

**Statement regarding the notice to media outlets received from Yerevan Municipality on vacating the premises allocated to them on the basis of free lease agreements**

**February 27, 2019, Yerevan**

In February, notably in the course of the past week a number of media outlets received a notice from Yerevan Municipality on vacating the premises allocated to them on the basis of free lease agreements. Moreover, they were mostly given a 5-day period for doing this. Such abrupt and rush actions cannot be justified by the need for more effective use of the community premises.

We, the undersigned organisations, take note of the additional clarifications provided by the Municipality to the effect that the notification does not automatically entail termination of the right to use and that the 5-day period must not be viewed as a deadline implying that the organisations must vacate the premises. We also take note of the assurances that decisions will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Nevertheless, in view of the fact that this pretty short-sighted decision and the steps stemming from it threaten the normal functioning of the mentioned media outlets, we demand:

- That the RA Government addresses the issue of allocating space to the mass media outlets and finds balanced solutions by means of comprehensive and broad discussions of the problem;
- That Yerevan Municipality suspends the actions and annuls the demands put forward to the mass media, initiates discussions and negotiations with the heads of the media, offering options for the possible comprehensive solution of the problem in the future.

We call on the heads of the media outlets not to dramatize the situation and, taking account of the official clarifications, negotiate with Yerevan Municipality, offering their recommendations and claims.

We stand ready to assist in the process by our options and recommendations for solution.

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