
Slovak Republic

Slovak National Centre for Human Rights

Executive summary

In 2025, Slovakia faced various challenges coming from ongoing and increasing threats undermining the rule of law. In this report, the NHRI highlighted persistent issues, including the prevalence of disinformation campaigns attacking democracy. Reported challenges also included erosion of protections for HRDs, journalists, and media freedom over the recent years. The NHRI further reported increased use of fast-tracked legislative procedures and barriers to participatory processes, which hinder data-driven policymaking and lead to the adoption of laws that undermine the rule of law. Importantly, the report also focuses on specific challenges arising in 2025, such as the approval of constitutional changes that challenge the primacy of international and European law and the fast-tracked abolition of the Whistleblower Protection Office, which would undermine the protection of whistleblowers in Slovakia. Overall, developments in 2025 point to a systemic weakening of democratic safeguards in Slovakia.

I. NHRIs' establishment, independence, effectiveness and resilience

International accreditation status and SCA recommendations

The Slovak National Human Rights Centre was [accredited with B-status in March 2014](#). On that occasion, the SCA noted that the NHRI has a clear mandate to promote and protect human rights, but with an emphasis on equality and discrimination. Acknowledging that the NHRI interprets its mandate broadly to encompass all rights, the SCA encouraged the Centre to advocate for legislative changes giving them the power to: submit opinions, recommendations, proposals and reports on any human rights matter to the Government; promote and ensure harmonisation of national legislation, regulations and practices with international human rights instruments to which Slovakia is a party; create awareness of human rights norms through teaching, research and addressing public opinion; encourage ratification or access to international human rights instruments; and effectively investigate complaints of human rights violations.

The SCA noted that the Administrative Board, one of the two bodies of the SNCHR together with the Executive Director, is made up of members selected by nine separate appointing authorities, each of which can define its own selection criteria. The SCA encouraged the Centre to advocate for the formalisation of a clear, transparent, and participatory selection and appointment process of decision-making body, in relevant laws, regulations or binding administrative guidelines.

Further, the SCA took the view that the arrangements for the appointment of members did not ensure pluralism in the composition of the Administrative Board. It encouraged the Centre to ensure that its membership and staff is representative of the diverse segments of society. Additionally, the SCA pointed out that the enabling legislation of the NHRI does not explicitly include provisions to protect the members from legal liability for the actions undertaken and decisions made in good faith in their official capacity.

Moreover, the SCA noted, that according to the enabling law, membership of the Administrative Board can be terminated by recall of the appointing authority. The SCA emphasized that dismissal should not be solely dependent on the discretion of appointing authorities. It encouraged the Centre to advocate for the formalisation of a dismissal process in which: dismissal is made in strict conformity with all procedural and substantive requirements prescribed by law; grounds for dismissal are clearly defined and appropriately confined only to actions adversely impacting the members' capacity to fulfil their mandate; and where appropriate, the legislation should specify the application of a particular ground must be supported by a decision of an independent body with appropriate jurisdiction.

Regulatory framework and mandates

The national regulatory framework relevant to the institution has not changed since January 2025, however the NHRI has been actively communicating with the Ministry of Justice, engaged in consultations in order to ensure the implementation of the standards for equality bodies EU directives and tried to make use of this process to strengthen the independence and role as an NHRI as well.

The NHRI's equality body mandate and a general NHRI mandate are compatible and intertwined and as such the NHRI does not face any particular challenges.

In the preliminary information on the transposition of the [AI Act](#), the Ministry of Investment, Regional Development and Informatics of the Slovak Republic proposed expanding the NHRI's mandate to include the Article 77 Body role in the future. However, in the legislative proposal that went through the inter-ministerial commenting procedure in August of last year, the NHRI's role was absent. The NHRI commented on the proposed legislation with a request to be included on the list. These comments have yet to be assessed.

NHRI structural challenges, threats and resilience

The institution faced structural challenges in terms of lack of adequate follow-up to NHRI recommendations.

Over the course of the year the NHRI has issued many recommendations, not only in its [reports](#), but also directly to lawmakers through [letters](#) and [other advocacy activities](#), however, no feedback or follow-up actions have been taken by the government authorities or coalition lawmakers.

In terms of threats, the institution reports having faced online attacks or defamatory campaigns against the institution and its work as well as verbal attacks against the institution, Head and/or staff.

In March the NHRI issued a [statement](#) on the proposed NGO law discussed in parliament. PM's chief advisor then issued a statement claiming that the NHRI's analysis was based on lies, misquoting and misleading about its contents and called on the Director of the NHRI to resign. Several [NGOs](#) issued statements to support the NHRI and the Commissioner for Human rights issued a [letter](#) urging Slovak parliamentarians to "speak out in defense of the NHRI's independence and to acknowledge the clear legitimacy of its engagement with the draft law as well as any proposals made to amend it". No further attacks followed.

Response to threats seeking to undermine their independence and effectiveness

As described above, support from national stakeholders such as NGOs and regional and international actors such as the Commissioner for Human rights is invaluable. It sends a much clearer message about the NHRI's public work than engaging in media discussions trying to explain why the attacks are misleading and wrong.

Actions to strengthen NHRI resilience

The Centre has continued to build strategic partnerships with key domestic and international stakeholders in order to strengthen its resilience.

II. Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and civil society space

Challenges for HRDs and restrictions to civic space

The NHRI's human rights monitoring and reporting has continued to find evidence of laws, policies and/or state measures that negatively impact civil society space, especially freedom of association, as well as the ability of CSOs to conduct their activities, including limiting access to funding. Along with continued online, verbal threats and harassment from both state and non-state actors, these further contribute to shrinking civic space in Slovakia.

According to a [survey conducted by Amnesty International Slovakia](#) (AI SK) published in June 2025, civil society organizations have been experiencing an intensifying pattern of authoritarian practices from state actors. CSOs reported intensified hostility, and escalating pressure on those who hold the government accountable. Overall findings of the survey confirm findings of the NHRI, namely growing climate of fear, uncertainty, and polarization within Slovak society.

According to the [NHRI's research on environmental HRDs](#), published in 2025, civic space for nature protection has significantly narrowed and environmental HRDs were exposed to systematic harassment, which has been increasing in intensity and severity. Legislative and institutional changes were restricting participation and expert dialogue, and the political rhetoric of the Ministry of Environment contributed to hostile atmosphere and increased the risk of harassment.

Structural challenges for CSOs and HRDs

Lack of adequate funding for CSOs and HRDs

In a survey conducted by the NHRI in January 2026 among CSOs in Slovakia, respondents noted decreases in funding from public funds and/or their membership fees, as well as from international donors in 2025. Some of them also mentioned lack of transparency during fund allocation processes.

Similarly, financial insecurity emerged as a significant concern in the [aforementioned AI SK survey](#), with organizations reporting reduced or suspended public funding, higher operational costs, and

complications related to foreign support. As a result, more than a third of CSOs were considering scaling down their activities or staff, and most rely heavily on volunteers to sustain their work.

Explicit barrier to access to funding

In March 2025, the Ministry of Justice suspended [the provision of a grant in the amount of EUR 30,000](#) for LGBTI organization Iniciatíva Inakost', which was designated for the provision of professional assistance to victims of hate-motivated criminal offences. Ministry of Justice [argued](#) that the organization failed to disclose grants awarded to it by the United States Department of State in the total amount of USD 158,000 over past three years, extending also into 2025. For the same reasons, the Ministry of Justice [suspended funding from the scheme to Human Rights League](#), which provides legal aid to asylum seekers.

Barriers in access to law/ policy making and meaningful public consultation

HRDs face various obstacles to meaningful public consultation, including the complete abandonment of such procedures through fast-track legislative processes (as reported in the chapter below). Many laws supported by government officials are also proposed through parliament, which does not give HRDs sufficient opportunity to discuss the proposed changes. Moreover, parliamentarians are not mandated to hear HRDs' complaints. When participatory processes take place, HRDs report challenges such as insufficient time to respond to proposals and doubting their arguments and expertise.

Excessive administrative controls or audits

In March, [the Government passed a resolution](#) mandating members of the government to report information on the intention to conclude financial contracts with CSOs in advance.

The [audit of public finances](#) for 2020–2025 conducted by the Ministry of Finance mandated by a governmental resolution showed that ministries and government agencies provided EUR 1.2 billion to CSOs out of more than EUR 23.7 billion in total provided to legal entities in Slovakia. Even though CSOs accounted for only 5 percent of recipients of these public funds, the Ministry of Finance did a deeper audit of a risk-based sample of 26 recipients, out of which more than half were CSOs working in the field of human rights.

Laws and/or policies which negatively impact on right to association or assembly and to protest

In the 2025 Rule of law report, the NHRI has reported on the so-called [NGO Act](#) that was submitted to the parliament in March 2024. Initially, the law aimed to introduce an obligation for NGOs that

receive financial or other material benefits, exceeding EUR 5,000 for a calendar year, from a foreign natural or legal person, to register as an “organisation with foreign support” and to indicate this designation in all acts in the course of their operations. This obligation was later replaced in the bill by an obligation to register for „lobbying” activities. The bill was amended several times before it was adopted in April 2025, while some of the most disputed provisions including the above-mentioned obligations were removed. The adopted law requires all forms of non-governmental organizations (associations and organizations with an international element if their income exceeds EUR35,000 in a calendar year) to indicate in their reports an overview of income and expenditure by source, overview of persons who contributed to the activities of the non-governmental organization, including the amount of the contribution and the identification data of natural persons if their contribution exceeded EUR5,000 per year, and the identification data of legal persons regardless of the amount of their contribution. The law also introduces the right of the Ministry of the Interior or the relevant registration authority to evaluate the content of the report and to process personal data contained in the reports even without the consent of the data subject. Another significant obligation is the inclusion of non-governmental organizations in the scope of obligated persons under the [Freedom of Information Act](#), which constitutes an excessive administrative burden for NGOs. A group of MPs and the [Public Defender of Rights](#) initiated proceedings before the Constitutional Court, upon which [the Constitutional Court concluded](#) in December that the contested law was unconstitutional, as it was not in compliance with the right to privacy, right to information and freedom of association as established by the Constitution and the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Threats to CSOs and HRDs

According to the above-mentioned AI SK survey and report on the environmental HRDs, CSOs have encountered verbal attacks, online threats or harassment, negative narratives and increased administrative oversight from the state such as strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs).

Similarly, CSOs participating in the [AI SK survey](#) reported growing demonization, intimidation, and stigmatization, accompanied by restrictions of financial support and increased administrative pressures. Many CSOs faced both online and offline harassment, including hate speech, threats, doxxing, and physical intimidation, often coming from the public, but also from politicians and pro-government influencers. Due to these incidents, nearly one-third of surveyed organizations had to adopt additional safety measures. The AI SK survey further shows that between January 2024 and April 2025, almost one-third of non-governmental organizations perceived increased oversight and monitoring by state institutions and as many as 85 percent of organizations expressed concerns

about the future regarding the adopted NGO Act, which introduced substantial administrative burdens and broader state oversight. Findings of [the above-mentioned research report of the Centre on environmental HRDs](#) showed that up to 80 percent of surveyed environmental defenders in Slovakia have experienced some form of harassment, most commonly the spreading of false information and defamation. Nearly half encountered hateful messages, spam, or phone-based attacks, along with personal insults and stalking. Some reported threats of violence and several experienced physical attacks. Harassment often occurred repeatedly and in combined forms, such as verbal attacks accompanied by threats or legal pressure. The activities that carried the highest risk were social media engagement, field monitoring, reporting environmental violations, and public appearances in the media. Several individuals faced inspections, criminal complaints, or lawsuits. These actions appeared to serve as intimidation tactics resembling SLAPPs.

National frameworks to support and protect HRDs and CSOs

Advisory bodies

The public body established within the government to advise on civil society is [the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the Development of Civil Society](#), which is responsible for promoting civil society initiatives and strengthening public participation. The Office serves as the main communication point between the government and civil society and provides a channel for feedback from civil society members. There are no professional requirements for candidates nominated to the position of Plenipotentiary, who is directly appointed by the government, which may increase the Office's vulnerability to politicization.

The Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations [serves](#) as an advisory and coordinating body supporting the government in the development of civil society. Connecting representatives from ministries, civil society organizations, and the Office of the Plenipotentiary, the Council discusses legislative and other policy changes, issues statements on current developments in this sector, and consults the implementation of strategic documents. In addition, it submits proposals to the government aimed at strengthening and advancing civil society.

Specific national strategies to protect HRDs and/or inclusion of HRD protection in human rights action plans

There are also several document strategies aiming at enhancement of civil society and public participation, including [the Strategy of Civil Society Development in Slovakia for 2022–2030](#) and its

individual actions plans, as well as [action plans for Open Government](#). The strategy of civil society development includes objective to deepen the dialogue between civil society and public administration as a prevention against attacks or the spread of negative attitudes towards civil society, for example to develop tools to combat disinformation about non-governmental organizations and positively promote the results of their work.

As part of the transposition of the 2024 European Anti-SLAPP Directive, the government [proposed](#) an amendment to the Civil Procedure Code and introduced a new type of dispute, strategic lawsuits against public participation, in line with European legislation. The changes are yet to be approved by the government.

Gaps in the protection of HRDs nationally

There are no specific policies and mechanisms regarding the protection of HRDs. With the transposition of the Anti-SLAPP directive still pending government approval, HRDs currently have no special safeguards in legal disputes and remain in the same position as any other individual. Another issue in the context of SLAPPs is that defamation remains a criminal offense, with some of the highest penalties in the EU, ranging from one to eight years of imprisonment. As a result, this crime is used as a tool of intimidation against HRDs.

Another issue related to the protection of HRDs is that strategic documents are not being translated into action. Despite the stated objectives of the civil society development strategy to build a favourable environment for civil society and increase systemic resilience, attacks and disinformation against civil society and non-governmental organizations have increased over the past few years. This is due to various factors, including targeted smear campaigns against HRDs and the spread of disinformation by political leaders. For example, as the Centre observed in its [research report on environmental human rights defenders](#), representatives of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic frame HRDs as a threat. As a result, these smear campaigns incite hate towards HRDs and decrease their protection.

Furthermore, non-governmental organizations also face various financial challenges, including cuts to public funding schemes and the absence of systemic and sustainable funding. This lack of resources affects the work of HRDs, the provision of services to affected communities, and their ability to protect themselves against SLAPPs and other attacks on their activities.

Activities of NHRIs to support civil society space and human rights defenders (HRDs)

Promotion and/or communication campaigns

In 2025, the NHRI [hosted](#) a series of discussions on civil society as part of the Rule of Law Festival. Two discussions [focused](#) on environmental human rights defenders and the broader civic space and its challenges. The Centre also [organised](#) a presentation of the 2025 State of Rule of Law Report for non-governmental organisations in Slovakia.

Joint meetings and/or roundtables

In November, the Centre [co-organized](#) and took part in a roundtable on the human rights of people living with, at risk of, or affected by HIV. This expert meeting initiated a dialogue with the Ministry of Health and Regional Public Health Care Office regarding current legislation in this area aiming to strengthen protection of the people living with HIV in Slovakia. Furthermore, in cooperation with the NGO Možnosť voľby, the NHRI co-organized and participated in a roundtable focused on sexual and reproductive rights.

Capacity building for HRDs

The Centre [organized](#) two capacity building sessions for human rights defenders focusing on human rights reporting procedures under the European Social Charter (ESC) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). During the capacity-building sessions, the Centre informed HRDs about opportunities to engage with monitoring procedures as civil society actors and discussed the key human rights issues of concern. As a result, the NHRI collaborated with five non-governmental organizations on its two submissions.

Experience-sharing initiatives

The Centre was invited to talk about its experience with monitoring of social rights to a workshop organized by the Council of Europe in Armenia. Its representative focused the importance of cooperation with human rights defenders and non-governmental sector highlighting on the essential insight of their first-hand experience working with the impacted population(s).

Initiatives to **protect** civil society's space and HRDs

In terms of key actions taken to **protect** HRDs and CSOs, the institution reports monitoring, the issuing of recommendations to national authorities and other activities detailed below.

The above-mentioned publication on environmental human rights defenders was presented in two separate discussion panels concerning the civil space in Slovakia. Furthermore, NHRI [submitted](#) its

input for the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders on human rights defenders working on climate change and a just transition. In its submissions to ESC and CESCR, the NHRI reported on several challenges to civil society, including [the obligations](#) passed under the recently adopted NGO Act and [funding issues](#) connected to lack of sustainable and long-term financing of social services.

The NHRI [turned](#) to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) with a request to issue a statement on the amendment to the act on non-profit organizations. Consequently, ODIHR issued an urgent opinion on the proposed legislation and concluded that the adopted law contains serious shortcomings in terms of international human rights standards and OSCE commitments. The NHRI also [released](#) a media statement on the amendment, calling on the parliamentarians not to support the proposed changes. The NHRI sent a letter to the President, in which it communicated the main concerns and requested him not to sign the passed legislation.

In terms of the institution's needs to advance the protection of HRDs nationally, the Centre considers that the best tool to advance the protection of HRDs is communication, cooperation, networking and raising awareness of the necessity of healthy civic space for democracy and human rights.

NHRI's recommendations to national and regional authorities

1. To the Government of the Slovak Republic to refrain from online and offline harassment including verbal attacks and threats against non-governmental organisations and human rights defenders.
2. Investigate harassment and intimidation, threats, violence against non-governmental organisations and human rights defenders and other restrictions of rights, including from politicians, and guarantee that they can carry out their activities in safe conditions.
3. To ensure long-term, sustainable, transparent, timely and predictable funding for non-governmental organisations and human rights defenders.

III. Democracy

Disinformation

Based on the institution's human rights monitoring and reporting, the rights/democratic processes identified as having been significantly impacted by the spread of disinformation are the right to freedom of thought and the right to hold opinions without interference, the right to freedom of expression, the right to privacy, the right to participation in public life, including elections and the trust in democratic institutions. Disinformation and smear campaigns launched against NGOs often result in harassment, online hate and verbal attacks including life threats targeting members of NGOs, and might cause significant harm to individuals and interfere with their right to privacy. Such narratives have been present in Slovakia since the 2018 murder of investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová followed by mass protests. In reaction, politicians began spreading [conspiracies](#) while accusing the protesters of being directed from abroad and financed by George Soros. Since then, stigmatizing narratives and disinformation targeting NGOs have increased,, with the "foreign agents" narrative becoming a prevalent form of disinformation in Slovakia.

At the beginning of 2025, massive [peaceful protests](#) took place nationwide to voice support for Ukraine and Slovakia's membership of the EU and NATO following the PMs trip to Moscow. In reaction to the protests, [political representatives claimed](#) that foreign actors are conspiring to overthrow the government, calling it a "Slovak Maidan" (drawing parallels to events like Ukraine's Euromaidan and Georgia's recent protests).

Between July 2024 and June 2025, [the Investigative Center of Ján Kuciak analysed](#) thousands of paid political ads in the Visegrad Four (V4) countries. In the V4, they identified 773 hateful political ads on Meta platforms that used offensive or derogatory language, 523 of which came from Slovakia. The analysis showed that the leading government party was among the largest sponsors of hateful ads in Slovakia. The paid attacks targeted the media, but also civil activists, human rights defenders, and non-governmental organizations. The analysis revealed that they mostly attacked through narratives framing them as enemies—accusing journalists and NGOs of treason, spreading lies, or defending foreign interests. Almost three-quarters of the ads were based on the disinformation framework that the media or civil society were spreading fake news.

Disinformation often disproportionately targets vulnerable population groups amplifying hate speech and discrimination. The Centre has [monitored](#) the portrayal of migrants and refugees in the media and concluded that media generalise the discourse on these persons by focusing on security, security risks and border management issues. It further found that analysed media use vocabulary that supports the negative sentiment towards migrants and refugees. Moreover, the factually incorrect use of the term 'illegal migrant' contributes to the negative image of migrants. However,

such statements have also been proclaimed by politicians across the political spectrum, including in official communications from relevant ministries.

actions or initiatives to address disinformation

The institution conducted several trainings for pupils in primary school and workshops for students attending high schools.

NHRI's recommendations to national and regional authorities

1. To the Government of the Slovak Republic to set up an independent office with sufficient resources, tasked with debunking viral online hoaxes and disinformation, in order to ensure that the right to access objective information and facts is being guaranteed within a pluralistic media environment.

Law-making process

Based on the institution's human rights monitoring and reporting, the significant challenges affecting law-making processes are reported to be Limited time of consultations, the lack of mechanisms and processes in place to facilitate both general and targeted participation in the law-making process, the wide application of fast-track procedures or emergency procedures and the limited use of impact assessments, including human rights impact assessments.

Fast-tracked parliamentary procedure

As previously highlighted in ENNHRI's 2025 Report, fast-track legislative procedure remains an issue in Slovakia, threatening legal certainty and limiting public participation. According to the [official parliamentary statistics](#) which only cover the period until June 30 2025, during this government's term the parliament approved 193 pieces of legislation, out of which 52 were fast-tracked, meaning 25 percent of all laws passed did not go through a public consultation process and were fast-tracked through parliament, limiting discussion time. To illustrate the impact of this practice, the NHRI would highlight one piece of legislation passed during the December 2025 parliamentary session, which was another in a series of fast-track changes to the Criminal Code. On November 19, the government passed a proposal by the Minister of Justice, which did not go through the obligatory consultation procedure and proposed a fast-track procedure to the parliament. The amendment to the Criminal Code concerned minor changes to address a surge in small scale theft in the country following last year's fast-tracked changes increasing the amount of damage required for criminal liability to 700 euros. To fast track these cosmetic changes the government cited risk to property and sudden and extraordinary character of this situation, despite the fact that members of the opposition claimed there is a rise in minor thefts since at least August 2024 at which time [the government denied it](#). The amendment was then submitted to parliament on November 22. On December 9, the parliament approved the fast-track procedure, on December 10 the parliament approved the law in first reading and immediately sent it to the parliamentary committee for discussion. On December 11 the parliamentary committee approved the amendment and suggested significant changes, including adding a new crime of Obstruction of the election campaign to address influencing of electoral campaign from abroad (in line with [government allegations](#) that Great Britain supported influencers promoting opposition candidates in the last election), new crime of Denial of the peace settlement after World War II with unclear wording and a sweeping change to the Code of Criminal Procedure limiting the use of evidence presented by so-called cooperating accused (which is often the main source of evidence in corruption and organized crime cases). That same day, December 11, the parliament debated the proposal with these new changes, but the debate was [limited to 12 hours](#). The act, including the previously unknown and unseen changes proposed by the committee were approved later during the evening in the plenary, with the entire law coming into effect on December 27.

Limited public participation

In the NHRI's recent [publication](#), environmental HRDs pointed out that there are various barriers for civil society to participate in law-making processes. For example, the commenting procedures are set to a minimum number of days and often begin only after criticism from civil society. These procedures are sometimes announced before holidays, which gives HRDs less time to respond. This may be particularly challenging for individuals with caretaking responsibilities (predominantly women in Slovakia), who may not have enough time to participate in these processes. HRDs perceive these participatory processes as very formalistic taking place just for the sake of procedure while their expertise is doubted and their arguments ignored. HRDs also reported that when participatory meetings take place, they are often invited only to join online (unlike officials from public bodies).

Furthermore, changes to critical [environmental legislation](#), such as the Nature and Landscape Protection Act, were introduced through amendments proposed in Parliament, even in cases, when the parliamentarians cooperate on the legislation with the representatives of the ministry. HRDs reported that they were not informed about the proposed changes in advance, which hindered their capacity to quickly respond. To influence proposed legislation in parliament, organizations need much more internal capacities to advocate for their positions with parliamentarians, for example through open letters. Moreover, there is no mechanism in place in parliament for public consultation that would enable parliamentarians to hear collective comments issued by various actors, including HRDs and non-governmental organizations. Because of lack of capacities and unsure outcomes, some organizations [decided](#) not to engage in advocacy activities in parliament.

Actions or initiatives for challenges in law-making processes

On several occasions, the NHRI supported the involvement of civil society and non-governmental organizations in legislative processes. For example, the NHRI [warned](#) parliamentarians that the legislative procedures on various environmental legislations obstruct the participation of civic space and highlighted the importance of including experts during the legislative processes. The Centre wrote to the parliamentary representatives, reminding them of the obligations of public participation under the Aarhus convention. Moreover, during the participatory process on the Socio-Climatic Plan, the Centre recommended to the national authorities to engage with non-governmental organizations representing vulnerable communities that will be affected by the transposition of new carbon pricing ETS2.

NHRI's recommendations to national and regional authorities

1. To the Government of the Slovak Republic to limit the use of the fast-track legislative procedure strictly to cases of sudden, unpredictable and serious threats to the economy, human rights or security, as envisaged by law, in order to ensure effective public participation in the legislative process and safeguard legal certainty through open, transparent and data-driven legislative process.
2. To the National Council of the Slovak Republic to amend the rules of legislative procedure in order to ensure stricter rules for amendments to proposals discussed in parliament, tabled by MPs or parliamentary committees, which go beyond the original scope of the proposal or introduce additional amendments to unrelated legislation. In particular, such rules should ensure that legislative proposals for which the parliament approved a fast-track procedure cannot be amended by new provisions, which are not directly related to the original proposal and therefore for which the grounds for fast-track procedure do not apply.
3. To the Government and National Council of the Slovak Republic to strengthen participatory processes, in order to include persons affected by proposed legislation, including legislation proposed in parliament, have an opportunity to be heard. Ensure that proposed legislation is data-driven and based on current, expert opinions and in line with Slovakia's human rights obligations.

IV. Structural human rights issues which reflect persistent challenges for the rule of law.

Parliamentary crisis

Apart from overuse of fast-track procedures, rapid changes to legislation in parliament and restrictions on time for debate, members of the coalition parties blocked parliamentary scrutiny over the government and its members in several cases. The Centre monitored at least 10 instances from January to October 2025 when a parliamentary committee session was called at the behest of the opposition members to question government ministers, but were unable to hold a meeting because members of the coalition parties, who have a majority in all committees, either [did not attend](#), or [did attend, but refused to pass the agenda](#) of the meeting.

Since December 2024, opposition [motions](#) for a vote of no confidence concerning various government ministers have not been debated, either because the parliament did not have a quorum or because the agenda item was being constantly postponed to the next session. Oldest such proposal, from December 2024, aimed to dismiss the minister of interior for various cases of mismanagement and a surge in cases of police brutality, where, in line with the rules of procedure, members of parliament requested a session to vote within 7 days. As of January 2026, the vote has not taken place.

The latest instance of undermining the parliament's role of oversight over the government is the refusal to call a session for a vote of no confidence in the government based on the constitutional law on the so-called "debt-brake". According to this law, when the government's debt reaches certain thresholds, commensurate sanctions are in place, last of which is the vote of no confidence. As such, the vote should have been held at the end of November 2025 but was [not put on the parliamentary agenda](#).

Judiciary

Public trust in the judicial system continued to be eroded in 2025 by direct attacks from government ministers against courts and individual judges as well as continuing divisions within the judiciary.

For example, in September, the Minister of Defense [criticized](#) a decision of the Special Criminal Court to keep a prominent far-right social media personality and supporter of the leading

government party in pre-trial custody. He suggested the court makes decisions under pressure and in favor of the media and questioned whether a court making decisions like that is a “productive element of the justice system”. The defendant in this case is represented by a lawyer who serves as the PM’s advisor and is a partner in the legal firm of the minister of defense.

In November, the minister of interior lost a civil case against a group of policemen he had dismissed, despite some of them being under whistleblower protection, for defamatory statements made by the minister. In a statement on social media, the minister [claimed](#) the court decision was politically motivated and unacceptable.

The Minister of Justice initiated several disciplinary hearings of judges, who previously decided cases [against current government ministers](#) or [people close to the government](#), raising questions about his motivation. In one of these cases, the Supreme Administrative Court not only rejected the motion but also appealed to the minister by saying that even the motion itself can be harmful to the judge's reputation. The Ministry of Justice in a [statement](#) said that judges should be professional and refrain from public appeals and moralizing.

Judicial Council, a self-regulatory body of the judiciary, also garnered criticism for appearing to be in line with government positions and refusing to criticize members of government, while [criticizing](#) former Minister of Justice, [former head](#) of the Council as well as [judges](#) who decide cases against government members.

Since 2023, one of 13 judges' seats of The Constitutional Court has been vacant, as the parliament has not been yet able to agree on candidates. Chairman of the Court [personally appeared](#) before the plenary in November to ask the parliamentarians to do their duty. In his [speech](#), he said that as a result of the incomplete court, there are 1000 pending cases where a judge-rapporteur could not be assigned, which causes a “significant violation of the applicants' right of access to the Constitutional Court and the right to have the case heard before the Constitutional Court within a reasonable time.”

Constitutional changes

The Slovak parliament approved sweeping constitutional changes on September 26, 2025, effective as of November 1, 2025. Centre has [urged](#) parliamentarians not to adopt the amendment as it is, in the view of the NHRI, in breach of international law, European law and

poses a serious risk to protection of human rights. The proposal was widely criticized by the civil society and international institutions, including the Venice Commission which issued an [urgent opinion](#) on the draft.

New constitutional concepts of “national identity” and “cultural and ethical issues” were created with an open-ended and unclear definition and with the aim to restrict dynamic interpretation of human rights standards as provided by the UN Treaty Bodies, ECHR and others. The constitutional principle of primacy of European law and international human rights treaties was amended in a retroactive way to state that in areas covered by “national identity”, Slovakia remains sovereign, i.e. the principle of primacy would not apply, which in the opinion of the Centre is in breach of European law as well as international law, chiefly the principle of *pacta sunt servanda*.

Further, these changes introduced new provisions concerning adoption (with the aim to bar same-sex couples from adoption in the future), education (with the aim to make sexual education conditional on written consent from a legal guardian) and a provision that Slovakia recognizes only “biologically determined” sex of man and woman, causing legal uncertainty for trans people and their right for legal gender recognition stemming from the right to respect their private and family life, while it is for the moment unclear what “biologically determined” means as it was added to the draft at the very end of parliamentary discussion.

Forced sterilizations:

One of Slovakia’s long-term human rights challenges remains the access to justice for women subjected to unlawful sterilisation between 1966-2004 and establishment of a compensation mechanism, which was neither established nor proposed last year. This is despite the issue being continuously raised by various human rights institutions, including last year’s call from [the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights](#), Michael O’Flaherty. In the government’s legislative plan for 2025, the Ministry of Justice [stated](#) that it aimed to propose legislation on the compensation mechanism in December 2025. However, no such legislation was proposed. Proposals to establish the mechanism was submitted by the opposition in parliament but were not supported.

Foreign police

There is an ongoing [issue](#) with capacity at the Units of Foreign Police within the Police Force. Consequently, foreign nationals face hindered access to legalizing their status. For example,

[individuals eligible for temporary protection](#) sometimes must wait more than 90 days for appointments, during which they lack access to healthcare and the labour market, which puts them in a vulnerable position. This is due to various factors, including insufficient number of staff compared to the increasing number of foreign nationals requesting appointments. Moreover, the appointment reservation system is overwhelmed and vulnerable to fraud. As a result, time slots at the police are being traded on Facebook and Telegram groups.

Recommendations to address structural human rights issues which reflect persistent challenges to the rule of law

1. To political representatives in the Slovak Republic to refrain from public statements, which undermine the independence of the judiciary, public trust in the judicial system and intimidate individual members of the judiciary.
2. To the Government of the Slovak Republic to respect the constitutional division of power and ensure that rights of parliamentarians to scrutinize and review government actions remain guaranteed and enforced.
3. To the Ministry of Interior to increase the capacities and capabilities of the Border and Foreigners Police to effectively process requests for legalization of status made by foreign nationals.

V. Other persisting challenges or key developments for the rule of law in your country in 2025.

Media freedom

[Slovakia has fallen](#) nine places in the latest Reporters Without Borders (RSF) World Press Freedom Index, ranking 38th—its worst position in the past 15 years. In 2025, the NHRI has reported on the dissolution of the public broadcaster and its replacement with a newly established institution named Slovak Television and Radio (STVR). For nine months after the establishment of the new public broadcaster, the STVR was operating with an incomplete board. As a result, a provisional budget had to be introduced until the board was fully staffed, starting in January 2025. The five remaining members of the STVR board were not elected by the parliament until March 2025, resulting in a months-long interim budget period and a temporary general director remaining in office for [almost a full year](#). The new director was elected by the board in May 2025.

In November 2025, a group of MPs tabled an [amendment to the Media Services Act](#) with the aim to transform the Council for Media Services, the regulatory body for media services, into the “National Media Authority” (“Regulator”). According to the bill, the Chair of the Regulator would replace the council as the statutory body of the Regulator. The council currently has a Chair, elected from among the council members. According to the proposed bill, the Chair of the Regulator would be elected by parliament for a six-year term after a public hearing of candidates. The bill further stipulates that the Chair of the Regulator shall decide on all matters within the competence of the Regulator, unless they are reserved for the competence of another body and in the second instance, the council would be competent to decide on appeals against decisions issued by the Regulator in first-instance proceedings. The council has currently 9 members elected by parliament and the bill proposes increasing the number to 11. [Experts](#) warned that the external political selection of the Chair of the Regulator represents a concentration of influence in a single center of power – the parliament and concentration of power of the regulator in one person, who would make decisions in first instance, in contrast with current collective decision making in the council.

Whistleblower protection

In December, the Parliament adopted the [Act on the Office for the Protection of Victims of Crime and Whistleblowers](#) in a fast-track procedure without previous public consultation or consultation with experts or affected entities. The law was submitted by the government, which held an extraordinary session on a Saturday to present and approve the legislation.

The aim of the act was to abolish and replace the Whistleblower Protection Office as of January 1, 2026 with the newly established Office for the Protection of Victims of Crime and Whistleblowers, which was to become the legal successor to the Whistleblower Protection Office. [Experts warned](#) against the negative impacts of provisions introducing the obligation of prosecutors or administrative authorities to continuously review the fulfilment of conditions for protection already granted and introducing the possibility for employers to initiate a repeated review of the protection granted to whistleblowers. Experts, including the [Office itself further warned](#) that the law was intended to replace the current leadership of the Office, despite having no legal or factual grounds for doing so. This view was also expressed by the President when he [vetoed](#) the law stating that the law’s primary purpose did not appear to be the proclaimed protection of employers’ rights or safeguarding against ongoing threats to fundamental rights and freedoms, but instead an ill-

conceived and incomplete institutional and personnel restructuring. The President also raised concerns about the legislative procedure, potential violations of the principles of the rule of law and threats to the use of European Union funds. After the parliament voted to override the President's veto, the law was challenged at the Constitutional Court by 63 MPs and the motion was [supported](#) by the Public Defender of Rights. [The Constitutional Court](#) temporarily suspended the effectiveness of the law until it rules on the matter itself.

Recommendations on how to address persistent challenges to the rule of law

1. To the Government and National Council of the Slovak Republic to strengthen independent institutions established as such to prevent political interference in performance of their duties, which are in public interest. Particularly, to refrain from sweeping reforms or transformations of these institutions without public consultation, participation and expertise, ensuring special care not to raise concerns of politicization of independent institutions.