**Statement Regarding MP Andranik Kocharyan’s reckless behavior towards journalist Hripsime Jebejyan**

**21 March 2025, Yerevan**

On March 20, 2025, a highly concerning and unacceptable attitude towards a journalist was once again exhibited in the National Assembly. Andranik Kocharyan, a deputy from the *Civil Contract* faction and chair of the NA Standing Committee on Defense and Security, upon noticing that Hripsimeh Jebejyan, the head of the news service at *Tribune.am* website, had also joined a group of reporters that had initiated a briefing with him, demanded that she reposition herself and not disturb. When Jebejyan attempted to seek clarification regarding this treatment, the deputy urged her to “clean her lips.”

We, the undersigned journalistic organizations, strongly condemn this unbridled conduct of a high-ranking official, underscoring that Hripsimeh Jebejyan faced discrimination on the grounds of both her professional activity and her gender. It is particularly outrageous that Andranik Kocharyan refused to apologize to the journalist after the incident and, based on his later remarks, has no intention of doing so. At the same time, he is one of the officials who most frequently targets and belittles journalists, including Hripsimeh Jebejyan.

Conflicts of this kind have become an integral part of the parliament’s daily life. We have repeatedly highlighted the issue of severe tension and intolerance in relations between deputies and journalists, where representatives of the ruling force demonstrate indecent behavior and insult reporters from opposition media, while opposition figures exhibit similar behavior towards pro-government media representatives. Moreover, as a rule, such conflicts remain without consequences, with no parliamentarian having been held accountable so far. In this regard, the settlement of issues related to the establishment of the Ethics Committee for the NA deputies has become more than urgent.

Based on the above, we demand:

• the Civil Contract party and its parliamentary faction, to make deputy Andranik Kocharyan’s behavior in his interaction with journalist Hripsimeh Jebejyan a subject of discussion and issue a public apology to her;

• the NA leadership and all factions, to initiate the creation of a parliamentary ethics committee and implement the necessary legislative amendments to that end.

**COMMITTEE TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

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