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Citizens mostly report corruption in public administration, judiciary and education

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Banjaluca, 29th March 2019 – In 2018 more than 1300 citizens addressed the Center for providing free legal advice in anti-corruption fight, established by Transparency International in BiH (TI BiH), via toll-free info line 0800-55555. Most of corruption reports referred to the public administration, judiciary and education sector, and the citizens mostly complained about non-transparent employment procedures or their suspicions concerning clientelism practices during the recruiting in public sector. In addition to this, reports referred to suspicions of illegal consumption of public fund, too long court proceedings, inappropriate actions of police officers, etc. It is evident that the number of anonymous corruption reports is increasing which indicates the growing lack of trust of citizens in institutions and fear of retaliation. An increased number of complaints made by so-called whistleblowers, reporting the working environment, has also been recorded.

Last year, TI BiH filed seven criminal charges against officials and other parties for criminal offenses that could be related to corruption. Particularly interesting is a case in which criminal charges were filed against several officials of the City Administration of Banja Luka for suspecting that they had committed criminal offense against their official duties by using their official position to favour the investor whose illegally built building has not been demolished, in spite of the fact that writ of execution has become enforceable. Also, it is interesting that the Prosecutor's Offices to which TI BiH submitted reports against Milorad Dodik, for suspecting that this politician committed several criminal offenses by threatening voters during the election campaign, issued orders for not conducting investigations against Milorad Dodik in an unusually short time.

In 2018, TI BiH won a great number of cases against institutions refusing to submit information of public interest which is one of the common problems the citizen are faced with once they decide to report corruption and provide evidences for the reports. Thus, TI BiH won a dispute against the Ministry of Education and Culture of RS (hereinafter: the Ministry) which is one of the institutions that are frequently sued for practicing secret work. The Ministry refused to provide its decision on appeal in a case in which the educational inspector ordered previously, upon the report filed by TI BiH, to repeat the competition procedure for the admission of a fixed-term contract to one teacher. The court concluded in its judgment that the Ministry's refusal to provide access to information was an irregular and illegal act, and that the argument about TI BiH not being the party in the proceeding, was not relevant to the subject matter.

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