

Statement Regarding the Incident at Hayeli.am Editorial Office

October 7, 2019, Yerevan

On October 5, 2019 a group of young people went to “Hayeli” Press Club and to the editorial office of “Hayeli.am” situated in the same premises, threw eggs and hang “condemning” posters on the wall of the media and the closed office door. They stated that if the editorial office were open, they would have done the same inside. According to the young persons, the motive of this step is the article titled “Aliyev’s belated but powerful response to Pashinyan” published on “Hayeli.am” (later the word “powerful” was replaced by the word “strong” in quotation marks).

Avoiding giving a professional assessment to the title of the publication, we, the undersigned organizations, state that it is an opinion, a judgment, which everyone in a democratic society has the right to express, regardless of whether some people like it or not. Thus, the steps that may undermine or violate that right are unacceptable and condemnable.

At the same time we note that the polarization of the media based on political and financial camps has resulted in a situation when a significant part of the media has become a propaganda tool, primarily serving the interests of their owners and sponsors. All methods of “brainwashing” have been put into practice, including fake news, deliberately distorted facts, biased, misleading comments, etc. This causes outrage among the public, which in some cases is manifested by unacceptable actions.

Based on the above-mentioned, we demand from:

- *the authorities and opposition political parties to make statements and call on their supporters and followers to demonstrate restraint and tolerance towards those, who express different views and opinions;*
- *law-enforcement bodies to investigate the incident at Hayeli.am editorial office and, if there are grounds, to apply liability measures;*
- *the media serving the interests of different political camps to return to the professional field, to abstain from manipulation, to avoid spreading misinformation, to abide by the norms of journalistic ethics, to respect and represent the diversity of opinions in society.*

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

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION CENTER
PUBLIC JOURNALISM CLUB
“JOURNALISTS FOR THE FUTURE” NGO
GORIS PRESS CLUB
“JOURNALISTS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS” NGO