

Statement Regarding the Restrictions on the Activities of Media Representatives in the Parliament, in Particular, Banning Lilian Galstyan, Panorama.am Photo Reporter, from Entering the RA National Assembly Building

5 August, 2021, Yerevan

In the morning of 5 August, Lilian Galstyan, photo correspondent of the online media *Panorama.am* was prohibited from entering the National Assembly. Later it became known that she was deprived of her permission to cover the parliamentary activity by the letter of Anna Grigoryan, deputy chief of the NA staff, informing the media outlet that whilst performing her professional functions the photographer had violated paragraph 2.8 of Annex 1 to the Decision of the NA Chairman on Approving the Rules within the Premises and the Building of the National Assembly. According to the mentioned paragraph, within the premises of the guarded object, including the checkpoints it was prohibited to record, videorecord or take photos of the officers of the state protection service performing their professional duties.

In their turn, the editorial office stated that some of the photos were indeed made in the NA lobbies and the plenary hall. However, the officers of the state protection service, who according to the NA administration, had a problem hiding their faces, were looking towards the plenary hall with open faces where live broadcast was being made from.

We, the undersigned journalistic organisations, harshly condemn the arbitrary and groundless actions taken against journalists by the leadership of the parliament and reiterate our profound concerns expressed in our August 3 **statement**. The recent plethora of decisions and legislative initiatives restricting media activity clearly undermines all avenues for any civilised relationship between the authorities and the media. And as long as these regressive initiatives are not abolished, we will continue considering them as infringements upon the rights of our colleagues.

Considering the aforementioned, we demand from the leadership of the National Assembly to:

- Immediately restore the right of Lilian Galstyan, photo correspondent of *Pam* to enter the parliament and cover the NA activity;
- Annul or recall the resolutions and drafts restricting journalistic activity and abstain from similar initiatives in the future;
- Lay down in one document all problems arising from the relations between the parliament and the media and initiate broad discussions with the participation of journalists accredited in the National assembly and the relevant stakeholders and experts with a view to finding lawful and reasonable solutions to them.

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