

LYMEC Stands with Jelena Banjac Against Threats and Intimidation

LYMEC expresses its full solidarity with Jelena Banjac, former president of Mladi Pokreta slobodnih građana (PSG Mladi) in Serbia, who has been subjected to a coordinated campaign of online hate, harassment, and violent threats following her public statements on the death of convicted war criminal Ratko Mladić.

Mladić, the former Commander of the Main Staff of the Army of Republika Srpska, was convicted in 2017 by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia of genocide in Srebrenica, crimes against humanity, and violations of the laws or customs of war committed during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. His convictions and life sentence were upheld on appeal in 2021. Following his recent death, his crimes have once again become the subject of public debate and attempts at glorification and historical revisionism across the region.

In this context, Jelena Banjac spoke clearly in defence of principles that should be beyond dispute in a democratic Europe: respect for established judicial facts, support for transitional justice, and rejection of the glorification of convicted war criminals.

For taking this position, she has faced deeply disturbing abuse, including explicit threats of sexual and physical violence. Such threats are not merely attacks against one individual. They are an attempt to intimidate young political activists, restrict democratic debate and silence those willing to confront historical revisionism and the history of war crimes in the Western Balkans.

LYMEC unequivocally stands with Jelena Banjac.

LYMEC calls on the relevant Serbian authorities to take the threats against Jelena seriously, investigate them promptly, hold those responsible to account, and take all necessary measures to ensure her safety. Democratic institutions have a responsibility to safeguard political participation and ensure that intimidation and abuse are not used to silence critical voices.

No young person should fear for their safety for speaking openly about war crimes and defending democratic values. Threats of violence, particularly gender-based and sexual violence, must never be accepted or normalised as part of political discourse.

We also stand in solidarity with PSG Mladi and all young people across the Western Balkans who challenge historical revisionism and the glorification of convicted war criminals. Acknowledging judicially established facts and confronting the past are essential to reconciliation and the European future of the region.