*Information about interviewee:*

*The interviewee, who wished to remain anonymous, was a leader of an NGO based in Novi Sad. The interview was conducted at a protest in Novi Sad, Serbia.*

*R= Respondent – Anonymous NGO leader*

*I=Interviewer – Sam Wrighton*

I: Why are you here protesting today?

R: We are sick of the increasing political influence and control over the media in Vojvodina.

They are now using this control to spread political propaganda and are directly influence from Hungary and the right-wing elite. This protest today is to mark the anniversary of the protest occurring a year ago, at the decision of the Vojvodina regional government to remove 80% of the editors at the RTV and replace them with those who are loyal to the government. This propaganda is having a massive influence over the population of Vojvodina. Who are largely right-wing, uneducated and rural populations? They are changing their perceptions very quickly according to the narrative they receive from the media channels. We have noticed that this control is working – people are now regurgitating the things they hear on the media, despite having no factual basis. It is a worrying time for Serbian media. The quality is decreasing, and this is not a good time to be a journalist in Serbia. There is no freedom of expression through conventional channels. The uninformed will say, well there is not censorship that we can witness. This might be true, but the fact is that there is no critical media left in the region as the critical editors have all been replaced by those more subservient to the will of the government. The government has a fear that we wish to form another revolution. This is simply not true. All we are attempting to do is to stop propaganda which is negatively affecting politics. How can people adequately vote and participate in politics if they are not receiving the facts, but a distorted image of what is going on. There is undoubtedly corruption both political and financial at many levels of the government and unfortunately this has now spread to the media. It is a powerful force of repression which operates subtlety.

My notes

* Police highly cooperative
* People sat in RTV building (employees) watching and clapping speeches of protesters
* 500 people, less than 10 times what was expected
* Security guards initially let the protesters put up a sign and take a few photos before cutting it down
* Social movement from Belgrade came to support the protest
* Big fear of the influence of propaganda
* Selling badges and toilet paper
* At the end of the protest, people threw toilet paper at the building
* Flares
* Police did nothing despite the flares and toilet paper
* Un-uniformed security guards blocked the entrance and followed the protest between the two HQs