

# Serbia police probing attack on website

June 4 2014

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Serbian police said Wednesday they are investigating an attack on an independent website, as the Balkan country's new government sought to dispel allegations that it was trying to curb online and media freedoms.

Liberal Pescanik website went down last weekend, hours after it published an article by British-based scholars alleging that parts of the Serbian interior minister's doctoral thesis were plagiarized. Police said the site was blocked by an influx of messages from several IP addresses.

Serbia's new government has faced criticism for alleged attempts to censor online media and pressure local media outlets, including the detention last month of three men for their online postings during recent flooding.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and local [human rights activists](#) have expressed concern over the allegations of media censorship. This was denied by Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic, a former hard-line nationalist turned pro-EU reformer, who demanded an apology from OSCE in a strongly-worded statement.

Vucic had served as the information minister during a media crackdown under late autocrat Slobodan Milosevic in the 1990s, but he has since changed to a pro-EU position.

In the statement to the OSCE, Vucic, however, evoked Milosevic-era allegations of a "dirty campaign" against him, and attempts to "discipline" Serbia's leaders. He insisted that censorship allegations

weren't true and that Serbia is a "free and democratic country."

The OSCE has said that Serbia's government must protect and promote media freedoms.

Serbia has opened accession talks with the European Union following a decade as an international pariah over its warmongering during the 1990s. Vucic has pledged to speed up Serbia's EU path, after winning overwhelming support at snap election in March.

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