**Statement regarding the violence against journalists and cameramen on June 12**

**13 June 2024, Yerevan**

More than 10 journalists and cameramen carrying out their professional duties at the heart of events sustained injuries along with numerous demonstrators as a result of the police using special measures against the protest organized by the “Tavush for the Motherland” movement near the RA National Assembly on June 12.

Thus, **“News.am”** **cameraman Vazgen Yetumyan, “Armlur.am”** **cameraman Hovsep Hovsepyan,” “CivilNet”** **cameraman Narek Hayryan, “ABC Media”** **reporters Naneh Hayrapetyan and Aghvan Asoyan,  cameramen Edik Malakyan and Arman Gharibyan, “Mediahub.am” reporter Nareh Gevorgyan, “AlphaNews” reporter Arpineh Baghdasaryan and cameraman Hovhannes Hakobyan**were injured from the explosions of stun grenades and the resulting stampede.

During the clashes, the equipment of “Pastinfo” news agency, “PARA TV”, “Sputnik Armenia” and other media was damaged or lost, including live broadcast devices, cameras and microphones.

We, the undersigned journalistic organizations, strongly condemn the police’s use of brute force against media representatives, unprofessional, ill-considered actions that led to serious consequences. Numerous videos, as well as a photograph by “Photolure” news agency clearly show stun grenades being also aimed at journalists and cameramen, where the cameras of the media were concentrated. This situation is reminiscent of the targeting of journalists covering the events in Yerevan’s Sari Tagh district in July 2016, and the use of unjustified force and persecution against them, indicating that the operational methods of the police have seen almost no change and casting serious doubt on the claims about proclaimed reforms.

In this context, the unconditional justification of the security structures’ actions by the country’s top officials, without even waiting for the events’ analysis results, is highly concerning. This approach creates fertile ground for the recurrence of such actions in the future.

Another source of indignation is the fact that on the same day when a heated argument broke out between government and opposition representatives during the Q&A session with the Prime Minister at the National Assembly, the security officers tried to forcibly remove the journalists from the NA lodge, barring them from carrying out their professional duties, such as filming what was happening in the NA session hall. This unacceptable approach in the parliament has also been observed in previous years, establishing a vicious tradition.

Based on the above, we demand:

• the ruling force to issue a statement and apologize to all the journalists and media affected by the events of June 12, to compensate for their damages and take measures to ensure their safety during crisis situations;

• the Ministry of Internal Affairs to conduct an internal probe and analyze the legality and proportionality of the police actions, identify violations, publicly acknowledge them, and hold accountable the officers who abused their authority.

We extend our solidarity and support to all the journalists and cameramen affected by these distressing events and wish them speedy recovery and fortitude.

**COMMITTEE TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

**YEREVAN PRESS CLUB**

**MEDIA INITIATIVES CENTER**

**JOURNALISTS’ CLUB “ASPAREZ”**

**MEDIA DIVERSITY INSTITUTE-ARMENIA**

**PUBLIC JOURNALISM CLUB**

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**“JOURNALISTS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS” NGO**

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