

Quarterly Report On the Situation with Freedom of Speech and Violations of Rights of Journalists and Media in Armenia (April-June 2010)

Starting from 2010, the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression will provide interim quarterly reports, in addition to annual reports, on the situation with freedom of speech, including the following:

1. Legislation on the freedom of speech and media, amendments to such legislation and related processes;
2. The economic environment and its influence on the media;
3. The political environment and its influence on the media;
4. Violations of rights of the media and journalists.

The first quarterly report was presented on April 8, 2010.

This report covers the period of April-June 2010.

1. Legislation on the Freedom of Speech and Media

The second quarter of 2010, as well as January-March, was marked with legal initiatives on freedom of expression and media.

On May 18, the National Assembly adopted the package of draft laws “On Amendments and Supplements to the RA Civil Code”, “On Amendments to the RA Criminal Code”, “On Amendments to the RA Criminal Procedure Code”. The initiators of the draft laws are representatives of three parties of the coalition: Hovhannes Sahakyan (Republican Party of Armenia - RPA), Hovhannes Margaryan (Orinats Yerkir Party – Country of Law), Ruben Gevorgyan (Prosperous Armenia Party – PAP). These draft laws envisaged decriminalization of libel and insult, i.e. violations of these laws transferred from the regulation field of the Criminal Code to the Civil Code field. The main issue of the package was “On the amendments and supplements to the RA Civil Code”. After the first reading (March 18, 2010, see CTFE first quarterly report), the RA NA Standing Committee on State and Legal Issues organized parliamentary hearings. Then a task group was formed to make amendments and supplements to the draft law. Though, after the changes some concerns were disseminated, according to some experts, there is always a threat of criminal prosecution of the mass media for as long as there is Article 333 in the Criminal Code (False denunciation), the formulations of which only slightly differ from that of libel.

In the draft law “On Amendments and Supplements to the RA Civil Code” adopted in the first reading, there was a dangerous provision in the formulation of “Insult”, according to which insult was considered to be an opinion or estimating judgment.

Due to the suggestion of the CPFE experts, it was surpassed in the adopted law, as well as the following was added, “According to this law, the public expression in this situation and its content can be considered as a non insult if it is based on concrete facts or is accounted for by an overwhelming public benefit.”

One of the achievements of the draft law adopted in the second reading is that it involved (according to media experts) a provision on relieving from responsibility for libel and insult, which was amended due to the RA Law “On Mass Communication”. The formulation is as follows, “A person who makes a public announcement is relieved from responsibility for insult or libel, if it is word-for-word conscientious

reproduction of some material spread by a news agency, public speech of a person, official document of state authorities, mass media, author or other creative work, and if the source is cited when spreading the information.” Another important provision is added, according to which an individual is deprived of the right to be protected for libel and insult, if before filing an appeal he/she has demanded to issue a denial, as envisaged by Article 8 of the RA Law on “Mass Communication”, and publish a response, and the mass media has complied with that demand. Thus, the draft law package that was severely criticized at the beginning of the year is considered to be rather positive in its current shape. Concerns are connected with the practical use of the law.

On June 10 the extraordinary session of the RA National Assembly fully adopted the draft law “On Amendments and Supplements to the RA Law on Television and Radio” in the second reading. The draft law was introduced by the RA Interdepartmental Commission on TV and Radio Digitalization. On May 13, the RA government approved the draft law, and treated it as urgent. With the participation of representatives from the government, interdepartmental commission, international organizations and media experts, the draft law was discussed on May 14 during the roundtable discussion initiated by “Partnership for Open Society” and journalist NGOs, as well as on May 18, during the seminar organized by the OSCE Yerevan office. During that seminar, conclusions of OSCE experts on the law were presented. After having been adopted in the first reading, the RA NA Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport organized parliamentary hearings on the draft law on May 26, during which the authors of the draft law – members of the Interdepartmental Commission, as well as MPs, heads of journalist NGOs, experts and representatives of international organizations, made reports. After the hearings, the Interdepartmental Commission initiated the discussion of the suggestions. On June 3, a discussion took place in the RA Ministry of Economy, and the draft for the second reading was introduced at the four-day session on June 7-10. It seemed that after so many discussions the authors of the draft law would listen to the voice of the society and the international organizations and would make some changes to the draft law. However, only insignificant editorial changes were made, whereas in principal issues there was no concession. Journalistic organizations of Armenia (including the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression) have expressed their positions on the draft law in several statements. In particular, before the second reading, these NGOs had suggested leaving only those provisions in the RA Law “On Amendments and Supplements to the RA Law on Television and Radio” that immediately deal with the broadcast digitalization and give an opportunity to announce and organize a tender to broadcast in the state multiplex network on July 20, 2010; and abolishing all the other amendments and supplements that do not directly deal with digitalization and tenders, publishing the results of the broadcast frequency audit which would justify the fact why there are envisaged only 18 frequency broadcasting licenses in the multiplex network; envisaging a provision on satellite broadcast which would not depend on the air broadcast license in Armenia, working out supplements for Radio and television digitalization system, thus giving answers to the questions and concerns that the organizations introduced at the parliamentary hearings on May 26.” Comments and suggestions were introduced alongside with the draft law.

Ensuring that before the second reading only the provisions dealing directly with the digitalization would be left in the draft law, its authors made amendments to other articles that had no connection with this process. In particular, the public TV and radio advertisement limitation (the demand not to interrupt programs with advertisements) was taken out of the adopted law, and the volume of advertisements during programs changed from 5 to 7 per cent. Moreover, after the second reading essentially an anti-constitutional provision was imported – the first part of Article 35 was edited, as a result of which the activity of the Public TV and Radio Company remains out of any regulation and control. Besides, the provisions on having air broadcast license in Armenia for satellite broadcasting were maintained. By having given the formulation “A license is the only legal basis allowing implementation of TV and Radio program broadcast in the territory of Armenia” (Article 46), the authors created basis for not allowing satellite and Internet broadcast.

The results of the broadcasting frequencies audit have never been published.

As for the digitalization and organization of license tenders, the articles regulating these processes did not bear significant changes, and again the winner decision-making will contain elements of Armenian subjectivism. Only under the pressure of international organizations, the authors have included

a provision according to which in case of a positive decision (to grant the license), the choice should be justified.

All in all, the RA Government has worked out and introduced to the National Assembly not a draft law “On Amendments and Supplements to the RA Law on Television and Radio”, but a document the format of which reminds a new law. With the adoption of this law, in 2011 the number of broadcasting TV channels in the capital will be reduced from 22 to 18, which will be a blow to the diversity of TV air. The already adopted law fixes the status quo of the authority-controlled air in the TV market.

Summing up the following can be concluded, if in case of decriminalization of libel and insult the law-maker cooperated with the civil society, having accepted the main suggestions, the cooperation over the draft law “On Amendments and Supplements to the RA Law on Television and Radio” was more imitative. The authorities did not concede in any principal issues. It testifies that the ruling authorities do not want to liberalize the broadcasting field, moreover, they are striving for maintaining complete control over it.

According to CPFE experts, the document entitled “Charter of Ethical Principles of TV and Radio Broadcasters” elaborated in the RA Public Council, had the same intention of maintaining control, its introduction to TV and Radio companies as if for self-regulation and its signing by several broadcasters on April 21. We estimate it as a process hindering the real self-regulation of mass media.

2. The Economic Conditions

When estimating the influence of economic environment on media activity, mostly the ownership of these media by the government and the latter’s control over them, and whether it influences the pluralism is being taken into account. Is the media ownership transparent? Do the government and other entities control media through advertisements or financial support? Is the media ownership centralized? Does it influence the content pluralism? Is the country’s economic condition increasing media dependence on the state, parties, big business or other influential political entities?

The Committee will give answers to these questions later, after having completed the whole research which is in progress. In the “**Pressure on the Media and Media Staff**” section of the current report, we will present the attempts of the authorities to put pressure on GALA TV Company in Gyumri through financial levers.

3. The Political Situation and Its Influence

In its previous reports the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression had mentioned that the violation of rights of journalists and media became more active as political tensions increased. Though there were no elections in the second quarter of 2010, there was some political tension, when a group of young activists from Armenian National Congress decided to organize a demonstration in the Freedom Square. In this period law-enforcement bodies demonstrated violence against journalists. These cases are presented in the section “*Physical Violence Against Journalists*” of the current report.

4. Violation of Rights of Journalists and the Media

The second quarter of 2010, as compared to April-June 2009, was relatively quiet. It is natural, since on May 31, 2009 the Elections to Yerevan Council of Elderly took place, and four incidents connected with the activity of journalists were recorded.

Below is a comparison of violations that had occurred in the second quarters of 2009 and 2010:

Types of violations / Year	2009 2nd quarter	2010 2nd quarter
Physical violence against journalists	8	3
Pressure on the media and media staff	1	5
Violation of the right to seek and impart information	1	5

Physical Violence Against Journalists

In the second quarter of 2010, three cases of violence and developments of two previous cases have been recorded. One of these cases is presented in this section and the other in the section **“Pressure on Media and Media Staff”**.

On April 1, at a café being constructed in the former Ghukasyan Park located between Abovyan and Teryan streets, an unknown person hindered the work of Azg Daily’s journalist. He attacked the journalist and hit him twice on the shoulder and head trying to take away his photo camera and bag. Some students came and helped him. The person hindering the journalist’s activity threatened, “Not that your days, but your hours are counted.”

On April 30 it was one year since the assault against coordinator of “Armenia Today” News Agency Argishti Kiviryan has taken place. On the same day during the press conference Argishti Kiviryan presented all the things done within that year. Two people have been arrested – Vladik Serobyan and Gurgen Kilikyan.

During the confrontation, he recognized one of them. However, on March 8 they were released from prison. According to Kiviryan, the attempted murder had been ordered by prefect of Akhalkalaki Samvel Petrosyan, as he had lots of critical publications on the activities of the latter. On April 30, in his interview to “Hetq” the prefect of Akhalkalaki region denied his connection to the accident.

On April 30, 2009, at dawn, unknown people attacked Kiviryan with wooden bludgeons when the journalist was leaving his office in that building for home. Argishti Kiviryan was transported to Erebuni medical center in serious condition with various injuries. Upon the attack on Argishti Kiviryan, the police has instituted criminal proceedings on Article 117 of the RA Criminal Code (“Intentional non-grave health injuries”). Later, the case was transmitted to the Investigative Department of RA National Security Service, where the case was re-qualified to Article 34-104 of the RA Criminal Code (“Murder attempt”).

On May 31 journalists of “Haykakan zhamanak” Daily Syuzanna Poghosyan and “Hayq” newspaper Lilit Tadevosyan were detained in Yerevan Freedom Square when covering the action of Armenian National Congress activists. According to Lilit Tadevosyan, they had been implementing their journalistic activity in the Freedom Square, and when Chairwoman of Social Democrat Hnchak Party Lyudmila Sargsyan was taken to the police car, journalists were pushed away from the Freedom Square. Policemen had been pushing and shoving journalists while they were doing some recording, after that they were detained. The journalists were set free only in three hours.

On May 31 in the vicinity of Freedom Square the police used force and detained and arrested journalist of “Haykakan Zhamanak” Daily Ani Gevorgyan. According to the police statement, the journalist is accused of not obeying policeman Hambardzum Boksyian and of “using violence that does not represent threat to the life – slapping and hurting.” Criminal proceedings were instituted against the journalist according to Part 1 of Article 316 (“Violence against a Representative of Power”) of the RA Criminal Code. According to “Haykakan Zhamanak” newspaper’s editorial staff, Ani’s arrest is the expression of personal revenge of RA Chief of Police Alik Sargsyan, as he didn’t like the journalist’s critical publications. On June 1, the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression and partner

organizations made announcements stating that “such violent methods against journalists are unacceptable for a democratic society. According to Article 4 of the RA Law “On Mass Communication”, “The journalist in the process of exercising professional activities as person at public duty is protected by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia”, Point 2 of Article 164 of the RA Criminal Code “Impeding the Legitimate Professional Activities of a Journalist” envisages punishment for similar deeds by authoritative people. We demand that the RA Police heads immediately release journalist of “Haykakan Zhamanak” Daily Ani Gevorgyan and stop any criminal proceedings against her, instead punishing policemen who abused their authority.” Several international human rights organizations expressed their concerns in various statements. On June 3, the journalist was set free as a precautionary measure, giving a cognizance not to leave the country.

Pressure on the Media and Media Staff

On April 6 Gala TV Company of Gyumri announced that it had imported new technology for re-equipment, the customs clearance of which is artificially prolonged. The TV Company has implemented all its documentary responsibilities; however, the Shirak region’s customs office of the RA State Revenue Committee (SRC) by the Government had terminated the customs clearance process without giving any justifications. GALA heads addressed the Head of the Shirak region SRC with a letter, though without any result. On April 8, collaborators of SRC tax inspection visited the TV Company to execute SRC President G. Khachatryan’s directions, according to which the property belonging to the founder of GALA TV Company CHAP LLC, as well as the banking accounts in the amount of 822.2 thousand AMD (the amount of tax commitments) were seized.

The RA Human Rights Defender also interfered with this case by sending a letter to SRC head. On April 8, the SRC spread its interpretation, according to which the customs clearance of the imported goods has been terminated because of GALA’s tax commitments in the amount of 822,803 AMD. GALA considered SRC working manner illegal. On May 13, collaborators of the regional department of Compulsory Enforcement Service of Judicial Acts visited the TV Company. The aim of the visit was to enforce the decision of the RA Administrative court. 822,200 AMD was seized from CHAP LLC. The whole story finished with the customs clearance of GALA’s technical equipment on May 20. We estimate this as an expression of financial pressure on mass media through state levers. We should add that an experimented method of economically pressing GALA is going on – advertisers avoid putting advertisement there. On May 27, Executive Director of the TV Company Karine Harutyunyan told CPFE that in May they had only one advertiser.

On May 14 it became known, that the inspector of RA Police Kentron (Center) Investigation Department Garik Begoyan decided to withdraw the proceedings against police inspector Gagik Margaryan who had attacked photojournalist Gagik Shamshyan, as well as to initiate criminal proceedings against the latter for false denunciation. As a reminder, in the morning of February 24, 2010, an action of violence took place against the photojournalist of “Aravot” and “Chorrord Inqnishkhanutyun” newspapers Gagik Shamshyan in front of the RA Prosecutor’s Office. The photojournalist was taking photos of prosecutors and other high-ranking officials who were coming to participate in the Collegium Session. However, a 30-year old man banned Shamshyan taking photos, then started cursing him and in front of the Prosecutor’s Office hit him. Gagik Shamshyan had got injuries and received medical assistance. Later on, the violator turned out to be inspector Gagik Margaryan from the RA Special Investigation Service. On May 10, Gagik Shamshyan learnt from the inspector of RA Police Kentron (Center) Investigation Department Garik Begoyan that criminal proceedings had been initiated against him on Part 2 Point 2 of Article 333 (“False denunciation”) of the RA Criminal Code. The photojournalist turned to RA Prosecutor General Aghvan Hovsepyan complaining of the intentional purpose of the preliminary investigation, ill-founded withdrawal of the criminal proceedings and his being charged. This was followed by the response of the Deputy Prosecutor of Yerevan S. Khachatryan, informing that there are “no bases for eliminating” the decision on the case. The photojournalist made an appeal to the court of general jurisdiction of Kentron and Nork-Marash administrative districts of Yerevan. The consideration of the appeal was appointed for June 15, though the first session was delayed.

On April 16 “Hraparak” Daily received the conclusion of the National Expert Bureau State Non-Commercial Organization of the National Academy of Sciences on the video file containing intimate sequences “starred” by (according to the newspaper) Hrach Keshishyan. The experts could not fully answer the questions of the court, saying that the quality of the video that the newspaper had presented does not allow doing portrait identification. Though it is mentioned in the conclusion of the National Expert Bureau State Non-Commercial Organization that it is not possible to do a full identification, the experts had estimated the similarity between the “hero” of the sequence and Hrach Keshishyan to be about 30-40%. The sessions of the court on April 30 and June 18 were delayed with various arguments. Nevertheless, there was even a suggestion to reach a settlement, even its text had been discussed, however, later on the claimant refused it.

When the article about the video was published in the July 18, 2009 issue of “Hraparak” Daily, Keshishyan wrote a letter to the newspaper demanding to publish a disclaimer that it was not him on the video. “Hraparak” published his letter but did not disclaim the information. Keshishyan sued them, as a compensation demanding 5mln AMD.

On May 24 head of Armavir garrison of Military Police of the RA Defense Ministry, President of “Glorious combatants” organization Grisha Sargsyan called to the editor’s office of “Chorrord inqnishkhanutyun” newspaper with threats. He was angry with the newspaper’s article on May 22 issue on his activity. He told Vice-Director Mher Ghalechyan to warn journalist Taguhi Tovmasyan and photojournalist Gagik Shamshyan that he intends to “punish” them and that he will “shoot them both in the head.” President of “Glorious combatants” Grisha Sargsyan also pointed out his power, shouting, “Have you forgotten how many people I have that can come and bomb you editor’s office? You don’t know me yet.” A couple of days later after this incident, it became known that Grisha Sargsyan was fired from office, as for his activities, service examination has been initiated.

On June 14 during the lawsuit on plunder of a criminal grouping on the private residence of the former head of State Customs Committee Armen Avetisyan, the relatives of the accused Ara Karapetyan used pressure on “Aravot” Daily’s journalist who was covering the hearings. After the lawsuit, the relatives of the gang threatened the same journalist to restrain from publications or else “something bad will happen”.

On June 25 in the Court of First Instance of Shirak region restarted the lawsuit between Gyumri City Hall and CHAP LLC (founder of GALA TV Company) on the exploitation of the old TV tower of the city. The dispute started in November 2007. The City Hall of Gyumri turned to the RA Economic Court demanding that they made CHAP LLC stop the exploitation of the TV tower and dismantle the equipment located there. The attempts of the TV Company to solve the problem by negotiations did not achieve any results. On February 28, 2008, the Court announced a verdict in favor of the City Hall, however, on October 31, 2008, the Court of Appeal quashed the verdict and sent the case to the Court of First Instance of Shirak region for a new hearing. On the lawsuit of January 14, 2009, the Court of First Instance of Shirak region satisfied GALA’s application on conducting expert examination of the TV tower. On May 10, 2010, the experts of the RA expert examination center went there for expert examination on the spot. Nevertheless, on June 25, 2010 the results were not made public during the court hearings, and the lawsuit was delayed till July 12.

On June 25 the Court of General Jurisdiction of Kentron and Nork-Marash administrative districts of Yerevan started the lawsuit Ijevan City Hall vs. “Investigative journalists”. This case started on September 29, 2008 in the Civil Court of Yerevan. The claimant was demanding to disclaim the information stabbing the fame, dignity and business reputation of Ijevan Mayor Varujan Nersisyan that was published in May 5, 2008 issue of Hetq entitled “To whose pocket goes the money of the sand pit?” (the article was republished in AZG Daily’s inset of May 20, 2008 issue) and June 23, 2008 entitled “Will the three committees see illegal exploitation of water reservoir sand” (see details in 2008 and 2009 CPFE annual reports). Later, after judicial reformations, the case was moved to Kentron and Nork-Marash administrative districts of Yerevan which published the verdict on July 10, 2009 rejecting the claim of the City Hall. However, the City Hall of Ijevan brought an action to the Court of Superior

Jurisdiction, and on November 13 the RA Civil Court of Appeal disaffirmed the verdict of 25 the Court of General Jurisdiction of Kentron and Nork-Marash administrative districts and sent the case for additional re-examination. On June 25, 2010, the court finished the examination of the case and made the verdict public on July 9.

Violation of the Right to Seek and Impart Information

On April 16, in the small hall of the National Center of Aesthetic Education (NCAE), the film “Choice” shot on the script of journalist Tigran Paskevichyan should have been screened. However, in the morning of April 16, the screening of the film was banned on the decree of the NCAE Director Levon Igityan. Later it turned out that the RA Ministry of Science and Education put the ban. It is the second film of Paskevichyan that has been banned. In October 2008, the heads of “Moscow” Cinema house refused the screening of the first movie “Alienation” (“Otarum”) on land appropriation in the center of Yerevan.

On April 22, the RA Court of Cassation made its decision according to which it partially satisfied the appeal of the Freedom of Information Center (FOI Center) reversing the decision of the RA Administrative Court on the case “FOI vs. Zartonk community and the head of the community.” On August 13, 2009 the RA Administrative Court made a decision withdrawing the proceedings on the case, as the FIC representative withdrew two demands of the claims, and the court considered to withdraw the part of the FIC demand that deals with the violation of the law by the village community. The FIC made an appeal to the RA Administrative Court. The RA Court of Cassation disaffirmed the decision of the Administrative Court of August 13, 2009 and sent the case to the same court for re-examination.

On May 25 the RA Administrative Court (Vanadzor) dismissed the claim of “Aravot” Daily and Freedom of Information Center NGO against Lori region governor Aram Kocharyan. On August 19, 2009 “Aravot” sent an electronic request to the regional municipality asking to inform the aims of the expenditures from the RA state budget with the line “Other allowances from the budget”. In the court verdict it is recorded that the regional municipality had received the query but on the old address which did not appear to be the official address of the municipality at that moment. The court also admitted that “Aravot” could have been unaware of the change when sending the query to that e-mail available on the website of Lori regional municipality www.ori.region.am. The court also included in the protocol that the reply to the query sent on August 19, 2009 was received on April 21, 2010, i.e. 245 days later than within 5 days envisaged by law. After all this, the Administrative Court decided that the no-reply to the query cannot be estimated as illegal. “Aravot” and Freedom of Information Center informed that they will appeal the decision in the Court of Appeal.

On May 25 Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobyan did not allow reporter of “Hraparak” Daily Gayane Saribekyan to enter the Ministry of Diaspora for covering the reception of a band that had returned from Latin American tournée by saying “Did you come to write something bad?” “Hraparak” wrote about this in its May 26 issue.

On May 27 Hraparak reporter Hambardzum Hambardzumyan was not allowed to participate in the press conference organized by the Constitutional Right Union’s Azdak club. The guests of conference were writers Hovhannes Grigoryan and Ruben Hovsepyan, the topic was another writer Levon Javakhyan’s Azerbaijani literary award and the book presentation of a Turkish writer that took place in the Writers’ Union of Armenia.

On May 31 at the National Assembly of Armenia, the first outgoing session of the CSTO parliamentary assembly was convened, which only TV companies and some websites had the right to cover. Reporters of other media accredited in the NA were not allowed to enter the building of the parliament by being informed that the security service had received the list of journalists. However, not everyone accredited in the NA was on the list.

On May 31, the RA Administrative Court (Echmiatsin), after having examined the same case for the second time, answered to the claim of the Freedom of Information Center against Paraqar village community. The court made a decision to recognize as illegal the improper answer to the FOI query directed to the activity of the RA Armavir region's Paraqar community, as well as to make the village community provide answers to the query. As a reminder, the RA Administrative Court had dismissed FOI claim against Paraqar village community to recognize the activities of the latter as illegal and to make provide answers to the query. The FOI appealed the verdict. On March 12, 2010, the RA Court of Appeal dismissed the decision of the Administrative Court and directed the case to the same court for a new examination.

On June 1 the RA Administrative Court (Gyumri) made public its decision on the case of Freedom of Information Center and "Aravot" Daily against Shirak regional municipality. The plaintiffs agreed to settle the case with the regional municipality. On August 19, 2009, journalist of "Aravot" Daily Aram Zakaryan sent an electronic query to former governor of Shirak region Lida Nanyan, which remained unanswered. According to the municipality, they hadn't received the query as they had some technical problems. The municipality expressed readiness to provide all the information required, and on this basis the sides agreed on a truce.

On June 3 the RA Court of Appeal fully answered to the claim of the Freedom of Information Center by disaffirming the decision of the RA Administrative Court on the case "FOI Center against Yerevan Construction and Investment Projects Implementation Office" State Non-Commercial Organization" and sent the case to the same court for a new examination. The FOI Center had requested the Administrative Court to recognize as illegal "Yerevan Construction and Investment Projects Implementation Office" activities or inactivity that did not give an exhaustive answer to the claim and made the State Non-Commercial Organization provide all the necessary information within five days. The RA Administrative Court had dismissed the FOI Center claim.

On June 16 the examination of the case "Levon Barseghyan vs. the RA Shirak region governor Lida Nanyan" finished in the RA Administrative Court of Gyumri. On January 18 and 29, 2010, Levon Barseghyan asked her to provide information on the expenses of Shirak municipality in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 within the articles "Other allowances from the budget" and "Representative expenses". The municipality refused Barseghyan's query by justifying that the information on the "Other allowances from the budget" contains personal secrets, whereas on "Representative expenses" – trade secrets. The new governor of Shirak Ashot Giziryan agreed on a truce, which took place on June 16. According to the agreement, Shirak region governor regretted that Levon Barseghyan had inconveniences connected with the freedom of information right and obliged to have provided the queried information by July 1, 2010. In his turn, Levon Barseghyan refuses from further judicial statements of claim on this case.

Other Events Related to Media Activities

On May 11 "Aravot" Daily informed that a task group had been formed by the order of the RA Prosecutor General to study all the material prepared in 2008-2010, all the criminal cases and the legitimacy of the decisions dealing with the professional legal activity of journalists. The task group had already demanded all the subdivisions to provide all the exhaustive information on criminal cases dealing with journalists.

The report is based on data collected by the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression, materials found in the electronic newsletter of the Yerevan Press Club and Freedom of Information Center's website, as well as publications in the media.