**Statement Regarding the offensive remarks of RA NA Deputy Hovik Aghazaryan against Knar Manukyan, a correspondent of “Zhoghovurd” daily and Armlur.am**

**16 October 2024, Yerevan**

On October 15, 2024, in the RA National Assembly, Hovik Aghazaryan, a deputy from the “Civil Contract” faction, came across Knar Manukyan, a correspondent for “Zhoghovurd” daily and Armlur.am accredited in the parliament. During their encounter, Aghazaryan expressed dissatisfaction with the [interview](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iqtuD1DHEo) she had published featuring him and insulted her. According to the journalist, the deputy called her a “scoundrel”, “disgusting” and used hate speech, by saying “Persian, you are worse than a Persian woman” (it is difficult to understand what he meant by such a strange remark).

On the same day, Hovik Aghazaryan denied using the word “Persian”, but reporters from other media had witnessed the incident. In particular, Ruzan Khachatryan, a journalist from News.am, confirmed that the deputy had used that word.

We, the undersigned journalistic organizations, express our indignation and condemn this indecent behavior of the deputy from the ruling faction. We note that this is merely one incident among many conflicts, displays of disrespect and insults between the NA deputies and journalists. This is a serious issue that necessitates a comprehensive discussion in the Ethics Committee of the Parliament, whose formation and operation remain unrealized for unclear reasons.

Regarding the aforementioned incident, we demand:

• Deputy Hovik Aghazaryan to issue a public apology to journalist Knar Manukyan and assure that he will refrain from exhibiting disrespectful behavior towards media representatives in the future;

• the “Civil Contract” faction to evaluate Hovik Aghazaryan’s behavior and provide the public with updates;

• the leadership of the National Assembly to take measures to relieve the existing tension in relations between deputies and journalists, to examine the emerging conflicts in the Ethics Committee and draw conclusions.

**COMMITTEE TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

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