

Statement Regarding the Cases of Threats and Obstruction of Professional Activities of Journalists during the elections to Local Self-Government Bodies

October 4, 2016

Four cases of threats and obstruction of legitimate professional activities of journalists have been registered during the elections to local self-government bodies held in the months of September and October 2016. Moreover, two of them have been accompanied by physical violence.

Thus, on September 17, in the precinct 18 of Nor Kyanq community of Ararat region Khazhak Aghabekyan, chairman of the electoral commission, attacked Tigran Mazmanyanyan, photo correspondent of Araratnews.am, hit his camera, using profanities towards him.

On September 18, in the precinct 19/2 of Merdzavan community of Armavir region freelance journalist Yelena Zohrabyan was threatened, and her activities were obstructed.

On October 2, in the precinct 30/47 of Vanadzor a woman instructing the voters attacked Shoghik Galstyan, correspondent of Araratnews.am, snatched her cellphone and smashed it on the ground.

On the same day, on October 2, after 20.00 the entry of media representatives was groundlessly prohibited to the precincts 34/73 of Gyumri and 30/47 of Vanadzor.

In fact, in terms of obstruction of professional activities of journalists these elections were no different from the previous ones. Moreover, the incidents that occurred once again proved that a vicious tradition has been set in our society: during the electoral processes the pressure and number of attacks on the media and their representatives increase.

It is evident that the situation has not changed even after the RA President apologized to journalists injured during the July 2016 events in Sari Tagh district and Khorenatsi street of Yerevan, assuring that such incidents would not happen again.

We, the undersigned, demand from the authorities to take relevant measures to subject to liability those who obstructed the legitimate professional activities of journalists. We are going to closely monitor the actions of law enforcement agencies and, if necessary, to present our position to the Armenian and international public.

COMMITTEE TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

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