

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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## **Serbia: Death of Biljana Kovačević-Vučo**

Following the sad death of human rights defender Biljana Kovačević-Vučo on 20 April 2010, after a long illness, Amnesty International pays tribute to her life and work.

As President of the non-governmental organization the Lawyer's Committee for Human Rights (YUCOM) Biljana Kovačević-Vučo worked persistently and tirelessly for human rights in Serbia, despite threats and attacks against her and the organization she founded.

In an interview in 2008, she said, "In Serbia today, if you campaign for accountability for abuses from the past, or for gay or women's rights or if, as a journalist, you write about the links between government and organized crimes, then you quite literally put your life on the line."

A lawyer by profession, Biljana Kovačević-Vučo was a peace movement activist and human rights defender. She founded the Human Rights Council of the Centre for Antiwar Action in Belgrade and led the SOS helpline for the victims of political, ethnic and workplace discrimination. In 1994 she founded the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights Office in Belgrade, and in 1997 established YUCOM.

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