

Statement regarding the detention and arrest of “Yerkir Media” TV Company Director Bagrat Yesayan

3 June 2022, Yerevan

On June 10, 2022, four National Security Service officers, without prior notice, broke into the office of Bagrat Yesayan, Director of “Yerkir Media” TV Company and member of the “ARF-Dashnaktsutyun” party Armenian Supreme Body, and arrested him. According to lawyer Vahe Yeprikyan, Bagrat Yesayan was charged with Article 38-225, Part 2 of the RA Criminal Code (violence, pogroms or arson, destruction or damage to property during a mass disorder) and Article 164, Part 1 (obstruction to the journalist’s legal professional activities or forcing the journalist to disseminate or refuse to disseminate information).

This charge is related to the [attack](#) against the Yerevan Bureau of “Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty” on the night of November 10, 2020, which resulted in the institution of a criminal case. On the same day, we, the undersigned journalistic organizations, issued a [statement](#) expressing our indignation, condemning the harassment against the media and its employees. Nevertheless, taking note of the fact that Bagrat Yesayan, as a participant in the mentioned incident, did not hinder the preliminary investigation and did not avoid providing testimony, his detention, and arrest are unacceptable. Especially when it has been carried out demonstratively, without prior notice on the premises of the media headed by Yesayan.

In this regard, we welcome the June 11, 2022 decision of the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan, which rejected the NSS motion for Bagrat Yesayan’s detention.

While reiterating our position that the attack against the Yerevan Bureau of RFE/RL on the night of November 10, 2020, is a highly reprehensible act with legal consequences, we nevertheless insist that a comprehensive and fully objective investigation of this incident should be conducted. Hence, we demand from the body carrying out the preliminary investigation act strictly within the law, steadfastly adhere to its letter and spirit, and not give any reason for political manipulation.

COMMITTEE TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

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