

## **Statement regarding the Court Proceedings on the Case of Violent Actions against Journalists during the April 5, 2014 Rally**

June 29, 2004

On June 10, 2004 the court of primary jurisdiction of Center and Nork-Marash communities of Yerevan sentenced two people, who engaged in violent actions against journalists during the rally of April 5, to a fine of 100,000 drams each. The process became a comedy show. We cannot call it otherwise, because both the preliminary investigation and the court proceedings and the sentence cause doubt and frustration. The proceedings were only instituted on Part 1 of Article 185 of the RA Criminal Code (“Premeditated destruction or spoilage of property”), whereas the charges should have also been introduced on Article 164 (“Obstruction of legitimate professional activities of journalist”): the violent actions, committed on April 5 with regard to journalists, contain the signs of crimes, stipulated by these two Articles of the RA Criminal Code. Therefore, Article 20 of the RA Criminal Code (“Cumulative offences”) should have been applied which was not done by the structure implementing the preliminary investigation. The court on its behalf did not correct the mistake of the preliminary investigation and did not send the case to additional investigation.

Neither the bodies of preliminary investigation, nor the court displayed any wish to protect the right of journalists to gather and disseminate information, to say nothing of the fact that the punishment defined is not adequate to the misdeed. Moreover, the supporters of those who committed the crime obstructed the entry of journalists to the courtroom and exerted pressure on the course of the trial.

We expected more disclosures and trials to come, however nothing was done to find those guilty of other violent acts.

Up to day no measures have been taken to punish the policemen who were impartially observing those who interfered with the work of media representatives and broke their equipment on April 5.

The policemen who gave a beating to journalists on Baghramian Avenue in the early morning of April 13 were not revealed and punished either. Not even a condemnation of their actions was made. Instead from the highest power levels statements were made that it had been impossible to tell journalists from the demonstration participants.

We once more demand that the right of the public to receive and the right of the journalists to impart information be respected, that any attempt to infringe these rights be prevented.

We call on all the media and journalists be more united and consistent when it comes to professional solidarity, when the right to free gathering and dissemination of information is violated.

**Yerevan Press Club**

**Journalists Union of Armenia**

**Internews Armenia public organization**

**Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression**