**Statement Regarding the Creation of the Parliamentary Ethics Committee**

**29 April 2025, Yerevan**

On April 25, 2025, during a session of the National Assembly Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs, members of the *Civil Contract* faction voted down the proposal to establish an ethics committee regarding the conduct of Deputy Andranik Kocharyan.

As a reminder, on March 20, 2025, during a briefing with journalists, Andranik Kocharyan, the Chair of the NA Standing Committee on Defense and Security, demanded that Hripsimeh Jebejyan, the head of the news service at *Tribune.am* website, reposition herself, and, clearly demonstrating his unwillingness to talk to the journalist, insulted her with an obscene remark. We, the undersigned organizations, issued a [***statement***](https://khosq.am/en/2025/03/21/statement-129/)condemning the incident, called for a probe into the deputy’s conduct and a corresponding assessment through the initiation of a parliamentary ethics committee. Hripsimeh Jebejyan, in turn, submitted a letter signed by 161 journalists to the RA Prime Minister and the NA Staff, echoing the same demands.

It is hard to determine the main reason behind the CC majority in the NA Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs opposing the creation of a parliamentary ethics committee: is it due to the fact that the proposal was presented by opposition factions, whose suggestions are, as a rule, dismissed by the ruling force, or is it a manifestation of solidarity towards a fellow party member, irrespective of his conduct? In any case, the absence of an assessment of Andranik Kocharyan’s indecent behavior and the failure to establish an ethics committee to at least discuss the issue indicate that the ruling majority sees nothing unusual in such conflicts, regards the insulting of journalists as normal, and thereby greenlights such incidents.

This might be the reason why confrontations between deputies and media representatives have become frequent recently. Suffice it to recall the disrespectful attitude of NA Speaker Alen Simonyan, as well as deputies Khachatur Sukiasyan, Hovik Aghazaryan, Vilen Gabrielyan and others towards various journalists.

We are convinced that the combat against indecent conduct in a polarized environment must begin with the National Assembly itself. On the one hand, politicians, including representatives of the parliamentary majority, complain about the atmosphere of intolerance, and on the other hand, they evidently show unwillingness to take necessary steps to address it, rejecting the establishment of an ethics committee. Meanwhile, the situation in the National Assembly – particularly, the tension in the relations between deputies and journalists – requires far more responsible solutions, suggesting political open-mindedness.

We, the undersigned journalistic organizations, express our disappointment that parliamentarians continuously shy away from the idea of ​​having an ethics committee. We reiterate our call for legislative amendments to further simplify the process of setting up such a body or, preferably, to establish a standing committee on parliamentary ethics.

**COMMITTEE TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

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