



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

Serbia

Serbia – SRB37812 –
Vojvodina – Zabalj – Serbian Radical
Party – League of Vojvodina Social
Democrats (LSV) – Democratic Party –
Police – State protection
29 November 2010

- 1. Please provide information on the current extent of Serbian Radical Party (SRS) or other extremist presence and impact in Zabalj. Please also include evidence of current elected representatives and to which party they belong.**

Reports of violent attacks, property damage or intimidation did not list the political affiliation (if any) of the perpetrators; and in many cases, the perpetrators were never found. *Country Advice 37720* discusses the treatment of Serbians opposed to the Serbian Radical Party in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, or the municipality of Zabalj. No further information on the presence of extremist nationalists in addition to that provided in *Country Advice 37720* was located.

After the fall of Milosevic in 2000, the Serbian Radical Party (SRS or the Radical Party) briefly disappeared from the political landscape, only to reappear at the 2003 Parliamentary elections.¹ The three most recent national polls were: 2004 Presidential; 2007 Parliamentary; and 2008 Presidential. The ruling coalition government is comprised of the so-called 'democratic block' which includes the Democratic Party (DS); G17 Plus (G17+); the League of Vojvodina Social Democrats (LSV); the Social Democratic Party of Serbia (SDP); and the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO).²

The most recent national elections held in Serbia were the Parliamentary elections in May 2008, and the Presidential elections in January (first round) and February (second round) 2008.³

The municipality of Zabalj is located in the district of South Bačka in the northern Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.⁴ The Province has been the site of significant post

¹ Spasić, I. 2008, 'Serbia 2000 – 2008: a changing political culture?', *Balkanologie* website, <http://balkanologie.revues.org/index1282.html> - Accessed 30 November 2010, Attachment 1

² Spasić, I. 2008, 'Serbia 2000 – 2008: a changing political culture?', *Balkanologie* website, <http://balkanologie.revues.org/index1282.html> - Accessed 30 November 2010, Attachment 1

³ IFES Election Guide 2010, 'Country Profile: Serbia', *Election Guide* website, 12 August, <http://www.electionguide.org/country.php?ID=242#> - Accessed 5 December 2010, Attachment 2

⁴ 'The Autonomous Province of Vojvodina' undated, *Vojvodina Portal* website, <http://vojvodinaportal.com/eng/book/export/html/3> - Accessed 5 December 2010, Attachment 3

conflict migration of Serbs from Kosovo.⁵ A result of this influx of displaced Serbs has been an increase in ethnic tension in the province, which climaxed in 2004 after a series of attacks on ethnic minorities by Vojvodina Serbs in response to an Albanian riot in Kosovo which injured Kosovar-Serbs⁶ and continued into 2005⁷. In a result which reflected the changing demographic of Vojvodina, in the 2004 municipal elections, the only major city to be won by the SRS was the capital of Vojvodina, Novi Sad.⁸ In recent years, racially motivated incidents in Vojvodina have experienced a decline, although attacks continue to be reported sporadically.⁹

2. Please provide any information about current police protection from criminal / extremist violence in Zabalj.

Serbian criminal law does not explicitly proscribe racially motivated attacks, which makes it very difficult for Serbian authorities and outside observers to ascertain the true extent of the problem.¹⁰ No information was located which dealt specifically with Zabalj.

Some general information was located which suggested that, where victims reported incidents to the police in Vojvodina, the police occasionally respond with investigations, and occasionally arrests; however, the conversion of arrests to convictions was not able to be located.

Reports by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International in 2006 and 2007 refer to attacks against Hungarians. They also note an increase in other parts of Serbia of anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim graffiti, as well as continued physical assaults and discrimination against Roma.¹¹ Similarly, the United State Department reports on human rights practices in Serbia in 2005 and 2006 stated that there continued to be incidents of vandalism and some physical attacks against minorities, “mainly

⁵ RRT Country Advice 2010, *Country Advice SRB 37720*, 15 November Attachment 4

⁶ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2005, *Serbia and Montenegro: Treatment of ethnic Albanians in Serbia and Montenegro, excluding the United Nations administered province of Kosovo (January 2005 - December 2005)* 30 December SCG100786.E, at <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/45f1480411.html> - Accessed 12 November 2010, Attachment 5

⁷ Human Rights Watch 2005, *Dangerous Indifference: Violence against Minorities in Serbia*, October, Human Rights Watch website, <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/11582/section/2> - Accessed 11 August 2010, Attachment 6

⁸ Cvijic, S. 2008, “Blocked political system”: Serbia 2000 – 2008”, *Balkanologie* Vol. XI, No. 1 -2, December, <http://balkanologie.revues.org/index1293.html#> - Accessed 5 December 2010, Attachment 7

⁹ Briza, J. 2004, ‘Serbia: Fear ripples through Vojvodina minorities’, *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 22 January, <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/AllDocsByUNID/115a7d49cd4da7bac1256e280059ce24> - Accessed 16 November 2010, Attachment 8; see also Human Right Watch 2009, ‘Serbia: Events in 2009’, *Human Rights Watch* website, <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/87763#> - Accessed 5 December 2010, Attachment 9. (The report does not list attacks in Vojvodina during 2009, suggesting there were not significant incidents during the year.)

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch 2005, *Dangerous Indifference: Violence against Minorities in Serbia*, October, Human Rights Watch website, <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/11582/section/2> - Accessed 11 August 2010, Attachment 6

¹¹ Human Rights Watch 2007, *World Report 2007 – Serbia* – Attachment 10 ; Human Rights Watch 2006, *World Report 2006 – Serbia*, p.388 – Attachment 11 ; Amnesty International 2007, *Amnesty International Report 2007 – Serbia* – Attachment 12 ; Amnesty International 2006, *Amnesty International Report 2006 – Serbia* – Attachment 13 .

Hungarians in Vojvodina”, but noted that the number of incidents had decreased compared with 2004.¹²

The underrepresentation of ethnic minorities within the Serbian police force and the recent history of the Serbian police as enforcer for an ultra-nationalist state are also contributing factors.¹³ As Human Rights Watch noted in 2004, Hungarians made up only 1.3 percent of police employees in Vojvodina.¹⁴ In its 2005 report, Human Rights Watch provided the following explanation:

The police force was a key institution in the ultra nationalistic government of the former Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic during 1990s. Non-Serbs were virtually excluded from its ranks. Nearly five years after the removal of Milosevic from power in October 2000, Serbia still has a long way to go before ultra-nationalism is eradicated from police service and from the Serbian society as a whole.¹⁵

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance similarly stated that a “degree of nationalism and a lack of sensitivity to incidents of this kind have been observed within the police”.¹⁶

3. Please find out whether there is a group in Zabalj called the League of Social Democrats in Vojvodina, and if it or the Democratic Party have a large presence there, and who the leader is.

The League of Vojvodina Social Democrats (Serbian: Лига социјалдемократа Војводине, *Liga socijaldemokrata Vojvodine*) (LSV) is a regionalist social democratic political party in Serbia¹⁷ established in 1990. The leader of the party is Nenad Čanak.¹⁸

¹² US Department of State 2006, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2005 – Serbia*, 8 March, Section 5 – Attachment 19; US Department of State 2007, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2006 – Serbia*, 6 March, Section 5 – Attachment 20. See also Country Advice SRB37135.

¹³ US Department of State 2010, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2009 – Serbia*, 11 March, Section 5 <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eur/136056.htm> – Accessed 12 August 2010, Attachment 21; European Commission against Racism and Intolerance 2008, *Report on Serbia*, 29 April, p.30 http://hudoc.ecri.coe.int/XMLEcri/ENGLISH/Cycle_03/03_CbC_eng/SCG-CbC-III-2008-25-ENG.pdf – Accessed 11 August 2010, Attachment 22

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch 2005, *Dangerous Indifference: Violence against Minorities in Serbia*, October, Human Rights Watch website, p. 7 <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/11582/section/2> – Accessed 11 August 2010, Attachment 6

¹⁵ Human Rights Watch 2005, *Dangerous Indifference: Violence against Minorities in Serbia*, October, Human Rights Watch website, p.44 <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/11582/section/2> – Accessed 11 August 2010, Attachment 6

¹⁶ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance 2008, *Report on Serbia*, 29 April, p.30 http://hudoc.ecri.coe.int/XMLEcri/ENGLISH/Cycle_03/03_CbC_eng/SCG-CbC-III-2008-25-ENG.pdf – Accessed 11 August 2010 – Attachment 22

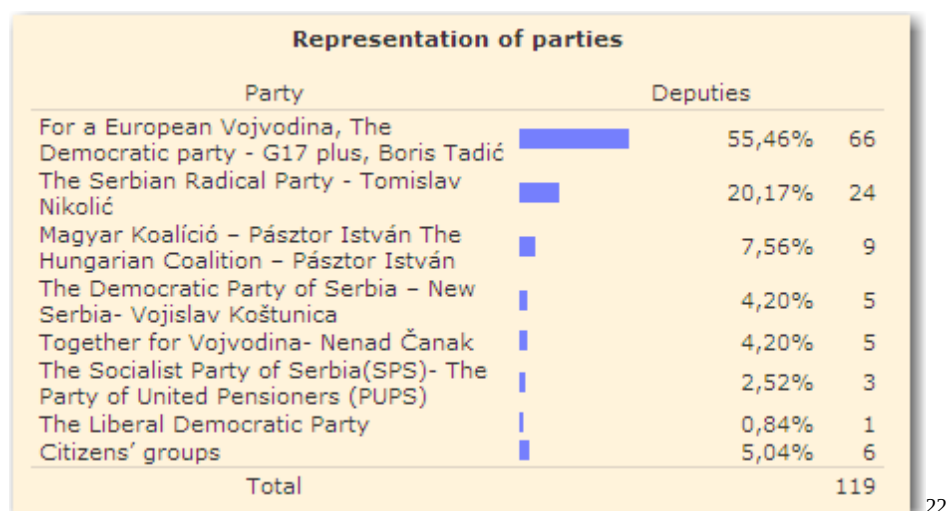
¹⁷ Wikipedia commons, undated, ‘League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina’, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Social_Democrats_of_Vojvodina - Accessed 30 November 2010, Attachment 14

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¹⁸ Wikipedia commons, undated, ‘League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina’, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Social_Democrats_of_Vojvodina - Accessed 30 November 2010, Attachment 14

At the national level, the LSV is currently a minor member of the ruling democratic coalition which formed government after the 2008 Presidential elections.¹⁹ As mentioned in Question 1, the so-called 'democratic block' includes the Democratic Party (DS); G17 Plus (G17+); the League of Vojvodina Social Democrats (LSV); the Social Democratic Party of Serbia (SDP); and the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO).²⁰

In the most recent 2008 Legislative Assembly elections in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, the Democratic Party formed government with the pro-EU, pro-government reform party G17Plus (G17+) (with a cumulative total of 34.9 per cent of the vote, and 64 seats). The Serbian Radical Party won just over 30 per cent of the vote, and 25 seats, and the League of Vojvodina Social Democrats won 8.5 per cent of the vote (6 seats).²¹



The Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina has five Vice Presidents; currently, one of these Vice Presidents, Maja Sedlarevic, is a member the LSV.²³

¹⁹ 'Serbia' 2008, *Parties and Elections in Europe*, <http://www.parties-and-elections.de/serbia.html> - Accessed 30 November 2010, Attachment 15

²⁰ Spasić, I. 2008, 'Serbia 2000 – 2008: a changing political culture?', *Balkanologie* website, <http://balkanologie.revues.org/index1282.html> - Accessed 30 November 2010, Attachment 1

²¹ 'Vojvodina' 2008, *Parties and Elections in Europe*, <http://www.parties-and-elections.de/vojvodina.html> - Accessed 30 November 2010, Attachment 16

²² 'Table: Representation of Parties', *Skupstinavojvodine.gov.rs*, <http://www.skupstinavojvodine.gov.rs/?s=Statistika&mak=Poslanici> - Accessed 30 November 2010, Attachment 17

²³ 'Vice-President Maja Sedlarević' undated, <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:OmhDiRf-2W8J:www.skupstinavojvodine.gov.rs/%3Fs%3DKabinetSedlarevic%26mak%3DPotpredsednici+Vice+Presidents,+Maja+Sedlarevic&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=au> - Accessed 5 December 2010 (only available as an archived webpage), Attachment 18
<http://www.skupstinavojvodine.gov.rs/?s=KabinetSedlarevic&mak=Potpredsednici> - Accessed 30 November 2010; see also <http://www.skupstinavojvodine.gov.rs/?s=ZastupljenostStranaka&mak=Stranke> - Accessed 30 November 2010 (Vojvodina Assembly)

Attachments

1. Spasić, I. 2008, 'Serbia 2000 – 2008: a changing political culture?', *Balkanologie* website, <http://balkanologie.revues.org/index1282.html> - Accessed 30 November 2010.
2. IFES Election Guide 2010, 'Country Profile: Serbia', *Election Guide* website, 12 August, <http://www.electionguide.org/country.php?ID=242#> - Accessed 5 December 2010.
3. 'The Autonomous Province of Vojvodina' undated, *Vojvodina Portal* website, <http://vojvodinaportal.com/eng/book/export/html/3> - Accessed 5 December 2010.
4. RRT Country Advice 2010, *Country Advice SRB 37720*, 15 November.
5. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2005, *Serbia and Montenegro: Treatment of ethnic Albanians in Serbia and Montenegro, excluding the United Nations administered province of Kosovo (January 2005 - December 2005)* 30 December SCG100786.E, at <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/45f1480411.html> - Accessed 12 November 2010.
6. Human Rights Watch 2005, *Dangerous Indifference: Violence against Minorities in Serbia*, October, Human Rights Watch website, <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/11582/section/2> - Accessed 11 August 2010.
7. Cvijic, S. 2008, 'Blocked political system': Serbia 2000 – 2008', *Balkanologie* Vol. XI, No. 1 -2, December, <http://balkanologie.revues.org/index1293.html#> - Accessed 5 December 2010.
8. Briza, J. 2004, 'Serbia: Fear ripples through Vojvodina minorities', *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 22 January, <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/AllDocsByUNID/115a7d49cd4da7bac1256e280059ce24> - Accessed 16 November 2010.
9. Human Right Watch 2009, 'Serbia: Events in 2009', *Human Rights Watch* website, <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/87763#> - Accessed 5 December 2010.
10. Human Rights Watch 2007, *World Report 2007 – Serbia*.
11. Human Rights Watch 2006, *World Report 2006 – Serbia*.
12. Amnesty International 2007, *Amnesty International Report 2007 – Serbia*.
13. Amnesty International 2006, *Amnesty International Report 2006 – Serbia*.
14. Wikipedia commons, undated, 'League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina', http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Social_Democrats_of_Vojvodina - Accessed 30 November 2010.
15. 'Serbia' 2008, *Parties and Elections in Europe*, <http://www.parties-and-elections.de/serbia.html> - Accessed 30 November 2010.
16. 'Vojvodina' 2008, *Parties and Elections in Europe*, <http://www.parties-and-elections.de/vojvodina.html> - Accessed 30 November 2010.

17. 'Table: Representation of Parties', *Skupstinavojvodine.gov.rs*, <http://www.skupstinavojvodine.gov.rs/?s=Statistika&mak=Poslanici> - Accessed 30 November 2010.
18. 'Vice-President Maja Sedlarević' undated, *skupstinavojvodine.gov.rs*, <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:OmhDiRf-2W8J:www.skupstinavojvodine.gov.rs/%3Fs%3DKabinetSedlarevic%26mak%3DPotpredsednici+Vice+Presidents,+Maja+Sedlarevic&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=au> - Accessed 5 December 2010 (only available as an archived webpage).
19. US Department of State 2006, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2005 – Serbia*, 8 March, Section 5.
20. US Department of State 2007, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2006 – Serbia*, 6 March, Section 5.
21. US Department of State 2010, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2009 – Serbia*, 11 March, Section 5 <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eur/136056.htm> – Accessed 12 August 2010.
22. European Commission against Racism and Intolerance 2008, *Report on Serbia*, 29 April, p.30 http://hudoc.ecri.coe.int/XMLEcri/ENGLISH/Cycle_03/03_CbC_eng/SCG-CbC-III-2008-25-ENG.pdf – Accessed 11 August 2010.