



Center for
Investigative Reporting

**Annual
Report** | **2021**

DONORS



EMBASSY OF SWEDEN



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



**Rockefeller
Brothers Fund**
Philanthropy for an Interdependent World



Kingdom of the Netherlands



Norwegian Embassy
Sarajevo



British Embassy
Sarajevo

Open
Society Fund
Bosnia & Herzegovina



Fond
otvoreno društvo
Bosna i Hercegovina



OCCRP

Assembly

Aida Čerkez, president
Mehmed Halilović
Edward Ferguson
Bodo Weber
Tanja Topić

Director

Leila Bičakčić

Editorial

Aladin Abdagić, editor-in-chief
Mirjana Popović, deputy editor-in-chief

Newsroom

Azhar Kalamujić, Renata Radić-Dragić, Sadeta Bajrović, Nino Bilajac,
Jelena Jevtić, Milena Mitrović, Ibro Čavčić, Adna Zilić, Dženita Lutvić,
Adna Serdarević

Fact-checking

Jasna Fetahović

Production

Mubarek Asani

Photography

Dženat Dreković

Graphics

Željko Todorović

Project associate

Mirza Avdić

Translation

Lejla Efendić

Proofreading

Razija Šahinović

Administration

Aleksandra Zelić, finance manager
Damir Salihbašić, office & HR manager

Address

Center for Investigative Reporting
Gabriele Moreno Locatelli 11
71000 Sarajevo, BiH

Tel: +387 33 560 040

Fax: +387 33 560 045

E-mail: info@cin.ba

Web: cin.ba



4

sanctions and amended
regulations and changed practices



6

indictments



8

verdicts



5

investigations

What did we do in 2021?

In 2021, CIN investigated misuse of public money, money laundering, textile smuggling, corruption in employment, illegal exploitation of natural resources, racketeering of businessmen, health system problems, public procurement procedures, abuse of public office, and property of politicians, judges, and prosecutors.

Police and judicial institutions were checking allegations from our stories. Some investigations have resulted in criminal investigations, indictments, and prison sentences. Our stories prompted institutions to change their rules and practices and several initiatives to amend laws and regulations.



*"A day without medicine is
a life one day shorter."*

Almedina Semanić
mother of a sick child

"Fighting Bureaucrats for Children's Lives"

Children suffering from cystic fibrosis in Una-Sana Canton have been waiting for months for the Health Insurance Institute to approve them expensive medicines. While waiting for medicines, the health condition of some has deteriorated, and some have moved abroad.

Monthly therapy costs around BAM 6,500, and in the Una-Sana Canton the costs of drugs should be borne by the Health Insurance Institute. However, sick children waited six months for the Institute to approve the drugs to which they were entitled.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 51 patients suffer from this rare disease. Their treatment, health condition, and life expectancy depend on the part of the country in which they live.

#AFTERPUBLISHINGCINSTORIES



sick children started receiving
expensive medicines on
regular basis



A rulebook was passed stating
that patients over the age of 18
in the Sarajevo Canton have
the right to medicines at
the expense of the budget

" She came to me, throwing the papers and saying 'You are exaggerating. No one is a fool, we all know that this is not the real value of the goods.' Either you will give it [a kickback] or he [the customs officer], will raise the taxable base. He'll spoil your goods, and will let the dogs out! "

Esnaf Kastrat
a textile merchant



A truck loaded with textile crosses the borderline without being inspected

for a BAM 2,500

kickback paid to a freight forwarder and customs officer



in three and a half years
BiH has lost about

BAM 38 million

"A Coffee Gratuity To Custom Officers Instead Of Millions To The State Budget"

CIN journalists found that textile importers have been paying several times lower customs fees and tax duties in return **for a kickback of BAM 2,500 per truck paid to freight forwarders and customs officers**. BiH thus loses tens of millions of BAM a year.

From 2018 to mid-2021, only at the border crossing in Gradiška, about 3,500 tons of devalued textile goods were cleared through the customs, **thus causing BiH to lose nearly BAM 38 million in customs duties**, as estimated by importers.

One of the textile merchants confirmed to journalists that a freight forwarding agent, after talking to a customs officer, offered him to pay only a two thousand BAM kickback instead of two and a half thousand, but he refused.





” The importance of unveiling electoral fraud is obvious. It is, however, rare to have such clear and proven case, including quotes, recordings, and pictures. Great investigation, very interesting. ”

Juan Luis Sanchez

Panel of Judges European Press Prize



Award for Best Journalistic
Research on Corruption (CRMA)

Eco Journalist Award for The Best Text
on Environmental Protection (CPCD)

SEEMO Award for Outstanding
Merits in Investigative Journalism

UNICEF Award for Media Contributions
for Protection and Promotion
of the Rights of the Child

Second prize of the European Union
(EU) for Investigative Journalism in BiH

CIN nominated for
the European Press Prize

Prizes and awards

In 2021, **CIN received six international awards** and recognitions for investigative journalism.

Our research on electoral fraud, illegal exploitation, abuse, and environmental protection, and stories of children suffering from a rare and incurable disease who have been denied the right to medical treatment by bureaucratic authorities have been awarded.

The story **Vote selling network exposed by CIN reporters** was in competition with more than 1,000 applications from almost all European countries for the European Press Prize.



Multimedia content



123
infographic



37
videos



3
databases



6
animations

Our readers also absorb information by way of infographics which give an easy-to-understand overview of exploratory topics. We published the research in various video forms.

For some stories, we developed photo galleries to convey the facts and atmosphere from the fieldwork more authentically and help readers better see the issues being written about.

"The rulebook was developed based on a single brand. It is a well-known brand in the world, an import brand. Such a rulebook was made, i.e., formulated in a way to prevent us from making (the uniforms, author's note)."

Fahrudin Čančar
owner of a domestic company

"Police Uniforms Requirements Tailored For Private Individuals"

For years, four police agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been buying uniforms and footwear worth millions from company KM Trade, following internal regulations that exclude other domestic companies from this business.

Under these regulations, police officers are required to wear uniforms and footwear matching **the characteristics of the American brand "5.11" and the German brand "Haix". Company KM Trade from Visoko is the only agent of goods matching the characteristics precisely described in the regulations.**

According to the BiH Procurement Law, technical specifications of required goods or services must provide equal access to tender to all bidders and must not refer to a particular manufacturer, brand, or origin so as not to exclude some companies from the procurement process.

**4**

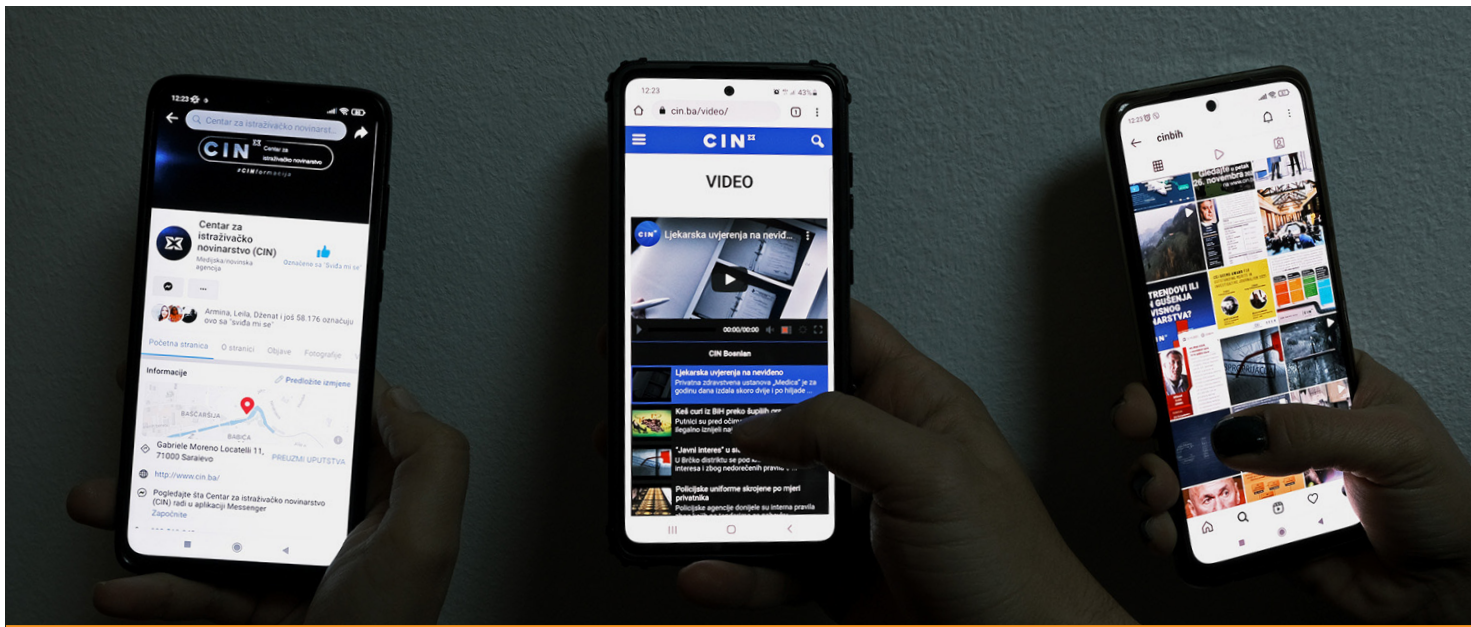
POLICE AGENCIES



bought footwear and
uniforms worth

BAM 17.5 million

following the internal regulations,
which exclude other domestic
companies from this business



CIN and its readership

More and more citizens every year read our content on social media. In 2021, we offered our followers much more video and graphic content on stories that had **over four million clicks across all platforms**.

CIN heartily thanks its readers for their trust and support.



3.5 million
PEOPLE
REACHED



1.5 million
ENGAGEMENT



6,050
subscribers
CIN YouTube channel



80,000

Readers following
CIN on Facebook



5,930

Readers following
CIN on Twitter



1,710

Readers following
CIN on Instagram



Cooperation of CIN with Other Media

CIN offers its investigative stories free of charge to all print, online and electronic media, on the condition that the source of information must always be indicated and that the content remains unchanged.

In this way, fact-checked and true information, based on facts and evidence, reaches a large number of citizens.

The stories have been redistributed or mentioned **636 times on various portals**, print media, and nearly all private and public television stations in the country.

**636**

CIN contents redistributed
in other media

**598**

times by portals

**23**

times by
print media

**17**

times by
TV stations



"I sold a stove in Doboj for about EUR 500 at the time. I offered it to them. They accepted and took it."

Mersad Džafić

owner of a second-hand shop



During 2017 and 2018,
they asked for a kickback
from merchants ten times



At least four times, they
illegally confiscated their goods

worth more than
BAM 200,000

"The Boss and Her "Blackshirt" Mob"

CIN reporters revealed that some inspectors from the Indirect Taxation Authority of BiH have been racketeering businessmen. They asked for money so as not to control their business. From those who refused to give bribes, they unlawfully confiscated goods.

Among shopkeepers, **Jelena Majstorović, Radenko Popović, Stevo Savić i Vladimir Puzić** are known as **"Blackshirts"** because of the color of their uniforms, but some more serious reasons lie behind the ominous nickname. **This group has been blackmailing the shop owners** who hold surplus goods, offering them "a deal", and confiscating the goods from those who refuse to give bribes.



” If Allah wanted us to be angels we would be angels and we would not sin. It means that every man sins. ”

Ramo Isak
a delegate in the
FBiH Parliament

“Legislators On The Other Side Of The Law”

Every fourteenth parliamentarian in the highest legislative body of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina are former convicts, and more than half of them are re-offenders.

The final verdicts were the reason for the Central Election Commission of BiH to revoke only the terms **of delegate Duško Radun and MP Senaid Begić**. According to the BiH Election Law, the term of office shall be revoked on the day of the final court decision sentencing the office-holder concerned to imprisonment of six months or more.

Accordingly, **delegates Ramo Isak, Ilija Ilić, Edim Fejzić, Sejad Tatarin, Jasenko Tufekčić, Boris Krešić, and MPs Hamdija Abdić and Eldin Vrač** unhinderedly pass laws in the Federal Parliament, regardless of the convictions pronounced against them during their term or before. **MP Salmir Kaplan** is the only one whose verdict is not yet final.



fight



shooting



racketeering



threats



destruction
of property



abuse
of office

are the offenses of which
11 parliamentarians have
been charged and convicted
during their term or earlier

” I’ll draw a parallel with a football player receiving a red or yellow card – which puts him out of the game. If Džeko receives a red card and does not play, should he be excluded from football? “Once punished, does not mean that he’s incorrigible. ”

Sead Kreštalica

Deputy Chief Cantonal Prosecutor of
the Sarajevo Canton Prosecutor’s Office

DATABASE



Disciplinary sanctions against
judges and prosecutors

184

Disciplinary decisions
from 2010 to mid-2019



136

Judges

43

Prosecutors

5

Professional
associates

“A Promotion for Disciplinary Offenders in Judiciary”

Despite their misconducts, **at least 14 judges and prosecutors have been promoted to a higher position** or reappointed to a managerial position.

CIN reporters revealed that judges and prosecutors have been punished for misrepresenting work results, rendering cases obsolete, misconduct, or leaking confidential information from cases.

Ten of them had their omissions established in a disciplinary proceeding before the appointment, while for the rest, the omissions were established after their appointments.

The appointments were made by the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of BiH (HJPC BiH), which claimed in its decisions to have taken into account the candidate’s attitude towards work, their work results, and their conduct, the very things for which they have been disciplinarily sanctioned.



#AFTERPUBLISHINGCINSTORIES



#AFTERPUBLISHINGCINSTORIES

NOVEMBER 2020 - Vote selling network exposed by CIN reporters in the Brčko District.

DECEMBER 2021 > Vote traders **Elvir Saletović** and **Sanel Pengić** are on trial before the court in Brčko, while an indictment has been filed against candidate **Pejo Mendeš**.

NOVEMBER 2019 - CIN reporters revealed how **members of the Brčko District Assembly distributed grants** to friends and voters.

SEPTEMBER 2021 > **Ćazim Dačaj**, a representative in the Brčko District Assembly, **was sentenced to four years in prison** for abuse of office in the grant-awarding process, **and his property worth BAM 131,000 was confiscated**.

APRIL 2013 - CIN reporters revealed how did **Kemal Čaušević**, former director of ITABiH buy real estate worth **BAM 1.08 million**, the investment that does not match his financial income, at a time when he played an important role in covering up textile import wrongdoings.

MAJ 2021 > **Kemal Čaušević was sentenced in the first instance** for money laundering to nine years in prison, **and his assets worth 2.3 million will be confiscated**.

FEBRUARY 2017 - CIN reporters found that **the former director of the Health Insurance Institute of Zenica-Doboj Canton, Senaid Begić used the money of this institution** for election promotion, media advertising, and purchase of awards.

APRIL 2021 > **Begić was sentenced to a prison term of 2.5 years** for abuse of office, embezzlement and fraud in office, unlawful recruitment...



NEW DATABASE

Post Term Severance - unearned salary



81

local officials



51

municipalities

from November 2020 to January 2022



paid or planned to be paid

BAM 1.5 million

In post-term severance

CIN Databases - A Source of Information

Every year CIN publishes databases that contain thousands of pieces of fact-checked information and primary source documents hitherto hidden from the public by government bureaucrats. They enable citizens to quickly get information about different areas, and also access data to which they otherwise have no access.

This year, we published a new database **on the privileged post-term severance and supplemented two existing databases with new data on disciplinary sanctions against judges and prosecutors and pardons in BiH.**

On our website, you may find databases about the financing of veterans' associations, politicians' assets, distribution of subsidies, public procurement, a perk paid to politicians and officeholders called post-term severance, earnings of court-appointed attorneys, energy potential in BiH, etc.