

# Canopy collapse in Novi Sad: Vesić and Momirović's house arrest lifted

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More than a year after the collapse of a canopy at the Novi Sad Railway Station, which killed 16 people, and months of protests, several court proceedings are underway, but no trial has yet begun.

The Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime in Belgrade is conducting an investigation into possible corruption in the project to modernize the railway to the border with Hungary - no indictments have been filed so far.

In the proceedings so far, the suspects have included engineers, directors of subcontractor companies from public companies, as well as former officials - former ministers Goran Vesić and Tomislav Momirović.

Their house arrest has been lifted because "the indictment has not been confirmed to this day," Ivona Čogurić, spokesperson for the Special Court, [confirmed to Beta news agency](#).

The detention was lifted by force of law, as a three-month detention measure can be imposed a maximum of two times in a row before indictment is filed, she added.

Momirović and Vesić's ban on meeting and communicating with potential witnesses in this case has been extended for another three months.

In the proceedings conducted by the Organized Crime Prosecutor's Office (TOK), all suspects were questioned and denied guilt.

Goran Vesić, former Minister of Construction, was questioned on November 17 at TOK on corruption charges.

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Vesić, dressed in a gray coat and cap, did not give statements to reporters after the hearing, but hurriedly got into his car.

Vesić was questioned as a suspect, presented his defense, but refused to answer any questions from prosecutors, the prosecutor's office told BBC Serbian at the time.

[Read HERE](#) the BBC article about the deaths in the canopy collapse.

[Since the tragedy in Novi Sad , various forms of anti-government protests](#) have been organized in Serbia , with demands for the punishment of those responsible, the fight against corruption, and the calling of early parliamentary elections.

In addition to the proceedings at the Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime, a separate case is being conducted at the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office (HPO) in Novi Sad.

The prosecutor's office had previously filed an indictment against 13 people for the canopy collapse, including Vesić.

Despite the request for detention for all, the High Court in Novi Sad ruled on September 18 to order Vesić to house arrest for three months, and extended that measure for the other 12 for another 90 days.

In addition to Vesić, the indictment also includes Jelena Tanasković and Nebojša Šurlan, former directors of the Serbian Railway Infrastructure.

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All defendants are charged with a serious offense against public security, the prosecution [announced](#) .

The indictment was filed for:

- criminal offenses that enabled the use of the Novi Sad Railway Station building without a usage permit and during construction works,
- due to non-maintenance of the station building structure
- due to criminal acts committed during the design and execution phase of the station building renovation.

In April 2025, the High Court returned the initial indictment to Novi Sad for further investigation, stating that better clarification was needed to examine the merits of the indictment.

This was followed by an unusual clash [of statements from the prosecution and the court in June](#) , followed by an announcement in mid-July that *a full indictment would be filed*.

"Several proceedings (in Belgrade and Novi Sad) related to the collapse of a canopy show that the institutions in our country are not functioning properly."

"The executive branch, or rather politics, interferes heavily in the work of the court, so whoever manages to resist, succeeds," Vida Petrović Škero, former president of the Supreme Court of Serbia, told BBC Serbian.

Signature below the photo, Tomislav Momirovic

In early August 2025, following an investigation by TOK, the Higher Court in Belgrade ordered detention for up to 30 days for 13 suspects in the case of alleged corruption during the reconstruction of the Novi Sad Railway Station, who were detained on August 1, exactly nine months after the canopy collapse.

Detention was then ordered, among others, for another former minister, Tomislav Momirović, whose lawyer Dragan Palibrk called the decision shameful.

The investigation determined that the defendants obtained material benefits of at least \$18 million (about 16 million euros) from the Chinese contractor, and damaged the budget by \$115 million (about 100 million euros), the statement said.

Author of the photo, Marko Djurica/Reuters

Signature below the photo, The Novi Sad Railway Station building the day after the canopy collapsed, November 2, 2024.

In the third trial, on April 17, the Higher Court in Belgrade confirmed the indictment against [three people in connection with the commission of several](#) criminal

offenses with a corrupt element, the consequence of which was the collapse of the canopy.

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### **Financial procedure**

In addition to Tomislav Momirović, who was Minister of Construction for exactly two years, since October 2020, Goran Vesić, his successor, who held this position until November 2024, when he [resigned for "moral reasons", is now also suspected of corruption.](#)

Anita Dimoski, former Assistant Minister of Construction, and Nebojša Šurlan, Acting General Director of "Infrastruktura Železnica Srbije", were re-arrested by order of the Public Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime (JTOK).

Also detained were Nikola Trivić from the company "Starting" , Siniša Jokić, former director of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Novi Sad, Veljko Novaković, public procurement officer of this institute, Aleksandar Cvjetković, director and responsible person of the Youth Cooperative "Manager", as well as Dragan Popović and Zoran Mijajlović, directors of several companies.

Among the suspects are Goran Rosić from the company "TECO", Nenad Ignjatović, owner of "Deko Team" and Slobodanka Katanić, manager of "Infrastruktura železnice Srbije".

However, they were not found at the address where they live, and JTOK announced on Saturday that it had proposed issuing a warrant for Rosić.

"The suspects Momirović, Vesić, Dimoski, Šurlan and Katanić enabled the contractor 'CRIC-CCCC' to invoice the financier and investor for the value of the work performed in the amount of 1.2 billion dollars (about one billion euros).

"Thus, they obtained a material benefit of at least \$18 million for the contractor 'CRIC-CCCC', and damaged the Serbian budget by more than \$115 million," the official statement from the Organized Crime Prosecutor's Office states.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić assessed the arrest action "as criminal behavior by the Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime, not the fight against crime."

Other officials spoke in a similar tone.

"I claim that Tomislav Momirović, my good acquaintance, and Goran Vesić are not even a shred of guilt."

"It is quite clear that the move is towards the arrest of Aleksandar Vučić," Vladimir Đukanović, a member of the ruling Serbian Progressive Party and the parliamentary committee on the judiciary, wrote on Facebook.

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### **Who are the suspects in the Novi Sad trial?**

The proceedings are being conducted in Novi Sad against Goran Vesić, former Minister of Construction, his assistant Anita Dimoski, as well as former directors of Serbian Railway Infrastructure - Jelena Tanasković and Nebojša Šurlan.

Vesić was released to defend himself shortly after his arrest, while Tanasković and Dimoski are under house arrest, with electronic monitoring.

Šurlan was released from custody on May 29. He was also placed under house arrest.

The other suspects, including engineers, are charged with the same offense against public safety, but in connection with the criminal offense of improper and improper performance of construction work.

Therefore, the investigation included designers from the CIP Traffic Institute Slobodan Naumović, Milan Jelkić and Ljiljana Milić Marković.

Milan Spremić, associate professor at the Faculty of Civil Engineering in Belgrade, and rapporteur of the Republic Revision Commission that reviewed the Preliminary Design, is also a suspect.

The indictment also includes Jasna Stojiljković Milić, responsible for technical control on behalf of the Cestra company, Zorica Slavković Marjanović and Dušan Janković, responsible for the execution of construction works on behalf of the Chinese consortium, as well as Marina Gavrilović and Dejan Todorović, persons responsible for expert supervision on behalf of EŽis.

Signature below the photo, The Novi Sad tragedy was the trigger for months of mass protests and student rebellion across the country.

### **How far have the other proceedings progressed?**

The proceedings [against 13 suspects](#) in Novi Sad are being conducted for criminal offenses against public security related to causing public danger and are still in the investigation completion phase.

In recent months, there has been speculation in pro-government media that the collapse of the recently reconstructed canopy may have been the result of terrorism, but authorities have denied this.

"The analysis and expert examination of more than 20 samples of seized traces, conducted by the Technical Directorate of the National Center for Criminal Forensics at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, did not determine the presence of explosive materials, which means that the aforementioned analysis showed that the collapse of the Railway Station canopy was not a consequence of terrorism," the prosecutor's office announced [on July 14](#).

In [a separate proceeding in Belgrade](#), the manager for investment development at Serbian Railways, Slobodanka Katanić, the president of the Technical Inspection Commission, Milutin Savović, and a member of that Commission, Biljana Krstić, were charged with corruption.

The case, initiated by the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade, was handed over to the Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime, after the shortest corruption investigation in the history of the Serbian judiciary, wrote [Insajder](#).

Due to the slowness of the authorities, a group of experts, including Vida Petrović Škero, has in the meantime created an informal Inquiry Commission to investigate the canopy case.

Their analysis showed that not all necessary documents have been published, which was also one of the demands of the student protests.

"If you don't have construction logs for everything, if you don't have payment invoices and how jobs are contracted with subcontractors, it's obvious that there's a problem."

"A large element of corruption has emerged that says we will do things this way and that way, not as planned," says Škero.

Although, he says, there was an awakening among students, professors, individual judges and prosecutors, and tens of thousands of people across Serbia, their demands for justice and later for elections were met with [repression and force as a response from the state](#).

That's why she doesn't expect anything from the court proceedings until there is a change of government.

"Everything is being diluted to eliminate the possibility of identifying all those who bear some responsibility for the canopy's collapse."

"It's certainly not just one engineer or subcontractor, it's a series of people who participated and led to the collapse," Škero points out.

### **Watch the video: Victims of the canopy collapse**

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### **The Railway Station Case**

The renovation of the station, built in 1964 and opened twice after reconstruction - in 2021 and 2024, is the backbone of one of the most important infrastructure projects of the Serbian Government - the high-speed line from Belgrade to Budapest.

The investor of the project was the Serbian Railways Infrastructure, and the reconstruction project was developed by the Transport Institute CIP.

A consortium of Chinese companies China Railway International and China Communications Construction was selected to carry out the work on this project.

The French company Aegis and the Hungarian company Utiber were awarded expert supervision, according to the 2022 Contract Award Decision, available on the website of the Ministry of Construction.

Just a few hours after the canopy collapsed, government representatives claimed that it was not part of the reconstruction and that it was a "professional error," which some experts later denied.

Due to the canopy collapse, two ministers - Vesić and Momirović - resigned.

On July 31, the Novi Sad Assembly adopted Mayor Žarko Micin's proposal to erect a monument to the victims of the canopy collapse, despite opposition from the opposition.

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