***REPORT***

***ON SITUATION WITH FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS OF JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA IN ARMENIA IN 2024***

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*The Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression regularly presents to the public its reports on the working environment of Armenian media and their personnel, the issues faced by them, the state of freedom of expression and violations of the rights of media and journalists. This report reflects the data from the year 2024.*

*The facts presented in the report are derived from the following sources:*

*- phone calls received via the CPFE “hotline”,*

*- meetings and discussions held by the CPFE experts with media personnel,*

*- responses to official inquiries sent to state bodies,*

*- materials from court cases involving media entities,*

*- materials disseminated by partner journalistic organizations,*

*- media publications.*

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*The views and assessments expressed in the report belong to the CPFE and may not coincide with the views and opinions of the National Endowment for Democracy.*

***OVERVIEW***

**In 2024, the number of recorded violations of the rights of journalists and media in Armenia overall surpassed the figures from the previous year.**

**Cases of physical violence and various forms of pressure fluctuated in different periods of the year, depending on socio-political events in the country. The figures are as follows: 15 cases of physical violence (with 24 injured), 71 cases of various other pressures, 122 violations of the right to receive and disseminate information.**

Throughout the year, physical violence against journalists and cameramen was mainly recorded in the second quarter. This period coincided with the mass protests held by opposition forces in response to the border demarcation in the RA Tavush Marz. It was during the coverage of these very events that media professionals faced violence, other obstructions to their professional activities, and pressure. In that period alone, the total number of such violations of journalists’ rights reached 20, with 13 resulting from actions by law enforcement officers and 7 by opposition protest organizers or their supporters. Apart from these incidents, another case of physical violence was recorded in the National Assembly, when a State Protection Service (SPS) officer obstructed the work of a journalist by using force.

All these cases, along with the targeting of media and their employees, as well as manifestations of insulting and disrespectful attitude towards them, are presented in this report. At the same time, the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression and partner organizations have issued joint statements regarding the most significant cases.

Compared to the previous year, the number of lawsuits against media and journalists also increased by 7 in 2024, totaling **43**. Of these, 17 were filed by state bodies or officials, 13 by business entities and/or businessmen, 3 by lawyers, 1 by an NGO, 1 by an opposition figure, and 8 by other private individuals.

The lawsuits filed by officials were mostly accompanied by demands for large sums of compensation. In this regard, the most notable figures were National Assembly Speaker Alen Simonyan and Yerevan Mayor Tigran Avinyan, each having filed 3 lawsuits against media throughout the year.

The monitoring conducted in 2024 demonstrates that the situation is also problematic in the area of freedom of information. State bodies are not sufficiently open in their interactions with the media and, according to journalists' accounts, they make a special effort to conceal the information that could, if made public, reveal deficiencies in their operations and possible abuses. The most striking example in this context was the approach taken by the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Health, when both avoided providing clear responses to media inquiries about the clashes near the National Assembly building on June 12 and the special means used. These bodies urged the editorial teams to approach the investigative bodies and, as revealed by the press[[1]](#footnote-1), were buying time while amending internal regulatory and legal acts aimed at establishing legal foundations for the police actions.

Overall, throughout the monitoring, the issues pointed out by the CPFE in its previous reports resurfaced. The violation of the 5-day timeframe prescribed by law for providing information continues to be a widespread phenomenon (23 cases). In some cases, this process is unnecessarily prolonged and extended up to 30 days without proper justification for the additional work required during that period (11 cases). What is more problematic are the responses that are vague, incomplete and lack proper references (36 cases). State or other secrets and the protection of personal data are unfoundedly cited, disguised as a reason for not providing information that should be made public (12 cases).

From the perspective of ensuring that official data is accessible both to the media and the public, the package of legislative amendments on freedom of information, drafted by the RA Ministry of High-Tech Industry and released in 2024, holds significant importance. Despite being the subject of numerous discussions throughout the year, it has not yet been finalized in a form required for submission to parliament.

Important developments also took place in the process of modernizing the RA main law “On Mass Communication,” which regulates media operations. The draft on amendments and supplements to that law, developed through a partnership involving a number of journalistic organizations, the Ministry of Justice, the relevant parliamentary commission, as well as international organization Freedom House, was presented for discussion at the parliamentary hearings held on April 29. For the purpose of improving the legislative amendments and supplements, the draft law was submitted to the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe for expert review. On October 14, the Commission delivered its conclusion. As of the end of the year, following a number of expert discussions, the draft was undergoing edits, considering the recommendations from the Venice Commission.

The purpose of the proposed amendments is to encourage quality journalism, establish and develop a system of media self-regulation based on the norms of professional ethics, and make it so the state recognizes this system.

Throughout the year, the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression continued to actively pursue the protection of the rights of journalists affected by the events of “Electric Yerevan” in June 2015. After going through all instances within the country and exhausting every option, the journalists, supported by the CPFE, appealed to the UN Human Rights Committee in 2021. On September 4, upon receiving a confirmation of the request to examine the complaint, the Committee asked for the English translation of the entire case, which was provided. The process is ongoing.

On October 15, Freedom House released its “Freedom on the Net 2024” Report[[2]](#footnote-2), in which Armenia was ranked among the “countries with Internet freedom.” Armenia’s position improved by 2 points from the previous year, reaching a total score of 74. This assessment was based on the fact that during the period under review (from June 1, 2023 to May 31, 2024), no cases of blocking social platforms and websites were recorded in Armenia. At the same time, the organization pointed to cases of obstruction to journalists' professional activities, citing data from the 2023 Annual Report of the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression.

***MEDIA ACTIVITIES ENVIRONMENT***

The environment for journalists and media in 2024 was marked by wave-like patterns of development, driven by escalations in the socio-political situation and subsequent phases of relative stability. Accordingly, the second quarter was the most intense period, with protests taking place across the country, clashes between police forces and demonstrators, which were accompanied by violence and other pressures against journalists and cameramen covering these events.

In April, the start of the border demarcation process between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the RA Tavush Marz sparked a new wave of protests, initially in that region, and later in the capital. An opposition movement emerged, led by Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan, the Head of the Tavush Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church. This period saw a sharp increase in intolerance and hatred between different political camps. The same animosity was also directed towards media outlets associated with opposing forces and their representatives. Throughout the protests, the CPFE recorded 14 cases of physical violence against journalists and cameramen, resulting in 23 media workers being affected. The violence was committed by both law enforcement officers (11 cases) and representatives of opposition forces and their supporters (3 cases).

A few striking facts from the above-mentioned events deserve to be highlighted.

On April 27, 2024, on Ijevan-Kirants road of Armenia’s Tavush Marz, a group of masked policemen stopped the vehicle carrying media professionals, removing them from it. They knocked *NewDay.am* cameraman Janibek Khachatryan to the ground, handcuffed him, attempting to detain him. Multiple alerts indicating that the individual was a media representative covering the ongoing protests alongside his colleagues went unanswered. The cameraman was released shortly after the incident. On the same day, during the dispersal of citizens' protest along the Yerevan-Tbilisi highway near Lori Marz’s Dsegh village, police officers hindered the professional activities of *Oragir.News* representatives covering the event. Reporter Ani Nerkararyan suffered injuries after being pushed down, and cameraman Zaven Ohanyan was forced to cease filming.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Physical violence was also used by the supporters of Bagrat Galstanyan, who led the protest movement. In particular, on April 30, 2024, Davit Levonyan, a reporter of *Civic.am,* was subjected to physical violence near the central building of the National Assembly. Artur Sukoyan, who accompanies NA “Armenia” faction deputy Levon Kocharyan and presents himself as his assistant, approached the journalist, entered into an argument with him, striking him in the face and alleging “blasphemy”. According to Davit Levonyan, Sukoyan's actions were provoked by the journalist’s recent remarks on his personal YouTube channel where he had stated that Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan, the Head of the Diocese of Tavush, was serving Russian interests.[[4]](#footnote-4) Notably, a criminal case was initiated against Sukoyan, which later proceeded to court. Galstanyan, in turn, filed a lawsuit against Davit Levonyan for his political statements. Further details of these court cases are presented in the relevant section of the report.

On the evening of May 5, 2024, *1in.am* commentator Zhirayr Voskanyan was subjected to violence in “1896” restaurant on Tumanyan Street in Yerevan. This incident was also linked Zhirayr Voskanyan’s remarks against the movement.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The violence against media workers peaked on June 12, when as a result of the police using special measures against the protest organized by the “Tavush for the Motherland” movement near the RA National Assembly, along with numerous demonstrators, more than 10 journalists and cameramen carrying out their professional duties at the heart of events, also sustained injuries.[[6]](#footnote-6)Footage from the scene clearly shows stun grenades being also aimed at media representatives. This situation is reminiscent of the targeting of journalists covering the events in Yerevan's Sari Tagh district in July 2016, and the use of unjustified force and persecution against them. As highlighted in the statement released by the CPFE and partner organizations, these developments indicate that the operational methods of the police have seen almost no change, casting serious doubt on the claims about proclaimed reforms.

Over the course of this movement between April and June, the CPFE and its partner journalistic organizations issued a total of 8 joint statements regarding the violations of the rights of media professionals. They voiced deep concern over the ongoing situation and demanded:

* the Ministry of Internal Affairs to intensify efforts with the police personnel, guiding officers to act more professionally, to strictly observe the principle of proportionality when force is necessary, and when dealing with journalists, refrain from hindering their legitimate professional activities, while ensuring their safety;
* state officials and politicians to demonstrate restraint and responsibility in public discourse, displaying tolerance towards media representatives, regardless of the “camp” they may be associated with;
* the ruling force to take measures to ensure journalists’ safety during crisis situations;
* journalists and cameramen to carry out their mission with utmost responsibility and demonstrate conduct befitting their profession, especially during moments of tension, strictly adhering to the norms of journalistic ethics.

In some cases, law enforcement agencies responded to these statements. Specifically, on May 14, the Investigative Committee sent a letter to the CPFE, stating that appropriate actions were being taken regarding cases of violence against media representatives to ensure the objectivity and normal course of the investigation. On May 23, the same body reported that it had duly noted the CPFE and partner organizations’ demand to inform the public about the cases of violence against media representatives and their investigations. However, in line with the established vicious practice, all these investigations largely remain without consequences. The CPFE’s inquiries submitted to the RA Prosecutor's Office show that the proceedings in these cases were either terminated on the grounds of absence of a crime, or no proceedings were initiated from the beginning, or a preliminary investigation is still ongoing.

There were also external reactions to the events of that period. On May 22, Reporters Without Borders issued a press release regarding the pressure and violence used against journalists by the police during the protests. The organization pointed out that media representatives were sometimes targeted by the police, as well as attacked by politicians who are supposed to guarantee press freedom. They called on the Armenian authorities “to end this violence at once and to combat impunity by carrying out independent and transparent investigations into the attacks that have taken place.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

Regarding the June 12 clashes between protesters and the police near the parliament, the US Embassy in Armenia, in turn, issued a statement urging participants to responsibly exercise their right to freedom of assembly by eschewing violence. “The democratic process is the way to resolve political disputes. We also encourage law enforcement authorities to maintain order in a manner that upholds citizens' rights to freedom of expression and assembly, and to investigate any incidents in which procedures may have been violated, including with regards to journalists covering demonstrations,”[[8]](#footnote-8) the statement read.

Throughout the year, media and individual journalists, among other pressures, were not spared from indecent treatment, threats, insults, and obstructions to their legitimate professional activities. Moreover, these actions were carried out by representatives of both the government and opposition forces. The recorded number of cases of pressure in 2024 stands at **71**. Below are some examples of these cases.

On March 5, 2024, as Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan visited Vazgen Sargsyan’s grave at Yerablur Military Pantheon, journalists and cameramen in the area were prohibited from covering the ceremony. Officers from the State Protection Service together with the police pushed media representatives away, arguing that they lacked accreditation for event coverage.[[9]](#footnote-9) Even filming from a distance was prohibited. In this regard, 10 journalistic organizations issued a statement, calling on the RA Government Staff to provide a public explanation regarding the unjustified ban and guarantee that such practices would not recur in the future, as well as create favorable conditions for journalists when organizing any official event of public interest, which is subject to media coverage.[[10]](#footnote-10)

On March 15, the Department for Information and Public Relations at the Office of the RA Prime Minister issued a response to this statement, noting that the event was of a ceremonial nature, and, therefore, the media had not been communicated. Thus, the reasoning put forward by the law enforcement agencies—that the coverage ban was due to the journalists' lack of accreditation, which had not initially been planned and organized—was officially refuted.

On April 16, 2024, Hripsimeh Jebejyan, a correspondent of *Aravot* daily and *aravot.am,* engaged in a conversation with Khachatur Sukiasyan, a deputy from the “Civil Contract” faction in the National Assembly, seeking his comments on various issues. This resulted in the latter accusing the journalist and the media, demonstrating disrespectful behavior. This incident further highlights the serious issues in the relationship between National Assembly deputies and journalists, once again pointing to the necessity for the establishment of the NA Ethics Committee and structured work.[[11]](#footnote-11)

The conduct of Hovik Aghazaryan, a deputy from the NA “Civil Contract” faction, was also sharply criticized by journalistic organizations. On October 15, 2024, in the RA National Assembly, Hovik Aghazaryan came across Knar Manukyan, a correspondent of *Zhoghovurd* daily and *Armlur.am* accredited in the parliament. During their encounter, Aghazaryan expressed dissatisfaction with the interview she had published featuring him and insulted her, calling the journalist a “scoundrel”, “disgusting” and using hate speech.[[12]](#footnote-12)

NA Speaker Alen Simonyan and Yerevan Mayor Tigran Avinyan made efforts to exert pressure on the media through their public speeches and later also through lawsuits. Thus, on July 12, Alen Simonyan, in a Facebook post, accused the editorial team of *Zhoghovurd* daily and Taguhi Tovmasyan, an opposition member of the National Assembly associated with the media's activities, of defaming him. “Unfortunately, it has become a frequent occurrence when journalists abandon their professional role, turning into waiters and serving the orders they are given. Here, Taguhi, who gave her employees the “ATTACK!” command against me, is ignorantly seeking any connection to me wherever possible: they regularly inquire about my employees’ comings and goings, and even dig up dirt...”[[13]](#footnote-13) Later, on July 24, on the same occasion, the official filed a lawsuit against *Zhoghovurd* daily, demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay 2 million AMD in compensation.

Following this, on October 31, a scandalous clash occurred between NA Speaker Alen Simonyan and Vahe Makaryan: their conversation started on a humorous note. However, it soon escalated into mutual accusations, and eventually into a verbal altercation with street-like expressions. Security officers intervened to stop the conflict. As a result, the journalist’s accreditation was revoked.

Yerevan Mayor Tigran Avinyan also stood out for his publicly disrespectful attitude and intolerance towards media. On December 18, during a debate with former Mayor Hayk Marutyan on *Factor TV,* he stated that Armenian media has turned into a big garbage dump. He made this comment after Marutyan recalled *Civilnet.am’s* investigative publication about possible corruption deals involving Avinyan. The official later filed a lawsuit against the media.

Over the past two years, Alen Simonyan and Tigran Avinyan have filed 11 lawsuits against media, with 5 lawsuits from Simonyan and 6 from Avinyan. Moreover, some of these lawsuits included large monetary compensation demands, which is viewed as additional pressure on the editorial offices.

Opposition figures also stood out for their disrespectful and discriminatory attitude toward journalists. Thus, on September 9, in the National Assembly, opposition deputy Ishkhan Saghatelyan displayed an aggressive attitude and made insulting remarks in response to the questions of *Civic.am* news website's reporter Davit Levonyan, specifically saying: “Every time you publish something stupid and seek someone's comment,” “… You are lying: if I sue you, you along with your owners, team, and patrons will face judgment for the next 400 years.” Later, on September 16, in the National Assembly, Gegham Manukyan, a member of Armeniafaction, stated in response to Davit Levonyan's question that the faction would not answer “libelous” questions.

We believe that this kind of discriminatory attitude towards media and journalists, especially within the country's legislative body, does not contribute to the development of civilized relations between officials and journalists and the establishment of healthy discussions on topics of public concern.

This image reflects the polarization of the media. Media have essentially become a part of the political system, and it is no coincidence that representatives and supporters of different parties and alliances divide them into friends and foes, treating them accordingly.

The polarization of the media was also highlighted in the US Department of State “Armenia 2023 Human Rights Report,”[[14]](#footnote-14) released on April 23. The report states that while individual citizens and the media in Armenia enjoy the right to freedom of speech and are free to criticize the government, the polarization and financial viability of the media remain a hindrance to press freedom. The report highlights that private individuals or groups reportedly tied to former authorities or parliamentary opposition parties continued to hold ownership stakes in many broadcast media organizations and newspapers, which tended to reflect the political leanings and financial interests of their proprietors. Throughout the year, government authorities expanded their financial investments in media outlets, exacerbating polarization.

The media environment, according to Amnesty International report released on April 24, remained largely free and pluralistic, but was deeply polarized. International observers also reported an unprecedented level of disinformation and hate speech.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Another international organization, Reporters Without Borders, in its annual report published on May 3[[16]](#footnote-16), apart from the issue of media polarization, highlighted that in Armenia “journalists are often subjected to pressure, insults and violence by both ruling party officials and opposition politicians, as well as their supporters – whether in Parliament, in the street, or on social media. In general, violence against journalists goes unpunished.” According to the report, the majority of media are controlled by people close to political movements or are supported by influential public figures, and the advertising market remains under-developed, which limits the financial independence of privately owned media. 

According to Reporters Without Borders, overall, as a profession, journalism is disparaged and subject to especially troubling hate speech. The formation of pluralistic environment stands out as one of key accomplishments, due to which Armenia improved its position in the press freedom index by 6 positions: in 2023, Armenia ranked 49th out of 180 countries, while in 2024, it ranked 43rd. However, the organization underlines that the legal framework that regulates the sector does not sufficiently protect freedom of the press, nor does it follow European standards.

To improve the situation, the CPFE and its partner journalistic organizations view the modernization of media legislation as a necessary step. In pursuit of this goal, a tripartite Memorandum[[17]](#footnote-17) on implementing reforms in the field was signed in 2022 between these organizations, the NA relevant committee, and the Ministry of Justice. A Concept is currently under development, whose principles and approaches will serve as a foundation for drafting laws that comply with modern international standards. Efforts in this direction continued in 2024. In particular, the Concept’s chapters related to the establishment and development of media self-regulation system were drafted. These chapters also covered updated definitions of the terms of “journalist” and “media” in today’s environment, transparency of media ownership and financial sources, reforms in the Public Television and Radio Company, development of freedom of information, etc. They are currently under discussion.

The draft to amend and supplement the Law “On Mass Communication,” developed through a partnership involving the previously mentioned journalistic organizations, the relevant parliamentary committee, the Ministry of Justice, and Freedom House, is also in line with the objectives of these ongoing processes.

Throughout 2024, the document was discussed not only within expert circles, but also during parliamentary hearings held on April 29. The draft was also sent to the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe for their review. In September, the Commission representatives arrived in Yerevan, where they held discussions with legislative, executive authorities, as well as journalistic organizations, and provided their conclusion on October 14. The draft law is currently being revised based on the recommendations from the Commission. Notably, the draft law also suggests amendments to Article 1087.1 of the Civil Code, which concerns defamation and insult. The goal of these changes is facilitating the use of extrajudicial bodies for resolving disputes and overcoming barriers before resorting to lawsuits against journalists and/or media in courts.

One of the peculiarities of 2024 was the increase in the number of court cases filed under the aforementioned Article 1087.1 compared to 2023: while in 2023 there were 34 cases, in 2024, the number grew to 43. Nevertheless, throughout the year, a trend towards resolving information disputes out of court through the Media Ethics Observatory and the Information Disputes Council was observed among politicians, primarily those from the ruling force. The aim of the aforementioned legislative amendments is to establish a favorable legal framework for these specific solutions. This will help both potential plaintiffs and media and journalists to avoid legal complications, significantly reduce the caseload of courts, and most importantly, prevent such a frequent use of judicial mechanisms to exert additional pressure on the media, including financial pressure.

The year under review was also problematic in terms of violations of the right to receive and disseminate information. When responding to journalists' inquiries, state institutions often without justifiable reason compelled them to submit their inquiries in writing, and frequently delayed the provision of the requested information. In 11 cases, a 30-day extension was required, yet no proper substantiation was given for the extra work needed for the response. In 5 cases, the provision of information was rejected at the end of that period, while in the remaining cases, the responses were incomplete, delayed, and sometimes no longer relevant. Violation of the deadlines for providing information prescribed by law (23 cases), vague, incomplete responses to inquiries without proper references (36 cases) continue to be widespread issues. References to state or other types of secrets and the protection of personal data are abused, under the pretext of which information subject to publication is not provided (12 cases). During the year, 4 lawsuits (all by *Fip.am*) were filed with the administrative court, with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the relevant body to provide an exhaustive response to the inquiry.

A glaring example of state bodies’ failure to provide information of public significance to the media is the way the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Health artificially delayed, or initially even avoided providing clear answers to written inquiries about the use of special means —specifically “Zarya-3” stun grenade—against protesters at the intersection of Baghramyan-Demirchyan streets in Yerevan on June 12. The Ministry of Internal Affairs urged journalists to reach out to the investigative bodies, even though those questions were related to the ministry’s actions and authority. Later, the media revealed that earlier decisions or directives issued by the ministries’ leadership regarding the use of special means, had been revised after the aforementioned events to establish legal foundations for the actions of June 12. Thus, the *Fact Investigation Platform (Fip.am)* discovered that on July 12, exactly one month after the events of June 12, Minister of Internal Affairs Vahe Ghazaryan made a change in IA Minister’s order No. 48-L, and information concerning the presence, types and quantities of special means in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, including details related to “Zarya-3” was rendered confidential. In turn, Health Minister Anahit Avanesyan, 14 days after the incident, modified a decision defining the acceptable criteria for using special means against individuals, thereby authorizing “Zarya-3,” which had long been prohibited.

Journalists also encountered difficulties in obtaining information related to another sensitive topic—the border village of Kirants in Tavush Marz. Meanwhile, it is the border demarcation running through this area that sparked protests.

In terms of protecting the right to receive and disseminate information, the RA Government’s response to last year’s CPFE report was important. Following the report’s release, a meeting was held on February 7, initiated by Arayik Harutyunyan, the Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister, and attended by representatives of state bodies, as well as heads of journalistic and human rights organizations. A range of issues were discussed, the resolution of which could facilitate access to official data. However, according to the CPFE monitoring findings, while the situation improved significantly during the 2nd quarter of the year, there was a setback again later. A zigzag pattern of violations was observed throughout the year, with the following figures recorded by quarters: 41, 19, 40 and 22 cases.

To improve public access to information from state bodies through digital technologies, the authorities proposed legislative amendments throughout the year, which, however, raised numerous concerns among civil society organizations. In particular, the new draft law “On Freedom of Information” authored by the RA Ministry of High-Tech Industry sparked intense debates and faced criticism by journalistic and human rights NGOs. As per the official interpretation, the adoption of the draft was supposed to contribute to ensuring a unified policy in the field and modernizing the state information system, creating an opportunity for the digital transformation of governance, the economy and the society. Meanwhile, journalistic and human rights organizations argued that alongside promoting the use of new information technologies through legislation, an attempt was made to introduce legal regulations that would create unjustified restrictions and obstacles in accessing official data from state bodies.

As a result of discussions, including a meeting held at the RA Government, attended by officials of state bodies and experts from civil society organizations, the Ministry of High-Tech Industry reassessed its approach and prepared a new draft law “On Public Information,” along with a package of amendments and supplements to a number of related laws, including the Law “On Freedom of Information”.[[18]](#footnote-18) Experts see serious problems here too. According to the Freedom of Information Center of Armenia, the main issue revolves around the role of the authorized body for public information. FOICA suggests a fundamental reassessment of the body’s powers, since the envisaged supervisory functions carry a risk of unlawful interference with the right to freedom of information. Notably, the authorized body, according to the draft, will operate under the supervision of the HTI Ministry, via the Information Systems Agency of Armenia.

Journalistic and human rights organizations remain concerned about the introduction of the concept of “official information of limited distribution” in the freedom of information legislation and its potential to be used as grounds for denying official data requests. As highlighted in previous reports, almost any document circulating within a state body could fall under this classification.

During the year, there were new developments in the process of protecting the rights of journalists that were subjected to violence during the “Electric Yerevan” events of June 2015. As a reminder, on March 4, 2019 the Special Investigative Service suspended the case of “Electric Yerevan” on grounds that “the individual to be charged was not identified.” On April 2 of the same year, three of the injured journalists, Hakob Karapetyan, Gevorg Ghazaryan and Tehmineh Yenokyan, who had approached the CPFE for legal support, filed a complaint against the SIS decision to the RA Prosecutor's Office, which on April 15 annulled the decision and instructed to restart the preliminary investigation. The case saw a second suspension in 2020, leading the affected journalists, again with the CPFE’s backing, to submit an appeal to the Prosecutor’s Office. Upon receiving a rejection, they proceeded to take their appeal to the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan. On January 22, 2021, the latter upheld the complaint, which was appealed by the Prosecutor's Office. The Court of Appeal upheld the appeal by the Prosecutor's Office, and the injured journalists filed a further appeal with the Court of Cassation, which ultimately rejected it. Hence, with domestic options for defending the victims' rights exhausted, materials were prepared to take the case to international courts. Tehmineh Yenokyan chose to submit her case to the European Court, while Hakob Karapetyan and Gevorg Ghazaryan opted to appeal to the UN Human Rights Committee. And on August 15, 2024, the UN Human Rights Committee requested a confirmation from the CPFE on whether it still insisted that the rights of the injured journalists be protected. Upon, naturally, receiving a positive response, on September 4, the UN body requested the English translation of the entire case, which was provided. These developments signal hope that the brutalities committed against journalists nearly 10 years ago will receive a legal assessment from the aforementioned international structure.

One of the notable events in the media sector in 2024 was the Constitutional Court’s decision on several legislative provisions regulating the issues of insult and defamation. On April 25, the Constitutional Court accepted for proceedings the application submitted by Artak Zeynalyan, former Minister of Justice. In his application, Zeynalyan questioned the constitutionality of Article 1087.1, paragraph 8 (pecuniary and non-pecuniary compensation for defamation and insult) of the Civil Code and paragraph 2 of Article 3 (the concept of mass media) of the Law “On Mass Communication.” The applicant argued that the articles were controversial from the point of view of the Constitution: firstly, the Civil Code does not envisage a procedure and requirement for removing defamatory content from a social platform account and publishing a refutation in the same platform; secondly, Article 3 of the Law “On Mass Communication” does not consider a social media account as a medium of information.

On October 1, the Constitutional Court issued its judicial act, determining that the disputed provision contradicted the Constitution: “Paragraph 8 of Article 1087.1 of the RA Civil Code, insofar as it fails to allow the affected party to refute or respond to defamatory content, remove it, or provide another opportunity equivalent to the aforementioned regulations, in cases where defamation is spread on the Internet by a non-media actor, shall be recognized as contradicting Article 31 (in conjunction with Article 75) of the Constitution and invalid.”[[19]](#footnote-19)

Another significant event related to the media sector was the decision by the relevant state bodies to block the programs “Evening with Vladimir Solovyov” and “Sunday Evening with Vladimir Solovyov” of *RTR-Planeta* TV channel broadcast in the public multiplex in Armenia. This action was carried out starting from March 29, based on repeated violations of Articles 5 and 6 of the Agreement “On Cooperation in Mass Telecommunications between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the Government of the Russian Federation” (use of offensive language, hate speech and hostile rhetoric about states, peoples, and national values), as documented by the Commission on Television and Radio.[[20]](#footnote-20)

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

We present the violations of the rights of journalists and media in 2024 according to the following classification by the CPFE:

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

The CPFE’s classification is somewhat conditional. In particular, sometimes hindrances to the access and dissemination of information are accompanied by violence against journalists. These incidents are attributed to the type of violation that the authors of the report find to be the closest match. Nonetheless, the classification used allows for a more streamlined and highlighted portrayal of the violations of journalists’ and media rights.

The relevant sections of the report provide details on the violations of the rights of journalists and media in 2024, along with updates on previous incidents.

***In total, there were 208 reported cases of various violations of journalists' and media rights in 2024. Among these, 15 are cases of physical violence, 71 are cases of various pressures, and 122 involve violations of the right to receive and disseminate information.***

The table below presents these data, also in comparison with the indicators of the previous year.

**Quantitative Data on Violations per Quarter in 2024**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Types of violations | 1st Quarter | 2nd Quarter | 3rd Quarter | 4th Quarter | Total |
| Physical violence against journalists | **0** | **14**  (23 injured) | **0** | **1** | **15** (24 injured) |
| Pressure on media and their personnel | **17** | **26** | **11** | **17** | **71** |
| Violations of the right to receive and disseminate information | **41** | **19** | **40** | **22** | **122** |

**Quantitative Data on Violations in 2023 and 2024**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Types of violations | 2023 | 2024 |
| Physical violence against journalists | **6** | **15** |
| Pressure on media and their personnel | **60** | **71** |
| Violations of the right to receive and disseminate information | **134** | **122** |

**Court Cases against Media and Journalists in 2024**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Types of court cases | 1st Quarter | 2nd Quarter | 3rd Quarter | 4th Quarter | Total |
| On the grounds of insult and defamation | 12 | 17 | 6 | 8 | 43 |
| Economic and other disputes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**Court Cases Filed in 2023 and 2024**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Types of court cases | 2023 | 2024 |
| On the grounds of insult and defamation | **34** | **43** |
| Economic and other disputes | **2** | 0 |

Similar to previous reports, the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression emphasizes that the data in the tables may not be comprehensive and do not claim absolute accuracy. Media representatives sometimes find it unnecessary to publicize facts about impediments to their professional activities, ignore various threats, or opt to resolve problems and overcome illegal restrictions on their own. Therefore, the CPFE is convinced that the actual number of obstructions is higher than what is presented in this report. Outlined below are the most significant cases.

1. ***Physical Violence against Journalists***

*In 2024, 15 cases of physical violence against media professionals were documented, with 24 injured. Below we present these cases along with the developments related to the past occurrences of violence in chronological order.*

**On January 5**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *168.am news website correspondent Ani Keshishyan and Public Radio correspondent Liana Yeghiazaryan and other citizens v. former Commander of the RA Police Troops Levon Yeranosyan*.

As a reminder, Levon Yeranosyan faced charges for intentionally taking actions beyond his authority through the use of special measures during the events taking place in Yerevan throughout the 2018 revolution, which caused significant damage to the rights of citizens, including the aforementioned journalists, and brought about severe consequences due to negligence. (For details see the CPFE’s annual reports for 2018-2024, in the *Reports* section on khosq.am).

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on January 12 and 19, February 2, 23 and 29, March 1, 7, 15, 22 and 29, April 12, 26, May 2 and 24. By the verdict issued on June 3, Levon Yeranosyan was found guilty but released from serving his sentence on the basis of amnesty and the statute of limitations.

On August 12, an appeal was filed against this ruling with the Anti-Corruption Court of Appeal, seeking Levon Yeranosyan’s acquittal and the initiation of a new trial in the court of first instance. On September 13, the Criminal Court of Appeal also received an appeal against the ruling of the court of first instance, filed by injured citizen Ara Gharagyozyan, who considered Yeranosyan’s release from serving his sentence to be unacceptable. Hearings on this appeal were held on November 14 and December 6, with the next one scheduled for January 17, 2025.

**On January 17**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan continued the trial regarding the violence against Artak Khulyan, a correspondent of *Shantnews.am*, and Hovhannes Sargsyan, a cameraman of *Factor.am*.

As a reminder, the criminal case is related to the violence that occurred during the days of the April Revolution in 2018, including against media representatives. It was sent to the court with indictments for 8 persons. The criminal prosecution on some episodes of those events was terminated on the grounds of expiration of the statute of limitations.(For details see the CPFE’s annual and quarterly reports for 2018-2024 in the *Reports* section on khosq.am).

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on February 12, April 1, May 14, June 11, 21, 28, August 16, 23, 30, September 13, November 28, December 11, 17, with the next one scheduled for January 29, 2025.

**On April 23**, in Armenia’s Tavush Marz, clashes erupted between the citizens who deemed the process of border demarcation with Azerbaijan unacceptable and staged a protest on the Bagratashen-Ayrum road and the police. During this turmoil, the police obstructed the legitimate professional activities of Garik Melkonyan, an employee of Aravot daily.[[21]](#footnote-21) In particular, upon noticing that their actions were being filmed, the law-enforcement officers approached the media representative, and one of them hit Garik Melkonyan’s hand causing his phone to fall and break. Journalistic organizations issued a statement regarding the incident.[[22]](#footnote-22) In response to the inquiry submitted by the CPFE, the Prosecutor's Office informed that no criminal proceedings had been initiated in connection with the incident.

**On April 27**, on Ijevan-Kirants road of Armenia’s Tavush Marz, a group of masked policemen stopped the vehicle carrying media professionals, removing them from it. They knocked *NewDay.am* cameraman Janibek Khachatryan to the ground, handcuffed him, attempting to detain him.[[23]](#footnote-23) Multiple alerts indicating that the individual was a media representative covering the ongoing protests alongside his colleagues went unanswered. The cameraman was released shortly after the incident.

In response to the inquiry submitted by the CPFE, the Prosecutor's Office informed that criminal proceedings had been initiated on June 4 under Article 237 (3) *(Obstruction of legitimate professional activities of journalists through the use of violence)* and Article 441 (2.1) *(Abuse of governmental or official authority or influence derived therefrom by an official, or acting beyond the scope of their authority, committed through the use of violence or the threat thereof)* of the RA Criminal Code. The cameraman was recognized as a victim, and the preliminary investigation remains ongoing, with necessary procedural and evidentiary actions being carried out.

The following day, **on April 28**, during the dispersal of citizens' protest along the Yerevan-Tbilisi highway near Lori Marz’s Dsegh village, police officers hindered the professional activities of *Oragir.News* representatives covering the event. Reporter Ani Nerkararyan was pushed to the ground.[[24]](#footnote-24) The Prosecutor's Office informed the CPFE that no criminal proceedings had been initiated regarding the incident.

**On April 30,** Artur Sukoyan who accompanies NA Deputy Levon Kocharyan and presents himself as his assistant, near the central building of the National Assembly, hit *Civic.am* correspondent Davit Levonyan in the face, accusing him of “blasphemy”.[[25]](#footnote-25) The deputy’s assistant referred to the journalist’s viewpoint shared several days earlier on his personal YouTube channel, where he had stated that Bishop Bagrat Galstanyan, the head of the Diocese of Tavush, was serving Russian interests[[26]](#footnote-26).

Based on the facts obtained, criminal prosecution was initiated against Artur Sukoyan under Article 237 (3) of the RA Criminal Code *(Obstruction of legitimate professional activities of journalists through the use of violence).* On May 1, the deputy's assistant was arrested on that charge. In response to the CPFE’s inquiry, the RA Prosecutor’s Office reported that on June 13, the criminal proceedings, along with the indictment, had been forwarded to the court. Artur Sukoyan faced charges for obstructing journalist David Levonyan's legitimate professional activities through the use of violence, forcing him to refrain from disseminating information. On June 17, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan accepted the case for proceedings. On June 27, the court decided to change the preventive measure of house arrest against the accused, Artur Sukoyan, introducing administrative supervision instead. Under this decision, he was prohibited from changing his place of residence without the permission of the authority dealing with the case, and from having any contact with the victim, David Levonyan, and the witness, Petros Petrosyan.

Court hearings in the case were held on September 5, October 8, and November 27. At the December 25 hearing, the court granted a motion by Sukoyan's defense attorney to lift administrative supervision. The next hearing was scheduled for March 20, 2025.

On the evening of **May 5**, *1in.am* commentator Zhirayr Voskanyan was subjected to violence in “1896” restaurant on Tumanyan Street in Yerevan. According to the journalist, blogger Mika Badalyan and several companions seated at his table approached him, displayed indecent behavior and provoked a conflict. When Zhirayr Voskanyan alerted the police, right in front of them, individuals from that group hit Voskanyan several times and snatched the phone from his hand. The brawl continued in the street. A criminal case was initiated in connection with the incident. In the following days, Mika Badalyan, while being on the wanted list, sent threats and insults to Zhirayr Voskanyan via social networks. He was detained on May 9.

Criminal proceedings were initiated by the Investigative Division of Yerevan Kentron and Nork-Marash Administrative Districts of the RA Investigative Committee under Article 297 (2.1) (group hooliganism) and Article 460 (1) (acts of arbitrariness). Zhirayr Voskanyan was recognized as a victim. In response to the CPFE’s inquiry, the RA Prosecutor’s Office reported that measures were being taken within the proceedings to clarify the circumstances of the incident and legally assess the actions of those involved. The preliminary investigation remains ongoing.

**On May 9**, during the march on Amiryan Street in Yerevan, the supporters of Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan, leading the “Tavush for the Motherland” initiative, snatched the camera from Vahe Aghryan, the cameraman of *Xosnak.am* news website. They removed the chip, threw the device on the ground, and then left using offensive language. Journalistic organizations issued a statement regarding the incident.[[27]](#footnote-27) As reported by the RA Investigative Committee, criminal proceedings were initiated on the incident under Article 237 (1) of the RA Criminal Code *(Forcing a journalist to disseminate or refrain from disseminating information or otherwise obstructing their legitimate professional activities)*. In response to the CPFE's inquiry, the RA Prosecutor's Office stated that the preliminary investigation was ongoing, with necessary procedural and evidentiary actions being carried out.

**On** **May 13**, officers of the Police Special Forces used force against journalists covering protests in Yerevan. The victims of these actions were *24news.am* news website journalist Mary Manukyan and *ABCmedia.am* cameraman Mher Davtyan. First, one of the police officers pushed the cameraman, and after noticing that he had fallen down the stairs, he walked away.[[28]](#footnote-28) Later, the police used force against *24news.am* journalist Mary Manukyan, as a result of which she lost consciousness[[29]](#footnote-29) and, after receiving first aid, was hospitalized. In response to the CPFE’s inquiry, the Prosecutor’s Office reported that on May 17, the Department for Investigating Crimes of Torture and Abuse or Excess of Authority by Officials through Violence under the General Department for Investigation of Particularly Important Cases of the RA Investigative Committee initiated criminal proceedings under Article 441 (2.1) of the RA Criminal Code *(Abuse of governmental or official authority or influence derived therefrom by an official, or acting beyond the scope of their authority, committed through the use of violence or the threat thereof).* Mary Manukyan was recognized as a victim, and a preliminary investigation was carried out. On November 12, the proceedings in the case were discontinued under Article 13 (1.3) of the RA Criminal Procedure Code: the criminal prosecution against the accused was terminated, and all options for continuing the proceedings were exhausted.

**On May 14**, during disobedience actions in Yerevan, a police car hit *Mediahub.am* journalist Nareh Gevorgyan while she was on the pedestrian crossing at the junction of Abovyan Street and Republic Square.[[30]](#footnote-30) One of the police officers escorted the journalist out of the area. She suffered a leg injury, underwent examination at a medical center, and was discharged. The Prosecutor’s Office reported that with regard to the incident, the Traffic Crimes Investigation Division at the Yerevan Investigative Department of the RA Investigative Committee had initiated criminal proceedings on May 14, under Article 342 (1) of the RA Criminal Code *(Violation of a requirement intended to ensure road traffic safety or a safety rule for road traffic or vehicle operation by an individual driving a car or other mechanical vehicle, negligently causing serious or moderate harm to human health).*

As reported by the RA Prosecutor’s Office, Nareh Gevorgyan was recognized as a victim and provided clarifications regarding the incident. A forensic examination was ordered, and the conclusion indicated that no bodily injuries were found. In light of this, the criminal proceedings were discontinued on the grounds of the absence of a crime.

**On May 15**, during police actions to disperse a protest in Yerevan, a bus hit Ani Nerkararyan, a journalist of *Oragir.News* website, who was covering the events.

In response to the CPFE’s inquiry, the RA Prosecutor’s Office reported that no criminal proceedings had been initiated regarding the incident.

**On May 25**, security officers dragged Ani Gevorgyan, the editor of *Newday.am* news website, out of the school premises of Baghanis community of the RA Tavush Marz, where Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan was supposed to meet with residents.[[31]](#footnote-31) The journalist highlighted that by using force, the security officers prevented her from asking the Prime Minister a possible question. In response to the CPFE’s inquiry, the RA Prosecutor’s Office reported that no criminal proceedings had been initiated regarding the incident.   
  
**On May 27**, during protests organized by the opposition in Yerevan, officers of the Police Special Forces hit and threw to the ground Paruyr Nersisyan, a cameraman of *Yerkir.am* news website, who was filming on his phone their actions to disperse the demonstration by force. The video shows the cameraman wearing his badge issued by the editorial office.[[32]](#footnote-32)

In response to the CPFE’s inquiry, the RA Prosecutor’s Office reported that no criminal proceedings had been initiated regarding the incident.

**On June 12**, as a result of the police using special means against the protest organized by the “Tavush for the Motherland” movement near the RA National Assembly, along with numerous demonstrators, journalists and cameramen carrying out their professional duties at the heart of events also sustained injuries.

Thus, ***News.am* cameraman Vazgen Yetumyan, *Armlur.am* cameraman Hovsep Hovsepyan, *CivilNet* cameraman Narek Hayryan, *ABC Media* correspondents Naneh Hayrapetyan and Aghvan Asoyan, cameramen Edik Malakyan and Arman Gharibyan, *Mediahub.am* correspondent Nareh Gevorgyan, *AlphaNews* correspondent Arpineh Baghdasaryan and cameraman Hovhannes Hakobyan** were injured from the explosions of stun grenades and the resulting stampede.

During the clashes, the equipment of *Pastinfo, PARA TV, Sputnik Armenia* and other media was damaged or lost, including live broadcast devices, cameras and microphones.

In response to the CPFE’s inquiries, the RA Prosecutor’s Office reported that on June 14, the RA Investigative Committee had initiated criminal proceedings under points 1, 3 and 4 of Article 441 (2) of the RA Criminal Code *(Abuse of governmental or official authority or influence derived therefrom by an official, or acting beyond the scope of their authority, committed through the use of violence or the threat thereof; committed through the use of a weapon or special means; committed by a group of officials by prior agreement).* Media representatives were questioned, were recognized as victims, and a forensic examination was conducted. The preliminary investigation remains ongoing, with procedural and evidentiary actions being carried out.

**On June 12**, during a National Assembly session, when an argument broke out between representatives of the government and the opposition during a Q&A with the Prime Minister, security officers forcibly removed several journalists from the press box and attempted to do the same to others, barring them from carrying out their professional duties, namely, filming what was happening in the NA session hall. It was only thanks to their relentless demands and assertion of their rights that the journalists managed to stay in the press area and continue their work.

**On November 14**, Lusineh Shahverdyan, a correspondent of *Hraparak* daily, tried to get a comment from Srbuhi Galyan, the RA Minister of Justice. At that moment, an officer of the State Protection Service present at the scene, deciding that the official did not want to continue the exchange, grabbed the journalist’s arm and pulled her aside, resulting in a bruise left on Lusine Shahverdyan’s arm. The incident was captured on video and is available on the Internet. Journalistic organizations issued a statement regarding the incident.[[33]](#footnote-33)

***2․ Pressure on Media and Their Personnel***

*In 2024, there were* ***71*** *recorded cases of various forms of pressure on media and their personnel. Each of these cases is presented in the following subsection of the report, along with the developments and outcomes related to similar facts from previous years, all listed in chronological order.*

**On January 8**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan ruled to reject the lawsuit filed by Grisha Davtyan, a former employee of the Compulsory Enforcement Service, against the *Investigative Journalists NGO* and journalists Anya Sarkisova, Saro Baghdasaryan, and Grisha Balasanyan, with the plaintiff demanding to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation.

The lawsuit filed on January 3, 2023 was caused by a piece titled “Borrower Cheated in the Bank, Fired Compulsory Enforcement Service Employee Bought His House,” which was published on the NGO’s *Hetq.am* website on December 3, 2022.[[34]](#footnote-34)

In its ruling, the court highlighted that the plaintiff had not attended any of the hearings throughout the examination of the case and had not provided arguments refuting the cited facts that were subject to proof. Furthermore, the court concluded that the authors of the disputed piece had not committed any violations and had not attributed any actions to an individual or a state body beyond what was reflected in the documents under review. Additionally, it was not determined that any damage had been inflicted upon the plaintiff.

The judicial act was not appealed and entered into legal force.

**On January 9**, Simon Zakharov, a member of Alaverdi Council of Elders, filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *ABC Media Ltd.,* demanding to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation. The lawsuit was caused by a report titled “Simon Zakharov: the ‘Éminence Grise’ of Alaverdi,” published on *ABCmedia.am* on December 13, 2023. According to the report, Zakharov took control of the activities of the Council of Elders, he had a background of lathe operation and after a year of training, performed surgeries at Alaverdi Medical Center. The report further claimed that in 2014 he had been able to purchase a plot of land along the river in the city for only 13 thousand AMD, by the decision of the Council of Elders.[[35]](#footnote-35) On January 22, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings.

Court hearings in the case were held on March 18, May 27, July 3, and October 15. On November 4, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit. On December 11, the plaintiff filed an appeal with the appellate court.

**On January 9**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan returned the lawsuit filed by the *Armenian National Agrarian University Foundation* against *Hraparak Daily Ltd.* due to deficiencies in the documents. In the lawsuit, the plaintiff demanded to oblige the defendant to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation.

The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “Electoral Chaos at Agrarian University,”[[36]](#footnote-36) published on November 22, 2023 in *Hraparak* daily and on the eponymous website. In the piece, referring to the upcoming rector's elections at the university, the periodical specifically noted that a forgery had been committed, stating that “...In fact, no candidacy was submitted for the rector position; yesterday, the documents of Vice-Rector Hrachik Zakoyan, a close friend of acting Rector Vardan Urutyan, were submitted through backdating.” The plaintiff viewed this information as defamation.

The lawsuit was refiled on January 26, and accepted for proceedings on February 7. Hearings were held on April 26, August 19, September 6, 11, 25, and November 26, with the next one scheduled for January 13, 2025.

**On January 9,** the Civil Court of Appeal upheld the complaint filed by the defendant in the case of *citizen Arusyak Mkrtchyan v. Zhoghovurd Daily Editorial Office Ltd.*, challenging the verdict of the court of first instance, which had partially upheld the lawsuit.

As a reminder, the lawsuit, with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and compensate the damage, filed on August 12, 2019, was caused by an article titled “A DJ in Healthcare Sector: Around $20,000 to the Minister's Acquaintance,” which was published on July 12 on *Zhoghovurd Daily Editorial Office Ltd.’s Armlur.am* website.[[37]](#footnote-37) By the ruling of December 21, 2022, the media was obliged to refute the defamatory information and pay 150 thousand AMD as attorney's fees.

The appellate court ruled to modify the verdict and reject the lawsuit. The case was moved to the court archive.

**On January 9,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Syunik Marz (based in Meghri) partially upheld the lawsuit filed by investigator Narek Abgaryan against former Mayor of Meghri Arshavir Hovhannisyan (with *Syunyats Ashkhar Ltd.,* the founder of *Syunyats Yerkir* newspaper, involved as a third party).

The lawsuit, with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and compensate the damage caused to his honor and dignity, was filed on July 16, 2019. It was triggered by the remarks made by Arshavir Hovhannisyan about Narek Abgaryan during a press conference, which were later published on June 16 in *Syunyats Yerkir* provincial newspaper. Specifically, among the remarks in question were: “nonsense,” “smarty pants,” “the investigator didn't get,” “look at how my investigator has turned into a big shot,” “neither do the parents have any influence.”

By the court’s ruling, Arshavir Hovhannisyan was obligated to hold a press conference at his own expense in the press room of *Syunyats Yerkir* newspaper’s editorial office and publicly refute the defamatory remarks made about Narek Abgaryan. Additionally, he was ordered to pay the plaintiff 250 thousand AMD as compensation for defamation and 100 thousand AMD as reasonable attorney’s fee.

The judicial act entered into legal force.

**On January 9,** a replacement was made due to the judge's recusal, and on February 6, the Civil Court of Appeal accepted the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *Alvina Gyulumyan, a former member of the Constitutional Court, v. Dareskizb Ltd., the founder of Haykakan Zhamanak daily*.

As a reminder, the lawsuit, filed on August 22, 2018, with the plaintiff demanding a refutation of defamation and compensation, was caused by an article in the daily alleging that during her time representing Armenia as a judge at the European Court of Human Rights, Gyulumyan did not spare any effort to delay the investigation of one of the cases in relation to the March 1, 2008 events in Yerevan. The first instance court had rejected Alvina Gyulumyan’s lawsuit on December 6, 2019 on the grounds of the application of the statute of limitations. The plaintiff had filed an appeal on December 30, which had been upheld, and the case had been remanded to the same court for a new trial. On December 5, 2023, the court ruled to leave the lawsuit without examination, because the plaintiff, despite being notified, had failed to attend two consecutive court hearings. On December 27, the plaintiff appealed this decision in the Court of Appeal.

On March 11, 2024, there was another replacement of the judge, and on March 12, the appeal was accepted for new proceedings. On July 8, the court rejected the appeal, and the decision of the court of general jurisdiction to leave the lawsuit without examination remained in legal force.

**On January 10,** in the case of *journalist and anchor Nver Mnatsakanyan v. Hayeli Club and Garnik Isagulyan,* the Court of Cassation ruled to leave Garnik Isagulyan's appeal against the Court of Appeal’s August 30, 2023 decision without examination.

As a reminder, the lawsuit was filed on May 15, 2019, with the plaintiff seeking an apology and demanding to oblige the defendant to disseminate the court ruling via the media. The lawsuit was caused by a video titled “No Shame, Nver? You Will Serve Whoever Pays You: Garnik Isagulyan,” published on *Hayeli.am* on April 14, 2019, in which Isagulyan shared his views regarding Nver Mnatsakanyan's activities.[[38]](#footnote-38)

In its ruling of August 16, 2021, the court rejected Nver Mnatsakanyan’s lawsuit. However, the Civil Court of Appeal ruled to overturn the verdict of the Court of General Jurisdiction, remanding the case to the same court for a new examination. On March 13, 2023, the court partially upheld the lawsuit, obliging Garnik Isagulyan to issue an apology, pay 28,000 AMD as state duty and 300,000 AMD as attorney's reasonable fee. On April 25, Garnik Isagulyan filed an appeal with the Court of Appeal, which was rejected on August 30. On October 18, 2023, he filed an appeal with the Court of Cassation.

**On January 10,** the plaintiff in the case of *citizen* *Erik Yeghinyan v. CMG Ltd. (the founder of Pastinfo news website)* filed an appeal with the Civil Court of Appeal, challenging the ruling of the court of first instance that had rejected his lawsuit.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on February 14, 2019 was caused by a piece titled “Prisoner Attempts Suicide After Being Denied Dentist Visit,” published on September 10, 2018 on the above-mentioned website.[[39]](#footnote-39) (For details see the CPFE’s reports for 2019-2024 in the *Reports* section on khosq.am). The plaintiff demanded that 1 million AMD be confiscated as compensation for insult and defamation, along with obliging the defendant to issue a written apology and publish a refutation.

On June 11, the appellate court rejected the appeal. On July 17, the plaintiff filed a cassation appeal, which the court rejected to accept on October 30.

**On January 11**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in one of the 2 lawsuits filed by Senik Julhakyan, the Director of *Armhydroenergy Project CJSC* against Hmayak Hovhannisyan, the Chairman of *the Political Scientists Union of Armenia,* and *BAC TV* online TV Company. The plaintiff demanded from the defendant to make a public apology for the insult. Regarding defamation, the plaintiff demanded from the court to oblige the defendant to refute the information and pay monetary compensation.

As a reminder, օn March 17, 2022, Senik Julhakyan, the Director of *Armhydroenergy Project CJSC,* filed **2 lawsuits** with identical content. The lawsuits were caused by the December 21, 2021[[40]](#footnote-40) and January 15, 2022[[41]](#footnote-41) remarks made by Hmayak Hovhannisyan on the air of the online TV platform. Hovhannisyan alleged that the plaintiff had obtained a construction permit through corrupt deals and further claimed that former RA President Serzh Sargsyan, through Julhakyan, intended to take control of the *Armhydroenergy Project Institute* building, housing the office of the *Political Scientists Union of Armenia*.

Hearings for the first lawsuit were also held on April 25, September 10, and October 29, with the next one scheduled for February 13, 2025.

Hearings for the second lawsuit were held on February 1 and September 24. On October 15, the court rejected the motion to apply the statute of limitations filed on behalf of the defendant. The next court hearing was scheduled for January 20, 2025.

**On January 12**, the Civil Court of Appeal partially granted the appeal filed by the defendant in the case of *Artur Vanetsyan, former Director of the RA National Security Service, former deputy from the NA “With Honor” faction, v. Gurgen (Gagik) Melkonyan, a deputy from the NA “Civil Contract” faction* (with *Public Television Company of Armenia CJSC* involved as a third party in the case). The appeal challenged the verdict of the court of general jurisdiction, which had ruled to partially uphold the lawsuit, obliging the defendant to refute the disputed remarks on the air of the *Public TV*, pay 500 thousand AMD as compensation for defamation, and 18 thousand AMD as state duty.

As a reminder, the lawsuit, with the plaintiff demanding to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and compensate the damage caused to his honor and dignity, was filed on August 19, 2021. It was triggered by the remarks made by Melkonyan on July 20, 2021 on the air of the *Public TV*. Regarding Vanetsyan’s actions during the 44-Day War, Melkonyan specifically stated: “Vanetsyan departed and fled. He left and returned in no time. They reached the scene, picked up the weapons and brought them to Armenia, knowing that there were plenty of weapons scattered around. Their goal was to bring weapons.”[[42]](#footnote-42)

The appellate court ruled to remand the case to the first instance court for a new examination. On February 14, the plaintiff filed an appeal against this decision with the Court of Cassation. However, on April 3, the Court of Cassation refused to accept the appeal for proceedings.

The Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held hearings for the new examination of the case on June 5, 27, September 25, October 15, November 7, and December 25, 2024. A trial was set for February 13, 2025.

**On January 12**, the Civil Court of Appeal accepted for proceedings the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *Armenian National Interests Fund (ANIF) CJSC v. 168 Zham Ltd*. The plaintiff challenged the November 10, 2023 ruling of the first instance court, which had rejected the lawsuit on the grounds of expiration of the statute of limitations, obliging the plaintiff to pay 200,000 AMD as reasonable attorney’s fee.

As a reminder, the lawsuit was filed on May 13, 2021, with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information tarnishing their business reputation and pay compensation. The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “In Anticipation of Investments,” published on *168.am* on April 12, 2021. The piece specifically claimed that the Fund was failing to secure the promised investments.[[43]](#footnote-43) Notably, the lawsuit was examined on two occasions (For details see the CPFE’s reports for 2021-2024 in the *Reports* section on khosq.am).

On March 29, 2024,the appellate court upheld the plaintiff's complaint, overturned the verdict of the court of general jurisdiction and sent the case back to the same court for a new examination. On April 29, the defendant filed a cassation appeal against this decision. However, the Court of Cassation refused to accept it for proceedings on July 17. Later, on September 3, the case was accepted for a new examination in the first instance court. A hearing was held on December 25, with the next one scheduled for February 19, 2025.

**On January 12**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a preliminary hearing in the case of *Grisha Tamrazyan, Advisor to the Rector of V. Brusov State University*, v. *Public Television Company of Armenia CJSC*, with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory. The lawsuit filed on January 5, 2023 was caused by a report[[44]](#footnote-44) aired during the *Public TV’s* “Lurer” program on December 10, 2022, which claimed that after the rector’s elections, Grisha Tamrazyan had sworn at Vahram Dumanyan, the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, in his absence.

A court hearing was also held on April 22, 2024. In its May 15 ruling, the court partially upheld the lawsuit, obliging the defendant to publish a refutation, pay 150 thousand AMD as reasonable attorney's fee for the plaintiff, and 20 thousand AMD as state duty. On June 17, the defendant challenged the verdict by filing an appeal with a higher court, which was accepted for proceedings on July 12. The judicial act is scheduled for publication on January 10, 2025.

**On January 16**, Alen Simonyan, the Speaker of the National Assembly, filed a lawsuit against Anzhela Tovmasyan, the President of *Hayeli Club* (the founder of *Hayeli.am*), with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan, demanding an apology for insult, compensation of 1 million AMD and payment of 530,000 AMD for court costs.

The lawsuit was caused by Anzhela Tovmasyan's remark about Alen Simonyan during a December 25, 2023 press briefing at *Hayeli Club* where she appeared alongside Ambassador Edgar Ghazaryan. Tovmasyan specifically stated: “...He kept bustling around beneath Khachatur Sukiasyan's feet, Alen kept bustling around beneath his feet.”[[45]](#footnote-45) On January 24, the court accepted the lawsuit for proceedings, granting the plaintiff’s motion to secure the claim by placing a lien on the defendant's property in the amount of the claim. On March 1, the case was transferred to another court and was accepted for proceedings on March 18.

Court hearings in the case were also held on May 13, and June 14. In its ruling issued on December 2, the court partially upheld the lawsuit, obliging Anzhela Tovmasyan to issue a public apology to Alen Simonyan, publish a refutation, and pay 20 thousand AMD as state duty and 150 thousand AMD as reasonable attorney's fee. By the end of the year, no appeal was filed against the verdict.

**On January 16**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Armenian National Interests Fund CJSC v. Hraparak Daily Ltd. and journalist Suzan Simonyan,* with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information tarnishing their business reputation and pay compensation.

As a reminder, the lawsuit, filed on August 2, 2021, was caused by an article titled “State Interest or Business of a Group of People?” published on July 24 on *Hraparak.am*. The article particularly noted that ANIF Director Davit Papazyan had released a Q&A in the form of a self-interview, addressing the deal signed with *Air Arabia* on July 14.[[46]](#footnote-46)

Another court hearing was held on June 10, 2024. On June 28, the court first decided to separate the cases of *Armenian National Interests Fund* *CJSC* *v. Suzan Simonyan* and *Armenian National Interests Fund* *CJSC* v. *Hraparak Daily Ltd.* Following this, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit against Suzan Simonyan on the grounds of expiration of the statute of limitations. Regarding the case against the media, a court hearing was held on December 16. As of the end of the year, the court had not set the date for the next hearing.

**On January 17**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *citizen Yura Adyan v. Skizb Media Kentron Ltd., the founder of Zhamanak daily,* with the plaintiff demanding to refute the defamation and pay 2 million AMD in compensation.

The lawsuit, filed on June 10, 2019, was caused by an article titled “The Old Fox of Old and New Armenia,”[[47]](#footnote-47) published on *Zhamanak* dailyon May 9 of the same year. The plaintiff sought the refutation of the claim that he was the uncle of the Adyans, who held positions in the State Supervision Service. He also demanded the refutation of the allegation that under the former authorities he was considered the “old fox” in procurement, participating in tenders beyond his field of expertise and selling the contracts to other companies after winning them.

In 2024, court hearings were also held on February 21 and April 2. On April 19, the court ruled to partially uphold the lawsuit, obliging the media to publish a refutation and pay 4 thousand AMD in state duty. On June 14, the court issued an additional ruling, obliging the media to pay 200 thousand AMD to the plaintiff as reasonable attorney's fee. The case was moved to the court archive.

**On January 17**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *NA Speaker Alen Simonyan against V.I.V. Today and Tomorrow Ltd*., *the founder of Ankakh.com news website,* with the plaintiff demanding compensation for damage caused to his honor and dignity.

The lawsuit filed on December 22, 2022 was caused by an article titled “Are Alen Simonyan and Vahagn Khachaturyan Making Purchases with State Funds?” published on December 9 on the above-mentioned website.[[48]](#footnote-48) The article specifically noted that the RA President and the Speaker of the National Assembly documented the purchase of their clothes as state procurement, categorizing it under representative expenses, but the items were added to their personal wardrobes.

In 2024, hearings in the case were held on February 26, April 15, May 17, and June 3. In its ruling issued on July 15, the court partially upheld the lawsuit, obliging the media to publish a refutation and pay 20 thousand AMD as state duty and 200 thousand AMD as reasonable attorney's fee. The demand for pecuniary compensation for the damage caused to the plaintiff’s honor and dignity was rejected.

On September 13, the defendant filed an appeal with a higher court, challenging the verdict. After the appeal was returned for eliminating deficiencies, it was accepted for proceedings on November 26.

**On January 18**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Zangezur Copper-Molybdenum Combine CJSC v. journalist Tehmineh Yenokyan,* with the plaintiff demanding to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay 6 million AMD in compensation.

The lawsuit filed on January 5, 2023 was caused by a December 1, 2022 Facebook post made by the journalist, where she referenced open sources to make the following statement: *“Yesterday, the pipeline going to the tailings dump of the ZCMC broke again, the Voghji River was polluted again, a criminal case was initiated again, and it will be forgotten, swept under the rug once again...”[[49]](#footnote-49)* At first, the ZCMC representative demanded a refutation from the journalist, and upon refusal, a lawsuit was filed in court.

In 2024, a hearing in the case was also held on April 15. By the judicial act issued on May 7, the court rejected the lawsuit regarding one of the defendant’s statements on the grounds of expiration of the statute of limitations. This ruling was appealed to a higher court on July 4. Meanwhile, regarding another statement, the case was separated: hearings were held on September 20, October 24, and December 3, with the next one scheduled for January 29, 2025.

**On January 23,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *Veolia Jur CJSC v. Leo Nicolian, a citizen of France and French-Armenian military and investigative journalist, Hayeli Club NGO (the founder of Hayeli.am) and Live News Media Ltd. (the founder of Livenews.am).* In their lawsuit, the plaintiff demanded to oblige the defendants to remove defamatory publications, issue a refutation, and pay monetary compensation.

The lawsuit filed on May 18, 2023 was caused by the statements made by Leo Nicolian's on May 2[[50]](#footnote-50) and 14[[51]](#footnote-51) on *Hayeli.am’s* YouTube channel. He alleged that the French Ambassador to Armenia had received a bribe from Aliyev to carry out espionage. Additionally, Nicolian claimed that the management of French *Veolia Jur CJSC* in Armenia was corrupt and was cooperating with Ambassador Anne Louyot to gain a stronger footing with the RA authorities. The lawsuit was also triggered by an interview with the French-Armenian journalist on *Livenews.am’s* YouTube channel on May 4, during which he reiterated his claims that “the French Ambassador to Armenia is Azerbaijan’s spy in Yerevan, and Veolia Jur bribed Anne Louyot to ensure that the Ambassador would put in a good word for CEO Marianna Shahinyan with the RA authorities to enjoy their patronage.”[[52]](#footnote-52)

In 2024, hearings in the case were also held on June 21 and December 13. The judicial act was set to be published on January 9, 2025.

**On January 23**, *Hraparak* daily correspondent Lia Sargsyan attempted to conduct an interview with Artur Manukyan, a member of the Commission on Television and Radio. However, CTR Chairman Tigran Hakobyan stepped in, prohibiting Artur Manukyan from giving the interview. Furthermore, Hakobyan insulted the journalist, specifically saying, “You are a trash-tier media, you’re pathetic: who fooled you into thinking that you are a journalist?”[[53]](#footnote-53)

**On January 24**, RA Deputy Military Prosecutor Vahagn Muradyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan againstcitizen Marianna Sahakyan and *Factor Information Center NGO* (the founder of *Factor.am* news website), demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation.

The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “‘I Fear for My Life': Woman Accuses Prosecutor’s Son of Taking $45,000 and Vanishing,” published on the website on January 19. The piece claimed that Marianna Sahakyan, the defendant in the case, had fallen victim to fraud, accusing the plaintiff of being involved as well.[[54]](#footnote-54) Later, the website added a refutation regarding the plaintiff in a postscript to the article. However, the trial remains ongoing.

The lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on February 7. On April 17, the court decided to separate the part against the media. This part was refiled under a new case number on April 22. On April 25, it was terminated after the plaintiff submitted a request to withdraw the claim regarding *Factor Information Center NGO.*

**On January 24**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a preliminary hearing in the case of *citizen Yurik Grigoryan v. Kentron TV Company-Multi Media Kentron CJSC,* with the plaintiff demanding to publicly refute the information containing defamation and pay compensation.

The lawsuit filed on August 22, 2023 was caused by the July 23 episode of *Kentron TV’s* “Tracking the Crime” program. The plaintiff argued that the program violated his presumption of innocence, accusing him of organizing a murder. He specifically referred to the program title: “They Murdered Their Former Friend by Blowing Up His Car. How Is Tokhmakhtsi Yuro Involved?”[[55]](#footnote-55)

A court hearing was also held on April 2, 2024. On April 29, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit. On May 31, the plaintiff filed an appeal with a higher court, which was returned on June 17 for correction of deficiencies. No further developments were recorded by the end of the year.

**On January 24**, the plaintiff in the case of *citizen Mariam Hovsepyan v. International Media Holding LLC (*the founder of *Lurer.com* news website*)* filed an appeal against the December 12, 2023 ruling of the first instance court. The court had partially upheld the lawsuit, obliging the media to publish a refutation, pay 50 thousand AMD each for insult and defamation, as well as 50 thousand as attorney’s remuneration and 43 thousand as state duty.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on August 23, 2022, with the plaintiff demanding from the defendant to issue a public apology, refute defamation, and pay compensation, was caused by an article titled “Citizen Mariam Hovsepyan Fined by Court for Offensive Social Media Behavior, and Forced to Issue a Written Apology,” published on *Lurer.com* on July 7, 2022.[[56]](#footnote-56)

On February 9, 2024, the court rejected the plaintiff's appeal, along with the motion to restore the missed procedural deadline for filing it. On March 6, the plaintiff filed a new appeal, which was accepted for proceedings on April 5, and was partially granted on September 20: the ruling regarding the confiscation of reasonable attorney's fee was overturned, with the amount revised from 50 thousand to 150 thousand AMD. The case was moved to the court archive.

**On January 25**, citizen Anna Petakchyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd*., demanding to publicly refute the information considered defamatory. The lawsuit was caused by a publication titled “A Group of Indians Turned to Law Enforcement: Beaten, Starved and Held in Ex-Deputy’s Hotel,” which claimed that the plaintiff was exploiting Indians who had come to Armenia.[[57]](#footnote-57) Later, on February 2, the plaintiff’s attorney refuted the news via media. Nevertheless, on February 8, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. At the hearing held on March 6, the court reviewed the plaintiff’s motion to terminate the case, and on March 14, granted the motion based on the plaintiff’s decision to withdraw the lawsuit.

**On January 30,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Ruben Khachatryan, former Director of Yerevan Zoo, v. citizen Manuk Manukyan (with Iravunk Media Ltd. involved as a third party),* with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay monetary compensation.

The lawsuit filed on April 29, 2022 was caused by the remarks made by Manuk Manukyan on *Iravunk T*V's April 1 broadcast. He alleged that the Zoo was standing on the brink of collapse, as a corruption scheme had been in place for years—particularly during the tenure of Ruben Khachatryan—where public funds were embezzled, and animals were neglected.[[58]](#footnote-58)

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on May 22 and September 16, with the next one scheduled for January 20, 2025.

**On February 1**, *Zangezur Copper-Molybdenum Combine CJSC* filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Datablog Ltd.*, demanding to oblige the defendant to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation.

The lawsuit was caused by an article[[59]](#footnote-59) titled “Trotsenko Will Plunder Syunik with the Attitude of a Seasonal Migrant Worker, Leaving Spin Doctor Aro to Explain to the Locals Why They Are Left Both Without a Mine and Health,” published on December 28, 2023 on *Blognews.am,* owned by *Datablog Ltd.* The article claimed that the *ZCMC* was exploiting the mineral resources, with employees earning enormous incomes at the expense of people's health.

On February 13, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. Hearings in the case were held on April 19, May 16, June 20, August 1, and September 19. In its October 10 ruling, the court partially upheld the lawsuit, obliging the media to publish a refutation and pay 500 thousand AMD as compensation for defamation. The judicial act was not appealed and entered into legal force.

**On February 8**, *Zangezur Copper-Molybdenum Combine CJSC* filed a new lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Datablog Ltd.,* demanding to refute the factual data considered defamatory and pay 6 million AMD in compensation for their violated rights.

The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “The Ever-Silent Jhanyan and His Backers Won’t Clarify the Process and Terms Under Which the RA Government Concluded a Deal with the ZCMC, Receiving 15% of Its shares in Exchange,” published on January 11 on *Datablog Ltd.’s Blognews.am* website.[[60]](#footnote-60) The website essentially accused Vardan Jhanyan, the Deputy Director of the *ZCMC*, and other officials of being responsible for an environmental disaster that harmed people’s health. Added to that, it accused the officials of being responsible for the *ZCMC’s* non-transparent practices. On March 4, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings.

**On the same day**, the *ZCMC* filed another lawsuit against the same media with identical claims. In this case, the lawsuit was caused by an article titled “Aro Margaryan, the Spin Doctor of the ZCMC, which Continues to Deplete Armenia’s Mineral Reserves, Keeps Sweeping Under the Rug the Mess Created by His Own Leadership,” published on *Blognews.am* on January 9.[[61]](#footnote-61) The ZCMC was accused by the website of destroying the mineral wealth and nature, ruining the health of the people, and engaging in plunder. On March 7, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings.

**On February 25**, *Zangezur Copper-Molybdenum Combine CJSC* filed another lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Datablog Ltd.,* once again demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay 6 million AMD in compensation for their violated rights. This lawsuit was caused by an article titled “The ZCMC is Methodically Destroying Southern Armenia: Who Will Catch the Thief Red-Handed?”[[62]](#footnote-62) published on the same website on January 25. On March 7, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings.

In another lawsuit filed **on February 29**, the same company demanded from the same media to refute the information considered defamatory and pay 3 million AMD in compensation for violated rights. This lawsuit was caused by the remarks in the article titled “Instead of Addressing Press Alarms About the Environmental Disaster Caused by the Artsvanik Tailings Dump and Taking Action, the ZCMC Management Is Shamelessly Issuing Statements,”[[63]](#footnote-63) published on *Blognews.am* on January 31. The lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on March 27.

On December 6, the court issued rulings in favor of the plaintiff in **the above-mentioned four cases**. It was determined that the data presented in the publications was untrue. The court’s rulings obliged the defendant to publish refutations and pay the plaintiff 300 thousand AMD for each case as compensation for the dissemination of defamation, along with 200 thousand AMD as attorney's fee, and 29 thousand AMD as state duty. The total amount to be recovered from the defendant was 2 million 116 thousand AMD. The judicial acts were not appealed and entered into legal force.

**On February 5**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Yerevan State University Foundation v. “Hraparak Daily Limited Liability Company” LLC.,* the founder of *Hraparak.am* website, with the plaintiff demanding a public refutation of the information considered defamatory and 1 million AMD in compensation.

The lawsuit filed on January 30, 2023 was caused by a December 30, 2022 article titled “Financial Deficit Emerges at YSU,” published on the aforementioned website.[[64]](#footnote-64) YSU demanded a refutation, which was published by the editorial office with certain comments. Dissatisfied with the outcome, the plaintiff took legal action.

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on April 22, June 5, July 15, and October 4. At one of these hearings, *Hraparak Daily Ltd.* was involved as a new defendant. On November 4, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit concerning *Hraparak Daily Ltd.* on the grounds of expiration of the statute of limitations. Additionally, the court obliged the plaintiff to compensate the media with 300,000 AMD as attorney’s fee. By the end of the year, no appeal had been filed against this ruling.

The court also separated the case against “*Hraparak Daily Limited Liability Company” LLC.* A preliminary hearing for this case was held on December 13, while as of the end of the year, the next hearing date had not been set.

**On February 5**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *lawyer Tigran Yegoryan v.* *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd*. and *Union of Journalists of Armenia NGO*, with the plaintiff demanding compensation for the damage caused to his honor and dignity.

The lawsuit filed on November 2, 2022 was caused by the *UJA* October 3 statement in support of *Zhoghovurd* daily. The statement followed a second lawsuit filed by former official Samvel Kharazyan, defended in court by Tigran Yegoryan, against the media.[[65]](#footnote-65) The statement particularly emphasized that the editorial office had reasonable grounds to suspect that the goal of the plaintiff and especially lawyer Yegoryan was to harm the newspaper.

The case was reassigned to another court on March 11, 2024, and accepted for proceedings on March 27. A hearing was held on June 11, and on July 16, the court ruled to leave the lawsuit unexamined. The ruling was based on the plaintiff’s failure to attend two consecutive court hearings, despite being notified, and the absence of a motion by the defendant to continue the examination of the case. The case was moved to the court archive.

**On February 6**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *Civil Contract Party v. Union of Informed Citizens NGO* (*the founder of Fip.am news website),* with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation.

The lawsuit filed on August 17, 2023 was caused by an investigative article titled “The CC Uses the Administrative Resources of Other Communities to Secure Votes for Avinyan,” published on *Fip.am* on July 21.[[66]](#footnote-66) On August 25, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings, and the court upheld the motion to secure the claim by imposing a lien on the defendant’s property in the claim amount of 1 million AMD. Following the statement[[67]](#footnote-67) issued by journalistic organizations, where they deemed the application of security measures for the claim as additional pressure on the media founder, the court ruled on November 27 to annul the measure.

In 2024, a court hearing in the case was also held on May 21. On June 7, 2024, the court ruled to partially uphold the lawsuit, obliging the defendant to publish a refutation, pay 20,000 AMD as state duty and 150,000 AMD as reasonable attorney’s fee. Furthermore, the court ordered the *Civil Contract* party to pay 50,000 AMD to the *Union of Informed Citizens NGO* as remuneration for the defendant’s attorney.

On July 8, the defendant appealed the verdict to the appellate court.

**On February 6**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan continued the trial in the case of *Lara Aharonyan, Head of Women's Resource Center NGO, v. Hayeli Club and Live News Media Ltd.*, with the plaintiff demanding 2 million AMD in compensation for the damage caused to her honor and dignity.

The lawsuit was caused by an April 24, 2019 video titled “Lara Aharonyan, a Member of the CC Board of Trustees, Is Engaged in Corrupting Children: Hayk Ayvazyan,” in which Hayk Ayvazyan, one of the guests at *Hayeli Club,* commented on Aharonyan's activities during a press briefing. The video was published on *Hayeli.am* and *Livenews.am* websites.

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on May 20, August 30, and November 29, with the next one scheduled for February 11, 2025.

**On February 7**, the Court of Cassation declined to accept for proceedings the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *Armenian Second TV Channel Ltd. v. Commission on Television and Radio.*

As a reminder, the lawsuit was filed on December 21, 2022 (*Armenia TV CJSC, A-TV Ltd., Shant Ltd. and Multi Media Kentron TV CJSC* were involved as third parties)*,* seeking the annulment of the December 2, 2022 Decision No. 143-A, which recognized the winners of the licensing competition for the use of the republican broadcasting slot in the public multiplex and granted the corresponding licenses.

On February 22, 2023, the court upheld the lawsuit, declaring the contested decision invalid. On March 23, the defendant filed an appeal with the appellate court. On October 5, the appellate court granted the appeal, entirely overturning the verdict, modifying it, and rejecting the plaintiff's claim. The plaintiff then took the case to the Court of Cassation on November 16, but the appeal was returned on December 13. On January 17, 2024, the cassation appeal was refiled. The case was moved to the court archive.

**On February 8**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a preliminary hearing in the case of *Yerevan Deputy Mayor (currently Mayor) Tigran Avinyan v. Oragir Media Ltd.,* with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to refute the information tarnishing his honor, dignity and business reputation and pay monetary compensation.

The lawsuit, filed on April 13, 2023 was caused by an article titled “Appetite Comes with Eating: Vivacell-MTS on Avinyan’s Radar,”[[68]](#footnote-68) published on March 9 on *Oragir.news* website*.* Citing its sources, the website claimed that following his acquisition of the *Grand Hotel Yerevan*, Avinyan sought to also purchase the telecommunications operator *Vivacell-MTS*. It was further highlighted that he leveraged administrative mechanisms to block a deal with another buyer, pushing for the company to be sold to him.

In 2024, hearings in the case were held on May 7, August 8, and September 24, with the next one scheduled for January 14, 2025.

**On February 8**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Hayk Khanumyan, Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of Artsakh, v. Hraparak daily,* with the plaintiff demanding to refute defamation and pay compensation.

The lawsuit was caused by the articles published in the daily newspaper, claiming that Hayk Khanumyan was involved in several criminal cases related to corruption and abuse of office, with Armenian authorities backing him and making every effort to absolve him of responsibility.[[69]](#footnote-69)

On February 29, 2024, the court ruled to partially uphold the lawsuit, obliging the defendant to publish a refutation, pay 100 thousand AMD as pecuniary compensation and 23 thousand AMD as state duty. On April 9, the defendant filed an appeal with a higher court, which returned the complaint on May 6 due to a missed deadline. On May 21, the defendant filed another appeal, which was accepted for proceedings on June 13.

On December 16, the Civil Court of Appeal upheld the media’s appeal, overturning the verdict, and rejecting Hayk Khanumyan's claim.

**On February 9**, the defendant in the case of *Larisa Harutyunyan v. Shark Ltd.* (the legal entity representing *5th Channel* TV Company) filed an appeal with the Civil Court of Appeal against the verdict of the court of first instance. The court had ruled to partially uphold the lawsuit, obliging the defendant to publish a refutation, and pay 4 thousand AMD as state duty in favor of the plaintiff.

As a reminder, the lawsuit was filed on October 26, 2021, with the plaintiff demanding to publish a refutation. The lawsuit was caused by the October 16 report of the *5th Channel* “Haylur” news program titled “She Is Making Me Mourn: the Neighbor Does Not Allow to Install a Khachkar Dedicated to the Heroes”[[70]](#footnote-70).

The defendant's appeal was returned on March 1. It was refiled on March 28 and accepted for proceedings on April 9. In its decision of July 19, the appellate court partially granted the appeal by overturning and modifying the verdict issued by the court of general jurisdiction. The defendant's obligations remained unchanged, while the plaintiff was obliged to pay 50 thousand AMD as reasonable attorney's fee and 10 thousand AMD as state duty. The case was moved to the court archive.

**On February 9,** the Civil Court of Appeal decided to partially uphold the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *Armenian National Interests Fund* *CJSC* v. *Hraparak Daily Ltd. and Hrant Bagratyan, former Prime Minister of the RA.* Theappeal challenged the verdict of the court of first instance, which had previously rejected the lawsuit.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on October 20, 2021, with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendants to refute the information tarnishing their business reputation and pay compensation, was caused by an opinion expressed by Hrant Bagratyan on *Hraparak.am* on September 28, 2021, in which he reaffirmed the media’s position that the deal signed by the mentioned fund on July 14—granting the Arab company *Air Arabia* the status of national air carrier—was not transparent to the public and carried high risks of corruption.[[71]](#footnote-71)

The Court of Appeal ruled to overturn the verdict regarding the claim against *Hraparak Daily Ltd.* and send the case for a complete re-examination, while leaving the verdict regarding the claim against Hrant Bagratyan unchanged.

On March 15, 2024, the defendant media appealed the decision of the appellate court to the Court of Cassation, which on August 7, refused to accept the appeal for proceedings.

On October 1, the lawsuit regarding the media was accepted for new proceedings, with hearings held on November 7 and 28. On December 11, the court ruled to leave the lawsuit unexamined, since the plaintiff company was in the process of liquidation and had failed to submit a motion to postpone the two scheduled preliminary court hearings or have the case resolved in their absence. Under the court's ruling, the plaintiff was obligated to pay 200 thousand AMD to *Hraparak Daily Ltd.* as attorney's fee.

**On February 12**, the Civil Court of Appeal ruled to uphold the appeal filed by the defendant in the case *of NA Deputy Hayk Sargsyan v. Hraparak Daily Ltd.,* against the June 2, 2023 verdict of the court of general jurisdiction, which had partially upheld the lawsuit. The appellate court overturned the verdict and modified it, rejecting the lawsuit in its entirety.

The lawsuit filed on June 21, 2019, with the plaintiff demanding compensation for the damage caused to his honor, dignity and good reputation through defamation and insult, was caused by an article titled “Pashinyan Showed Hayk Sargsyan a Yellow Card,”[[72]](#footnote-72) published on May 25 of the same year. On May 29, the Court of Cassation returned the plaintiff's appeal against the decision of the appellate court. The case was moved to the court archive.

**On February 13**, a replacement of the judge took place in the Civil Court of Appeal in the case of *Karen Melik-Tangyan, now former head of Mother Armenia Military History Museum of the RA Ministry of Defense v. Social Media Ltd.* The defendant's appeal was accepted for new proceedings on February 16.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on December 10, 2021, with the plaintiff demanding compensation for the damage caused to his honor and dignity, was triggered by a news piece (later removed from the page) titled “A Military or a Criminal Authority? The Head of the Museum Is Not in the Appropriate Role,” published on November 11, 2021 in the “Press Spokesman” column of *Mamul.am* website, owned by *Social Media Ltd.* On April 27, 2023, the court ruled to partially uphold the lawsuit, and the plaintiff filed an appeal with the appellate court.

In its decision of March 11, 2024, the appellate court partially granted the appeal, overturning the verdict, and sending the case to the same court for a new examination. On June 28, the court of first instance accepted the case for a new examination. A court hearing was held on December 20, with the next one scheduled for February 24.

**On February 13,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *citizen Siranush Abelyan v. Lilit Silanyan, Executive Director of Politcom.am* news website. The plaintiff demanded from the defendant to issue an apology for defamation and publish a refutation.

The lawsuit filed on September 3, 2021 was caused by a news piece published on the website, which concerned an issue surrounding the provision of loans by a specific bank. Following the publication, the plaintiff, who was an employee of the bank, expressed disagreement with the piece, which resulted in its removal from the website. The person responsible for managing the media suggested publishing also the bank's viewpoint, but the plaintiff rejected the suggestion, taking the matter to court.

On March 14, 2024, the case was transferred to another court. Hearings were held on September 20, December 3, with the next one scheduled for March 18, 2025.

**On February 15,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *NewsAM Ltd. v. Hraparak Daily Ltd.,* with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to refute the information considered defamatory, make a public apology for insult and compensate the damage caused to their business reputation.

The lawsuit filed on September 23, 2022 was caused by an article, published on *Hraparak.am* on August 10.[[73]](#footnote-73) The article claimed that upon a request from the Ministry of Defense, *News.am* had refuted *Hraparak.am’s* news piece regarding an unpleasant incident involving the Minister.[[74]](#footnote-74)

In 2024, court hearings were also held on June 25 and October 31, with the next one scheduled for April 8, 2025.

**On February 16,** the Civil Court of Appeal accepted for proceedings the appeal, filed by the plaintiff in the case of *NA Deputy Hayk Sargsyan v. Irates newspaper and the eponymous website*, against the October 6, 2023 decision of the court of first instance to leave the lawsuit without examination.

The lawsuit filed on October 1, 2019, with the plaintiff demanding compensation for defamation and insult, was caused by an article titled “You Were Just the One Holding Nikol’s Bottle: Anna Hakobyan,” published in the newspaper’s September 6 issue. On October 6, 2023, the court ruled to leave the lawsuit unexamined, as the plaintiff, despite being notified, had failed to attend two consecutive court hearings. Additionally, the court ordered the plaintiff to pay 300 thousand AMD as compensation for the media's attorney fee.

On April 30, 2024, the plaintiff’s appeal was granted. As a result, the decision to leave the lawsuit unexamined was revoked, and the case was remanded to the same court to proceed from where it had been interrupted.

A preliminary hearing was held on November 28, and at the December 19 hearing, the media's motion to apply the statute of limitations was dismissed. The next hearing was scheduled for March 27, 2025.

**On February 19**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Hrachya Sargsyan, former Mayor of Yerevan, and Hayk Hovhannisyan, former Chairman of the Board of Directors of Yerevan Metro, v. Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.,* with the plaintiffs demanding to oblige the defendant to refute the information tarnishing their honor, dignity and business reputation and pay monetary compensation.

The lawsuit filed on April 6, 2023 was caused by an article titled “New Details on the Procurement of Buses: What Happened?” published in *Zhoghovurd* daily on March 30.[[75]](#footnote-75) According to the newspaper, the acquisition of Chinese buses for Yerevan was accompanied by corruption practices with the involvement of the co-plaintiffs.

In 2024, hearings in the case were also held on May 21 and July 23. On October 7, the court ruled to approve the settlement agreement signed by the parties.

**On February 20**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *FDA Laboratory LLC v. Investigative Journalists NGO,* with the plaintiff demanding a refutation of the published information and a response.

The lawsuit filed on August 12, 2021 was caused by an article titled “Two of the Vitamin D Medications Were Registered as Biologically Active Supplements,” published on the NGO’s *Hetq.am* website. The piece pointed out that vitamin-based medications, in violation of regulations, are often registered as supplement or food items to avoid a costly and time-consuming procedure.[[76]](#footnote-76)

On March 11, 2024, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit. On August 2, the plaintiff filed an appeal against this decision, which was received on December 17.

**On February 20,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Khachatur Sukiasyan v. ArmdayAM Ltd., the founder of Armday.am website*, with the plaintiff demanding from the defendant to make a public apology, refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation.

The lawsuit filed on April 19, 2021 was caused by an article published on a number of other websites on March 25. The article titled “Beware: Khachatur Sukiasyan's Petrolium Ruins Cars – Dejavu”[[77]](#footnote-77) contained a reference to an unidentified Telegram channel.

On March 13, 2024, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit, citing the lack of evidence in the case proving that *Armday.am* website was operated by *ArmdayAM Ltd.* The judicial act was not appealed and entered into legal force.

**On February 20**, at Yerablur Military Pantheon, Artsakh President Samvel Shahramanyan and his bodyguards displayed indecent treatment towards *24News.am* journalist Mary Manukyan and cameraman Asatur Aslanyan.[[78]](#footnote-78) The media representatives were carrying out their professional activities by filming visitors at Yerablur for the 36th anniversary of the Artsakh movement. One of the bodyguards directed profanities at them and pushed the cameraman. Later, Shahramanyan expressed regret over the incident.

**On February 22**, *Iravunk.com* news website reported that journalist Gayaneh Zargaryan, the head of *NewsMedia.am* news agency, had been the target of online attacks for the past month. The attacks on various social networks included death threats, defamatory and false information, hate speech, and accusations of her being an agent of international influence.[[79]](#footnote-79)

**On February 22**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Yelena Zohrabyan, Head of Public Relations Department at the Urban Development, Technical and Fire Safety Inspection Body v. journalist Susanna Simonyan,* with the plaintiff demanding to issue a public apology, remove the Facebook post, as well as pay compensation equivalent to 2,000 times the established minimum wage.

The lawsuit filed on September 19, 2022 was caused by the following post made by the journalist on her Facebook page on August 16, 2022: “I suggest that spokespersons like Yelena Zohrabyan, whose mission consists of sitting idly, getting paid and occasionally dusting off their boss, be henceforth called Press Brushes.”

In 2024, hearings in the case were held on June 24, September 12 and October 24. On November 14, the court partially upheld the lawsuit, obliging the journalist to issue a public apology to the plaintiff, remove the post, pay 100 thousand AMD as compensation, as well as 23 thousand AMD as state duty. On December 16, the defendant filed an appeal with the appellate court.

**On February 25**, *Zangezur Copper-Molybdenum Combine CJSC* filed a lawsuit against *TertAM Ltd.* with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan, demanding to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay 2 million AMD in compensation for their violated rights. The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “Environmentalist: ZCMC’s Artsvanik Tailings Dump Likely to Pollute Villages, Rivers, and Damage Agricultural Lands,” published on Tert.am website on January 24.[[80]](#footnote-80)

On November 15, the court fully rejected the lawsuit, and the plaintiff appealed the verdict on December 9.  
 **On February 26,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Lori Marz (based in Vanadzor) held a regular hearing in the case of *teacher Susanna Sargsyan v. Hraparak.am reporter Shushanna Grigoryan*.

As a reminder, the case is being re-examined in the court of first instance. The lawsuit filed on June 6, 2014 was caused by articles, titled “The Headmaster of Vanadzor School N8 was Fired”[[81]](#footnote-81) and “Vanadzor Teacher Received 12 Million AMD for Forced Idleness,”[[82]](#footnote-82) published on the aforementioned website on October 4 and December 5, 2013, respectively (For details see the CPFE’s annual reports for 2016-2024 in the *Reports* section on khosq.am).

In 2024, hearings in the case were also held on March 4 and 25, April 12, May 20, and June 24. On July 9, the court rejected the lawsuit on the grounds of the statute of limitations. The court also obliged the plaintiff to pay 11,500 AMD as state duty and 150,000 AMD as the defendant’s attorney fee. On October 23, the plaintiff filed an appeal, which was returned on November 29.

**On February 27**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a preliminary hearing in the case of *Alen Simonyan, Speaker of the National Assembly, v. Anzhela Tovmasyan, President of Hayeli Club, journalist*. In the lawsuit, the plaintiff demanded an apology for insult and compensation of 3 million AMD. Additionally, the plaintiff demanded 590 thousand AMD to cover court expenses, with 480 thousand AMD to be allocated for attorney's fee and 110 thousand AMD for state duty.

The lawsuit filed on October 26, 2023 was caused by the offensive language used by Anzhela Tovmasyan under the NA Speaker's address titled “We Must Finally Leave Behind a Free, Independent and Peaceful Armenia for Our Children: Alen Simonyan,” published on September 21 on *Tert.am*. [[83]](#footnote-83)

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on May 27, July 3, September 3 and 23, October 15, and December 11, with the next one scheduled for February 4, 2025.

**On February 28**, the case of *Styopa Safaryan, former Chairman of the Public Council, v. Livenews.am reporter Taguhi Aslanyan* was transferred to another court. The case was then accepted for proceedings on March 11.

The lawsuit filed on July 13, 2021, with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to make a public apology for offensive remarks and pay 1 million AMD in compensation, was caused by the journalist's remarks in a June 20, 2021 Facebook post, particularly the statement “You’re not rejected, you’re urinated upon...”[[84]](#footnote-84) The journalist, citing an unidentified source, wrote that the neighbors had urinated on Styopa Safaryan for serving the Prime Minister.

In 2024, court hearings in the case were held on May 2, June 14, July 24, and October 23. On November 12, the court ruled to partially uphold the lawsuit, obliging the journalist to issue a public apology to the plaintiff and pay 600 thousand AMD as compensation for the damage caused through insult. On December 23, the journalist filed an appeal.

**On February 28**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Lyova Abrahamyan, Head of Sarukhan Community of Gegharkunik Marz, against Narineh Hasratyan, a journalist of Haykakan Zham news website,* with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the plaintiff to refute the information tarnishing his honor, dignity, and business reputation.

The lawsuit filed on February 13, 2019 was caused by an article titled “Who Is Backing Sarukhan Community Head and Hindering the Preliminary Investigation Case Initiated in August?” published on the aforementioned website on January 10, which featured complaints from villagers about their community head.[[85]](#footnote-85)

On June 28, the court ruled to leave the lawsuit unexamined on the grounds that the plaintiff, although notified, had not attended two consecutive court hearings and had not filed a motion to postpone the examination of the case or to have the case resolved in his absence, while the defendant had not filed a motion to proceed with the examination. The judicial act entered into legal force.

**On March 1**, the Civil Court of Appeal rejected the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *Stepan Mosinyan, Director of Alaverdi Medical Center CJSC, v. journalist Larisa Paremuzyan and CivilNet online TV* (later *Civilitas Foundation* was recognized as a proper defendant) against the ruling of the first instance court, which had rejected the lawsuit.

The lawsuit filed on April 4, 2022, with the plaintiff demanding to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation, was caused by an article titled “The Director of Alaverdi MC a Monopolist in the Business of ‘Death’,” published on *Civilnet.am* on March 14.[[86]](#footnote-86) (For details see the CPFE’s annual reports for 2022-2024 in the *Reports* section on khosq.am).

The decision of the Court of Appeal was not appealed.

**On March 4**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan continued the new trial in the case of *NA Deputy Speaker (currently NA Speaker) Alen Simonyan v. Iravunk Media Ltd.,* during which the burden of proof was distributed.

As a reminder, the lawsuit, filed on August 4, 2020, with the plaintiff demanding compensation for the damage caused to his honor and dignity, was triggered by a piece titled “What Innovation Will Nikol Pashinyan Introduce in August?” published in *Iravunk* newspaper on July 20 of the same year. The piece attributed statements to Alen Simonyan, suggesting that he had said that the ruling political team was not ready to work without receiving bonuses. In its ruling issued on September 29, 2021, the court partially upheld the lawsuit, obliging the media to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay 200,000 AMD as attorney's fee. The defendant filed an appeal against this ruling. On April 29, 2022, the appeal was upheld, and the case was remanded for a new examination. (For details see the CPFE’s reports for 2020-2024 in the *Reports* section on khosq.am).

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on April 15 and June 7. On June 27, the lawsuit was rejected, and the proceedings were terminated. The court obliged the plaintiff to pay the media 10 thousand AMD as state duty for the appeal, as well as 140 thousand AMD as attorney's fee. The verdict entered into legal force.

**On March 4**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a preliminary hearing in the case of *Zangezur Copper-Molybdenum Combine CJSC v. Oragir Media Ltd.,* with the plaintiff demanding to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation.

The lawsuit filed on October 17, 2023 was caused by an article published on September 2 on *Oragir.news* website owned by *Oragir Media Ltd.* The piece titled “Employee: Trojan Horse in Syunik: Azerbaijani Appointments in the ZCMC” specifically read that “5 to 6 persons were sent from Baku in May. They are destroying various structures, etc. I have no information on whose order they have arrived, but they are destroying all the structures.”[[87]](#footnote-87)

In 2024, hearings in the case were also held on April 22, May 31, July 11, September 20, and October 17. On November 1, the court ruled to partially uphold the lawsuit, obliging the media to publish a refutation, pay 200 thousand AMD as compensation for defamation, 26 thousand AMD as state duty, and 100 thousand AMD as attorney's fee. The verdict was not appealed and entered into legal force.

**On March 4**, the defendants in the case of *NA Deputy Speaker (currently NA Speaker) Alen Simonyan v. Ani Hovhannisyan, the founder of Media Idea Ltd. and Analitik.am website owned by it,* challenged the October 3, 2023 ruling of the first instance court at the appellate court. The lower court had partially upheld the lawsuit, mandating the defendants to publish a refutation, pay 200 thousand AMD to the plaintiff as compensation for defamation and 150 thousand AMD as attorney's fee.

The lawsuit filed on July 13, 2020 was caused by an article titled “Who Are the Sponsors of the ‘Guardians of Revolution'?”[[88]](#footnote-88) published on June 22 on the aforementioned website (For details, see the CPFE’s reports for 2020-2024 in the *Reports* section on khosq.am).

On May 6, 2024, the court refused to accept the defendants' appeal, and the verdict of the court of first instance entered into legal force.

**On March 5,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *citizen Arsen Ghukasyan v. Media News Ltd.* *(the founder of Medianews.am website)*, with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information tarnishing his honor and dignity and compensate the damage.

The lawsuit filed on June 14, 2022 was caused by an article titled “Arsen Ghukasyan Caused a Scene in Court Yesterday and Insulted the Judge: Why Did the Court of Appeal Opt for a Closed-Door Review of Complaint Against Pashinyan?”[[89]](#footnote-89) published on the website on May 26. The publication claimed that the relatives of the victims of the 44-Day War, including the plaintiff, were politicizing the ongoing hearings on treason, exploiting them against the incumbent authorities.

In 2024, hearings in the case were also held on June 25 and October 16. At the latest hearing, the court decided to involve Taron Chakhoyan as a co-defendant. The next hearing was set for January 16, 2025.

**On March 5**, 2024, during Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s visit to Vazgen Sargsyan’s grave at Yerablur Military Pantheon, journalists encountered impediments in their work. Officers from the State Protection Service together with the police pushed the journalists and cameramen away, arguing that they lacked accreditation for event coverage.[[90]](#footnote-90) The journalists' efforts to capture footage at least from a distance were harshly opposed by the representatives of security structures. In this regard, 10 journalistic organizations issued a statement.[[91]](#footnote-91) In response, Armen Khachatryan, the Head of the Government's Department for Information and Public Relations, informed theCPFE and its partners in a letter that the event was of a ceremonial nature, and that the video footage of it had been provided to the media. However, the CPFE believes that information from a state body cannot fully replace media coverage, and even less so serve as grounds for restricting the activities of journalists.

**On March 5,** *Yerevan State University Foundation* filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *24News.AM Ltd.* (the founder of *24News.am* website), demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay 1 million AMD in compensation.

The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “Pashinyan Has a Folder of Incriminating Evidence on YSU Rector: A Corruption Scandal Is Brewing,” which was published on February 5 on the aforementioned website. The piece referenced the Russian Telegram channel TOGARMA[[92]](#footnote-92) and claimed that the YSU Rector was behind corruption schemes. Additionally it suggested that the Rector was trying to obstruct the re-election of Gagik Ghazinyan, the Dean of the Faculty of Law, by all means.

On March 15, the lawsuit was returned. The plaintiff filed an appeal against this decision on May 2. By the end of the year, no additional developments were recorded in the case.  
 **On March 7**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *National Assembly Deputy Khachatur Sukiasyan v. Vazgen Saghatelyan, Spokesman of the Reviving Armenia Party* (with *NewsAM Ltd.* as a third party), with the plaintiff demanding to issue a public apology, refute the information considered defamatory, as well as pay compensation.

The lawsuit filed on August 12, 2022 was caused by remarks made by Vazgen Saghatelyan during an opposition rally held in Yerevan on July 29, 2022. Saghatelyan claimed that the deputy had a role in the licensing of gas cylinders for cars and was benefitting from a relevant Government decision. His controversial speech was published by *News.am*, which is owned by *NewsAM Ltd.*, a third party in the case (For details see the CPFE’s reports for 2022-2024 in the *Reports* section on khosq.am).

In 2024, a court hearing was also held on August 14. In its verdict issued on September 19, the court ruled to partially uphold the lawsuit, obliging the defendant to refute the statements tarnishing in nature and pay 200 thousand AMD for defamation. Additionally, both sides were ordered to pay 250 thousand AMD each for the opposing party's attorney's fees. The defendant filed an appeal against this ruling with the Civil Court of Appeal on October 22, which was returned on November 8. No further developments were recorded in the case by the end of the year.

**On March 15**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan ruled to reject the lawsuit filed by Hovhannes Poghosyan, the Deputy Head of Shirak Marz Investigative Department, against *168 Zham Ltd.* and journalist Gohar Savzyan, on the grounds of the statute of limitations. The plaintiff sought a refutation of the information considered defamatory and monetary compensation. The court also ordered the plaintiff to pay 100 thousand AMD to *168 Zham Ltd.* as attorney's fee.

The lawsuit filed on April 3, 2023 was caused by an article about the plaintiff titled “Prosecutor Unfit for His Position Now Serves as Deputy Head of the Regional Investigative Department,” which was published on March 7 on *168.am* website, owned by *168 Zham Ltd.*[[93]](#footnote-93) (For details see the CPFE’s reports for 2023-2024 in the *Reports* section on khosq.am).

On April 18, 2024, the plaintiff filed an appeal, which was returned on May 10. The appeal was refiled on June 13 and accepted for proceedings on July 4. The judicial act is scheduled to be published on January 7, 2025.

**On March 18**, by the decision of the Court of General Jurisdiction of Armavir Marz (based in Vagharshapat) *ALT TV Company* of Armavir was involved as a third party in the case of *Armavir Regional State College Director Angin Arshakyan v. Educators Susanna Margaryan and Karineh Harutyunyan.*

The lawsuit was filed on September 12, 2022, with the plaintiff demanding compensation for the damage caused to her honor, dignity, business reputation and the right to respect for private and family life. It was caused by a September 2, 2022 report by *ALT TV Company* titled “The Staff of Armavir Regional State College Demands the Resignation of the Director,” which was broadcast during “Zham” news program of *Armenia TV Company* and published on *ALT TV Company’s Alttv.am* website.[[94]](#footnote-94)

In 2024, hearings in the case were also held on May 15, July 3, and September 16. The judicial act was published on October 3, leading to the dismissal of the lawsuit on the grounds of expiration of the statute of limitations.

**On March 18**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of*Armenian National Interests Fund CJSC and Tigran Avinyan, Chair of the Company's Board of Directors, v. Pastinfo Ltd.* (the founder of *Pastinfo.am*) with the plaintiffs demanding to obligate the media to refute the information tarnishing their honor, dignity and business reputation and pay monetary compensation.

The lawsuit filed on March 16, 2023 was caused by an article titled “Pastinfo’s Information Confirmed: Avinyan's Tenure as Deputy Mayor Is Illegal as He Heads a Commercial Entity, a Position He Is Prohibited from Holding,” which was published on February 20 on *Pastinfo.am*.[[95]](#footnote-95) Notably, the plaintiffs failed to provide the information requested by the website regarding the issue.

In its ruling issued on June 12, 2024, the court partially upheld the lawsuit, obliging the media to refute the remarks tarnishing the honor, dignity and business reputation of Tigran Avinyan, and the business reputation of *Armenian National Interests Fund CJSC*. Additionally, the ruling mandated the defendant to pay 200 thousand AMD to each plaintiff as pecuniary compensation for defamation and 26 thousand AMD as state duty, while rejecting the confiscation of the attorney’s fee. On July 17, the media filed an appeal against the ruling.

**On March 19**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan ruled to terminate the case of *businessman Davit Yeremyan v. Datablog Ltd.* (the founder of *Blognews.am* website) due to the withdrawal of the lawsuit by the plaintiff.

As a reminder, the lawsuit was filed on June 13, 2023, with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to publicly refute the information considered defamatory, issue an apology and pay compensation. The lawsuit was caused by a news piece titled “‘Businessman’ Yeremyan Davo Gone Beyond Limits,”[[96]](#footnote-96) which was published on May 12 on the website with a reference to [*Armeniannews.Info*](https://t.me/armeniainfo11)Telegram channel. The piece not only contained disrespectful language, but also attributed a number of illegal actions and immoral conduct to the plaintiff.

It is worth noting that on the same day, the businessman called for a public apology on his Facebook page for tarnishing his business reputation. In response, the website reproduced his words without offering an apology.[[97]](#footnote-97)

**On March 19**, the Court of Cassation upheld the appeal filed by the defendant in the case of *Mher Derdzyan v. Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.,* against the Civil Court of Appeal’s decision not to accept the appeal.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on April 15, 2019 was caused by a concern expressed by the newspaper that Mher Derdzyan’s construction project could be a carefully devised fraud.[[98]](#footnote-98) The plaintiff demanded a public apology, along with 1.5 million AMD compensation for insult and defamation (For details see the CPFE’s reports for 2019-2024 in the *Reports* section on khosq.am). The court of general jurisdiction had initially rejected the lawsuit. The appellate court had subsequently upheld the appeal, overturning the verdict and sending the case back for a new examination. Following this, the court had partially upheld the lawsuit, obliging the defendant to issue an apology, publish a refutation, and compensate 800 thousand AMD for insult and defamation, as well as 500,000 AMD as attorney’s fee. The defendant had filed an appeal, which had been rejected due to document deficiencies, and the defendant had appealed to the Court of Cassation.

The Civil Court of Appeal accepted the plaintiff's appeal on April 16, 2024 and ruled to partially uphold it on August 14. The verdict was overturned in regard to the amount of compensation for legal expenses, and the case was remanded to the same court for a new examination to address this particular aspect. The first instance court held hearings on November 19 and December 25, with the next one scheduled for February 19, 2025.

**On March 22,** theCivil Court of Appeal partially upheld the appeals filed by both the plaintiff and the defendant in the case of *citizen Artur Vardanyan v.* *168 Zham Ltd*. *and citizen David Pirumyan.* The appeals challenged the verdict of the first instance court, which had partially granted the lawsuit, obliging Davit Pirumyan to make an apology and pay state duties, while also mandating both sides to pay 100 thousand AMD each in attorneys' fees.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on July 10, 2020, with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to issue an apology, refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation, was caused by an article titled “Nikol Pashinyan Talked to Artur Vardanyan During His Campaign,” published on March 6 on *168.am*.[[99]](#footnote-99) The website quoted Pirumyan as saying: “The Prime Minister warmly greeted terrorist Artur Vardanyan on the street, who had been unexplainably released by the court under his administration.”

The Court of Appeal ruled to send the case for a new examination. On June 7, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan accepted it for proceedings. A court hearing was held on October 14, with the next one scheduled for January 30, 2025.

**On March 22,** the Civil Court of Appeal rejected the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *Vardan Badasyan* (father of Rustam Badasyan, former RA Minister of Justice - CPFE) *against Alternative NGO Co-Chair Narek Mantashyan and News.am, Analitik.am, 168.am, Iravunk.com, Blognews.am, Alternativ.am, Ipress.am news websites.* The plaintiff specifically challenged the lower court’s ruling regarding *168 Zham Ltd.* and *Iravunk Media Ltd.* On January 4, 2023, the court had rejected the lawsuit against these two media on the grounds of expiration of the statute of limitations, obliging the plaintiff to pay 200,000 AMD to *Iravunk Media* and 150,000 AMD to *168 Zham* in attorney's fee.

On April 22, 2024, the plaintiff filed a cassation appeal against the decision of the Court of Appeal, which was accepted for proceedings on July 27. On November 15, the Court of Cassation upheld the appeal, overturning the March 22, 2024 ruling of the Court of Appeal and sending the case to the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan for a new examination. On November 28, it was accepted for proceedings, with a court hearing held on December 23 and the next one scheduled for February 6, 2025.

As a reminder, the lawsuit was filed on July 10, 2020, with the plaintiff demanding to publicly refute the information considered defamatory, publish a refutation in the above-mentioned media, and compensate the damage caused to his honor, dignity and business reputation. The lawsuit was caused by articles published on the mentioned websites about Vardan Badasyan's years of past activities, which claimed that he handed positions in exchange for money.[[100]](#footnote-100)

Regarding the other media, a court hearing was held on February 26, 2024. On March 18, the court ruled to partially uphold the lawsuit, obliging Narek Mantashyan to publish a refutation on the mentioned media platforms and his Facebook page, and to pay the plaintiff 300 thousand AMD as compensation for defamation.

**On March 26**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *lawyer Lusineh Avagyan v. Naira Terteryan (Live News Media Ltd. was involved as third party),* with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation for the damage caused to her dignity, honor and business reputation.

The lawsuit filed on August 10, 2021 was caused by the June 30 issue of *Livenews.am’s* “Ditaket” program cycle, during which Naira Terteryan claimed that Lusineh Avagyan, the attorney of her ex-husband Mher Terteryan, apart from carrying out her professional duties, also interfered in their private and family life.[[101]](#footnote-101)

In 2024, a court hearing in the case was also held on April 22. On June 13, the court ruled to terminate the lawsuit due to its withdrawal by the plaintiff.

**On March 27**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Hraparak Daily Ltd. v. Media Initiatives Center NGO,* with the plaintiff demanding to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation. The case is being re-examined in the court of first instance: the appellate court had upheld the defendant’s appeal against the ruling of the court of general jurisdiction, overturning the initial verdict and sending the case for a new examination.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on July 19, 2021 was caused by a media monitoring carried out within a joint project by *Factcheck.ge* website and the *MIC*, which identified fake news and disinformation pieces, leading to their blocking by Facebook and Instagram. The plaintiff believed that the selection was not objective, and that through these actions, in general, pressure was being exerted on the press (For details see the CPFE’s reports for 2021-2024 in the *Reports* section on khosq.am).

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on October 3, November 7, and 12, with the next one scheduled for March 7, 2025.

In the morning **of March 29**, Karineh Simonyan, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Armenian Service* correspondent covering Lori and Tavush marzes, while away in Yerevan, was informed that her work camera had been stolen from her Vanadzor apartment. The journalist noted that the camera contained no contents, and none of her other equally valuable belongings had been taken. She believed the incident was most likely connected to her professional activities and could be an attempt to warn, intimidate and silence her. Journalistic organizations released a statement on the incident.[[102]](#footnote-102) On March 29, 2024, criminal proceedings were initiated in connection with the incident under paragraph 2 of Article 254 (3) of the RA Criminal Code, with Karineh Simonyan recognized as a victim. In response to the CPFE's inquiry, the RA Prosecutor's Office stated that along with evidentiary and procedural actions, Karineh Simonyan's reception had also been arranged. The preliminary investigation remains ongoing.

**On April 4**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *Ruben Khachatryan, former Director of Yerevan Zoo, v. journalist Narineh Kirakosyan,* with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and compensate the damage.

The lawsuit had first been filed on September 24, 2019, then returned upon the plaintiff’s request and refiled on November 13. It was caused by the journalist’s August 25 Facebook post, in which she stated that Ruben Khachatryan had caused significant damage to the animals by declaring himself a sole leader (For details see the CPFE’s reports for 2019-2024 in the *Reports* section on khosq.am).

In 2024, hearings in the case were also held on April 29, July 9, October 15, November 26, and December 20, with the next one scheduled for January 21, 2025.

**On April 4**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *NA Speaker Alen Simonyan v. Mediahub Ltd. (the founder of Mediahub.am),* with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation in the amount of 1 million AMD.

The lawsuit filed on April 19, 2023 was caused by an article titled “Government Signs a 79 Million AMD Deal with Alen Simonyan's Brother’s Company Without Tender,”[[103]](#footnote-103) published on April 13 on the above-mentioned website.

In 2024, a court hearing for the case was also held on June 13, and on July 4, the court ruled to fully reject the lawsuit. The court also ruled to oblige the plaintiff to compensate the media’s attorney fee in the amount of 150 thousand AMD. The ruling was not appealed and entered into legal force.

**On April 5**, the judge in the Administrative Court of Appeal was replaced in the case of *MELTEX Ltd., the founder of A1+ TV Company, v. RA Government and Commission on Television and Radio,* and on April 10, the case was accepted for proceedings for a new examination.

As a reminder, the lawsuit was filed with the Administrative Court on December 18, 2019, with the plaintiff demanding the annulment of the acts related to 7 broadcasting licensing tenders held in 2003. *Armenia TV CJSC, Mo TV Media Holding CJSC, ArmenAkob Ltd., AR Television Company Ltd. and Husaber CJSC* were involved in the case as third parties. On April 6, 2021, the court rejected the lawsuit, and on June 1, 2022, the Civil Court of Appeal rejected the plaintiff's appeal. *MELTEX Ltd.* subsequently appealed to the Court of Cassation. On November 10, 2023, the cassation appeal was upheld, and the case was sent to the Court of Appeal for a new examination.

In 2024, a court hearing in the case was also held on September 18, during which the plaintiff presented arguments regarding the discrimination in the licensing tender. It is noteworthy that the lower court did not address this issue at all. The judges of the Administrative Court of Appeal focused on whether the plaintiff had the right to appeal to the court based on those grounds and with such a demand. The plaintiff argued that they did, but if the Court of Appeal determined that the administrative proceedings did not envisage that, they would file a motion to appeal to the Constitutional Court to declare the RA Administrative Offenses Code unconstitutional. Notably, at the most recent session, the representative of the Government stated that they had no position regarding the case, as the process did not concern them. The date of the next court session was set for February 5, 2025.

**On April 6,** Judge Rubik Mkhitaryan of the Appellate Criminal Court filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Pastinfo Ltd.* (the founder of *Pastinfo.am* news website), demanding a public apology for defamatory and offensive expressions and compensation totaling 6 million AMD. The lawsuit was caused by the publication of two articles on the website on March 6 and 12 titled “Dismissed Judges Spied on as Karen Andreasyan Seeks to Appoint His Preferred Candidate to Supreme Judicial Council”[[104]](#footnote-104) and “Authorities Shift Tactics: Rubik Mkhitaryan Withdraws Supreme Judicial Council Bid.”[[105]](#footnote-105)

On June 4, following a redistribution process, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings, with no further developments recorded by the end of the year.

**On April 6**, Judge Rubik Mkhitaryan of the Appellate Criminal Court filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Zhoghovurd* *Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.*, demanding to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay 3 million AMD in compensation.

The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “Chaos in the Judicial System Continues: Rubik Mkhitaryan Withdraws Supreme Judicial Council Candidacy After ‘Correspondence’ Scandal,” published on March 12 on *Armlur.am* website owned by *Zhoghovurd* *Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.*[[106]](#footnote-106) On April 17, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings, with February 17, 2025 set as the date for a court hearing.

**On April 8**, the RA Government, in a letter responding to an application from *Aravot* daily, refused to accredit journalist Hripsimeh Jebejyan instead of another accredited journalist from the media. The *Information Disputes Council*, in its expert opinion, qualified this action as unlawful.[[107]](#footnote-107) According to the *IDC*, the Government violated the right of *Aravot* daily to disseminate information and ideas, protected by Article 42 of the RA Constitution and Article 10 of the European Convention.

**On April 8,** the plaintiff in the case of *citizen Narineh Abrahamyan v. journalist Kristineh Aghalaryan* (with *International Media Holding Ltd.,* the founder of *Lurer.com* news website, later also involved as a defendant) filed an appeal against the ruling of the general jurisdiction court. The appeal was returned on May 23 and refiled on June 13.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on June 2, 2017, with the plaintiff demanding a public refutation of the information considered defamatory, along with the payment of compensation, was caused by an article titled “Meghri Medical Center vs. SRC,” published on *Lurer.com* on May 17, 2017. The article referenced Narineh Abrahamyan as having been at the center of multiple scandals during her professional career.[[108]](#footnote-108) (For details see the CPFE’s annual reports for 2017-2024 in the *Reports* section on khosq.am). On January 25, 2024, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit, mandating the payment of 200 thousand AMD to Kristineh Aghalaryan as reasonable attorney’s fee.

On November 15, the court rejected the plaintiff's appeal, leaving the initial verdict unchanged, and ordering the confiscation of additional 70 thousand AMD from Narineh Abrahamyan in favor of Kristineh Aghalaryan as attorney's fee. The plaintiff appealed this decision to the Court of Cassation on December 19.

**On April 9**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Davit Galstyan, Advisor to the former RA Minister of Defense, v. First Armenian News Website Ltd. and journalist Nver Mnatsakanyan.*

The lawsuit was filed on March 23, 2021, with the plaintiff demanding compensation for the damage caused to his honor and dignity, and a public refutation of the information considered defamatory. It was triggered by an assertion made by host Nver Mnatsakanyan during an interview on the *First Armenian News* portal on February 23, 2021. The host particularly stated, “But look where the trajectory leads—today an advisor to the Minister of Defense is under arrest on corruption charges...”

In 2024, hearings in the case were also held on May 10 and July 16, while on August 5, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit. The court justified this decision by noting that the defendant neither ever mentioned the plaintiff's name nor provided any other identifying data during the interview. Furthermore, the remarks did not meet the criteria necessary to be considered as defamation. By the end of the year, no appeal had been filed against the judicial act.

**On April 9,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *citizen Mher Terteryan v. Hraparak Daily Ltd.,* with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation for a remark tarnishing his business reputation. The plaintiff is the son of Hayk Terteryan, the RA Honorary Consul in Aktobe Region of Kazakhstan.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on February 2, 2021 was caused by an article titled “The Pig Farm of the RA Honorary Consul in Kazakhstan Has Caused an Ecological Disaster,” which was published on December 9, 2020 on *Hraparak.am*.[[109]](#footnote-109) The article particularly claimed that the carcasses of diseased pigs had been buried in the land surrounding the Terteryan family’s pig farm, causing enormous damage to the communities near the city of Aktobe.

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on June 12 and September 3. On September 24, the court ruled to leave the lawsuit unexamined, obliging the plaintiff to pay 100 thousand AMD as reasonable attorney's fee. The rejection was grounded in the fact that the plaintiff, despite having been properly notified, failed to attend 2 consecutive court hearings without submitting a motion for postponement. The case was moved to the court archive.

**On April 11**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevanruled to reject the lawsuit filed by *Luyser CJSC v. Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.*, in which the plaintiff demanded to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation.

The lawsuit filed on July 11, 2023 was caused by an article titled “Luyser Residential Buildings Yard Teeming with Snakes and Scorpions: Residents Sound the Alarm,”[[110]](#footnote-110) published on June 8 on *Armlur.am* website, owned by *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.*

On April 26, the plaintiff filed an appeal with the appellate court, which on September 24, upheld the appeal, overturning the verdict of the first instance court and remanding the civil case to the same court for a complete re-examination. The lawsuit was subsequently accepted for proceedings on December 27, with a court hearing scheduled for May 27, 2025.

**On April 15**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a preliminary hearing in the case of the ruling *Civil Contract party v. Hayeli Club NGO* *(the founder of Hayeli.am website),* with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation.

As a reminder, on April 25, 2023, the *Civil Contract* party filed **4** lawsuits with similar claims against *168 Zham, 24 News, NewsAM Ltds. and Hayeli Club NGO*, caused by a news piece published on *168.am, 24news.am, News.am and Hayeli.am* websites on March 26, the day of elections (legally defined as a no-campaign day) in Sisian and Ani communities. In this context, the media were accused of engaging in counter-propaganda against the *Civil Contract* party by reproducing a statement by the *Citizen's Decision* party pre-election headquarters under the headline “Civil Contract Gives Out Bribes”. Notably, the publication was later removed from the websites.

In the lawsuit against the founder of ***Hayeli.am****,* the motion to secure the claim by imposing a line on the property was granted. In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on July 9 and November 5, with the next one scheduled for March 19, 2025.

Hearings in the case against the founder of ***168.am*** were held on May 6, July 24, October 3, December 2, 2024, with the next one scheduled for January 27, 2025.

Hearings in the case against the founder of ***24news.am*** were held on May 2 and September 4, 2024. On September 25, the court ruled to uphold the lawsuit, obliging the media to publish a refutation and pay 200 thousand AMD as compensation for defamation, along with an equal amount for attorney's fee. On October 28, the media appealed the verdict, but the appeal was returned on November 20 for the elimination of deficiencies. It was refiled on December 13 and accepted for proceedings on December 20.

A hearing in the case against the founder of ***News.am*** was held on July 16, 2024, while on August 12, the court issued a rulingin favor of the media, thereby rejecting the lawsuit initiated by the *Civil Contract* party. The plaintiff was obliged to pay 150,000 AMD as reasonable attorney's fee. On September 30, the plaintiff filed an appeal with a higher court, which was returned on October 21. The appeal was refiled on November 19 and accepted for proceedings on December 10.

**In relation to the last two conflicting rulings, the *Information Disputes Council* released an expert opinion.** [[111]](#footnote-111)

**On April 16,** Hripsimeh Jebejyan, a correspondent of *Aravot.am* news website, interviewed Khachatur Sukiasyan, a deputy from the *Civil Contract* faction in the National Assembly. In the course of the conversation, the journalist specifically noted that there exists a belief among citizens that “Khachatur Sukiasyan engaged in stealing and avoided paying taxes...” and that not everyone is equal before the law.

The deputy responded harshly, declaring, “You, your parents, your relatives, your boss are all thieves... Go ask your boss ‘Mr. Chief, why were you being financed by the KGB for years? Was it for spreading lies, fabricating falsehoods against people, and destabilizing this country?’” Journalistic organizations issued a statement regarding the incident.[[112]](#footnote-112)

**On April 16**, citizen Arev Vratsyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Oragir Media Ltd.* (the founder of *Oragir.news* website) and *ATV's* “Ajar Windows” program. The plaintiff demanded to refute the information considered to be defamatory and insulting, which tarnished her honor, dignity and business reputation, issue an apology and compensate the damage caused.

The lawsuit was triggered by a video about Arev Vratsyan, a teacher at Masis School No. 4, which was aired in the aforementioned program on January 24, 2024. The video accused her of discriminatory attitude and indecent conduct towards children from Artsakh.[[113]](#footnote-113) The lawsuit was also caused by an article titled “Violence Alone Is Sufficient to Issue a Reprimand and Dismiss the Teacher,”[[114]](#footnote-114) published on *Oragir.news* on December 16, 2023.

After being returned twice due to the need for eliminating deficiencies, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on July 30. A court hearing was held on November 29, with the next one scheduled for February 11, 2025.

**On April 18**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Olymp Construction Ltd. v. Hetq Ltd. (the founder of Hetq.am),* with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation.

The lawsuit filed on June 29, 2020 was caused by an article titled “The Construction Company Developing a New Building Refuses to Hand Over the Pumping Station to the Water Committee: Residents Are Complaining,” published on *Hetq.am.*[[115]](#footnote-115) Although the author of the article incorporated a comment from the representative of the construction company as well, the plaintiff disagreed with the residents’ complaint and took the matter to court.

On July 19, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit, obliging the plaintiff to pay 100 thousand AMD as the media's attorney fee. On September 12, the plaintiff appealed the verdict to a higher court, which returned the appeal on October 14.

**On April 18,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Europe in Law Association NGO, its President Lousineh Hakobyan, and senior legal advisor Tigran Yegoryan v. Hraparak Daily Ltd. and journalist Davit Sargsyan*, with the plaintiffs demanding compensation for the damage caused to their honor and dignity.

The lawsuit filed on October 7, 2021 was caused by an article titled “An Apparent Agent Network Disguised as a Human Rights Defenders’ Community,” published on *Hraparak.am*.[[116]](#footnote-116) The article particularly claimed that along with other human rights NGOs and defenders, the plaintiffs were also part of a network of foreign agents, whose hidden and, at times, explicit objective was to orchestrate a change in Armenia’s government rather than to fight for human rights.

In 2024, a court hearing was also held on November 4. On November 25, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit, obliging the plaintiffs to pay 150 thousand AMD in favor of the media as reasonable attorney's fee. The rejection was grounded in the fact that *Europe in Law Association NGO* was not a proper plaintiff, while *Hraparak Daily Ltd.* was not a proper defendant. Additionally, according to the court, the other plaintiffs failed to provide sufficient evidence that the disputed statements referred to them.

On December 27, the plaintiffs filed an appeal.

**On April 19**, *Pallada Tsaghkadzor Ltd.* filed a lawsuit against *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.* with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan, demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay 12 million AMD in compensation for the damage caused to their honor, dignity or business reputation.

The lawsuit was caused by an article published on March 5 on *Armlur.am* website owned by *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.,* as well as its eponymous pages on social media. The piece titled “Government Efforts to Assist A. Simonyan’s Godfather Thwarted by Nature”[[117]](#footnote-117) specifically read: “Pallada Tsaghkadzor multifunctional residential complex is facing serious construction problems. According to information obtained by *Zhoghovurd* daily, issues began last year, when during the excavation of the foundation, a river was discovered at the intended foundation site, located over 20 meters below the surface, causing disruptions to the construction process. Additionally, the area is impacted by landslides, too.”

Following several returns for the elimination of deficiencies, the court accepted the lawsuit for proceedings on July 17. On November 7, the case proceedings were terminated due to the plaintiff’s decision to withdraw the lawsuit.

**On April 19**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Medisar LLC v. NewsAM Ltd.,* the founder of *News.am* website, with the plaintiff demanding compensation for the damage caused to their business reputation.

The lawsuit filed on July 2, 2021 was caused by an article titled “Excess Profits from the Purchase of a DNA Identification Device for War Victims? Uncovering New Facts from the Questionable Deal”[[118]](#footnote-118) published on May 29, 2021 on the above-mentioned website (For details see the CPFE’s reports for 2021-2024 in the *Reports* section on khosq.am).

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on September 11, October 30, November 13, and December 11. During the last hearing, the defendant filed a motion, requesting that the lawsuit be left unexamined on the grounds that the plaintiff had not approached the media for an out-of-court resolution of the dispute. The court dismissed this motion, highlighting that the point raised by the defendant was not an obligatory requirement for resolving the dispute. In its ruling issued on December 27, the court rejected the lawsuit, obliging the plaintiff to pay 100 thousand AMD to the media as attorney's fee.

**On April 20**, *Public Radio* Vanadzor correspondent Lusineh Sargsyan was unable to arrive on time and attend the meeting with the RA Prime Minister organized at Stepanavan School No. 1.[[119]](#footnote-119) According to the journalist, the issue arose due to the lack of coordination between Government staff and law enforcement, with her name being left off the list of invitees for an unknown reason. As a result, the journalist was unable to provide the editorial office with information in a timely manner.

**On April 23**, the Court of General Jurisdiction held a preliminary hearing in the case of *Yerevan State University Foundation v. Oragir Media Ltd.* (the founder of *Oragir.news* website), with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to publicly refute the factual data considered defamatory, and pay compensation for defamation.

The lawsuit filed on October 10, 2023 was caused by an article titled “STEM—Another Disgrace from YSU,”[[120]](#footnote-120) published on *Oragir.news* on September 5, 2023. According to the piece, the project for the YSU-affiliated school with a strong emphasis on natural sciences and mathematics failed due to the enrollment of only 36 students. Additionally, the article claimed that the allocated funds had not been used as intended.

In 2024, a court hearing in the case was also held on September 10, with the next one scheduled for January 30, 2025.

**On April 25**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a preliminary hearing in the case of *Samvel Ghukasyan, Head of Kentron Administrative District, v.* *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd*., with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to issue a public apology, publish the court’s verdict, refute the information considered defamatory, as well as pay compensation.

The lawsuit filed on September 27, 2023 was caused by two articles titled “PHOTO: Kentron District Head Buckles Down to the CC Campaign with His Staff, Putting Aside Other Problems”[[121]](#footnote-121) and “Kentron District Head and Precinct Officers: Who Was Responsible for the Abovyan 22 Break-In? – ‘Zhoghovurd’.”[[122]](#footnote-122) Both articles were published in *Zhoghovurd* daily and on *Armlur.am* website—owned by *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.*—on August 26 and September 9, 2023, respectively.

The next court hearing was set for January 15, 2025.

**On April 30**, *Argo Farm Ltd.* filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Investigative Journalists NGO,* demanding a refutation of the information in an article, published on April 6 on *Hetq.am*, a website owned by the NGO. The article was titled “The Grey Market of Medications: Why Some Unregistered Drugs Continue to Be Sold.”[[123]](#footnote-123) The plaintiff specifically challenged the following statement: “We purchased Voltaren, Sirdalud and Claforan from the “36.6” pharmacy located at Khorenatsi 72, which is part of the chain, owned by Argo Pharm Ltd. Despite being marked with a stamp, the medications remain unregistered, and the importers have failed to obtain an import certificate from the Ministry of Health (...).”

On May 13, the lawsuit was returned due to deficiencies in documents. It was refiled on May 15 and accepted for proceedings on May 24. A court hearing was set for February 18, 2025.

# **On May 2**, the police shut down all roads leading to Kirants, and also prohibited journalists and cameramen from entering.[[124]](#footnote-124) As a result, they were unable to document the locals’ complaints about the issues related to the demarcation taking place in the village.

**On May 2**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of shooting at the window of journalist Tehmineh Yenokyan's apartment.

As a reminder, On March 31, 2023, the court received a criminal case from the Prosecutor's Office of Avan and Nor Nork Administrative Districts, in which charges were brought against citizen Hayk Grigoryan.[[125]](#footnote-125)

In 2024, court hearings were also held on May 17, August 27, September 20, October 23, and December 2, with the next one scheduled for January 10, 2025.

**On May 3,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing as part of the retrial in the case of *Van-Charter Ltd. v. Armenia TV CJSC*, with the plaintiff demanding to refute the defamation and pay compensation.

The lawsuit, filed on May 12, 2020 was caused by a viewpoint about the company, which was shared during the aforementioned TV Company’s “Sur Ankyun” program on April 12, 2020. This viewpoint specifically addressed the incorrect records and insufficient quality of alcohol-based sanitizer production.[[126]](#footnote-126) On January 29, 2021, the court rejected the lawsuit, determining that the defendant had not intended to tarnish the plaintiff's business reputation through its publication. As a result, the disputed expressions were qualified as a value judgment. On March 5, the plaintiff appealed to the Civil Court of Appeal, where the appeal was upheld, and the case was sent back for retrial.

In 2024, a court hearing in the case was also held on November 25, with the next one scheduled for February 12, 2025.

**On May 7,** the Court of Cassation ruled to uphold the appeal filed by the defendant in the case of *Garik Sargsyan, former Governor of Ararat Marz, v. 168 Zham Ltd.,* challenging the decision of the appellate court, which had rejected their complaint against the verdict of the first instance court. By the initial verdict issued on August 2, 2021, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan had partially upheld the claim, obliging *168 Zham Ltd.* to publish a refutation on their *168.am* website, pay 700 thousand AMD as compensation, and 18 thousand AMD as state duty.

The lawsuit filed on December 20, 2019, with the plaintiff demanding compensation for the damage caused to his honor and dignity and a public refutation of the information considered defamatory, was triggered by an article titled “Governor of Ararat Involved in Yet Another Incident,” published on *168.am*. According to the piece, a fight took place involving Garik Sargsyan, where a barber named Serob was beaten for refusing to cut the governor’s hair out of turn, and was later barred from continuing his business in Nor Kyank community.[[127]](#footnote-127)

The Court of Cassation overturned the February 11, 2022 ruling of the Civil Court of Appeal and sent the case back for a new examination. This decision was grounded in “the lower courts’ failure to carry out a comprehensive examination of the case and assess the factual details.”

In the course of the retrial, a hearing in the case was held in the court of first instance on July 30, 2024. On October 17, the court made a decision to leave the lawsuit unexamined due to the plaintiff’s failure to attend 2 consecutive hearings, despite being notified.

**On May 9,** during the march organized by the “Tavush for the Motherland” initiative, on Amiryan Street in Yerevan, the professional activities of *Xosnak.am* news website representatives were obstructed, and violence was used. In particular, journalist Naneh Israelyan sought a comment from Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan, who was leading the march, but the latter urged the journalist to leave. The Archbishop's supporters, in turn, used foul language and profanities against the journalistic crew. As reported by the RA Investigative Committee, criminal proceedings were initiated on the incident under Article 237 (1) of the RA Criminal Code *(Forcing a journalist to disseminate or refrain from disseminating information or otherwise obstructing their legitimate professional activities).* In response to the CPFE's inquiry, the Prosecutor's Office reported that the preliminary investigation was ongoing, with necessary procedural and evidentiary actions being carried out.

**On May 10**, from the podium at Yerevan's Republic Square, Bagrat Galstanyan, the leader of the opposition movement, called the individuals behind *Araratnews.am* website “scum” and “murderers” for distorting his statements.[[128]](#footnote-128)

**On May 13**, the Court of Appeal ruled to dismiss the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *Armenian National Interests Fund (ANIF) CJSC* v. *Pastinfo Ltd.* against the ruling of the court of general jurisdiction that had rejected the lawsuit.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on August 2, 2022, with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the media to refute the information tarnishing their business reputation and pay monetary compensation, was caused by an article published on *PastInfo.am* website, owned by *Pastinfo Ltd*. The article claimed that *ANIF*, in violation of the RA Law “On Freedom of Information,” kept the contact information of foreign members of the Board of Directors confidential, and that the editorial office’s inquiries sent to the Fund's office did not reach the intended recipients.[[129]](#footnote-129) On April 11, 2023, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan rejected the lawsuit, and the plaintiff filed an appeal.

The appellate court left the first instance verdict intact, ruling that 100 thousand AMD should be confiscated from the plaintiff as reasonable attorney's fee related to the appellate proceedings.

The case was moved to the court archive.

**On May 13,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *French University in Armenia Foundation v. French citizen Leo Nicolian* (with *BAC TV Ltd.* involved as a third party), with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation for the remarks tarnishing their business reputation.

The lawsuit, filed on July 27, 2023 was caused by Leo Nicolian's July 12 interview on *BAC TV* online media, during which he accused Anne Louyot, the former Ambassador of France to Armenia, and the French University in Armenia of engaging in corrupt dealings.[[130]](#footnote-130)

Court hearings in the case were also held on June 10, September 24, and December 4, 2024, with the next one scheduled for February 4, 2025.

**On May 14**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Deputy Hayk Sargsyan v.* *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.,* with the plaintiff demanding compensation for the damage caused to his honor, dignity and good reputation through defamation.

The lawsuit filed on December 10, 2021 was caused by an article titled “MP Hayk Sargsyan Was Near the Former MP’s House on the Day of the Murder, Waiting for Tuy,”[[131]](#footnote-131) published on November 17 in *Zhoghourd* daily and on *Armlur.am* news website, both owned by *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.* The day after the publication, the deputy submitted a refutation text to the media. However, the editorial team found inconsistencies in the facts cited by the deputy and incorporated this information into the commentary published alongside the refutation text.[[132]](#footnote-132)

On May 29, 2024, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit, reasoning that the plaintiff had failed to point out and substantiate what specific factual data the information he qualified as defamation contained in terms of violation of existing legal requirements, manifestations of unfair conduct, as well as engaging in behavior contrary to ethical norms in personal, public or political life. The judicial act entered into legal force.

**On May 14**, Haykaz Jomardyan, the commander of the Yerevan Police Special Forces, called Hasmik Arakelyan, a reporter from *Antifake.am,* a “blasphemer” and “scum,” after the journalist reprimanded police officers for speaking disrespectfully to the parents of fallen servicemen.[[133]](#footnote-133) The journalist filed a crime report, leading to an internal probe against Haykaz Jomardyan.

In response to the CPFE’s inquiry, the RA Prosecutor’s Office stated that no criminal proceedings had been initiated regarding the incident.

**On May 15**, lawyer Tigran Yegoryan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against Gagik Yeghiazaryan and *Hraparak Daily Ltd*., demanding compensation for the damage caused to his honor and dignity.

The lawsuit was caused by an April 12 news piece titled “Gagik Yeghiazaryan from ‘Sasna Tsrer’ Accuses Yegoryan of Embezzling the 2,500 EUR He Received as Compensation,” published on *Hraparak.am*, owned by *Hraparak Daily Ltd.*[[134]](#footnote-134)

On May 23, the lawsuit was returned due to deficiencies. It was refiled on June 12 and accepted for proceedings on June 17. Hearings in the case were held on July 12, September 11, with the next one scheduled for January 21, 2025.

**On May 16,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Yeghitsi Luys-BH Ltd. v. Public TV Company of Armenia and Hakob Shahgaldyan, Head of Charentsavan Community*, with the plaintiff demanding a refutation of the information considered defamatory.

The lawsuit filed on January 10, 2020 was caused by a report covering issues related to the use of community-owned territories, which was aired on November 30, 2019 within “News 60 Minutes” program of the *First Channel of Public TV*.[[135]](#footnote-135) The plaintiff considered Hakob Shahgaldyan’s comment on the quality of their work to be defamatory. *Yeghitsi Luys-BH Ltd.* demanded from the *Public TV* to refute the information considered defamatory in a live broadcast and sought 2 million AMD in compensation from Hakob Shahgaldyan, the Head of Charentsavan Community (For details see the CPFE’s annual reports for 2020-2024, in the *Reports* section on khosq.am).

In 2024, a court hearing was also held on November 14, where the court granted the plaintiff's motion to supplement the lawsuit’s subject matter. The next hearing was scheduled for March 12, 2025.

**On May 16**, in Kirants village of Tavush Marz, Gegham Nazaryan, a deputy from the National Assembly’s “Armenia” faction, insulted *NewDay.am* editor Ani Gevorgyan, displayed aggressive behavior, and demanded that she stop the livestream.[[136]](#footnote-136) The incident occurred when Nazaryan was attempting to persuade local residents struggling against the demarcation to open the blocked Kirants-Voskepar road. Upon noticing the camera, the deputy became visibly irritated, rudely demanding from Ani Gevorgyan to turn it off. He further accused her of executing orders and making manipulations.

**On May 17**, the court ruled in favor of approving the amicable settlement agreement between the parties in the case of *Yerevan Deputy Mayor Gevorg Simonyan v. Pastinfo Ltd.* Accordingly, the defendant was obligated to publish the text requested by the plaintiff, while the plaintiff, in turn, was obligated to drop all remaining claims.

The lawsuit filed on April 13, 2023, with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to refute the information tarnishing his honor, dignity and business reputation and pay monetary compensation (a total of 6 million AMD), was caused by an article titled “Interesting Documents Discovered in Gevorg Simonyan's Office Search: Trouble Deepens for Tigran Avinyan,” published on March 11 on *Pastinfo.am*.[[137]](#footnote-137) The website reported that, based on the information available to them, law enforcement officers had discovered lists stored on Gevorg Simonyan's computer, which were related to the involvement of personnel from polyclinics and ambulance services in the Yerevan Council of Elders elections.

**On May 21**, *Pride Systems Ltd.* and its director, Mher Terteryan, who is also the leader of the *United Motherland* party, filed a lawsuit against *Hraparak Daily Ltd.* with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan, demanding to oblige the media to refute the information considered defamatory and provide compensation for the damage caused to their honor, dignity, and business reputation.

The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “Why Armenian Drones Were Never Produced,” which was published in *Hraparak* daily and *on Hraparak.am* website on April 13.[[138]](#footnote-138) Alongside personal information, the media also made the following claims: “In 2021, “Pride Systems” was granted a license for the production of combat weapons and was supposed to produce drones. The license expired in February of this year, but the company failed to produce the drones it had promised.” It is noteworthy that Suzan Simonyan, the author of the article, sent a request to Terteryan seeking clarification, but he refused to answer the journalist’s questions. Later, *Hraparak* received a refutation text from Terteryan, and on May 14, the media published an article titled “How to Refute the Irrefutable: Failure to Execute State Order Cannot Be Kept Secret.”[[139]](#footnote-139) The lawsuit was returned on June 4 for the elimination of deficiencies in the documents, and no new lawsuit was filed. The case was moved to the court archive.

**On May 22**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Ara Mkrtchyan, Head of Kasakh Community of Kotayk Marz, v. Yelena Zohrabyan, Head of Public Relations Department at the Urban Development, Technical Standards and Fire Safety Inspectorate, as well as against the* *Public TV Company of Armenia CJSC*. In his claim, the plaintiff sought a public refutation of the information considered defamatory and compensation for the damage caused to his honor and dignity.

The lawsuit filed on December 7, 2021 and refiled on January 10, 2022 after being returned, was caused by a report aired within the *Public TV Company’s* “Lurer” news program on November 2. The report titled “NA Deputy Anna Mkrtchyan’s Father, Kasakh Community Head, Gifted a Part of the Community to His Son,” delved into the plaintiff’s alleged involvement in corrupt transactions, which had been uncovered through investigations conducted by the Inspectorate.[[140]](#footnote-140)

In 2024, a hearing in the case was also held on September 25. On October 16, the court rejected the lawsuit, concluding that the factual details presented regarding the plaintiff were value judgments and did not tarnish his honor and dignity.

**On May 22,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Union of Journalists of Armenia NGO*, *its President Satik Seyranyan and 168 Zham Ltd. v. Civic.am news website and Ashot Melikyan, Chairman of the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression NGO.* The plaintiffs demanded that the court oblige the defendants to refute the information considered defamatory, publish the refutation text, and pay compensation for the damage caused to their honor, dignity and business reputation.

The lawsuit filed on February 28, 2022 was caused by an interview with Ashot Melikyan published on *Civic.am* on January 31. In the interview, addressing the January 29 congress of the UJA, Melikyan specifically stated: “It was not a congress of the Union of Journalists, but rather an alliance of Robert Kocharyan and Serzh Sargsyan's propagandists, who had gathered to plan their next moves and elect a leader for the organization serving their camp...”

In 2024, a hearing in the case was also held on December 27, with the next one scheduled for February 28, 2025.

**On May 22**, at the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan, a redistribution took place in the case of *Photolure LLC (news agency) v. Skizb Media Kentron Ltd. (the founder of 1in.am news website).* On June 6, the case was accepted for new proceedings.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on October 20, 2023, with the news agency demanding to stop the use of copyrighted content, was caused by the illegal publication of the agency's photos on *1in.am.*

On August 28, the court granted the motion filed by *Photolure LLC* to modify the subject of the lawsuit. As a result, the subject of the lawsuit was supplemented with the following claims: to compel the defendant to stop the reproduction, dissemination and any other use of photographic works of *Photolure LLC* news agency, to compensate 2 million 400 thousand AMD calculated as double the honorarium, 550 thousand AMD as reasonable attorney's fee, along with the state duties paid by the plaintiff.

The judicial act is set to be released on January 17, 2025.

**On May 23,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *NA Deputy Khachatur Sukiasyan v. Alternative Media Ltd. (the founder of Alternativ.am website) and Media Plus Ltd. (the founder of Yerevan.today website)*, with the plaintiff demanding a public apology, publication of the court ruling, refutation of the information considered defamatory, as well as payment of compensation.

The lawsuit filed on January 5, 2023 was caused by an article titled “‘Dark Clouds’ of Velvet ‘Racketeering’ Loom Over Kirov Factory: Factory Auctioned in Their Own Bank Bought by the Sukiasyans’ Driver,”[[141]](#footnote-141) which was published on *Alternativ.am* on December 5, 2022. With reference to the original source, the article was also reprinted by *Yerevan.today* under the following headline: “The Sukiasyans’ Driver Purchases the Factory Mortgaged in Their Bank: Alternativ.am.”[[142]](#footnote-142)

On September 27, 2024, the case was redistributed. It was accepted for new proceedings on October 7, with a court hearing scheduled for February 3, 2025.

**On May 24**, Vazgen Galstanyan (also known as Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan, the leader of the “Tavush for the Motherland” movement) filed a lawsuit against journalist Davit Levonyan and the *Civil Contract* party (the founder of *Civic.am* news website) with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan. The plaintiff demanded to refute the information he deemed defamatory. The following claims were shared on April 29 via the defendants’ YouTube channels and Davit Levonyan’s Facebook page: “He is selling homeland, tries to drag Armenia into a war, in exchange for millions of dollars from the Kremlin, he led an entity to bankruptcy, squandered funds and may have used them for personal indulgence, he tried to dethrone Garegin II, serves as a KGB agent, incites war on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, attempts a coup, he has received an order from the KGB, he promotes the Russian-Azerbaijani interests, he has turned the church into a business.”[[143]](#footnote-143)

The lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on June 6. Court hearings were held on September 6 and November 11, with the next one scheduled for January 22, 2025.

**On May 27**, citizen Arev Vratsyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Mediahub.am* news website, demanding to refute the information tarnishing her honor, dignity and business reputation, issue an apology for insult and compensate the damage caused. The lawsuit was triggered by a piece titled “I Was High on Cocaine: Teacher from Masis Exhibited Hatred towards Artsakh Residents (Video),” published on *Mediahub.am* on April 25. According to the piece, Arev Vratsyan, an Armenian language and literature teacher at Masis School No. 4, was displaying a marked bad attitude towards children from Artsakh.[[144]](#footnote-144)

After two prior returns, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on August 26. A court hearing in the case was held on November 18, with the next one scheduled for February 26, 2025.

**On May 30,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *NA Deputy Hayk Sargsyan v. Armenuhi Hovsepyan, founder of Newspress.am website*, with the plaintiff demanding compensation for the damage caused to his honor, dignity and good reputation through defamation and insult.

The lawsuit filed on April 13, 2020 was caused by posts and livestreams shared on the defendant’s Facebook page on March 20, which, according to Hayk Sargsyan, contained multiple remarks directed at him. These remarks were made in an ironic and offensive tone, with the use of criminal slang and street jargon. Notably, one of these remarks read: “Tell little Hayk, who used to hold Nikol’s water bottle, that I have collected some fine bottles for him to hold,” etc.

On June 28, the court ruled to leave the lawsuit unexamined due to the plaintiff’s failure to attend two consecutive court hearings, despite having been notified. Added to that, the plaintiff had not submitted a motion to postpone the examination of the case or have the case resolved in his absence. Meanwhile, the defendant had not filed a motion to continue the proceedings. Through this ruling, the court also obliged the plaintiff to pay 70 thousand AMD for the defendant's attorney’s fee.

**On May 31**, *Park Group Ltd.* filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Makarun MA Ltd.,* the founder of *Araratnews.am* website, demanding to refute the information in the May 7 piece titled “Yerevan Park Staff Threatened with Dismissal.”[[145]](#footnote-145) Specifically, the plaintiff’s demand concerned the claim that the employees of *Yerevan Park* were forced to participate in the May 9 rally organized by Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan, with the threat of dismissal if they refused. The plaintiff also sought 6 million AMD as compensation for tarnishing their business reputation and defamation.

On June 13, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. By the end of the year, no court hearing date had been set.

**On May 31**, the Administrative Court of Appeal fully rejected the plaintiff's appeal in the case of *Armenian Second TV Channel Ltd. v. Commission on Television and Radio,* leaving the first instance court's decision in legal force.

The lawsuit was filed on March 15, 2021, with the plaintiff demanding to obligate the *Commission on TV and Radio* to recognize *Armenian Second TV Channel Ltd.* as the winner in the tender for licensing the use of national broadcasting slots in the public multiplex and grant the channel a license. *ArmNews CJSC, Shark Ltd., Multi Media Kentron TV CJSC, Armenia TV CJSC, A-TV Ltd., Skizb Media Kentron Ltd., Free News Ltd., Meltex Ltd., Public TV Company of Armenia CJSC, Husaber CJSC, Shant Ltd.,* and the Ministry of High-Tech Industry were involved as third parties. On August 30, 2022, the Administrative Court had partially upheld *Armenian Second TV Channel Ltd.’s* motion to apply a measure to secure the claim by prohibiting the CTRfrom conducting a tender for national broadcasting slot in the public multiplex until the judicial act resolving the merits of the case took effect. In its ruling of March 17, 2023, the court rejected the lawsuit, and also revoked the measure to secure the claim. On May 25, 2023, the plaintiff filed an appeal with the Court of Appeal.

**On May 31**, citizen Erik Yeghinyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Lori Marz (based in Stepanavan) against *Ararat TV Company* and Anna Sirunyan, demanding confiscation of one million AMD from Anna Sirunyan for tarnishing his honor, dignity and good reputation, as well as publication of a refutation. The lawsuit was caused by the statements made on the air of the TV Company alleging that the plaintiff had used violence against citizen Sirunyan and had orchestrated a fraudulent scheme by selling the latter’s apartment. The plaintiff argued that the journalist had failed to hear his perspective and had published defamatory information.

On June 7, the lawsuit was returned due to deficiencies. The plaintiff filed an appeal against this decision with the Civil Court of Appeal, which upheld it on July 17. The case was subsequently accepted for proceedings in the court of first instance on August 23. Hearings in the case were held on September 30, December 6, with the next one scheduled for January 31, 2025.

**On June 3**, lawyer Melineh Zakaryan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Shamshyan Media Ltd.,* demanding that the defendant issue an apology, publish a refutation, and pay compensation of 1.5 million AMD for offensive remarks, 2.5 million AMD for defamation, as well as 160 thousand AMD in state duty. The lawsuit was caused by a piece titled “Armenians, for centuries known to the world for their respect for the elderly, have now vanished: A 72-year-old grandmother in critical condition is about to appear on the street. The lawyer is unwilling to halt the eviction for several days.”[[146]](#footnote-146) It was published on May 30 on *Shamshyan.com* website and its eponymous Facebook page. The plaintiff specifically challenged the statements claiming that she had threatened the employees of the Compulsory Enforcement Service to proceed with the eviction, and had boasted about filing a complaint to the highest authorities, fully aware of the woman’s severe condition, with her life already hanging in the balance.

On June 12, the lawsuit was returned due to deficiencies in the documents. It was refiled on June 13 and accepted for proceedings on June 20. No other procedural actions were taken by the end of the year.

**On June 3**, Hovsep Khurshudyan, the head of the *Free Citizen NGO*, filed a lawsuit against *Asekose Ltd.* with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan, demanding a refutation of the information considered defamatory and compensation of 1 million AMD for the damage caused to his honor and dignity.

The lawsuit was caused by a video published on May 1 on *Asekose.am* website and on the eponymous YouTube channel, both owned by *Asekose Ltd.,* titled “Hayk Manasyan Confronts Hovsep Khurshudyan: You’re Either Spreading False News or Spying.”[[147]](#footnote-147) Hayk Manasyan, a physician and public figure, criticized the news spread by Khurshudyan, according to which, over the previous 5 days, there had been a rise in the volumes of Russian ruble exchange at currency exchange points in Tavush Marz. Manasyan argued that Khurshudyan could not have access to such information, implying that the latter, most probably, just wanted to circulate news that “The Kremlin was distributing money among the local puppets.”

On June 13, the lawsuit was returned due to deficiencies. It was refiled on June 26 and accepted for proceedings on July 9. A court hearing was held on October 7, with the next one scheduled for February 11, 2025.

**On June 4**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Livenews.am* reporter Artur Hovhannisyan against journalist Levon Sardaryan, with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to make an apology for insult and publicly refute the information considered defamatory.

The lawsuit filed on June 22, 2020 was caused by Levon Sardaryan's May 21 Facebook post regarding a *Livenews.am* May 21 article titled “The Situation in Armenia Is Terrible: Survive if You Can, Die if You Can’t”. Sardaryan quoted the article headline and wrote: “...I will agree to live in a barn if anyone can prove that the owner of this website is a human after all this. In my subjective view, however, I'll pass the pleasure of living in a barn to G.I.” (Referring to Garnik Isagulyan, whose name is tied to the ownership of *Livenews.am* website - CPFE).

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on September 25 and December 25, with the next one scheduled for January 21, 2025.

**On June 6**, NA Deputy Hrachya Hakobyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Yerkir Editorial Office Ltd.,* demanding a refutation of defamatory information and payment of 500,000 AMD as compensation. The lawsuit was caused by a video titled “The Money-Monger Revolutionaries: Hrachya Hakobyan,”[[148]](#footnote-148) which was published on May 15 on *Yerkir Editorial Office Ltd.’s Yerkir.am* news website, its eponymous Facebook page, and “Yerkri Lurer” (Country’s News) Telegram channel. The video piece discussed the deputy’s real estate purchases in recent years, his substantial involvement in drug trafficking within Armenia, and engagement in cultivating drug plants in the USA. The plaintiff deemed all these statements defamatory. A court hearing was held on December 4, with the next one scheduled for January 30, 2025.

**On June 7,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan ruled to leave unexamined the case of NA Deputy *Sofia Hovsepyan v. Anna Gevorgyan, editor of Haykakan Zham news and analytical agency* due to the plaintiff’s failure to attend two consecutive court hearings, despite being notified.

The lawsuit filed on July 29, 2020, with the plaintiff demanding compensation for the damage caused to her honor, dignity and business reputation, as well as refutation of defamation, was triggered by a series of publications on *Hzham.am*: specifically, “They Have Concerns that Money Could Be Handed Out During Elections” from March 13,[[149]](#footnote-149) “Corruption with a Velvet Touch” from June 1,[[150]](#footnote-150) and “Civil Contract Members Reflect on Their Achievements” from July 10.[[151]](#footnote-151)

On July 4, the plaintiff filed an appeal against this decision with the appellate court.

**On June 10**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Project Inter-Invest Ltd. v. Hraparak Daily Ltd. and journalist Suzan Simonyan*, with the plaintiff demanding a refutation of the information tarnishing their business reputation and monetary compensation.

The lawsuit filed on April 25, 2024 was caused by a piece[[152]](#footnote-152) titled “Dark Clouds Loom Over the Head of the Authorities’ Favorite Oligarch,” published on March 6 on *Hraparak.am* website owned by *Hraparak Daily Ltd.* According to it, Narek Nalbandyan, the founder of the plaintiff company, evaded taxes through machinations, invented sly schemes to dodge state taxes and eventually got caught.

On August 1, the court ruled to leave the lawsuit without examination. The decision was grounded in the plaintiff’s failure to attend 2 consecutive court hearings, despite being notified. The court also obliged the plaintiff to pay AMD 200,000 as remuneration for the defendant's attorney. On August 13, the plaintiff filed an appeal against the verdict with the appellate court.

**On June 10,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *NA Deputy Hayk Sargsyan v. Armdaily News Agency Ltd*., with the plaintiff demanding compensation of the damage caused to his honor, dignity and good reputation through defamation and insult.

The lawsuit filed on November 25, 2020 was caused by an article titled “URGENT: ‘My Step’ Deputies Intimidated by Criminal Authorities Ara and Alik Banduryans from Noratus: Mediaport,” published on *Armdaily.am* on November 20. The controversy centered around the expression “the holder of the bottle,” used in reference to the deputy.[[153]](#footnote-153) On June 2, 2022, the court ruled to leave the case unexamined, citing the plaintiff's failure to attend 2 successive consecutive hearings, despite being notified. The Court of Appeal upheld the plaintiff's appeal against this ruling.

On September 27, 2024, the case was redistributed. It was re-accepted for proceedings by the court of first instance on October 11, with a court hearing scheduled for February 12, 2025.

**On June 10**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan ruled to partially uphold the lawsuit filed by Suren Papikyan, the former Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure and current Minister of Defense, against *Anna Gevorgyan Private Entrepreneur* (the founder of *Hzham.am* news website).

The lawsuit filed on June 22, 2020, with the plaintiff demanding a public refutation of the information considered defamatory and payment of compensation, was caused by an article titled “Civil Contract Party Representatives Show Interest in the Real Estate Market,” published on May 15, 2020 on *Hzham.am.* The piece specifically read that marz governors, led by Minister Suren Papikyan, were purchasing properties in the capital city “without reaching their pockets”, and provided services, demanding apartments as donations.[[154]](#footnote-154) On December 17, the motion to apply a measure to secure the claim by placing a lien on the defendant's property was upheld.

On March 31, 2022, the court had ruled to reject Suren Papikyan's lawsuit. However, following the plaintiffs appeal to a higher court, the ruling was overturned and the case was returned to the same court for a new examination.

This time, the first instance court obliged the defendant to publish a refutation, pay 4 thousand AMD as state duty, and annulled the measure to secure the claim. On July 19, however, the courtobliged the defendant to pay an additional 290,000 AMD as reasonable fee for the plaintiff's attorney. The case was moved to the court archive.

**On June 10,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *businessman Ashot Khlghatyan v. lawyer Lernik Hovhannisyan* (with *Investigative Journalists NGO* involved as a third party), with the plaintiff demanding to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation.

The lawsuit filed on October 17, 2022 was caused by an open letter to the RA Prime Minister, which was published on September 8 on *Hetq.am* website, owned by the NGO.[[155]](#footnote-155) The publication claimed that a gas station belonging to the lawyer's client was unlawfully run by Ashot Khlghatyan, the plaintiff.

On June 28, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit. The judicial act entered into legal force.

**On June 12,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a preliminary hearing in the case of *former Yerevan Deputy Mayor (currently Mayor) Tigran Avinyan v. 168 Zham Ltd. and journalist Davit Sargsyan*, with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendants to issue an apology, refute of the information tarnishing his honor, dignity and business reputation and pay monetary compensation.

The lawsuit filed on March 31, 2023 was caused by a video titled “Tigran Avinyan: A Newly Discovered Wealthy Figure,” published on *168.am* website’s YouTube channel on February 25. In the video, Davit Sargsyan depicted Avinyan as an official benefiting from unlimited administrative resources and steadily amassing wealth. The journalist further accused Avinyan of engaging in economic and political corruption.[[156]](#footnote-156)

On May 2, the court accepted the lawsuit for proceedings and granted the plaintiff's motion to secure the claim, which involved placing a lien on the journalist’s and the media’s property and bank accounts in the amount of 9 million AMD. The decision was annulled after journalistic organizations issued a statement criticizing it.

In 2024, hearings in the case were also held on October 9 and December 17, with the next one scheduled for January 22, 2025.

**On June 12**, Alen Simonyan, the Speaker of the National Assembly, filed a lawsuit against *Yerkir Editorial Office Ltd.,* demanding 1 million AMD as compensation for defamatory information, 410,000 AMD for court expenses, and publication of a refutation. The lawsuit was caused by a video titled “The Money-Monger Revolutionaries: Alen Simonyan,” which was published on May 14 on *Yerkir Editorial Office Ltd.'s Yerkir.am* website, its eponymous Facebook page, and “Yerkri Lurer” (Country’s News) Telegram channel. Although it was later removed from the Internet, the court had earlier granted the plaintiff's motion to secure the evidence. On June 24, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. A court hearing was held on November 15, with the next one scheduled for January 15, 2025.

**On June 18**, Irina Mkrtchyan, a correspondent for “Lurer” news program of the *Public Television Company*, faced backlash from the opposition movement led by Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan. Opposition members were outraged by the journalist’s report on the June 12 events near the parliament building, claiming that individuals speaking in the report justified the police that had used special means against the demonstrators. They further argued that the report failed to include any viewpoint from opposition representatives. The Telegram channel of the movement calling for ousting the government shared a photo of Irina Mkrtchyan, using offensive remarks to accuse her of feeding the people with false information. Regarding this matter, Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan said that they had condemned the journalist’s lies.

**On June 24**, citizen Edgar Manukyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *168 Zham Ltd.*, demanding to publish a refutation. The lawsuit was caused by an interview with Canadian-Armenian Aris Papikyan, published on May 25 on *168.am* website and the YouTube channel, both owned by *168 Zham Ltd*. The interview carried the headline “For 600 Years, the Turks Didn’t Manage to Bury the Armenian People—Today, the Authorities of Armenia Want to Do It with Their Own Hands: Canadian-Armenian Aris Papikyan.”[[157]](#footnote-157) The interview contained a particular remark claiming that “a former employee of Pashinyan’s family-run newspaper named Edgar Manukyan, who is also known for his divisive role in the Canadian Armenian community, arranged some affairs in Canada for Pashinyan's family.”

The lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on July 4. There is no available information regarding the court hearings.

**On June 27**, *KOK System Ltd.* filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against businessman Samvel Matinyan and *Tavush Media Ltd.*, demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation. The lawsuit was caused by the information about *KOK System Ltd.* shared on May 28 by Samvel Matinyan on the air of *Tavush TV*, owned by *Tavush Media Ltd*. Specifically, Matinyan mentioned that a section of a bridge had collapsed due to the construction of a hydroelectric power plant (HPP) by *KOK System Ltd.,* one of the waterways had been blocked by the directors of the HPP to enable construction works, which had led to the destruction of a pillar. The plaintiff demanded to oblige *Tavush Media Ltd.* to publish Samvel Matinyan’s refutation, confiscate 1 million AMD from Samvel Matinyan in favor of *KOK Systems Ltd.* as compensation for defamation, an additional 1 million AMD as reasonable attorney's fee, and 70,000 AMD as court costs.

On July 9, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. At the October 30 hearing, the court distributed the burden of proof. The next hearing was scheduled for January 16, 2025.

**On July 11**, RA Deputy Military Prosecutor Vahagn Muradyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Hraparak Daily Ltd.,* demanding a refutation of the information considered defamatory. The lawsuit was caused by the article “Accusations Against the Deputy Military Prosecutor,” published on June 18 on *Hraparak.am* website[[158]](#footnote-158), owned by *Hraparak Daily Ltd*. According to the piece, businessman Varsham Gharibyan accuses Muradyan of owing him 19 million AMD. The dispute dates back to 2005 and has been bouncing from court to court in an endless cycle.

The lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on July 25. Court hearings were held on October 14 and December 9, with the next one scheduled for March 31, 2025.

**On July 12**, NA Speaker Alen Simonyan criticized *Zhoghovurd* daily on his Facebook page, accusing the media of acting on instructions. The official specifically highlighted that the media had published false, untrue information about his brother.[[159]](#footnote-159) Simonyan’s remarks were punctuated with rude and offensive expressions, and he threatened to take legal action.

**On July 16**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held the trial in the case of

*businessman Petros Tovmasyan against Civil Contract party’s Civic.am website,* with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the media to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation.

The lawsuit filed on October 4, 2021 was caused by an article titled “Taguhi Tovmasyan’s ‘Superman’ Brother Runs a Brewery ‘Single-Handedly’, Produces 1000 Liters of Beer Monthly: SRC Ignores Tax Evasion Hypothesis,”[[160]](#footnote-160) published on the website on September 1. The piece alleged that the businessman engaged in tax evasion, which the State Revenue Committee failed to investigate.

In 2024, a court hearing in the case was also held on December 19, with the next one scheduled for March 20, 2025.

**On July 24**, Alen Simonyan, the Speaker of the National Assembly, filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.*, demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay 2 million AMD in compensation. The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “A Contract Worth 4 Billion 674 Million Drams Signed Between MTAI and Alen Simonyan’s Brother’s Company,” published on July 11 on *Armlur.am* website, owned by *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.,* in which accusations were raised about murky deals in the state procurement system. Later, the media updated the report by adding the word “former”[[161]](#footnote-161) before the word “company”.

The lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on August 5.

**On August 5**, citizen Vahagn Ghazaryan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Kotayk Marz (based in Yeghvard) against Yeghiazar Baghdasaryan and *Oragir Media Ltd.,* demanding a public apology for the insulting expression, a refutation of the information considered defamatory, and payment of compensation.

The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “Trees Heavy with Fruit Were Sawn Down: Tracking the Tree Massacre in Garni,”[[162]](#footnote-162) published on June 26 on *Oragir.news.* According to the piece, due to a financial dispute with a fellow villager, Vahagn Ghazaryan, along with his lawyer Gegham Margaryan, and 2 other persons entered Yeghiazar Baghdasaryan's garden and cut down 126 trees, causing, according to preliminary estimates, a damage of 11 million AMD. The lawsuit, having been once returned, was accepted for proceedings on September 26. Court hearings were held on October 21, November 28, with the next one scheduled for January 9, 2025.

**On August 5**, lawyer Gegham Margaryan filed a lawsuit against the same defendants **on the same case** **and with identical demands**. This lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on September 16. Court hearings were held on October 30 and December 2, with the next one scheduled for January 22, 2025.

**On August 13**, the Civil Court of Appeal rejected the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *Demi Pharm Ltd. v. Investigative Journalists NGO* *(the founder of Hetq.am)* against the ruling of the court of general jurisdiction, which had rejected the lawsuit. Thus, the verdict of the first instance remained unchanged.

The lawsuit filed on June 10, 2021, with the plaintiff demanding to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation, was caused by an article[[163]](#footnote-163) titled “Children's Vitamins Registered with Violations by the National Institute of Health,” published on May 6, 2021 on *Hetq.am*. According to the publication, *Demi Pharm* assured the media that children's vitamins were already state-registered, trying to buy time for conducting the non-existent registration. The National Institute of Health reportedly completed the registration in a suspiciously short timeframe, accompanied by various violations.

The case was moved to the court archive.

**On August 20,** at the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan, a redistribution took place in the case of *Naira Nahapetyan, a former member of the Yerevan Council of Elders and a representative of the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA), v. First Armenian News Website Ltd.* The court later accepted the lawsuit for proceedings on August 30.

The lawsuit, in which the plaintiff demanded to oblige the defendant to refute the information considered defamatory, was initially filed on February 27, 2023. It was caused by a video titled “RPA Member Naira Nahapetyan Accused: January 24 Chronicle,” which was published on *1in TV’s* YouTube channel. The video contained official reports stating that Nahapetyan was accused of large-scale tax evasion.[[164]](#footnote-164) According to Astghik Sapeyan, the editor of the website, the video was the legal chronicle of the day, which also incorporated news from the press about Naira Nahapetyan.

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on November 4 and December 12, with the next one scheduled for February 6, 2025.

**On August 20**, businessman Arsen Papoyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Shamshyan Media Ltd.,* demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay 6 million AMD in compensation. The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “Aharon Papoyan, the official representative of the Development Foundation of Armenia in Russia, on 22.06.2024, openly embezzled most of the property belonging to Top Market LLC, valued at approximately 10 million AMD. The embezzlement was carried out through his brother, Arsen Papoyan, from the 331st area of Tsarav Aghbyur 55/5 building in Avan, previously owned by their family,”[[165]](#footnote-165) published on June 29 on *Shamshyan.com* website owned by *Shamshyan Media Ltd.*

The lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on August 27.

**On September 9**, in the National Assembly, opposition Deputy Ishkhan Saghatelyan showed disrespectful attitude in response to the questions of *Civic.am* reporter Davit Levonyan, specifically saying: “Every time you publish something stupid and seek someone's comment,” “You are lying: if I sue you, you along with your owners, team, patrons will face judgment for the next 400 years.”[[166]](#footnote-166) The journalist's question was about the ARF-Dashnaktsutyun 2022 circular regarding Russia's role in the future of Artsakh and Armenia.

**On September 9**, the Court of Cassation partially upheld the appeal challenging the appellate court's decision in the case of *citizen* *Zaven Hakobyan v. Skizb Media Kentron Ltd., the founder of Zhamanak daily.* As a result, the court overturned the decision that had dismissed the plaintiff’s appeal against the first instance court’s verdict. The lower court had rejected the motion to modify the method and procedure for executing the ruling in the upheld claim. The Court of Cassation remanded the case to the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan for a new examination.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on July 13, 2020, with the plaintiff demanding compensation for the damage caused to his honor and business reputation, along with a public apology and refutation from the defendant, was triggered by an article titled “Remnants of the Vanetsyan Era: Who Are Zaven and Sos Hakobyans?” published in *Zhamanak* daily on June 13. The article specifically claimed that while Artur Vanetsyan served as Head of the NSS, “his godson, Zaven Hakobyan, infamous for being extremely corrupt, was promoted from an operative inspector to the head of the highly profitable Araratyan Customs. However, following Vanetsyan’s removal from office, he barely managed to make his way out of the system.” [[167]](#footnote-167)

On July 19, 2022, the court had partially upheld the lawsuit, obliging *Zhamanak* daily to publish an apology, pay the plaintiff 200 thousand AMD as compensation, 100 thousand AMD as attorney’s fee, and 8 thousand AMD as state duty.

On November 25, 2024, the case was accepted for new proceedings. On December 5, the court granted the motion to modify the method and procedure for executing the ruling in the case, which entailed clarifying the text of the apology to be published.

**On September 16**, in the National Assembly, Gegham Manukyan, a deputy from “Armenia”faction, stated in response to *Civic.am* reporter Davit Levonyan's question that the faction would not answer his “libelous” questions.[[168]](#footnote-168)

**On September 17**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *NewsAM Ltd. v. Dareskizb Ltd.,* the founder of *Haykakan Zhamanak* daily.

The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “Ararat, Armnews, H2, News.am, Yerkir Media, Fake Profiles: Which Media Have Been “Bought” by Kocharyan?”[[169]](#footnote-169) published on August 21, 2018 in *Haykakan Zhamanak*. According to the plaintiff, their business reputation was damaged by a number of statements about *News.am* in the publication, as well as by the article’s headline. *NewsAM Ltd.* demanded 200 thousand AMD in compensation from the founder of *Haykakan Zhamanak*.

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on November 6 and 28, with the next one scheduled for March 27, 2025.

**On September 20**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *Arayik Harutyunyan, the Chief of Staff at the Office of the RA Prime Minister, v. Hraparak Daily Ltd.,* with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation.

The lawsuit filed on August 19, 2022 was caused by an article titled “Hrach Indoors, Avinyan Outdoors: Clashes Averted,” published on July 31 on *Hraparak.am* website owned by *Hraparak Daily Ltd.* The article highlighted that Arayik Harutyunyan and his brother—who owns a private company and takes over the management of big-budget projects[[170]](#footnote-170)—also play an active role in matters related to managing the city.

In 2024, a hearing in the case was also held on December 3. On December 24, the court ruled to partially uphold the lawsuit, obliging the media to publish a refutation and pay 226 thousand AMD, with 200 thousand for the damage caused through defamation, and 26 thousand as state duty.

**On September 26**, businessman Davit Yeremyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Zhoghovurd daily Ltd.,* demanding compensation in the amount of 6 million AMD for defamation and 1 million 680 thousand AMD for court costs, along with the publication of a refutation.

The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “Businessman Yeremyan’s Dinner with the Prosecutor Leads to Case Terminations,”[[171]](#footnote-171) published with an accompanying video on *Armlur.am* on September 4. The article contained accusations against the businessman, alleging him of making corrupt deals with the authorities.

The lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on October 14. No court hearing date was set by the end of the year.

**On September 27**, at Yerablur Military Pantheon, in response to the question posed by *NewDay.am* editor Ani Gevorgyan on what he had done for the motherland and with what conscience he came to Yerablur while being labeled as a Turkish-Azerbaijani agent, Armen Khachatryan, a deputy from the NA “Civil Contract” faction said: “Just go away... you foreign agent! Stop provoking on this day. This is a holy site, not your place, it is not a place for profaners.”[[172]](#footnote-172) Arpi Davoyan, a deputy from the same faction, in her turn, reproached Ani Gevorgyan for the behavior unbefitting a journalist. To be fair, however, it should be noted that the aggressive behavior of the media editor and the wording of her questions were actually not in line with the norms of journalistic ethics.

**On September 27**, at Yerablur Military Pantheon, *Armlur.am* reporter Christineh Musheghyan asked Hakob Aslanyan, a deputy from the National Assembly’s “Civil Contract” faction, about the country’s development and the lessons learnt after the war. Without concealing his anger, the deputy called the journalist and all those who do not notice the country’s progress as “blind”.[[173]](#footnote-173)

**On September 27**, at the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan, a redistribution took place in the case of *Samvel Kharazyan v. Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.* and its editor Knar Manukyan due to a change of judge. It was accepted for proceedings on October 9.

The lawsuit filed on September 26, 2022, with the plaintiff demanding compensation for the damage caused to his honor and dignity was triggered by an article titled “The Corrupt System Remains the Same Today: New Disclosures from the Head of the State Supervision Service,”[[174]](#footnote-174) published on August 25, 2022 on *Armlur.am*. The piece revisited the fact that Samvel Kharazyan was implicated in a criminal case alongside multiple other officials. It further stated that the editorial team remained dedicated to pursuing the exposure of corruption linked to the case.

In 2024, a court hearing in the case was also held on December 4, with the next one scheduled for January 16, 2025.

**On October 4**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan ruled to approve the settlement agreement signed between Vladimir Karapetyan, the RA Ambassador to Ukraine, and *Hraparak Daily Ltd.,* under which the plaintiff withdrew the lawsuit. The judicial act entered into legal force.

As a reminder, the lawsuit was filed on February 2, 2023, with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation. It was caused by an article titled “I Request that Sick People Remain Silent Here: Vagharshak Harutyunyan Has Scolded Vladimir Karapetyan,” which was published on December 30, 2022 in *Hraparak* daily and later appeared on *Hraparak.am* website. According to the article, a heated exchange took place between the ambassadors regarding the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.[[175]](#footnote-175)

**On October 15**, the RA Administrative Court held a hearing in the case of *Armenian Second TV Channel v. Commission on Television and Radio (with Boon Scientific and Cultural Foundation as a third party).* The plaintiff demanded to oblige the CTR to recognize *Armenian Second TV Channel Ltd.* as the winner in the tender of March 24, 2022 for licensing the use of the capital city’s slot in the public multiplex and to grant the channel a license.

The lawsuit was filed on September 19, 2022 and was rejected by the court on November 5, 2024, with no appeal filed against this decision.

**On October 15**, in the RA National Assembly, Hovik Aghazaryan, a deputy from the “Civil Contract” faction, came across Knar Manukyan, a correspondent for *Zhoghovurd* daily and *Armlur.am* accredited in the parliament. During their encounter, Aghazaryan expressed dissatisfaction with the interview she had published featuring him and insulted her. According to the journalist, the deputy called her a “scoundrel”, “disgusting” and used hate speech. Journalistic organizations issued a condemning statement regarding the incident.[[176]](#footnote-176)

**On October 15**, citizen Arev Vratsyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Ararat and Vayots Dzor Marz (based in Masis) against *Civilitas Foundation* (the founder of *Civilnet.am* news website), demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation. The lawsuit was caused by an article published on the website on April 26, 2024, alleging that the plaintiff, a teacher at Masis School No. 4, had used violence against children displaced from Artsakh. On November 27, the lawsuit was returned for the correction of deficiencies. The plaintiff refiled the lawsuit on December 12, but it was once again returned on December 26.

**On October 15**, Tigran Simonyan, the acting Rector of *Armenian State Institute of Physical Culture and Sport Foundation,* filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.,* demanding a public refutation of the information considered defamatory and compensation for the damage caused to his honor and dignity. The lawsuit was caused by an article published in *Zhoghovurd* daily on September 7, which accused Simonyan of abuse of office, leading to substantial financial harm to the state. On October 25, the lawsuit was returned for the correction of deficiencies, and by the end of the year, it had not been refiled.

**On October 31**, an incident occurred in the National Assembly between Vahe Makaryan, a correspondent of *MediaHub.am* news website, and NA Speaker Alen Simonyan. Initially, their conversation unfolded smoothly, but it soon escalated into mutual accusations, culminating in a verbal altercation with street-like expressions. Security officers intervened to stop the conflict. As a result, the journalist was stripped of his accreditation. Journalistic organizations issued a statement regarding the incident.[[177]](#footnote-177)

**On October 31**, Olya Aleksanyan, the acting headmaster of Goris School No. 2, filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Oragir Media Ltd.,* demanding to oblige the defendant to refute the information considered defamatory and pay 1 million AMD in compensation. The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “Parents Complain: Students Are Subjected to Beatings and Profanity in Goris Schools, Headmasters Deny the Claims,”[[178]](#footnote-178) which was published on October 3 on *Oragir.news* website, owned by *Oragir Media Ltd.* The court accepted the lawsuit for proceedings on November 19, with no hearing date set.

**On November 4**, *Armlur.am* correspondent Kristina Musheghyan tried to inquire from Hovik Aghazaryan, a member of the National Assembly’s “Civil Contract” faction, about the internal discord within the ruling elite. The deputy declined to comment in an unusual manner, stating, “You are permanently disqualified,”[[179]](#footnote-179) referring to the earlier complaints against the website’s reporter Knar Manukyan, as described in the October 15 incident.

**On November 6**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a preliminary hearing in the case brought by *Europe in Law Association NGO*, lawyers Lousineh Hakobyan, Tigran Yegoryan, human rights defender Zhanna Aleksanyan, *Skizb Media Kentron Ltd.,* and NA Deputy Arman Babajanyan against *Veto* socio-political movement, Narek Malyan, *Armnews TV Company CJSC,* and *Yerevan.today* news website, with the plaintiffs seeking compensation for the damage caused to their honor and dignity.

The lawsuit filed on January 29, 2021 was caused by an article titled “They Work Hand in Hand in Turkish Interests,”[[180]](#footnote-180) published on *Yerevan.today* on October 24, 2020, alongside Narek Malyan’s film with identical content,[[181]](#footnote-181) aired on *ArmNews TV* on December 5. The article targeted human rights organizations, labeling them as “Sorosists” who “are laying the foundations for the destruction of Armenia.”

The next hearing date was set for January 22, 2025.

**On November 14,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan ruled to reject the lawsuit filed by Mher Terteryan, the leader of the *United Motherland* party, against lawyer Hakob Charoyan (with *Live News Media Ltd.* involved as a third party), where the plaintiff demanded a refutation of the information considered defamatory and compensation of the damage caused to his honor, dignity and business reputation.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on October 22, 2021 was caused by statements made in the June 30 issue of *Livenews.am’s* “Ditaket” program cycle. In particular, it was claimed that “the leader of the *United Motherland* party Mher Terteryan tried to kill his wife.” Additional details about his personal life were also disclosed, with his ex-wife, Naira Terteryan, and her attorney, Hakob Charoyan, discussing the matter during the program.[[182]](#footnote-182)

The court grounded its decision to reject the lawsuit in the fact that the plaintiff had not attended two consecutive court hearings and had not filed a motion to postpone the examination of the case or to have the case resolved in his absence. The decision was not appealed and entered into legal force.

**On November 18**, Lusineh Dayan, Advisor to Yerevan Mayor, filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *International Media Holding Ltd.,* demanding a public apology, a refutation of the information considered defamatory, and 3 million AMD in compensation. The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “Company Owned by Kentron District Head and Avinyan’s Advisor’s Close Associate Wins 3 Billion Dram Tender,”[[183]](#footnote-183) published on October 17 on *International Media Holding Ltd.'s Lurer.com* website. The article claimed that Yerevan Municipality signed single-source procurement contracts for event organization with a company headed by Rudik Ter-Galstyan, who maintains close ties with Kentron administrative district head Petros Petoyan and Mayor’s advisor Lusineh Dayan. On December 4, the lawsuit was returned for the correction of deficiencies in documents. The plaintiff's motion to postpone the state duty payment was rejected. No further developments were recorded by the end of the year.

**On November 22**, Yerevan Municipality’s Information Department prevented *Factor TV* online media from covering a competition aimed at filling vacant positions in community service, even though the event was supposed to be public.[[184]](#footnote-184) Taron Gevorgyan, the acting Head of the Department, reasoned that applying 2-3 days in advance was necessary to cover the competition. When the journalist pointed out that the committee was set up only a day before the competition, Taron Gevorgyan continued to claim that prior application was required, referencing an order that did not contain any provisions regarding such a requirement.

**On December 10**, Yerevan Mayor Tigran Avinyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Oragir Media Ltd.,* demanding a public apology, refutation of the information considered defamatory, and payment of compensation. The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “Tigran Avinyan Buys Former Ministry Building for High-Rise Construction,”[[185]](#footnote-185) published on November 29 on *Oragir.news* website, owned by *Oragir Media Ltd.* On December 24, the court accepted the lawsuit for proceedings, rejecting the plaintiff’s motion to place a lien on the defendant’s property in the amount of the claim.

**On December 10**, Yerevan Mayor Tigran Avinyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Civilitas Foundation*, demanding a public apology, refutation of the information considered defamatory, and payment of compensation. The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “The Avinyans’ Business Benefitting Indirectly from State Funds,”[[186]](#footnote-186) published on November 13 on the Foundation’s *Civilnet.am* website. The article claimed that as Tigran Avinyan advanced politically, his family-affiliated business flourished, in part through indirect benefits from state programs. On December 24, the court rejected the plaintiff’s motion to postpone the state duty payment and returned the lawsuit. Following this, Tigran Avinyan filed a new lawsuit against the media on December 27, paying the state duty.

**On December 17**, during a public hearing regarding the construction of a hydroelectric power plant in Vahagnadzor community of Lori Marz, Edik Yeghoyan, the administrative head of the community, showed disrespectful attitude towards Gevorg Aslanyan and Lusineh Sargsyan from the *Citizen’s Voice* online media platform *(cvmedia.am)*, accusing them of disrupting the normal course of the public hearing. He also threatened to prohibit filming next time.[[187]](#footnote-187) According to Lusineh Sargsyan, the official was displeased with her questions.

**On December 18**, Yerevan Mayor Tigran Avinyan, during a debate with former Mayor Hayk Marutyan on *Factor TV* online media, stated that Armenian media has turned into a big garbage dump, adding, “Anyone can say whatever they want, without facing consequences… some, not all of them.” He made this comment after Marutyan recalled *Civilnet.am’s* investigative publication about possible corruption deals involving Avinyan.[[188]](#footnote-188)

**On December 18**, Yerevan Mayor Tigran Avinyan filed a lawsuit against *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.,* demanding a public apology, refutation of the information considered defamatory, and payment of compensation. The lawsuit was caused by an article published on December 11 in the daily and on *Armlur.am* website, both owned by *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.* According to the article, some members of the ruling *Civil Contract* party reminded the Prime Minister of media publications about Avinyan. They further emphasized that Avinyan was appointing former bribe-takers to positions, one after another, questioning “if he isn’t inclined towards corruption, then why would he act that way?”[[189]](#footnote-189) The website claimed that the Mayor retaliated, by threatening those who had voiced such an opinion about him.

As of the end of the year, the lawsuit had not been accepted for proceedings.

**On December 26**, Yerevan Municipality prohibited *Factor TV* online media representatives from entering the Mayor’s year-end press conference.[[190]](#footnote-190) Prior to that, the editorial office had received an invitation addressed to the media’s chief editor, but since press conferences are covered by journalists, the event was attended by a journalist and a cameraman. According to *Factor TV*, before the press conference, Avinyan held a brief closed-door meeting with the chief editors of media outlets. After this meeting, the press conference started, in which, in fact, journalists from those media outlets whose chief editors had attended the closed-door meeting were allowed to participate. As a result, *Factor TV* was only able to rebroadcast the Municipality’s livestream from the event, with no opportunity to participate and ask questions.

**On December 26**, the State Supervision Service sent a demand for a refutation to *Hetq.am* regarding an investigation the media had published the day before. The article focused on the compliance check conducted at *Armenia Medical Center*. The SSS claimed that a number of details in the piece were untrue and contained biased, non-objective assessments. *Hetq.am* published the SSS statement,[[191]](#footnote-191) along with their response,[[192]](#footnote-192) highlighting that the media had earlier submitted an inquiry to the SSS regarding the issue, but the agency had avoided answering a number of questions that were vital to the case.

**On December 27**, *Factor TV’s* journalistic crew was denied entry to cover the competition held to select the head of the first territorial department responsible for drafting urban development documents at Yerevan Municipality’s Department of Architecture and Urban Development.[[193]](#footnote-193) The editorial office had earlier submitted a written request to the Municipality’s Information Department for permission to cover the competition, but the competition committee opposed it and essentially hindered the work of the media. As a result, the publicity and transparency of the competition were not ensured, which goes against the Law “On Local Self-Government.”

**On December 28**, citizen Artur Danielyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Oragir Media Ltd.,* demanding compensation of one million AMD for defamation. The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “$2 Million Interest-Free Loan: The Price for the Silence of Former Activist Artur Danielyan,”[[194]](#footnote-194) published on December 19 on *Oragir.news* website owned by *Oragir Media Ltd.* According to the article, Artur Danielyan, the founder of *Adekvad* order and a former activist, was granted a 2 million dollar interest-free agricultural loan from the Government and went off the radar.

On December 30, the lawsuit was assigned to a judge.

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

*In 2024, the CPFE recorded 122 cases of violation of the right to receive and disseminate information. In 4 of these cases, lawsuits were filed against state bodies in the Administrative Court, with plaintiffs demanding to oblige them to provide information. The violations recorded during the period under review, as well as new developments related to the events from past periods are presented below in chronological order.*

**On January 3,** *Sputnik Armenia* news agency submitted an inquiry to the RA Ministry of Internal Affairs, requesting information regarding offenses registered in the country on New Year's Eve. On January 15, the ministry responded with a delay, stating that they required an additional 1 month for a response. However, they ultimately failed to provide any response.

**On January 5**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *Union of Informed Citizens NGO, the founder of Fip.am fact-checking platform, v. Public Television Company of Armenia CJSC,* regarding the plaintiff’s demand to oblige the defendant to respond to an inquiry. The lawsuit was filed on August 11, 2023, after the plaintiff did not receive responses to the following questions: why, among all the deputy mayors, specifically Tigran Avinyan was interviewed ahead of the Yerevan Council of Elders elections, and whether the *Public TV* would provide a similar interview opportunity to the mayoral candidates from other political forces.

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on February 7, June 5, and November 27. On December 13, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit, citing the plaintiff’s failure to prove a crucial fact necessary for the resolution of the case. Specifically, the court found that the requested information was not related to data obtained and formed in accordance with the legally established procedure regarding a person, object, fact, circumstance, event, occurrence, or phenomenon. Thus, the plaintiff bore the negative consequences of failing to prove this point.

The following inquiries sent by **Fip.am** to the Ministry of Internal Affairs remained without a response:

**On January 9**, *Fip.am* sent an inquiry to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, requesting information on the number of criminal cases (initiated criminal proceedings) instituted since 2017 under the illicit enrichment article of the RA Criminal Code, the number of accused individuals involved, cases sent to court with an indictment, and verdicts that had entered into force.

In another inquiry sent **on the same day**, the website sought to verify whether the Ministry of Internal Affairs held information regarding the ban on the operation of any vehicle under paragraph 6.5 of Appendix 2 to the 2007 Decision 955-N of the RA Government.

The inquiry sent to the same ministry **on January 11** concerned the number of vehicles listed on the balance sheet of the state bodies of the Republic of Artsakh as of September 20, 2023, and sought to determine how many of those vehicles were under the administration of the state bodies of the Republic of Armenia as of the date the inquiry was sent.

In an inquiry submitted **on February 20**, the website sought information about the actions taken to address the identified software problem (the types of violations were not specified) in the “Road Control Armenia” application since December 26, 2023, and the demands the Ministry of Internal Affairs had presented to the service provider. Notably, a follow-up to this inquiry was submitted on June 10, and the response was provided on time, on June 14.  
 **On January 11**, *Pastinfo.am* received a response dated January 3 to an inquiry sent to the Investigative Committee on December 26 of the previous year. The inquiry concerned the 32 Armenians repatriated from Azerbaijani captivity on December 13, 2023. The IC response lacked a number of clarifications essential to the media, particularly those concerning the torture of the captives, as well as their abduction. Consequently, on January 22, 2024, the media sent another written inquiry to the same body. Once again, no clear response was provided. The Investigative Committee claimed to have already responded to the inquiry. On January 30, the inquiry was submitted for the third time, yet no response was received whatsoever.

**On January 15**, *Sputnik Armenia* applied to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, requesting information regarding the driving licenses of individuals in Armenia who had lost their upper or lower limbs during the 2020 44-Day War and the military actions that followed. No response was received within the timeframe prescribed by law, nor was any notice given about the necessity of additional time.

**On January 15**, *Factor TV* submitted an inquiry to the Judicial Department to obtain information on the budget of the film “Delayed Justice and Judicial Corruption: When Will It End and How?”[[195]](#footnote-195) commissioned by the agency. Despite possessing the requested information, the state agency did not provide it to the editorial office, but instead published the information on its Facebook page, thereby depriving the media of the chance to prepare and publish an exclusive piece.   
  
**On January 16**, the Civil Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan terminated the proceedings in the case of *Freedom of Information Center v. Civil Contract party* on the grounds of the approval of the settlement agreement signed between the parties.

As a reminder, the lawsuit was filed on December 4, 2023, with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to provide the list of donations received during the party’s fundraising evening.

The defendant party committed to providing the requested information and paying a state duty of 20 thousand AMD.

**On January 17**, *Freedom of Information Center (FOICA)* sent an inquiry to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports to ascertain whether the ministry had published the annual statistics on inquiries for information received during 2023, in accordance with Article 7 (3.11) of the RA Law “On Freedom of Information”. The NGO also requested clarification on whether the ministry had used the unified statistical template developed by FOICA. While the ministry provided a response within the designated timeframe, it was incomplete in terms of content, with some questions left unaddressed.

**On the same day**, FOICA also submitted **the same inquiry** to the Ministry of Finance. The ministry provided an incomplete response: they did not indicate whether they had published the annual statistics, failed to provide the link to the statistics, leaving the question about the use of the FOICA template unaddressed.

**On January 19**, FOICA submitted the same inquiry to the State Revenue Committee, whose response was considered incomplete: the SRC did not address the question concerning the annual statistics, provided a link to their monthly reports and left unanswered the question regarding the use of the FOICA template.

**On the same day**, an incomplete response was received to the same inquiry by the Urban Development, Technical and Fire Safety Inspectorate. The Inspectorate provided a link exclusively to the statistics of inquiries received from the media and did not address the question regarding the use of the FOICA template.  
  
**On January 18**, *Civilnet.am* journalist Gevorg Tosunyan sent an inquiry to Yerevan Municipality regarding the consequences of the collapse of a section of the Tsitsernakaberd highway and its reconstruction. The Municipality’s response arrived with a delay on March 4 and was incomplete, as not all questions were answered clearly. **On March 4**, the journalist sent another inquiry to the Municipality regarding the reconstruction of yards and replacement of parking lots. The response was delayed until March 12 and was again incomplete.  
  
**On January 22**, *Oragir.News* submitted an inquiry to the Investigative Committee, seeking information on whether relevant inquiries had been made to states and organizations equipped with the technical capability for satellite imaging or observations in relation to the criminal case initiated following the explosion of the fuel depot near Stepanakert on September 25, 2023, to ensure Armenia receives materials obtained from the scene of the incident.[[196]](#footnote-196) On February 7, the website received a delayed response from the Investigative Committee, dated January 29. The letter stated that it was impossible to provide the requested information, as it contained materials that were not subject to publication.  
  
**On January 24**, the RA Administrative Court held a hearing in the case of *Investigative Journalists NGO, the founder of Hetq.am, against RA Ministry of High-Tech Industry.*

In the lawsuit filed on June 5, 2023, the NGO demanded to oblige the HTI Ministry to provide the information requested on May 22 regarding the organizations that had signed contracts with the ministry, as well as the amount of state support granted to them.

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on April 4 and July 4. On July 29, the Administrative Court upheld the lawsuit, obliging the ministry to provide the plaintiff with the list of organizations that had received state support under the Government's December 1, 2022 decision. The court also obliged the HTI Ministry to pay 10,000 AMD as pre-paid state duty and 40,000 AMD as attorney's fee in favor of the *Investigative Journalists NGO.* The judicial act entered into legal force

**On January 24**, *Freedom of Information Center* sent an inquiry to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, requesting information on the RA Government’s stance on Artsakh in its foreign policy agenda, whether the negotiated document with Azerbaijan encompassed the issues of the right to self-determination of Artsakh Armenians, and security guarantees for the return of forcibly displaced people to Artsakh. FOICA also requested information on the issues and problems related to Artsakh and Armenians of Artsakh that the RA Government prioritized for discussion on international platforms and in diplomatic relations with other states. The response letter, provided with a delay on February 6, essentially lacked any answers to the questions. It merely presented a general idea that these issues were in the MFA’s focus.

**On January 24**, *Freedom of Information Center* sent an inquiry to the Investigative Committee, seeking information about the ongoing stage of the criminal proceedings regarding the explosion of the fuel depot located near the Stepanakert-Askeran road on September 25, 2023. They also requested information on the possible causes of the explosion and the involvement of any RA or Artsakh officials in the criminal proceedings. The request went unanswered, and FOICA sent another inquiry. This time, the Investigative Committee provided a response within the designated timeframe, presenting a substantiated refusal, which could have been given in response to the previous letter.

**On January 24**, *Freedom of Information Center* sent a letter to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, requesting information on the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Republic of Artsakh during and after the 44-Day War in 2020, and, if feasible, its transfer to Armenia. The NGO also sought information on where the property of cultural value transferred from Artsakh to Armenia was being stored, and whether it was deemed possible to transfer any such property left in Artsakh to Armenia. The response, though provided in a timely manner, was incomplete, as it lacked the requested information on the transfer and the property itself.

**On February 2**, another inquiry was sent to the MoESCS on this matter, the response to which was also incomplete.  
  
**On January 28**, *Hetq.am* reported that the Ministry of Defense had once again refused to provide information under the pretext of a military secret.[[197]](#footnote-197) Having gathered information about the 87662 aircraft from multiple open sources, the website also attempted to verify it with the RA official bodies. The State Property Management Committee stated that they did not possess any relevant data. The Ministry of Defense also provided a similar response. The clarifying question on whether the “Yak-40” was registered as a military aircraft remained unanswered. The website noted that the MoD had taken more than 1 month to refuse providing a response, a practice that has already become common for this state body, where information is often denied under the pretext of state/military secrets. Yet, that brief reply was provided only a few weeks after the inquiry.  
  
**On January 30**, *Infocom.am* sent a written inquiry to the administrative head of Shirakamut village of Lori Marz to obtain information about the community's infrastructure. The website received a delayed response letter on February 14, which specified that access to the requested information required first applying to Spitak Municipality, after which the questions would be addressed based on the request of Spitak Mayor. Later, as the issue became outdated, the media no longer applied to the municipality.

**On February 1**, the same website sent a written inquiry to Yeghegnadzor Municipality to obtain information about the community's infrastructure. The response was provided on February 9, in violation of the 5-day timeframe prescribed by law.

**On February 1**, *Aravot.am* reported that they had sent an inquiry to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, requesting information about the educators who, according to official sources, had proposed renaming the subject “Armenian History” to “History of Armenia.” The MoESCS responded that they were “not authorized to disclose the names of these professionals. They may choose to speak publicly at their own discretion and initiative.”[[198]](#footnote-198) Earlier, the website had addressed the same question to Nazeli Baghdasaryan, the RA Prime Minister’s Press Secretary, requesting information about these teachers to secure an opportunity to interview them and hear their reasoning. The Press Secretary, however, did not share the information either, stating that she had clarified with the Prime Minister that the proposal to revise the subject’s name had been raised in various formats and during private talks.

**On February 5**, the defendant in the case of *Union of Informed Citizens NGO, the founder of Fip.am fact-checking platform, v. RA Ministry of Internal Affairs,* filed an appeal to the appellate court against the ruling of the court of general jurisdiction. The lower court had upheld the lawsuit filed on March 1, 2023, in which the plaintiff demanded to oblige the ministry to provide a response to their inquiry.

As a reminder, the NGO had requested that the ministry provide comprehensive information regarding the number of solved incidents by each of the 4 police patrol service officers nominated for promotion in December 2022, as well as the specifics of those cases. On December 27, 2023, the court had ruled to oblige the Ministry of Internal Affairs to provide comprehensive information.

On May 7, 2024, the Administrative Court of Appeal accepted the appeal for proceedings, and a court hearing was scheduled for February 20, 2025.

**On February 8**, *Infocom.am* sent an inquiry to the Water Committee of the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, requesting a list of settlements in Armenia with access to drinking water in JSON format. On February 28, the Committee sent a letter with a delay, stating that they did not possess the requested data.

**On February 8**, *Infocom.am* sent an inquiry to *Gazprom Armenia,* requesting to provide a list of settlements supplied with gas. After the 5-day timeframe expired, the media contacted the company, which claimed they had not received the inquiry. The response to the second inquiry sent on February 13 was provided with a delay, on February 23.

**On February 12**, *Oragir.News* sent a written inquiry to the Higher Education and Science Committee, requesting a clarification regarding reports that Vanadzor State University Rector Rustam Sahakyan had been awarded the title of professor by the HESC through a falsification of official documents. No reply was received.[[199]](#footnote-199)

**On February 13**, *Infocom.am* sent a written inquiry to Aghvan Vardanyan, a deputy from the National Assembly's “Armenia” faction, seeking a clarification on the discrepancies in his declaration. After not receiving a response within the 5-day timeframe prescribed by law, the editorial office called him, but he refused to answer the questions.[[200]](#footnote-200)

**On February 16**, the website reached out to Karen Sarukhanyan, a deputy from the “Civil Contract” faction, with the same request. Following the expiration of the 5-day timeframe, the editorial office called the deputy, who asked for another 30 days to respond. After that period expired, the request still remained unanswered, despite further phone calls.

**On February 21**, the website reached out to Taguhi Ghazaryan, another deputy from the “Civil Contract” faction, with the same inquiry. On February 28, her assistant communicated by phone that there were no problems with Ghazaryan’s declaration and that there was no need to respond to the website’s inquiry.

Tatevik Gasparyan, a deputy from the “Civil Contract” faction, did not respond to the same inquiry either, sent on **February 28**.

**On February 15**, *Union of Informed Citizens* NGO, the founder of *Fip.am* fact-checking platform, filed a lawsuit with the Administrative Court against Arshak Arshakyan, the Head of the Human Resources Management Department at the RA Ministry of Internal Affairs, demanding to hold him liable for violating Article 189.7 of the Administrative Offenses Code. The lawsuit was caused by the refusal to respond to an inquiry sent to the state agency on January 8. In the inquiry, the NGO had requested to provide them with the work hours report of the Minister of Internal Affairs for December 2023. The lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on February 23. On May 29, the case proceedings were suspended, pending the final judicial act to be issued in the case presented below.

**On February 15**, the same plaintiff filed another lawsuit with the Administrative Court against the RA Ministry of Internal Affairs, demanding to oblige the defendant to provide information. This inquiry was related to the clarification of the rejection of the previous inquiry, which had similarly remained unanswered. On January 22, the plaintiff had applied to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, asking for information on the specific provision of the RA Law “On Freedom of Information,” under which the refusal to provide information had been made. On February 20, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. A court hearing was held on July 3, with the next one scheduled for January 20, 2025.

**On February 19**, *Sputnik Armenia* submitted an inquiry to Armen Ghazaryan, the Head of the Migration and Citizenship Service at the RA Ministry of Internal Affairs, regarding the registration issues for RA citizens leaving for Russia. After numerous calls, a delayed response was provided, which was general and lacked details.

**On February 20**, *Hetq.am* sent an inquiry to the Central Bank of Armenia to ascertain whether Ruben Vardanyan’s imprisonment in Baku would in any way be considered by the CB when approving or rejecting the transaction for the sale of 90% of *Ameriabank* shares. The inquiry also sought to determine whether Ruben Vardanyan’s consent, as a shareholder, was not mandatory for proceeding with the sale. The CB provided evasive responses to both questions.[[201]](#footnote-201)

**On February 20**, *Infocom.am* applied to the Corruption Prevention Commission, requesting the names of the deputies against whose declarations reports had been filed. While in terms of content, the CPC provided a proper response, it did so in breach of the timeframe, on February 28. The response to a March 5 inquiry with identical content was also provided with a delay, on March 12.

**On February 23**, *Hetq.am* reported that they submitted an inquiry to the National Security Service and the Ministry of Defense about a Czech citizen who had crossed the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and had been detained by Azerbaijani soldiers. The media asked for details regarding the specific section of the border the citizen had crossed, the security agency overseeing that part of the border, how the citizen had managed to pass through the interpositional minefield, whether the Armenian side was involved in the process of returning the Czech citizen from Baku, and finally, whether the individual had any connection to the European Union Observation Mission in Armenia.[[202]](#footnote-202) Both agencies provided similar responses, stating that they had no information regarding a Czech citizen crossing the border. However, the Ministry of Defense had earlier requested an additional 30 days to reply to the editorial team’s questions but eventually declined to do so.

**On February 29,** the RA Administrative Court of Appeal replaced the judge in the case of *Investigative Journalists NGO (the founder of Hetq.am) v. the National Assembly (*the RA Ministry of Finance was involved as a third party*)*. On March 29, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings.

As a reminder, the lawsuit was filed on December 14, 2021, with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to provide information. The media's questions concerning the assignment of the 43 National Assembly vehicles and the expenses tied to each received no response, after which they turned to court. On June 30, 2022, the court issued a ruling obliging NA Speaker Alen Simonyan to provide the requested information, pay 80 thousand AMD to the plaintiff's attorney and 8 thousand AMD as state duty. The defendant challenged the verdict in the appellate court.

In 2024, a court hearing was also held on September 12. On October 10, the appellate court ruled to partially uphold the defendant's appeal: the verdict was overturned, and the case was terminated on the grounds that the lawsuit had been filed by an individual who evidently was not entitled to do so. In other words, the court found that the inquiry had been sent by a journalist, and later by the head of *Hetq Media Factory,* whereas the lawsuit had been filed by the NGO, which were distinct legal entities and could not be equated or substituted for one another. On November 21, the plaintiff filed an appeal with the cassation court.

**On March 14,** *Aravot* daily journalist Gohar Hakobyan reached out to Aragatsotn Regional Administration to verify the circulating rumors about the alleged removal of heroes' glory corners from the schools of the marz. Shortly afterward, the Regional Administration posted a statement on their Facebook page, refuting the news. This action violated the legally established procedure, stipulating that the designated official must reply to inquiries using the same method by which they were received. Furthermore, this approach by the Regional Administration deprived the media of the opportunity to be the first to obtain the requested information and prepare an exclusive piece.

**On March 14**, the Administrative Court held a regular hearing in the case of *Union of Informed Citizens NGO, the founder of Fip.am fact-checking platform, v. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,* with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the ministry to provide the information requested on October 20, 2022. The inquiry concerned the anticipated support from the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in defending Armenia’s borders on September 13, 2022.

The lawsuit was filed on November 14, 2022. In 2024, another hearing in the case was held on September 24. On October 15, the court rejected the lawsuit, reasoning that the requested information contained a state secret. On November 28, the plaintiff filed an appeal, which was received on December 17.

**On April 1**, the editorial office of *Zhoghovurd* daily submitted a request to RA Prosecutor General Anna Vardapetyan for information regarding the RA borders and the demarcation process. The request went unanswered.

**On April 4**, the Administrative Court of Appeal accepted for proceedings the appeal filed by the defendant in the case of *Union of Informed Citizens NGO, the founder of Fip.am fact-checking platform, v. RA Police,* challenging the ruling of the court of first instance. The lower court had ruled to uphold the lawsuit filed by the NGO on June 6, 2022, with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to provide exhaustive information. As a reminder, the website had requested the names, surnames and work telephone numbers of all regional police departments, their divisions and heads, as well as their deputies, but had received no response.

The appellate court held a hearing on September 27. On October 17, the court partially granted the appeal, fully overturning the ruling and terminating the case, since the inquiry had been signed by Daniel Ioannisyan. In other words, the dispute was between a private individual, Daniel Ioannisyan on one side, and the Police as a public authority on the other. Meanwhile, the lawsuit had been filed by the *Union of Informed Citizens NGO*, meaning, an entity that evidently was not entitled to do so acted as a plaintiff. On November 27, the plaintiff filed a cassation appeal, which was received on December 5.

**On April 8**, *Infocom.*am sent an inquiry to Yerevan Municipality, requesting information on contractors involved in state procurement who had failed to meet contractual quality standards or deadlines. The inquiry also requested details on the fines imposed as a result of these violations. On April 15, the municipality responded that the requested data was available on *Armeps.am* website. However, upon review, it was determined that the information was not published on the platform.

**On April 30**, the same website sent an inquiry to Yerevan Municipality, requesting the copy of the contract signed with *Comfortshin Plus Ltd.,* as it was not available on *Armeps.am.* The municipality once again did not provide the requested document, stating that certain questions needed to be clarified.

**On May 22**, the same media sent another letter to the municipality, requesting information on violations recorded by organizations responsible for the technical supervision of pothole filling and repair works in Yerevan, interim and final reports, as well as data from relevant registers. The municipality requested a 30-day extension, but ultimately provided a delayed response on June 28.

**On April 10**, *Union of Informed Citizens NGO,* the founder of *Fip.am* fact-checking platform, filed a lawsuit with the Administrative Court against the RA Anti-Corruption Committee, demanding to oblige the Committee to provide an exhaustive response to their inquiry H-2748, submitted on February 23, 2024. The inquiry was related to the Committee’s decision to terminate a criminal proceeding.

On April 15, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. A court hearing was held on September 19, and on October 9, the lawsuit was rejected on the grounds that the requested information contained confidential data from the preliminary investigation.

On November 8, the plaintiff filed an appeal against the verdict to a higher court. On November 20, the Administrative Court of Appeal accepted the complaint for proceedings and set the hearing date for February 12, 2025.

**On April 11**, the office of Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Khachatryan responded to an inquiry sent to the RA Government by *Infocom.am* on March 14 regarding financial aid provided to citizens displaced from Artsakh. On March 19, the inquiry was forwarded to the Ministry of Finance. After multiple calls, the response provided by Tigran Khachatryan's office on April 11 was incomplete, leaving several questions unanswered. To address this, the media later attempted to gather information through verbal exchanges with staff members of the Deputy Prime Minister, including his assistant. After once again failing to receive sufficient information on the issues in question, the website sent a letter to the Deputy Prime Minister's advisor on May 3, presenting the outcomes of the correspondence and verbal discussions, certain discrepancies in the data received, and requesting comprehensive and detailed information. The response was received with a delay on May 17.

**On April 25**, the Administrative Court held a hearing in the case of *Union of Informed Citizens NGO, the founder of Fip.am fact-checking platform, v. the Ministry of Defense,* regarding the plaintiff’s demand to oblige the defendant to provide an exhaustive response to their inquiry.

The lawsuit was filed on August 30, 2023, when the ministry failed to provide information on the total funds spent by the Republic of Armenia for weapon acquisitions in 2008-2022.

In 2024, a court hearing was also held on June 5. On June 26, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit, citing that part of the requested information was considered a state secret, while the defendant was not considered the holder of the remaining information. On July 29, the plaintiff appealed to a higher court. The appeal was received by the Administrative Court of Appeal on August 13.  
  
**On May 13**, *Fip.am* fact-checking platform submitted an inquiry to the RA Prosecutor's Office, requesting information on whether criminal proceedings had been initiated in connection with media reports claiming that Stepanavan Mayor, armed with a knife, had tried to cut the throat of a citizen who had approached him, and if so, whether the proceedings had verified the authenticity of the incident, and whether the mayor was facing criminal prosecution. No response was received.

**On June 4**, in another letter, the same media requested information from the RA Prosecutor’s Office regarding the dismissal of Samvel Danielyan, the Director of Yeolyan Hematology Center. The inquiry specifically referred to the existing view that his dismissal was “politically motivated” and evidently contained the elements of violation outlined in Article 441 of the RA Criminal Code *(Abuse of governmental or official authority or influence derived therefrom by an official, or acting beyond the scope of their authority).* The website also inquired what steps had been taken to verify the authenticity of the news. No response was received from the Prosecutor's Office.

**On May 21**, *Fip.am* applied to the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, requesting information on what grounds *Gazprom Armenia* classifies data on gas storage volumes over the past 5 years as a trade secret, as well as the rationale behind its claimed real or potential commercial value due to being unknown to third parties. No response was received to the request. A second request was sent on July 3, which received a timely response.

**On May 21**, the defendant in the case of *Investigative Journalists NGO, the founder of Hetq.am, v. Board of Trustees of A. I. Alikhanyan National Science Laboratory (Yerevan Institute of Physics) Foundation,* once again appealed the 2023 ruling of the court of general jurisdiction, which had upheld the lawsuit.

As a reminder, after receiving a refusal from the Foundation, *Investigative Journalists NGO* filed a lawsuit with the Administrative Court on July 8, 2019, demanding to oblige the board to provide copies of all decisions adopted in 2011-2019. On July 15, the case was re-addressed to the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan. In the ruling of May 22, 2020, the claim of the NGO was partially upheld, while on October 23, the defendant's appeal was upheld: the verdict was overturned, and the case was sent to the same court for a new examination. On January 14, 2022, new proceedings were initiated in the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan. By a judicial act of October 13, 2023, the court once again upheld the lawsuit, and the defendant filed an appeal. By its decision of December 20, the appellate court left the verdict unaltered.

**On May 23**, the Administrative Court held a hearing in the case of *Union of Informed Citizens NGO, the founder of Fip.am fact-checking platform, v. the Ministry of Internal Affairs.* In the lawsuit filed on March 22, 2023, the NGO demanded to oblige the ministry to respond to their February 17 inquiry regarding the purpose of installing red and blue flashing beacons on some vehicles of the military police troops. On June 7, the case proceedings were terminated on the grounds that the response to the inquiry had been provided.  
  
**On May 23**, the Administrative Court held a regular hearing in the case of *Union of Informed Citizens NGO, the founder of Fip.am fact-checking platform, v. the RA National Security Service,* regarding the plaintiff’s demand to oblige the RA NSS to provide exhaustive information to their inquiries.

The lawsuit was filed on August 15, 2022, after the NGO did not receive the requested information from the agency regarding the number of NSS and border guard servicemen subject to disciplinary action between 2012 and 2022.

On June 14, 2024, the lawsuit was rejected, as the court determined that the information requested by the plaintiff contained a state secret. The verdict was not appealed and entered into legal force.

**On May 24**, *Zhoghovurd* daily sent 3 inquiries to the RA Prosecutor’s Office. The inquiries were related to possible corruption transactions linked to the renovation of the Armenian Football Federation stadium, *Hayrapet* hotel complex in Sevan, and *Pallada Tsaghkadzor Ltd.,* which had also been reported by Deputy Taguhi Tovmasyan. The responses to these inquiries were received with a delay of more than 10 working days, following additional calls.

**On May 30**, Roza Vardanyan, a correspondent of *Factor.am* news website, alerted that she had sent an inquiry to the RA Ministry of Finance 2 days before, after prior coordination with the press secretary, who had assured her that the response would be provided the same or the following day. However, the promise was not fulfilled. After numerous calls, she discovered that the inquiry submitted two days prior had only been registered that day, with the expected response deadline set for June 6. The journalist raised concerns that within the specified period the response would lose its timeliness. In fact, the request called for a very simple answer, which could even be provided verbally. Indeed, when the information was received from the ministry, it was already outdated and did not represent any value for publication.  
  
**On May 31**, *Medialab.am* news website sent a written inquiry to Yerevan Municipality, requesting information on the costs incurred for inviting the English National Ballet’s “Giselle” ballet choreographed by Akram Khan, which was performed in Yerevan as part of their tour in May and was described as a historic event. The media did not receive a response.

**On June 2**, *Infocom.am* sent an inquiry to Vedi Municipality, requesting information on the procurement procedures for the years 2022 and 2023. No response was provided.

**On June 12**, two inquiries from *Zhoghovurd* daily to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs regarding housing construction programs for forcibly displaced persons from Artsakh and financial aid provided to them remained unanswered.

**On June 12**, the Administrative Court held a hearing in the case filed by *Union of Informed Citizens NGO,* the founder of *Fip.am* fact-checking platform, against the staff of the RA Supreme Judicial Council, the Judicial Department and its Head Nairi Galstyan, regarding the demands to oblige them to provide an exhaustive response to their inquiry, as well as to subject Nairi Galstyan to administrative liability.

The lawsuit was filed on May 22, 2023, after the UIC did not receive a response to the inquiry regarding desertion cases within a specific period. On May 25, the court returned the lawsuit on the grounds that the claims submitted were related to separate disputes, were not interconnected and were directed at different defendants. On June 14, the amended lawsuit was refiled, with claims directed solely against the staff of the RA Supreme Judicial Council and the Judicial Department. On November 4, the court terminated the proceedings, citing that the dispute had been resolved, as the plaintiff had received an exhaustive response.

On June 12, the Administrative Court also held a hearing in the case against the Head of the Judicial Department Nairi Galstyan, filed on June 14, 2023, under the same grounds. The plaintiff demanded that Galstyan be held liable under Article 189.7 of the RA Administrative Offenses Code *(Failure to fulfill the duty of providing information).* A court hearing was also held on November 4, with the next one scheduled for April 8, 2025.

**On June 12**, the Administrative Court held a hearing in the case of *Union of Informed Citizens NGO, the founder of Fip.am fact-checking platform, v. the RA Ministry of Internal Affairs,* with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to provide a response to their February 13, 2023 inquiry. The inquiry referred to the description of the locations of stationary cameras monitored by the police in public areas, including the devices not used for recording road traffic. The lawsuit was filed on March 1, 2023.

On July 1, 2024, the Administrative Court rejected the lawsuit on the grounds that the requested information constituted a state secret. On August 2, the plaintiff appealed the decision to a higher court. The Administrative Court of Appeal accepted the appeal for proceedings on September 2, scheduling a hearing for June 11, 2025.

**On June 25**, *Infocom.am* submitted an inquiry to Vanadzor Municipality, requesting information on the procurement procedures for the years 2022 and 2023, but did not receive a response.

**On July 1**, Kristineh Hovhannisyan, a reporter of *Pastinfo.am*, submitted 3 inquiries to the Government, which covered the following topics: 1. When will the second phase of demarcation in Tavush begin and what settlements will it cover? 2. Does the Government consider the issue of reinstalling the highway gas pipeline that runs from Georgia to Armenia? 3. How much land from Kirants has been designated as overriding public interest, how much of that land is communal property, how much is private, by what act will compensation be provided, and how many people will receive compensation?

Regarding the first question, the Government staff referenced a press release published months ago, which was actually outdated, without providing information on the developments. For the second question, they stated that there was no such issue, and for the third, they requested 30 days to provide a response without offering any rationale why additional time was needed. On July 22, they replied, by stating that the process was being conducted based on a Government decision, which was confidential. In fact, it took 30 days to realize that the information sought in the inquiry contained secrets, rendering the delay in providing a response unreasonable.

**On July 2**, *168.am* sent an inquiry to the RA National Security Service, requesting details about the fences and engineering barriers being installed in the villages of Kirants and Voskepar as part of the delimitation and demarcation process carried out in Tavush.[[203]](#footnote-203)

In its response sent on July 10, the NSS refused to provide any comment citing the information as a state secret. Nonetheless, the website reminded its readers that just days before the NSS communication, Nikol Pashinyan had visited the Kirants section of the Armenia-Azerbaijan state border and already shared a video showing the installed barbed wire fence or engineering barriers.

**On July 4**, *Armlur.am* sent an inquiry to the National Academy of Sciences, inquiring about the academic performance of Davit Arakelyan,[[204]](#footnote-204) the Chief of Staff at the National Assembly, including information about the institution of his internship, his supervisors, and the results achieved. In his response, Atom Mkhitaryan, the NAS Acting Director, presented a several-page justification stating that information about the academic journey of high-ranking official Davit Arakelyan could not be provided on the grounds of protection of his private life. The response is considered an unfounded rejection, since the Law “On Personal Data Protection” itself cannot serve as grounds for denying access to such information, especially when it concerns a high-ranking official, information about whom is of public interest.

The website also submitted an inquiry to the National Assembly, requesting information from Davit Arakelyan about his academic performance, the number of his absences, the reasons for them being considered excused, his thesis supervisor, the institution where he had done his internship, etc. Eduard Khanzradyan, the Deputy Chief of Staff replied, stating that Davit Arakelyan had completed his internship at the National Assembly, leaving the rest of the questions unanswered.

On September 24, *Zhoghovurd* daily posed the same question to Zhanna Andreasyan, the RA Minister of Education, Science, Sport and Culture, and received a broad response regarding the legal basis for organizing students' internship, directing the media to forward their question to the NAS.[[205]](#footnote-205) Meanwhile, it was already mentioned in the inquiry that the NAS had also been approached but had refused to provide a response regarding the issue.

**On July 9**, *Infocom.am* reported that they had submitted a written inquiry to Yerevan Municipality, requesting information on why the road leading from the Tbilisyan Highway to nearby buildings had not been constructed, whether there were plans for its construction, and how an alternative road’s plot of land ended up privatized (Yerevan Community had initially donated this land to the Republic of Armenia, which subsequently granted it to citizen Armen Movsesyan under the right of gratuitous ownership). The Municipality sidestepped the questions regarding the failure to construct the road and future plans, merely stating that relevant services were working on options to solve the issue.

The same questions were also directed to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, and instead of providing substantive responses, the ministry referred to the background of the issue and the legal documents underpinning the donation.[[206]](#footnote-206)

**On July 9**, *Citizens’ Special Service CNCO* delayed its response to the June 26 inquiry submitted by *Infocom.am* about the execution of the budget for 2021-2023. Notably, the CNCO first verbally stated that they were not going to provide a response, since it was necessary to reach out to Yerevan Municipality for obtaining information. The following day, on June 27, the website also applied to the municipality, but ultimately received a response from the CNCO, as mentioned, in violation of the 5-day timeframe prescribed by law.

**On July 15**, *Radio Liberty Armenian Service* reported that the Prosecutor's Office refused to disclose whether they had received a letter from the Government to investigate the inaccuracies in the cadastral maps, which served as a basis for issuing property certificates in Kirants.[[207]](#footnote-207)

Regarding the inaccuracies in the cadastral maps, the media also reached out to the Government to verify whether a letter had been sent to the Prosecutor's Office. The inquiry submitted on July 8 was redirected to the Cadastre Committee, which refused to respond, citing the issue as a state secret.  
  
**On July 17**, *Factor.am* reported that the Ministry of Internal Affairs refused to provide information about the grenades used against protesters near the National Assembly building on June 12 and the person who had made a decision on their use.[[208]](#footnote-208) The ministry avoided providing a direct response, stating that criminal proceedings had been initiated in relation to the incidents, and urging the media to contact the investigative body for relevant details. It is noteworthy that the MIA took not the 5 days established by law, but an additional 30 days to provide this response, yet failed to provide the information in substance.

According to the website, the Investigative Committee, which had initiated criminal proceedings, in turn, did not specify what type of stun grenades had been used and who had given the order for their use. The spokesperson of the committee told *Factor TV* that there was no information available to be published at that time.

**On July 18**, *168.am* reported that on June 14 they had submitted an inquiry to the RA Ministry of Internal Affairs, seeking information on who had ordered the use of special means by the police troops against protesters at Yerevan Baghramyan-Demirchyan intersection on June 12, the necessity behind the action and the legal grounds for the use of such measures.[[209]](#footnote-209) The Ministry of Internal Affairs requested an additional 30 days to respond, later stating that for the relevant information, the media should contact the investigative body.

**On July 18**, *Fip.am* fact-checkingplatform sent a letter to the RA Ministry of Internal Affairs, seeking clarifications on the piece titled “Shooting on Erebuni Street: One Injured, Shooter Arrested,” published on July 10 on *police.am*. In particular, *Fip.am* inquired why the person had not been searched during the arrest, before being taken to the police department, and whether an internal investigation had been initiated. The inquiry received no response.

**On July 23**, *Fip.am* fact-checking platform reported that on June 18, they had sent an inquiry to the Ministry of Internal Affairs seeking a clarification on the special means used against the protesters at Yerevan Baghramyan-Demirchyan intersection on June 12. However, the MIA requested an additional 30 days to reply. After the 30-day period expired, they failed to provide a clear response, informing that criminal proceedings had been initiated by the Investigative Committee in relation to those incidents, and therefore, the inquiry should be directed to the investigative body.[[210]](#footnote-210)

**On July 23**, *Fip.am* directed the same question to the RA Prosecutor General, but received no response.

Additionally, the website did not receive a response to their **June 27** inquiry to the RA Ministry of Health, in which they requested information on the number of civilians and police officers who had sought medical assistance due to the June 12 events at Yerevan Baghramyan-Demirchyan intersection, as well as the number of persons with shrapnel injuries among them.

**On August 1**, *Hetq.am* submitted a written inquiry to the Health and Labor Inspection Body to clarify whether the agency had independently taken any steps to detect unregistered medications. As part of its investigation, the media also purchased 12 unregistered medications from 6 different pharmacies in Yerevan and provided this information to the inspection body.[[211]](#footnote-211) On August 7, the HLIB Department of Information, Consultation and Public Relations responded, stating that additional work was required to provide the requested information. Later, the website reported that even 163 days were not sufficient for the inspection body to complete their examination. And this occurred under conditions where *Hetq* had provided all the necessary data - the names of the pharmacies, the list of the 12 medications purchased, and the payment receipts.  
   
**On August 1**, *Infocom.am* reported that they had spent the past 4 months trying to summarize and categorize the data regarding the humanitarian aid for the needs of those displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh.[[212]](#footnote-212) To obtain information, the editorial team, along with international structures and embassies, also reached out to the RA Government, requesting data on how the collected funds had been distributed—specifically, the amounts used for salaries, consultations, event organization, and those allocated directly to displaced persons.

The requested information was not provided, which, according to the website, casts doubt on the transparency of the aid process.

**On August 2**, *Fip.am* fact-checking platform reached out to the RA Ministry of Defense, requesting the name of the person in charge of managing integrity issues within the structure. The media also sought clarification on the principles used for assigning that role to that particular official. No response was received.

**On August 2**, *Infocom.am* sent an inquiry to Armen Pambukhchyan, the First Deputy Mayor of Yerevan, requesting to clarify the financial discrepancies in his and his wife's declarations. No response was received.

**On August 5**, *168.am* reported that since June 27, they had sent an inquiry to the RA Ministry of Defense, requesting information on a number of issues related to the army.[[213]](#footnote-213) The response they received was incomplete. Thus, under former Minister of Defense Vigen Sargsyan, the provision of information related to the apartment allocation process had been refused, with the justification being the protection of personal and official data. Additionally, the media asked on what grounds RA Defense Minister Suren Papikyan had approved the idea by ​​the Chair of the NA Committee on Defense and Security concerning the voluntary trench-digging initiative. In response, it was stated: “You can obtain information regarding the details of the project to establish engineering squads from students from the National Assembly.”

**On August 13**, Shoghik Galstyan, a correspondent from *Radio Liberty Armenian Service*, reported that even after a month and a half, the Office of Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan, who chairs the Border Delimitation Commission, did not clarify why Yerevan and Baku had failed to reach an agreement by July 1 on the document establishing the principles of border delimitation. A written inquiry was sent by the radio station to the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, seeking information on the current stage of the work on agreeing the regulations, whether Azerbaijan was creating obstacles, whether the parties had set a new deadline for completing the work, and whether, after all, negotiations were ongoing to reach an agreement on the delimitation of other parts of the border.

Despite promising a response within a month, the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, even 30 days later, offered no clarity and simply reminded of prior agreements stating that the negotiations on coming to terms on the regulations were proceeding in a constructive way.

**On August 18**, *Tert.am* reported that they had sent an inquiry to the Cadastre Committee to clarify the decision behind the Kirants map change.[[214]](#footnote-214) In response, the committee stated that the information could not be provided as it contained a state secret. The website reminded that, according to procedure, map changes are made in the Cadastre Committee based on a community decision.

**On August 21**, *Aliqmedia.am* news website submitted an inquiry to the Ministry of Economy, seeking to find out whether any studies had been conducted on the sale of fruits and vegetables in the Armenian market after the export ban introduced by the Russian side.[[215]](#footnote-215) Additionally, the media asked the ministry to clarify whether there were problems related to the sale of agricultural produce, and, if so, how the ministry had resolved the issue. The ministry responded that these issues did not fall within their purview. The website also addressed the above questions to the Food Safety Inspection Body and received an identical response. The website reminded that in 2019, the RA Ministry of Economy was formed through the merger of the RA Ministry of Economic Development and Investments and the Ministry of Agriculture. Consequently, the issues related to the agricultural sector should be regulated by this ministry, but the responses provided suggest otherwise. In that case, it remains unclear to which institution the media should address these inquiries.

**On September 5**, *Freedom of Information Center* submitted a request to Gyumri Municipality, asking for a copy of the technical passport of Gyumri Ghandilyan 48a residential building and its adjacent plot. The request was denied without proper justification. The Municipality referenced Article 8, paragraph 1, point 2 of the RA Law “On Freedom of Information” and Article 3, paragraph 1, point 1 of the RA Law “On Personal Data Protection,” which, according to FOICA, did not constitute a sufficient basis for rejection.[[216]](#footnote-216)

**On September 6**, *Armlur.am* sent an inquiry to the RA Government, seeking information about the construction process of the new nuclear power plant. The Government redirected the request to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure within the designated period. However, no response was provided by the ministry.

**On the same day**, the website also sent an inquiry to the Government regarding the 15 percent share held by the Government in the *Zangezur Copper-Molybdenum Combine*, specifically asking who managed the share of the Prime Minister's Office, who had joined the ZCMC, in what role and at what salary. No response was received for this inquiry either.  
  
**On September 6**, *Armlur.am* sent an inquiry to the Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Committee regarding the involvement of NA Deputy Taguhi Tovmasyan as a witness in a criminal case. In particular, the media sought information on the current stage of the investigation into the criminal proceedings initiated under part 1 of Article 486 (2) of the RA Criminal Code *(Interference with the administration of justice or an investigation through the use of governmental or official powers or the influence stemming from them),* the persons involved and their roles in the case. No response was provided to the inquiry.

**On the same day**, the media also sent an inquiry to Father Yesayi Artenyan, the Director of the Information Center of the Mother See, requesting data related to the financing of the renovation of the Mother Cathedral. This request also received no response.

**On September 12**, *Fip.am* fact-checking platform submitted an inquiry to the RA Ministry of Internal Affairs requesting data on the number of cases registered in 2023 and 2024, involving individuals driving vehicles while having their driving rights revoked despite the revocation period having ended and the right not restored. No response was received.

**On September 12**, *Pastinfo.am* sent a written inquiry to the RA Government, asking whether the RA Prime Minister's Office had received the resignation request of Yeghisheh Kirakosyan, the Representative on International Legal Issues, and if so, when it had been submitted to the Government and whether the discussion of the matter had concluded.[[217]](#footnote-217) A written response was received from the Government, stating that the request was considered personal data. However, this refusal is not legitimate. Whether a high-ranking official has submitted a resignation request or not is a matter of public interest, and there is no legislative restriction on the provision of such information. Even if that information contains personal data, this in itself cannot serve as a basis for denial.  
   
**On September 18**, *Factor.am* reported on their inquiries submitted to the Prosecutor's Office, which had not received any response.[[218]](#footnote-218) The inquiries were related to the biographical data of judges involved in criminal cases. Specifically, Davit Sargsyan, a judge of the Court of General Jurisdiction of Ararat and Vayots Dzor Marzes, prior to becoming a judge in 2023, had been involved in a criminal case, which had been terminated. In a written inquiry to the Prosecutor's Office, the media requested information about the case Sargsyan was involved in and the grounds for its termination. However, the state body refused to provide information under the pretext of protection of privacy. According to the website, the Prosecutor's Office took a different approach in this case, as the official website of the state body published announcements containing data on criminal cases involving various officials or judges. For example, detailed announcements were available regarding the charges against Hrayr Tovmasyan, the former President of the Constitutional Court, and now a judge there, as well as Sergey Smbatyan, the Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Symphony Orchestra, and his father, along with the actions attributed to them.

In a response letter, the journalist of the website asked for clarification on the difference between Davit Sargsyan's and others' right to privacy. The Prosecutor's Office requested a one-month period to respond to this simple question, but failed to do so. The media concluded that the Prosecutor's Office was simply avoiding providing information regarding judge Davit Sargsyan's criminal case.

In another inquiry, the journalist tried to obtain information on the current status of judge Masis Melkonyan, who had been involved in a criminal case, specifically, whether he was an accused party or not and in what capacity he had compensated the damage. However, the Prosecutor's Office merely informed that Melkonyan at the moment did not hold the status of an accused party, while again not providing other details, citing preliminary investigation confidentiality. “It is noteworthy that this issue is of such public significance that when President Vahagn Khachaturyan was presented with his candidacy, he returned the proposal from the Supreme Judicial Council with objections. ...Melkonyan became a judge by virtue of the law and took his judicial oath not at the presidential residence, but at the Supreme Judicial Council,” the website wrote.

**On September 23**, *Armlur.am* sent an inquiry to RA Prosecutor General Anna Vardapetyan regarding Stepan Hakobyan, the son of former Minister of Culture Hasmik Poghosyan. Specifically, the media inquired under which proceedings Stepan Hakobyan was prosecuted that resulted in his leaving Armenia, and whether he was on the wanted list. The inquiry received no response.

**On September 25**, *Infocom.am* sent an inquiry to Yerevan Municipality, requesting information regarding the granted construction permits in the capital in 2018-2024, including permit codes, the names of the companies or natural persons carrying out the construction, the construction addresses, as well as the issuance and expiration dates of the permits. On September 30, the municipality responded that the Department of Special Urban Development Programs did not compile data in that format. They further pointed out that information about permits was available in the “Doing business” section of the Municipality website. However, according to *Infocom.am,* the map in that section is incomplete, making it impossible to download without knowledge of programming languages.

**On September 26**, *Infocom.am* reported that they had applied to the RA Investigative Committee to verify the complete data on the Armenian side’s casualties in the 44-Day War. This request was also prompted by the fact that this state body had released varying figures in previous years. The RA Prime Minister and other officials had also made announcements regarding the casualties. Despite that, the RA Investigative Committee refused to provide such information to the media, referencing the Criminal Procedure Code article prohibiting the disclosure of preliminary investigation data.

**On September 27**, *Pastinfo.am* reported that they had sent an inquiry to the RA Investigative Committee, requesting information on the number of criminal proceedings initiated concerning the cases of torture and murder of captured civilians, soldiers, the number of persons recognized as victims, and whether the Azerbaijani servicemen responsible for mistreating the captives had been identified. If so, the inquiry requested clarification on how many persons were being prosecuted, the articles of law under which they were charged, and whether search warrants had been issued against them, etc.[[219]](#footnote-219) 20 days after the submission of the request, the IC responded, refusing to provide digital information, citing the confidentiality of the preliminary investigation. The website argued that digital data, especially information about a wanted person, could not be classified as a preliminary investigation secret, as sharing their name and image was essential for their identification. Earlier, *Pastinfo* had again submitted an inquiry to the IC, to which the response indicated that a criminal prosecution had been initiated against approximately 20 representatives of the military-political leadership and armed forces of Azerbaijan. The media was unable to find out whether the criminal prosecution against the Azerbaijanis had already been terminated, and why the information had recently been classified as confidential.

**On October 23, *Infocom.am* sent an inquiry to the first deputy head of Vedi Municipality, seeking a comment on inaccuracies in the declarations, but the inquiry went unanswered.**

**On October 30, *Infocom.am* submitted an inquiry to Gyumri Municipality, requesting to provide single-source procurement contracts. The inquiry received no response.**

**On October 29**, Astghik Karapetyan, a reporter of *EVNreport.com* news website, wrote on Facebook that Mariam Tsatryan, the spokesperson of the Minister of Health, had refused to arrange an interview with the relevant official upon learning that the journalist also intended to request numerical data during the interview.[[220]](#footnote-220) Tsatryan insisted on a written inquiry, which, according to the journalist, was an artificial delay in providing information. Later, the spokesperson stopped responding to the journalist’s messages altogether.

**On November 6, *Infocom.am* sent an inquiry to the Anti-Corruption Committee, requesting details about the progress of the preliminary investigation in a case, potential accused individuals, and specific charges. The committee provided a delayed response on November 22, stating that there were no individuals involved as accused, while the remaining information was protected under the confidentiality of the preliminary investigation.**

**On November 11, *Civilnet.am* correspondent Gevorg Tosunyan applied to Yerevan Municipality, requesting information about the tree felling activities carried out. The journalist was offered the option to visit the municipality and examine the documents in person. However, during his visit, he was not provided with comprehensive information, as access to tree felling records was arbitrarily denied.**

**On November 11, *Infocom.am* sent an inquiry to Gyumri Municipality regarding New Year's purchases. The municipality provided a response 7 days later than the legally prescribed timeframe, following multiple calls.**

**On November 12, *Infocom.am* sent an inquiry (consisting of 20 questions) to Kajaran Municipality regarding contracts signed with a company. The municipality responded to all the questions together, without following the order and highlighting that the questions violated the commercial interests of the company involved. Notably, they responded to the inquiry with a delay of 6 days. They also responded to the second inquiry on the same matter with a 3-day delay.**

**From November 12** to December 30, *Mediaforedu.am* news website sent **5 written** inquiries regarding the problems encountered during the electronic certification of teachers. 4 of these inquiries were sent to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports and 1 to the National Center of Educational Technologies. The Ministry violated the provisions of the Law on “Freedom of Information” with each response, as they failed to provide comprehensive, proper, and exhaustive information. Furthermore, the responses provided were contradictory. In response to the December 24 inquiry, the NCET initially contradicted the MoESCS, claiming they were not the coordinator of the electronic certification process. Nevertheless, following the publications of *Mediaforedu.am* and a second inquiry, they acknowledged the existence of the problem underlying the teachers’ complaints and promised to resolve the issues raised.[[221]](#footnote-221)

**On November 20, *Infocom.am* submitted an inquiry to Yerevan Municipality, asking why it was not possible to pay urban transport fares with bank cards as previously promised, and when this option would be available. The municipality requested a 30-day extension to reply and only responded on December 20. They stated that from December 2 onward, it was already possible to pay with bank cards (except for the metro). Essentially, the one-month timeframe made the questions and the corresponding information outdated.**

**On November 26, *Panorama.am* news website sent a written request for information to Armen Khachatryan,** the Head of the RA Government's Department for Information and Public Relations**, inquiring about the RA Prime Minister and his wife’s visit to Italy, the expenses incurred, and what substantial, tangible outcomes the wife’s visit had yielded for Armenia.**[[222]](#footnote-222)

**According to the Government’s response, the request needed to be directed to *My Step Foundation.* Following this, on November 26 and December 18, the editorial office sent inquiries to the Foundation. In response, they received a letter, written in an instructive tone, emphasizing that the question had been submitted to the wrong entity.**

***Freedom of Information Center*** conducted a legal analysis of both the inquiry and the response, **concluding that the RA Prime Minister's Office, in its reply to the request made under the Law “On Freedom of Information,” made reference to an entity not considered as an information holder. Additionally, the Office failed to provide accurate and comprehensive responses to all the questions posed by the journalist. It should be emphasized that the above-mentioned questions regarding the Prime Minister's visit were of public interest.**

**On December 2**, *Infocom.am* sent an inquiry to Sevan Municipality, requesting the contracts related to the specified codes, along with their acceptance and delivery documents. The municipality's response was incomplete, as they only provided the contracts.

**On December 9**, Narek Kirakosyan, a correspondent of *Factor.am*, in his inquiries, addressed the information regarding the reduction of official vehicles in the state apparatus following the relevant instruction from the RA Prime Minister.[[223]](#footnote-223) Some agencies shared the information, while the Ministry of Defense considered it confidential.

**On December 16**, *Union of Informed Citizens NGO,* the founder of *Fip.am* fact-checking platform, filed a lawsuit against the RA National Security Service, demanding to oblige the defendant to provide an exhaustive response to the plaintiff’s November 16, 2024 inquiry. The request concerned the number of persons banned from entering Armenia as persona non grata. On December 24, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings, with a court hearing scheduled for May 12, 2025.

**On December 17**, *Fip.am* fact-checking platform submitted an inquiry to Yerevan Municipality, requesting information about the ongoing construction at Mashtots Avenue 24 and all construction permits issued for it since 2004. The inquiry went unanswered.

**On December 17, *Infocom.am* sent an inquiry to the *Armenian State Institute of Physical Culture and Sport,* requesting information on the number and age groups of employees conducting scientific research at the institution. The Institute did not provide the requested details, explaining in a response letter dated December 20 that the inquiry lacked the required data about the organization as prescribed by law. However, these data were available: the organization’s name, address, contact information, along with the journalist’s name and surname, and signature. On December 30, the editorial office followed up with an additional letter requesting a response.**

**On December 18**, *Pastinfo.am* sent an inquiry to the RA Government, requesting information on whether it had received applications from 300,000 Azerbaijanis regarding the creation of conditions for their return, as announced by Ilham Aliyev on the same day. The media also requested clarification on when, in what format and by whom the applications had been submitted to the RA Government, as well as the extent to which the Armenian Government was considering the possibility of 300,000 Azerbaijanis settling in Armenia. The Government forwarded the inquiry to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which provided a vague and generalized response to the issue of public concern.

**On December 26**, *Armlur.am* reported that they had submitted an inquiry to Alen Simonyan, the RA NA Speaker, requesting information about his advisor-assistant.[[224]](#footnote-224) The inquiry included 11 questions in total, but not all of them received a response from the NA. Specifically, no information was provided regarding the education of the advisor-assistant, along with some other unanswered queries. In other words, the response was incomplete.

***OTHER EVENTS RELATED TO THE ACTIVITIES OF MEDIA AND JOURNALISTS***

**On January 10**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan accepted for proceedings the lawsuit filed on December 25, 2023 by *Hraparak Daily Ltd.* against Deputy Artur Hovhannisyan, with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory, as well as compensate the damage caused to their business reputation. The lawsuit was caused by a December 15, 2023 statement made by the defendant from the NA rostrum, alleging that some media, in particular, *Zhoghovurd* and *Hraparak* dailies, and *Asekose.am* news website, could publish articles for money.[[225]](#footnote-225)

Court hearings in the case were also held on April 2, 18, June 4, and October 29. On November 18, the court rejected the lawsuit on the grounds that the plaintiff had failed to present any evidence that would allow the court to conclude that the public statement made by the defendant had caused any harm to them. On December 20, the plaintiff filed an appeal.

**On January 3**, on the same occasion, *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.* also filed a lawsuit against the deputy, demanding to oblige the defendant to refute the publicly made statement, issue an apology, and compensate (in the amount of 4 million AMD) the damage caused. On January 17, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. Court hearings were held on April 4, 29, June 5, and July 3. On October 15, the court ruled to partially uphold the lawsuit, obliging the deputy to refute the statements that tarnished the media’s business reputation, and pay 300 thousand AMD as compensation for non-pecuniary damage. On November 18, the defendant filed an appeal against the verdict, which was accepted for proceedings on December 17.

**On January 29**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *168 Zham Ltd. and journalist Gohar Savzyan v. citizen Ashot Davinyan,* with the plaintiffs demanding an apology for insult, a public refutation of the information considered defamatory, as well as compensation for the damage caused to their honor, dignity and business reputation.

The lawsuit filed on July 14, 2023 was caused by a June 10 post on Ashot Davinyan’s Facebook page directed at the journalist and the media in response to the article titled “A Person at the Heart of a Sex Scandal Appointed Chief Coordinator of the SUsh High School and College,”[[226]](#footnote-226) published on June 9 on *168․am* website owned by *168 Zham Ltd.*

A hearing in the case was also held on March 5, 2024. On March 25, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit, citing the lack of evidence to confirm that the disputed post had been made by Ashot Davinyan himself. On April 26, the plaintiff filed an appeal, which was accepted for proceedings on July 4. On November 28, the Civil Court of Appeal granted the appeal, overturning the verdict and sending the case to the same court for a new examination. As of the end of the year, no new proceedings had been initiated in the court of first instance.

**On January 30**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan continued the retrial in the case of *NewsAM Ltd. v. Styopa Safaryan* regarding the plaintiff’s claim for compensation for the damage caused to their business reputation.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on August 28, 2019 was caused by a post made by the defendant on his Facebook page on July 29, 2019. In the post, he claimed that the website had received an order from Robert Kocharyan’s office to publish some articles about judges.[[227]](#footnote-227)

On July 15, 2022, the lawsuit was partially upheld, with the defendant obliged to refute the disputed statements on his personal Facebook page. The defendant filed an appeal, which was partially granted: the court overturned the initial verdict, remanding the case to the same court for a new examination.

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on June 6 and December 27, with the next one scheduled for February 18, 2025.

**On February 1**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Tavush Marz (based in Ijevan) held a regular hearing in the case of *Aravot.am reporter Hripsimeh Jebejyan v. citizen Khazhak Tananyan,* with the plaintiff demanding to protect her honor and dignity from publicly made insult.

The lawsuit filed on August 28, 2023, was caused by the statements made against the journalist online.[[228]](#footnote-228) In 2024, court hearings were also held on March 19 and 21, April 3, 18 and 23, May 30, and June 18. The lawsuit was upheld by a verdict issued on July 10. The court obliged the defendant to issue a public apology to the journalist, pay 400 thousand AMD as compensation for insult and 200 thousand AMD as attorney’s fee. On August 26, the defendant filed an appeal with the appellate court.

**On March 19**, the court continued the examination of the case filed by the same plaintiff against citizen Diana Martirosyan on August 31, 2023, involving the same claim and related to the same circumstances. In 2024, a court hearing was also held on June 7. By the verdict issued on June 27, the lawsuit was partially upheld: the court obliged Diana Martirosyan to issue an apology to the journalist and pay 70 thousand AMD as compensation for non-pecuniary damage. The verdict was not appealed and entered into force. Meanwhile, Diana Martirosyan announced on her Facebook page that she was not going to comply with the obligations imposed by the verdict.

**On February 7**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *Newday.am editor Ani Gevorgyan v. citizen Lala Bernetsyan,* with Ani Gevorgyan demanding to protect her honor and dignity from publicly made insult. The lawsuit filed on August 28, 2023 was caused by a social media campaign against the journalist involving insults, threats, and calls for physical harm, which began after Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's July 25 press conference.[[229]](#footnote-229)

In 2024, court hearings in the case were also held on April 18, June 27, August 29, and November 7. On November 28, the court upheld the lawsuit, obliging the defendant to make an apology to the plaintiff.

**On February 20**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Kotayk Marz (based in Abovyan), held a hearing in the case of the same plaintiff against citizen Diana Martirosyan, with the former demanding to protect her honor and dignity from publicly made insult and compensate 400,000 AMD.

The lawsuit filed on October 13, 2023 was caused by an incident on September 11 during the Yerevan Council of Elders election campaign, in which Diana Martirosyan attacked Ani Gevorgyan. The attack was accompanied by verbal insults and threats.[[230]](#footnote-230)

In 2024, hearings in the case were also held on May 7 and July 11. On August 1, the court ruled to uphold the lawsuit, obliging the defendant to issue an apology, pay 400,000 AMD as compensation for the insult, and 27,000 AMD as state duty. Although the judicial act entered into legal force, the defendant announced in a Facebook post that she was not going to pay the compensation.

**On February 13**, the RA Administrative Court held a hearing in the case of *Armenian Second TV Channel Ltd. v. Commission on Television and Radio.* The plaintiff demanded to oblige the CTR to recognize *Armenian Second TV Channel Ltd.* as the winner in the tender for licensing the use of the capital city’s slot in the public multiplex and to grant the channel a license. As a reminder, the lawsuit was filed on January 5, 2023. In 2024, a court hearing was also held on July 12, and on July 31, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit. The case was moved to the court archive.

**On March 5**, the Administrative Court of Appeal replaced the judge in another case involving the same plaintiff and defendant. This lawsuit was filed on August 6, 2021, with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the CTR to recognize *Armenian Second TV Channel Ltd.* as the winner in the tender for licensing the use of the capital city’s slot in the public multiplex and to grant the channel a license. On January 12, 2023, the Administrative Court ruled to terminate the case, prompting the plaintiff to file an appeal with a higher court. On April 1, 2024, the Administrative Court of Appeal accepted the case for proceedings. A court hearing was held on September 6, and on September 27, the appeal was rejected. The judicial act entered into legal force.

**On April 25**, the Administrative Court of Appeal held a hearing regarding the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *Armenian Second TV Channel Ltd. v. Commission on Television and Radio,* challenging the decision of the first instance court, which had rejected the lawsuit.

The lawsuit was filed on February 18, 2022, with the plaintiff demanding to recognize the absence of legal grounds for the imposition of a fine equivalent to one hundred times the minimum wage as specified in paragraph 28 of Article 57 of the RA Law “On Audiovisual Media” referenced in the CTR’s decision No. 86-A from May 27, 2021. The fine was set on the grounds that, according to the CTR, the TV Company had failed to provide the regulatory state body with relevant information on the amount of revenue and the shortfall in generation for the previous year. By a decision issued on March 15, 2023, the lawsuit was rejected. The plaintiff subsequently filed an appeal on April 20. On May 20, the appellate court rejected the appeal, leaving the Administrative Court's ruling unaltered. The case was moved to the court's archive.

**On June 11**, the Administrative Court of Appeal rejected the defendant’s appeal in the case involving the same plaintiff and the CTR. This appeal was filed on August 2, 2022, in which the plaintiff demanded to recognize the absence of legal grounds for imposing a fine on the TV Company equivalent to four hundred times the minimum wage as specified in paragraph 22 of Article 57 of the Law "On Audiovisual Media.” The fine had been referenced in the CTR’s drafted but unsigned decision No. 85-A, dated June 13 of the same year. On October 16, 2023, the appeal had been granted, and the defendant had filed an appeal on November 10.

On July 10, 2024, the defendant filed a cassation appeal, which was returned on August 15, and refiled on September 6. On October 16, the cassation court decided to leave the appeal without examination.

**On September 17**, the RA Administrative Court held a hearing in another case involving the same plaintiff against the CTR. The lawsuit, filed on February 6, 2023, sought to oblige the CTR to recognize the plaintiff as the winner in the tender for licensing the use of the national broadcasting slot in the public multiplex and to grant the channel a license. The next court hearing was scheduled for June 17, 2025.

**On April 16**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Shark Ltd. (the founder of 5th Channel TV Company) v. NA Deputy Vladimir Vardanyan,* regarding the demands to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation. As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on November 16, 2022 was caused by the statements made by the deputy against the TV Company during a briefing in the NA on October 18: “The worse it is for your channel, the better.” According to the media, the deputy targeted journalist Karineh Mangasaryan.[[231]](#footnote-231) On June 11, 2024, the case was accepted for proceedings under a new judge. A court hearing was scheduled for January 30, 2025.

**On April 26**, the Civil Court of Appeal rejected the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *Shark Ltd. (the founder of 5th Channel TV Company) v. NA Deputy Khachatur Sukiasyan,* challenging the ruling of the first instance court, which had rejected the lawsuit.

The lawsuit filed on November 25, 2022, with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay monetary compensation, was caused by an incident that occurred in the National Assembly on November 7. During a briefing with journalists, Khachatur Sukiasyan shouted at the *5th Channel* correspondent Arpi Sukiasyan, not allowing her to finish her question. He then made statements about the political patronage of the media, linking it to the second RA President Robert Kocharyan and labeling him a thief and a bandit engaged in robbery: “Take your boss and go bring the billions, you don’t have the right to be called a media outlet...”[[232]](#footnote-232)

On May 30, the plaintiff filed an appeal with the Court of Cassation, which was returned on July 11 and was no longer refiled.

**On April 26**, the RA Administrative Court accepted for proceedings the lawsuit filed by Knarik Manukyan, journalist and editor of *Zhoghovurd* daily, against the RA National Assembly Staff. The plaintiff sought the annulment of the decision 1/6399-2023 issued by the NA Chief of Staff on December 15, 2023, which revoked the plaintiff’s accreditation to the parliament.

Court hearings in the case were held on May 29, July 11, and December 10, with the next one scheduled for May 29, 2025.

**On August 16**, journalist Lusineh Petrosyan, one of the candidates in the competition for the role of executive director of the *Public Radio*, filed a lawsuit with the Administrative Court against the Council of Public Broadcaster (CPB). She demanded that the CPB’s decision be declared invalid, the competition procedure be amended within a month, the revised version be sent for a state and legal review, and the election be held again. On August 26, the court rejected the second part of Lusineh Petrosyan’s lawsuit and accepted the claim to invalidate the CPB’s decision, while also involving Armen Koloyan, the newly elected director, as a third party.

**On November 12**, Garegin Khumaryan, the former Director of the *Public Radio*, filed a lawsuit with the Administrative Court against the CPB, demanding to annul the decisions No. 52-A dated 29.07.2024 and No. 53-A dated 31.07.2024 on recognizing the winner of the competition for the vacant position of the Executive Director at the *Public Radio Company of Armenia CJSC.*

On November 18, the lawsuit was returned on the grounds that the procedural deadline had been missed. On November 25, it was refiled, accompanied by a motion to restore the right to perform actions conditioned by the missed procedural deadlines. The motion was granted, and on December 3, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. This case, along with the previous one—*Lusineh Petrosyan v. CPB*—was merged into a single proceeding. A court hearing was scheduled for March 25, 2025.

**On November 21**, the Administrative Court of Appeal held a hearing regarding the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *Husaber CJSC (the founder of Yerkir Media TV Company) v. Commission on Television and Radio,* challenging the decision of the first instance court, which had rejected the lawsuit. This pertains to a lawsuit filed on August 31, 2022, with the plaintiff demanding to annul the CTR’s August 17, 2022 decision. By that decision, the CTR had imposed a fine equivalent to five hundred times the wage on *Husaber CJSC* for recorded violations under the provisions of the Laws “On Audiovisual Media” and “On Advertising”. On December 21, 2022, the lawsuit had been rejected, and the plaintiff had filed an appeal with the appellate court.

On December 19, the appellate court rejected the plaintiff's appeal.

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1. [**https://fip.am/25587**](https://fip.am/25587) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [**https://freedomhouse.org/country/armenia/freedom-net/2024**](https://freedomhouse.org/country/armenia/freedom-net/2024) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [**https://khosq.am/en/2024/04/29/statement-117/**](https://khosq.am/en/2024/04/29/statement-117/) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [**https://khosq.am/en/2024/04/30/statement-118/**](https://khosq.am/en/2024/04/30/statement-118/) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [**https://khosq.am/en/2024/05/07/statement-119/**](https://khosq.am/en/2024/05/07/statement-119/) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [**https://khosq.am/en/2024/06/13/statement-123/**](https://khosq.am/en/2024/06/13/statement-123/) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [**https://rsf.org/en/protests-armenia-rsf-denounces-deliberate-police-violence-against-reporters**](https://rsf.org/en/protests-armenia-rsf-denounces-deliberate-police-violence-against-reporters) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [**https://www.facebook.com/usembarmenia/posts/pfbid02xhG8pP3TVepmoauLeFiz9UF442MwZy5x7EE6NU31moSkTbHKZ7PxvMFuFFw6FpKCl**](https://www.facebook.com/usembarmenia/posts/pfbid02xhG8pP3TVepmoauLeFiz9UF442MwZy5x7EE6NU31moSkTbHKZ7PxvMFuFFw6FpKCl) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. [**https://khosq.am/en/2024/03/05/statement-113/**](https://khosq.am/en/2024/03/05/statement-113/) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. [**https://khosq.am/en/2024/03/05/statement-113/**](https://khosq.am/en/2024/03/05/statement-113/) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. [**https://khosq.am/en/2024/04/17/statement-115/**](https://khosq.am/en/2024/04/17/statement-115/) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. [**https://khosq.am/en/2024/10/16/statement-125/**](https://khosq.am/en/2024/10/16/statement-125/) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. [**https://www.facebook.com/simonyanalen/posts/pfbid02oFGH44na5W9BXZfYYKtJbVMdJcwtYXSgJXCdoVnJaVCuhuKhGhMqEUSRtnM7T39Jl**](https://www.facebook.com/simonyanalen/posts/pfbid02oFGH44na5W9BXZfYYKtJbVMdJcwtYXSgJXCdoVnJaVCuhuKhGhMqEUSRtnM7T39Jl) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. [**https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/528267\_ARMENIA-2023-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf**](https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/528267_ARMENIA-2023-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. [**https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/europe-and-central-asia/eastern-europe-and-central-asia/armenia/report-armenia/**](https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/europe-and-central-asia/eastern-europe-and-central-asia/armenia/report-armenia/) [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. [**https://rsf.org/en/country/armenia**](https://rsf.org/en/country/armenia) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. [**https://www.moj.am/storage/files/news/news\_5121033488291\_Scan\_2\_.pdf**](https://www.moj.am/storage/files/news/news_5121033488291_Scan_2_.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
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116. [**https://hraparak.am/post/b93c724fb855d707e28dee03d3079c36?fbclid=IwAR0hSdr0zK\_BH0BB7fLQmv\_nLmajFUNQoVkUZ0I-jBAYtrVGIehGJdvsvAU**](https://hraparak.am/post/b93c724fb855d707e28dee03d3079c36?fbclid=IwAR0hSdr0zK_BH0BB7fLQmv_nLmajFUNQoVkUZ0I-jBAYtrVGIehGJdvsvAU) [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
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118. [**https://news.am/arm/news/646164.html**](https://news.am/arm/news/646164.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
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122. [**https://armlur.am/1295811/**](https://armlur.am/1295811/) [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. [**https://hetq.am/hy/article/165552**](https://hetq.am/hy/article/165552) [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. [**https://www.azatutyun.am/a/32930660.html**](https://www.azatutyun.am/a/32930660.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
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126. [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kt8rPD2m8YQ**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kt8rPD2m8YQ) [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
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140. [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsw8nVMKjxI&t=172s**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsw8nVMKjxI&t=172s) [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
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156. [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=696vWAmCtjk&t=317s**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=696vWAmCtjk&t=317s) [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
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