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COMMITTEE TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

***ON SITUATION WITH FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND VIOLATIONS OF JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA RIGHTS IN ARMENIA***

**2020 first quarterly (January-March) report by the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression**

*The Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression regularly submits to the public its reports on the working environment and issues of Armenian media and its personnel, on the situatioan of freedom of expression and the violations of the rights of media outlets and those of journalists. This report reflects the data for the first quarter of 2020.*

*The sources of facts included in the report are the following:*

*- phone calls to CPFE “hot line”,*

*- meetings and conversations of the CPFE experts with media personnel,*

*- replies to official inquiries sent to public bodies,*

*- materials from court cases with media involvement,*

*- materials disseminated by the partner journalist organization,*

*- publications by the media.*

***BRIEF SUMMARY***

The first quarter of 2020 was a tense time for journalists and the media. This was firstly due to the coverage of the constitutional referendum campaign and then to the restrictions on freedom of speech in the state of emergency due to the spread of coronavirus, which caused serious problems for the media.

Thus, by the decree of the Government of the Republic of Armenia adopted on March 16, it was forbidden to publish "panic-causing" information in the media and on social networks, and the only source of information on the topic of the coronavirus was allowed to be the Commandant’s Office, created by the Government.

Along with many other issued raised in this document, it was highly controversial which news could be considered truly "panic-causing." Besides, it caused a lot of concern due to the fact that the decisions, leading to subjective and arbitrary prohibitions, were made by the law enforcement agencies that interfered with the activities of the media, as well as forced users of social networks to delete "unacceptable" posts.

The extremely severe restrictions imposed during the state of emergency could be accounted for the majority, namely 30 out of 50, of cases of pressure on journalists and the media in the reporting period.

The efforts of Armenian journalistic organizations and the media, as well as international organizations (particularly, the OSCE and Reporters Without Borders) led to the government’s reconsideration of the approach to restrictions and a new decision on March 25, significantly mitigating the requirements for the activities of the media and information dissemination.

However, even after the mitigation, the situation remained worrysome due to the limited access to official information on the topic of the coronavirus. Journalists' inquiries were often left unanswered due to poor coordination. In a statement issued on March 27, 10 journalistic organizations called on the government to "immediately establish a clear procedure for providing the requested information to the media within a reasonable period of time and to appoint a body responsible for it." [[1]](#footnote-1)

This could probably seen as another manifestation of media’s long-term and continuous dissatisfaction with the activities of press secretaries and PR departments at public agencies, which have turned the social media into the main tool for disseminating information and poorly maintain any direct contact with the editorial offices. In general, taking into account the alarm raised by the journalists, CPFE recorded 21 cases of violation of the right to receive and disseminate information during the first quarter of 2020, 6 of which happened during the state of emergency, between March 16 and 31.

During the period under review, the government and parliament undertook a number of media-related initiatives that were not always acceptable for the journalistic community. At the beginning of the year, the new draft Criminal Code designed by the Ministry of Justice was discussed widely; its Article 450 on the publication of false information on a crime establishes strict liability for the media outlet, even up to imprisonment. A number of journalistic and human rights organizations considered this change to be a warning to the media and a threat to journalists' information sources. [[2]](#footnote-2)

Earlier, on another initiative, the Ministry of Justice proposed amendments to the Law on Television and Radio in order to reserve the right to broadcast commercials on the state-funded Public Television. And although 10 journalistic organizations released a joint statement, calling these changes unacceptable, it did not prevent the Government from approving the bill, and on March 25 the National Assembly adopted it in the first reading.

And yet, the legislation regulating the broadcasting sector needs radical reform. The new draft law On Television and Radio developed by the CPFE and partner organizations and submitted to the National Assembly was never officially circulated. And the parliamentary hearings held on January 16 to discuss problematic issues in the sector did not provide any clear answers as to what the conceptual approaches and principles of the new regulations should be.

The processes of making additions and amendments to the Law on Media cause a lot of concerns, too. Different factions at the National Assembly are engaged in it, a working group has been formed which CPFE has proposed a bill to, but all these actions are not systemic in nature, hence the process has been ineffective so far.

Discussions on criminalizing hate speech are being held at the National Assembly working group. On March 5, the National Assembly adopted other legislative amendments aimed at criminalizing public calls for violence, justifying or propagating violence in public.

No cases of physical violence against journalists were reported during the first quarter. The number of lawsuits involving journalists and the media has decreased, too. 14 new lawsuits were filed, which is twice fewer than in the same period last year. By the way, 12 of the lawsuits filed during this quarter are on the grounds of insult and defamation under Article 1087.1 of the Civil Code, and 2 are on a labor dispute.

***MEDIA ACTIVITIES ENVIRONMENT***

The first quarter of 2020 coincided with the pandemic, the period of the new global spread of coronavirus, due to which a state of emergency was declared in Armenia. Initally, it was accompanied by strict control over the press and social media. Thus, on March 16, the Government of the Republic of Armenia adopted a decision restricting freedom of speech, along with a number of other rights. The media and journalistic organizations reacted very negatively. International organizations also expressed their concerns in this regard.

In particular, on the very day the RA Government passed the decree, "Reporters Without Borders" human rights organization responded with a Tweet. "Coronavirus. Armenia has declared a state of emergency and is forcing the media to use official sources only. Control of information does not help in the fight against the epidemic, but spreads gossip and fear," the statement on Twitter said. [[3]](#footnote-3) The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) also expressed concern over the decision of the Armenian government. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Harlem Desir said in particular: "Publishing only information provided by the authorities is a very restrictive measure which would limit freedom of the media and access to information disproportionately." [[4]](#footnote-4)

On March 18, 25 media executives sent an open letter to the RA Commandant Tigran Avinyan, expressing concern that the media outlets covering the topic of the coronavirus may find themselves in a desparate situation: "The provisions of the decision and their possible interpretations are devoid of predictability and certainty and, consequently, can be applied arbitrarily, grossly violating the freedom of opinion and expression, guaranteed by the Constitution, and a number of other constitutional principles."[[5]](#footnote-5)

On March 20, 11 journalists and human rights organizations issued a statement that the enforcement of restrictions introduced by the government were ineffective, disproportionate, contradictory to common sense and reason and unfavorable for public interest in the conditions of the pandemic. [[6]](#footnote-6)

On those days, the media and individual journalists, as well as social media users, were already subject to severe restrictions. The police enforcing the government's decision demanded to remove, by its own estimation, panic-causing publications. In the absence of criteria, as a rule, such enforcement was implemented subjectively and arbitrarily. And 30 of the 50 cases of pressure on journalists and the media during the first quarter were recorded on those days.

There were disproportionate restrictions and restrictions on individual citizens, too, with violations of their right to freedom of expression, particularly on social media. The case with Dr. Artavazd Sahakyan can serve as a clear example. In his Facebook post, he stressed that regardless of the state of emergency in the city was bustling and crowded, thus full of threat in terms of the spread of the virus. As a result, the police visited the doctor's house, then his workplace and demanded that the post be removed.

On March 23, RA Deputy Chief of Police Hayk Mhryan stated at his press conference that they had contacted 22 media outlets in order to remove publications that did not cover official information.

The data provided by the police, as well as similar cases recorded by the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression as reported by media representatives, 30 in total, are described below in the relevant section of the report. By the way, in response to the CPFE's inquiry, the RA Police informed that despite dozens of notifications, no administrative penalties were imposed on journalists or media outlets.

Because of this situation, journalists and human rights NGOs issued a statement calling on the Government and the Commandant’s Office to repeal those provisions of the decree on declaring a state of emergency in Armenia that related to the freedom of speech, to develop a new regulation that would define information dissemination regimes and clarify possible restrictions, promote adherence to professional norms by the media, ensure an effective and beneficial partnership between the authorities and the media.

The statement was followed by joint discussions of the above-mentioned NGOs and government representatives, after which, on March 24, the Armenian government changed the provisions of its March 16 decree on declaring a state of emergency in the Republic of Armenia. Thus, the new decision of the government stipulates that if the information received from other sources about the new coronavirus does not correspond to the official information or is inaccurate, it should not be removed with the threat of a fine, but the media outlet should publish a refutation within 2 hours and disseminate it on the social media. And in case of complete or partial copying of information on the coronavirus epidemic from foreign media, the Armenian media outlet should indicate the source in the title of the article. In addition, the provision on "panic-causing information" which gave rise to arbitray barriers was removed from the government's decision.

However, this did not solve all issues. Another statement by journalistic and human rights organizations was released in relation to the frequent violations of the media’s right to receive official information in the conditions of the state of emergency. The problem was that the provisions revised by the government did not clearly name the authority to provide official information or commentary to the media on behalf of the Commandant’s Office. This caused problems with the effective implementation of the relevant regulations set in decree on the state of emergency and required further clarity.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Before that, on March 23, RA Minister of Justice Rustam Badasyan had made a statement in the National Assembly that the Government was discussing a legislative initiative to make amendments to the Criminal Code in relation to the restriction of freedom of speech for the future. According to him, those who implement media activities would be subject to an administrative penalty if they breached the restrictions on publishing information during the state of emergency. If the information that caused the fine was not removed within one day, a fine ranging from 500 to 1,000 times the minimum wage would be imposed.

Generally speaking, the Ministry of Justice came up with a number of legislative initiatives related to the media sphere during the reporting period. Thus, this agency posted a new draft of the Criminal Code on the official “e-draft.am” website, containing provisions on the media that caused serious concern in the journalistic circles. According to experts, these are new obstacles for the media.

In particular, Article 450 on false denunciation provides for criminal liability for publishing false information about a crime or a person committing a crime in the media, up to and including imprisonment. Journalists and human rights activists made a statement that the transfer of false denunciation as a crime onto the media domain was an unprecedented (as it is absent in the enforced Criminal Code) and currently excessive innovation that could seriously jeopardize freedom of expression and impede journalism. Moreover, it will also hinder journalistic sources from confidentially providing valuable information on matters of public interest. [[8]](#footnote-8)

The Ministry of Justice undertook another troublesome initiative by proposing amendments to the Law on Television and Radio, proposing that the Public Television reserve the right to broadcast commercials for up to 5 minutes per hour on air. On February 6, the government approved this legislative amendment, and on March 25, the National Assembly adopted the bill in the first reading.

According to the currently enforced law, the Public Television and Radio Company, which is financed from the state budget, is prohibited from engaging in advertising. Many experts in the field believe that the proposed change is not justified in any way.

In general, the situation with the media in the post-revolutionary Armenia, when the vast majority of media outlets are divided into political and financial camps and serve the interests of their owners and sponsors, allows us to state that they clearly fulfil the function of controlling the flow of information in the country, thus public interest is pushed to the background or is altogether ignored. The RA Prime-Minister, too, addressed this issue at the beginning of the year. He mentioned at a governmental session on January 16: "Today the level of democracy in Armenia is so high that there are even TV stations at least two that are owned by corrupt entities and the logos of which can be replaced by the words “corruption" or the header could say: Breaking news on Corruption Group TV Company." [[9]](#footnote-9)

Before that, on January 12, the “*Haykakan Zhamanak”* newspaper, with the RA PM’s wife as its editor-in-chief, made a sensational publication, according to which a campaign was rolled out against Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s family members, particularly his wife Anna Hakobyan and daughter Mariam Pashinyan by a number of concrete media outlets, coordinated and inspired by Artur Vanetsyan, the former director of the National Security Service. [[10]](#footnote-10) The mutual accusations ended with Arthur Vanetsyan filing a lawsuit against the newspaper on February 10.

Another scandalous debate took place upon the Public Television's report of January 29 about the chairman of the Constitutional Court Hrayr Tovmasyan that was based on the data from the Special Investigation Service.[[11]](#footnote-11) According to some opponents, Public TV had violated the principle of presumption of innocence, moreover, the report presented one-sided and biased information. The RA Commission on Television and Radio was the target of some accusations, hence releasing a statement, particularly noting that "in this case, the SIS is the primarily responsible entity for violating the above-mentioned principle." [[12]](#footnote-12) The SIS responded with no delay. "The preliminary investigation body provided the media with the findings of the relevant investigative body s on the facts substantiated by a sufficient combination of evidence that was obtained by strict observance of the procedures envisaged by the RA Criminal Procedure Code. On this basis the person has already been charged." [[13]](#footnote-13) The Special Investigative Service urged the Commission on Television and Radio to refrain from conducting amateur legal analyzes of criminal cases and the SIS in general.

In the conditions of polarized media that service various political interests, the issue of transparency of ownership in this sector and publicized information on the beneficiary owners remains urgent. It requires legislative changes. In particular, the Law on Media must be amended. Different factions of the National Assembly are working in this direction, a working group has been formed, and CPFE has submitted a drafted bill to. However, the process is not yet effective, primarily due to lack of proper coordination

Besides, the CPFE submitted proposals to the three factions of the National Assembly to amend several other laws aimed at eliminating unfounded restrictions on freedom of information and journalists’ activities. Thus, we proposed to repeal the provisions in the Law on Procurement on the confidentiality of expenses incurred in relation to the activities of the first three persons of the country, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, the President of the Republic of Armenia and the Speaker of the National Assembly. On February 21, 2020, the Parliament organized hearings on public procurement, during which Artak Manukyan, Deputy Chairman of the NA Standing Committee on Financial-Credit and Budgetary Affairs, assured that those proposals were not ignored and after some amendments would become part of the parliamentary agenda.

The new draft Law on Television and Radio proposed by the CPFE was not put into circulation, being stuck in the National Assembly for 8 months. On January 16, by the initiative of the NA Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Diaspora, Youth and Sports, parliamentary hearings were held on legislative regulations in the field of audiovisual media services, but no substantial progress has been observed yet.

During the first quarter, criminalization of hate speech was discussed in the parliament. The representatives of the opposition forces left this themtic working group due to various organizational and ideological disagreements. And many media experts believe that as long as there is no clear legal formulation of hate speech, restrictions may endanger freedom of speech.

On March 5, the National Assembly presented a package of bills to amend RA Criminal Code and a number of related laws, which envisage criminal liability for public calls for violence, public justification or propaganda of violence. The parliament adopted this package in the first reading.

In the reporting period, the demand put forth by the State Commission for the Protection of Economic Competition to submit a report on financial sources came as a surprise to the media. On March 17, SCPEC Chairman Gegham Gevorgyan confirmed that letters had been sent to editorial offices, demanding a detailed tax report and details on the advertising policy. At the same time, the Chair of the agency noted that this requirement did not intend to interfere in the activities of the press and was only aimed at studying media and Internet advertising market. Moreover, Gegham Gevorgyan assured that this was done for the benefit of the media.

During the first quarter of the year, some media outlets continued to complain about the government's work style, because information was provided exclusively through social media, particularly Facebook. The press secretaries at the ministries and other agencies have almost completely ceased to practice information dissemination via e-mail, and the inquiries addressed to them do not always receive a proper response. This is evidenced by the data recorded by the CPFE. In the first quarter, 21 cases of violation of the right to receive and disseminate information were recorded. By the way, for the first time in the post-revolutionary period, there were complaints about Nikol Pashinyan's press conference, too. The most recent one, organized in Kapan, was problematic. The issue of journalists’ transportation was not handled by the government, and due to unfavorable weather conditions, not everyone was able to attend and pose questions to the Prime Minister.

As for other violations of the media and their employees' rights, it is noteworthy that no cases of physical violence against journalists were recorded during the first quarter, and the number of various pressures was 50. During the period under review, 14 new lawsuits involving journalists and media outlets were recorded, 12 of which were initiated on the grounds of insult and slander under Article 1087.1 of the Civil Code, and the other 2 were labor disputes.

The Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression continued to monitor the progress of the criminal cases initiated in connection with the events of “Electric Yerevan” on June 23, 2015, "Sari Tagh" on July 17-30, 2016, with more than 40 journalists and cameramen recognized as victims. The journalists who suffered from the decision of the Special Investigative Service on suspending the investigation of "Electric Yerevan", with the support of the CPFE, appealed first to the Prosecutor's Office and then to the court (Details are available in the annual reports of the CPFE for 2015-2019, see “Khosq.am” website, "Reports" section). On January 21, 2020, the Criminal Court of Appeal dismissed the case on the grounds that the SIS had annulled its own decision to suspend it and resumed the investigation. Last year, on August 23, the Sari Tagh case had the same fate in the Court of Appeals (Details are available in the annual reports of the CPFE 2016-2019, see “Khosq.am” website, "Reports" section).

***VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHTS OF JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA OUTLETS***

The violations of the rights of journalists and the media during the first quarter of 2020 will be presented according to the following classification proposed by the CPFE:

* physical violence against journalists,
* Pressure against media outlets and their personnel,
* violations of the right to receive and disseminate information.

This classification of CPFE is somewhat conditional. In particular, sometimes hindering the access and dissemination of information is accompanied by violence against the journalist. Such facts are attributed to the type of violation that the authors of the report consider to be the closest. Nonetheless, the classification used allows for a more concise and prominent picture of the violations of journalists’ and media rights.

The relevant sections of the report list the facts on the violations of the rights of journalists and the media in in the first quarter of 2020, as well as developments related to the previous incidents.

***In total, 71 cases of violations of the rights of journalists and the media were recorded during the reporting period. Fifty of them were cases of pressure on the media and their employees, 21 were violations of the right to receive and disseminate information, and there was no evidence of physical violence.***

Below we present the quantitative data of the violations of the first quarter and the comparison with the same period of the previous year.

**Quantitative data of the violations in the 1st quarters of 2019-2020**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Types of violations | 1st quarter, 2019 | 1st quarter, 2020 |
| Physical violence against journalists | **2** | **0** |
| Pressure against media outlets and their personnel | **41** | **50** |
| Violations of the right to receive and disseminate information | **51** | **21** |

**Lawsuits in the 1st quarters of 2019 and 2020, involving media and journalists**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Types of court cases** | 1st quarter, 2019 | 1st quarter, 2020 |
| Based on insult and slander | 28 | 12 |
| Based on violation of getting information | 0 | 0 |
| Other disputes | 1 | 2 |

As in the previous reports, the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression would like to note that the data in the table may not be comprehensive and do not claim absolute accuracy. Media representatives sometimes find it unnecessary to publicize facts that impede their professional activities, ignore various threats to them, or prefer to solve problems themselves and overcome illegal restrictions on their own. Therefore, CPFE is convinced that the real number of obstacles is greater than stated in this report. The following are the most significant facts.

1. ***Physical violence against journalists***

*In the first quarter of 2020 no cases of physical violence against media workers were recorded. Below we present the developments related to the previous cases of violence in chronological order.*

**On January 22**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Ararat and Vayots Dzor Marzes (seat in Yeghegnadzor) made a decision on the case of journalists, subjected to violence while performing their professional duties in Shatin community.

We should remind that in order to learn more about the tense situation in Shatin after the 2017 local elections, the employees of the “*Zhoghovurd”* daily Syune Hambardzumyan and Knar Manukyan arrived at the community, where some of the residents attacked them, took away the journalist's certificate, hit the reporter on the hand while the former was taking footage.[[14]](#footnote-14) (Details are available in the annual reports of the CPFE for 2018 and 2019, see the "Reports" section of “Khosq.am” website).

According to the court decision, defendants Zhanna Khudoyan, Zvart Smbatyan, Geghanush Yeghoyan and Shirak Harunyan were found guilty under Article 164, Part 1 of the RA Criminal Code. They were fined at 200,000 AMD which is twice the minimum wage.

On February 20, the respondent filed a complaint with the Criminal Court of Appeal against the decision of the Court of First Instance. On March 2, the appeal was filed for proceedings, the first court session is scheduled for April 21.

**On February 1,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a court session on the case of Levon Gasparyan and Julietta Kokolyan who impeded the professional activity of Sisak Gabrielyan, a journalist from “Radio Liberty” and Shoghik Galstyan, a correspondent from “Araratnews.am”.

We should remind that on April 2, 2017, on the day of National Assembly elections, violence was applied against Sisak Gabrielyan, a journalist from Radio Liberty and Shoghik Galstyan, a correspondent from "Araratnews.am.", at the RPA candidate Hakob Beglaryan's headquarters at 15 Rustaveli Street in Yerevan's Kond district. (Details are available in CPFE’s annual reports for 2017, 2018, and 2019, see the "Reports" section of the “Khosq.am” website). Shoghik Galstyan is represented by CPFE’s lawyer.

Julietta Kokolyan, who is accused of obstructing Shoghik Galstyan's work, was declared wanted by the court on February 5, 2018.[[15]](#footnote-15) The defendant's lawyer regularly informed the court that Kokolyan had health problems and could not appear, but when the court requested documents, they were not presented. The court ruled to suspend the case against Julietta Kokolyan until she was found, and to continue the court investigation in relation to the other defendant, Levon Gasparyan, in a separate proceeding.

The date of the next court session was not set as of March 31.

**On February 6,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing on the case of violence applied against of Artak Khulyan, a reporter at “Shantnews.am” news website, and Hovhannes Sargsyan, a cameraman for “Factor.am” news website.

We should remind that the criminal case is related to the violence that took place during the 2018 April Revolution. It was sent to the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan with an indictment against 8 people. (Details are available in the CPFE annual reports for 2018 and 2019, see the "Reports" section of “Khosq.am” website).

This year, court hearings on the case were held on February 20 and March 5. The next court session is scheduled for April 2.

**On February 24,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan helda regular session on the case of Ani Keshishyan, a correspondent for the “168.am” website, Liana Yeghiazaryan, a correspondent of the Public Radio, and a group of citizens against Levon Yeranosyan, the former commander of the RA Police forces.

We should be remind that Levon Yeranosyan was charged under Article 309, Parts 2 and 3 of the RA Criminal Code for intentionally acting outside the scope of his authority, causing significant damage to the rights of citizens and their legitimate interests, as they have inadvertently caused severe repercussions. Ani Keshishyan was injured in Baghramyan Avenue on April 16, 2018. Liana Yeghiazaryan was injured at the intersection of Artsakh and Erebuni streets in Yerevan on April 22 when the Police used special measures against protesters. (Details are available in CPFE's annual reports for 2018 and 2019, see the "Reports" section of “Khosq.am” website).

The court hearing, scheduled for March 23, did not take place. The next one is scheduled for May 8.

**On March 16,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Lori Marz continued the investigation of the criminal case initiated on the case of obstructing the professional lawful activity of Narine Avetisyan, the editor-in-chief of "Lori TV".

We should that on September 28, 2017, Narine Avetisyan was informed that asphalt was being laid on the bridge adjacent to the St. Astvatsatsin Church in the town in the heavy rain, and she left for the site to cover the ongoing works. When she was shooting some footage, the head of Shinplus construction company Tigran Nazaryan and his staff attacked Narine Avetisyan, twisted her arms, threw her onto the ground, snatched her phone, and deleted the photos.[[16]](#footnote-16)

The next court hearing is scheduled for April 10.

**As of March 31**, according to the information provided by the RA Prosecutor's Office, one person was involved in the criminal case initiated in connection with the attack on "Kentron" TV journalist Arthur Hakobyan and cameraman Simik Mailyan.

We should remind that on December 24, 2019, in the Hovtashen community of the Ararat region, several dozens of residents attacked the employees of "Kentron" TV, hit them and damaged the camera.[[17]](#footnote-17) The film crew managed to save a part of the footage, which clearly shows the fact of violence. On December 25, a criminal case was initiated under Article 164, Part 1 of the RA Criminal Code, based on the materials prepared by the Masis Police Department for obstructing the journalist's lawful professional activity, hauling him, obstructing his shooting, and damaging the camera.

The preliminary investigation of the criminal case is progress, a number of necessary investigative and other judicial actions are being implemented.

1. ***Pressure on media outlets and their personnel***

*In the first quarter of 2020, a total of 50 cases of pressure on the media and their employees were recorded, which exceeds the numbers for the same period last year. 30 of the registered cases came in the form of state of emergency restrictions, 2 are in connection with a hacker attack, 3 are in the form of insults and threats against journalists, 1 is related to a demand for refutation, and 14 are lawsuits. The number of the latter has decreased by 15 compared to the court cases in the same period of the previous year. Six of the new lawsuits against the media and journalists are from ordinary citizens, three from business people, three from incumbent and former officials and their associates, and in two cases the journalist filed a lawsuit against the employer.*

*This section of the report covers developments and solutions to both new and past cases of pressure on the media and journalists. Below we present all the details in chronological order.*

**On January 8**, citizen Hayk Stepanyan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against the "Mirror" Club Democracy Support NGO and its founder, journalist Angela Tovmasyan, claiming for obliging her to publicly refute the defamatory information and confiscation of a compensation sum. According to the plaintiff, Angela Tovmasyan insulted him, in particular, the journalist called Hayk Stepanyan a "scum" on Facebook. We should remind that Hayk Stepanyan was among those who threw eggs on the "Mirror" Club on October 5, 2019.

On January 17, the lawsuit was returned for corrections and elimination of deficiencies existent in the documents, and on February 14 it was submitted again. It was accepted for proceedings on February 26. The first court session is appointed for April 29th.

**On January 8**, Dr. Eduard Hambardzumyan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against “Aravot Daily” LLC, demanding a public apology, refutation of defamatory information data, and a compensation for the damage caused to his dignity. The lawsuit was caused by an article "The dream of having a child cherished by an Armenian family from France was shattered in the motherland" published by the “*Aravot”* daily on November 23, 2019 and *Aravot website* on November 25, 2019 which claimed that the family from France had fallen prey to the fraud of Eduard Hambardzumyan, the director of “Fertility Center”. [[18]](#footnote-18)

The lawsuit was returned on January 17 for corrections in the documents, and was re-submitted on January 30. It was accepted for proceeding on February 3, and the first court session is scheduled for April 6.

**On January 8**, Daniel Ioannisyan, Program Director of the "Union of Informed Citizens" NGO, filed a complaint with the Court of Cassation against the decision of the Court of Appeal, which rejected his complaint against the investigator’s inaction.

We should remind that on March 25, 2017, Iravunk.com website published "Interesting Episodes from Civic Activist Daniel Ioannisyan's Biography" with information on Daniel Ioannisyan and his family’s private life, exclusively owned by the RA Police and Investigative Committee. (Details can be found in CPFE’s annual reports for 2017, 2018, and 2019, see *Reports* section in “Khosq.am” website).

On May 18, 2019, the Investigative Committee suspended the criminal case of Daniel Ioannisyan, Program Director of Informed Citizens' NGOs vs. Iravunk.com website for the second time. The case was initiated for illegally collecting and disseminating information considered a personal and family secret. On May 20, Ioannisyan filed a complaint with Yerevan Court of General Jurisdication on the investigator's inaction, which was rejected. On September 15, an appeal was filed, which, too, was rejected on November 8.

The Court of Cassation had not reacted to the complaint as of March 31.

**On January 9,** the “ArmLur.am” news website was down due to a cyber attack (DDoS) on the server. There were numerous attacks on the website from around the world for hours. According to a statement issued by the media, the cyberattack aimed to block uploads and dissemination of materials from the website. "According to experts, for hours on, different IPs from different countries accessed the site at the same time, thus disrupting the work of the server," the statement read.

**On January 9,** Alvina Gyulumyan, a member of the Constitutional Court, filed an appeal against the judgment of Yerevan Court of First Instance, which rejected her claim against “Dareskizb” LLC, the founder of the “*Haykakan zhamanak”* daily, for compensation for defamation.

It should be reminded that the reason for the lawsuit was the article published in the newspaper that when Gyulumyan represented Armenia as a judge in the European Court of Human Rights, she spared no effort to postpone the trial of one of the cases filed in court in relation with the events in Yerevan on March 1, 2008.

On February 3, the appeal was accepted for proceedings. The court ruling will be published on April 15.

**On January 10**, "Yeghitsi Luys-BK" LLC filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against the Public Television of Armenia and the head of Charentsavan community Hakob Shahgaldyan, demanding refutation of the information considered slanderous. The reason for the lawsuit was the broadcast of a report on issues related to the use of community owned territories during the 9 o’clock main news program on the First Channel – "News in 60 Minutes" on November 30, 2019.[[19]](#footnote-19) The plaintiff considered the following statement made by Hakob Shahgaldyan during the news report as de facto defamatory. "The park area has been rented for 25 years, and there are many commitments that have not been fulfilled by the "Yeghitsi Luys-BK" LCC company, including water supply to ensure drinking water supply in the park, irrigation in the park, electricity, electricity supply.”

"Yeghitsi Luys-BK" LLC demanded from Public TV to publicly refute the de facto defamatory data on air, and claimed from the head of Charentsavan community Hakob Shahgaldyan the payment of monetary compensation in the amount of 2000 times the minimum wage.

The lawsuit was filed for proceedings on January 22. No court session was appointed.

**On January 10**, the Civil Court of Appeal filed an appeal, submitted by Daniel Ioannisyan, Program Director of the "Union of Informed Citizens" NGO, against the judgment of the Court of First Instance, according to which Daniel Ioannisyan was obliged to refute the information about Samvel Harutyunyan, the President of State Committee of Science, by a publication on his Facebook page and in “Tert.am” news website and pay 500,000 AMD as a compensation for the damage caused by defamation to the plaintiff’s honor and dignity.

We should remind that the cause of Samvel Harutyunyan's lawsuit was Daniel Ioannisyan's post on his Facebook page of June 12, 2018[[20]](#footnote-20) and an interview based on it and published on “Tert.am” website on June 13 ("The Minister of Education and Science should also answer the question to what extent the friendship between Samvel Harutyunyan's son and himself influenced the decision of appointing the father in the position: Ioannisyan”)[[21]](#footnote-21). The third party to the case is Panarmenian Media Group CJSC as the rightholder of “Tert.am” website.

On March 10, the court of Appeal rejected Daniel Ioannisyan's complaint.

**On January 13**, citizen Nelli Mikaelyan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against the director of the “Haykakan zham” news agency Anna Gevorgyan, the editor-in-chief of “Hzham.am” website Gayane Manukyan and “7or.am” website, claiming for public apology, refutation of defamation and monetary compensation. The lawsuit was triggered by publications – an article “Nikol's Discredited Guard”[[22]](#footnote-22) in “Hzham.am” on June 19, 2019 and an article "Nikol Pashinyan Has to Rely on Sausage Thieves"[[23]](#footnote-23) in “7or.am” and the photos attached thereto. The plaintiff claims compensation in the amount of 2 million AMD.

We should remind that the plaintiff had filed a lawsuit on this occasion back on August 12, 2019, and it was rejected due to faults in the documents. This lawsuit was also returned for the same reason.

The plaintiff filed a second lawsuit this year on March 16, which, too, was rejected on March 24 on the grounds that it was flawed.

**On January 13,** MIG TV journalist Karine Vanesyan filed an appeal against the decision of the Court of First Instance, which obliged the journalist to publish an apology to Lori Governor Andrey Ghukasyan on his Facebook page.

We should remind that on May 15, 2019, Governor of Lori Marz Andrey Ghukasyan filed a lawsuit against MIG TV journalist Karine Vanesyan for insulting him and demanded to oblige her to apologize in the same manner. The lawsuit was triggered by a post on the journalist’s Facebook page: "The smart ones from among you are sitting at home in a state of uncertainty, and homeless morons like you take advantage of the moment and start devouring like a pig. Shame on you, if you know what shame is…"

On February 17, the appeal was accepted for proceedings. The judicial act will be published on April 17.

**On January 13**, the Public Television and Radio Company Council appealed the decision of the RA Administrative Court on December 9, 2019, which upheld the lawsuit of journalists Liana Karapetyan and Siranush Muradyan against the Public Television and Radio Company Council.

We should remind that on January 24, 2019, journalists Liana Karapetyan and Siranush Muradyan filed a lawsuit with the RA Administrative Court against the Public Television and Radio Company Council with a claim for repealing Administrative Act No. 46-L of December 25, 2018. This act concerns the termination of these journalists’ employment contracts. On December 9, the court upheld the journalists’ suit, deciding to quash the aforesaid administrative act and annul the orders thereon.

The appeal of the Public Television and Radio Company Council was accepted for proceedings on February 17. The court session was scheduled for May 6, 2021.

**On January 15**, the Court of Cassation refused to accept the appeal of the “NewsAM” LLC against the decision of the Court of Appeal, rejecting the appeal against the decision of the Court of First Instance. The latter obliges to publish a refutation on "News.am" website, in relation to lawyer Gevorg Mkrtchyan's lawsuit.

We should remind that lawyer Gevorg Mkrtchyan filed a lawsuit against “NewsAM” LLC on March 30, 2016. The cause of the claim was an article published on the “News.am” website on March 18, 2016, titled "Ridiculous Situation in the Chamber of Advocates -2. Retaliation Continues.” The publication states that lawyer Gevorg Mkrtchyan gave obviously false testimony[[24]](#footnote-24) (details are availably in the annual reports of the CPFE for 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019, see the "Reports" section of “Khosq.am” website). The plaintiff demanded that the website publish a refutation.

On February 10, the judgment of the Court of Cassation was sent to the parties.

**On January 17**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan continued the proceedings with a regular court session on the case of journalist Tehmine Yenokyan against citizen Hovsep Asoyan, with a claim of obliging to refute the information that was considered an insult.

We should remind that on September 11, 2018, Tehmineh Yenokyan posted on Facebook that Lydian Armenia employees had cut her phone conversation from her colleagues’ live broadcast, then posted it and wrote insulting comments about the journalist.[[25]](#footnote-25) Tehmine Yenokyan reported the case to the police.

Later the RA Investigative Committee dismissed the criminal case initiated on the persecution of “Lragir.am” correspondent Tehmine Yenokyan, gathering and disseminating information on her private life on the grounds of absence of corpus delicti. The reporter went to court on April 29, 2019 (Details are available in CPFE annual reports for 2018 and 2019, see *Reports* section on “Khosq.am” website.) A hearing of the case was held on February 28, and on March 19 the court rules to uphold Tehmine Yenokyan’s claim, however reducing the compensaton sum from 1 mln to 200000 AMD. Besides, the respondent was obliged to make a public apology to Tehmine Yenokyan for insulting Tehmine Yenokyan on Facebook.

**On January 22**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court session on the citizen Armen Arakelyan against "Asekose AM" LLC case with claims of public refutation of the slanderous information published on “Asekose.am” website.

We should remind that the reason of the suit was an article, titled "The Moral Image of the Hieromonk Demanding the Resignation of the Catholicos," published on August 6, 2018.[[26]](#footnote-26) By the way, at the end of the article the website expressed its readiness to publish the opinion of the other party, too, but defrocked hieromonk Koryun Arakelyan (also known as Armen Arakelyan) preferred to go to court.

A court session was held on January 29, and on February 12 the court decided to reject Armen Arakelyan's lawsuit against "Asekose" LLC. No appeal was filed against the judgment.

**On January 23,** the RA Court of Appeal held a closed-door court session on the case of the editor-in-chief of the “*Zhoghovurd”* daily, journalist Knar Manukyan’s telephone calls deciphered by the RA Special Investigative Service. The court ruled the actions of the SIS illegal.

We should remind that the daily appealed to the Court of Appeal against the decision of the first instance court, which allowed the Special Investigative Service to decipher Knar Manukyan's phone calls to find out who called the journalist or, who the journalist called herself, and who shared March 1 case testimony with the journalist. Earlier, on March 16, 2019, the Special Investigative Service initiated a criminal case against the “*Zhoghovurd”* daily, accusing it of publishing a pre-investigation secret.[[27]](#footnote-27) It was triggered by the publication of an article in the March 16 issue of the newspaper, under the heading “Serzh Sargsyan Would Issue Command 0038. Serzh Sargsyan’s Testimony to ‘March 1’ Case”, which contained excerpts from the records of the interrogation of the RA third President Serzh Sargsyan as a witness.

On February 26, however, the RA Prosecutor General Arthur Davtyan appealed to the Court of Cassation and petitioned to overturn the January 23 decision of the Court of Appeal. The Prosecutor's Office informed the CPFE that the RA General Prosecutor's Office had not yet been notified on whether the appeal was accepted or not.

**On January 23**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan rejected citizen Emma Kirakosyan's motion to apply a measure for securing the claim against the Public Television of Armenia CJSC within the framework of the case on obliging to compensate the damage caused to honor and dignity and publish a refutation.

We should remind that the cause of the lawsuit is The Single Window program broadcast on Public Television First Channel on December 10, 2018.[[28]](#footnote-28) The plaintiff believed that the program contained "false factual information" about her (Details are available in CPFE 2019 annual report, see *Reports* section on “Khosq.am” website).

The plaintiff motioned to oblige " Public Television of Armenia" CJSC to completely remove "One Window" program issue, broadcast at 19:30 on December 10, 2018 from http://www.1tv.am//, https: // www .facebook.com, https://www.instagram.com, http://youtube.com websites. However, the court rejected the motion on the grounds that the measures for securing the claim were not commensurate with the claim, and "the application of the measures to secure the claim will result in disproportionate interference with the constitutional right to freedom of expression."

On February 27, the citizen filed an appeal against the rejection of the motion, which was accepted for proceedings on March 18. April 6 was appointed for the publication of the judicial act.

**On January 29,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court session on the case of the Chairman of the RA NA Standing Committee on Defense and Security Andranik Kocharyan against the “*Hraparak”* daily with claims of public apology for an insult, compensation in the amount of 1 million AMD, and public refutation of defamatory information.

The reason for the lawsuit is the article titled "Who really is Andranik Kocharyan?"[[29]](#footnote-29) published in the newspaper and on the homonymous website. Hasmik Melkonyan, the author of the article, wrote that those who collaborated with Andranik Kocharyan in the 1990s either died or lost their memory, and presented a number of details about his life in an unfavorable context.

A court session on the case was held on February 17, the next one was scheduled for April 13.

**On January 31,** journalist Sona Harutyunyan, in pursuance of the court decision, posted a refutation of her Facebook post about the “News.am” website.

We should remind that on September 26, 2018, “NewsAM” LLC filed a lawsuit against the journalist, based on a post on her Facebook page where Sona Harutyunyan associated “News.am” with Robert Kocharyan's name.[[30]](#footnote-30) The founder of "News.am" demanded from the journalist to publish the court decision on Facebook. (Details are available in the CPFE annual reports for 2018-2019, see the "Reports" section of “Khosq.am” website).

The defendant appealed the court's decision in the Court of Appeal, but the appeal was rejected, and defendant did not pursue the appeal in the Court of Cassation.

**On January 31,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held the first and the last court hearing on the case of Pargev Ltd. against "Iravunk Media" LLC on the protection of business reputation.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on August 22, 2019, triggered by an article entitled "SSFS Shall Follow up on the Alarming News Reported in *Iravunk*”, published on Iravunk.com website on July 19 which, according to the plaintiff, contained inaccurate and groundless information, discrediting the business reputation of “Pargev” LLC.[[31]](#footnote-31) By the way, the RA State Commission for the Protection of Economic Competition launched proceedings based on this publication and fined the organization at 2.3 million AMD for the violations. As a result, “Pargev” LLC withdrew the claim against the media outlet.

**On February 4,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held the first court hearing on the case of Vardan Harutyunyan, former chairman of the State Revenue Committee against the Investigative Journalists NGO, with claims of compensation for the damage caused to honor and dignity and public refutation of the factual information considered as slander. The reason for the lawsuit was an article, titled “Cash registers were obtained at a high cost by a secret decision of the government: a criminal case has been launched” and published on “Hetq.am” on August 7, 2019. [[32]](#footnote-32)

Court hearings on the case were also held on February 20 and March 11. At the last hearing, the court decided to partially uphold Vardan Harutyunyan's lawsuit against the Investigative Journalists NGO and obliged the latter to publish a refutation on the “Hetq.am” website. As of March 31, the defendant had not filed a complaint. The Investigative Journalists NGO is going to appeal the judgment in the Court of Appeal.

**On February 4,** a regular hearing of the case with claims of compensation for insult and slander of the citizens of Yerevan Marat Grigoryan, Sargis Kelyan, Levon Harutyunyan, Liana Manukyan, Esther Manukyan, Tatevik Boyakhchyan against the “*Hraparak”* newspaper was held at Yerevan Court of General Jurisdication.

We should remind that the lawsuit caused by an article titled "A Scandal at YSU? Has a New “Sashik" Come Forth?” which, according to a certain letter, accused the dean of YSU Faculty of Geography and Geology Marat Grigoryan, of embezzling 50 percent of faculty salaries.[[33]](#footnote-33) By the way, the site published Marat Grigoryan's comment to the letter, too, and on October 19, the researchers' refutation of the facts presented in the preceding article, this however did not satisfy the plaintiffs. [[34]](#footnote-34)

Court hearings of the case were also held on February 27, and the claim was partially upheld by a decision made on February 28. The *Hraparak* was obliged to refute the defamatory information published in the above-mentioned article regarding the misappropriation of salaries by the plaintiff Marat Grigoryan and publicly apologize to him. Besides, according to the court ruling, a compensation of 100,000 AMD for defamation and 100,000 AMD for insult should be confiscated from the newspaper in favor of Marat Grigoryan. The court also obliged the newspaper to publicly apologize to Marat Grigoryan for the insulting remarks contained in the article.

**On February 4,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court session on the case of Vahe Hakobyan against the Hayeli Club Democracy Support NGO, the founder of Hayeli Press Club with claims of compensation for the damage caused to honor and dignity and obligation of refutation.

We should remind that the plaintiff sought to oblige the defendant to pay 3 million AMD in compensation for damage to his honor and dignity, as well as to publish a refutation. The CPFE did not manage to find out the reason for the lawsuit. Moreover, the defendant was not even aware of the court hearings.

On February 17, by the decision of the court, the case was terminated because the plaintiff had withdrawn the lawsuit.

**On February 4**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court hearing on the case of Mher Derdzyan, the head of the "Under One Roof" housing project against the “Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office” LLC with claims for a publicly apology and obligation for 1,5 million AMD compensation for insult and slander. The lawsuit was caused by the newspaper’s concerns that the program could be a deliberate hoax.

The date of the next court session has not been set as of March 31.

**On April 15,** Mher Derdzyan, the head of the "Under One Roof" housing project, filed a lawsuit in Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction against the “Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office” LLC with claims for a publicly apology and obligation for 1,5 million AMD compensation for insult and slander. The lawsuit was caused by newspaper’s concerns that the program could be a deliberate hoax expressed on April 15, 2019. [[35]](#footnote-35)

The next court session was not appointed as of March 31.

**On February 4** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court session on the first case of the NA Deputy Hayk Sargsyan against "Hraparak Daily" LLC with claims of compensation of damage to honor, dignity and good reputation through slander and insult.

We should remind that Hayk Sargsyan filed three lawsuits against “Hraparak Daily” LLC, caused by 22 publications against him in the newspaper. According to the Hraparak’s homonymous website, "Hayk Sargsyan is the most odious MP in the parliament", and there are suspicions that he played a role in a scandalous criminal case. According to another article published on the website, Hayk Sargsyan "made a row" on the Yerevan-Moscow plane, [[36]](#footnote-36) and besides he took girls to 26 Baghramyan Street.[[37]](#footnote-37) (Details are available in the annual report of the CPFE 2019, see "Reports" section in “Khosq.am” website).

The first court hearing was held on March 24, and the next hearing was scheduled for July 9. The second hearing was held on February 17, with the next one scheduled for April 17. Court hearings on the third case were held on February 6 and 28. At the last hearing, the court decided to dismiss the claim without examination, on the grounds that the plaintiff and the respondent did not attend two consecutive hearings. On March 12, the plaintiff filed an appeal against this decision with the Civil Court of Appeal. However, on March 24, the Court of Appeal refused to file the appeal.

**On February 5**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court session on the case of the “*Hraparak”* daily correspondent Vahe Makaryan against the former MP Rubik Hakobyan, with claims of protection of honor and dignity.

We should remind that on December 7, 2016, the National Assembly MP Rubik Hakobyan, after applying violence against the “*Hraparak”* daily's correspondent Vahe Makaryan, made abusive remarks about the journalist in the NA hall, as well as in various interviews and records, calling him a hooligan, an ignorant man, and a criminal. Vahe Makaryan filed a lawsuit claiming protection of honor and dignity in connection with the incident (Details are available in CPFE's 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 annual reports, see the *Reports* section on “Khosq.am” website).

On February 20, Vahe Makaryan's lawsuit was rejected. The court explained its ruling as follows: "The materials of the case made it clear that the phrase "hooligan" was uttered after the plaintiff used a swear word addressed at the NA MP, and the expression “hell-raiser” was used in connection with the public statement made by the plaintiff that the defendant allegedly used a sexual curse word to address him in the NA building and punched him. However, the the decision of February 6, 2017, "On Stopping Criminal Prosecution and Terminating the Criminal Case" substantiated that “Vahe Makaryan presented the slaps as punches, in fact slandering the defendant.”

On March 31, the case was handed over to court archives.

**On February 5**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of of Yerevan held a regular court hearing on the case of businessman Vahe Hakobyan against lawyer Hovik Arsenyan and Yerkir Media TV company, claiming a compensation of 2 million AMD for the damages caused to honor and an obligation to publish a refutation.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on February 21, 2019, caused by a question raised by the attorney during the talk show “Yerkri Harts” as to why the former Governor of Syunik Vahe Hakobyan was not subject to criminal prosecution as of then, namely October 18, 2018. [[38]](#footnote-38)

February 25 was appointed for the announcement of the decision, but the session did not take place. The date of the next court session was not set as of March 31.

**On February 5**, the Court of Cassation decided to return the appeal submitted by “Politik.am” website editor Boris Tamoyan against the decision of the Court of Appeal, which had left the First Instance Court decision upholding the claim of RA Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan against Boris Tamoyan unchanged. Accordingly, the defendant was obliged to publish a refutation, as well as pay 1 million AMD to the plaintiff as compensation for defamation.

We should remind that the cause of the lawsuit was the publication of the following articles in “Politik.am”: "Deputy PM Avinyan Used Marijuana in the Government" (October 26, 2018), "Avinyan is Afraid. Marijuana Put Him into Trouble”, (October 27, 2018)”, and “A Surprise is Awaiting Avinyan in Court; He will Have to Undergo an Examination” (October 29, 2018) Details are available in CPFE's 2018 and 2019 annual reports, see the *Reports* section on “Khosq.am” website).

The Court of Cassation also rejected Boris Tamoyan's motion to postpone the payment of the state fee.

**On February 6,** the Court of Appeal rejected the appeal filed by Boris Tamoyan, the editor of "Politik.am" website, which disputed the ruling of the First Instance Court as of October 14, 2019, on public refuation on “Poltik.am” website and his Facebook page, along with the payment of monetary compensation to Mesrop Papikyan, former adviser to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia.

We should remind that on January 24, 2019, the former adviser to the RA Prime Minister Mesrop Papikyan filed a lawsuit in the Ararat and Vayots Dzor Court of General Jurisdication against Boris Tamoyan, editor of “Politik.am” website, claiming compensation of damage to honor and dignity and public refutation of information considered as slander. The suit was caused by an article titled "Criminal Authority Tooy Granted $10000 to Pashinyan's Aadviser," posted on the website on January 17 and stating that "according to word of mouth Prime Minister Mesrop Papikyan has reportedly granted $ 10,000 by criminal authority Tooy not to have scarcity of funds during the campaign.” [[39]](#footnote-39)

On March 4, Boris Tamoyan applied to the Court of Cassation. On March 31, the Court of Cassation received the case.

**On February 6**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court session on the case of Khachatur Khachatryan against “Shamshyan Media” LLC, claiming a public apology for the damage caused to honor and dignity and a compensation of 1 million AMD.

The lawsuit filed on April 17, 2019, was prompted by an article titled "Shirak marz police operation against drug addicts. Two of the detained have just been released under amnesty. Deputy Director of one of the Diaspora Ministry's SNCOs is among the Detained."[[40]](#footnote-40)

The next court hearing is scheduled for April 6.

**On February 7**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan continued the regular court session on the case of Erik Yeghinyan against "Pastinfo" news website, with claims of one million AMD to be confiscated in his favor, a written apology and pubslihed refutation.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on February 14, 2019. The reason for the lawsuit was a publication of September 10, 2018, entitled "The detainee tried to commit a suicide in order not to be taken to a dentist." [[41]](#footnote-41) (Details are available in the annual report of the CPFE 2019, see the "Reports" section of “Khosq.am” website).

A court hearing was held on March 20, the next one is scheduled for July 1.

**On February 10**, Artur Vanetsyan, the former head of the National Security Service, filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against “Dareskizb” LLC, the founder of the *“Haykakan Zhamanak”* daily and "Armtimes.com" website, claiming a public refutation of slanderous information, the removal of the article from the “Armtimes.com” website, the publication of the refutation statement and a compensation of the non-pecuniary damage caused. The lawsuit was filed in reaction to a publication in “Armtimes.com” website and in the *“Haykakan Zhamanak”* daily on January 12, with the title of «Do I or Don’t I Have Honor: Mishik, Arthur, Arik”, according to which the former head of the National Security Service Arthur Vanetsyan and his supporters organized a media campaign against Nikol Pashinyan's family.

On February 21, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. On the same day, the court rejected the motion to secure the lawsuit, which was appealed by the plaintiff in the Court of Appeal on March 6. On March 26, the appeal was accepted for proceedings, and April 9 was appointed as the date for publishing the judicial act.

**On February 10,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court hearing on the case of businessman Vahe Parazyan against “Virtual Media” LLC, the founder of “Slaq.am” website, and Menua Harutyunyan, the founder of the former, claiming a public apology, refutation of the defamatory information, and a compensation of the damage to honor and dignity. The reason for the lawsuit was an article, bearing the title “Follow-up on a scandalous incident. Narek Karapetyan Presents Details" published in the website on July 17, 2019, with a video attached to it.[[42]](#footnote-42) The next court hearing is scheduled for April 14.

Another of the businessman's lawsuits is against Armenia TV CJSC, journalist Shake Ghazaryan and lawyer Armen Feroyan. This lawsuit was caused by the publications about the incidents between businessmen Vahe Parazyan and Samvel Karapetyan. A court hearing on this case took place on March 13, the next one was appointed on June 26.

**On February 10**, “Infocom.am” co-founder Sevak Mamyan alerted the CPFE that Liana Ashrafyan, former principal of Yerevan's Nikol Aghbalyan School No. 19, had threatened to sue Infocom․am’s correspondent Arpi Avetisyan and her mother who teaches at the school. The reason was the journalist's activity.[[43]](#footnote-43) Earlier, Arpi Avetisyan had made an inquiry to one of the banks about the position occupied by the former principal's father. "I ask to tell Arpi not to bother my family, and I will hold both of you accountable, I will go to the police," said Liana Ashrafyan.

The editorial office also went to the police to report on the threats against the journalist. The police summoned the co-founder of the website Sevak Mamyan, the journalist and her mother for questioning.

**On February 10**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held the first hearing on the case of “Vega World” LLC against “Skizb Media Center” LLC, the founder of the “*Zhamanak”* newspaper, claiming a public refutation of defamatory information, without monetary compensation.

The lawsuit was filed on September 30, 2019, prompted by the “Planned: SRC was Going to Audit Vega Before the Fire” article published in the August 30 issue of the newspaper.[[44]](#footnote-44)

The next court hearing on the case is scheduled for April 13.

**On February 11,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Shirak Region held the first court hearing on the case of Artak Gevorgyan, the head of Ani community in Shirak region, against Andranik Gevorgyan, a resident of Maralik town in the same community, seeking a refutation of slander and compensation. "Armlur.am" news website was recognized as a third party to the case.

The lawsuit was filed on August 23, 2019, caused by the phrase "ate it up, robbed it all" in the video and the accompanying text posted on the site on August 10: “The former head robbed the village college and fled. What do people in Maralik tell us?" [[45]](#footnote-45) The plaintiff claims a compensation of 2 million AMD from the defendant.

A court session was held on March 26, the next one is appointed on May 12.

**On February 12**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held the first court hearing on the case of Alvina Gyulumyan, a member of the Constitutional Court, against lawyer Tigran Hayrapetyan and the founder of "1in.am" news website "Skizb Media Center" LLC with claims of refutation of slander and a compensation of 1 million AMD, to be paid by Tigran Hayrapetyan.

The reason for the lawsuit filed in 2018 was Tigran Hayrapetyan's interview with "1in.am", where the latter spoke about the activities of Alvina Gyulumyan in her capacity as ECtHR judge, in particular stating that she had made a cunning move to prevent cases against Armenia to be heard at ECtHR. The plaintiff rendered this statement to be slander.

The next court hearing is scheduled for May 4.

**On February 12**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held the first hearing on the case of NA Deputy Hayk Sargsyan against “Armday.am” LLC, the founder of "Armday.am" news website, with claims of compensation to the damage to honor, dignity and good reputation through slander and insult.

The lawsuit was filed on July 8, 2019, prompted by an article titled "From Being Laid to the Asphalt to Night Celebrations; What is Going on Inside “La Scala" published on the website, where the MP is allegedly ascribed information about night parties, as well information that "Hayk Sargsyan and Pzo are in pretty close relationship, and Sargsyan is trying to comply with criminal rules and regulations."[[46]](#footnote-46)

A court hearing on the case was held on March 23, the next one is scheduled for June 8.

**On February 13,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Lori Region held the first court hearing on the case of lawyer Hakob Charoyan against citizen Arthur Mnatsakanyan (with "1in.am" news site as the third party) with claims of refutating the information, damaging honor and dignity and compensating the damage.

The reason for the lawsuit, filed on October 8, 2019, was an interview by the defendant about the case of Vardan Antonyan, accused of attempted to murder Vahag from Alaverdi, which specifically contained a statement that the shootings in Akhtala were intended to kill Vahag from Alaverdi and his supporters.[[47]](#footnote-47)

The plaintiff asked to oblige Artur Mnatsakanyan to give an interview to “1in.am”, refuting the information damaging his honor and dignity and business reputation, as well as apologize and compensate for the damage at the value of 2 million AMD.

A court hearing of the case was held on March 25, the next one was appointed on May 13.

**On February 14**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court session on the case of Azat Tovmasyan against ATV and citizen Sirvard Avoyan, claiming for acknowledging the violation of the right to privacy and family, obliging to refute the information deemed defamatory and compensating at the value of $ 2 million AMD.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on November 22, 2018, and was caused by an accusation addressed at Azat Tovmasyan during the program "Semi-open windows" on July 30, 2018. Sirvard Avoyan accuses the father, Azat Tovmasyan, of abducting his daughter.[[48]](#footnote-48) (Details are available in the annual reports of the CPFE for 2018 and 2019, see the "Reports" section of www. “Khosq.am” website).

A court hearing was held on March 20, the next one is appointed on June 17.

**On February 14**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held the first court hearing on the case of citizen Babken Ghazaryan against Daniel Ioannisyan, Program Director of the Union of Informed Citizens with claims of refutation of and compensation for information considered slander.

The suit was caused by Daniel Ioannisyan's statement accusing NSS Director Arthur Vanetsyan of having connections with Arshak Hakobyan, Aram Vardanyan known as "Vestrechi Aper" and Babken Ghazaryan known as "Tokhmakhi Babo", calling them "criminal authorities" at Media Center on May 22.[[49]](#footnote-49)

The next court hearing is scheduled for April 10.

**On February 15**, the Ararat regional department of the Compulsory Enforcement Service applied to "Aravot.am" news website, demanding a refutation of the article "The conflict between Alik Sargsyan and Vardges Hovakimyan has a long history of many years" published in the July 6, 2018 issue of the *“Haykakan Zhamanak”.*[[50]](#footnote-50) The website quoted the article in the *Haykakan Zhamanak”* in the "Press Review" section, adhering to the code of ethics, it did not repeat the insulting remarks contained in the original source. This demand for refutation by the state body is unfounded and can be qualified as an attempt to put pressure on the media outlet.

**On February 18**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court session on the case of the penitentiary service of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armeniaagainst the “*Zhamanak”* daily, claiming for a public refutation of the information, considered defamatory.

The lawsuit filed on January 11, 2019, was caused by an article published in the *“Zhamanak”* daily on December 12, 2018, under the headline “No control whatsoever: guards earn money for keeping cell doors open in penitentiary institutions” [[51]](#footnote-51)

The next court hearing is scheduled for April 23.

**On February 18,** Court of General Jurisdiction of Lori Marz held a regular court hearing on the case of the teacher Susanna Sargsyan against Shushanna Grigoryan, the correspondent of "Hraparak.am" website.

We should remind that the case is being re-examined in the court of first instance. The lawsuit was caused by articles, titled "Head of Vanadzor School N8 was Fired"[[52]](#footnote-52) (October 4, 2013) and "A Teacher in Vanadzor Received 12 Million AMD for Forced Idle Time"[[53]](#footnote-53) (December 5, 2013) and published in “Hraparak.am” (details are available in CPFE’s annual reports for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019, see *Reports* section on the “Khosq.am” website).

A court session on this case was held on March 5, and a trial is scheduled for April 9.

**On February 18**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held the first hearing on the case of Karen Karapetyan, the former head of the Operational Intelligence Department at the State Revenue Committee against the founder of the “*Zhamanak”* daily “Skizb Media Kentron” LLC with claims of compensation for damage caused to honor and dignity. The reason for the lawsuit is the article “Someone related to SRC Deputy Head Appointed as Head of the Operational Intelligence Department”, which was published in the *Zhamanak* on July 5 and specified "... Before this appointment, Karen Karapetyan was the head of the operational intelligence department at SRC, being Valeri Osipyan's godfather. He left against the backdrop of a corruption scandal."[[54]](#footnote-54)

At this session, the court made a decision on the need to prove a number of facts. In particular, the plaintiff must prove that the above information is in fact detrimental to his or her honor and dignity. And the respondent must prove that the above-mentioned publication corresponds to the reality, that is, it is neither false, nor unsubstantiated, nor unlawful, and that he has revealed that information through conscientious and balanced work.

The next court hearing is scheduled for April 20.

**On February 19,** “Hraparak.am” website wrote that Andranik Kocharyan, Chairman of the NA Standing Committee on Defense and Security, manifested a discriminatory and unpleasant attitude towards some journalists during a briefing: "... he regularly complained about the questions raised by the journalists, tried to prevent us from asking questions, hindered the flows of Q&A, and after every question he leaned towards Naira Zohrabyan, the facilitator of the briefing, and muttered something in her ear with a displeased look in his eyes. His whisper was quite audible in the hall, and we could hear that Kocharyan was complaining about Zohrabyan’s manner of facilitation, namely, why she allowed the journalists of the oppositional media to pose questions to the head of the General Headquarters."[[55]](#footnote-55)

**On February 19**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court session on the case of David Adyan, Head of Social Sector Control of the RA State Control Service, against the “Skizb Media Kentron” LLC as founder and publisher of the “*Zhamanak”* daily.

We should remind that the reason for the lawsuit was the article entitled "The Old Fox of Old and New Armenia,” published in the May 9 issue of the daily newspaper.[[56]](#footnote-56) The plaintiff is seeking a refutation of the information contained in the article, a public apology and a compensation of 2 million AMD for defamation, and 1 million AMD for insult.

The next court hearing is scheduled for April 9.

On February 19, the Civil Court of Appeals ruled against the appeal of Norik Sargsyan against the decision of the Court of First Instance, which dismissed the case of a group of lecturers at the Armenian State University of Economics against Norik Sargsyan, while the lawsuit of one of the lecturers, namely Lyuba Mehrabyan, was upheld and the “*Aravot”* daily was obliged to publish a refutation.

We should remind that the claim was caused by Norik Sargsyan’s articled, titled “An Open Letter to Norik Sargsyan, Rector of the Armenian State University of Economics, Mr. K Atoyan” published in the “*Hraparak”* daily on April 15, 2016, and “Where the Shoe Pinches” published in the “*Aravot”* daily on June 15. (Details are available in CPFE’s annual reports for 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, see also the *Reports* section in the “Khosq.am” website).

Defendant Norik Sargsyan filed a appeal with the Court of Appeal on December 9, 2019, claiming that the court of first instance had not examined and had not referred to some pieces of evidence in its ruling.

According to the Court of Appeal, however, the defendant's statements published in the “*Aravot”* daily were defamatory in nature, and the respondent initially pursued the purpose of defaming the plaintiff's honor and dignity, with the intent to demean and humiliate the plaintiff. That is why the Court of Appeal upheld the decision of the first instance.

**On February 19**, citizen Ara Sukiasyan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against Shamshyan.com news website, claiming for an apology for the factual data, considered defamatory and insulting. The lawsuit was caused by an article, titled "Police officers, investigators and military police officers tracked a 27-year-old employee of the RA Ministry of Defense down on suspicion of brutal murder of a 16-year-old girl in Yerevan”, published on the website on January 6, 2012," where based on his own information, the author published data about the plaintiff’s son, the person arrested on suspicion of murder. [[57]](#footnote-57)

On February 28, the lawsuit was returned for corrections. It was re-submitted on March 18, but was returned on March 27 for the same reason.

**On February 20**, “ORSIS ARMS” LLC filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against the Public Television of Armenia, seeking refutation. The plaintiff's representative Alexander Sirunyan informed the CPFE that the reason for the lawsuit was the news published by the Public Television on February 11, according to which "ORSIS ARMS" LLC deceived the army and sold hunting weapons instead of combat arms.[[58]](#footnote-58) Moreover, as the author of the news piece Gevorg Tosunyan told the CPFE, the video contains the LLC’s clarification on the matter.[[59]](#footnote-59)

As of March 31, the lawsuit was not yet accepted for proceedings.

**On February 24**, citizen Hayk Stepanyan filed a second lawsuit against founder of Hayeli Club Democracy Support NGO and journalist Angela Tovmasyan, claiming for obligation to publicly refute information considered defamatory and confiscation of a compensation. The reason for the lawsuit was an insult, namely, at the press conference held in "Hayeli" club on January 22, Angela Tovmasyan reaffirmed the previous insult and added to it: "You are not only a hooligan, but also awful and perverted people."[[60]](#footnote-60) On March 5, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. As of March 31, the date of the court session was not set yet.

**On February 24,** “Bari Samaratsi” LLC filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against journalist Teresa Asatryan (Sargsyan), demanding a refutation and a compensation for the damage caused to its business reputation. "Bats TV" LLC was involved in the case as third party. The reason for the lawsuit was Teresa Asatryan's statement about Bari Samaratsi’s production, voiced during the “Bats Or” program, according to which this meat product is inedible, and it was called a leader in the market, because its owner was close to Serzh Sargsyan. The plaintiff claims that this is not true, and demands 2 million AMD to compensate for the damage. On March 2, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. As of March 31, the date of the court session was not set yet.

**On February 24**, Court of General Jurisdication of Yerevan held a regular court hearing on the case of Lara Aharonyan, head of the Women's Resource Center NGO against “Hayeli” Club and “Live News Media” LLC, seeking compensation of damage to her honor and dignity in the amount of 2 million AMD.

The lawsuit was caused by a video with the heading “Member of the CC Board of Trustees Lara Aharonyan is Involved in Sexual Profanity of Childern: Hayk Ayvazyan” published on April 24, 2019, in which one of the guests of Hayeli Club, Hayk Ayvazyan, made assessments of Aharonyan's activities during a press conference. The video was posted on “Hayeli.am” and Livenews. am news sites.

At this session, the court decided to uphold Lara Aharonyan's motion to allow an addition to the subject of the lawsuit. Among other additions, the plaintiff demands the publication of a refutation text, as composed by her. Besides, “Hayeli Club” NGO and “Live News Media” LLC must each prove to the public that the publications in their outlets reflect the reality and that those data serve public’s best interest, and so on.

The next court hearing is scheduled for April 28.

**On February 24,** the court of general jurisdiction of Ararat and Vayots Dzor marzes (seat in Masis) held a regular hearing of the case of Nver Mnatsakanyan, a journalist and anchor at “1in.am” website against Hayeli Club and Garnik Isagulyan, with claims to oblige for a public apology and publication of the judgment in the media.

The reason for the lawsuit was the video under the heading of “Hey, Nver, aren’t you ashamed: you will serve whoever pays you: Garnik Isagulyan” published on Hayeli.am website on April 14, where the latter made his assessment on a number of processes in Armenia, including Nver Mnatsakanyan's activities.[[61]](#footnote-61)

The next court hearing on the case is scheduled for May 13.

**On February 25**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court session on the case of citizen Hayk Mkrtchyan against "ArmNews TV" CJSC, with claims for obligation to refute the data considered defamatory and compensation of the damage.

The reason for the lawsuit filed on May 13, 2019, is the news published in the above-mentioned media outlet, stating that Hayk Mkrtchyan, a 32-year-old resident of Yerevan's Nor Nork administrative district, used counterfeit banknotes. The plaintiff considers this a slander and demands a refutation.

The date of the next court hearing was not set as of March 31.

**On February 25**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court hearing on the case of Lyova Abrahamyan, head of Sarukhan Community in Gegharkunik Marz, against Narine Hasratyan, a reporter at the *Haykakan Zham* news site, claiming refutation of the information damaging his honor, dignity and business reputation. The cause of the lawsuit, filed on February 13, 2019, was an article titled "Who Sponsors Sarukhan Mayor and Prevents Preliminary Investigation Since August."[[62]](#footnote-62)

The next hearing is scheduled on April 8.

**On February 25**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court session on the case of theRA Health Minister's spokesperson Alina Nikoghosyan against the founder of the “*Hraparak”* daily with claims of public apology and confiscation of 1 million AMD as compensation.

The cause of the lawsuit, filed on June 3, 2019, is an article published on “Hraparak.am” on May 9 under the heading "Ministry of Health Conceals What Happened and Practices Protectionism towards Lfik."[[63]](#footnote-63)

According to the judgment, published on March 17, the lawsuit was partially upheld. The defendant was obliged to apologize to the plaintiff Alina Nikoghosyan publishing the refutation text provided by the plaintiff on "Hraparak.am" website. Besides, the court decided to confiscate 200,000 AMD from “Hraparak daily” LLC in favor of Alina Nikoghosyan as compensation for insult and 200,000 AMD as a reasonable fee for the lawyer. As of March 31, the verdict was not appealed.

**On February 26**, the Court of Cassation rejected and did not accept for proceedings the appeal of Lydian Armenia CJSC against the rejection of the appeal by the Court of Appeal.

We should remind that the subject of dispute is the decision of the first instance court to reject the motion to secure the claim by means of freezing the property and financial means within the case of Lydian Armenia CJSC against Atom Margaryan and “Lragir.am” electronic newspaper.

The lawsuit was filed on September 27, seeking a refutation of defamatory information and claiming confiscation of compensation for expressions discrediting business reputation. The reason for the lawsuit is an interview with Atom Margaryan, entitled "In case of impartial investigation, Lydian's leaders will face a problem" and published on “Lragir.am” on September 15.[[64]](#footnote-64)

On October 29, the Court of General Jurisdiction rejected the motion to apply measures to secure the claim, for which the plaintiff appealed to the Court of Appeal on November 21. On 2 December the appeal was returned on the ground that it had been brought in after the expiry of the statute of limitation and at the same time it had not petitioned for an excuse and reinstatement of the limitation period. On December 30, an appeal was filed against the decision of the court of appeal.

There were no other development regarding this case as of March 31, 2020.

**On February 27**, Acting Head of the State Control Service Argishti Kyaramyan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against the founder of the “*Zhamanak”* newspaper "Skizb Media Kentron" LLC, seeking compensation for the damage caused to his honor, dignity and business reputation. The lawsuit was caused by an article, titled “The One of the Old Lot: the Head of SCS annuls inspection results” and published in the “*Zhamanak”* daily on February 19. The newspaper wrote: "According to the information obtained by the “*Zhamanak”*, Kyaramyan does not stand out with his professionalism in this system. Moreover, over time, getting rid of Sanasaryan's staff and bringing in his own people, he successfully annuls the results of the inspections, revealed in various bodies, or suddenly it turns out that there are no problems in the inspected bodies. They say that he especially succeds in finding common ground with the representatives of the old regime.” [[65]](#footnote-65)

As of March 31, the lawsuit was not accepted yet.

**On February 27,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan rejected the lawsuit of actress Ani Yeranyan against “BlogNews.am” news website and its founder “Datablog” LLC, seeking and obligation of public apology, and ruled to confiscate 500000 AMD in favor of “Datablog” LLC as a reasonable fee for the lawyer.

We should remind that on January 9, 2019, Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction accepted the lawsuit filed by actress Ani Yeranyan against “BlogNews.am” news website's chief editor Konstantin Ter-Nakalian and Karen Antinyan, director of “Datablog” LLC, on obliging them to public apology. The reason for the lawsuit was the published information about Ani Yeranyan's personal life, in particular the following expression: "Ani Yeranyan seems to have followed Meline Daluzyan's path".[[66]](#footnote-66) By the court decision as of September 26, the case was split on the “BlogNews.am” and Datablog episodes. In case of “BlogNews.am”, the case was dismissed. (Details are available in theCPFE annual report for 2019, see *Reports* section of “Khosq.am” website).

The plaintiff did not file an appeal against the decision of the court of first instance in relation to “Datablog” LLC.

**On February 28,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held the first hearing on the cause of “Lydian Armenia” CJSC against “Skizb Media” LLC, the founder of “1in.am” news website, claiming for a compensation of the damage caused to the good business reputation of the company.

We should remind that the cause of the lawsuit, filed on October 11, 2019, was the article entitled "What is the way out? Armen Sargsyan can change the situation" published on "1in.am" news website at 3:10 pm on August 19. Armen Sargsyan Can Change the Situation” article where the author specifically wrote as follows: "It is obvious, for example, that a comprehensive legal and political assessment of the former system's performance will inevitably affect Lydian, who has, of course, obtained the right to exploit the mine as a result of corrupt deals and such arrangements that the current Armenian government may terminate the deal, having in general all the political and legal grounds for doing it." The plaintiff claims for a confiscation of only one AMD from the defendant as compensation for the damage caused to the business reputation of the company.

The next court hearing on the case is scheduled for April 17.

**On March 3,** lawyer Aram Orbelyan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against the Republic of Armenia, in the person of the National Security Service and the Public Television of Armenia CJSC, claiming for a refutation of the defamatory information and a compensation of the damage caused by defamation. The reason for the lawsuit was the report within the main news program on the Public Television on January 30, which, according to its author Gevorg Tosunyan, was based on official explanations. The report contained information provided by the NSS, stating that lawyer Aram Orbelyan regularly visited the Constitutional Court without presenting an ID, and his entries were not recorded.[[67]](#footnote-67)

On March 17, the lawsuit and the attached documents were returned on the grounds that the data was incomplete. The lawsuit was filed again on March 18 and was accepted for proceedings on March 30.

**On March 5,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court hearing on the case of attorneys Lusine Sahakyan, Aramazd Kiviryan, and Armen and Armine Poghosyan against “Lakmoes.am” and “Skizb Media Kentron” LLC, claiming compensation for damage to their honor, dignity, business reputation and for infringements of their right to privacy in their personal and family life.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on January 15, 2019, caused by an article titled "‘Hunters’ for Diaspora Armenians Seize the Military Doctor’s Son" published on “Lakmoes.am” website on December 3, 2018, and “1in.am” on December 4, 2018.

The next court hearing is scheduled for April 17.

**On March 10**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court session on the case of Emma Kirakosyan against “ATV TV Company” LLC with claims of compensation of damage to her honor and dignity and obligation for refutation.

We should remind that the suit was triggered by the February 22 issue of Semi-Open Windows program. The topic is the 20-year-old lawsuits and hassle caused allegedly by Emma Kirakosyan herself.[[68]](#footnote-68)

The next court hearing is scheduled for June 9.

**On March 10,** journalist Hasmik Arakelyan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against the repeal the orders No. 90-A, 106-A, 147-A on administering sanctions against “Armenian Public Television” CJSC. On March 19, the lawsuit was returned because the data contained in the documents proved incomplete.

On March 17, the journalist filed a second lawsuit against Public Television to have Order 161-A on the termination of the Labor Contract and pay-off repealed, claiming reinstatement in the job and confiscation of a compensation for the forced idle time. By the decision of the court, this lawsuit was returned for corrections on March 20. As of March 31, no new developments have been noted.

**On March 11**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court hearing on the case of citizen Yura Adyan against “NewsAM” LLC (“News.am” website), seeking refutation of slander and 2 million AMD in compensation.

The reason for the lawsuit filed on August 16, 2019, was the article titled "The Old Fox of Old and New Armenia,” published in the May 9 issue of the “*Zhamanak”* daily newspaper that was reprinted by the website.

The next court hearing is scheduled for June 24.

**On March 13**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a preliminary hearing on the case of former NSS intelligence colonel Eduard Harutyunyan against former MP Taron Sahakyan ("First News Agency" LLC, the founder of “1in.am” website was involved as the third party), seeking a public apology for the insult, as well as refutation of defamatory information and a compensation.

We should remind that the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on July 3, 2019, caused by an article, titled ““The Harutyunyans dynasty is still rooted in the state administration system: who occupies a post, what post and where?”[[69]](#footnote-69)

The next court hearing is scheduled for June 26.

**On March 13,** citizen Entsa Davtyan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against “Shamshyan Media” LLC, claiming a public apology, obligation to refute and pay a monetary compensation for non-pecuniary damage. The reason for the lawsuit was an article, titled "An extraordinary case in Yerevan. Police are looking for 31-year-old Entsa, who for four years on forced his wife to have sex with strangers and give him the money” [[70]](#footnote-70) and published on "Shamshyan.com" website on February 11.

On March 23, the lawsuit and the attached documents were returned by the decision of the court.

**On March 20**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court hearing on the case of Armenian Progressive Youth NGO against Konstantin Ter-Nakalyan, Editor-in-Chief of “BlogNews.am” and the founder of “Channel 5” TV Company, “SHARK” LLC, with claims of refution of a defamatory statement, apology for insult and compensation.

We should remind that the lawsuit filed on May 6, 2019, was caused by a statement made by Constantin Ter-Nakalian, Editor-in-Chief of “BlogNews.am” website, in “Channel 5”'s "Face to Face" program on April 5 that Progressive Youth NGO implemented LGBT campaign in a Kotayk region school.[[71]](#footnote-71) (Details are available in the *Reports* section on “Khosq.am” website.)

The next court hearing is scheduled for June 19.

**On March 20,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular session on the case of former Vayots Dzor Governor Trdat Sargsyan against “Hraparak Daily” LLC claiming an obligation for refutation of the information considered slander and confiscation of a compensation in the amount of 2 million AMD.

We should remind that the suit was caused by a publication in the newspaper, according to which Governor Trdat Sargsyan was present at the brutal beating of Lieutenant Colonel Ara Mkhitaryan.[[72]](#footnote-72)

The next court hearing is scheduled for May 5.

**On March 21**, “Mediaroom.am” website was hacked. Harutyun Mkrtchyan, the editor of the website, informed that 100,000 Chinese and Malaysian IPs per second attacked, and that specialists worked all night to resolve the issue. Eventually, the website was restored.

**On March 23**, Gagik Tsarukyan, the leader of the Prosperous Armenia Party (PAP) faction in the National Assembly, demonstrated a disrespectful attitude towards journalists.

In response to the question posed by Ani Gevorgyan from “Tert.am” as to what he was doing as an employer and whether he was paying his employees for the idle time due to the coronavirus pandemic, Tsarukyan said: “Get concerned about your employers.” And in response to Public Television journalist Shoghik Galstyan’s clarifying question, whether the businessman was not going to pay for the forced idle time, Tsarukyan answered: "Dear girlie, how long can you keep this empty talk going on?"[[73]](#footnote-73)

**On March 23,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court session on the case of citizen Yura Adyan against “Mitk Media” LLC (the founder of “Mitk.am” website), claiming refutation of slander and a compensation of 2 million AMD. The lawsuit was cuased by the article “The Old Fox of Old and New Armenia” published in May 9, 2019 issue of the “*Zhamanak”* newspaper, reprinted by the website.

The next court hearing is scheduled for July 2.

**On March 25**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Syunik Marz held a regular court hearing on the case of Senior Investigator of Syunik Regional Investigation Department Narek Abgaryan against former Mayor of Meghri Arshavir Hovhannisyan (with "Syunyats Ashkharh" LLC, founder of the “*Syunyats Yerkir”* newspaper as the third party to the case), with claims of public refutation of defamatory information, public apology for insult and slander, and compensation of the damage caused to honor and dignity.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on July 16, 2019, caused by the insulting statements made by Arshavir Hovhannisyan about Narek Abgaryan, published in the June 16 issue of the “*Syunyats” Yerkir* newspaper.

The next court hearing on is scheduled for June 18.

**On March 26**, the Civil Court of Appeal upheld the appeal of citizen Armen Khachatryan against the decision of the Court of First Instance, which decided to dismiss the case and levy 100 thousand AMD from the citizen.

We should remind that on September 10, 2018, citizen Armen Khachatryan filed a lawsuit against editor-in-chief of "Irates" newspaper Piruza Meliksetyan, claiming public refutation of slander. The lawsuit was caused by an article titled "The goal is to see a Gay Catholic on the Enlightener’s throne which will destroy not only the church but will also become the end of the Armenian gene,"**[[74]](#footnote-74)** published on “Irates.am” on July 17, 2018. On October 10, the case was dismissed based on the plaintiff's request.

The decision of the first instance court on levying a state duty was overturned by the Court of Appeal.

***Pressures Applied Agaianst Media Outlets and Journalists during the State of Emergency due to the New Coronavirus***

**On March 18**, the “Aravot.am” news website reported that citing the government decree on the State of Emergency the Police had asked to remove the news piece that contained that Russian political scientist Valery Solovey’s commentary to Ekho Moskvi radio station on the spread of coronavirus in Russia. Moreover, the Police demanded to remove only the Armenian version of the news piece.

**On March 18**, Police Colonel A. Karapetyan sent a letter to the “*Hraparak”* daily, demanding to remove the news on the lack of cigarettes in prisons from the newspaper and from the homonymous website. According to that publication, the editorial office had received a call from "Armavir" penitentiary institution that a revolt was brewing among the convicts because of the ban on sending parcels by relatives due to the state of emergency.

Notifications, resulting in the removal of news pieces related to the state of emergency, were received by “Mamul.am” and Iravunk.com websites that had republished this news.

**On March 19,** the Cybercrime Department of the RA Police paid a visit to the editorial office of the “*Iravunk”* newspaper and informed: “The article published on page 5 of March 18 issue of the “*Iravunk”* newspaper, titled "Koronovirus caused serious shocks in the United States and Europe" as well as the publication titled "I did not create that virus, I am surprised at how evil and heartless people are: The woman from Etchmiadzin, who arrived from Italy, opens up brackets." and pubished on Iravunk.comat 14:48 on March 18, in fact, contain a risk of causing panic and creating a panicky situation and must be removed immediately.”

# On March 20, the RA Police informed sent an e-mail letter to the editorial office of the “*Hraparak”* newspaper to notify that it was necessary to remove the Facebook post, made by the former Prime Minister Hrant Bagratyan, which was republished on the newspaper's homonymous website and already had 25,000 views. In addition, the Police demanded to remove the publications titled "Weddings and Funerals Attended by Several Hundred People Continue. No Control Whatsoever” and “A Woman Sick with the Coronavirus Calls for Self-Protection and Warns against Self-Treatment.”

# In connection with this type of pressure, the newspaper wrote: "A huge army within the government and elsewhere is monitoring the press. None of them know what the restriction of "not spreading panic" means, and each of them makes decisions through the prism of their own education and fears. Some of them, even ordinary employees at SNCOs, MPs and their assistants, simply call the media outlet editors and order them to remove this or that publication. However, they can't even explain the reasoning behind such a decision. Yet, they threaten with the large fine mentioned in the decision "On the State of Emergency" in the amount of 500-800 thousand AMD."

**On March 20,** Satik Seyranyan, editor of the “168.am” website, told “Aravot.am”. "Yesterday they called from the 6th department of the Police, tried to force our employee to remove the material, namely the publication of Hrant Bagratyan's Facebook post, from the website. I demanded that there be only a written notice, because we will need some grounds for the future and they must substantiate and explain why they demand the removal of that material. "

A notification for the removal of Hrant Bagratyan's Facebook post was also sent to "Armday.am", "Hayeli.am" and "Yerkir.am" websites.

**On March 20**, the RA Police demanded the removal of journalist Marine Kharatyan's Facebook post, which stated that some employers forced employees who were running a fever to show up. The journalist also told about the probability of having the coronavirus spread in one of the large factories in Yerevan. In a conversation with "Aravot.am" news site, Marine Kharatyan said that at first the police called and asked to remove the post. "I replied that I had been asked to help, how could I remove it? They said that if I did not remove it, they would hold me administratively liable. At first, I said I would consider it. A few hours later, the police came to our house and said, "On behalf of the Commandant we would like to ask you to remove the post and showed the decree on the state of emergency." I asked what if I didn't remove it. They said they would not leave until we removed it."

**On March 20**, “Araratnews.am” editor-in-chief Harutyun Mkrtchyan announced on his Facebook page that he had been asked by the Commandant’s Office to remove journalist Marine Kharatyan's post, stating that some employers forced employees running a fever to show up. The editor also said: "We removed the post at the request of the Commandant, according to the regulations set for the state of emergency. However, we would like to draw the attention of the relevant authorities to the fact that it would be more effective if, instead of demanding that the article be removed, they would be more consistent when dealing with the issue itself.”

**On March 20,** “Tert.am”'s editor-in-chief Aram Antinyan told “Aravot.am” that since the declaration of the state of emergency, the police had already forced them to remove 4 materials, contacting them directly. For example, the editor was asked to remove a material where Hollywood actor Idris Elba did not rule out that he had contracted the infection from the first lady of Canada. In another notification, the RA Police demanded that the material, which stated that a citizen who arrived in Russia from Armenia tested positive for the coronavirus be removed from the website. By the way, the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed the news hours later.

The editor said that he did not agree with the claim that the materials the Polices forced to remove were panic-mongering. "Of course we will remove them, but on the condition of challenging these decisions in the future."

# On March 20, the Police sent a notification to the website with the demand of removing the article, titled "Coronavirus. A Real Threat or Handy Panic?" In that publication, the author Suren Sahakyan analyzes the data related to the global pandemic. However, the publication was not removed from the website.

# On the same day, the Police sent a notice to the editorial office to remove the news, titled "An Armenian died of coronavirus infection in Pasadena" published on "Yerevan.today" website, but the publication was not removed from the website. By the way, the news was reprinted from "Asbarez.com" website.

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**On March 20,** “Aravot.am” news website reported that the Commandant’s Office had asked to remove the article titled "An elderly resident of Etchmiadzin Is Diagnosed with Pneumonia, Runs a Fever but is neither Tested nor Hospitalized."

**On March 21**, “Mamul.am” website published Facebook user Artak Shirinyan’s post with the caption: "Nothing in Zvartnots Could Hint at the So-Called Quarantine." The Police sent a notification to the editorial office to remove it, however, the news piece was not removed from the website.

**On March 28**, “Blognews.am” website published an article, composed by Narek Malyan and titled: "A man died three days ago without being tested. In our country, the tests are not for sick villagers, but for healthy Soros-supporters.” The website received a notification from the Police on this matter. However, the website did not remove the publication.

**On March 31**, "Hraparak.am" published the news of the “*Hraparak”* daily with the headline "Isolation Process Continues", where unofficial information is presented about the number of isolated people from Alapars village in Kotayk region, referring to anonymous sources. The police sent a notification to remove this publication, but, unlike other cases, the editorial office did not remove this one.

The police sent 5 notifications, which were removed from the Internet. Two of them were from "News.am," and one article was removed "Lurer.com", "Zham.am", "Hraparak.am" websites each.

1. ***Violations of the Right to Receive and Disseminate Information***

*During the first quarter of 2020, the CPFE recorded 21 cases of violations of the right to receive and disseminate information, including 6 in the state of emergency. Compared to the same period last year, the number of such violations decreased by 30.*

*The facts recorded during the period under review, as well as the new developments of the previously recorded ones, are presented in chronological order.*

**On January 8**, the Penitentiary Service of the RA Ministry of Justice refused to provide information to "Hetq.am" website about the bonuses received in December 2019. Thus, the journalist of the website Seda Ghukasyan informed that the first inquiry was sent to the Penitentiary Service on December 30, 2019. On January 8, 2020, the service replied that they would not provide the requested information because it was a state and official secret.

**On January 9**, the journalist sent the same inquiry to the Ministry of Justice, but on January 14 the Ministry, too, refused to provide the requested data, reasoning that the questions required content, revealing personal data. Meanwhile, the journalist reminded that a number of agencies published orders on bonuses on their websites.

**On January 9**, the “*Iravunk”* newspaper sent a request to Yerevan Municipality with a request for information on New Year's expenses. All the deadlines for replying to the written inquiry have expired, but the newspaper has not received an answer yet. Journalist Ilona Azaryan wrote on January 22 that after her calls, the municipality informed that from now on only the signed and sealed inquiries would be accepted. On January 31, the newspaper wrote that they had not received any answer, having sent the request in the required format.

**On January 9**, the Freedom of Information Center sent a request to the Ministry of Environment asking for information on the grant program that supported the development of the draft law on making supplements to the RA Law on the Freedom of Information, posted on the portal for the publication of draft legal acts – “e-draft.am” – on December 2, 2019. The answer received on January 17 was just a formality and inconsistent with the content of the inquiry.

**On January 14,** the Freedom of Information Center applied to the National Security Service of the Republic of Armenia, requesting to provide statistical data on the inquiries made to the Agency in 2018-2019. The answer was received on January 20 and was incomplete.

On the same day, the FOICA sent the same inquiry to the RA Police, the answer was received on January 17, and was incomplete again.

**On January 21,** Asbarez Club journalist Ani Mkrtchyan sent an electornic inquiry to the RA Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Zaruhi Batoyan about some social issues related to and the possibility of the renovation of the apartment owned by a socially vulnerable family in Vahramaberd community, Shirak region. The response to the inquiry was received on February 25 with a delay, and the ministry did not provide any written or oral notification about that postponement or delay.

**On January 30**, the Court of Appeal examined the complaint on the case of the "Union of Informed Citizens" NGO against Yerevan Municipality.

We would like to remind that on January 8, 2018, the Union of Informed Citizens filed a lawsuit with the Administrative Court of Armenia against Yerevan Minicipality, requesting a full response to the written inquiries. The NGO was asked to report whether the Department of Exterior Design and Advertising of the Municipality of Yerevan had considered the banners with the so-called "Devoted and Conscripted to One Purpose" as a social advertisement, and if so, whether it stemmed from a document. The municipality responded to the written inquiry only partially.

On February 19, the Court of Appeal rejected the appeal in its entirety, leaving the judicial act in force. No appeal was filed with the Cassation Court.

**On February 15,** “Hetq.am” journalist Tirayr Muradyan sent a written inquiry to the Electric Networks of Armenia, requesting information on the possible compensation to the residents. As of March 31, no response was received.

**On February 19,** the “*Iravunk”* newspaper wrote that it was impossible to get any commentary from the Health Minister’s spokesperson. Once again, the editorial office tried to get clarification on the issues related to the Institute of Oncology, but the speaker Alina Nikoghosyan's phone did not answer. The newspaper wrote: "This has already become a carved-in-stone dogma, when the speaker, who is paid to answer the questions of the press, ignores calls, to put it mildly."

**On February 22**, “Hetq.am” journalist Tirayr Muradyan sent an electronic inquiry to Gegharkunik Water Users' Association (WUA), a public sector organization, requesting information about an irrigation network owned by them. On February 26, the acting director of the the WUA S. Hambardzumyan did not answer most of the questions for requested information, and sent a partial answer only. On February 27, the journalist again applied to the same official with a written inquiry, but as of March 31, he had not received any answer.

**On February 22**, “Hetq.am” journalist Tirayr Muradyan sent a written request to Yerevan Municipality, requesting information on the privatization of some land spots. As of March 31, the journalist had not received an answer yet.

**On February 24**, the Journalists' Club Asparez sent an e-mail to Ani Amirshadyan, the head of the Social Security Service of the Republic of Armenia, requesting for clarification on the age pension of a resident in the Arevik community, Shirak Marz. The response to the inquiry was received by post, with a delay, on March 20, and it was incomplete.

**On February 27**, “Hetq.am” online journalist Tirayr Muradyan sent an e-mail to Arman Ghazaryan, head of the Zolakar community, Gegharkunik Marz, asking him to provide copies of the decisions made by the head of the community and the Elders’ Council for 2015 - 2020, as they were not published on the official website of the municipality. As of March 31, neither the requested information nor the notification on the need of additional time was received.

**On March 3**, the Court of General Jurisdication of Yerevan held a regular hearing on the case of "Hetq.am" online periodical (founded by "Investigative Journalists" NGO) against the Board of Trustees of the National Reseach Laboratory after A.I. Alikhanyan (Yerevan Institute of Physics) Foundation, claiming to oblige the Board to provide copies of all the decisions adopted in 2011-2019.

We should remind that after the refusal from the foundation, the "Investigative Journalists" NGO filed a lawsuit in the Administrative Court on July 8, 2019, and the case was referred to the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan on July 15, where a hearing was held on August 14.

This year a court hearing on the case took place on March 6, and the next one is scheduled for April 27.

**On March 20,** “Aravot.am” journalist Nelli Babayan alerted that after the declaration of a state of emergency in the country and restrictions of the media's capacity to disseminate information, the spokesperson of the Commandant’s Office should at least answer phone calls. According to the journalist, all agencies refer journalists to the Commandant’s Office, but no one would answer the calls there.

**On March 20**, “Factor.am” journalist Narek Kirakosyan wrote to the National Security Service to provide information about an Azerbaijani person who had crossed the Armenian-Azerbaijani border on March 12. On March 26, a response was received from the NSS, which rejected the request on the grounds that the requested information contained data not subject to publication. This refusal is deemed unfounded because the service could provide the part of the information that was not confidential.

**On March 24**, “Factor.am” journalist Narek Kirakosyan wrote to the National Security Service for information on Nikol Pashinyan's statement that $ 42 million worth of weapons that cold not be used had been purchased during Serzh Sargsyan's rule. In particular, the journalist inquired whether a criminal case had been initiated and whether Serzh Sargsyan or others had been interrogated in the framework of that case. On March 30, the NSS replied that providing information about it was not expedient due to need of ensuring the comprehensiveness and objectivity of the preliminary investigation. These arguments cannot be considered well-grounded.

**On March 24**, the “*Iravunk”* newspaper wrote that on March 16 it had sent a request to the Ministry of Health, asking for statistics on mortality in the Republic of Armenia caused by the H1N1 virus in 2009 and 2016. The newspaper did not receive a response from the Ministry within the 5-day period stipulated by the law, they only informed that it was "in progress," when in fact the Ministry had provided this information to the RA Prime Minister, and the latter spoke about it. Besides, the newspaper sent an inquiry, asking to clarify in which cases should an epidemic be declared in the country, and whether there was an epidemic in Armenia. According to the newspaper, the Minister of Health Arsen Torosyan did not answer this question during the press conference.

On March 25, the *Iravunk* wrote that he had addressed the above-mentioned questions to Vahan Hunanyan, a representative of the Commandant’s Office, but the latter would not answer the calls, and the government had advised to try again because they had been busy, but all attempts proved in vain.

On March 31, the newspaper wrote that they had called the government again, hoping to get answers to their questions, and only after that the answer to the first question was received from the Ministry of Health.

**On March 25**, “Aravot.am” journalist Nelli Babayan reported that Deputy Minister of Economy Varos Simonyan had not answered any of the journalists’ questions during the press conference. The journalist also complained about the online press conferences, organized by the government, because interaction was not maintained, besides, the press secretaries did not read out all the questions, sent in by the journalists.

**On March 26**, the editor-in-chief of “Politik.am” Boris Murazi made an announcement in a Facebook live that Mane Gevorgyan, the spokeswoman for the RA Prime Minister and the Commandant’s Office, was not fulfilling her duties and was threatening to send police officers to the editorial office.[[75]](#footnote-75) The problem is that the website published a news piece about a man who died in Gyumri on suspicion of the coronavirus, but they could not get an explanation on the news from the Commandant’s Office. In particular, Boris Murazi said that Mane Gevorgyan had explained it by the workload and suggested posting the Facebook post of the press secretary of the Minister of Health. When the editor said that the latter could not be considered an official refutation, Mane Gevorgyan threatened to fine him and send in the police.

**On March 27**, “Aravot.am” journalist Nelli Babayan expressed concern over the working style of the Ministry of Defense. Numerous questions related to the coronavirus data among the military remained unanswered, citing confidentiality of personal data, whereas the Defense Ministry spokesman later showed the soldiers isolated due to the infection in a live broadcast.

***OTHER EVENTS ON THE ACTIVITY OF MEDIA AND JOURNALISTS***

**On February 3**, by the decision of the RA Administrative Court, TV5 CJSC, Armenia TV CJSC, “MoTV Media Holding” CJSC, “ArmenAkob” CJSC, “AR TV COMPANY” LLC, Cinemax and “Husaber” CJSCs were involved as third parties in the trial on the case of "A1 +" TV Company against the RA Government and the Commission on Television and Radio.

We should remind that on December 18, 2019, the founder of "A1+" TV company "MELTEX" LLC filed a lawsuit with the RA Administrative Court against the RA Government and the Commission on Television and Radio in relation to the annulment of acts from 7 broadcast licensing competitions held in 2003. As early as in 2002 the TV Company was deprived of the opportunity to broadcast on political grounds and subsequently was not granted a license as a result of all organized competitions.

The court hearing scheduled for March 13 did not take place due to the situation with the new coronavirus. As of March 31, the date of the next court session was not set yet.

**On February 24**, Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular court hearing on the case of the founder of the “*Iravunk”* newspaper, former MP Hayk Babukhanyan against Larisa Minasyan, the Executive Director of Open Society Foundations-Armenia.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on April 4, 2019, with claims of refuting the information considered defamatory, and the reason was Larissa Minasyan's statement that Hayk Babukhanyan, too, received a grant from their foundation. [[76]](#footnote-76)

During the court hearing, the representative of the respondent Larissa Minasyan objected to the video recording of the court session. The next court hearing is scheduled for May 6.

**On March 19**, the RA Government passed a decree to liquidate the *02* weekly CJSC. The rationale of the decree stated that in line with the economic, social and budgetary policy pursued by the Government of the Republic of Armenia every state administration body should implement functions, exclusively in compliance with and stemming from its goals. Hence, it was decided to stop the activity of an organization, fulfilling functions that were not typical of the field of activity of the RA Police.

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2. <https://khosq.am/2020/02/28/%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%b6-52/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://twitter.com/RSF_inter/status/1239640272415469569> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
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5. <https://www.aravot.am/2020/03/18/1100722/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://khosq.am/2020/03/20/%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%b6-53/> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://khosq.am/2020/03/27/%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%b6-54/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <https://khosq.am/2020/02/28/%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%b6-52/> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtRw3uHyDsE&feature=emb_title> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://armtimes.com/hy/article/177841> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <https://www.facebook.com/lurer.1tv/videos/2579486728993873/> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <http://tvradio.am/2020/02/03/%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-%D5%B0%D5%A1%D5%B5%D5%A1%D5%BD%D5%BF%D5%A1%D5%B6%D5%AB-%D5%B0%D5%A1%D5%B6%D6%80%D5%A1%D5%B5%D5%AB%D5%B6/?fbclid=IwAR02Mu0HHMWio-Em0rejZacIBOR_htTCNOQjrwnuL_8ES1gZpP7Aw-uPrxQ> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
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19. [**https://bit.ly/2y6NWIb**](https://bit.ly/2y6NWIb) [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
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22. [**http://hzham.am/articles/1636754873032009.html**](http://hzham.am/articles/1636754873032009.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. [**https://www.7or.am/am/news/view/162333/**](https://www.7or.am/am/news/view/162333/) [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. [**https://news.am/arm/news/317604.html**](https://news.am/arm/news/317604.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. [**https://www.facebook.com/tehmine.yenoqyan/posts/1897779590268586?\_\_xts\_\_[0]=68.ARAz3VISA9F-cl2LvF5W0up00fdh7FXPaV134HIz6i\_SGZ7qXmcXEHLUd1HZn-H7rq-yaC-x9gRgDqkN6XoZgpJKmsgc94aI3Z0F6ZC4pv8RaArEEV2jvG2tH6jBFozkopQl370tuCwHPqYIvUvps\_e76B6MCvJ7tHxm3AEgsllfKsQZJ**](https://www.facebook.com/tehmine.yenoqyan/posts/1897779590268586?__xts__%5b0%5d=68.ARAz3VISA9F-cl2LvF5W0up00fdh7FXPaV134HIz6i_SGZ7qXmcXEHLUd1HZn-H7rq-yaC-x9gRgDqkN6XoZgpJKmsgc94aI3Z0F6ZC4pv8RaArEEV2jvG2tH6jBFozkopQl370tuCwHPqYIvUvps_e76B6MCvJ7tHxm3AEgsllfKsQZJ) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
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32. [**https://hetq.am/hy/article/106239**](https://hetq.am/hy/article/106239) [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
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39. [**http://politik.am/%D6%84%D6%80%D5%A5%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%A1%D5%B6-%D5%B0%D5%A5%D5%B2%D5%AB%D5%B6%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%A9%D5%B5%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B6-%D5%BF%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B5%D5%A8-10-%D5%B0%D5%A1%D5%A6%D5%A1/**](http://politik.am/%D6%84%D6%80%D5%A5%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%A1%D5%B6-%D5%B0%D5%A5%D5%B2%D5%AB%D5%B6%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%A9%D5%B5%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B6-%D5%BF%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B5%D5%A8-10-%D5%B0%D5%A1%D5%A6%D5%A1/) [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
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47. [**https://youtu.be/R9JvpgtnAf8**](https://youtu.be/R9JvpgtnAf8) [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mznz1XD6KEw**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mznz1XD6KEw) [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. [**https://youtu.be/Tit\_LDYzOl0**](https://youtu.be/Tit_LDYzOl0) [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. [**https://www.aravot.am/2020/02/19/1094857/?fbclid=IwAR1sGJO4emViWLemQWcoFWaq-pzNRMaZq\_fTfIfBNHkfaPUYlgrcKIVnpe4**](https://www.aravot.am/2020/02/19/1094857/?fbclid=IwAR1sGJO4emViWLemQWcoFWaq-pzNRMaZq_fTfIfBNHkfaPUYlgrcKIVnpe4) [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. [**https://www.1in.am/2475932.html**](https://www.1in.am/2475932.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. [**https://hraparak.am/post/591fb734e3d84d0d37fd972c**](https://hraparak.am/post/591fb734e3d84d0d37fd972c) [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
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