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**Serbia**

Thank you, Mr. President.

Canada welcomes positive steps taken by Serbia, including strengthening the independence of judiciary following constitutional amendments in February 2022. We also welcome the participation of all political parties in 2022 elections, including those that boycotted the 2020 parliamentary election.

Canada recommends that Serbia:

1. Further promote the integrity, impartiality and independence of the judiciary to free it from political influence over judicial appointments and external pressures regarding judicial rulings, particularly in high profile corruption cases.
2. Investigate and prosecute alleged attacks on journalists and media outlets; address the practice of SLAPP suits that financially drain critical media; and respond effectively to thwart smear campaigns against independent media.
3. Protect human right defenders, including against threats and smear campaigns often emanating from pro-government media and elected officials.

We are concerned by death threats against investigative journalists, those working on web portals and at media outlets, as well as by reports that national TV broadcasting licenses were issued to channels known to be in serious breach of media laws.