**Statement Regarding the violence and pressures applied to journalists during the last week**

**20 May 2024, Yerevan**

In the past week, multiple cases of violations of the rights of journalists and cameramen covering the ongoing protests in the country were documented. On May 16, 2024, Gegham Nazaryan, a Deputy from the National Assembly “Hayastan” faction, who had traveled to Kirants village of Tavush region to persuade local residents struggling against the demarcation to open the blocked Kirants-Voskepar road, upon noticing that NewDay.am editor Ani Gevorgyan was streaming live from the scene, displayed aggressive behavior, insulted the journalist, accused her of executing orders and making manipulations and demanded that she stop filming.

On May 15, during police operations at a protest in the capital’s Republic Square, Ani Nerkararyan, a journalist from Oragir.News covering the events, was hit by a bus.

On May 14, during disobedience actions in Yerevan, a police car hit Mediahub.am journalist Nareh Gevorgyan while she was on the pedestrian crossing at the junction of Abovyan Street and Republic Square. She suffered a leg injury, underwent examination at a medical center, and was discharged. The RA Investigative Committee initiated criminal proceedings regarding the incident, under Article 342, Part 1 of the RA Criminal Code.

On the same day, a verbal altercation broke out between Haykaz Jomardyan, commander of the Yerevan Police Special Forces, and Hasmik Arakelyan, a reporter from Antifake.am. When Arakelyan called the policemen who spoke disrespectfully to a parent of a fallen serviceman “blasphemers”, Jomardyan countered, “You are the blasphemer, you are scum, Hasmik Arakelyan”. The journalist filed a crime report, leading to an internal probe against Haykaz Jomardyan.

With awareness that in some cases internal probes or criminal proceedings have been initiated against police officers and noting that since the beginning of the protests related to the border demarcation there have been 10 cases of violence and 5 cases of pressure against media representatives, we, the undersigned journalistic organizations, reiterate our deep concern over the situation and call on:

• the Ministry of Internal Affairs to intensify efforts with the police personnel, guiding officers to act more professionally, to strictly observe the principle of proportionality when force is necessary, and when dealing with journalists, refrain from hindering their legitimate professional activities, while ensuring their safety;

• state officials and politicians to demonstrate restraint and responsibility in public discourse, displaying tolerance towards media representatives, regardless of the “camp” they may be associated with;

• journalists and cameramen to carry out their mission with utmost responsibility and demonstrate conduct befitting their profession, especially during moments of tension strictly adhering to the norms of journalistic ethics.

**COMMITTEE TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

**YEREVAN PRESS CLUB**

**MEDIA INITIATIVES CENTER**

**MEDIA DIVERSITY INSTITUTE-ARMENIA**

**PUBLIC JOURNALISM CLUB**

**“JOURNALISTS FOR THE FUTURE” NGO**

**“JOURNALISTS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS” NGO**

**GORIS PRESS CLUB**