



## **OHR clarifies misinformation publicized by ATV and RTRS**

Regarding the information publicized in the news programs of ATV and RTRS on 28 September 2018, the OHR wishes to clarify that the individual whose initials and photograph were shown – and who allegedly introduces himself as an OHR employee – is not an employee of the OHR and is not connected to the organization in any way.

Considering the fact that ATV and RTRS could have easily contacted the OHR to check the accuracy of any information related to the organization, we see no justification for publishing incorrect and fabricated information.

It is very disappointing that some media, in this particular case even the entity public broadcaster, have chosen to participate in the election campaign in a way that is not in line with professional journalistic standards. Labeling of people and passing accusations without evidence undermines not only the basic principles of the profession, it also further poisons the public discourse and can cause serious consequences. Ultimately, it also undermines the credibility of the broadcaster itself.

The 2018 election campaign has so far been dominated by harsh and divisive rhetoric, which is utterly unacceptable. Instead of focusing on real-life issues such as unemployment, corruption, rule of law, healthcare and education, some politicians and media outlets have decided to take the route of inventing enemies, foreign and domestic, and creating an atmosphere of fear. Inventing fake threats may help to score some electoral points but in the long run it only hurts the credibility of those who use such tactics.

People in BiH must be able to exercise their democratic right in an atmosphere free from fear or any undue influence. Actions, such as the one in question, should encourage citizens to go out and vote.