



NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER
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...jer nam je stalo!

POD LUPOM CONDUCTED AN INDEPENDENT OBSERVATION MISSION FOR THE EARLY ELECTIONS IN REPUBLIKA SRPSKA



The Coalition 'Pod Lupom' conducted a civic, non-partisan observation mission for the early elections for the President of Republika Srpska from the Serbian ethnic group, which were held on Sunday, 23 November 2025. The observation mission included 26 long-term observers (LTOs) representing 21 civil society organizations, all members of the Coalition 'Pod Lupom'. On election day, the electoral process was monitored by 380 short-term observers (STOs) deployed across Republika Srpska.

Independent, non-partisan election observation plays a key role in maintaining citizens' trust in the electoral process. Observers ensure greater transparency through their presence, help prevent electoral irregularities, and contribute to the free expression of voters' will.

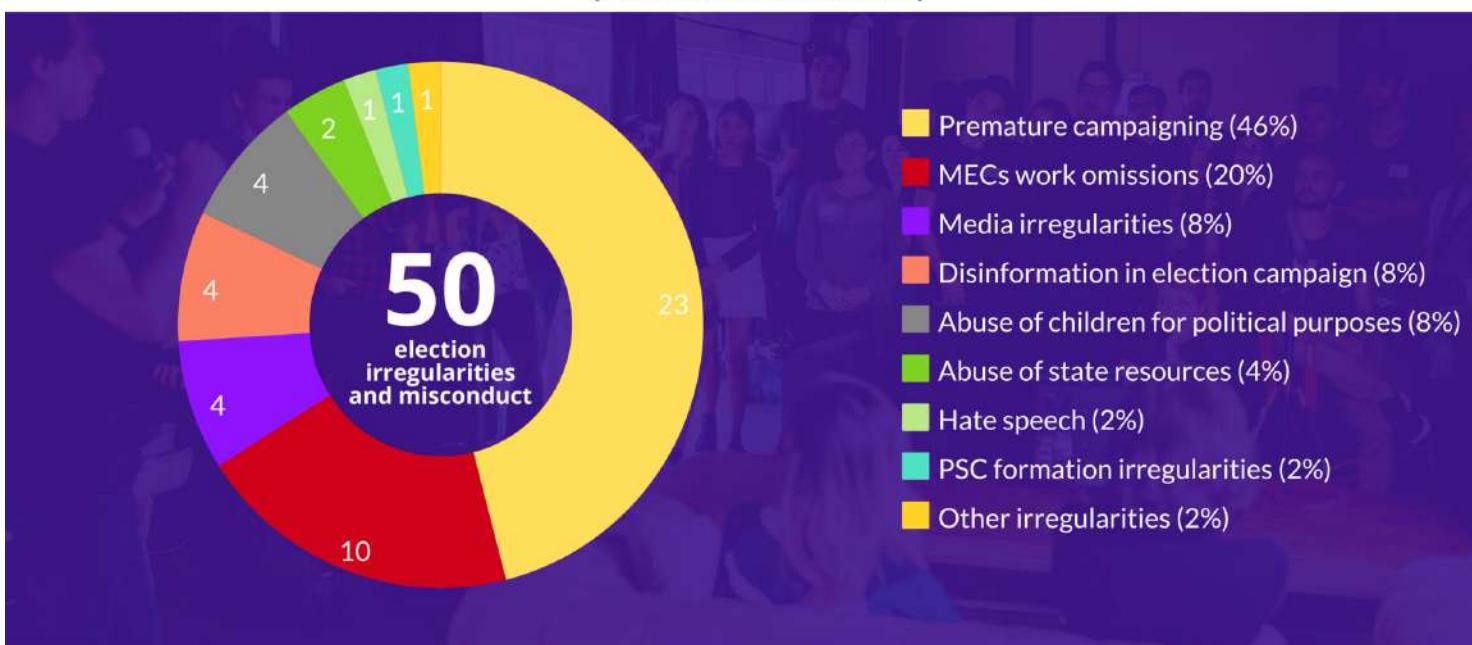
Long-term observers worked until election day on monitoring the activities of local election commissions, recording and reporting electoral irregularities and fraud, and recruiting and training election day observers.

Election day observers monitored all stages of the electoral process at nearly every fifth polling station across Republika Srpska, including the preparation and opening of polling stations, the voting process, closing of polling stations, vote counting, and packaging of election materials. They closely monitored any potential irregularities that could affect the electoral process and acted immediately to address them, ensuring that the elections were conducted in accordance with the law.

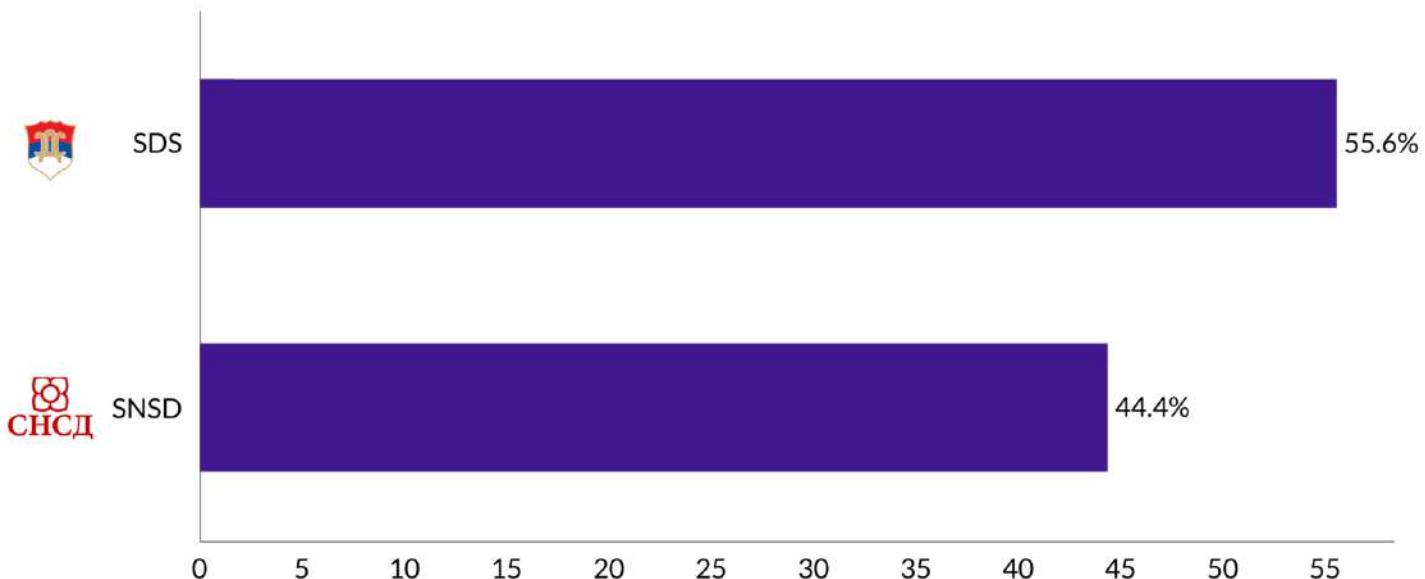
Observers were deployed at a representative sample of polling stations throughout Republika Srpska, enabling statistically reliable monitoring and reporting of election day proceedings. This allows the Coalition 'Pod Lupom' to have a reliable insight into the integrity of the electoral process.

PRE-ELECTION PERIOD

ELECTION IRREGULARITIES (PRE-ELECTION PERIOD)



POLITICAL SUBJECTS BY ELECTION IRREGULARITIES (PRE-ELECTION PERIOD)



FINDINGS OF THE OBSERVATION OF THE WORK OF MECs



...jer nam je stalo!

Although six political entities were certified to participate in the elections, the campaign was overwhelmingly shaped by SDS and SNSD, whose narratives dominated the public space. The campaigns were characterized by **emotional messaging, incendiary rhetoric, and mutual discrediting**, without clear policy solutions. Additionally, both parties employed narratives of Republika Srpska being under threat, but from different perspectives: SDS focused on 'internal abuses,' while SNSD emphasized threats from the international community and other ethnic groups in BiH. Of particular concern is the use of **hate speech**. Its presence in the election campaign is unacceptable, reflecting an underdeveloped and immature political culture and a low level of democratic standards. The **misuse of children for political purposes** was also recorded again, despite being explicitly prohibited by the BiH Election Law. However, sanctions for this type of violation are extremely rare. The Coalition 'Pod Lupom' also warned about the increasingly common practice of **exploiting legal provisions that allow internal gatherings of party statutory bodies**. Political entities use these gatherings for covert pre-election activities, constituting a form of **premature campaigning**.

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF ELECTION DAY



ELECTION DAY PRELIMINARY STATEMENT



Pod Lupom PVT vs CIK

35.8%

Pod Lupom cannot confirm the election winner with certainty, but the published results of the CEC match ours

37.8%

historically low turnout, almost 200,000 fewer people voted compared to the 2022 General Election

29.2%

family voting (more than 2 persons behind the booth)

3.7%

misuse of assistance voting

voting without proper identification

...jer nam je stalo!



SCAN THE CODE AND READ THE PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF ELECTION DAY!

...jer nam je stalo!

PROTECTION OF ELECTORAL RIGHTS

So far, BAM 61,500 in fines for electoral irregularities related to the Republika Srpska elections based on reports by the Coalition 'Pod Lupom'

During its non-partisan observation mission the Coalition 'Pod Lupom' submitted 32 complaints to the Central Election Commission of BiH (CEC BiH) and one complaint to the Communications Regulatory Agency of BiH (CRA BiH). On election day, it submitted 5 complaints to local election commissions, 3 complaints to PSCs, and 2 complaints to the police.

To date, the CEC BiH has imposed 5 monetary sanctions totaling BAM 61,500 based on 14 complaints filed by the Coalition 'Pod Lupom'.

SANCTIONED ELECTORAL IRREGULARITIES

MISUSE OF CHILDREN FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES

PREMATURE CAMPAIGNING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

VIOLATION OF ELECTION SILENCE

HATE SPEECH

Four electoral irregularities have been sanctioned: the misuse of children for political purposes, premature campaigning on social media, violation of election silence, and hate speech (based on multiple complaints).

The political entities sanctioned are SNSD and SDS. Specifically, SNSD was fined BAM 46,000, candidate Siniša Karan BAM 8,500, and SDS BAM 7,000. SNSD was sanctioned for the misuse of children for political purposes, violation of election silence, and hate speech, while SDS was sanctioned for premature campaigning on social media.

To date, the CEC BiH has dismissed 8 initiatives submitted by the Coalition 'Pod Lupom,' while the remaining initiatives, including the one submitted to the CRA, are still under review. Although mechanisms for controlling and sanctioning electoral irregularities are improving, the Coalition 'Pod Lupom' emphasizes that there are still certain shortcomings in the sanctioning process. It is necessary to fully implement one of the Coalition's key recommendations, which calls for authorities to timely and adequately sanction all electoral irregularities.

POST-ELECTION FORENSICS

The Coalition 'Pod Lupom' monitored the repeated verification and counting of ballots at the Central Counting Center (CCC) to ensure the accurate determination of the election results.

The most concrete part of the observation findings concerns the comparison between preliminary results from polling stations and the results of the repeated counts at the CCC. In a sample of 131 polling stations where votes were recounted, Pod Lupom identified discrepancies at 72 polling stations, while no deviations were found at the remaining stations. At these polling stations, at least 827 votes were "stolen": 532 votes were unlawfully added to Siniša Karan, and 295 votes were subtracted from Branko Blanuša. On average, approximately 11 votes were "stolen" per polling station where discrepancies were identified.

The Coalition 'Pod Lupom' also reminds that alarming levels of irregularities were observed previously, particularly after the 2022 General Elections, when repeated vote counts for the President of RS indicated organized electoral fraud in certain cities (Doboj, Prijedor, Zvornik), which are again among the locations most suspected of electoral manipulation this time.

IRREGULARITIES POINT TO SYSTEMIC ABUSES

CEC BiH on 24 December 2025 adopted a Decision to annul the early elections for the President of Republika Srpska at **136 polling stations across 17 municipalities and cities**. The Court of BiH rejected the appeals, thereby confirming the CEC's decision. CEC BiH issued a Decision to schedule and conduct repeated early elections, which will take place on 8 February 2026.

Identified electoral irregularities: Doboj and Zvornik as “traditional” centers of electoral fraud

- **Discrepancies in results after the recount**
- **Abnormal turnout and suspected identity abuse**
- **Extremely high support for a single candidate**
- **Unusually high share of invalid ballots at certain polling stations**

Polling stations where elections were annulled: 84,249 voters have the right to vote.

The repeated elections are being conducted using the same candidate lists and the same extracts from the CVR that were used in the annulled elections. In the annulled elections at 136 polling stations, a total of 84,249 voters had the right to vote, of which 38,992 “voted” (turnout was 46.3%).

Results from these polling stations showed that candidate Siniša Karan (SNSD) received 26,700 votes (70%), candidate Branko Blanuša (SDS) 11,130 votes (29.2%), while all remaining candidates together received 339 votes. A total of 823 ballots were declared invalid. The difference between the two leading candidates at the polling stations where elections were annulled was 15,570 votes.

Why is all this important?

The data indicate that the annulment of the elections is not an isolated incident but a signal of serious weaknesses in protecting the integrity of elections and citizens' votes. It is essential to ensure that the repeated elections are accompanied by enhanced monitoring, sanctioning of those responsible, and measures that prevent the recurrence of irregularities – from proper voter identification and the work of polling boards to transparency in vote counting and results processing. The electronic voter identification and ballot scanners planned for the upcoming elections contribute precisely to these objectives.

PUBLIC CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER ELECTIONS IN BiH & I VOTE FOR THE FIRST TIME



The Coalition 'Pod Lupom' continues to implement its public campaign across Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to organizing Academies for Fair Elections, special focus in the past period has been placed on the 'I Vote for the First Time' workshops, primarily aimed at young people who will soon be voting for the first time, as well as other interested citizens.

Through this initiative, the Coalition 'Pod Lupom' seeks to encourage greater citizen participation in the electoral process and strengthen democratic culture in communities across BiH.

It is important to note that the Ministry of Culture and Education of the Government of Republika Srpska and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports of the Government of the West Herzegovina Canton are the only two ministries in Bosnia and Herzegovina that have not granted the Coalition 'Pod Lupom' permission to conduct educational workshops in high schools.



Public Campaign in Numbers

7522

citizens directly engaged in public campaign activities

2153

participants of the 'I Vote for the First Time' educational workshops

1169

certified participants of the Academy for Fair Elections

354

meetings with decision-makers and the election administration

180

'I Vote for the First Time' workshops

98

Academies for Fair Elections

43

street actions

DEMOCRACY DISAPPEARS – BUT ONLY IF WE ALLOW IT!



The Coalition 'Pod Lupom' has created a video spot that reminds viewers of a simple yet essential truth: democracy does not disappear overnight, but when we stop fighting for it.

In the symbolic video story, the viewer moves through scenes depicting the suppression of freedom, corruption, injustice, and helplessness. The video guides them through everyday situations all too familiar: silenced voices of those who dare to speak, political elites who are above laws and rules, journalists being removed for asking the "wrong" questions. The pivotal moment occurs when an ordinary family decides it will no longer wait for someone else to make a change. At the heart of the message is a call for responsibility and civic engagement, focusing on the citizen who wants to live in a country where every voice is heard, justice and laws are respected, and freedom is protected.

For more than ten years, the Coalition 'Pod Lupom' has been bringing together citizens and civil society organizations who believe in the power of citizen-activists, and it invites all interested citizens to participate in the Coalition's activities in the coming period, contributing both to free and fair elections in BiH and to the broader democratization of Bosnian society. Participation is possible via the form at <https://ukljuce.podlupom.org/>.



STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY CAPACITIES IN THE FIELD OF ELECTIONS: FROM REGULATIONS TO PRACTICE



The Coalition 'Pod Lupom' continues activities aimed at strengthening the capacities of civil society organizations in the electoral process through the training program titled '*Election Authorities in BiH: Fair Elections Start with Knowledge – From Regulations to Practice*'.

During the training, participants went through a series of interactive sessions combining theoretical knowledge with practical work. The program began with an election quiz and an introduction to the fundamental principles of the electoral system in BiH, allowing participants to test and refresh their existing knowledge. The training then focused on the election authorities in BiH, their competencies, and the importance of communication and cooperation between institutions and civil society organizations. Special attention was given to understanding the legal framework governing elections. The first day concluded with the topic of electoral rights protection, covering procedures, deadlines, and legal remedies available in cases of electoral irregularities. Through practical examples, participants learned how to draft complaints and appeals and how to report observed irregularities. On the second day, participants continued working on the application of legal remedies in practice, where, through group work and simulations, they had the opportunity to independently draft objections, complaints, and appeals based on real cases.

Through programs like this, the Coalition 'Pod Lupom' aims to empower representatives of civil society organizations to contribute to building more transparent and fair elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina through knowledge, cooperation, and active participation.

ENHANCING THE VISIBILITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS



OKT, Teslić



ALD, Zavidovići



Milenijum, Srbac

As part of its ongoing efforts to increase the visibility of its member organizations, the Coalition 'Pod Lupom' continues to develop and promote short videos showcasing the work of each member organization. These videos allow citizens to easily learn about the core objectives of the member organizations, their engagement in strengthening electoral integrity, and the broader context of their activities within local communities.

The videos are available on the official YouTube channel of the Coalition 'Pod Lupom,' where they continue to serve as a valuable resource for education, information, and the promotion of civic activism in general, as well as in electoral processes.

