**Statement Regarding the disproportionate actions of the State Patrol Service employees in the National Assembly**

**27 March 2025, Yerevan**

On March 26, 2025, just as the Parliament-Government Q&A session was about to begin in the National Assembly, journalists accredited to the NA attempted to stage a protest from the press lodge, unfurling a poster featuring an image of Deputy Andranik Kocharyan, accompanied by the messages “Say sorry,” “Andranik Kocharyan, clean your lips!” This act of protest was roughly interrupted by the officers of the State Protection Service. In essence, this is the continuation of the [***incident***](https://khosq.am/en/2025/03/21/statement-129/) that occurred in the parliament a few days earlier, when Deputy Andranik Kocharyan displayed an offensive attitude towards Hripsimeh Jebejyan, the head of the news service at *Tribune.am* website.

We, the undersigned journalistic organizations, have pointed out in multiple of our statements (see links: [***1,***](https://khosq.am/en/2024/11/15/statement-127/)[***2,***](https://khosq.am/en/2024/06/13/statement-123/)[***3***](https://khosq.am/2021/08/25/%d5%b0%d5%a1%d5%b5%d5%bf%d5%a1%d6%80%d5%a1%d6%80%d5%b8%d6%82%d5%a9%d5%b5%d5%b8%d6%82%d5%b6-90/)*)* that security service officers in the parliament have been abusing their powers to obstruct the activities of journalists, in some cases also resorting to the use of disproportionate force against them. As for the latest incident, it is a flagrant violation of journalists’ freedom of expression, representing an unlawful and brutal restriction on their ability to defend their own rights. All these incidents point to a longstanding confrontation between the activities of the media and the powers of the security service within the National Assembly. The obstruction of legitimate journalistic activities, the unjustified use of force, and restrictions on freedom of expression – disguised as measures to protect state institutions – are unacceptable.

Based on the above, we demand:

* the leadership of the National Assembly, to discuss and disclose how this and similar past incidents involving security officers were made possible, and to take steps that will prevent such occurrences in the future;
* the State Protection Service, to conduct an internal probe into the March 26 incident, hold liable the officers who abused their powers, and reassess their approaches for interacting with media representatives;
* the NA *Civil Contract* faction, to demonstrate political will and issue a public assessment of Deputy Andranik Kocharyan’s conduct towards journalist Hripsimeh Jebejyan, which has sparked public outrage.

**COMMITTEE TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

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