

Statement Regarding the Use of Violence and Obstruction of Professional Activities of Journalists during the Dispersal of the Protests in Sari Tagh District of Yerevan

July 30, 2016

In the evening of July 29, 2016, during the dispersal of the protest actions in Sari Tagh district and Khorenatsi street of Yerevan the law enforcement bodies targeted journalists again. As a result of the use of brutal force our following colleagues were injured: Hovhannes Movsisyan, Karlen Aslanyan and Garik Harutyunyan (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Armenian Service), Robert Ananyan and Tigran Badalyan (“A1+” TV company), Mariam Grigoryan and David Harutyunyan (1in.am), Gevorg Ghazaryan (freelance photojournalist), Hovik Grigoryan (Panorama.am), Aghvan Asoyan and Albert Galstyan (“Armenia” TV company), Sargis Kharazyan and Mkrtich Karapetyan (Civilnet.am), Marut Vanyan (Lragir.am).

This data are preliminary: the police actions were of a massive scale, and hence more people may have been injured. What is more, the physical violence was accompanied by smashing of video and photo equipment, erasing of shots and other types of obstruction to the professional activities of journalists.

This is not the first time when the police deliberately attack media representatives so that the latter cannot report objective information on the violence committed. In this context, the statement by the RA Police Department of Public Relations and Information that the cases of violence against journalists will be investigated sounds at least ridiculous. We already know how similar incidents of police brutalities are “investigated”. A vivid example of this is the June 23, 2015 and other similar cases which have not been solved yet.

Our numerous statements, appeals and calls to end physical violence against journalists and obstructions to their legitimate professional activities still remain unanswered, and there is no change in the style of the police.

Under these circumstances we find it useless to demand anything from the police and other law enforcement agencies, and we reserve the right to resort to other legal ways of protecting the interests of journalists.

**COMMITTEE TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
YEREVAN PRESS CLUB
MEDIA INITIATIVES CENTER
“ASPAREZ” JOURNALISTS’ CLUB
MEDIA DIVERSITY INSTITUTE-ARMENIA
PUBLIC JOURNALISM CLUB
“JOURNALISTS FOR THE FUTURE”
“JOURNALISTS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS”
GORIS PRESS CLUB
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION CENTER
“INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS”
“REGION” RESEARCH CENTER**