

Statement Regarding the Threats and Insult to Journalists in Social Networks

15 April 2021, Yerevan

On April 14, 2021, the RA Human Rights Defender Arman Tatoyan announced that Ani Gevorgyan, correspondent of Tert.am, had applied to him informing that she had received threats on different social media in connection with her professional journalistic activities. In particular, several users had disseminated a photo of her and her child along with insulting and degrading texts.

Taking note of HRD Arman Tatoyan's intention to send a letter to the RA Police and the fact that Ani Gevorgyan has already reported the case to the law enforcement authorities, we hereby record an increase in the cases of attacks and pressure on journalists both on social media and during mass political protests. Unfortunately, we have not been able to develop a culture of civilized political debate within our society and confronting any dissent with hatred, swear words and threats still remains widespread. Furthermore, no regard whatsoever is paid to the danger of illegally publicizing the photos and other personal data of minors. Under these circumstances special attention by the law enforcement authorities to the problem and taking adequate countermeasures becomes even more demanded.

We, the undersigned journalistic organizations, condemn any form of pressure on media representatives, especially if this is connected with a criminally punishable act, such as a threat to a journalist or his/her close relative. Underlining the importance of the precedent of a journalist applying to a state institution, we demand that:

- The RA Police take steps to ensure Ani Gevorgyan's safety, to identify and hold liable the users that have insulted and threatened her on social networks.
- The political forces and their proponents demonstrate more restraint in respect of journalists and the media performing their professional duty regardless of their focus, disseminated ideas and views.

We call on journalists to voice any incident of violation of their rights, which will contribute to giving publicity to the issue and effectively protecting the rights of media workers.

COMMITTEE TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

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