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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 third quarterly 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 status of the freedom of expression and the violations of the rights of media outlets and those of journalists. This report reflects the data for the third 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 third quarter of 2020 was a difficult period for the Armenian media, primarily due to the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, followed by the the armed conflict in Nagorno Karabakh and the martial law declared in Armenia. Both Armenian and foreign journalists worked in life-threatening conditions. The war was waged not only on the battlefield, but also in the information domain. During this period, numerous cases of hacker attacks by Azerbaijan, also targeting news websites, were registered, the consequences of which were quickly eliminated by Armenian specialists. The newly emerged situation was accompanied by the quarantine due to the new coronavirus epidemic, which sometimes led to disproportionate or unfounded restrictions of media operations.   
 In general, the trend of increasing numbers of lawsuits against journalists and media outlets sustained during the quarter. Their number is exactly the same as in the previous quarter, namely 22 cases. The plaintiffs are both representatives of the current and former authorities or persons affiliated with them and ordinary citizens. Pressure was applied on journalists, accompanied by unfavorable or insulting treatment. In this sense, NA Speaker Ararat Mirzoyan, NA Deputy Speaker Alen Simonyan, the initiator of the "VETO" movement Narek Malyan, the former RA Chief of Police Vladimir Gasparyan were the most prominent perpetrators of such behavior. The latter, by the way, was accused of obstructing the professional activities of Radio Liberty correspondents. Cases of abuse of power by law enforcement agencies and interference in the activities of the media due to the state of emergency registered, too, hence journalistic organizations issued statements in this connection. They are described in the following *Media Activities Environment* and *Pressure on the Media and Their Staff* sections.

In the third quarter, the number of violations of the right to receive and disseminate information increased. 34 cases were registered against the 26 in the previous quarter. No physical violence against journalists was registered in the reporting period.

The quarter was also marked by significant legislative developments. Thus, on July 16, the National Assembly adopted the Law on Audiovisual Media. It was sharply criticized by a number of journalistic organizations, as it is not aimed at carrying out reforms or solving urgent problems in the field. Nevertheless, the law was adopted, and the processes deriving from it have already started. In particular, the Television and Radio Commission implemented the authorization of TV companies, after which, on September 18, it announced a tender for licensing the broadcasting in public multiplex.

The legislative initiative by NA Deputy Speaker Alen Simonyan, proposing a five-fold increase in the amount of monetary compensation for insult and slander, caused serious concern in journalistic circles. This bill triggered a great resonance, especially against the background of the large number of lawsuits filed against the media, as the current requirement of the law is already significantly large, if we take into account the financial situation of the media. And the new aggravations can become a serious constraining factor and threaten the freedom of speech. The initiative is dangerous also in the absence of an independent judiciary and the deep crisis of the judiciary, when we often see arbitrary and politically motivated decisions and judgments. Both local and international journalistic organizations made statements on this occasion.

During the reporting period, namely on July 7, the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression was informed that the Special Investigation Service had again suspended the criminal case, initiated in related to “Electric Yerevan” with more than 20 journalists and cameramen recognized as victims. The CPFE assisted its colleagues in the appeal against the SIS decision, turning first to the Prosecutor's Office and then to the Court of General Jurisdiction.

***MEDIA ACTIVITIES ENVIRONMENT***

In the third quarter of 2020 military clashes started on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, followed by large-scale hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh. This became a serious ordeal for the Armenian media covering the events. The editorial offices worked in an emergency mode, informing the public about the developments in the conflict. Many media outlets sent their journalists and cameramen to Artsakh to cover the hostilities more accurately and operatively.

In addition to these woes, the operations of the media was hampered by another challenge, the insurmountable coronavirus pandemic. Although the information restrictions provided by the government decree and later the state of emergency were lifted, COVID-19 still poses many obstacles to media activity and is still a constraining factor.

The third quarter displayed another trend that causes many concerns, namely the intensive flow of lawsuits against journalists and media continued. During the reporting period, number of new court cases was 22, the same as in the previous quarter.

In general, the third quarter, just like the previous ones, was marked by a large number of cases of pressure being applied on journalists and media. CPFE registered 47 such cases. The most remarkable of all was related to the reckless behavior of the former Chief of Police Vladimir Gasparyan towards the journalists of Radio Liberty, when the latter were preparing a report on illegally constructed buildings in the territory of Sevan National Park. Noticing that the journalists were filming his private house, the former Chief of Police drove the car towards them, threatening to run them over, physically annihilate them, "shoot" them, "kill them". He then went on swearing and demanded not to publish the video.

The CPFE and partner journalistic organizations issued a statement in this regard, demanding that law enforcement agencies seriously investigate the incident and bring Vladimir Gasparyan to justice in accordance with the law.[[1]](#footnote-1) The next day, a criminal case was initiated in the Police pursuant to Article 164 of the RA Criminal Code (obstruction of a journalist's legal professional activity), and on September 17, Vladimir Gasparyan was charged and signed an undertaking of not leaving.

The reason for another statement by the same journalistic organizations was the unnecessary obstruction of the media activity by law enforcement officers in the yard of the National Assembly. [[2]](#footnote-2) Thus, on August 18, journalists and cameramen were forbidden to enter the yard of the Parliament, where a walking protest was organized to protect Amulsar-Jermuk. Later, the media were asked to get permission from the chief of staff of the parliament if they wanted to film. After a local row, the Police let the journalists in, taking their names, surnames, patronymics and the names of the media outlets. In this regard, the journalistic organizations released a statement, demanding from the Government of the Republic of Armenia to clearly instruct the law enforcement bodies to act within their powers, not to use the state of emergency caused by the epidemic as an opportunity to interfere or unreasonably restrict the work of the media.

Such facts were registered in the previous quarter as well, and during the observed period the trend continued with various manifestations. Thus, on July 3, the police visited ArmNews and Channel 5 TV companies, aiming to initiate administrative proceedings for not wearing a mask on air. According to the evaluation of journalistic organizations, what happened was an abuse of authority by the law enforcement body. "In the conditions of the existing political and psychological tension in the society, the authorities should be more sensitive and avoid taking unnecessarily strict steps. We are convinced that the issue of whether to wear a mask on air or not can be resolved in a different way, through discussions, clarifications and mutual agreements," the regular statement said.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Meanwhile, on July 29, the RA Police issued a call, again warning all the representatives of the broadcast online media against violating the order, asking to wear masks during the broadcast, otherwise protocols on administrative violations would be drawn up. By the way, the Police, in response to the inquiry of the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression as to how many media outlets had been prosecuted administratively for not wearing a mask, stated that no such segregated registration was carried out.

Later, on August 18, a decision of the Commandant eased the requirements for on air activites, in particular, the obligation to wear the mask of the presenters working alone on the set was lifted. At the same time, the government provided assistance to public television and radio companies with national and capital coverage that had implemented public awareness campaigns to prevent the spread of coronavirus disease. On July 30, the government decided to provide a one-time financial assistance of 78 million 300 thousand AMD from the reserve fund to the broadcast media so that they could pay off their debts to the TV tower. Accordingly, Armenia, Shant, H2, Yerkir Media, Kentron TV companies will receive 10 million AMD each in the course of 9 months, and AR, ArmNews, New Armenia, Channel 5, Dar 21, and ATV companied will receive 2.5 million AMD each. Digital TV stations operating in the regions will receive 500 thousand AMD, and those operating in analog mode will be granted 300 thousand AMD. As for radio companies, each will receive financial support of 250 thousand to 500 thousand AMD, according to their coverage.

One of the important events in the sphere in the reporting period was the adoption of the new Law on Audiovisual Media by the National Assembly, leading to a number of related developments. On July 8, after its adoption in the first reading, journalists' organizations issued a statement on the initiative of the CPFE, stating that the law only failed to aim at reforms in the broadcasting sector, but was also severely flawed in terms of proposed principles and approaches as well as the language thereof.[[4]](#footnote-4) However, on July 16, the Parliament passed the law in the second reading. And since the President of the Republic of Armenia had not signed it yet, the Television and Radio Commission had to be guided by the old law and, in compliance with the letter of that law, announced a tender on July 17 for the licensing TV programs on the digital broadcasting network. On August 5, the President signed the Law on Audiovisual Media, and on August 7, the Television and Radio Commission canceled the opened tenders.

According to the new law, authorization should be granted before inclusion in the public multiplex. Hence, that process started on August 21. And from September 18, a new competition for licensing broadcasting in the public multiplex was announced. The slots (parts of the multiplex network stream that correspond to a single TV program) are as follows:

• Republican broadcast - 6 slots,

• Capital broadcasting - 9 slots,

• Regional broadcasting - 10 slots, one in each region.

One of the remarkable events concerning media was that on September 7 the NA Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs gave a positive conclusion to the legislative initiative of NA Vice Speaker Alen Simonyan, proposing to increase the amount of monetary compensation for insult and slander. Although the authorities claim that the draft is not aimed at targeting specific media outlets, but rather is a general measure against insults and slander spread by individuals, the document has caused serious concern among the Armenian and international journalistic community.

Thus, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) joined the statement, issued by the Union of Journalists of Armenia, which calls for rejecting Alen Simonyan's legislative initiative, as it "aims to restrict free speech in general, and freedom of the press, in particular…”[[5]](#footnote-5) On September 16, the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression and 9 partner journalistic organizations issued a joint statement, considering the NA Vice Speaker's initiative a purely political approach, which in no way could contribute to the exclusion of irresponsible journalism and the protection of citizens' information rights.[[6]](#footnote-6) Another bill, which appeared without consultations with the expert community, is more dangerous against the background of the fact that every month the number of lawsuits on the grounds of insult and/or slander against the media increase, with the maximum amount of claimed compensation, namely 1 million AMD for insult and 2 million AMD for slander. It is true that these claims are seldom fully satisfied, but in the current situation, the fivefold increase in the amount of compensation will be a clear message to the still undeveloped independent judiciary and will push for tougher decisions against the media. Among other demands, journalistic organizations called on the government to promote legislatively the development of quality journalism and out-of-court settlement of information disputes. This is very important, especially considering that the courts often make arbitrary decisions in cases involving the media. All these concerns have caused serious disagreements within the ruling party, which is why the inclusion of the bill in the NA agenda has been moved down to October.

Another issue that still causes a lot of concern is the process of making amendments and supplements to the RA Law on Media. Although the working group set up in the parliament for that purpose continues its activities, and the CPFE has had discussions with the head of the group, however, no bill has been officially put into circulation yet. The proposed amendments are especially important for ensuring the transparency of media ownership and regulating the activities of online media, as the current law has obvious gaps in this regard.

During the reporting period, there was an increase in the number of violations of the right to receive and disseminate information. The CPFE registered 34 such cases, which exceeds the number of the previous quarter by 8. The dissatisfaction of the media is especially connected with the fact that the agencies often use the loophole in the law, requiring 30 days to respond to inquiries, while this is a serious obstacle for operative coverage of events.

No physical violence was reported against journalists during the third quarter, but a criminal case was opened in connection with one of the previous incidents. According to the August 24 decision of the Court of General Jurisdiction of Lori Marz, the persons accused of applying physical violence against the editor-in-chief of "Lori TV" Narine Avetisyan were condoned. Responding to this, the CPFE and partner journalistic organizations stated in a joint statement that this decision, in fact, not only acquitted a person who had attacked the journalist, but also gave a "green light" for new violence against media representatives, thus creating an atmosphere of impunity. Taking into account the obvious bias of this judgment, a claim was submitted to overturn it and initiate disciplinary proceedings against the judge passing the judgment.[[7]](#footnote-7)

No less worrying developments have taken place in the criminal case of "Electric Yerevan." We should remind that in the framework of this case 21 journalists were recognized as victims. On July 7, the CPFE learned that the Special Investigation Service had suspended the case for the second time on the grounds of unknown suspect. As before, this time, too, the CPFE supported the journalists who applied to it, who were victims of the events of "Electric Yerevan". Thus, the SIS decision was appealed to the Prosecutor's Office on July 29, and after rejection was submitted to the Court of First Instance on August 25. A hearing on the case was appointed on October 15.

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

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

* physical violence against journalists,
* pressures on the media and their staff,
* 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 journalists. Such facts are classified under the group which, in the opinion of the author, is most indicative of the type of the violation. 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 the third quarter of 2020, as well as developments related to the previous incidents in the past periods.

***In total, 81 cases of violations of the rights of journalists and the media were recorded during the reporting period. 47 of them were cases of pressure on the media and their employees, 34 were violations of the right to receive and disseminate information, no case of physical violence was registered.***

Below we present the quantitative data of the violations of the third quarter and the comparison with the same period last year and the 1st-2nd quarters of 2020.

**Quantitative data of the violations in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2020**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Types of violations | 1st quarter | 2nd quarter | 3rd quarter |
| Physical violence against journalists | **0** | **2  (6 victims)** | **0** |
| Pressure against media outlets and their personnel | **50** | **34** | **47** |
| Violations of the right to receive and disseminate information | **21** | **26** | **34** |

**Quantitative data of the violations in the third quarters of 2019 and 2020**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Types of violations | 3rd quarter of 2019 | 3rd quarter of 2020 |
| Physical violence against journalists | **1** | **0** |
| Pressure against media outlets and their personnel | **35** | **47** |
| Violations of the right to receive and disseminate information | **11** | **34** |

In the table below we have presented the quantitative data on the lawsuits, with the involvement of media outlets and journalists.

**Lawsuits with the involvement of media outlets and journalists in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2020**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Types of lawsuits** | **1st quarter** | **2nd quarter** | **3rd quarter** |
| On the grounds of insult and slander | 12 | 22 | 20 |
| On the grounds of the violation of the right to receive and disseminate information | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Other disputes | 2 | 0 | 2 |

**Lawsuits with the involvement of media outlets and journalists in the 3rd quarter of 2019 and 2020**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Types of lawsuits** | **3rd quarter of 2019** | **3rd quarter of 2020** |
| On the grounds of insult and slander | 30 | 20 |
| On the grounds of the violation of the right to receive and disseminate information | 2 | 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***

*No case of applying violence against media staff members was registered in the 3rd quarter of 2020. Below we present the cases of violence and their development in both the reporting period as well as before in chronological order.*

***On July 9,*** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing on the criminal case of violence applied against Artak Khulyan, a reporter at Shantnews.am news website, Hovhannes Sargsyan, a cameraman for Factor.am news website, and a number of citizens.

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. (For details see the CPFE annual reports for 2018 and 2019, and quarterly reports for 2020, in the "Reports" section of khosq.am website).

This year, court hearings on the case were also held on August 27, September 10 and the next one is scheduled for October 22.

**On July 13,** the trial on the criminal case on the occasion of the attack on Artur Hakobyan, Kentron TV reporter and Simik Mayilyan, operator, in Hovtashen community in Ararat marz and the obstruction of their professional activity, was held at the General Jurisdiction Court of Ararat Marz (seat in Masis).

We should remind that on December 24, 2019, dozens of residents in Hovtashen community in Ararat marz attacked Kentron TV employees, hitting them and damaging the camera.[[8]](#footnote-8) On December 25, a criminal case was launched based on the materials prepared at the Masis department of the RA Police for obstructing the lawful professional activity of the journalist, hauling him, disturbing the process of shooting and damaging the camera. On May 26, the case was accepted into proceedings.

Court hearings were also held on August 13, September 14, and the next one is scheduled for October 29.

**On July 16**, the court of general jurisdiction of Yerevan held a court hearing on the case of Levon Gasparyan and Julieta Kokolyan, who hindering the professional activities of *Radio Liberty* journalist Sisak Gabrielyan and *Araratnews.am* news website reporter Shoghik Galstyan.

We would like to remind on April 2, 2017, on the National Assembly Election Day, violence was used against Radio Liberty journalist Sisak Gabrielyan and Araratnews.am correspondent Shoghik Galstyan at RPA candidate Hakob Beglaryan's headquarters, at Rustaveli 15, Kond district, Yerevan (For details see CPFE annual reports for 2017, 2018, 2019, in the "Reports" section of khosq.am website). Shoghik Galstyan is represented by CPFE's lawyer.

The court has declared Julieta Kokolyan, accused of obstructing Shoghik Galstyan's professional activity on February 5, 2018, wanted.[[9]](#footnote-9) The court decided to suspend the case until Julietta Kokolyan were located and continue the investigation into the other defendant, Levon Gasparyan within separate proceedings.

On August 17, the court ruled that defendant Levon Gasparyan should be charged with Article 149, Para 2, Subparagraph 3 of the RA Criminal Code, and that criminal prosecution of defendant Levon Gasparyan should be terminated due to the expiration of the statute of limitations, thus leading to the termination of the proceedings for this criminal case.

**On August 24**, the General Jurisdiction Court of Lori Marz (seat in Spitak) passed a judgment on the criminal case initiated on the event of applying violence against Narine Avetisyan, Editor-in-Chief of Lori TV.

We would like to remind 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, scrolled her arms, threw her onto the ground, snatched her phone, and deleted the photos. [[10]](#footnote-10)

According to the court ruling, Tigran Nazaryan was found not guilty and was acquitted on the grounds that his participation in the criminal act was not proven. And the employee of the organization Vrezh Khachatryan was released from criminal responsibility due to the expiration of the statute of limitations.

On September 29, the court judgment was appealed in the Criminal Court of Appeal.

***2. Pressure on the media and their personnel***

*In the third quarter of 2020, a total of 47 cases of pressure on media outlets and their employees were recorded, 22 of which came in the form of lawsuits, 17 were hacker attacks, and 8 were various other types of pressure applied by officials and related persons or state authorities. This section of the report contains the developments and resolutions of various cases on pressure applied to the media and journalists from the past. Below we present all the details in chronological order.*

**On July 1**, Varduhi Ishkhanyan, the founder of Ankakh.com website, was invited by the RA Police Criminal Investigation Department to give an explanation in connection with the Facebook posts about former RA Military Prosecutor and Deputy Prosecutor General Gagik Jhangiryan. [[11]](#footnote-11) Among them, Varduhi Ishkhanyan called Jhangiryan "the father of election fraud" and noted that he was suspected of murders in the army. Varduhi Ishkhanyan refused to come to the Police station.

**On July 1**, the Court of Cassation refused to accept the appeal by Daniel Ioannisyan, Program Director of the Union of Informed Citizens NGO, challenging the ruling of the Appeal Court, which rejected his appeal against the judgment of the First Instance Court, according to which Daniel Ioannisyan was obliged to to refute on his Facebook page and on the Tert.am news website the information about Samvel Harutyunyan, Chairman of the State Committee of Science of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia and pay 500000 AMD in compensation for the damage to honor and dignity of the plaintiff.

We would like to remind that Samvel Harutyunyan filed a lawsuit on June 19, 2018, claiming a compensation for the damage caused to his honor and dignity and a confiscation of 2 million AMD. The reason for the lawsuit was the status posted onto his Facebook page by Daniel Ioannisyan on June 12, 2018[[12]](#footnote-12) 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”).[[13]](#footnote-13) The third party to the case is Panarmenian Media Group CJSC as the rightholder of Tert.am website (currently the website belongs to “Qaryak Media” Ltd.).

Earlier**,** on May 6, the Court of Appeals turned down Daniel Ioannisyan’s motion on deferring the payment of the state fee and returned the appeal against the judgment of the Court of Appeals on the same grounds. This appeal was resubmitted on June 8 and was rejected again on July 1. On August 19 the case was sent to archive.

**On July 1**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan accepted the lawsuit of Livenews.am journalist Arthur Hovhannisyan against the editor-in-chief of the Public TV "Lurer" (News) program Levon Sardaryan, claiming an apology for the insult and a public refutation of the factual data considered defamatory.

The lawsuit was filed on June 22, based on Levon Sardaryan's Facebook comment, dated on May 21, on “The Situation in Armenia is Terrible: some will survive, the rest will die” article published on Livenews.am website. Sardaryan published the title of the article and wrote: “if anyone proves that after all this the owner of this website is a human being, I will agree to live in a barn. But in my subjective opinion, I will let G.I. enjoy the life in the barn.” (G.I. is Garnik Isagulyan, who is identified as the site owner. *Comment by CPFE*). Arthur Hovhannisyan responded to Leon Sardaryan's post and warned that he intended to sue Sardaryan.

The first court session is scheduled for January 25, 2021.

**On July 1**, the Civil Court of Appeals accepted the appeal of NA Deputy Speaker Alen Simonyan against the decision of the Court of First Instance, which rejected the motion of applying a measure to secure the claim by means of seizure of property and money on the case against Anna Gevorgyan, Director of the *Haykakan Zham* news website, on obliging her to publicy refute slanderous factual data and compensate the damage.

The lawsuit was filed on May 19, triggered by the article "Did he buy the silence?" published on Hzham.am on April 20, which stated that Alen Simonyan “made a row” in the restaurant, used swear words, smashed the table and the dishes, and then paid money to the owner of the restaurant on the condition he would keep silent.[[14]](#footnote-14)

On July 10, the appeal was rejected․ The arguments presented by the plaintiff that failure to take the requested measures might lead to the impossibility of enforcing the judicial act were considered unsubstantiated.

The court session is scheduled for November 27.

**On July 1,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdication held another hearing on the case of citizen Erik Yeghinyan against Factinfo news website with claims of one million AMD confiscated in his favor, written apology and published refutation.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on February 14, 2019, caused by a publication on September 10, 2018, entitled "The Prisoner Attempted a Suicide Because He Was Not Taken to the Dentist."[[15]](#footnote-15) (For details see the CPFE annual report for 2019 in the "Reports" section of khosq.am website). A court hearing on the case was held also on September 16, and the next one is scheduled for November 13.

**On July 1**, citizen Lilit Martirosyan, the defendant on the case against Tesaket Ltd., the owner of Irates.am website, and on July 7 the plaintiff appealed the judgment of the First Instance Court, passed on June 2, rejecting the claim of a public apology for offensive expressions and the payment of 1 million AMD in compensation.

We should remind that the reason for the lawsuit was an article published on the Irates.am website on April 9, titled "A Sodomite openly Addresses the Public from the NA Platform".[[16]](#footnote-16)

The Court of Appeals accepted the appeal of the defendant for proceedings on July 21, and that of the plaintiff was accepted on September 14.

**On July 2,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court hearing on the case of citizen Yura Adyan against Mitk Media Ltd. (the founder of Mitk.am website) with claims of refutation of slander and payment of 2 million AMD in compensation. The cause of the lawsuit, is the article entitled "The Old Fox of Old and New Armenia”, published in the May 9 issue of the *Zhamanak* daily, reprinted by website.

The next hearing is scheduled for October 5.

**On July 2**, Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular court hearing on the case of MP Hayk Sargsyan against Iravunk Media Ltd. and Ilona Azaryan, seeking compensation of the damage to honor, dignity and good reputation and claiming the confiscation of 1 million AMD.

The lawsuit was filed on June 13, 2019, prompted by an article published in the Iravunk newspaper on May 14, stating that "the entire information package against David Sanasaryan reached the NSS with Hayk Sargsyan’s help."

A court hearing on the case was held also on September 9, and the next one is scheduled for November 19.

**On July 2,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a preliminary court hearing on the case of journalist Hasmik Arakelyan against the Public Television of Armenia CJSC to repeal orders No. 90-A, 106-A, 147-A on imposing penalty. The first lawsuit, filed on March 10, was returned because the data contained in the documents proved incomplete. On April 29, the second lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. Court hearings on the case were held also on July 20, 23, August 3, 11, September 2, 15, 22, and the next one is scheduled for October 1.

On July 7, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held the first session on the second lawsuit submitted by the journalist, seeking the repeal of Order 161-A on the termination of the Labor Contract and pay-off, claiming reinstatement in the job and confiscation of a compensation for the forced idle time. Court hearings were held on July 21 and 27. The day of the next hearing is not appointed yet.

**On July 3,** the Court of General Jurisdiction in Yerevan held a regular hearing on the lawsuit filed by the lawyer Aram Orbelyan 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.

We should remind that the reason for the lawsuit was the report within the main news program on the Public Television on January 30, which stated that according to the information provided by the NSS, the lawyer Aram Orbelyan regularly visited the Constitutional Court without presenting an ID, and his entries were not recorded.[[17]](#footnote-17)

A court hearing on the case took place on September 25, and the next one is scheduled for October 9.

**On July 3**, the Court of General Jurisdiction in Yerevan held a regular hearing on the case of attorneys Lusine Sahakyan, Aramazd Kiviryan, as well as Armen and Armine Poghosyan filed a lawsuit against Lakmoes NGO as the founder of Lakmoes.am website and Skizb Media Kentron Ltd. as the founder of 1in.am website, claiming compensation for the 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, prompted by the article titled "Diaspora Armenians' ‘Hunters’ Seized Military Doctor’s Son" published on Lakmoes.am website on December 3, 2018, and on 1in.am on December 4.

A court hearing case was held on August 13, and the next one is scheduled for October 7.

**On July 3,** the Police visited ArmNews and Channel 5 TV companies, aiming to initiate administrative proceedings for not wearing a mask on air. The CPFE and partner journalistic organizations considered the incident to be an abuse of power by the law enforcement agency, as the issue of restrictions on air could be resolved in other ways, namely through discussions and mutual agreements.[[18]](#footnote-18)

**On July 6,** the Court of General Jurisdiction in Yerevan received a criminal case from the Prosecutor’s Office of Kentron and Nork-Marash administrative districts against Hasmik Martirosyan, director of Skizb Media Kentron Ltd. who was charged for the deliberate failure of the execution of a legally effective judicial act in the prescribed period.

The matter in question is the execution of the judicial act passed on the case of the second President of the Republic of Armenia Robert Kocharyan against Skizb Media Kentron Ltd.. Thus, on January 18, 2019, the Court of General Jurisdiction has partially upheld the lawsuit, filed by Robert Kocharyan against Skizb Media Kentron Ltd. to publicly refute the information considered as slander and receive compensation.

The cause of the lawsuit was the publication articles about Kocharyan published on June 7, 23 and 24 on 1in.am news website owned by the Ltd. Skizb Media Kentron appealed the ruling on February 20, 2019, according to which 400,000 AMD should be seized to compensate Robert Kocharyan's non-pecuniary damage and a refutation should be published. Both the Court of Appeals and the Court of Cassation rejected the appeals of the Ltd.

On July 7 the criminal case was accepted fro proceedings, the court hearing is scheduled for October 12.

**On July 6**, the Court of General Jurisdiction in Yerevan returned the lawsuit filed by Olymp Construction Ltd. against Hetq Ltd. with claims of refutation of defamatory information and compensation. The lawsuit was filed on June 29, on the occasion of an article published on Hetq.am website on May 29 and titled "The developer of the new building refuses to hand over the pumping station to the Water Committee. Residents are complaining."[[19]](#footnote-19) Though the author of the article also presented a comment from the representative of the construction company, the plaintiff did not agree with the complaint.

The court reasoned the decision to return the lawsuit by the fact that the plaintiff did not specify which specific expressions, contained in the article, were perceived as slander, what he demands to refute and in what manner. The lawsuit was filed again on July 22, and was returned on July 30 for the same reason.

On August 14, the plaintiff appealed the decision on returning the lawsuit, and on September 16, the appeal was accepted in the Court of Appeal, and on September 30, the appeal was upheld, overturning the decision of the first instance court.

**On July 6**, the Court of General Jurisdiction in Yerevan held a regular session 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 Ltd. with claims of compensation for damage caused to honor and dignity.

We should remind that the reason for the lawsuit, filed on August 2, 2019, was 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 the following: "... Before this appointment, Karen Karapetyan was the head of the operational intelligence department at SRC, being Valeri Osipyan's godfather. He left within the context of a corruption scandal."[[20]](#footnote-20)

On July 20, the court ruled to uphold Karen Karapetyan’s lawsuit against Skizb Media Ltd. The latter was obliged to publish a refutation and to pay 150000 AMD to the plaintiff as the lawyer’s reasonable remuneration. The following substantiation underlay the ruling: no position or proof has been presented by the defendant on the facts to have been proved by the defendant, and the position of the plaintiff shows that the correlation of his resignation and a corruption scandal, in fact, damaged his honor and dignity. The ruling has legally entered into force.

**On July 7**, the defendant on the case of the Chairman of the RA NA Standing Committee on Defense and Security Andranik Kocharyan, and on July 13 the plaintiff of the same case filed an appeal challenging the ruling of the first instance court.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on March 7, 2019, 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?" [[21]](#footnote-21) 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.

On June 16, the court ruled that Andranik Kocharyan's lawsuit could be dismissed on the grounds that the article could not be considered defamatory because it was based on information provided by a citizen, hence, the newspaper, not being the proper defendant in the case, proves that the information cannot be refuted as it is based on the exact factual circumstances, embodied in the testimony of the citizen.

On August 5, the appeals were returned to eliminate the violations. On September 4 and 15 the appeals were re-submitted, and the proceedings were accepted on September 28.

**On July 7**, a regular hearing on the case of citizen Hayk Stepanyan against the "Hayeli" Club NGO and its founder, journalist Angela Tovmasyan, was held, claiming to oblige her to publicly refute the defamatory information and demanding confiscation of a compensation sum.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on February 24, triggered by an insult to the plaintiff. Thus, at a press conference held in "Hayeli" club on January 22, Angela Tovmasyan reaffirmed the previous insult and added: "You are not only hooligans, but also awful and perverted people."[[22]](#footnote-22)

A court session on the case took place on August 17, and by the decision of September 7 the lawsuit was rejected. The basis of the judicial act is the following explanation: "It is unacceptable to forbid a journalist to make critical evaluative judgments, moreover, evaluative judgments made in the political field enjoy special protection as a precondition for pluralism, and the opposite approach may have a freezing effect on the media and journalists.”

**On July 7**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan returned the lawsuit of citizen Anna Aslanyan against the editor of Hzham.am website Anna Gevorgyan, claiming refutation of defamatory information, public apology and payment of compensation.

We should remind that the reason for the lawsuit, filed on May 19, was an article published on the website on April 13, titled "Was it OK that we took Nikol's brother's son to the resort? Fake Manufacturers."[[23]](#footnote-23) According to the plaintiff, the article contains defamatory information.

The court substantiated the rejection as follows: it is not clear to the defendant what substantive claims are addressed to him, besides, it is not clear how the mentioned website is related to the defendant.

On July 27, the case was handed over to the court archives.

**On July 8,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan accepted the lawsuit of MP Hayk Sargsyan against Armenuhi Hovsepyan, the founder of "Newspress.am" website, with claims of compensation for the damage to his honor, dignity, and reputation through slander and insult. The reason for the lawsuit were the posts and live broadcasts on the defendant's Facebook page, dated March 20, where, according to the lawsuit, a number of expressions were made in the plaintiff’s address in an ironic and insulting tone, slang and jargon. In particular, "Tell little Hayk, who used to the water bottle for Nikol, I have collected good bottles so that he can hold them in his hand well", etc. The plaintiff demands that the defendant be obliged to apologize for at least 2 minutes, and keep this recording available on the respondent's Facebook page for at least 10 days. In addition, the plaintiff demands compensation in the amount of 800,000 AMD for insul.

The court session is scheduled for October 8.

**On July 8,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan decided to involve the Public Television of Armenia as a third party in the case of the Rector of Yerevan State Medical University Armen Muradyan against the Minister of Health Arsen Torosyan. The lawsuit was filed on October 2, 2019, triggered by statements made by Arsen Torosyan on Public TV, according to which some of Armen Muradyan's statements were mentioned to be false.[[24]](#footnote-24) Arsen Torosyan also said that Armen Muradyan had organized a campaign against him. The plaintiff demands refutation of defamatory statements on Facebook and on Public TV air and a compensation at 2 million AMD for the damage caused.

The next court session is scheduled for October 8.

**On July 8**, the Speaker of the National Assembly Ararat Mirzoyan showed disrespect towards "Aravot.am" journalist Hripsime Jebejyan. When the journalist reminded Ararat Mirzoyan's words that he could not take a loan because his account had been detained by the Compulsory Enforcement Service for the unpaid fine, and then asked if he had already paid off all the loans, the NA Speaker lost his temper and responded: "Why would you ask such a stupid question, I continue paying my loans and fines."[[25]](#footnote-25) Later Ararat Mirzoyan regretted for what had happened.

**On July 8,** the Court of Cassation refused to accept citizen Norik Sargsyan’s appeal against the decision of the Court of Appeals which upheld the judgment passed by the court of first instance to terminate the case of a group of teachers from Armenian State university of Economics against Norik Sargsyan, whereas the suit of one of the teachers, Lyuba Mehrabyan, was upheld, and the *Aravot* daily was obliged to publish a refutation.

We should remind that the claim was caused by the publications by Norik Sargsyan, titled “An Open Letter to Norik Sargsyan, Rector of the Armenian State University of Economics, Mr. K Atoyan” printed in the *Hraparak* daily on April 15, 2016 and “Where the Shoe Pinches” printed in the *Aravot* daily. (For details see the CPFE annual reports for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019, and quarterly reports for 2020, in the "Reports" section of khosq.am website).

The Court of Cassation explained this rejection by the insufficiency of presented reasoning.

**On July 8,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction 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 Ltd. as founder and publisher of the *Zhamanak* daily.

The suit was submitted on May 29, 2019, and 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.[[26]](#footnote-26) The plaintiff is seeking a refutation of the information contained in the article, a public apology and compensation of 2 million AMD for defamation, and 1 million AMD for insult.

On July 29, the lawsuit was partially upheld by the court. Skizb Media Center Ltd. was obliged to publish a refutation, it was ruled to confiscated 4,000 AMD, the amount of the state fee, in favor of David Adyan, along with 50,000 drams as lawyer’s reasonable remuneration. The plaintiff's claim for compensation of 3 million AMD was rejected.

On September 7, the defendant appealed the judgment to a higher court.

**On July 8,** Karen Petrosyan, Acting Director of the Gyumri Branch of Armenian State University of Economics, filed the second lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against Blognews.am, claiming public refutation of the defamatory information and a compensation of the moral damage. The lawsuit was triggered by the Facebook posts about Karen Petrosyan by a user named Abgar Gevorgyan, published on the "Blognews.am" website from April 7 to 20, under the following titles: "This blasphemer who curses the church has now become rector, and construes the coronavirus using the Bible"[[27]](#footnote-27), "The odyssey of Karen Petrosyan's villainy: how he expelled a young veteran of the April war and how he beat a lecturer"[[28]](#footnote-28), "Cursing the church is profitable in the times of the incumbent government: see how rages he was before and how well-off he got ever since cursed the church,” [[29]](#footnote-29), "Arayik Harutyunyan, are you aware that you have appointed a mentally ill rector who could not even write his own dissertation?"[[30]](#footnote-30)

We should remind that the lawsuit, submitted on June 2, was returned for corrections on June 12. The second one, too, was returned on July 20 because of the incomplete data in the documents. The case was handed over to the court archives.

**On July 8,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court hearing on the case of businessman Vahe Parazyan against Virtual Media LLC, founder of Slaq.am website, and the founder of the company Menua Harutyunyan, seeking a public apology, public refutation of the defamatory information, and compensation for the damage caused to honor and dignity. The suit was triggered by an article entitled “Tracing the Scandalous Incident: Narek Karapetyan Gives Details”, a video attached to it and published on the website on July 17.[[31]](#footnote-31) The next court hearing is scheduled for August 19.

The businessman filed **another lawsuit** against Armenia TV CJSC, journalist Shake Ghazaryan and lawyer Armen Feroyan. This lawsuit, too, was caused by the publications on the incidents between businessmen Vahe Parazyan and Samvel Karapetyan. A court session on this case took place on September 25, the next one is scheduled for November 11.

**On July 9,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular hearing on the case of NA deputy Hayk Sargsyan against Hraparak Daily Ltd., seeking compensation of damage caused to honor, dignity and good reputation through defamation and insult.

We should remind that the reason for the lawsuit, submitted on June 21, 2019, was the publication against him in the newspaper, entitled "New Schmeiss appeared in Parliament.”[[32]](#footnote-32)

A court hearing on the case was also held on August 27, and by the judgment of September 16 Hayk Sargsyan’s lawsuit was partially upheld. The newspaper was obliged to refute the defamatory information, stating “Hayk Sargsyan is called New Schmeiss in the Parliament, as Hayk Sargsyan is dealing with human resources and business lobbying, he is doing clinker lobbying in the Parliament in favour of Mher Sedrakyan who he is interacting with.”

Besides, it was ruled to confiscate 50000 AMD in favor of Hayk Sargsyan as compensation for non-pecuniary damage and 150000 AMD as the lawyer’s reasonable remuneration.

On September 2, the Court of Cassation accepted an appeal against the ruling of the Court of Appeal on the **next lawsuit,** filed by the MP, which refused to accept the appeal against the judgment made by the first instance court on leaving the claim unexamined. This lawsuit against the *Hraparak Daily* Ltd was also submitted on June 21, 2019, triggered by an article, entitled “Hayk Sargsyan “made a row” on the Yerevan-Moscow plane” and published on May 26.[[33]](#footnote-33)

**On July 9,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing on the second case of citizen Hayk Stepanyan against the "Hayeli" Club NGO and its founder, journalist Angela Tovmasyan, claiming to oblige her to publicly refute the defamatory information and demanding confiscation of a compensation sum.

The lawsuit was filed on January 8, and was triggered, according to the plaintiff, by an insult used by Angela Tovmasyan in his address, in particular, the journalist called Hayk Stepanyan a "scum" on Facebook, and on Channel 5 she called him a “hooligan.” We should remind that Hayk Stepanyan was among those who threw eggs on the "Hayeli" Club on October 5, 2019.

A court hearing on the case was held also on August 10, and on August 31 the lawsuit was rejected. The court substantiated its judgment as follows: the examination of the case did not leave to any data to allow a conclusion that the expression on the hooliganism by a group of young people was addressed to the plaintiff, but rather it was abstract and with no specific addressee.

**On July 9,** the initiator of VETO movement Narek Malyan made insulting expressions about Hasmik Hambardsumyan on Facebook. In particular, he called the latter “Soros’s mercenary”, a liar who, in Malyan’s words, writes Facebook posts for personal gain.[[34]](#footnote-34)

**On July 9,** Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly said in an interaction with Aravot.am that he was going to be very harsh and was going to voice relevant facts about those journalists and editors who received cash of unknown origin in envelopes, to discuss the issue of bonuses provided to the National Assembly. He also noted as follows: "In the RA journalistic community, if we can call it that way, financial resources amounting to approximately 700-800 million AMD of unknown origin are in circulation. This is an ungrateful environment of impudence and crime, promoted by journalists’ contribution, too."[[35]](#footnote-35)

On July 9, the Civil Court of Appeal held a trial on the appeal of the defendant against the judgment of the first instance court on the case of the former Chairman of the State Revenue Committee Vardan Harutyunyan against Investigative Journalists NGO, which Hetq.am website, owned by the organization, was obliged to publish a refutation.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on September 5, 2019, with claims of compensation of 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 decree of the government: a criminal case has been launched” and published on hetq.am on August 7.[[36]](#footnote-36)

On July 31, the Court of Appeals upheld the defendant's appeal, fully rejecting Vardan Harutyunyan's claim. Besides, it was ruled to confiscate the advance payment of the state fee at 10,000 AMD from Vardan Harutyunyan in favor of the "Investigative Journalists" NGO. As a result of the examination of the above-mentioned article, the Court of Appeal found that it did not contain any untrue information, which in accordance with the clauses of Article 1087.1 of the RA Civil Code, could be qualified as defamatory to the plaintiff. On September 2, the plaintiff applied to the Court of Cassation, and the appeal was received on September 24.

**On July 10,** citizen Artur Vardanyan filed the second lawsuit with Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction against “168 zham” Ltd. And citizen David Pirumyan with claims of apology, refutation of defamatory information and a compensation.

We should remind that the first lawsuit was filed on April 6. The cause is the same article, titled “Nikol Pashinyan talked to Artur Vardanyan during his campaign” and published on 168.am website on March 6.[[37]](#footnote-37) The website wrote: “In the course of the campaign, as noted by the active user David Pirumyan, Nikol Pashinyan greeted and talked to Artur Vardanyan, who was the leader of the group neutralized in 2015”, and they quoted Pirumyan: “The Prime-Minister warmly greeted the terrorist Artur Vardanyan who was incomprehensibly released by the court during the former’s rule.”

The first applicastion was returned for corrections on April 15. On May 7the plaintiff applied to the Court of Appeal, however, the appeal was rejected and the case was handed over to the archives. On July 22, the new lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. The appointed date of trial is October 1.

**On July 10**, the Chief of Staff of the Prime Minister Eduard Aghajanyan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against the founder of "168 am" website "168 Zham" Ltd., with claims of refutation of defamatory information and a pay compensation for the defamation.

The reason for the lawsuit was the article "A Party in the Government-owned “Fermata” Club" published on the website on June 7.[[38]](#footnote-38) The article narrated that the club, owned by Eduard Aghajanyan, violated the Commandant’s decisions by organizing a night-club style party with the participation of several dozen people in a closed space, such as his club, which is an act prohibited during the state of emergency caused by COVID-19. By the way, Eduard Aghajanyan sent a refutation to the editorial office, but the latter did not publish it due to disagreement with the presented arguments.

On July 17, the lawsuit was returned to eliminate the violations. The plaintiff filed a new lawsuit on August 11. It was accepted for proceedings on August 21. The court session is scheduled for October 23.

**On July 10**, the father of the RA Minister of Justice Rustam Badasyan, Vardan Badasyan, filed a lawsuit against Alternative NGO co-chair Narek Mantashyan and News.am, Analitik.am, 168.am, Iravunk.com, Blognews.am, Alternativ.am, Ipress.am websites to publicly refute the defamatory factual data, publish the refutation in the relevant media, compensate the damage caused to the honor, dignity and business reputation. The reason for the lawsuit were the articles about Vardan Badasyan's activity of many years, published on the above-mentioned websites, according to which he assigned positions for money.[[39]](#footnote-39)

On July 20, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. The court upheld the motion to apply a measure to the secure the claim, namely 2,000,000 AMD equal to the claimed compensation was seized from the property owned by Narek Mantashyan. A hearing is scheduled for October 19.

On July 10, Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held the first court hearing on the case of Lydian Armenia CJSC against Skizb Media Ltd., the founder of 1in.am news website, with claims of a compensation for the damage caused to the business reputation of the company. We should remind that the cause of the lawsuit was the article entitled "What is the way out? Armen Sargsyan can change the situation," published on "1in.am" news website on August 19, where the author Sargis Artsruni particularly wrote Lydian Armenia had obtained the right to exploit the mine as a result of corrupt deals and such arrangements that the incumbent Armenian government might terminate the deal, having in general all the political and legal bases for doing it. The plaintiff claims for a confiscation of only one AMD from the defendant for the damage caused to the business reputation of the company.

A hearing on the case was held on September 18, and October 12 is scheduled as the date for the publication of the judicial act.

**On July 10,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction ruled to reject the lawsuit of Emma Kirakosyan against ATV TV Company Ltd. and a group of citizens with claims of compensation (2 million AMD) of damage to her honor and dignity and obligation for refutation.

We should remind that the suit, filed on March 22, was triggered by the February 22 issue of Semi-Open Windows program, referring to the 20-year-old lawsuits caused allegedly by Emma Kirakosyan herself.[[40]](#footnote-40)

According to the judgment, Emma Kirakosyan was obliged to pay 44,000 AMD into the state budget as a deferred state duty and 50,000 AMD as a lawyer’s reasonable remuneration. The Court found that the broadcast contained a number of evaluative judgments made by several citizens (defendants) who exercised their rights in accordance with Article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of which freedom of expression is a part. As for Emma Kirakosyan's request to oblige the TV company to refute the factual data defaming her honor and dignity through an announcement by the host, the Court found that the statements forming the factual basis of the lawsuit were made by the citizens who were defendants in this case, and in case the lawsuit was potentially satisfied, they should be the ones to refute that information.

On August 17 the defendant appealed the ruling in the Court of Cassation. The Court received the appeal on September 15.

**On July 12**, Hetq.am online outlet was under DDOS attack. The next morning the site was restored. According to experts, the attack was from abroad.

**On July 13**, Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular court hearing on the case of journalist Artur Hovhannisyan against RA Ministry of Health (with Aravot Daily Ltd. involved as third party).

We would like to remind that the case was prompted by “Don’t Trust Fake Information: There has been no attempt at vaccination at the Aygabats community school in Shirak marz” information piece, published on the official website of MoH, moh.am, on January 11, 2018.[[41]](#footnote-41) According to the plaintiff, this publication contains insults and slander in his address (For details see the CPFE annual reports for 2018 and 2019, in the "Reports" section of khosq.am website).

The next court hearing is scheduled for October 9.

**On July 13,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a court hearing on the case of Artur Vanetsyan, the former head of the National Security Service against Dareskizb Ltd., the founder of the *Armenian Times* 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.

We should remind that the suit against the media outlet was filed on February 10 in reaction to a publication in Armtimes.com website and in the *Armenian Times* 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 April 9 the Civil Court of Appeal rejected the plaintiff’s appeal against the judgment passed by the court of first instance, which rejected the motion on the application of a measure to secure the claim by freezing the assets of Dareskizb Ltd., the founder of the *Armenian Times* daily and Armtimes.com website, at the value of the claim at 2 million AMD and removing the disputed article from the website.

The next court hearing is scheduled for October 14.

**On July 13,**  the Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure Suren Papikyan filed the second lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against "Anna Gevorgyan" Private Entrepreneur ("Haykakan Zham" news website) claiming public refutation of the defamatory data and payment of a compensation.

The lawsuit was prompted by an article published on Hzham.am on May 15, entitled "My Step party members are interested in the real estate market", which states in particular that the governors, led by Minister Suren Papikyan, are buying houses in the capital "without paying,” as they provide services, demanding an apartment as a donation.[[42]](#footnote-42)

The first lawsuit, filed on June 22, was returned by the court on June 30, citing unclear wording. The second lawsuit was returned on July 24, citing flaws in the documents. On August 24, the lawsuit was filed again and was accepted for proceedings on September 1. No other developments were recorded as of September 30.

**On July 13**, the father of the Minister of Justice Rustam Badasyan, Vardan Badasyan, filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against the Alternativ.am news website, with claims of confiscation of money and publication of a refutation.

The lawsuit was triggered by an article, published on the above-mentioned website on June 9, titled "The apple does not fall far from the tree. Rustam Badasyan should start the vetting process from his own father." It was particularly mentioned that Vardan Badasyan used to be the Deputy Head of the Legal Department of the Police, the First Deputy Head of the 6th Department and “the appointments in positions below his level of hierarchy were made on one exclusive condition– appointment for money” .[[43]](#footnote-43)

On July 22, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. A court session is scheduled for November 13.

**On July 13**, NA Deputy Speaker Alen Simonyan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against Ani Hovhannisyan, the founder of Analitik.am website, claiming compensation.

The reason for the lawsuit was an article, titled "The government needs a referendum to ratify the" Istanbul Convention." Was this confirmed by Alen Simonyan?" and published on the website on February 11, which states that present composition of the Constitutional Court would not give a positive opinion on the Istanbul Convention, hence it was crucial for the ruling power to change the composition of the RA Constitutional Court as soon as possible.[[44]](#footnote-44) On February 17, Alen Simonyan sent a letter to the editorial office, refuting the comments mentioned in the article on whether he mean the Istanbul Convention per se․ "․․․․․․ the journalist presented his assumption as if it were the reality and used the respective wording as the headline." [[45]](#footnote-45) However, the website reiterated the opinion it had already expressed.

On July 27, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. The court rejected the motion to apply for security (seizure of property). No other developments were recorded as of September 30.

**On July 13**, citizen Zaven Hakobyan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against the *Zhamanak* daily, claiming a compensation for the non-pecuniary damage caused to his business reputation, a public apology and a refutation. The reason for the lawsuit was an article, was published in the daily on June 13 that was entitled "What Vanetsyan Left Behind. Who are Zaven and Sos Hakobyans?" where it was particularly mentioned that when the former head of the NSS Artur Vanetsyan was in office, “his godson Zaven Hakobyan who was notorious for being extremely corrupt was promoted from an operative inspector to the head of the super profitable Araratyan Customs, however, after Vanetsyan’s dismissal, he also managed to escape the system by a near miss.” [[46]](#footnote-46)

On August 21, the lawsuit was returned for corrections in the documents, on August 31, it was re-submitted and accepted for proceedings on September 14. As of September 30, no court hearing date was set.

**On July 13**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court hearing was held 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 Ltd., seeking refutation of slander and receipt of 1 million AMD in compensation from Tigran Hayrapetyan.

The reason for the lawsuit, filed in 2018, was the interview by lawyer Tigran Hayrapetyan to 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.

Court hearings on the case were also held on September 25 and 30, and the next one is scheduled for November 3.

**On July 14,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdication held a regular hearing of the case of Lara Aharonyan, head of the Women's Resource Center NGO, against Hayeli Club and Live News Media Ltd., seeking compensation of the damage to her honor and dignity in the amount of 2 million AMD.

We should remind that the lawsuit, filed on May 30, 2019, 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, 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. On its session on February 24 the court ruled to uphold Lara aharonyan’s motion to make an addition to the subject of the suit. Among other additions, the plaintiff demands the publication of the refutation text she has drafted. Besides, that Hayeli Club NGO and Live News Media NGO should each, on its own part, prove that the published information reflects the reality and they are driven by public interest and so on.

The next court hearing is scheduled for October 6.

**On July 14**, citizen Edgar Janibekyan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against Gagik Shamshyan, the founder of Shamshyan Media Ltd., with claims of defamation and compensation for non-pecuniary damage.

The reason for the lawsuit was an article, titled “Arabkir District Police Discover Another Large Batch of Drugs in Yerevan: 26-year-old suspect bought it over Telegram App: A Photo Report" and published on Shamshyan.com website on June 14. In the article the website, referring to the information it availed of, wrote that Edgar Janibekyan was among the detained.[[47]](#footnote-47)

On July 23, the lawsuit and the documents attached to it were returned to the plaintiff for corrections. It was resubmitted on August 7 and was returned again on the 20th. It was submitted for the third time on September 2 and was accepted on September 14.

**On July 14**, Aysor.am, Tert.am, News.am, Armtimes.com, A1plus.am news websites were hacked.[[48]](#footnote-48) The attacks are related with the Armenian-Azerbaijani border clashes in the direction of Tavush. As for Tert․am, in particular, the specialists note that Azerbaijan tried to implement a DDoS attack with about 10 thousand IPs. At the same time, they report on an unprecedented event. This time it was noticed that they worked in a well-systematized and synchronized manner, and a large number of users were attacking websites at the same time.

**On July 14**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Ararat and Vayots Dzor Marzes (seat in Artashat) held a regular court session on the case of Garik Sargsyan, Governor of Ararat, against 168 Zham Ltd., seeking a compensation for the damage caused to his honor and dignity and a public refuation of defamatory information.

The lawsuit was filed on December 20, 2019, triggered by the article "Again An Incident with the Participation of Governor of Ararat" published on the 168.am website, which stated that again there was a fight with Garik Sargsyan’s participation and that the hairdresser Serob was beaten for not cutting the Governor's hair asking him to wait for his turn and was not allowed to continue working in Nor Kyank community.[[49]](#footnote-49)

A court session on the case took place on August 6, too. The next hearing is scheduled for November 12.

**On July 15**, the National Security Service issued a statement, urging media representatives, in particular, not to use Azerbaijani information resources, to refrain from disseminating unchecked and unverified information, and published a video where besides Azerbaijani media materials and social media users’ posts and comments they presented Hetq.am’s publication about the shelling of Aygepar, a border village in Tavush.[[50]](#footnote-50) The website considers this an attempt at censorship – an unfounded restriction, as the information provided by Hetq.am from the scene was also confirmed by the representative of the Ministry of Defense and the Human Rights Defender.

**On July 15,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevanheld a regular session on the case of citizen Hayk Mkrtchyan against ArmNews TV CJSC seeking a refutation of the defamatory information and a compensation for the damage.

The reason for the lawsuit, filed on May 13, 2019, is the news published by the outlet that Hayk Mkrtchyan, a resident of Nor Nork administrative district of Yerevan, used counterfeit banknotes. The plaintiff considers this to be slander and demands refutation.

A court hearing of the case was held on August 17, too, and the next one is scheduled for October 26.

**On July 20,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held the first hearing on the lawsuit of the former Chief of Police Vladimir Gasparyan’s chief of guard Arshak Hakobyan against Daniel Ioannisyan, Program Director of the Union of Informed Citizens, with claims of refutation of slanderous information and a compensation.

The suit was filed on June 6, 2019, caused by Daniel Ioannisyan's statement accusing NSS Director Arthur Vanetsyan of having a relationship 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.[[51]](#footnote-51)

A court hearing was held on August 19, and the next one is scheduled for October 26.

**On July 21**, the successors of the 9 victims of March 1 events filed the second lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against Shark Ltd., founder of Channel 5 TV and Narek Mantashyan, co-founder of Alternative NGO with claims of compensation for the damage caused to their honor and dignity. The reason for the lawsuit is an interview on the Channel 5 set with Mantashyan's participation, during which he made slanderous and insulting remarks about the legal successors of the March 1 victims. In particular, as the plaintiffs' representative Tigran Yegoryan clarified, the statements contained declarations on hooliganism, mass disorders, and bargain.[[52]](#footnote-52) The plaintiffs demand that the two defendants together compensate each legal successor at the value of 2 million AMD for defamation and 1 million AMD for insult.

The first lawsuit was submitted on June 16 and was returned on June 29 for corrections. The second lawsuit was returned on July 30 for the same reason. It was submitted on September 2 for the third time and was returned again on September 10.

**On July 21,** the Court of General Jurisdiction in Shirak Marz (seat in Ashotsk and Amasia) held the first session on the case of the head of Akhuryan community Artsrun Igityan against Yurik Grigoryan, Arzuman Gapoyan, and Aravot Daily Ltd. as the third party, claiming for a public apology, refutation of factual data considered defamatory and a payment of compensation.

The lawsuit, submitted on May 25, was triggered by an article, titled “They are all Serzh’s followers in those positions, and we have only the streets left for the Mayor to buy and be done with.” Karnut farmers say” and published on Aravot.am website on April 29, where the farmers who had appealed to the government complained about the discriminatory attitude of Artsrun Igityan, the mayor of Akhuryan consolidated community.[[53]](#footnote-53) By the way, on May 8, the website published the text of refutation, drafted by Artsrun Igityan himself, but he demands that the farmers apologize, too, and refute the accusations in his address contained in the article.

A hearing of the case was held on September 16, too, and on September 30 the court ruled to leave the case unexamined due to the fact that the plaintiff failed to appear before court twice in a row and failed to inform the court in advance.

**On July 22,** the Court of Cassation ruled to reject journalist Karine Vanesyan’s appeal and did not accept it for proceedings. It challenged the judgment of the April 17 ruling of the Civil Court of Appeal, which rejected Vanesyan’s appeal against the decision of the first instance court, obliging her to apologize to the Governor of Lori Marz Andrey Ghukasyan on her Facebook page.

We should remind that on May 15, 2019, the Governor of Lori Andrey Ghukasyan filed a lawsuit against journalist Karine Vanesyan for insulting him and demanded to oblige her to apologize. The lawsuit was triggered by the following the journalist wrote on her 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…"

The case is handed over to the court archives.

**On July 23,** the General Jurisdiction Court of Yerevan held the first court hearing on the case of Gevorg Gorgisyan, a deputy of the National Assembly, against 4rd.am news website with claims of obligation for public apology, a compensation for the damage caused to honor, dignity and business reputation and confiscation of 1 million AMD.

The cause of the lawsuit, filed on April 2, was an article published in 4rd.am on Feburay 29, titled “Gorgisyan could be a pickpocket.”[[54]](#footnote-54) “We officially declare that unless Michael Minasyan has established the Bright Armenia party and but for Georgisyan’s surname as his competitive advantage, the latter would definitely be a pickpocket”, the website wrote.

Court hearings on the case were held also on September 8, 24, 30, and the next one is scheduled for October 23.

**On July 23**, the Court of Appeal rejected the plaintiff’s appeal against the first instance court decision on the case of journalist Tehmine Yenokyan against citizen Hovsep Asoyan, which obliged the defendant to publicly apologize for insulting Tehmine Yenokyan on Facebook and paying a compensation of 200 thousand AMD.

It should be reminded that the RA Investigative Committee terminated the criminal case initiated in connection with the persecution of the journalist, as well as the collection and dissemination of information about her private life on the grounds of "lack of corpus delicti", as a result of which on April 29, 2019, the journalist filed a lawsuit in court with claims of obliging the defendant to refute the information considered insulting and pay 1 million AMD as compensation. (For details see CPFE annual reports for 2018 and 2019, in the "Reports" section of khosq.am website).

Tehmine Yenokyan stated in her appeal that the decision did not define the means and method of the apology, besides, the compensation was disproportionate to the insult and its consequences. As of September 30, no other developments were recorded.

**On July 23,** the Court of Cassation granted no privilege in relation to the state duty and on this ground returned citizen Ashot Gevorgyan’s appeal against the decision of the first instance court which rejected Ashot Gevorgyan’s lawsuit against the Hraparak Daily Ltd. on obliging to the refutation of defamatory data and with a claim of confiscating a compensation for slander.

We should remind that the reason for the lawsuit, filed by citizen Ashot Gevorgyan on July 12, 2019, was the news published on the front page of the daily on July 11, according to which "…members of the non-traditional sexual orientation community have targeted "traditionalist MPs." The newspaper cited a Facebook post by Ashot Gevorgyan, in which he offered to "burn", "exterminate" and "expel" Prosperous Armenia MP Naira Zohrabyan.

The Court based its judgment on the European Court of Justice's approach to the journalist’s freedom to disseminate information, namely "Only assumptions or suspicions on the defamatory nature of the publication shall not be sufficient to confirm that a specific person was harmed." As of September 30, no other developments were registered.

On July 24, Vahe Makaryan, a correspondent of the *Hraparak* daily, filed an appeal with the Court of Cassation to challenge the decision of the Court of Appeal which had rejected Vahe Makaryan’s appeal against the February 20 decision of the first instance court, rejecting his suit against the former MP Rubik Hakobyan with claims of protection of his honor and dignity.

We should remind that on December 7, 2016, the National Assembly MP Rubik Hakobyan after using 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. On December 30, 2016, Vahe Makaryan went to court (for details see CPFE annual reports for 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and quarterly reports of 2020 in the *Reports* section of khosq.am website).

The decisions of the court of first instance and the Court of Appeal stated that there was no intent to insult the plaintiff in the defendant's actions. The person who made these statements did not pursue an objective of defaming the honor, dignity or business reputation of the plaintiff. On September 7, the appeal was returned for corrections, no other developments were registered as of September 30.

**On July 24**, the *Aravot Daily* Ltd. received a letter from the Court of General Jurisdiction of Ararat and Vayots Dzor Marzes Judge Gevorg Balyan, demanding the refutation of the publication quoted from the *Haykakan Zhamanak* newspaper.

We should remind that on February 15, the Ararat regional department of the Compulsory Enforcement Service applied to the media outlet on the same matter, demanding a refutation of the July 6 article, titled "The Conflict between Alik Sargsyan and Vardges Hovakimyan has a long history of many years."[[55]](#footnote-55) It should be stated, though, that Aravot.am website had not repeated the insulting expressions in the original source.

This demand to refute by a state body is unfounded; it can be qualified as an attempt to put pressure on the media outlet.

**On July 24,** the head of Arshaluys community of Armavir marz, Zarzand Grigoryan, filed a lawsuit in the Armavir Court of General Jurisdiction against citizen Virab Shahbazyan and Bats TV Plus Ltd., seeking a refutation of slander, a public apology and confiscation of a compensation sum. The reason for the lawsuit is the broadcast on Bats TV, dated October 29, 2019 ․ Virab Shahbazyan, a resident of Arshaluys village, spoke about Zarzand Grigoryan's activities, in particular, noting that the latter was still continuing his illegal activities even after the revolution. "He has been persecuting, robbing and oppressing the people for 12 years, he manages the village alone, sells the lands at a high price, and the authorities and law-enforcers do not interfere in all this."[[56]](#footnote-56)

On August 6, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings.

**On July 24**, the Civil Court of Appeal ruled to uphold the appeal submitted by the Hraparak Daily Ltd. challenging the decision of the first instance court which obliged to refute the defamatory information on the embezzlement of salaries by Marat Grigoryan, the Dean of the Geography and Geology Department at Yerevan State University and apologize publicly.

We should remind that the lawsuit submitted on October 30, 2018, was an article published on December 6, 2018, and titled “A Scandal at YSU? Has a New “Sashik” Come Forth?” which, according to a letter, accused the dean of YSU Department of Geography and Geology Marat Grigoryan of embezzling 50 percent of faculty salaries.[[57]](#footnote-57) (For details see the CPFE annual reports for 2018 and 2019 in the "Reports" section of khosq.am website). According to the decision of the court of first instance, in addition to publishing a refutation, 100,000 AMD was to be confiscated from the newspaper in favor of Marat Grigoryan as compensation for defamation and 100,000 AMD as compensation for insult.

The Court of Appeal noted that the case contained no separate act with the decision by the Court on the distribution of the burden of proof between the parties. The case was sent to the same court for a new trial.

**On July 27,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Kotayk Marz held the first court session օn the case of citizen Tigran Tsaturyan against citizen Sevada Khachatryanand *Aravot Daily* Ltd., claiming a public refutation of the defamatory factual data and a compensation of the damage caused to honor and dignity.

The lawsuit was filed on April 13 and was accepted for proceedings on April 22. The reason for the lawsuit was an article titled "A fight in Kotayk Marz because of a post on the coronavirus," published on "Aravot.am" website on March 19.[[58]](#footnote-58) Accordingly it was stated that, the director of "Ginats" restaurant Sevada Khachatryan gave an interview to the media outlet, where, according to the plaintiff, he presented obviously false and slanderous information.

The next court session is scheduled for November 4.

**On July 29**, NA deputy Sofia Hovsepyan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against the editor-in-chief of the *Haykakan Zham* news agency Anna Gevorgyan, claiming a compensation for the damage caused to her honor, dignity, and business reputation and a refutation of the slander. As the deputy informed the CPFE, the lawsuit was triggered by a number of articles published on Hzham.am website. In particular, the article titled "Velvet Corruption" published on June 1 states that "Sofia Hovsepyan, the former Deputy governor of Shirak and now an NA MP from the My Step faction, used to extort gifts from the heads of regional infrastructure.[[59]](#footnote-59) The March 13 article, titled "They are afraid that money will be distributed during the elections", states that "the candidate, sponsored by Sofia Hovsepyan, will distribute monetary "gifts" in Geghanist ahead of the local elections to be held on Sunday."[[60]](#footnote-60) The July 10 article, titled "My Step Faction Members Speak about Their Achievements" also mentions that the MP bought 2 apartments due to the bonuses paid to her by the Parliament.[[61]](#footnote-61)

On August 4, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. As of September 30, the day of the court session was not appointed yet.

**On July 29,** citizen Boris Gasparyan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against Armen Abroyan, *Hraparak Daily Ltd.* and Factor Information Center NGO claiming for protection of honor and dignity and a confiscation of a compensation. The lawsuit was triggered by the articles about archeologist Boris Gasparyan published on Hraparak.am and Factor.am websites. Thus, the article, titled "Tomato and pepper seedlings are planted in Areni Case under the disguise of viticulture development" and published on hraparak.am website on June 19, stated that according to Armen Abroyan, former head of the History and Monuments Protection Agency, Boris Gasparyan was allowed to lease out the cave, where tomato and pepper seedlings are planted under the disguise of viticulture development in Areni, in the reserve area specifically.[[62]](#footnote-62) Factor.am, too, published an article with the same content on June 27 with the title of "Who planted tomatoes and peppers in the area of ​​Areni cave? Abroyan blames the archeologist, the latter names the offender." [[63]](#footnote-63)

On August 6, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. The first court session is scheduled for October 13.

**On August 4**, the NA Deputy Speaker Alen Simonyan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against Iravunk Media Ltd., claiming a compensation for the damage caused to his honor and dignity. The lawsuit was triggered by a publication in the *Iravunk* newspaper, where thoughts were attributed to Alen Simonyan, namely that he allegedly said that the ruling political team was not ready to work if no bonuses were to be paid. On August 17, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. As of September 30, the day of the court session was not appointed.

**On August 4**, citizen Nelli Mikaelyan filed another lawsuit against the director of the *Haykakan Zham* news website Anna Gevorgyan, seeking the refutation of the whole content of an article, titled “Who is this mysterious beauty and how is she related to child molestation?” and published on Hzham.am website on May 14, 2019, a public apology and a compensation of 2 million AMD. The plaintiff claims that the article intentionally contains obvious false information.

The citizen also filed lawsuits with the same content on May 11 and June 22. All the lawsuits were returned (the last one was returned on August 17) due to the flaws in the documents.

**On August 6,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Ararat and Vayots Dzor marzes 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.[[64]](#footnote-64)

The next hearing is scheduled for October 20.

**On August 7**, Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular hearing of the case of NA deputy Hayk Sargsyan against Armday.am Ltd., founder of Armday.am website, with claims of compensation to the damage to honor, dignity and good reputation through slander and insult.

We should remind that the lawsuit, submitted on August 2, 2019, was triggered by the numerous comments about Hayk Sargsyan on the website, particularly, an expression made in Hayl Sargsyan’s address on June 27 that read “who acted as a guard” (which was later deleted - **CPFE**).

The ruling passed on August 28 held the lawsuit partially, namely armday.am website was obliged to make a public apology to Hayk Sargsyan for the above-mentioned expression, besides, 100000 AMD was confiscated in favor of the MP as a compensation for slander, 6000 AMD as state duty and 100000 AMD as a reasonable remuneration for the lawyer. No other developments have been registered as of September 30.

**On August 8**, the former Chief of Police of the Republic of Armenia Vladimir Gasparyan obstructed the professional activity of the Radio Liberty reporters.[[65]](#footnote-65) Noticing that the reporters were filming his private house on the shore of Lake Sevan, the former Police Chief, as reported by Radio Liberty, drove the car in their direction, threatening to run over them, physically destroy them, "shoot" them, "kill them", swearing and demanding not to publish the video. The editorial office submitted a report on the incident to the police. On August 9, a criminal case was initiated under Article 164, Part 3 of the RA Criminal Code (obstruction of a journalist's legal professional activity), but later Part 1 of the same article was chosed as the legal reference for the case. On September 17, Vladimir Gasparyan was charged by the General Department of Investigation of Particularly Important Cases at the Central Office of the the RA Investigative Committee, and a signature bond was chosen as a precautionary measure. The inquiry is underway.

**On August 12**, Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular hearing of the case of Vahe Parazyan against Tert.am Ltd., the founder of Tert.am news website, with claims of public refutation of defamatory information and compensation for the damage caused to honor and dignity.

We should remind that the cause of the lawsuit, filed on August 15, 2019, is an article titled "Vahe Parazyan, Who Reported Against Samvel Karapetyan’s Nephew, Has a Criminal Backgound" and published on the website on July 16.[[66]](#footnote-66)

The next court session is scheduled for November 9.

**On August 12,** journalist and founder of Medialab.am website Marianna Grigoryan filed an appeal with the Civil Court of Appeal, to challenge the decision of the first instance court to reject her motion on applying a measure to secure her claim in the case of Analytic Ltd.

We should remind that on April 28, Marianna Grigoryan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against Analytic Ltd. claiming compensation for the damage caused to her honor, dignity and business reputation. The reason for the lawsuit was an article titled "What does Erik Grigoryan have to do with Soros's Open Society Foundation" published on "Analitik.am" website on December 6, 2019.[[67]](#footnote-67) Referring to its own sources, the website writes that the Soros Foundation, through Erik Grigoryan's sister Marianna Grigoryan, influences the policy projects, implemented by the Ministry of Environment, adapting them to the Foundation’s interests.

On May 13, the lawsuit was returned for amendments. It was re-submitted on June 8 and accepted for proceedings on June 18. The court rejected the motion to use a measure to secure the claim by seizing the defendant's property.

On September 11, the Court of Appeal rejected the appeal on the following grounds: "It has not been substantiated that failure to seize the defendant's property in the amount of the lawsuit may make it impossible or difficult to enforce a possible court decision, as it may cause significant damage to the petitioner."

**On August 13**, Shirak Marz Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular session on the case of Artak Gevorgyan, the head of Ani community in Shirak marz, against Andranik Gevorgyan, a resident of Maralik town of Ani community, seeking a refutation and compensation. Armlur.am news site was recognized as a third party to the case.

The reason for the lawsuit, submitted on August 23, 2019, was 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 the people of Maralik tell us?"[[68]](#footnote-68) The plaintiff claims 2 million AMD from the defendant.

The next court hearing is scheduled for October 7.

**On August 13,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a court session on the first case of NA deputy Hayk Sargsyan against Andradardz Press Club NGO with claims of compensation for the damage caused to honor, dignity and good reputation by defamation and insult.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on June 19, 2019. It was caused by an article, titled "Who donated an expensive car to Hayk Sargsyan and why: all is knows" published on Newspress.am website.[[69]](#footnote-69)

The next court hearing is scheduled for October 8.

**On August 13,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a court session on the second case of NA deputy Hayk Sargsyan against Andradardz Press Club NGO with claims of compensation for the damage caused to honor, dignity and good reputation by defamation and insult.

The lawsuit was triggered by an article, authored by Andradards Press Culb and published on Newspress.am under the heading “Another Expensive Gift. A Phone Number that Costs 20 Million AMD for Hayk Sargsyan.”[[70]](#footnote-70)

The next court session is scheduled for October 8.

**On August 18**, the Police hindered the professional activity of a group of journalists in the yard of the National Assembly, where a walking protest was organized for the protection of Amulsar and Jermuk.[[71]](#footnote-71) The the law enforcement officers let some of the activists and the citizens who joined them through the open gates of the park in front of the National Assembly, they first did not allow media representatives to enter the area to cover the event and then demanded permission from the Chief of Staff of the parliament and take footage only after such permission was granted. After an argument that lasted for about half an hour, the same policemen let the journalists in, taking their names, surnames, patronymics and the names of the media outlets. Journalistic organizations issued a condemning statement on this occasion.

**On August 19,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a session on the cause of Mher Derdzyan, the head of the "Under One Roof" housing project, against the *Zhoghovurd* Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd. with claims for a publicly apology and obligation for 1,5 million AMD compensation for insult and slander.

The lawsuit, filed on April 15, 2019, was caused by the newspaper’s concerns that the program could be a deliberate hoax.[[72]](#footnote-72) (For details see the CPFE annual report for 2019, and quarterly reports for 2020, in the "Reports" section of khosq.am website).

The next court session is scheduled for October 9.

**On August 19,** citizen Roman Baghdasaryan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against Media Plus Ltd., claiming refutation of slander and a compensation. The reason for the lawsuit is an article published on Yerevan.today website on August 7: "Russian special services take interest in the editors of the "Bagramyan 26" channel that spreads disinformation."[[73]](#footnote-73) It stated that one of the admins of the mentioned Telegram channel was Roman Baghdasaryan, who lived in Russia, who, among others, had been targeted by the Russian special services. The federal government had decided to expel them from Russia. And the reason was that, according to the website, they were hiding behind secret accounts and were actually targeting Russia, a strategic ally of Armenia.

On August 28, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings, and on the same day, the motion to use a measure for securing the claim by seizing property was rejected. The day of the court session is scheduled for November 6.

**On August 19,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular court session on the case of the Armenian Progressive Youth NGO against Konstantin Ter-Nakalyan, Editor-in-Chief of BlogNews.am and the founder of Channel 5 TV Company, SHARK Ltd., with claims of refuting a defamatory statement, apologizing for insult, and seeking compensation.

We should remind that the lawsuit, filed on May 6, 2019, was triggered by a statement made by Constantin Ter-Nakalian, Editor-in-Chief of BlogNews.am website, in the Channel 5's "Face to Face" program on April 5 that Progressive Youth NGO implemented LGBT campaign in a Kotayk region school.[[74]](#footnote-74) (For details see the CPFE annual report for 2019 in the "Reports" section of khosq.am website).

The next hearing is scheduled for November 18.

**On August 21**, Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court session on the case of politician Vahan Babayan against journalist and publicist Liza Chagharyan.

We should remind that the reason for the lawsuit was Liza Chagharyan's Facebook post, dated April 13. "The one under the name of vahan babayan can claim the first place in the all-planet competition of snivellers."

The next court session is scheduled for November 18.

**On August 21,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held the first court session on the case of Jirayr Sefilyan against Armenia TV.

We should remind that on October 18, the Court of Cassation overturned the decision of the Civil Court of Appeal based on Jirayr Sefilyan’s appeal and remitted the case to Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction for a new examination. This is a case that has been going on for three years. The lawsuit was caused by a video about him in the "Sharp Angle" program on Armenia TV just days before Jirair Sefilyan's arrest, broadcast on June 12, 2016, which contained information that the plaintiff considers to be slander. On January 25, 2018, the Court of Appeal rejected Jirayr Sefilyan's appeal against the judgment of the first instance court. On February 28, the RA Court of Cassation appealed against this decision, which was accepted for proceedings on June 18 and the case was on a halt for about 18 months. (For details see the CPFE annual reports for 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 in the "Reports" section of khosq.am website). According to the decision of the Court of Cassation, when publishing any evaluatory judgment, the journalist must take all reasonable measures to verify the information to be true, even if the journalist's judgment is based on the facts revealed by a certain person, the journalist must at least try to listen to the party the information is about.[[75]](#footnote-75)

The date of the next session in the court of first instance on the case was not scheduled as of September 30.

**On August 24,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular court session on the case of the former NSS Intelligence Colonel Eduard Harutyunyan against former NA deputy Taron Sahakyan (founder of A1plus.am website MELTEX Ltd. is third person to the case) with claims of a public apology for insult, refutation of information considered slander and a compensation.

We should remind that the suit, filed on September 18, 2019, was triggered by a video released on A1plus.am on August 14 in which Taron Sahakyan talks about a former NSS official, in particular accusing him of “being related to drug supply”, “alienating strategic objects at the cost of a penny to his immediate surroundings,” “in exporting cheap resources from Armenia and importing expensive ones.”[[76]](#footnote-76)

The next court session on the case is scheduled for November 16.

**On August 24,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular session on the case of citizen Ashot Parazyan against Tert.AM Ltd, the founder of Tert.am news website, claiming a pubic refuation of defamatory information and a compensation for the damage caused to honor and dignity.

We should remind that the cause of the lawsuit is an article titled “Vahe Parazyan, Who Reported Against Samvel Karapetyan’s Nephew, Has a Criminal Background”, and published on the website on July 16.[[77]](#footnote-77)

The next court session is scheduled for November 18.

**On August 26,** the General Jurisdiction Court of Yerevan held the preliminary court session on the case of the the owner of Channel 5 TV company Armen Tavadyan against the President of the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression NGO Ashot Melikyan with a claim to refute factual data considered slander and pay a compensation of 2 million AMD. We should remind that the lawsuit was caused by an idea voiced by Ashot Melikyan during a discussion on the topic of “Transparency of beneficial owners in media sector”, held on March 4 and reported by Aravot.am, namely, “I do not think that Armen Tavadyan was arrested to be silenced. We know how he hit the protester with a bottle, how he tried to bribe.”[[78]](#footnote-78) Actually, the reports of the same discussion published by other media outlets testify to the fact that the defendant used an absolutely different language to express his idea.

Court sessions on the case were held also on August 28, and the next one is scheduled for November 3.

**On August 26,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular court hearing on the case of Vega World Ltd. against Skizb Media Kentron Ltd., the founder of the *Zhamanak* newspaper, with a claim for public refutation of defamatory information without any monetary compensation. The reason for the lawsuit, filed on September 30, 2019, was the article published in that newspaper on August 30, under the following heading: "All Was Planned: Before the fire, the State Revenue Committee was Going to Carry out Inspections at Vega.”[[79]](#footnote-79)

The next hearing of the case is scheduled for November 23.

**On August 26,** poet Hovhannes Ghazaryan filed a lawsuit against Newspress.am website, with claims that demand journalist Armine Mkrtumyan refute the slander and pay compensation. The reason for the lawsuit was an article, titled "It is immoral for a writer who helped boys evade army service to talk about patriotism: not all writers are intellectuals” and published on the website on July 21.[[80]](#footnote-80) Though on August 20, at the request of Hovhannes Ghazaryan, the website published a refutation, the poet followed up on the incident by filing a lawsuit against the website. As of September 30, the lawsuit was not accepted for proceedings.

**On August 26**, Leila Karina Yezeguelyan Majaryan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against Noyan Tapan Information Analytical Center Ltd. and NT Holding Ltd., with claims of acknowledging the publication of personal information as illegal and without consent and consequently destroying them. On September 9, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings.

**On August 26**, Yerevan Court of General Jurisdicton held a regular court session 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.[[81]](#footnote-81)

The next court hearing is scheduled for October 8.

**On August 27,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held the first court session on the case of former Acting Head of the State Control Service, and later Director of NSS Argishti Kyaramyan against the founder of the *Zhamanak* newspaper Skizb Media Kentron Ltd., seeking compensation for the damage caused to his honor, dignity and business reputation.

The lawsuit was filed on February 27, 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 at all. They say that he especially succeds in finding common ground with the representatives of the old regime.”[[82]](#footnote-82)

On September 11 the case was dismissed by the decision of the court, based on the motion by the plaintiff’s representative on dropping the claims.

**On August 28,** Syunik Marz Court of General Jurisdiction redistributed the case of Senior Investigator of Syunik Regional Investigation Department Narek Abgaryan against former Mayor of Meghri Arshavir Hovhannisyan (with the founder of the *Syunyats Yerkir* newspaper Syunyats Ashkhar Ltd. as a third person to this case), moving it from the seat in Goris to the seat in Meghri.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on July 16, 2019, with claims of refutation of defamatory information, and compensation of the damage caused to honor and dignity, and the reason for the lawsuit were the insulting statements made by Arshavir Hovhannisyan about Narek Abgaryan, published in the *Syunyats Yerkir* newspaper on June 16. No date for the next court session was scheduled as of September 30.

**On August 28,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular court session on the case of citizen Khachatur Khachatryan against Shamshyan Media Ltd. with claims of a public apology for the damage caused to honor and dignity and a compensation of the damage at 1 million AMD. The lawsuit, filed on April 17, 2019, was prompted by an article, titled "Shirak marz police’s 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."[[83]](#footnote-83) Published in Shamshyan.com on March 13.

The next court session is scheduled for November 6.

**On August 31,** Ara Harutyunyan, a former employee of the National Security Service, filed a lawsuit against the founder of 1in.am website Skizb Media Center Ltd., claiming refutation of defamatory facts, publication of the refutation text and a compensation of the damage caused to his honor and dignity. The reason for the lawsuit was an article published in "1in.am" on July 31, which stated that the plaintiff served in the RA NSS for more than 20 years, and according to rumors, was paid cash in envelopes for years by the chief accountant of South Caucasus Railway company in exchange for "turning a blind eye" to the robberies along the railways, the organized smuggling of goods․ He also engaged in protectionism.[[84]](#footnote-84)

The lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on September 9, and the motion for the use of a measure to secure the claim, namely by seizure of property, was rejected.

**On September 1**, Lori Marz General Jurisdication Court (seat in Vanadsor), under the presidency of a new judge, accepted the lawsuit for proceedings on the case of teacher Susanna Sargsyan against Hraparak.am website correspondent Shushanna Grigoryan, claiming a public apology and refutation of the factual data, considered defamatory.

We should remind that the case is being re-examined in the court of first instance. The reason for the lawsuit was the publication of articles, titled “Head of Vanadzor School N8 was Fired”[[85]](#footnote-85) (October 4, 2013) and “A Teacher in Vanadzor Received 12 Million AMD for Forced Idle Time”[[86]](#footnote-86) (December 5, 2013) in Hraparak.am (For details see the CPFE annual reports for 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 in the “Reports” section of khosq.am website).

The court session of the case was scheduledfor November 18.

**On September 2,** the MPs of the NA “Bright Armenia” faction Edmon Marukyan, Taron Simonyan and Armen Yeghiazaryan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against "Skizb Media Center" Ltd., the founder of 1in.am news website, claiming the publication of refuatation. The reason for the lawsuit is a news piece, titled “Bright Armenia met with Serzh Sargsyan in the latter's house” and published by 1in.am on June 19, which stated that the above-mentioned MPs discussed a number of events and issues of domestic policy with Serzh Sargsyan.[[87]](#footnote-87) On September 11, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings.

**On September 3,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdication held a regular court session on the case of Tigran Mets Publishing House against Iravunk Media Ltd., during which a decision was made to apply the expedited trial.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on January 22, 2019, claiming to seize 3 845 517 AMD in arrears and 77 000 AMD in advance state fee payment.

On September 14 the case was dismissed by the judgment of court, based on the settlement agreement between the parties.

**On September 3**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a preliminary hearing in the case of Van Charter Ltd. against Armenia TV CJSC, with claims of refuting the slander and paying a compensation. The lawsuit was filed on May 12, caused by an opinion voiced about the company during the"Sharp Angle" TV program of April 12, with reference to wrong tax declarations and the unsatisfactory quality of produced sanitizers. [[88]](#footnote-88)

The next court session is scheduled for January 20, 2021.

**On September 4**, the Court of General Jurisdictio of Yerevan held a regular session on the case of Lydian Armenia CJSC against economic commentator Atom Margaryan and the *Lragir* e-newspaper.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on September 27, 2019, 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.[[89]](#footnote-89)

By the way, on June 15, a countersuit was filed with claims of compensation for the damage caused to the honor, dignity, business reputation, and the previously paid state duty. The countersuit was accepted for proceedings on July 28. The next court session is scheduled for October 26.

**On September 8**, the operation of one of the round-the-clock broadcasting platforms of 1in.am news website, namely the Youtube channel, was blocked. The website published a statement, according to which “A study conducted by local and international professional circles revealed that a few weeks ago, a targeted group attack was carried out to completely shut down the independent media outlet's television platform and silence it. The attack was undertaken by the former Armenian authorities and the armies of fake account holders, owned and managed by their newly launched satellites.” The site worked on the backup channel for a few days, then its normal activity was restored.

**On September 8,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan accepted for proceedings the third lawsuit, filed by citizen Ara Sukiasyan against Shamshyan.com news website, claiming an apology for the factual data, considered defamatory and insulting. The plaintiff was also exempt from the payment of the state duty by the decision of the court.

We should remind that 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.[[90]](#footnote-90)

On April 28, the court had returned the third lawsuit for the same reason as the previous two, as a result of rejecting the plaintiff's motion on the exemption from the payment of the state fee. On May 23, the plaintiff applied to the Civil Court of Appeal, and on June 15, the Court of Appeal decided to uphold the appeal, overturning the decision of the first instance, establishing that the plaintiff's right to a fair trial guaranteed by the RA Constitution and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms was unnecessarily restricted.

No date for the court session was scheduled as of September 30.

**On September 9**, Gegham Vardanyan, Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission, filed a lawsuit against Pastinfo Ltd., demanding that the latter be obliged to publicly refute the defamatory information and pay a compensation. The reason for the lawsuit is an article, entitled “The Armenian Representative in the Eurasian Economic Commission is Suspected of Abuse” [[91]](#footnote-91) and published on Pastinfo.am website on August 31. The website referred to its own sources և wrote as follows: "…Gegham Vardanyan, abusing his official position, gave jobs to his relatives and tried to use their services to influence the redistribution of tenders."

On September 22, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings, the motion to apply a measure to secure the claim, to seize property and money, was rejected.

**On September 9**, Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular court session on the case of the former Director of Yerevan Zoo Ruben Khachatryan against journalist Narine Kirakosyan with claims refutation of information considered slander and a compensation for the non-pecuniary damage.

We should remind that the suit was filed first on September 24, 2019, and then was returned at the plaintiff’s request and was re-submitted on November 13. The suit was triggered by the journalist's Facebook post on August 25, where she stated that Ruben Khachatryan had inflicted great damage to the animals by declaring himself a sole leader.

The next court session was scheduled for October 22.

**On September 9**, Gegham Vardanyan, Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission, filed a lawsuit against Yerkir Editorial Office Ltd. with claims of public refutation of the information considered defamatory and insulting, an apology and confiscation of a compensation. The reason for the lawsuit was an article, entitled “Whatever the result of the investigation initiated by Myasnikovich, the consequences will not be particularly severe for Gegham Vardanyan. REX” and published on Yerkir.am website on September 2, which accuses Gegham Vardanyan of corrupt deals.[[92]](#footnote-92)

On September 23, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings, and the motion to apply a measure to secure the claim by seizure of property and money was rejected.

**On September 14**, Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular court session on the case of citizen Arusyak Mkrtchyan against the *Zhoghovurd* daily with claims of refuting defamatory information and compensating the damage caused.

The lawsuit was filed on August 12, 2019, and the cause of the suit was an article published on Armlur.am website on July 12, titled “A DJ in Healthcare Sector: Circa $ 20,000 to the Minister's Acquaintance.”[[93]](#footnote-93) The author noted that the RA Ministry of Health had allocated over 9.5 million AMD from the state budget to In Progress Production Company, founded by Arusyak Mkrtchyan, i.e. DJ Vaccina, to shoot social ads. “Let's take notice of the fact that DJ Vakcina, being Health Minister Arsen Torosyan’s friend (at least their photos testify to this), is making use of the RA state budget." By the way, the article posted on the website contained commentary by Arusyak Mkrtchyan.

The next session on the case was scheduled on January 18, 2021.

**On September 14**, a regular hearing on the case of citizen Narine Abrahamyan against journalist Kristine Aghalaryan was held in the Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction with claims of public refuation of the data, considered defamatory, and a payment of compensation.

We should remind that the reason for the lawsuitfiled on June 2, 2017, was the article, titled "Meghri Medical Center Against the State Revenue Committee" published on Lurer.com website, on May 17, 2011, which presents Narine Abrahamyan as being in the center of numerous scandals during her career. [[94]](#footnote-94) (For details see the CPFE annual reports for 2017, 2018, 2019 in the “Reports” section of khosq.am website)

The next hearing is scheduled for December 24.

**On September 16**, Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular hearing on the case of Alvina Gyulumyan, a member of the Constitutional Court against the founder of the *Armenian Times* daily, Dareskizb Ltd., with claims of refutation of slander and payment of a compensation.

We should remind that the lawsuit, filed on August 22, 2018, was prompted by the publication of an article stating that when Gyulumyan was representing Armenia at the ECtHR as a judge, she did not spare any effort to postpone the investigation of one of the cases in relation to the March 1, 2008, events in Yerevan. On April 15 the Court of Appeal ruled to uphold Alvina Gyulumyan’s appeal, overturned the judgment of the first court, which rejected her lawsuit against the media outlet. Thus, the case was sent to the same court for a new examination.

The next court session is scheduled for November 12.

**On September 16,** Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular court session on the case of the former NSS colonel Eduard Harutyunyan against former MP Taron Sahakyan (with the involvement of the founder of 1in.am website First News Ltd.), with claims of public apology, as well as a refutation of the information considered slander and payment of compensation.

We should remind that the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on July 3, 2019, and its reason was an article, entitled “The Harutyunyans dynasty is still rooted in the state administration system: who occupies a post, what post and where?” and published on the website on May 29, 2019.[[95]](#footnote-95)

The next court session was scheduled for November 16.

**On September 18**, NA Deputy Speaker Alen Simonyan filed a lawsuit in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against Gegham Simonyan, the owner of the domain of Alternativ.am website with claims of compensation for the damage caused to his honor and dignity. The reason for the lawsuit is an editorial, entitled “The Close Relations between "Vivaro" and Alen Simonyan that Cost $ 300,000. Why aren't the violations by “Vivaro” properly investigated?" and published on Alternativ.am website on August 20.[[96]](#footnote-96) The article particularly stated that Alen Simonyan took $ 300,000 from “Vivaro” company and promised to use his ties in the government to keep the company out of scandals and to keep it away from accountability for violations.

On September 28, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings, and the defendant's motion to secure the claim by restriction of action was rejected.

**On September 18**, Yerevan Court of General Jurisdication held a regular hearing on the case of citizen Azat Tovmasyan against ATV TV company 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 the damage at the value of 2 million AMD.

The lawsuit was filed on October 3, 2018, 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. [[97]](#footnote-97)

The next hearing was scheduled for October 12.

**On September 22,** the Administrative Court of Appeal examined the appeal, submitted by journalists Liana Karapetyan and Siranush Muradyan against the Public Television and Radio Company Council.

We should remind that on January 24, 2019, the journalists filed a lawsuit with the RA Administrative Court 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. On January 13, the Council of the Public Television and Radio Company appealed the judgment.

The next court session was scheduled for October 13.  
   
 **On September 22,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular court hearing on "May there be Light-BK" Ltd. against the Public Television of Armenia and the Mayor of Charentsavan community Hakob Shahgaldyan, demanding refutation of the information considered slanderous.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on January 10, and 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.[[98]](#footnote-98) The plaintiff considered defamatory a statement made by Hakob Shahgeldyan during the news report, namely that there were many commitments, related to the water and electricity supply, that May There Be Light – BK Ltd. company had not fulfilled. May There Be Light-BK Ltd. demanded from Public TV to publicly refute the defamatory data on air and claimed the payment of 2 million AMD monetary compensation by Hakob Shahgaldyan.

The next court hearing was scheduled for November 10..

**On September 24**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a preliminary court hearing on the case of the SOS Children's Villages Armenian Charitable Foundation against Iravunk Media Ltd., claiming public refutation of defamatory information and compensation for the damage caused to its business reputation.

The reason for the lawsuit, filed on May 14, is the article, entitled "What is happening in the Ijevan branch of SOS Children's Villages?" published on Iravunk.com website on January 8.[[99]](#footnote-99) The website, citing its own sources, stated that the foundation's employees were engaged in robbery․

The next court hearing was scheduled for December 11.

**On September 25,** the Civil Court of Appeal rejected the appeal, filed by the Hraparak daily Ltd. against the decision of the first instance court which had partially upheld the lawsuit of RA Health Minister's spokesperson Alina Nikoghosyan against the founder of the media outlet with claims of public apology and confiscation of 1 million AMD as compensation.

We should remind that the lawsuit, filed on June 3, 2019, was caused by an article published on Hraparak.am on May 9 under the heading "Ministry of Health Conceals What Happened and Practices Protectionism towards Lfik".[[100]](#footnote-100) The judgment published on March 17 partially upheld the suit: the defendant was obliged to apologize to the plaintiff Alina Nikoghosyan on Hraparak.am website, publishing the text proposed by her, and confiscate 200000 AMD in her favour as compensation for insult and 200000 AMD as reasonable remuneration for the lawyer.

According to the decision of the Court of Appeal, the arguments of the appellant were groundless.

**On September 27,** leading Armenian news websites A1plus.am, Armenpress.am, Armtimes.com, Blognews.am, Hetq.am, Mamul.am, Mediamax.am, Zhamanak.com were attacked by Azerbaijani hackers by DDos. On the same day, Azerbaijani hackers hacked the Armenian 1in.am, News.am websites, trying to spread the desired information through them. The normal operation of the sites was restored hours later.

**On September 30**, Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a regular court session 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 lawsuit, filed on February 13, 2019, was triggered by an article, entitled "Who Sponsors Sarukhan Mayor and Prevents Inquiry since August"[[101]](#footnote-101) and published on the website on January 10. The article contains the villagers’ complaints about their mayor.

The next hearing is scheduled on December 3.

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

*In the third quarter of 2020, the CPFE recorded 34 facts on the violation of the right to receive and disseminate information. As compared to the same period last year, the number of such violations has increased by 23, and by 5, as compared with the previous quarter.*

*We present the facts recorded during the period under review, as well as new developments in relation to the events from past periods, in chronological order.*

Starting from **July 1** and throughout the whole quarter, the Freedom of Information Center registered 20 violations of various kinds in the answers to inquiries sent to state and private bodies. In particular, the answers to 8 inquiries were assessed as incomplete, in 2 cases the content of the answer did not relate to the key points of the inquiry, in 1 case the deadline for the official response was unnecessarily extended. In addition, the FOICA registered the fact of 1 ungrounded rejection, 1 case of a delayed response and 7 late replies. (For details see Givemeinfo.am website).

**On July 4**, Pastinfo wrote that it sent a written inquiry on the disinfection in the courts to the Judicial Department on June 15, but the latter, violating the requirements of the RA Law on Freedom of Information, had not replied yet.[[102]](#footnote-102)

**On July 5**, the *NEWS.am Sport* wrote that before the start of the summer conscription, it sent a written inquiry to Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports Grisha Tamrazyan, to find out information about the conscription of the national sports team members and the fact that because of the coronavirus the athlets’ had lost opportunities to achieve the results necessary for deferral or service in the sports platoon. The deadlines for responding to the inquiry as set by the legislation had expired, and the Deputy Minister had not commented at all.[[103]](#footnote-103)

**On July 8,** the RA Administrative Court of Appeal accepted the appeal of the the Union of Informed Citizens NGO, challenging the decision of the first instance court which quashed its lawsuit against the Minister of Energy Infrastructure and Natural Resources Ashot Manukyan with claims of obliging him to provide information.

We should remind that on March 23, 2018, the Union of Informed Citizens NGO filed a lawsuit against the Minister because the Ministry had refused to provide the requested information, saying it contained secrets.

The court, having considered that the information requested by the plaintiff was provided by the defendant after the claim had been filed with the court, found that the dispute had in essence been exhausted and that the proceedings in the case should be dismissed. However, the plaintiff did not consider the answers to the questions to be complete and appealed the decision. The hearing of the case was held on August 20, and on September 9 the Court of Appeal rejected the appeal and left the decision of the first court unchanged.

**On July 11,** Armlur.am news website wrote that on June 11, the *Zhoghovurd* daily sent a number of questions to the RA Ministry of Health, trying to find out the size of premiums and bonuses the medical staff members (doctors, nurses, drivers, paramedics) involved in the fight against coronavirus had received and how much money was paid to the hotel managers who serviced and took care of the citizens who were isolated during the quarantine. 30 days after the the inquiry was sent, the newspaper received an answer, which it deemed as incomplete․ The Ministry did not answer the questions clearly and did not provide complete figures.[[104]](#footnote-104)

**On July 11**, Hetq.am online periodical wrote that an inquiry was sent to the RA Nature Protection and Subsoil Inspectorate, asking to answer a few questions about the Prime Minister's instructions to start inspections in 28 metal mining companies of Armenia as early as in 2018. A month after sending the inquiry, the inspectorate gave a poor answer, some of the questions posted were rejected whatsoever, with reference to Article 8, Para 1(b) of the RA Law on Organizing and Conducting an Inspection, which establishes that the requested information case be provided only with the written consent of an official, representing the enterpise. The website, however, wrote that the justification mentioned by the Inspectorate had nothing to do with their inquiry, and the confidentiality was completely inappropriate. By the way, the inspection body did not specify which 28 companies were inspected.[[105]](#footnote-105)

**On July 13**, *Sputnik Armenia* news website wrote that it had applied to Yerevan Municipality for information on the number of public transport drivers with a positive coronavirus test. The press secretary of the municipality Hakob Karapetyan noted that they did not have clear data about them, the registration of infected drivers working in the field of public transport was carried out by the National Center for Disease Prevention and Control SNCO. The latter operates under the authorization of and is subject to the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia, and the press service of this agency informed the media that they did not collect and categorize statistics of the infected by profession (except for doctors).[[106]](#footnote-106) *Sputnik Armenia* asked the municipality to present the statistics of fining drivers for not wearing a mask and exceeding the number of passengers (if there were any such cases). A written inquiry was required to fully answer these questions, but the answer as provided was incomplete.

**On July 14**, Tirayr Muradyan, a journalist with the Hetq.am online magazine, wrote on Facebook that he had sent an inquiry to the Chairman of the State Property Management Committee, to find out information on the 2004 state property auction, the participants, and the winner. The Chairman of SPMC Narek Babayan refused to provide the name of the winner, referring to the Law on Personal Data Protection, the Law on Public Bargaining and Clause 4.2 of the Regulation on Auction. The journalist commented as follows: “The details on the winner of the state property auction cannot be kept secret under any circumstances. Such an interpretation of the law is discretionary, it is a case of abusing a right, an excuse for not providing information.” Later, Levon Zakaryan, a member of the Elders’ Council of Yerevan, who also works for the State Property Management Committee, published the answer to a journalist's written inquiry with Narek Babayan’s permission, thus violating the exclusivity of the article to be prepared. [[107]](#footnote-107)

**On July 18**, Yerkir.am news website wrote that it had sent an inquiry to the RA Corruption Prevention Commission a month before, asking to provide information on how many of the RA high-ranking state officials had to submit an annual declaration of property, income and interests for 2019 and how many of them had not yet provided the necessary information. The answer received was incomplete: the website wrote that the Commission had avoided submitting some of the requested data.[[108]](#footnote-108)

**On July 27,** Tert.am news website wrote that they had prepared an article about the Gyumri Customs and had found out that the actual construction costs exceeded the estimated costs twice, amounting to 5,1 billion AMD, and the construction works were done mainly without a tender. After studying the contracts, Tert.am sent an inquiry to the State Revenue Committee on July 10 to receive an additional confirmation of the facts, but did not hear from them.[[109]](#footnote-109)

**On July 28,** the online periodical Hetq.am sent an inquiry to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports to find out how the state standards for general education were developed, who the members of the commission were, teachers and principals of which schools were involved in the work, what was the procedure of their election.[[110]](#footnote-110) In response to the inquiry, the Ministry sent the list of expert group members, amending the subject curricula. These lists were published on the website of the Ministry and contained only the experts’ names and surnames. The Ministry did not answer which school they represented or what position at schools they held.

**On July 30**, Aravot.am news website wrote that the staff of the National Assembly had sent a request to find out how the 580 million AMD bonus was distributed among the MPs in the period from February 2019 to February 2020 and how much bonus each MP received. The National Assembly refused to provide that information, noting that it was subject to discussion from the point of view of personal data protection.

“The annual declaration filed by MPs annually contains a separate line on the amount of income received from the salary, and if we subtract the fixed rate from that amount, the difference will clearly be the bonus. In other words, the secrecy of the bonus is nothing you can hide, it will be seen at a certain point,” the website wrote, considering the received answer an unfounded rejection. [[111]](#footnote-111)

**On August 5**, Hetq.am online periodical wrote that on June 30, it submitted a written inquiry to the Corruption Prevention Commission, hoping to clarify the inaccuracies in the MPs’ declarations. [[112]](#footnote-112) Not receiving a written response within 5 days, 10 days later the website contacted the Chairman of the Commission Haykuhi Harutyunyan, who said that the inquiry was not answered due to the workload. A month later, the mentioned mistakes were not corrected yet, which, according to the website, impacted the work of the media outlet adversely, as it was impossible to analyze a declaration full of mistakes.

**On August 21**, Hraparak.am website wrote that the editorial office sent an inquiry to the Ministry of Defense, asking to provide information on the "I am" and "I have the honor" programs for service in the RA Armed Forces and to clarify whether the Ministry intended to abandon or amend those programs.[[113]](#footnote-113) The answers provided in the official response by the Information Department were not full, in particular, the Ministry of Defense did not comment on the information about the closure of one of the programs, besides, there was no clarification on why no one applied to the program this year and what the problems these programs encounteres in terms for their implementation.

**On August 31,** Aravot.am website asked 10 questions to the Armenian National Interests Fund (ANIF) about the investments made in the economy. Executive Director Davit Papazyan did not answer the written inquiry, conveying through the press secretary that it was not an appropriate time to speak about such matters.[[114]](#footnote-114) The website writes that the necessary information was not available on the official, and exclusively English language, website of ANIF.

**On September 11,** the Court of Appeal accepted for proceedings the appeal of the defendant against the first instance court decision on the case of Hetq.am online periodical (founded by Investigative Journalists NGO) against the Board of Trustees of the National Scientific Laboratory after A.I. Alikhanyan (Yerevan Institute of Physics) Foundation.

We should remind that after a rejection from the foundation, Investigative Journalists NGO filed a lawsuit with the Administrative Court on July 8, 2019, seeking to oblige the Foundation's Board of Trustees to provide copies of all decisions made in 2011-2019. On May 22 the judgment was published which partially upheld the suit, namely the Foundation was obliged to provide all the documents in compliance with the requirements set in Article 8, Para 1, Clauses 1 – 5 of the RA Law on Freedom of Information. Besides, the court ruled to confiscate 4000 AMD in favour of the NGO as initially paid state duty and 70000 AMD as reasonable remuneration for the lawyer.

**On September 17,** the Administrative Court held a regular court hearing on the case of the President of the Asparez Journalists' Club, Levon Barseghyan against the National Security Service, claiming the provision of the information requested by an inquiry.

The plaintiff had demanded the NSS to provide all the information it had about him. The answer to the inquiry did not satisfy Levon Barseghyan, he applied to the court with the aim of creating a precedent so that those who owned information would provide it to the citizens upon request.

October 1 has been set as the date for publishing the judgment.

***Other Events on Activity of Media and Journalists***

**On July 2,** 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 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. [[115]](#footnote-115)

Court hearings were also held on July 10 and 14, with the next hearing not scheduled as of September 30.

**On July 23**, Yerevan Court of General Jurisdiction held a preliminary court session on the case of News.am Ltd., the founder of News.am website, against political scientist Styopa Safaryan, seeking compensation for the damage to its business reputation. We should remind that the suit, filed on Ausgust 28, was prompted by a Facebook post, saying that the site had received an order from Robert Kocharyan's office to publish some articles about judges.[[116]](#footnote-116)

The next session is scheduled for November 3.

**On August 3**, ArmNews CJSC and Radio 107 FM Ltd. filed lawsuits against the Television and Radio Commission, claiming to repeal Decision No. 37-A, dated May 19, 2020. The decision was about the administrative penalty against the companies. According to TRC, the “Before the Mirror” broadcast show on ArmNews TV contained numerous distortions of facts, blatant falsifications, threats, calls for violence, and panic-mongering assumptions, which caused anxiety and despair, especially among minor viewers. The audio version of the program was also broadcast on RADIO 107 FM radio company.

On August 11, the two lawsuits were merged and accepted for proceedings.

**On September 17**, the RA Administrative Court held a regular court session on the case of the the founder of "A1 +" TV company "MELTEX" Ltd. 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. 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.

We should remind that the lawsuit was filed on December 18, 2019, and on May6,the court decided to remove TV FIVE CJSC and Cinemax Ltd. from the list of the parties to the litigation, taking into account that that they are liquidated (TV FIVE CJSC, Armenia TV CJSC, Mo TV Media Holding CJSC, ArmenAkob Ltd., AR TV company Ltd., Cinemax and Husaber CJSC were involved in this case as the third party).

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

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***This report was made within the scope of the project of Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression implemented with the support from National Endowment for Democracy (NED, USA). Opinions and assessments contained in the report belong to CPFE and might not be consistent with the opinions and dispositions of the NED.***

1. [**https://khosq.am/2020/08/10/%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%b6-59/**](https://khosq.am/2020/08/10/%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%b6-59/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [**https://khosq.am/2020/08/19/%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%b6-60/**](https://khosq.am/2020/08/19/%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%b6-60/) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. **<https://khosq.am/2020/07/04/%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%b6-57/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. **<https://khosq.am/2020/07/08/%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%b6-58/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. **<https://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2020/09/10/armenia-legislative-proposal-on-insult-and-defamation-compensation-threatens-press-freedom/?fbclid=IwAR1fdc0buCGrcvu0vxoDcgjvXlGBamoY5WZX5au1eTNHEjL_FRWNBZK7nQo>** [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. **<https://khosq.am/2020/09/16/61695/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. **<https://khosq.am/2020/09/23/61712/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <https://youtu.be/uLm2R0ADfDg> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. **<http://hetq.am/arm/news/85516/azh-yntrutyunneri-zhamanak-lragroxneri-ashkhatanqy-khochyndotelu-gortsov-tarec-knoj-nkatmamb-hetakhuzum-haytararvec.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. **<https://www.azatutyun.am/a/28766203.html>**  [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. **<https://www.facebook.com/varduhi.ishkhanyan/posts/3672189966142380>** [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. # <https://web.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10215471419755711&set=a.1828379706309.196864.1144813885&type=3&theater>

    [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. **<http://www.tert.am/am/news/2018/06/13/Daniel-Ioanisyan/2712532>** [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. **<http://www.hzham.am/articles/1664482480940241.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. **<https://www.pastinfo.am/hy/news/2018/10/09/%D4%BF%D5%A1%D5%AC%D5%A1%D5%B6%D5%A1%D5%BE%D5%B8%D6%80%D5%A8-%D6%83%D5%B8%D6%80%D5%B1%D5%A5%D5%AC-%D5%A7-%D5%AB%D5%B6%D6%84%D5%B6%D5%A1%D5%BD%D5%BA%D5%A1%D5%B6-%D5%AC%D5%AB%D5%B6%D5%A5%D5%AC%D5%9D-%D5%AB%D6%80%D5%A5%D5%B6-%D5%A1%D5%BF%D5%A1%D5%B4%D5%B6%D5%A1%D5%A2%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%AA%D5%AB-%D5%B4%D5%B8%D5%BF-%D5%B9%D5%BF%D5%A1%D5%B6%D5%A5%D5%AC%D5%B8%D6%82-%D5%B0%D5%A1%D5%B4%D5%A1%D6%80/750103>** [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. **<http://www.irates.am/hy/1554757966>** [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. **<https://youtu.be/MNT-LBExMgo>** [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. **<https://bit.ly/2D4Hd45>** [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. **<https://hetq.am/hy/article/117483?fbclid=IwAR0hsTR937FaVgio0ipQqDWOCWaowzo-wrFssO3DmGQSjifkf41bwR9js04>** [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. **<https://www.1in.am/2589936.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. **<https://hraparak.am/post/2094192614>** [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. **<https://hayeli.am/?p=163090&fbclid=IwAR01CiAUOCakVFi7OnsUTJlSuHQq-yy4ocbvQSSt8muIe0svqxd2S60iPhw>** [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. **<http://www.hzham.am/articles/1663864370927057.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. **<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=491934574965832>** [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. **<https://bit.ly/3gebYSE>** [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. **<https://www.1in.am/2556548.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. **<https://bit.ly/37DN1wt>** [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. **<https://bit.ly/2BkEqm4>** [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. **<https://bit.ly/2N7fEZr>** [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. **<https://bit.ly/2Z06jZ9>** [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. **<http://www.slaq.am/arm/news/1326539/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. **<https://hraparak.am/post/1502474192>** [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. **<https://hraparak.am/post/1622065385>** [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. **<https://www.facebook.com/narek.malyan/posts/3618182874876584>** [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. **<https://bit.ly/3hMTSra>** [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. **<https://hetq.am/hy/article/106239>** [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. **<https://168.am/2020/03/06/1269324.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. **<https://168.am/2020/06/07/1314973.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. **<https://news.am/arm/news/584108.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. **<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0U6iBEDbIWw>** [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. **<http://www.aravot.am/2018/02/08/935799/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. **<http://hzham.am/articles/1666759386392681.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. **<http://alternativ.am/?p=35716&l=am&fbclid=IwAR144ZQeXwiP7E16Wb4W98IPF-QQyZa8i0K3HPEVQnS5tHosfe5VLXDxwlY>** [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. **<https://analitik.am/news/view/644922?fbclid=IwAR07mkBeIRChj9DcPNmY-oDZGRvfunrQ3AuII_8H-zGP6vfsRfhj5AzgJbQ>** [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. **<https://analitik.am/news/view/594100?fbclid=IwAR2-q-8ahmJ2vQBqyNfWmYvt1WQDwjHwq16tbcpVNackjKL5Ku9W7R8XQTI>** [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. **<https://www.1in.am/2770165.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. **<https://shamshyan.com/hy/article/2020/06/14/1157316/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. **<https://media.am/hy/newsroom/2020/07/14/22922/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
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50. **<https://hetq.am/hy/article/119421?fbclid=IwAR0BvMzs5u1nhud3KOWKhn6yqatwDHqw7QvcuVZNqSmZxD5L-eCMqO-WQDU>** [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. **<https://youtu.be/Tit_LDYzOl0>** [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. **<https://armtimes.com/hy/article/190467?fbclid=IwAR2iQWRf4TC57VkAV5Qky1JaynVUWUH6h-UHUh7rqIotmCdBoGUcyPpFGtQ>** [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. **<https://www.aravot.am/2020/04/29/1108891/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. **<https://bit.ly/3dmzdI5>** [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. **<https://www.aravot.am/2020/02/19/1094857/?fbclid=IwAR1sGJO4emViWLemQWcoFWaq-pzNRMaZq_fTfIfBNHkfaPUYlgrcKIVnpe4>** [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. **<https://youtu.be/4gGNJG8KAsM>** [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. **<https://bit.ly/2XOXFx1>** [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. **<https://www.aravot.am/2020/03/19/1101077/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. **<http://hzham.am/articles/1668284337218388.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. **<http://hzham.am/articles/1661036339300016.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. **<http://hzham.am/articles/1671819965288944.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. **<https://hraparak.am/post/bf6e81ca1c15291e0836f43015c913ce>** [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. **<https://factor.am/264289.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
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65. **<https://www.azatutyun.am/a/30773276.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. **<https://www.tert.am/am/news/2019/07/16/vahe-parazyan/3050642?fbclid=IwAR0ba7xITNht0RCar7sYNqRU7ETgWWZfBTXrvboonHl1xzCyRhmm1nAn9zs>** [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. **<https://analitik.am/news/view/574211?fbclid=IwAR2ecfMrTM9hOl9FJdnSAAJbLiWdl-_tNFYfrp4704F7NOIEFm5J0JHuGcE>** [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. **<https://armlur.am/922256/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. **<http://newspress.am/?p=96188&l=am/haytni+e+tevov+e+hayk+sargsyanin+nvirel+tankargeq+meqenan+ev+inchi+hamar>** [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. **<http://newspress.am/?p=96487&l=am/hertakan+tankargeq+nvery+20+mln+dram+argoxutyamb+heraxosahamar%D5%9D+hayk+sargsyanin>**  [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. **<https://factor.am/277291.html?fbclid=IwAR0ws-PmSR7fBCdDwwJ-lmTkDjeYKk4nDmM01bZoF5ODdkemPkunYWt3wRo>** [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. **<https://armlur.am/889450/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. **<https://yerevan.today/all/hetaqnnutyun/62229/rousastani-hatouk-tsarayoutyounnery-hetqrqrvats-en-dezinformacia-taratsogh-%C2%ABbagpamyan-26%C2%BB-edji-xmbagirnerov>** [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. **<https://youtu.be/5HI1iKl6ux4>** [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. **<https://hetq.am/hy/article/109392?fbclid=IwAR3g21o3tkASb6iXaFHUj0AWXDe2mt0wB6rxBEWkPdqyJ2_psEjD0FUx7-I>** [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. **<https://a1plus.am/hy/article/346145>** [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
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78. **<https://www.aravot.am/2020/03/04/1097910/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. **<https://www.1in.am/2616582.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. **<https://newspress.am/?p=113379&l=am/banastexc+hovhanes+xazaryany+herqum+e>** [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. **<https://youtu.be/Tit_LDYzOl0>** [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. **<https://www.1in.am/2704520.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. **[https://shamshyan.com/hy/article/2019/03/13/1119637/#](https://shamshyan.com/hy/article/2019/03/13/1119637/)** [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. **<https://www.1in.am/2797828.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. **<https://hraparak.am/post/591fb734e3d84d0d37fd972c>** [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. **<https://hraparak.am/post/591fb531e3d84d0d37fd8835>** [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. **<https://www.1in.am/2774752.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. **<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kt8rPD2m8YQ>** [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. **<https://www.lragir.am/2019/09/15/475661/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. **<https://shamshyan.com/hy/article/2020/01/06/1144413/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. **<https://bit.ly/3iyJYdF>** [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. **<https://www.yerkir.am/news/view/212232.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
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96. **<https://alternativ.am/?p=41096&l=am>** [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. **<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mznz1XD6KEw>** [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. **<https://bit.ly/2y6NWIb>** [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. **<https://www.iravunk.com/news/102231>** [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. **<https://hraparak.am/post/1270717699>** [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. **<http://hzham.am/articles/1622303581537336.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. **<https://bit.ly/2CVAp99>** [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. **<https://bit.ly/3fdyglZ>** [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. **<https://armlur.am/1021443/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. **<https://hetq.am/hy/article/119280>** [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. **<https://bit.ly/33dE9x9>** [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. **<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=3154523371292711&set=a.190479901030421&type=3&theater>** [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. **<http://www.yerkir.am/news/view/207865.html>** [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. **<https://www.tert.am/am/news/2020/07/26/gyumri/3354300>** [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. **<https://hetq.am/hy/article/119921>** [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. **<https://www.aravot.am/2020/07/30/1126485/>** [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
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114. **<https://www.aravot.am/2020/09/11/1134373/?fbclid=IwAR1FlttTOu4YplIg5tztPBK-KTHIddizE12QALktLDPJPKTBQzkD4xbizig>** [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. **<https://www.panorama.am/am/news/2019/03/05/%D4%BC%D5%A1%D6%80%D5%AB%D5%BD%D5%A1-%D5%84%D5%AB%D5%B6%D5%A1%D5%BD%D5%B5%D5%A1%D5%B6/2081488>** [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. **<https://www.armdaily.am/?p=61205&l=am>** [↑](#footnote-ref-116)