**Statement Regarding the violence against Davit Levonyan, the correspondent of the Civic.am, in the territory of the National Assembly**

**30 April 2024, Yerevan**

On April 30, 2024, Davit Levonyan, a reporter of Civic.am, was subjected to physical violence near the central building of the National Assembly. Artur Sukoyan, who accompanies NA “Armenia” faction Deputy Levon Kocharyan and presents himself as his assistant, approached the journalist, entered into an argument with him, striking him in the face and alleging “blasphemy”. According to Davit Levonyan, Sukoyan’s actions were provoked by the journalist’s recent remarks on his personal YouTube channel where he had stated that Bishop Bagrat Galstanyan, head of the Diocese of Tavush, was serving Russian interests.

We, the undersigned journalistic organizations, strongly condemn the intolerance and violence directed towards a media representative. Even if the journalist’s YouTube video contained insult or defamation, resorting to physical force is never justifiable when legal channels are available to address the issue.

It is evident that in recent days, alongside some escalation of social and political tensions in the country, journalists and cameramen carrying out their professional duties have faced a new wave of attacks and various pressures. This cannot but cause deep concern and resentment, especially considering that these acts of violence, as a rule, are not subject to legal assessment and consequences, thereby contributing to the increase in the number of similar incidents.

Based on the above, we demand:

• the law enforcement agencies to carry out meticulous and impartial investigation regarding the facts of violence against media representatives that occurred both today and in past days and provide the public with information about the results;

• Deputy Levon Kocharyan to issue a statement, apologizing to the journalist for the violence and evaluating the actions of his assistant.

Amidst this recent wave of violence against media professionals, we extend our solidarity and support to our colleagues. We call on the authorities and all opposition forces to demonstrate tolerance and civilized approach towards journalists and cameramen, irrespective of the “camp” their media is associated with.

**COMMITTEE TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

**YEREVAN PRESS CLUB**

**MEDIA INITIATIVES CENTER**

**JOURNALISTS’ CLUB “ASPAREZ”**

**PUBLIC JOURNALISM CLUB**

**MEDIA DIVERSITY INSTITUTE-ARMENIA**

**“JOURNALISTS FOR THE FUTURE” NGO**

**“JOURNALISTS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS” NGO**

**GORIS PRESS CLUB**