

## **Statement Regarding the Restrictions on the Activities of Media Representatives in the Parliament**

11 August, 2021, Yerevan

On 11 August, following a heated exchange between the MPs from the ruling faction and the opposition, Alen Simonyan, Speaker of the National Assembly ordered to discontinue live broadcast. In addition to this, the security officers prohibited the journalists and cameramen accredited with the parliament to shoot the incident from the box allocated to them.

We, the undersigned journalistic organisations note that the Speaker of the National Assembly clearly exceeded his powers: the RA Constitutional Law on the Rules of the National Assembly Procedures does not foresee such a power. RA citizens have a right to and must be informed of anything happening in the parliament, including the conduct of each and every single MP, regardless of whether this conduct is assessed positively or negatively.

We harshly condemn the prohibition imposed on the media representatives by the security officers whereby they were not able to shoot the conflicting situation in the plenary session hall.

Utterly shocked at yet another incident of restricting without any good reason the activities of the journalists accredited in the parliament, yet another infringement on the right to be informed of the RA citizens, we hereby reiterate the assessment as reflected in our August 5 **statement**, and we demand that the NA leadership:

- Publicly provide explanations on the legal basis of the interrupted live broadcast of the NA sitting and where there is no such basis, issue a public apology and guarantee that no such incidents will be repeated in the future;,
- Prevent any incident of obstruction of professional journalistic activity in the NA and any attempt at applying ungrounded restrictions;,
- Take measures to ensure that the security officers do not exceed their powers and in no way interfere with the work of the media representatives, except for cases provided by the rules of procedure, of which journalists are informed in advance;
- Annul all the restrictions applied to our colleagues since 2 August until a new rules of procedure for the work of media representatives in the parliament is drafted with the participation of accredited journalists and stakeholder organisations.

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