capital were obligated to submit data to the SCPC by August 18 of this year at the latest. The required data includes the number, type, license plates, and operational status of official vehicles. A total of 1,514 institutions were required to submit this information. As of today, only 635 institutions or 42 percent have done so, while 879 institutions, or 58 percent, have not submitted any information at all.

Audit uncovers issues in the ministry of education and science – million-euro debts, unfinished student dorms, and rotting textbooks in storage - The State Audit Office has completed its audit of the financial reports and compliance of the Ministry of Education and Science for the year 2023. The results of the audit are more than concerning – the institution responsible for overseeing education shows serious shortcomings in almost all areas: from managing capital investments and distributing scholarships and textbooks, to long-standing unpaid debts that exist only "on paper." The State Audit Office uncovered numerous irregularities, including that the state student dormitory in Tetovo where millions of euros were invested was put into use without a technical inspection and without an occupancy permit.

Witness who secretly recorded corrupt customs officers alleges his identity was exposed - The man who reported corruption within the Customs Administration and participated in special investigative measures secretly recording customs officers as they solicited and accepted bribes during the operation codenamed "Premin", in which 16 officers were arrested is now accusing prosecutors of revealing his identity to at least two of the detained individuals. The witness, a truck driver who insists on remaining anonymous, claims his safety is now at risk because the accused know who reported and recorded them. Last year, he reported that customs officers were regularly demanding bribes from him, so investigators equipped him with cameras to capture the bribery in action. The Prosecutor's Office states that procedures were followed correctly and that no witness safety has been compromised.

Signed by 16 doctors who refuse to stay silent: "with the money from the health insurance fund, we could have built a new clinical center" - A document signed by 16 cardiologists and cardiac surgeons from public clinics submitted to the Ministry of Health and the Health Insurance Fund, along with eight patient case files involving heart surgeries performed in private clinics states that these are cases where "certain irregularities in the indications for surgical treatment" were found. What does that mean? We asked some of the signatories. Their answer was brief and clear: "*That there was no real medical reason for surgery, based on evidence medicine.*" This means that, in these eight cases, according to the 16 cardiologists and cardiac surgeons, the surgeries were unnecessary yet still billed to the Health Insurance Fund. According to our source, these were not stent procedures (which does not cover in private clinics), but rather standard heart surgeries.

Every third citizen has encountered a corrupt official - Every third citizen has had contact with a corrupt official, according to research conducted by the Faculty of Security. At a scientific conference dedicated to this issue, it was emphasized that systemic corruption poses a serious security threat, as its infiltration into institutions leads to their paralysis. "The results are staggering. Every third citizen or a close relative has encountered a corrupt official. From that perspective, we need to take a much more serious approach to this issue, as it represents a security threat to the state," said Jonche Ivanovski, Dean of the Faculty of Security.

"DARK" OCCURRENCES FOR OCTOBER 2025

Suspensions and preliminary investigation: The "Pulse" Investigation expands - the Public Revenue Office has suspended several employees after the Public Prosecutor's Office launched a preliminary investigation into the nightclub fire in Kochani, based on new evidence involving multiple institutions. "The filing of the indictment for the fire at the so-called cabaret 'Pulse' in Kochani did not conclude the investigative procedures into other incriminating actions related to other individuals and institutions," said State Public Prosecutor Ljupcho Kocevski.

Appeals court judge Enver Bedzeti dismissed after being placed on U.S. blacklist - The Judicial Council dismissed Judge Enver Bedzeti from the Skopje Appeals Court. Last year, he was placed on the U.S. blacklist over suspicions of accepting a bribe in the court case regarding mass wiretapping, in which former Administration for Security and Counterintelligence director Sasho Mijalkov was charged. The council's explanation states that he was dismissed due to a serious disciplinary violation, rendering him unfit to hold the position of judge.

Only a third of election campaign participants submitted donation reports - Reports on received donations were submitted by 35 percent of all participants in the election campaign, the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) announced. "According to the deadline for

submitting reports on donations received in the campaign's transaction account, covering the period from the account opening until the 11th day of the election campaign, i.e., until October 9, 2025, at 24:00, a total of 61 reports were submitted to the SCPC. This represents slightly over 35 percent of the total number of participants in the election process," the SCPC stated.

Rule of law in North Macedonia stagnates – This year, North Macedonia ranks 64th out of 143 countries on the global Rule of Law Index, alongside Ghana, Argentina, Kazakhstan, and Mongolia. According to the criterion of constraints on government powers, the country ranks 80th with a score of 0.50; for absence of corruption, it ranks 69th with an index of 0.47; and for government transparency, it ranks 66th with a score of 0.51. In terms of fundamental rights, North Macedonia is in 53rd place with a score of 0.63. Regarding the criterion of order and security, the country is ranked 44th with a score of 0.80; for regulatory enforcement, 89th with 0.46; for civil justice, 78th with an index of 0.51; and for [criminal justice](#), 70th with 0.46 points. The World Justice Project's [Rule of Law Index](#) is a global source of original, independent data on the rule of law and serves as a tool to support reforms in governance, global development, and business investment worldwide.

Audit: "Post of North Macedonia" faces losses and increased staffing - The state-owned "Post of North Macedonia" is once again under scrutiny from auditors due to ongoing financial losses and rising costs for hiring contract workers. Despite reduced salary expenses, the number of employees grew to 2,267 in 2024, while expenses for contractors increased by nearly 29 million denars compared to the previous year. Auditors also raised concerns about the collectability of receivables exceeding 50 million denars and overestimated revenues from international postal services. The report emphasizes that the continued operation of "Post of North Macedonia" depends on financial support from the state due to high costs and an increasingly apparent liquidity shortage.

"DARK" OCCURRENCES FOR NOVEMBER 2025

The Ministry of Health Commission reveals: 10 out of 19 surgeries were unnecessary – The initial analysis of the commission investigating cases of malpractice involving cardiac surgical procedures shows that out of 25 examined cases, 10 surgeries were performed without justification, while six cases will be forwarded to the State Health and Sanitary Inspectorate, as the commission has no jurisdiction over them. Of the total 19 cases that were thoroughly reviewed, nearly half were assessed as unnecessary. The commission also announced a second phase of the analysis, which will include entering the institutions and thoroughly examining the cardiovascular treatment of patients. The reaction of the health authorities came after Dr. Sashko Kedev stated that private clinics were performing unnecessary surgeries for profit.

European Commission: The independence and financial autonomy of the judiciary are undermined by other branches of power – Overall, there is no progress. This is how the European Commission summarizes its assessment of North Macedonia in the section concerning the judiciary and fundamental rights in the country's 2025 EU Progress Report. In the area of combating corruption, the European Commission's evaluation is identical to that of the judiciary, stating that the country is "between a certain and moderate level of preparedness and has made no progress in preventing and fighting corruption." The 2025 Report also notes that the tragedy in the so-called "Puls" cabaret in Kochani revealed persistent systemic challenges related to the implementation of anti-corruption measures. The indictment against the president of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, Tatjana Dimitrovska, which led to her resignation, is another issue highlighted in the report, and which, according to the EC, has called into question the credibility of this institution. In this context, the European Commission provides critical recommendations to the Anti-corruption Commission regarding actions it should take within its competencies.

Industry can now burn any type of waste and legally hide it from citizens as a "Trade Secret" – Members of Parliament have adopted the Law on Industrial Emissions Control, which is intended to regulate pollution from industrial facilities in the country. The organization "Green Humane City" (ZHG) says the law is scandalous and enables industrialists and business owners to hide what kind of waste they burn in their factories under the guise of a "trade secret." "The industry will have the right to conceal information related to the design, activity, or operations of a building or installation; the composition or use

of certain raw materials, chemicals, or other materials or products if these are classified as a trade secret! This would mean that an ordinary citizen would have no right to know whether, for example, Usje is burning waste, rubber, or any other toxic element! Measures taken to reduce environmental damage identified during the closure of an installation may also be hidden as information (Article 24, Paragraph 8)."

State Audit Office: The Film Agency repeats the same irregularities, operates without strategy or internal control – Weaknesses and irregularities in the operations of the Film Agency have not been resolved and continue to persist, concludes the State Audit Office (SAO) in the Final Audit Report on the operations of the Film Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2024. The audit found that producers who received funds through public calls and whose films are completed and have premiered are not submitting the full documentation required to prove the gross profit generated from their film projects.

State Audit Office Finds irregularities in Prilep Hospital in 2024 – Prilep's "Borka Taleski" Hospital spent funds without adhering to relevant legal regulations, especially in conducting public procurement, with irregularities in cash operations and handling of cash funds, according to the State Audit Office audit for 2024. In its report, the State Audit Office issued adverse opinions regarding the accuracy and objectivity of the financial statements, as well as the compliance of financial transactions with legal regulations.

Company founded last year receives an €8 million state tender — has only two employees – Although the company *Digital One* was established only in August 2024, its results have been exceptionally strong, achieving revenues of around €570,000 and a net profit of approximately €17,400. The company, founded just last year, has so far won six tenders, four of which came from the Government's General Secretariat, according to *Faktor*. The latest tender awarded to *Digital One*, for software licenses for a virtual platform, exceeds €8 million and represents a framework agreement valid until 2028. Planned annual amounts are: around €16,300 for 2025; approximately €2.26 million for 2026; about €2.28 million for 2027; and roughly €2.28 million for 2028. On May 14, the company signed its first-ever contract with a state institution — the Government's General Secretariat. On that day, two major contracts were signed: one worth nearly €11 million and another worth around €10 million, both for the procurement of IT equipment, spare parts, and consumables.

ODIHR notes unequal conditions for smaller parties and independent candidates – The second round of local elections was in line with OSCE and international standards, according to the preliminary conclusion of the ODIHR Election Observation Mission. They noted that the second round offered a range of political options for mayoral candidates, but not all had equal access to paid political programs. Media monitoring during the second round showed that overall coverage remained balanced, but the allocation of funds for paid political advertising favored the major parties, placing smaller parties and independent candidates at a disadvantage, stated Matteo Mecacci, head of the ODIHR observation mission. According to ODIHR, the electoral legislation in the country provides a technical basis for democratic elections, but numerous inconsistencies and gaps remain in areas related to election administration, media access, and mechanisms for resolving electoral disputes. ODIHR again identified discrimination against smaller parties in paid political advertising during the second round as well. **Anti-Corruption Commission calls for clearer rules on media representation during election campaigns** – Ambiguous terminology that can be interpreted differently, incomplete coverage of all campaign participants, and inconsistencies in defining campaign participants in relation to advertising space in electronic media. These are the three regulatory risks identified by the Anti-Corruption Commission in the Electoral Code regarding media representation. The report from the anti-corruption review of specific provisions of the Electoral Code will be submitted to institutions with the aim of harmonizing certain articles — to clarify the definition of an election campaign participant and to ensure equal access to paid political advertising for all participants.

"DARK" OCCURRENCES FOR DECEMBER 2025

The former State Attorney received €50,000 to influence a judge at the Court of Appeal - Police officers, acting on the order of a public prosecutor from the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for the Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption, deprived F.S. of his liberty for committing the criminal

offense of ‘Receiving a Reward for Unlawful Influence.’ In the period from October to December 13, 2025, the suspect received a total amount of €50,000 to mediate and use his real influence to intervene with a judge at the Skopje Court of Appeal and, through bribery of the judge, to influence the performance of an official act that should not have been performed.

Reactions to the Criminal Code – legal amendments leading to even greater impunity for public officials - The amendments reduce the maximum sentences compared to the old Criminal Code from before 2023, which shortens the statutes of limitation and narrows the scope for effective prosecution of complex corruption cases, especially those uncovered after a longer period of time, and they do not even protect the budget from abuse, say representatives of the Platform of Civil Society Organizations and the Blueprint Group. The proposed amendments to the Criminal Code are equally bad, if not worse than the previous ones; they create legal uncertainty and a risk of institutional confusion during the transitional period, as well as the risk of future amnesty, the legal community reacts, after many months of waiting and deliberation, when nine members of parliament from the ruling party which had sharply criticized the scandalous 2023 amendments submitted their own proposals to the Assembly.

Different standards in the interviews of candidates for judge in Strasbourg - NGOs that monitored the interview phase of the candidates for a Macedonian judge at the court in Strasbourg note shortcomings in the methodology and transparency of the process, conflicts of interest, and strong doubts about compliance with the Council of Europe’s standards for a transparent and impartial selection. The President of the Commission, Darko Kostadinovski, only partially agrees with the report. A candidate for judge of North Macedonia at the [European Court of Human Rights](#) read most of his answers from a notebook during the interview before the Selection Commission, representatives of the network of non-governmental organizations—the Blueprint Group for Judicial Reform—testify, after being given the opportunity to monitor the only phase of the selection process, namely the interviews with the candidates. This move raises suspicions for them that the candidate had prepared answers, since he had also been involved in the previous procedure that was annulled by the Government.

An audit revealed serious irregularities in the operations of the Innovation and Technological Development Fund (FITD) – conflict of interest and €13.9 million in unpaid liabilities - The State Audit Office identified serious weaknesses in the financial operations of the Innovation and Technological Development Fund for 2024. The audit shows that FITD has not established a centralized database to track the financial support granted, nor a system for evaluating the results of completed projects. At the end of the year, the Fund also reported outstanding liabilities of nearly €13.9 million, and some of the obligations had not been recorded in a timely manner. In addition to financial irregularities, the audit also pointed to weaknesses in the management of public calls and in the allocation of experts for project evaluation.

Without cash receipts and without cash ledger records – the Financial Police are investigating the State Lottery based on parts of the audit report - Part of the audit report indicating serious cash irregularities is under investigation hundreds of thousands of euros in daily turnover without deposits into accounts, without cash receipts, and without cash ledger records. In 2024, according to the auditors, there was an achieved daily turnover of around €750,000. They found that these funds, which the Lottery collects in cash, were not deposited into any of its bank accounts, even though by law this should have been done no later than one day after receiving the payments. The auditors also determined that there are no cash receipts for the cash taken from players of games of chance, nor is there a practice of keeping a separate cash ledger for each day in which turnover is generated. **The State Audit Office identified irregularities in the operations of the Ministry of Economy and Labour – misdemeanor cases and more than €2 million not paid into the Budget** - The State Audit Office found serious irregularities in the operations of the Ministry of Economy and Labour for 2024, including time-barred misdemeanor cases and unpaid funds to the state budget totaling more than €2 million. Due to the statute of limitations, more than 1,500 decisions were issued to terminate proceedings, which directly affected reduced budget revenues. In addition, the auditors’ report identified shortcomings in public procurement and in the process of issuing licenses and categorizing hospitality establishments, carried out without full controls and timely inspection oversight.

The institution responsible for overseeing the exercise of citizens’ legal rights is in collapse! - One of the key institutions the Ombudsman, which is tasked with safeguarding the constitutional and legal rights

of citizens is on the brink of collapse and dysfunction. Instead of caring for and raising alarms about the protection of human freedoms and rights, employees of this institution have been put in a position to warn that the Assembly, as the most responsible body, has for a long time been unable to elect a new Ombudsman. Deputy Ombudsman Ilber Rufati says that all parties have been informed of the situation, from the President of the state to diplomatic representations in the country and foreign missions. The lack of consensus for voting under the Badinter principle, which is necessary for the appointment to the position, is among the key problems, leading employees of the Ombudsman's Office to question whether the state needs such an institution at all.

Over €90 million for sick leave; the Health Insurance Fund has detected abuses, with the public sector having the most suspicious cases - More than €90 million has so far been paid out by the Health Insurance Fund for sick leave longer than 30 days. The Health Insurance Fund has also identified abuses. Part of this amount is for those who went on maternity leave, while the rest of the funds are for those who opened sick leave due to other illnesses. The Fund claims it has also received requests from institutions to carry out inspections, due to cases where individuals have been on sick leave for months and are not going to work. A record number of requests for inspections came from the Ministry of Interior.

Shtip, Kichevo, Struga, and half of Skopje's mayors have not submitted asset declarations - Thirty-five former and 19 newly elected mayors failed to submit declarations of assets and interests following the local elections held at the end of October and the beginning of November, the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption has established. However, some names appear on both lists, as they are incumbents re-elected to office. Others submitted declarations as new officials but did not submit them as former ones. Among the most high-profile names who failed to submit an asset declaration are the former Mayor of Skopje, Danela Arsovka, as well as the new Mayor, Orce Gjorgjievski. He is obliged to declare both as the former mayor of Kisela Voda and as the new mayor of Skopje.

Two companies have dominated healthcare tenders for an entire decade, a study by the Center for Civil Communications shows - According to the analysis, these companies have significant influence over the market, making it difficult for new bidders to enter. The analysis shows that the total value of public procurement in healthcare more than doubled from about €135 million in 2015 to nearly €293 million in 2024. In contrast, the number of companies awarded contracts increased by only 12 percent, indicating that the growth in funding did not lead to greater competition. The research shows that an increasing share of public money is being concentrated among a small number of suppliers. In 2024, the ten largest companies received about 49 percent of the total value of healthcare contracts. According to the authors of the analysis, this level of concentration is an indicator of limited competition and increased corruption risk.

"LIGHT" OCCURRENCES 2025

"LIGHT" OCCURRENCES FOR JANUARY 2025

Police officers took bribes and shared the money: 16 people indicted in the "Premin" case - After a completed investigative procedure in the case codenamed "Premin", the competent public prosecutor submitted an indictment against 14 individuals and a prosecution motion against two more to the Basic Criminal Court in Skopje. According to the charges, 13 customs officers, including one who is retired, and a police officer are accused of co-perpetrating the continuous criminal offense of accepting bribes, as defined and punishable under Article 357 of the Criminal Code. Additionally, nine of the accused also committed the continuous criminal offense of abuse of official position and authority under Article 353 of the Criminal Code.

Former Director of the Gazi Baba Utility Company hired fake seasonal workers – indictment filed - The Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Skopje has filed an indictment against the former acting director of the public utility company "Gazi Baba 2007" for embezzling funds through fraudulent seasonal worker contracts. According to the Prosecutor's Office, the contracts: Had the same reference number Contained only the signature of the accused Listed seasonal workers who were actually abroad during the period they were supposedly employed and paid

Asked for €150 as a "Treat" – Surgeon arrested for taking a bribe for surgery in Bitola's Clinical Hospital - A 64-year-old surgeon from Bitola, M.S., was arrested after accepting a bribe following a gallbladder surgery performed on a patient at Bitola's Clinical Hospital. He indirectly requested a €150 bribe from the patient's son, stating it was "to treat himself" for the work done. The son handed the doctor an envelope with three marked €50 banknotes inside the hospital. At around 5 PM, police officers conducted a search, found the money, and arrested M.S..

Police officer took a €50 bribe for faster passport issuance: "You know we don't work for free," He told the victim - According to the Prosecutor's Office, a police officer from the Foreigners and Readmission Unit was caught taking a €50 bribe from a woman who needed a new passport after losing her previous one. On January 16, the officer called the victim into his office, where he: Skipped checking for a previously lost passport report Ignored standard procedures and handed her a payment slip After paying the fee, she returned to submit the receipt. When she asked about the processing time, the officer told her it could take 6-12 months. When she objected, he rubbed his fingers together in a bribe gesture and said: "You know we don't work for free." She then gave him €50, and authorities later caught him in the act.

"LIGHT" OCCURRENCES FOR FEBRUARY 2025

Constitutional Judges unanimously accepted the initiative of prosecutor Lenče Ristoska against the Rules of procedure of the Public Prosecutors Council made for self-promotion - The Constitutional Court unanimously accepted the initiative of prosecutor Lenče Ristoska to initiate a procedure to examine the constitutionality of the Rules of Procedure of the Public Prosecutors Council, which stipulates that, even if they do not work on cases, their service is considered positively evaluated for the duration of their 4-year term in the Council. With this high positive evaluation, a member of the Council of Public Prosecutors, once they leave the Council, can apply for promotion. "This benefit is received by the members themselves, who, after completing their term in the Public Prosecutors Council, are promoted to higher positions within public prosecutor offices," the initiative states. Ristoska was even evaluated while on maternity leave with twins, and she was criticized for not having worked on any cases during that period. She filed a case against the Council with the Commission for Prevention and Protection from Discrimination. Just because she openly and publicly criticized the Public Prosecutors Council, the Prosecutors' Code was changed, prohibiting them from speaking without the approval of their superior. Under pressure from both domestic and international public opinion, this censorship was later revoked.

Director and six employees at the Tetovo Social Center to face charges for misuse - The Tetovo Police Department has filed a criminal report against seven employees of the Social Work Center in Tetovo, due

to grounds for suspicion of misuse of office, negligent work, and document forgery, which enabled the illegal payment of 289,495 MKD, the police announced. Public Prosecutor's Office: Raids Conducted at 16 Locations, Investigating Allegations of Illegal Contracts Involving Public Procurement - Following an order from a public prosecutor at the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Skopje, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has initiated a preliminary investigation into misuse related to public procurement for servicing official vehicles. The investigation involves some employees from the General and Common Affairs Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who are suspected of misuse of office and contracts with economic operators. "So far, raids have been conducted at 16 locations, by order of an investigating judge and in accordance with the public prosecutor's request. The procedure is in its early stages, so we cannot share more details at this time. However, the aim of the investigation is to examine the allegations of misuse and illegal contracts involving public procurement," said the Public Prosecutor's Office.

Prosecutor's Office: Raids conducted at 16 locations, investigating allegations of illegal contracts involving public procurement - Following an order from a public prosecutor from the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Skopje, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has initiated a preliminary investigation into abuses related to public procurement for servicing official vehicles. The investigation involves some employees from the General and Common Affairs Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who are suspected of misusing their official duties and engaging in contracts with economic operators. "Up to this moment, raids have been conducted at 16 locations, following an order from an investigating judge and in accordance with the request of the public prosecutor. The procedure is still in its early stages, and therefore, we cannot provide further details at this time. However, the goal of the investigation is to examine the allegations of abuse and illegal contracts involving public procurement," stated the Prosecutor's Office.

Criminal report against the former Acting Director of the Hospital in Ohrid - The police have filed a criminal report against the former acting director of the General Hospital in Ohrid for misuse of office and authority. According to the Ohrid Police Department, the former acting director, by neglecting proper oversight and without legal grounds, assigned a leadership and responsibility coefficient to four employees at the Health Center, who did not have decisions for managerial positions, thereby allowing them to receive a higher salary at the expense of the hospital, amounting to a total of 257,920 MKD.

"LIGHT" OCCURRENCES FOR MARCH 2025

Civil organizations demand a transparent investigation into the Kočani fire – Civil organizations fighting corruption are calling for a transparent investigation into the [fire in Kočani](#) and a reform of the criminal policy. They are urging accountability from institutions and companies, on-site inspections during extraordinary oversight, as well as monitoring the asset status of inspectors. According to the Civil Society Platform for Combating Corruption, a review of the procedures for obtaining permits and licenses, vertical accountability, and urgent implementation of the guidelines from the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption and the State Audit Office is also necessary. "[Corruption in North Macedonia](#) is a threat to the life and safety of citizens, not just the misuse of public funds. Tragedies such as the fire in Kočani, Laskarc, 'Besa Trans,' and the modular hospital in Tetovo are direct consequences of systemic failures, political protection, incompetent hiring, and institutional neglect. Despite continuous promises of reforms, no substantial changes have been made in control, inspection mechanisms, and legal accountability," stated the platform during a press conference in Skopje.

Employees of "National Forests" and the owner of a company receive criminal charges, suspected of abuses – The Police Department of Ohrid filed a criminal report against M.V. (43), a manager of a legal entity from the village of Gorno Dobrenec, Kičevo, due to grounds for suspicion of committing the criminal offense of "forgery of an official document," against S.S. (41), an associate for records of receivables and obligations at the Public Enterprise "National Forests," V.R. (58), a financial officer at "National Forests," and Z.K. (65), a former director at the Public Enterprise "National Forests" – Regional Forestry Unit Lopushnik in Kičevo, due to grounds for suspicion of committing the criminal offense of "negligent performance of official duties." In 2022, 2023, and 2024, after a previously signed Agreement for the transportation of wood assortments between the Public Enterprise "National Forests" and the legal entity, the first accused submitted an invoice to the Public Enterprise "National Forests" – Regional Forestry Unit Lopushnik in Kičevo, in which she entered three shipping documents for transportation with

false content for a service not carried out by them, regarding the transport of oak firewood. Meanwhile, the other accused, by failing to conduct proper oversight, failed to identify the irregularities, accepted the invoice with false content, processed it, and paid it, thus causing damage to the Public Enterprise "National Forests," according to the police statement.

Criminal charges for the director of a primary school in Delčevo, accused of abusing position and authority – The External Office for Criminal Matters in Delčevo filed a criminal report against G.V. (48) from Delčevo due to grounds for suspicion of committing the criminal offense "abuse of official position and authority" under Article 353, Paragraphs 3 and 1, in relation to Article 45 of the Criminal Code. The accused G.V., as the director of a municipal primary school in Delčevo, used his official position and authority to act contrary to Article 77 and Article 49 of the Public Procurement Law during the period from September 1, 2021, to October 19, 2021.

Criminal report against a police officer for accepting a bribe – The Department for Internal Control, Criminal Investigations, and Professional Standards at the Ministry of Internal Affairs filed a criminal report to the competent Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for the Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption – Specialized Division for the Prosecution of Criminal Acts Committed by Persons with Police Powers and Prison Police Officers against the police officer S.F. due to grounds for suspicion of committing the criminal offense of "accepting a bribe." As informed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, on December 15, 2024, at the Dolno Blace Border Crossing, the accused S.F., a police officer at the Dolno Blace Border Police Station, requested and received money to carry out an official act that he was not authorized to perform.

"LIGHT" OCCURRENCES FOR APRIL 2025

Prosecutor's Office launches preliminary investigation into €7.3 million gap at the Agency for Seized Property identified by the State Audit Office - A gap of €7.3 million has been discovered in the state budget—funds that the Agency for Seized Property failed to deposit. The money comes from the sale of assets confiscated through final court rulings, as they were obtained through criminal activity. The seized assets are managed by the Agency, which is legally obligated not to misuse the funds generated from their disposal. The State Audit Office report revealed numerous irregularities in the operations of the Agency. The Prosecutor's Office will now investigate all of these findings.

Criminal charges for serious offenses against Public Safety for 10 police officers - Ten police officers from Kochani and Shtip have been charged with criminal offenses for failing to follow safety measures and regulations, and for not conducting a full inspection before issuing an operating license for the "Pulse" cabaret in Kochani. A tragic fire at the venue last month claimed the lives of 61 people. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the officers informed the Ministry of Economy that the establishment had a fire protection plan and that there were no obstacles to public order, peace, and traffic. The officers allowed the legal entity DPTTU "Klasik DM" LLC Kochani to obtain an operating license for the "Pulse" cabaret by not adhering to the required safety measures and failing to conduct a complete inspection before granting approval for the license. Their actions created a danger to the lives and safety of individuals at a location that gathers a large number of people.

Manager of Skopje-based company concealed taxes exceeding 12 million denars - The Financial Police Directorate has submitted a criminal report to the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Skopje, based on suspicion of tax evasion under Article 279, paragraph 2 of the Criminal Code. The individual, in his capacity as manager and owner of a legal entity, consciously and with premeditated intent to unlawfully gain financial benefit for himself and the company, unlawfully appropriated and failed to record purchased goods in the accounting records. To conceal the incriminating activities, the report adds, the defendant did not prepare or submit the final accounts for 2021, 2022, and 2023 to the Public Revenue Office and the Central Register of the Republic of North Macedonia. As a result, he did not calculate, declare, or pay taxes on various grounds, amounting to 12,079,019 denars, thereby damaging the state budget of the Republic of North Macedonia. **Criminal charges filed against two Struga residents for tax evasion of over 5.6 million denars** - The Financial Police Directorate has filed a criminal report to the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Struga against two individuals and a legal entity, based on suspicion of tax evasion.

The first suspect recorded incoming invoices in the accounting records and created a VAT claim, which he used to offset or reduce VAT obligations, thereby causing damage to the state budget of the Republic of North Macedonia through VAT at a calculation rate of 15.2542%, amounting to 5,632,920 denars, according to the Financial Police.

Retired Ministry of Interior Officers [charged](#) with concealing court verdicts and causing damage exceeding 3.3 million denars - The Department for Internal Control, Criminal Investigations, and Professional Standards at the Ministry of Interior has filed a criminal report with the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Skopje, charging individuals with the criminal offense of "abuse of official position and authority" under Article 353, paragraph 4, in relation to paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code. The first defendant, as an official, failed to carry out her duties during 2021 and 2022 by not enforcing final court rulings which ordered the termination of employment contracts for two employees. She allowed them to continue working at the Ministry of Interior. The second defendant, in her capacity as an authorized official, when the relevant verdicts arrived at the department she led, did not read them carefully and forwarded them to be registered in the records of the Sector for Legal Affairs and Protection of Personal Data. She failed to appropriately respond and send the verdicts back to the first defendant so they could be forwarded to the relevant Sector for Human Resources Management and Training for further action.

"LIGHT" OCCURRENCES FOR MAY 2025

Judge Enver Bedzeti [dismissed](#) – Placed on U.S. Blacklist alongside Artan Grubi over bribery suspicions in case involving Sasho Mijalkov - The Judicial Council has dismissed Appellate Judge Enver Bedzeti. The decision was made during the closed session of the Council. Bedzeti had previously been fined by the Judicial Council for holding the *Target-Fortress* case for nine months without action. After the judge was placed on the U.S. blacklist last year, the Judicial Council reopened proceedings against him. Although he has the right to appeal the decision, Bedzeti is suspended until the ruling becomes final. Bedzeti was blacklisted by the United States along with former Deputy Prime Minister Artan Grubi, who is currently on the run. Both were named in connection with bribery related to Bedzeti's decision-making in the case involving Sasho Mijalkov, tied to the massive illegal wiretapping scandal. The case became statute-barred after being delayed too long in Bedzeti's hands.

Supreme Court accepted secret recording as evidence in conviction of Oncological Clinic pharmacist for [bribery](#) involving deceased patient Minka Veizovska - Patient Minka Veizovska, who had lung cancer and was treated at the Oncology Clinic, reported that a pharmacist from the hospital pharmacy demanded money from her in exchange for providing the biological therapy "Keytruda," which she was entitled to free of charge with a specialist's report. Veizovska passed away during the court proceedings, but the Public Prosecutor's Office continued the case *ex officio* against the pharmaceutical technician, which ended with a final guilty verdict sentencing him to two years in prison for accepting a bribe. Among the evidence used to convict him was a secret recording made by Veizovska herself, covertly recorded on her mobile phone, in which voices can be heard and it is clear that someone is asking for money in exchange for the therapy.

Constitutional Court strikes down [Electoral Code](#) provisions raising signature thresholds for independent candidates - The Constitutional Court annulled the articles of the Electoral Code that increased the required number of citizen signatures independent candidates and lists must collect to participate in elections. These amendments to the Electoral Code, including the contested provisions, were adopted in March last year ahead of the presidential and parliamentary elections and were also set to apply to this year's local elections. The reporting judge in this case expressed concerns from a constitutional perspective, stating that these amendments violated fundamental constitutional values such as legal certainty and predictability, the principle of the rule of law, and raised suspicions of undermining political pluralism.

[Criminal charges](#) filed against Director and Department Head at M-NAV for damaging company budget by nearly 1.5 million denars - The Financial Police Directorate submitted criminal charges to the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Skopje against a suspect who served as the former Executive Director of the Aviation Technical Sector at the joint-stock company in state ownership providing air navigation

services, M-NAV AD Skopje. The charges are based on suspicion of committing the criminal offense of Abuse of Official Position and Authority under Article 353, paragraph 2 of the Criminal Code. Additionally, charges were filed against another suspect, who served as the Acting Head of the Public Procurement Department at the same company, on suspicion of the criminal offense of Negligence in Office under Article 353-v, paragraph 2 of the Criminal Code. Both suspects are accused of actions that caused damage to the company's budget totaling nearly 1.5 million Macedonian denars.

"LIGHT" OCCURRENCES FOR JUNE 2025

In nine months, Financial Police filed 36 criminal charges and uncovered €30 million in fraud - Over the past period, major cases involving multimillion-euro damages to the state budget have been uncovered, stated Slobodan Ivanovski, Director of the Financial Police, on the occasion of the institution's 22nd anniversary. The Director announced that financial investigations will be intensified in the coming period, aiming to identify, locate, and freeze assets derived from criminal activity.

Arsovska files criminal charges over 20 illegal constructions in Chair - Skopje Mayor Danel Arsovska has filed a criminal complaint regarding 20 cases of unlawful legalization of illegal constructions in the Municipality of Chair. The complaint was submitted to the Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime and Corruption, with Arsovska asserting that Chair Mayor Visar Ganiu and his team must have been aware of the illegal constructions. During a press conference in front of the Prosecutor's Office—following initial disagreements with building security—Arsovska presented two satellite images of Chair. In the 2017 image, the specific illegal buildings are not visible, while in the image taken six years later, construction activity can be clearly seen. According to the law, only illegal structures built before mid-2011 are eligible for legalization.

Investigation launched into six-story illegal construction in Chair - Acting on a criminal complaint submitted by a group of residents, a state prosecutor from the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office Skopje conducted investigations and issued a decision to initiate investigative proceedings against one individual for the criminal offense of illegal construction, under Article 244-a of the Criminal Code. According to the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, the building began construction in 2024 without the required permits and on state-owned land on "Kemal Sejfulla" Street in Chair. The accused, acting as the manager of a legal entity, is listed as the investor of the project—a residential building with commercial units, planned to be six stories tall (Ground Floor + 6 Floors + Attic) and intended for sale.

State Anti-Corruption Commission to file criminal charges against public utility company over illegal procurement - The State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) has decided to file an initiative for criminal prosecution with the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office against a public utility company, on suspicion of illegal procurement practices related to handling city landfill fires. As stated by the case reporter Biljana Karakashova Suulev at today's 19th session, the complaint notes that the price for the same or similar procurement item in 2021 was higher than in 2022. Given that the specifications were identical, the price discrepancy between the two years raises suspicions of corrupt behavior in the 2021 procurement process.

Commission for Protection of Competition: Higher Administrative Court confirms ruling on prohibited agreement between major wholesalers - The Higher Administrative Court has upheld a ruling by the Commission for Protection of Competition (CPC), confirming that two major pharmaceutical wholesalers — AD "Dr. Panovski" and "Pharma Trade" DOOEL Skopje — entered into a prohibited agreement (cartel) during participation in a public procurement procedure for insulin, glucagon, insulin needles, blood sugar test strips, and insulin pumps with consumables. The Competition Commission emphasized that in detecting and documenting this cartel, it considered not only domestic legislation but also European Union case law.

Three years and four months in prison for Mavrovo Manager caught taking bribe - Following an indictment by the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecuting Organized Crime and Corruption against S.E., the now-convicted manager fully admitted to the criminal offenses of Accepting a Bribe and Receiving a Reward for Unlawful Influence, as stated in the indictment. The Basic Criminal Court in Skopje issued a conviction based on the guilty plea, sentencing the defendant to three years and four

months in prison. Upon the public prosecutor's request, the court also ordered the confiscation of all monetary assets found during the search — totaling approximately €11,600 — applying the extended confiscation mechanism under Article 98-a of the Criminal Code.

"LIGHT" OCCURRENCES FOR JULY 2025

Well-Known ophthalmologist from Bitola arrested for [accepting a bribe](#) – second such case this year - A well-known ophthalmologist from Bitola was arrested at her workplace at the Clinical Hospital in Bitola after receiving money from a patient in exchange for a medical service. "Police officers from the Criminal Police Unit of the Bitola Interior Department, in coordination with the Public Prosecutor's Office in Bitola, detained the doctor employed at the Bitola Clinical Hospital on suspicion of committing the criminal offense of accepting a bribe. The Ministry of Health condemned corruption in the healthcare system through an official statement and announced that a procedure to determine disciplinary responsibility against the doctor has been initiated immediately. The Ministry encouraged citizens to continue reporting irregularities through the online tool "Report Irregularity."

Indictment against the director of the geriatric institution – accused of demanding a [€20,000 bribe](#) - A prosecutor from the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecuting Organized Crime and Corruption has filed an indictment against the director of the Public Health Institution "13th November" – Skopje and another individual, on suspicion of accepting a bribe and receiving a reward for unlawful influence. The director, as the primary defendant, is accused of demanding €20,000 from a witness in order to admit a person in critical medical condition to the institution. Although such admission falls under his official duties, the director allegedly made it conditional on receiving personal financial gain. According to the indictment, the second defendant received the amount on the director's behalf to influence him and persuade him to admit the patient.

Indictment for abuse of official position and authority - The Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecuting Organized Crime and Corruption has filed an indictment proposal against an individual accused of committing the criminal offense of Abuse of Official Position and Authority under Article 353, paragraph 5 in relation to paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code. According to the indictment, during the period from 2021 until March 15, 2022, the accused, acting as the Acting Chairperson of the Council for Advancement and Supervision of Auditing of the Republic of North Macedonia, by failing to perform and exceeding official powers, acted contrary to several legal provisions. In doing so, the accused unlawfully gained financial benefit for themselves and others, causing significant damage to the institution's budget.

Citizens will be able [to report irregularities](#) in healthcare on the Ministry's website - From now on, citizens will be able to report irregularities in healthcare through the Ministry of Health's [website](#). Reporting will be anonymous, but citizens can leave personal contact details such as a phone number and email address so that authorities can reach out if there are any questions. According to the new measure, data on the number of reports received by public healthcare institutions will be publicly published at the end of each month, showing how many irregularities have been reported by citizens for each institution.

"LIGHT" OCCURRENCES FOR AUGUST 2025

Criminal Charges Against Two Former Directors of Macedonian Post for Misuse of Over €32,000 - The Skopje Police Department (SVR Skopje) has filed criminal charges against two former General Directors of the Joint Stock Company "Post of North Macedonia", on reasonable suspicion of having committed the criminal offense of "negligent performance of duty", in accordance with Article 353, paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code. According to findings from the investigation, the accused failed to exercise proper oversight over the work of their subordinate managers during 2023, thereby enabling procurements in violation of the Law on Public

Procurement. Instead of adhering to the legally allowed procurement limit of €24,000, purchases were carried out totaling €56,546, thus exceeding the legal threshold by €32,546.

Charges Filed Against Eight People, Six Are Police Officers – Took Bribes to Enable Illegal Stay of Foreign Nationals - The State Public Prosecutor's Office, through the Specialized Department for Prosecution of Criminal Offenses Committed by Persons with Police Powers and Members of the Prison Police, has filed an indictment against eight individuals, six of whom are police officers. The indictment refers to serious abuses of official position, illegal mediation, and receiving bribes in order to facilitate unlawful stay and obtain temporary residence permits for foreign nationals.

Senior Police Officer Indicted for Bribing a Colleague at Dolno Blace Border Crossing - The Department for Internal Control, Criminal Investigations and Professional Standards within the Ministry of Interior (MoI) has filed a criminal complaint to the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecution of Organized Crime and Corruption in Skopje against a senior police officer from the Intervention Police Unit of the Skopje Police Department (SVR Skopje). He is suspected of committing the criminal offense of "giving a bribe", in accordance with Article 358, paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code. According to the investigation, during February and March of this year, the accused offered and gave a bribe to another police officer stationed at the Dolno Blace border crossing, in order for him not to perform his official duty. As a result, the entry record of a Macedonian citizen was falsely recorded as the entry of a Turkish citizen.

"LIGHT" OCCURRENCES FOR SEPTEMBER 2025

"Gray Zone": a game for youth to raise awareness about corruption and unethical behavior - Seven young students from North Macedonia are the creators of the educational digital game "Gray Zone", designed for high school students with the goal of raising awareness about corruption and the consequences of unethical decisions. The team also highlights the objectives they aim to achieve: "Young people face real-life corruption scenarios. The game encourages critical thinking, moral judgment, and active reflection on the decisions made by each player throughout the game, each player's integrity, reputation, time, and money are measured. Values such as integrity, honesty, and resistance to corruption are promoted. A long-term resource is being created that will be used in both formal and informal educational settings," the statement adds.

Criminal charges filed against six employees of public enterprise "National Forests": irresponsible conduct caused over €170,000 in damages - Six employees of the Public Enterprise "National Forests" have been charged with criminal offenses for negligent conduct in public service and abuse of official position and authority, having caused damage to the company's budget exceeding €170,000. The employees acted negligently in carrying out their duties and responsibilities, specifically by failing to perform on-site inspections.

Criminal charges against three police officers for causing damages of up to two million denars - The Department for Internal Control, Criminal Investigations, and Professional Standards within the Ministry of Interior has filed criminal charges with the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Skopje against three police officers from the Misdemeanor Unit at the Skopje Police Department. "The accused acted negligently in performing their official duties," the MoI stated. According to the indictment, between January 1, 2022, and December 31, 2023, the officers received records of traffic violations and misdemeanor payment orders but failed to process them within the legally prescribed two-year deadline, as outlined in the Law on Misdemeanors.

SOZR publishes phone number and email address for reporting misuse of official vehicles - The Director of the Service for General and Common Affairs (SOZR) announced that a dedicated phone number is now available for citizens to report cases of unlawful, partisan, or private use of official vehicles. "I encourage citizens to report any suspicions of misuse. We will forward the reports to the competent institution for investigation, verification of potential misuse, and the implementation of appropriate sanctions," said Tomovski, who also called on all institutions to rationalize their vehicle fleets. The number

for reporting is **070 399 050**, and reports can also be submitted via email at prijavizloupotreba@sozr.gov.mk.

“LIGHT” OCCURRENCES FOR OCTOBER 2025

Investigation into abuse and mistreatment in private elderly care facilities - A public prosecutor from the Basic Public Prosecutor’s Office in Skopje issued an order to initiate an investigation against two individuals suspected of the criminal offense of continued abuse of official position and authority. The actions coordinated by the prosecutor secured evidence confirming a well-founded suspicion that the two suspects, in their capacities as owners and authorized representatives of two private social care institutions for the elderly in Skopje, acted in violation of the Law on Social Protection. With the intent of obtaining financial gain for themselves, they severely infringed upon the rights of the residents under their care.

New investigation into abuses at Mining and Energy Combine(MEC) Bitola - The Basic Public Prosecutor’s Office in Bitola has issued an order to initiate an investigation against eight individuals and one legal entity for continued criminal offenses related to public procurement at MEC Bitola. Preliminary investigative actions secured evidence indicating a well-founded suspicion that five of the suspects—officials at MEC Bitola, including the then director of the plant and four managers and directors at the Mining Unit in MEC Bitola—committed, as co-perpetrators during 2023, the continued criminal offense of abuse of official position and authority.

Detention for six and precautionary measures for fifteen in the Prilep Hospital case - The Basic Public Prosecutor’s Office in Prilep submitted proposals to the Prilep Court in the case of the General Hospital in Prilep, seeking detention for six individuals, precautionary measures for about fifteen others, and restrictions on participation in public procurement procedures for six to seven legal entities from Prilep, Bitola, and Skopje. The investigation concerns allegations of financial malpractices, fictitious procurements, and misuse of public funds.

Criminal report against former manager at Public Enterprise “National Forests” – Bitola The Bitola Police Department filed a criminal complaint on suspicion of the offense of “negligent performance of official duties.” According to the complaint, the suspect, in his capacity as a former manager at PE “National Forests” – branch “Kajmakchalan” Bitola, failed to act according to his official responsibilities during 2023. Instead of overseeing the execution of a contract between PE “National Forests” – Skopje and a sawmill in the village of Dihovo, and ensuring that no delivery of technical wood occurred before advance payment, he allowed the delivery of timber without prior payment. As a result of this action, it is suspected that the private legal entity gained material benefit, while the public enterprise suffered damages amounting to 321,765 denars.

“LIGHT” OCCURRENCES FOR NOVEMBER 2025

Around ten tax administration employees detained for bribery and abuse of office linked to the Kochani tragedy – Around ten employees of the Public Revenue Office have been detained in a procedure led by the Kochani Public Prosecutor’s Office for abuse of official position and authority, as well as for accepting bribes. Proceedings have been initiated against a total of 11 individuals suspected of corrupt activities related to the operation of “Puls.” Among the suspects are tax controllers from the Tax Control Service at the Regional Tax Inspectorate in the Shtip directorate, tax inspectors and managers from the regional offices of the Public Revenue Office in Shtip and Strumica, as well as an inspector from the State Market Inspectorate.

Criminal charges filed against former officials in Saraj and Skopje – The Financial Police Administration has filed criminal charges against eight former officials and employees from the Municipality of Saraj and the City of Skopje, as well as against a supervising engineer, on suspicion of abuse of office, negligent work, and falsification or destruction of business records. According to the Administration, the accused individuals prepared and approved documents with false information

including calculations for construction land development fees despite being aware that no detailed urban plan existed for the cadastral parcel in Saraj.

Director of the Payment Agency and three others suspected of [bribery](#) placed in detention – The Director of the Agency for Financial Support in Agriculture and Rural Development, along with three other suspects in the bribery case, has been placed in 30-day detention after the court accepted the Prosecutor's request. The director and the other suspects are accused of negotiating a bribe of €50,000 for funds from the IPARD program from a former MP and minister, who allegedly promised the money but gave the arrested director €400, with which he was caught. The 77-year-old former MP and minister for local self-government and justice is also being placed in effective custody according to the court decision.

Police Operation: [Abuse](#) of State Grain Reserves – The Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Skopje has initiated proceedings against five individuals for abuse of official position and authority under Article 353, paragraph 5 in connection with paragraphs 4 and 1 of the Criminal Code. The operation includes managers from the Agency for Commodity Reserves, an expert from the Evaluation Bureau, and a former deputy minister of agriculture. They are suspected of committing abuses involving the state grain reserves. The damage is estimated at €780,000. The suspects allegedly abused their positions by failing to fulfill their official duties. Although obliged to inform the Government about the actual situation in the Public Enterprise for Stock Exchange Operations "Agro Berza" – Skopje, they submitted inaccurate data and information regarding an unjustified shortage of mercantile wheat and barley during 2019–2021. With these actions, they acted contrary to the Law on Commodity Reserves.

"LIGHT" OCCURRENCES FOR DECEMBER 2025

The Administrative Court establishes a [digital](#) connection with all institutions for a more efficient judiciary - The Administrative Court of the Republic of North Macedonia marked a significant milestone in the digital transformation of the judiciary with the launch of a new, innovative software system. This technological solution is designed to establish a digital connection with all public institutions, as well as with the Higher Administrative Court, directly contributing to a more efficient and faster functioning of the judicial system. The innovation represents an important step toward the modernization of administrative justice, ensuring more transparent and faster exchange of documents and data between institutions, which will directly improve services for both citizens and legal entities.

The Skopje Public Prosecutor's Office filed [indictment](#) against the former director of 'Communal Hygiene' and the Waste Management Manager for endangering the environment - The public prosecutor proposed that the detention of both defendants be replaced with precautionary measures, as the evidence-gathering phase has been completed and they have no possibility of influencing the proceedings. For the Waste Management Manager, who is still employed by the company, an additional measure was proposed, namely temporary removal from the workplace. The Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Skopje filed an indictment against the former director of the Public Enterprise 'Communal Hygiene' and the manager of the Waste Management Sector at the Skopje municipal enterprise, alleging that, as co-perpetrators, they committed the criminal offense of endangering the environment and nature through waste.

Albanian resident arrested after leaving money at the Qafasan border office [bribery](#) at the border - On December 27, 2025, around 14:30, at the Qafasan border crossing, police officers arrested V.K. (41) from the Republic of Albania. During border and passport checks, he offered a bribe to a police officer by leaving money through the window of the border office booth. He was taken to the police station, and after the case is fully documented, an appropriate report will be filed against him. **A 53-year-old man arrested at Qafasan for giving a [bribe](#)** – On December 21, 2025, around 09:10, at the Qafasan border crossing, police officers arrested E.K. (53) from the Republic of Albania. During passport and border control, he gave a bribe to a police officer by leaving money on the desk, after which he was taken into custody.