



Border Violence Monitoring Network

Protest statement against Tatjana Bobnar as a candidate for the minister of the Interior Affairs

Recipients: Ministry of Interior, Robert Golob, Tanja Fajon & Luka Mesec (heads of the coalition parties)

Statement of protest on the candidacy of Tatjana Bobnar for the post of Minister of the Interior of Republic of Slovenia

The civil initiative Infokolpa, the Border Violence Monitoring Network and the undersigned organisations condemn the announced candidacy of Tatjana Bobnar for the post of Minister of the Interior. Our primary objections relate to her actions when directing the actions of police officers at the border and the implementation of deportations to Croatia in 2018, 2019 and 2020. We recall that in June 2018, Slovenia started the practice of mass deportations of persons and denying them the application for international protection in Slovenia.

From the beginning of 2018 until the end of March 2022, Slovenia has carried out 29,865 extraditions to Croatia under the informal procedure, according to official data. Bobnar, as Deputy Director General of the Slovenian Police and later as Director of the Police, participated in one of the worst cases of mass violations of fundamental rights in the modern history of the Slovenian state by co-signing internal directives on police action at the border. During her time at the highest levels, police officers began the practice of systematically rejecting asylum applications and carrying out deportations. In 2018 and 2019 alone, Slovenia carried out almost 16,000 deportations to Croatia, despite the proven serious risk of torture and inhuman treatment of migrants by the Croatian police. Many of these cases have been documented in the two volumes of Black Book of Pushbacks that will be sent to all the presumed coalition parties together with this statement.

Bobnar is directly complicit in creating a deadly situation on the Balkan migration route by abusing the police and directing police procedures in a way that does not follow legal mandates, but instead constitutes a direct violation of the universal right to life and protection from torture. The existence of such violations has also been established by the Supreme Court, and it is therefore worrying that the future coalition does not recognise the role of Bobnar in the abuse of the police to carry out mass deportations. Mass deportations have been recognised as a systemic violation of the principle of non-refoulement, the prohibition of collective deportation and the denial of access to international protection by both the Supreme Court and the European Parliament Resolution on the rule of law in Slovenia.

We also draw attention to other problems: restrictive legislation and a lack of adequate staff have created confusion in the field of labour migration, where many foreign nationals and migrant workers wait for months before obtaining or renewing work permits and the possibility to regularize their stay. We also draw attention to the worrying situation regarding decisions on international protection status, where decision-makers are rejecting or holding for years applications from people fleeing countries such as Afghanistan or Eritrea. In 2021, Slovenia issued only 19 positive decisions on international protection status.

Slovenia needs a person to lead the Ministry of the Interior who will bring the police back into the community and who is able to resolve conflicts. We need a person who can reorganise the civil service to serve the people. Above all, we need a person who will be able to confront the serious violations of the fundamental rights of migrants that have been taking place on a massive scale in Slovenian police stations in recent years, and who will be able to carry out a proper investigation into the abuse of official procedures, to find the guilty parties, to apologise for their behaviour and, above all, to ensure that such serious violations do not happen again. We certainly do not need a person who will justify practices that systematically and brutally violate the human rights of certain groups.



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Gibanje Svoboda party, that has won the las elections, has also declared in its programme the removal of the wire from the border and a more humane migration policy. However, Bobnar's candidacy as Interior Minister may mean a continuation of the policies pursued by the previous government towards the abuse of police powers and the normalisation of police violence on a general level. We remind the future mandate holder that the border fence is not a cosmetic problem and that its removal should not be a populist gesture.

If the pre-election confrontations promised to "govern in coalition with civil society", we hope that the government will heed the warnings of civil society and involve it in shaping a migration policy based on human rights or at least in line with current legislation.

Info Kolpa

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Delavska Svetovalnica

Društvo Humanitas - Center za globalno učenje in sodelovanje

Are You Syrious? (Zagreb)

Centar za Mirovne Studije (Zagreb)

Alarm Phone Austria (Gradec)

Zagreb Solidarity City (Zagreb)

Tansbalkan Solidarity (Regional)