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 **THE COALITION “POD LUPOM” – PRESS RELEASE**

**Electoral Irregularities and Violations of the Election Law of BiH Continue**

*At today’s press conference in Tuzla, the Coalition for free and fair elections “Pod lupom” presented the findings of the long-term observation for the first four weeks of observers’ reporting (from July 23 to August 19) noting that electoral irregularities continue.*

The Coalition’s long-term observers register electoral irregularities and violations of the Election Law during the fourth week of reporting. By August 19, 10 local election commissions failed to comply with the provisions of the Election Law of BiH concerning gender equality – five at the expense of women and five at the expense of men. It is concerning that despite clear provisions of the law, these members received approvals for appointment to municipal councils and assemblies in BiH, which was certified by the Central Election Commission.

12 local election commissions lack adequate working conditions such as, as stated by the commissions’ members, inadequate premises, lack of finances and poor equipment. Progress is visible in this segment compared to the first three weeks of reporting. However, inadequate working conditions in these local election commissions may affect the high-quality implementation of the elections.

“We call on local administration officials for the second time to secure adequate working conditions in 12 municipalities”, said Danijel Stjepanović, Regional Assistant in the Regional Office in Tuzla.

During the fourth week of reporting, 62 local election commissions held no sessions, while 16 sessions were not announced even though these were the commissions’ obligations. Jezero municipal election commission is still the only local election commission that failed to adopt Rules of Procedures. According to the commission’s members, the Document will be adopted by August 23,2018.

Failures to meet the deadlines anticipated in the election calendar were also noted. By August 8, 21 local election commissions failed to assign positions within polling station committees to political subjects and some local election commission claim that they received the CEC’s approval. In every second municipality, town in BiH, political subject failed propose members of the polling station committee by August 15. According to the members of the local election commissions, the CEC prolonged the deadline until August 20.

‘’The question arises as to what the purpose of deadlines is if they are violated without any consequences or prolonged by the CEC’s decision, which then causes delays of other activities of the local election commissions”, said Dario Jovanović, Director of the Coalition “Pod lupom”.

178 cases of premature and prohibited campaigns were registered in every third municipality in BiH. This number is much higher in the fourth week of reporting for the 2018 General Elections in BiH compared to the number of cases registered in the eighth week of reporting for the 2016 Local Elections.

As documented, 18 political subjects violated the pertinent provision of the Election Law by engaging in paid advertising on social networks and organizations of public events to promote a political party or a candidate running in the elections.

Already there is suspicion of illicit trade of places within polling station committees in nine (9) municipalities, towns in BiH. The Central Election Commission of BiH, as recommended by the Coalition, adopted the modification to disclose names of all members of the polling station committees along with information about affiliation to the political party after being appointed to the polling station committee and on Election Day to prevent swaps and potential illicit trade of the places within polling station committees that, even if they occur, will be visible and, hopefully, sanctioned.

“Illicit trade of posts within polling station committees, threats to voters, vote buying, workplace job termination threats, offers for new employment, misuse of public resources to increase salaries, pensions, and social benefits and misuse of official and security personnel for the purpose of the campaign, misuse of personal data for the purpose of voting by mail and fake registration of residence, voters’ registers that include deceased persons and a premature start of election campaigning, are the violations of the law ahead of the Election Day”, said Dario Jovanović.

The Coalition “Pod lupom” will deploy 4,000 non-partisan observers on Election Day, covering all municipalities, towns and Brcko District to protect every citizen’s vote regardless of whom they will give their vote.

We remind citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina that they can apply to observe Election Day by calling a toll-free number 080 05 05 05 or by visiting our web page [www.podlupom.org,](http://www.podlupom.org/)  as well as to report electoral irregularities.

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 The Coalition ''Pod lupom''

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