

## **Statement Regarding the Obstruction of Professional Activities of Journalists Covering the Capture of the RA Police Patrol-Guard Service Regiment**

July 21, 2016

On July 21, 2016, at around 3.00-3.30 Gevorg Tosunyan, correspondent of Iravaban.net, was beaten by unknown persons while carrying out his legitimate professional activities on Tigran Mets avenue in Yerevan. The journalist was covering the actions of the protesters and law enforcement bodies relating to the capture of the RA Police Patrol-Guard Service regiment by “Sasna Tsrer” armed group on Khorenatsi street of Yerevan. In particular, the journalist filmed activists and a group of plainclothes people (policemen, as supposed by Gevorg Tosunyan) throwing stones at each other. On noticing that they were being filmed, the latter attacked the journalist, pushed and pulled him, hit him many times and then seized by force the memory card of his camera. Gevorg Tosunyan reported the incident to the police.

Two days before this incident, on July 18, 2016, a uniformed police officer intentionally hit Artak Hambardzumyan, correspondent of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Armenian Service, while the latter was covering the same events. When the journalist reported this to a high-ranking officer at the scene, he cynically denied that something of the kind had happened.

On July 17, 2016, the first day of those events, the policeman who impudently swore at and kicked Artur Hayrapetyan, correspondent of 4news.am, covering the demonstration at Liberty Square of Yerevan, also denied using unlawful force against the journalist, at the same time continuing the violence. The policeman seized the journalist’s phone and returned it only after erasing the files.

The correspondent of Lragir.am, Tehmineh Yenokyan, whose activities have been hindered as well, also reported that her files had been erased.

We, the undersigned, expressing our indignation at the recurrent unlawful violence used against journalists, and reminding that the June 23, 2015 brutalities against media representatives on Marshal Baghramyan avenue of Yerevan have not been forgotten, demand from:

- The RA Police to immediately end the use of unjustifiable brutal force and various obstructions to the journalists carrying out their professional duties, not to inflame the situation at this critical moment for the country, create favorable conditions for proper media coverage of the events of crucial social significance;
- The RA Prosecutor’s Office, based on the media reports and this statement, to institute criminal proceedings on the grounds of impeding the legitimate professional activities of journalists and the unlawful use of force by law enforcers.

**COMMITTEE TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION  
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MEDIA INITIATIVES CENTER  
“ASPAREZ” JOURNALISTS’ CLUB  
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