***REPORT***

***ON SITUATION WITH FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS OF JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA IN ARMENIA — SECOND QUARTER OF 2025***



*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* ***second quarter of 2025****.*

*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***

During the second quarter of 2025, Armenia’s tense domestic political climate once again demonstrated the extreme polarization within the country’s media—a point constantly emphasized by various international organizations in their reports.

The high-profile arrests of Russia-based businessman Samvel Karapetyan and two senior clerics, Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan and Archbishop Mikayel Ajapahyan, on grave charges presented by the Investigative Committee—including public calls for violent overthrow of the constitutional order, plotting acts of terrorism, mass unrest, seizure of power, etc.—were accompanied by extremely harsh and often unacceptable rhetoric between opposing political forces. Hate speech, insults, disinformation, and manipulative comments were not only reflected in the media affiliated with or influenced by these forces, but the groups themselves also intensified their use of abusive language.

Such an approach is characteristic of outlets serving the interests of various camps both within the government and opposition. Beyond that, some journalists, having immersed themselves in political confrontation, also share their highly biased posts and other types of content on social media. As a result, impartial reporting is sidelined, leaving a deficit in society.

Although Armenia improved its standing by 9 points over the previous year, ranking 34th out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index published by *Reporters Without Borders* on May 2, 2025, the report, too, highlights that media continue to remain polarized, and the country “is facing an unprecedented level of disinformation and hate speech.”

During the period under review, in terms of improving the situation in the media sector, and especially within the Armenian segment of social networks, the authorities’ initiative to introduce amendments and supplements to Article 1087.1 of the RA Civil Code and the Law “On Mass Communication” was noteworthy. The initiative concerns the accountability for insult and defamation, proposing that liability be applied not only in cases of such remarks appearing in media publications, but also unacceptable language used in social media posts. Accordingly, the proposed liability is envisaged to extend to both media and individuals not carrying out media activities, namely, social media users. Moreover, in addition to the existing right to publish a refutation or response under current legislative regulations, the initiative proposes introducing a new option that would enable individuals to file a request with the court for a partial or full removal of content (online posts) containing insult and/or defamation. These amendments initiated by the Ministry of Justice are based on the Constitutional Court's decision No. DCC-1752 issued on October 1, 2024.

Regarding new lawsuits filed against media and journalists under the current legislation, **16** cases were recorded in the period under review, which is 3 more than in the previous quarter. All of these are insult and defamation lawsuits, with the plaintiffs including 6 representatives of the business sector, 3 present and former officials, 2 politicians, 2 healthcare sector representatives, 2 citizens/private individuals, and 1 lawyer.

During the given quarter, the CPFE recorded 2 cases of physical violence against media representatives, both committed by law enforcement officers. Alongside this, **20** cases of various other pressures were registered, taking the form of indecent treatment, insults, threats, intolerance and discrimination against journalists. The overwhelming majority of these, **17** cases, were committed by representatives of state bodies or officials, and **one case each** involved a businessman, an activist and an unidentified individual.

*Compared to the previous quarter, the number of violations of the right to receive and disseminate information increased by 10, reaching* ***39*** *cases.*

 ***MEDIA ACTIVITIES ENVIRONMENT***

*The second quarter of 2025 was a tense period in Armenia’s socio-political life due to the escalation of the government-opposition and government-church confrontation. In particular, the arrests of Russia-based businessman Samvel Karapetyan, followed by the arrests of Armenian Apostolic Church Archbishops Mikayel Ajapahyan and Bagrat Galstanyan, and the charges brought against them by the RA Investigative Committee triggered wide public reaction and varied assessments. Samvel Karapetyan and Mikayel Ajapahyan are accused of making public calls for the seizure of power and violent overthrow of the constitutional order, while Bagrat Galstanyan, together with more than a dozen of his supporters, is accused of plotting acts of terrorism, mass unrest, and seizure of power. To substantiate these charges, law enforcement agencies issued a number of statements, and also published a secret recording, in which even calls for murder are voiced. In all these developments, the authorities see a Russian footprint, aimed at carrying out a coup in Armenia and undermining the country's sovereignty.*

*Under these conditions, as in the past, the relentless political struggle has been carried out mainly through the media and social networks, with intolerance growing even sharper, accompanied by rising levels of disinformation, hate speech, insults, and even profanities.*

The country’s top officials, including Armenian Prime Minister, did not refrain from spreading inappropriate speech, responding to insulting or defamatory statements directed at them with posts in the same style on social media. In this regard, Nikol Pashinyan’s June 28 Facebook post[[1]](#footnote-1) is noteworthy. In it, he essentially acknowledged the existence of foul language in political discourse and suggested putting an end to “foul language and hybrid targeting across societal, political and public domains” and switch to a mode of debate that is exclusively civilized and respectful, relying solely on verified facts. The Prime Minister set a timeframe of July 1-5 to achieve public consensus on the matter, and pledged: “… I veto the use of 'extracanonical' language and discourse on my part.”

According to independent experts, this moratorium on foul language should not be limited to five days but should remain in effect indefinitely, irrespective of the conduct of opposition political forces, those calling for a coup and those seeking to carry it out, as there are ample legal mechanisms to counter them. In addition, the public use of obscene language (regardless of whether it is in response to others or at one's own initiative) has a highly negative impact on an already divided society, as well as the media field.

In recent years, international organizations have also drawn attention to the fact that Armenia is facing an unprecedented level of disinformation and hate speech—a situation conditioned by internal political tensions and, at the same time, the polarization of the media.

In its annual report released on May 2, *Reporters Without Borders* highlighted[[2]](#footnote-2) that despite the pluralistic environment, the media in Armenia remains polarized, with most broadcast and print media outlets tied to major political and commercial interests. According to the report, “Many media outlets are close to political leaders who emerged after 2018, while others remain loyal to former oligarchs. Two political topics are especially sensitive: the ongoing negotiations with Azerbaijan and the increasingly strained relations between Armenia and Russia. Some political groups carry out disinformation operations and target journalists.”

Following the release of the above-mentioned report, both political and civic circles in Armenia, along with media representatives themselves, were questioning how it was possible that despite these shortcomings, Armenia advanced by 9 spots in the 2025 World Press Freedom Index, securing the 34th place out of 180 countries and ranking first in the region. The following factors can be cited as justification: first, there are no taboo topics in Armenia—even experts who actively criticize the authorities or the opposition media are unable to point out an issue, viewpoint or idea for which an appropriate platform cannot be found for coverage. Second, unlike our neighboring countries, there are no jailed journalists in Armenia, nor are there any media representatives forced to leave the country to avoid political persecution or fabricated criminal proceedings.

In addition, although not without flaws, the Armenian legislation regulating media activities is quite liberal and, in a number of respects, is close to European standards. Finally, while in neighboring and dozens of other countries and, in general, worldwide, regressive trends in press freedom have unfolded and deepened much more rapidly, against this background, the situation in Armenia has been assessed favorably.

Nevertheless, all the negative phenomena outlined in the above-mentioned report were fully manifested amid the heightened political tensions in the second quarter of 2025. ***The majority of media were engaged in propaganda campaigns, while individual journalists made political appeals and statements on Facebook. All these actions further deepened the division within society, with media representatives being targeted by the government or the opposition, along with their respective supporters.***

By engaging in political struggles and turning into their instruments, many media outlets not only neglect professional norms, but also face legal problems. Thus, on April 22, the RA Investigative Committee's General Department for Investigation of Crimes against the State, Fundamentals of Constitutional Order and Public Security received reports from the RA Prosecutor General's Office. These reports had been filed by citizen Nairi Hokhikyan, Mesrop Arakelyan, a member of the political council of the *Country to Live Party*, and RA NA Deputy Lilit Galstyan. According to their allegations, *Xosnak.am* (a news website associated with the authorities - **CPFE**) was disseminating videos that propagated hatred, used rhetoric inciting hostility and violence within society, and included calls that posed a threat to people’s lives and health. In particular, such calls had been made against residents of Gyumri and Artsakh.

With regard to the incident, on April 23, proceedings were initiated in the Investigative Committee under paragraph 2.3 of Article 329 of the Criminal Code. The preliminary investigation is ongoing.

Under these conditions, correspondents working for the media associated with the authorities encounter considerable difficulties in collaborating with opposition politicians. Similarly, relationships between opposition media representatives and government deputies and officials remain tense, with these interactions turning into serious conflicts, as was observed throughout the quarter. Thus, on April 29, the CPFE and a number of journalistic organizations issued a joint statement, expressing concern that on April 25, 2025, during a session of the National Assembly Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs, members of the *Civil Contract* faction voted down the proposal to establish an ethics committee regarding the conduct of Deputy Andranik Kocharyan.[[3]](#footnote-3)

As a reminder, On March 20, 2025, Andranik Kocharyan, Chair of the NA Standing Committee on Defense and Security, during a briefing with journalists, demanded that Hripsimeh Jebejyan, the head of the news service at Tribune.am website, reposition herself, and clearly unwilling to talk to her, insulted her using an obscene expression. The same journalistic organizations addressed the incident in a condemning [statement](https://khosq.am/en/2025/05/31/statement-129/), calling for the formation of a parliamentary ethics committee that would examine the behavior of the deputy and provide an evaluation. However, no such process was launched.

The failure to evaluate Andranik Kocharyan’s indecent behavior and the absence of even a discussion on the matter indicate that the ruling majority sees nothing unusual in such conflicts, considers insulting journalists as normal practice, thereby giving a green light for similar incidents in the future. It is likely for this very reason that clashes between deputies and media representatives have been occurring with greater frequency recently. Experts believe that in a polarized environment the fight against indecent behavior should start from the National Assembly itself. On the one hand, politicians—including representatives of the parliamentary majority—complain about the atmosphere of intolerance, and on the other hand, they are clearly unwilling to take the necessary steps to address it, rejecting the formation of an ethics committee. While some representatives of the ruling camp have suggested creating a permanent, rather than a temporary committee on parliamentary ethics in the NA, there continues to be no such initiative in practice.

During the period under review, Deputy Khachatur Sukiasyan, mayoral candidate for Gyumri (later elected mayor) Vardan Ghukasyan, several judges, a member of the council of elders, an assistant to the Prime Minister's wife, a minister's bodyguard, officers of the State Protection Service and the police, etc., also stood out for their unfriendly and offensive attitude towards journalists.

It is noteworthy that journalists have recently encountered unwarranted obstacles to their professional activities and discriminatory treatment also in courts. For example, one problematic case involved a judge, who, after expressing disagreement with a journalist’s article and its headline, engaged in an argument with her and instructed her out of the courtroom. In another instance, journalists in the Criminal Court of Appeal were sanctioned for requesting to move around the courtroom for a few minutes to capture quality footage or to place a loudspeaker on the rostrum to ensure high-quality sound. In another case, a person closely connected to a judge hit a cameraman’s camera near the building of the Supreme Judicial Council. Details on all these incidents are provided in the “Pressures” section of the report.

***“The legal framework that regulates the sector does not sufficiently protect freedom of the press, nor does it follow European standards.”*** This view is also expressed by *Reporters Without Borders.*

The legislation regulating media activities in Armenia is quite outdated and requires modernization to adequately respond to contemporary challenges. This also applies to liability for insult and defamation in both media publications and online platforms. The draft laws[[4]](#footnote-4) proposing amendments and supplements to the RA Civil Code and the Law “On Mass Communication,” shared for discussion on the Government’s unified website for publication of legal acts’ drafts between April 30 and May 16, aimed to improve the situation in the information field. Accordingly, it is suggested that liability measures be applied not only in cases where insults and/or defamation appear in media publications, as set out in the current legislation, but also in cases where such unacceptable remarks occur in social media posts. In other words, individuals not carrying out media activities who spread insults and/or defamation online may also be held liable.

Another important innovation is that in order to protect themselves from insult and defamation, individuals may request the court to oblige the author to remove such a publication or online post either partially (such as a separate phrase or one or more paragraphs) or entirely. It should be recalled that under the current legislation, liability for defamation consists of a refutation or the possibility of publishing a response, along with monetary compensation, while in cases of insult, it involves an apology and monetary compensation. According to the above-mentioned draft amendments, a plaintiff who believes to have been defamed cannot simultaneously seek both a refutation (or response) and the removal of the disputed content, but instead must choose one of these measures.

The Ministry of Justice, being the body that developed the aforementioned draft laws, substantiated these amendments and supplements by referring to the Constitutional Court's decision No. DCC-1752 issued on October 1, 2024. This concerns the application submitted to the Constitutional Court by Artak Zeynalyan, former Minister of Justice, in 2024. 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. Thus, on October 1, the Constitutional Court issued its judicial act, granting Artak Zeynalyan’s application and determining that paragraph 8 of Article 1087.1 of the Criminal Code contradicted the Constitution.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Discussions on the draft amendments and supplements to the Civil Code and the Law “On Mass Communication” continued throughout the quarter, engaging also civil society actors, media experts, and media representatives. The documents are still being refined and edited.

It should be noted that between April and June, **16 new lawsuits** were filed against media and journalists on grounds of defamation and insult under Article 1087.1 of the current Civil Code, marking an increase of 3 cases compared to the previous quarter.

*Throughout the quarter, courts issued* ***24*** *judicial acts in relation to lawsuits filed against journalists and media over different years. Of these, 3 lawsuits were definitively rejected, 3 were upheld (with one involving the media as a third party), and 1 case was dismissed on the grounds that the claim no longer had any substantive basis. The other 17 judicial acts have not yet entered into force or have been appealed in higher courts. 8 of these acts are in favor of the media, while 9 determined that the plaintiffs’ rights had been violated by the media (with one case involving the media as a third party).*

Overall, the number of various forms of pressure on media and their personnel during the period under review amounted to **36** (11 more than in the previous quarter). Additionally, **2** episodes of physical violence were recorded, both of which were committed by law enforcement officers. Thus, on June 16, during a protest organized by the residents of the village of Kasakh, a police officer used brute force against *24news.am* correspondent Mary Manukyan. He first shouted at her, and then pushed her back with a heavy blow. The Human Rights Defender of Armenia issued a statement regarding the incident, strongly condemning the police officer's violence. The same day, according to an official statement, the police officer was dismissed from service. In response to the CPFE's inquiry, the RA Prosecutor's Office informed that criminal proceedings had been initiated on June 17 under 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).* Mary Manukyan was recognized as a victim, and the preliminary investigation remains ongoing.

On June 13, 2025, the professional activities of *Mediahub.am* correspondent Vahe Makaryan were hindered by security officers in the National Assembly. It is worth recalling that on November 4, 2024, his accreditation in the parliament was withdrawn on highly controversial grounds. This decision followed a confrontation between Vahe Makaryan and NA Speaker Alen Simonyan. Although stripped of his accreditation, Vahe Makaryan obtained a one-time entry pass issued by Gegham Manukyan, a member of the National Assembly’s Standing Committee on Defense and Security, and entered the parliament to cover the Committee’s session. The Law “On Mass Communication” does not prohibit journalists who lack accreditation from receiving a pass from any deputy and reporting on the activities of that state body for that particular day. In addition, as outlined in Article 4 (3.2) of the same law, “any coercive act against media workers and journalists aimed at or leading to the dissemination of any information or the refusal to do so ” is prohibited. Contrary to these regulations, officers from the security service, citing instructions from the NA Chief of Staff, asked Vahe Makaryan to leave the Committee session, without providing any reasonable justification. They demanded that Makaryan exit the NA building, and when the journalist resisted, they forcibly removed him from the premises. The CPFE and partner journalistic organizations issued a statement regarding the incident.[[6]](#footnote-6)

*This quarter saw* ***39*** *violations of the right to receive and disseminate information, which is 20 more than in the same period last year and 10 more than in the previous quarter. According to the CPFE’s classification, in the period under review, the provision of information by various bodies and organizations was denied without valid grounds in 11 cases. Furthermore, 9 written inquiries did not receive any response, with 2 of these resulting in lawsuits filed with the RA Administrative Court, where plaintiffs demanded that the relevant bodies be obliged to respond to the inquiries. Additionally, 14 replies were vague (incomplete or lacking proper references), 1 arrived late, 2 were marked by unjustified postponements, and in 2 cases, the reply did not correspond to the essence of the inquiries.*

The glass barrier installed on May 19 between the Council of Elders’ session hall and the pressroom in the Yerevan Municipality can be considered a symbol of problems and a certain turning point in authorities-media relations. It is worth recalling that after the 2018 revolution, when the new authorities took office, media representatives gained easier access to the municipality building. Accreditation, which was mandatory under the previous authorities, was no longer required. Not long after, the wall between the Council of Elders’ session hall and its lobby was dismantled, and a special room was set up for journalists, enabling them to directly follow the sessions and ensure coverage. Following the installation of this barrier, the work of media representatives became significantly more complicated in terms of filming, listening to speeches and ensuring quality recordings. As a result, reporters have to request additional details and clarifications from the Council of Elders members or municipality officials on the issues under discussion, with the possibility that they might require such requests to be submitted in writing.

Another point of concern was the Government’s April 17 decision to create a foundation named “Public Benefit Media Environment.”[[7]](#footnote-7) At first glance, the idea is highly valuable and important. Yet, reviewing the content of the decision reveals that the Government intends to develop a public benefit media environment exclusively through television and radio companies broadcasting in the public multiplex. In other words, only these broadcasters would be eligible to access the foundation’s funds as grants for creating cultural, educational, instructional, scientific-educational, children's, sports and other audiovisual programs. Other media, including online platforms known for their quality products, will not be granted such a right. This represents a discriminatory approach towards media and an unfair principle in allocating state support. After all, Armenia’s media landscape is not formed and characterized solely by TV companies broadcasting in the public multiplex. In the present era of technological advancements, many media operating online play a significant role in the news sector and successfully compete with traditional broadcast channels.

These concerns were voiced by the CPFE and a number of partner journalistic organizations in two jointly issued statements, which were disseminated on April 22[[8]](#footnote-8) and May 20.[[9]](#footnote-9) Experts in the field highlighted that while they absolutely do not object to broadcasters operating in the public multiplex receiving state support, such support should be available to all media platforms (regardless of their dissemination technologies) that are willing and ready to produce content that is beneficial to the public. The authors of the statement reminded the authorities of the discussions held several years earlier between their representatives and the heads of journalistic public organizations regarding the provision of state support to the media and the establishment of a permanent foundation for this purpose. However, the aforementioned process was discontinued, and the authorities did not respond to the suggestions to resume it. Instead, the Government, without proper discussions, adopted a surprise decision to establish a foundation that exclusively supports the media broadcast in the public multiplex.

In another statement[[10]](#footnote-10) issued on June 20, journalistic organizations expressed concern over another round of indecent and offensive statements and descriptions directed at the authorities, state, and people of Armenia, made on June 18, 2025 by the author and host of the program “Evening with Vladimir Solovyov” on Russia-1 TV channel. As a reminder, Solovyov, outraged by the arrest in Yerevan of Samvel Karapetyan, an Armenian businessman residing in Russia, called the Armenian authorities, and particularly the Prime Minister, a “scoundrel,” a “sellout,” “Turkol” (Turkophile) and went on to question whether “the people of Armenia have any involvement in issues related to the fate of the country, or whether Armenia will soon suffer the fate of Artsakh…” This clearly demonstrates that circles and media resources close to the Russian authorities are making efforts to actively interfere in Armenia’s socio-political—and even legal—processes, trying to influence the internal situation in our country ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections. The journalistic organizations demanded that the Armenian Government annul the Agreement “On Cooperation in the Field of Mass Telecommunications between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the Government of the Russian Federation”—for which numerous justifications have been gathered—and by doing so, cease the broadcasting of Russian TV channels via the RA public multiplex. They also demanded that the Government take other necessary measures and conduct appropriate discussions with the expert community to ensure the protection of Armenia’s information environment from foreign hybrid influence.

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

We present the violations of the rights of journalists and media in the second quarter of 2025 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 is 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 the second quarter of 2025, along with updates on previous incidents.

***In total, there were 77 reported cases of various violations of journalists' and media rights in the 2nd quarter of 2025. Among these, 2 are cases of physical violence, 36 are cases of various pressures, and 39 involve violations of the right to receive and disseminate information.***

The charts below present these data, along with a comparison to indicators from previous periods.

Similar to previous reports, the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression emphasizes that the data in the charts 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***

*During the second quarter of 2025, there were* ***2*** *documented cases of physical violence against media professionals. Below we present these cases along with the developments related to the past occurrences of violence in chronological order.*

**On April 4**, 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 2018-2025 in the *Reports* section on *khosq.am*).

Hearings in the case were also held on April 18, 25, May 7, 16, 23, 30, and June 16, 2025, with the next one scheduled for July 4.

**On May 23**, injured citizen Ara Gharagyozyan, who is part of the case initiated by journalists Ani Keshishyan, Liana Yeghiazaryan and a group of other citizens against former Commander of the RA Police Troops Levon Yeranosyan, filed an appeal with the Court of Cassation. He challenged the appellate court’s decision to leave unchanged the June 3, 2024 verdict, which released Levon Yeranosyan from serving his sentence on the basis of amnesty and the statute of limitations.

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 2018-2025, in the *Reports* section on *khosq.am*). By the verdict issued on June 3, 2024, Levon Yeranosyan was found guilty but released from serving his sentence on the basis of amnesty and the statute of limitations. Appeals against the verdict were filed both by the victims and the accused (the latter seeking a new trial in the first instance court to be acquitted and recognized as innocent).

RA Prosecutor General Anna Vardapetyan also filed an appeal with a higher court against the appellate court's decision on June 11, and Yeranosyan’s attorney submitted a similar appeal on June 18.

**On June 13**, security officers at the National Assembly used force to remove journalist Vahe Makaryan from the parliament building.[[11]](#footnote-11) The journalist had obtained an entry pass issued by deputy Gegham Manukyan and had entered the parliament to cover the session of the National Assembly’s Standing Committee on Defense and Security. An officer from the State Protection Service interrupted the session, and citing instructions from the NA Staff, asked Vahe Makaryan to leave the room. Makaryan declined to follow the demand, arguing it was illegal, after which the SPS officers forcibly removed him from the premises.

It is worth recalling that on October 31, 2024, a [confrontation](https://khosq.am/en/2024/11/05/statement-126/) occurred between Vahe Makaryan and NA Speaker Alen Simonyan, after which the journalist’s accreditation in the parliament was revoked. Similar to the previous incident, journalistic organizations issued a statement regarding this incident.[[12]](#footnote-12)

**On June 16**, a police officer used force against *24news.am* correspondent Mary Manukyan.[[13]](#footnote-13) During a protest organized by the residents of the village of Kasakh in Kotayk Marz against changes in transport routes, the police officer approached the journalist covering the demonstration, shouted at her, and then pushed her back with a heavy blow. The Human Rights Defender of Armenia issued a statement regarding the incident, strongly condemning the police officer's violence. The same day, according to an official statement, the police officer was dismissed from service.

In response to the CPFE's inquiry, the RA Prosecutor's Office informed that criminal proceedings had been initiated on June 17 under 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).* Mary Manukyan was recognized as a victim, and the preliminary investigation remains ongoing.

**On June 30**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of violence against journalist Davit Levonyan.

As a reminder, on April 30, 2024, Artur Sukoyan, NA Deputy Levon Kocharyan’s assistant, near the central building of the National Assembly, hit *Civic.am* correspondent Davit Levonyan in the face, accusing him of “blasphemy”.[[14]](#footnote-14) The deputy’s assistant referred to the journalist’s viewpoint shared several days earlier on his personal YouTube channel, where he had stated that Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan, the head of the Diocese of Tavush, was serving Russian interests[[15]](#footnote-15). 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 June 13, the criminal proceedings, along with the indictment, were forwarded to the court.

The next hearing was scheduled for August 26, 2025.

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

*In the second quarter of 2025, there were* ***36*** *recorded cases of various forms of pressure on media and journalists. 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 April 1**, atthe Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan, a redistribution took place in the case of *NA Deputy Hrachya Hakobyan v. Yerkir Editorial Office Ltd.,* in which the plaintiff demanded a refutation of defamatory information and payment of 500,000 AMD as compensation.

The lawsuit filed on June 6, 2024 was caused by a video titled “The Money-Monger Revolutionaries: Hrachya Hakobyan,”[[16]](#footnote-16) 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 in the case was also held on May 6, with the next one scheduled for September 2, 2025.

**On April 1**, the Civil Court of Appeal accepted for proceedings the appeal filed by the defendant in the case of *Photolure LLC (news agency) v. Skizb Media Kentron Ltd. (the founder of 1in.am news website)* against the ruling of the first instance court, which had partially upheld the lawsuit.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on October 20, 2023, with the plaintiff demanding to stop the use of copyrighted content, was caused by the illegal publication of the agency's photos on *1in.am.* On January 17, 2025, the court obliged the defendant to stop the use of photographic works of *Photolure*, to pay 2 million 400 thousand AMD in compensation, along with the relevant state duties and 200 thousand AMD as reasonable attorney's fee.The defendant appealed the judicial act to a higher court on February 19.

**On April 1**, the Civil Court of Appeal upheld the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *Zangezur Copper-Molybdenum Combine CJSC v. journalist Tehmineh Yenokyan* against the ruling of the first instance court, which had rejected the lawsuit on the grounds of expiration of the statute of limitations. The case was sent to the same court for a complete re-examination. It was accepted for proceedings on June 27, with a court hearing scheduled for July 28.

The lawsuit filed on January 5, 2023, with the plaintiff demanding to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay 6 million AMD in compensation,

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...”[[17]](#footnote-17)* (For details see the CPFE’s annual reports for 2023-2025, in the Reports section on *khosq.am*).

**On April 1**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a preliminary hearing in the case of *Yerevan Deputy Mayor Armen Pambukhchyan v. Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.,* with the plaintiff demanding a public apology, refutation of the information considered defamatory, and payment of compensation.

The lawsuit filed on January 10, 2025 was caused by an article titled “A. Kocharyan Wasn’t That Wrong About Pambukhchyan,” which was published in the newspaper on December 10, 2024. The article specifically claimed that Armen Pambukhchyan “is facing serious problems within the team, and his case was raised during a board meeting of the Civil Contract party,” “... certain corruption deals involving Pambukhchyan have come to light,” etc.[[18]](#footnote-18)

A hearing in the case was held on May 14, with the next one scheduled for July 8, 2025.

**On April 2**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan accepted for proceedings the lawsuit filed on March 13 by Kajaran Municipality of the RA Syunik Marz

against *Oragir Media Ltd.* The municipality demanded that the media refute the defamatory information tarnishing their business reputation, issue an apology, and pay one million AMD in compensation.

The lawsuit was caused by a news piece published on February 13 on *Oragir.news* website, owned by *Oragir Media Ltd.* The piece claimed that the Mayor of Kajaran had been stabbed due to boastful behavior.[[19]](#footnote-19) Although the website later added a refutation to the publication, the plaintiff considered it unsatisfactory.

A hearing date had not been set by the end of the quarter.

**On April 2**, the lawsuit of NA Speaker Alen Simonyan against *Mediahub Ltd.* and journalist Vahe Makaryan, which had previously been returned, was refiled with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan. The plaintiff demanded that the court oblige the defendants to refute the information considered defamatory and impose a compensation totaling 1 million AMD.

The lawsuit was first filed on February 19 and was returned due to deficiencies in the documents.The dispute was caused by an article titled “Alen Simonyan Deceived Nikol Pashinyan and the Public: The NA Is Cutting Fewer Cars Than Originally Planned,”[[20]](#footnote-20) published on January 20 on *Mediahub.am*. The piece claimed that Alen Simonyan’s mother and children were moving around in a costly SUV at the expense of the state, even though the vehicle was supposed to be decommissioned, as previously promised. The plaintiff also filed a motion to impose a lien on the defendants’ property and financial means in the amount of 1 million AMD, with no decision issued by the court in that regard.

On April 11, the lawsuit was once again returned, after which the plaintiff filed an appeal with the appellate court on April 23. On May 23, the appeal was rejected on the same grounds.

**On April 2**,the Court of Cassation rejected to accept for proceedings the appeal filed by 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), which challenged the appellate court’s November 11, 2024 ruling to leave unchanged the first instance court’s verdict dismissing the lawsuit.

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.[[21]](#footnote-21) (For details see the CPFE’s annual reports for 2017-2025 in the *Reports* section on *khosq.am*).

**On April 3**, the Civil Court of Appeal rejected the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *FDA Laboratory LLC v. Investigative Journalists NGO* that challenged the ruling of the first instance court, which had rejected the lawsuit.

The lawsuit filed on August 12, 2021, with the plaintiff demanding a refutation of the published information and a response, 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 supplements or food items to avoid a costly and time-consuming procedure.[[22]](#footnote-22) On March 11, 2024, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit, a decision the plaintiff challenged by filing an appeal on August 2. The judicial act entered into legal force.

**On April 3**, the Civil Court of Appeal accepted for proceedings the appeal filed by the defendant in the case of*Livenews.am reporter Artur Hovhannisyan v. journalist Levon Sardaryan*. The defendant challenged the ruling of the first instance court, which had partially upheld the lawsuit: the court had obliged the defendant to issue an apology to Artur Hovhannisyan, pay 200 thousand AMD as compensation for insult, 300 thousand AMD as reasonable attorney's fee and 8,000 AMD in state duty.

The lawsuit filed on June 22, 2020, with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to make an apology for insult and publicly refute the information considered defamatory, 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 specifically 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,” “…I viewed living in a barn as a form of self-punishment. But in your case, Artur, that seems to be just a normal living space.”

**On April 3**, following the granting of the appeal, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Ararat and Vayots Dzor Marzes (based in Masis) received the case of *citizen* *Arev Vratsyan v. Civilitas Foundation (the founder of the Civilnet.am news website)*, with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation.

The lawsuit filed on October 15, 2024 was caused by an [article](https://www.civilnet.am/news/773382/%D5%B4%D5%A1%D5%BD%D5%AB%D5%BD%D5%AB-%D5%A9%D5%AB%D5%BE-4-%D5%A4%D5%BA%D6%80%D5%B8%D6%81%D5%AB-%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%BD%D5%B8%D6%82%D6%81%D5%B9%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B0%D5%AB%D5%B6-%D5%A1%D5%A6%D5%A1%D5%BF%D5%BE%D5%A5%D6%81-%D5%A1%D5%B7%D5%AD%D5%A1%D5%BF%D5%A1%D5%B6%D6%84%D5%AB%D6%81%E2%80%A4-%D5%B6%D6%80%D5%A1%D5%B6-%D5%B4%D5%A5%D5%B2%D5%A1%D5%A4%D6%80%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B4-%D5%A5%D5%B6-%D5%A5%D6%80%D5%A5%D5%AD%D5%A1%D5%B6%D5%A5%D6%80%D5%AB%D5%B6-%D5%B0%D5%A1%D5%B5%D5%B0%D5%B8%D5%B5%D5%A5%D5%AC%D5%B8%D6%82-%D5%B8%D6%82-%D5%AE%D5%A5%D5%AE%D5%A5%D5%AC%D5%B8%D6%82-%D5%B4%D5%A5%D5%BB/) 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 January 23,the plaintifffiled an appeal with the appellate court, challenging the decision of the court of general jurisdiction, which had refused to accept the lawsuit.On February 27, 2025, the appellate court upheld the appeal, annulling the judicial act to return the lawsuit. The case was accepted for new proceedings in the court of first instance on April 17. A hearing was held on June 4, with the next one scheduled for July 14.

**On April 3**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Kotayk Marz (based in Yeghvard) held a regular hearing in the case of *citizen Vahagn Ghazaryan v. Yeghiazar Baghdasaryan and Oragir Media Ltd.,* with the plaintiff demanding a public apology for the insulting expression, a refutation of the information considered defamatory, and payment of compensation.

The lawsuit filed on August 5, 2024 was caused by an article titled “Trees Heavy with Fruit Were Sawn Down: Tracking the Tree Massacre in Garni,”[[23]](#footnote-23) published on June 26 on *Oragir.news* website, owned by *Oragir Media Ltd.* 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.

On April 29, 2025, the court upheld the motion filed by the plaintiff's representative, allowing to modify the subject matter of the lawsuit, which concerned the content of the refutation text and the financial compensation sought from Yeghiazar Baghdasaryan. Court hearings were also held on June 5 and 13, with the next one scheduled for July 3.

**On April 23**, lawyer Gegham Margaryan filed an appeal against the court’s decision.

On August 5, 2024, Margaryan had filed a lawsuit against the same defendantson the same case and with identical demands. As a reminder, on March 20, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit on the grounds of the statute of limitations. On May 16, the complaint was returned due to being incomplete. A new complaint was filed on June 18.

**On April 4**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Kotayk Marz (based in Yeghvard) accepted for proceedings the lawsuit filed on March 12 by NA Speaker Alen Simonyan against journalist Vahe Makaryan. Alen Simonyan demanded that Makaryan refute the statement published on his Telegram channel on February 12, 2025, which read: “My comment doesn’t concern the claim that you once worked as a porn actor, despite the circulation of various videos leaning towards 18+ or suggesting such a background—and I do have several of them myself.” Additionally, Simonyan sought 400 thousand AMD as compensation for defamation. No further judicial actions took place by the end of the quarter.

**On April 4**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan ruled to reject the lawsuit filed by citizen Arev Vratsyan against *Oragir Media Ltd. (the founder of Oragir.news website) and ATV's “Ajar Windows”* program on the grounds of the statute of limitations.

The lawsuit filed on April 16, 2024, with the plaintiff demanding a refutation of the defamatory information, which tarnished her honor, dignity and business reputation, an apology for insult, and compensation for the damage caused, 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.[[24]](#footnote-24) The lawsuit was also caused by an article titled “Violence Alone Is Sufficient to Issue a Reprimand and Dismiss the Teacher,”[[25]](#footnote-25) published on *Oragir.news* on December 16, 2023.

The verdict entered into legal force.

**On April 5**, during an exchange with Gyumri mayoral candidate Vardan Ghukasyan, *Oragir.news* correspondent Anahit Ghazarents reminded him of his earlier sexist statement, in which he had claimed that by dressing beautifully and exposing their legs, women become a reason for men to feel tempted and commit sins. Ghukasyan countered with yet another sexist remark, telling the journalist: “You are a girl from Gyumri, I feel ashamed on your behalf for the word ‘sexist’.”[[26]](#footnote-26)

**On April 8**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan ruled to dismiss the lawsuit of the *Civil Contract* party against *Hayeli Club NGO* (the founder of *Hayeli.am* news website), since the media had cited the original source in both the headline and main text of the disputed article, and had presented a direct quotation. The judicial act entered into legal force.

As a reminder, on April 25, 2023, the *Civil Contract* party filed **4** lawsuits against *168 Zham, 24 News, NewsAM Ltds. and Hayeli Club NGO*, demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation. The lawsuits were 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.

**On April 15**, the Civil Court of Appeal accepted for proceedings the appeal filed by the defendant in the case of *Civil Contract party v. 168 Zham Ltd.* against the ruling of the first instance court, which had upheld the lawsuit, obliging *168.am* to publish a refutation and pay 200 thousand AMD as compensation for the damage caused through defamation.

Regarding the case against the founder of ***News.am***, on May 29, the appellate court rejected the plaintiff’s appeal against the ruling of the first instance court, which had dismissed the lawsuit and had obliged the plaintiff to pay 150,000 AMD as reasonable attorney's fee.

Regarding the lawsuit filed by the *Civil Contract* party against the founder of ***24news.am****,* the court rejected the media’s appeal, leaving the first instance court’s verdict unchanged. In this case, on September 25, 2024, the court had upheld 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 April 8**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan rejected the lawsuit filed by lawyer Melineh Zakaryan against *Shamshyan Media Ltd.,* in which the plaintiff demanded 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 court’s decision was grounded in the fact that the plaintiff failed to substantiate the presence of an insulting expression directly aimed at her or the defendant’s intent to demean her honor and dignity.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on June 3, 2024 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.”[[27]](#footnote-27)

On May 8, 2025, the plaintiff filed an appeal against the court's decision with the appellate court.

**On April 9**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan continued the 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,”[[28]](#footnote-28) published on March 9 on *Oragir.news* website owned by *Oragir Media Ltd.* 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.

On May 2, 2025, the court ruled to partially uphold the lawsuit, obliging the media to publish a refutation, pay 250 thousand AMD as compensation for defamation, along with state duties.

**On April 9**,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,”[[29]](#footnote-29) 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.”[[30]](#footnote-30)

During the period under review, a court hearing was also held on June 16. By its verdict of June 27, the court partially upheld the lawsuit, obliging *Alternativ.am* to pay 500 thousand AMD in compensation for defamation and to publish a refutation of the disputed remarks, while *Yerevan.today* was ordered to reprint the refutation.

**On April 9**, lawyer Aleksandr Sirunyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Golos Ltd.,* demanding an apology and a refutation of offensive remarks. The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “No Brick Showers Expected,” published on January 28 in *Golos Armenii* newspaper and on its eponymous website. The piece portrayed Sirunyan—a candidate for the Supreme Judicial Council membership—as a corrupt person, devoid of any morality.[[31]](#footnote-31) On April 18, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. However, the proceedings were terminated on June 23, as the plaintiff withdrew the lawsuit.

**On April 9**, Liparit Drmeyan, the Head of the Office of the RA Representative before the European Court of Human Rights under the Prime Minister’s Office, filed a lawsuit against *168 Zham Ltd.*, demanding that the court oblige the media to publicly refute the information considered defamatory. The lawsuit was caused by a news piece published on March 5 on *168․am* website, which claimed that the personnel of the aforementioned office, led by Yeghisheh Kirakosyan, the RA Representative to the ECHR, had submitted resignation letters․[[32]](#footnote-32) The alleged reason was yet another demand from Azerbaijan that Armenia withdraw its lawsuits against Azerbaijan from international courts. According to the media, only Liparit Drmeyan had not submitted a resignation letter, hopeing to take Yeghisheh Kirakosyan’s post.

On April 22, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. A court hearing was held on June 17, with the next one scheduled for July 10.

**On April 10**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan ruled to reject the lawsuit filed by *NewsAM Ltd.* against *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?”[[33]](#footnote-33) 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*.

The verdict obliged the plaintiff to pay 100 thousand AMD as attorney's remuneration. The court determined that the disputed remarks did not constitute defamation, since they contained abstract, generalized information arising from an overriding public interest and, in substance, did not tarnish the honor, dignity, and business reputation of the plaintiff company.

On May 14, the plaintiff filed an appeal, which was returned on May 30. A subsequent appeal was filed on June 12.

**On April 10**,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.[[34]](#footnote-34)

On May 12, 2025, the court partially upheld the lawsuit. It ordered Leo Nicolian to refute the contested remarks on *BAC TV,* pay 1 million AMD as compensation for defamation, and 150 thousand AMD as reasonable attorney's fee. The court also decided to maintain the previously imposed measure securing the claim until the judgment is executed. With no appeal filed, the judgment entered into legal force.

**On April 10**, the Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *Photolure news agency v. journalist Margarit Davtyan, founder of Meganews.am website.* The appeal challenged the decision of the first instance court, which had rejected the plaintiff's motion to apply a measure to secure the claim.

As a reminder, the lawsuit was filed on February 16, with the plaintiff demanding to stop the use of the agency’s copyrighted content on the mentioned website and remove the previously published materials. The next court hearing was set for July 11, 2025.

**On April 11**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan rejected the defendant's motion to apply the statute of limitations in the case of *Alen Simonyan, Speaker of the National Assembly, v. Anzhela Tovmasyan, President of Hayeli Club, journalist*.

The lawsuit filed on October 26, 2023, with the plaintiff demanding an apology for insult and compensation of 3 million AMD, 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*.[[35]](#footnote-35) 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.

A hearing in the case was also held on May 27, with the next one scheduled for July 14, 2025.

**On April 11**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *Armenian National Agrarian University Foundation* *v.* *Hraparak Daily Ltd*, with the plaintiff demanding that the defendant be obliged to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation.

The lawsuit filed on December 20, 2023 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.

During the period under review, hearings in the case were also held on May 30 and June 16, with the next one scheduled for September 10.

**On April 15**, the Civil Court of Appeal accepted for proceedings the appeal filed by the defendant in the case of *Ruben Khachatryan, former Director of Yerevan Zoo, v. citizen Manuk Manukyan (with Iravunk Media Ltd. involved as a third party).* The appeal challenged the February 7 ruling of the first instance court, which had rejected the lawsuit.

The lawsuit filed on April 29, 2022, with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay monetary compensation, 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.[[37]](#footnote-37)

As of the end of the quarter, the court had not set a hearing date.

**On April 16**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *lawyer Tigran Yegoryan v. Gagik Yeghiazaryan and Hraparak Daily Ltd.,* with the plaintiff demanding compensation for the damage caused to his honor and dignity.

The lawsuit filed on May 15, 2024 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.*[[38]](#footnote-38)

A hearing in the case was also held on June 18, 2025, during which the burden of proof was distributed. The next hearing was scheduled for October 29, 2025.

**On April 16**,following its initial return, the plaintiffs 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* refiled their appeal against the ruling of the first instance court, which had dismissed the lawsuit.

The lawsuit filed on October 7, 2021, with the plaintiffs demanding compensation for the damage caused to their honor and dignity, was caused by an article titled “An Apparent Agent Network Disguised as a Human Rights Defenders’ Community,” published on *Hraparak.am* website, owned by *Hraparak Daily Ltd*.[[39]](#footnote-39)

On May 13, 2025, the appeal was accepted for proceedings by the court.

**On April 16**, the Court of Cassation refused to accept for proceedings the appeal filed by the defendant in the case of *Grisha Tamrazyan, Advisor to the Rector of V. Brusov State University*, v. *Public Television Company of Armenia CJSC.* The cassation complaint challenged the decision of the Civil Court of Appeal, which had rejected the appeal against the first instance court’s ruling to partially uphold the lawsuit (the defendant was obliged to publish a refutation, pay 20 thousand AMD as state duty and 150 thousand AMD as attorney's fee).

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on January 5, 2023, with the plaintiff demanding to publicly refute the information considered defamatory, was caused by a report[[40]](#footnote-40) 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.

**On April 17**, following a redistribution, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan continued the examination of the lawsuit filed on May 22, 2023 by *Solid Partner Ltd.* against *Best Media Ltd.* (a company operating in film distribution), under new proceedings. The lawsuit sought compensation for damages and was based on alleged copyright infringement. The Commission on Television and Radio and *Multi Media Kentron TV CJSC* were involved in the case as third parties. A court hearing was also held on May 13, with the next one scheduled for August 26, 2025.

**On April 17**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case *of Samvel Kharazyan v. Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd. and its editor Knar Manukyan,* with the plaintiff demanding compensation for the damage caused to his honor and dignity.

The lawsuit filed on September 26, 2022 was triggered by an article titled “The Corrupt System Remains the Same Today: New Disclosures from the Head of the State Supervision Service,”[[41]](#footnote-41) 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.

A hearing in the case was also held on June 12, 2025, with July 3 set as the date for the release of the judicial act.

**On April 17**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan dismissed the motion filed by Armineh Ohanyan, the director of the defendant company in the case of *RA Deputy Military Prosecutor Vahagn Muradyan v. Hraparak Daily Ltd.* In her motion,Ohanyan requestedto terminate the civil proceedings on the grounds that the dispute had essentially been resolved. The court ruled to uphold the lawsuit, obliging the media to publish a refutation.

The lawsuit filed on July 11, 2024, with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory, was caused by an article titled “Accusations Against the Deputy Military Prosecutor,” published on June 18 on *Hraparak.am* website[[42]](#footnote-42), 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 verdict entered into legal force.

**On April 17**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan continued the hearing in the case of *Vardan Badasyan* (father of Rustam Badasyan, former RA Minister of Justice - CPFE) *against 168 Zham Ltd. and Iravunk Media Ltd.* In the lawsuit, the plaintiff demanded that the media publicly refute the information considered defamatory and compensate for the damage caused to his honor, dignity and business reputation.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on July 10, 2020 was originally directed *against Alternative NGO Co-Chair Narek Mantashyan and News.am, Analitik.am, 168.am, Iravunk.com, Blognews.am, Alternativ.am, Ipress.am* news websites*.* It was caused by remarks made by Mantashyan and published by these websites, in which he alleged that during his past activities, Vardan Badasyan had handed positions in exchange for money.[[43]](#footnote-43) Regarding the other media and Narek Mantashyan, on March 18, 2024, the court ruled to partially uphold the lawsuit.

**On January 4, 2023**, the court rejected the lawsuit against *168 Zham Ltd.* and *Iravunk Media Ltd.* 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 March 22, the Civil Court of Appeal rejected the plaintiff’s appeal of this decision, prompting the latter to apply to the Court of Cassation. On November 15, 2024, the Court of Cassation upheld the appeal, overturning the March 22 ruling of the Court of Appeal and sending the case to the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan for a new examination.

Throughout this quarter, hearings were also held on April 21, May 29, and June 23, with the next one scheduled for July 21.

**On April 17**, citizen Ashot Kyureghyan filed a lawsuit against *Blognews.am* news website and *Armenian Second TV Channel,* seeking compensation for the damage caused to his honor, dignity and business reputation. The lawsuit was triggered by information disseminated by the two media, according to which Kyureghyan was accused of organizing the murder of a criminal authority.[[44]](#footnote-44)

On April 22, the lawsuit was returned, with the court also rejecting the plaintiff’s motion to delay the payment of the state duty. On June 20, the case was moved to the court archive.

**On April 18**, activists protesting in front of the Artsakh Representation in Yerevan, upon noticing journalists who had come to cover the developments, obstructed their work, calling them “provocateurs” and urging them to leave the site. One of the activists, Artur Osipyan, in response to questions from *Hraparak* daily correspondent Lia Sargsyan, said: “Hraparak is a trashy news outlet that throws nothing but mud. Go away.”[[45]](#footnote-45)

**On April 18**, *Factor.am* correspondent Narek Kirakosyan approached Khachatur Sukiasyan, a deputy from the NA *Civil Contract* faction, seeking clarification regarding the statements made by him the previous day, in which he claimed that the people of Artsakh did not fight during Azerbaijan’s 2023 aggression. Sukiasyan, shoving the loudspeaker several times, said: “Go away... You are a very bad person; you make money with your YouTube videos so that many people watch them, shut up!”[[46]](#footnote-46)

**On April 18**, in the National Assembly, Khachatur Sukiasyan, a deputy of the NA *Civil Contract* faction, in response to the question from *Mediahub.am* journalist Nareh Gnuni about whether Artsakh was the guarantor of Armenia's security, first clarified which media she represented, and then said, “Take that question to your masters.”[[47]](#footnote-47)

**On April 21**, Judge Sargis Petrosyan of the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan, ordered the removal of *Yerevan.today* news website journalist Anna Gorginyan from the courtroom. The reason for this decision was that Gorginyan had mentioned in one of her articles about the judge’s former membership in the *Civil Contract* party.[[48]](#footnote-48) Addressing the journalist, the judge inquired whether she was prompted by someone before formulating her headlines. In response, the journalist asked if the judge was prompted before delivering his judgments. Following this exchange, the judge ordered her out of the courtroom.

**On April 22**, 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,”[[49]](#footnote-49) published on *Yerevan.today* on October 24, 2020, alongside Narek Malyan’s film with identical content,[[50]](#footnote-50) 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.”

During the period under review, hearings were also held on May 19, June 4, 9, and 23.

**On April 23**, the Court of Cassation returned the appeal filed by the defendant in the case of *Civil Contract Party v. Union of Informed Citizens NGO* (*the founder of Fip.am news website).* The cassation complaint challenged the decision of the Civil Court of Appeal to dismiss an earlier appeal against the ruling of the first instance court that had partially upheld the lawsuit.

The lawsuit filed on August 17, 2023, with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation, 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.[[51]](#footnote-51)

On May 14, the defendant filed another appeal with the cassation court.

**On April 24**, citizen Armen Ghalechyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Hraparak* daily, seeking a refutation of the information considered insulting and defamatory. In addition, he demanded 1 million AMD in compensation, as well as payment of attorney’s fees and state duties. The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “Papikyan’s Best Man Exerts Control Over Military Officers,”[[52]](#footnote-52) which was published on the eponymous website on March 29. The piece claimed that Armen Ghalechyan, who was the groomsman at the wedding of Defense Minister Suren Papikyan, exercised control over the regular attestation process for the top and senior officer personnel of the Armed Forces.

On May 2, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings. At the same time, the defendant filed a motion to apply the statute of limitations. No other developments were recorded by the end of the quarter.

**On April 25**, in Gyumri, Varduhi Manukyan, an assistant to the Prime Minister’s wife, prohibited *Oragir.News* reporter Anahit Ghazarents from attending an event dedicated to Manukyan’s son, who had died in the war, threatening to smash the reporter’s head.[[53]](#footnote-53) A few hours later, Ghazarents clarified in a Facebook post what had happened between her and Anna Hakobyan’s assistant. Following this, an online attack started against Anahit Ghazarents on Facebook, with users publishing posts that included profanities, insults, and threats directed at her.

**On April 29**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan, following two previous returns, accepted for proceedings the lawsuit filed on February 18, 2025 by RA NA Speaker Alen Simonyan against *Mediahub Ltd.* and journalist Vahe Makaryan. The plaintiff demanded that the defendants be obliged to refute the information considered defamatory and pay a compensation totaling 1 million AMD.

The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “Pashinyan Gave Alen Simonyan a Harsh Dressing-Down Because of Russians: Gurgen Arsenyan Got Angry Too,”[[54]](#footnote-54) published on *Mediahub.am* on January 29. The piece claimed that the RA Prime Minister had reprimanded Alen Simonyan for worsening Armenian-Russian relations, since “the way Alen spoke about Russia in the presence of representatives from the Baltic states could once again lead to serious problems in the relations between the two countries.”

No other judicial actions took place by the end of the quarter.

**On April 29**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a trial in the case of *citizen Yura Adyan v. Mitk Media Ltd. (the founder of Mitk.am website),* with the plaintiff demanding to refute the defamation and pay 2 million AMD in compensation. During this hearing, the court decided that the burden of proof should be supplemented.

The lawsuit filed on June 12, 2019 was caused by an article titled “The Old Fox of Old and New Armenia,” published on *Zhamanak* dailyon May 9, 2019 and reprinted by *Mitk.am*. On October 9, 2020, the court decided to suspend the proceedings, awaiting the final judicial act in the case of *Yura Adyan v. Skizb Media Kentron Ltd. (the founder of Zhamanak daily).* On April 19, 2024, the judicial act was released: the court partially upheld the lawsuit, obliging the media to publish a refutation and pay the plaintiff 200 thousand AMD as reasonable attorney's fee.

Regarding the case against *Mitq Media Ltd.,* the next hearing was scheduled for September 2, 2025.

**On April 29**, *MPG LLC* and its director Aram Navasardyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against politician Hrant Bagratyan and *Hraparak Daily Ltd.* The plaintiffs demanded a refutation of the remarks tarnishing the company’s business reputation and the director’s honor and dignity, compensation of a total of 2 million AMD from Hrant Bagratyan, and an apology to Aram Navasardyan.

The lawsuit was caused by the remarks made by Hrant Bagratyan on March 30 during an interview broadcast on *Hraparak TV* YouTube channel, owned by *Hraparak Daily Ltd.* In the video, Bagratyan claimed that the company carried out opinion polls on the orders of the authorities: “…That guy, Aram Navasardyan—or whatever his name is—they give him the figures, he just makes them up, they pay and make them up.” The video is titled: “Behavior Compared to That of a Fanatic and an Immoral Woman.”[[55]](#footnote-55)

On May 12, the court returned the lawsuit for being incomplete. On May 15, it was refiled but it was returned once more on May 22. The plaintiff challenged this to a higher court on May 29. On June 17, the appellate court upheld the plaintiff’s appeal, annulling the decision to return the lawsuit.

**On May 15**, *MPG LLC* filed a new lawsuit against the same defendants, demanding that the court order a refutation of the information tarnishing their business reputation, compel Hrant Bagratyan to pay 1 million AMD in compensation for defamation, along with state duties.

The lawsuit was caused by Hrant Bagratyan’s remarks in the aforementioned interview broadcast on *Hraparak TV* YouTube channel*.* Bagratyan particularly said: “…The opinion polls carried out by the authorities, especially those by *Gallup*… that guy, Aram Navasardyan—or whatever his name is—they give him the figures, he just makes them up, they pay and make them up...”

The lawsuit was returned on May 23 due to deficiencies, refiled on May 25, and accepted for proceedings on June 9. As of June 30, the court hearing date had not been set.

**On April 30**, during a briefing with journalists at Nor Nork district administration, Ani Khachatryan, a member of the *Republic* faction of the Yerevan Council of Elders, insulted *Euromedia 24* online TV journalist Suzi Badoyan, stating: “You must be one of Kocharyan’s minions.”[[56]](#footnote-56)

**On April 30**, during a scuffle at Nor Nork district administration between an activist and the administration personnel, *Zhoghovurd* daily and *ArmLur.am* editorial office’s camera and live-streaming equipment were broken.[[57]](#footnote-57)

**On April 30**, near the building of the Supreme Judicial Council, a person closely connected to Judge Artush Gabrielyan hit *ArmLur.am’s* camera, obstructing the professional activities of journalist Knar Manukyan.[[58]](#footnote-58) This happened after the journalist asked the judge regarding accusations that he had accepted a bribe.

**On April 30,** the Civil Court of Appeal ruled to reject the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *Simon Zakharov, member of Alaverdi Council of Elders, v. ABC Media Ltd.,* against the ruling of the first instance court, which had dismissed the lawsuit.

The lawsuit filed on January 9, 2024, with the plaintiff demanding to publicly refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation, 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.[[59]](#footnote-59) On November 4, 2024, the court rejected the lawsuit, and on December 11, the plaintiff filed an appeal with the appellate court.

**On April 30,** the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan continued the retrial 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).

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, during an interview with journalist Petros Ghazaryan 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.”[[60]](#footnote-60) On June 16, 2023, the lawsuit was partially upheld, while on January 12, 2024, the Civil Court of Appeal partially granted the defendant’s appeal against the verdict of the court of general jurisdiction, remanding the case to the first instance court for a new examination.

On June 17, 2025, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit, concluding that the remarks made by the defendant constituted value judgments rather than defamation.

**On April 30**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan terminated the proceedings in the case of *Argo Farm Ltd. v. Investigative Journalists NGO,* reasoning that the claim had ceased to have any substantive basis.

The lawsuit was filed on April 30, 2024, with the plaintiff 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.”[[61]](#footnote-61) 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 April 30**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *NA Deputy Hayk Sargsyan v. Irates newspaper and the eponymous website*.

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. The plaintiff challenged this decision by filing an appeal on April 30, 2024. The court granted the appeal, remanding the case to the same court to proceed from where it had been interrupted.

Over the course of this quarter, hearings were also held on May 16 (during which the burden of proof was distributed) and on June 27. A trial was scheduled for September 18.

**On May 5**, following a redistribution process, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Lori Marz (based in Stepanavan) accepted for new proceedings the lawsuit filed by citizen Erik Yeghinyan against *Ararat TV Company* and Anna Sirunyan, with the plaintiff demanding confiscation of 1 million AMD from Anna Sirunyan for tarnishing his honor, dignity and good reputation, as well as a refutation to be broadcast on the air of the TV Company.

According to the plaintiff, the lawsuit filed on May 31, 2024 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.

Court hearings were also held on May 27 and June 19, 2025. July 9 was set as the date for the release of the judicial act.

**On May 6**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan, following two prior returns, accepted for proceedings the lawsuit filed by citizen Arsen Avetisyan against the *Investigative Journalists NGO’s Hetq* online media, in which the plaintiff sought an apology, a refutation of the information considered defamatory, and monetary compensation.

The lawsuit was caused by two articles published on *Hetq.am* website on October 31, 2024[[62]](#footnote-62) and February 12, 2025[[63]](#footnote-63). According to these pieces, the plaintiff, acting with the municipality’s permission, carried out construction work in a building with monument status, deviating from design plans. It was also noted in the publications that criminal proceedings had been initiated in connection with the case.

A hearing in the case was held on June 13, with the next one scheduled for July 10, 2025.

**On May 6**, Nairi Sargsyan, former assistant to the RA Prime Minister, filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Gegharkunik Marz against *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.,* demanding a refutation of the information considered defamatory, payment of 2 million AMD in compensation and 500 thousand AMD as attorney’s remuneration. The lawsuit was caused by a news piece titled “The 'Bottle Holder’s' Brother Uses His Government Connections for Employer’s Benefit,”[[64]](#footnote-64) published on *Armlur.am* and in *Zhoghovurd* daily on April 16. According to the publication, Nairi Sargsyan is currently using his government ties to benefit his employer, *GTB Holdings,* which has undertaken the reconstruction of a section of Yerevan’s landmark, the Cascade, through a sham tender.

The lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on May 12, with no court hearing date set by the end of the quarter.

**On May 16**, the above-mentioned *GTB Holdings LLC* filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against the founder of the same media concerning the same matter. The lawsuit introduced substantially modified demands: publication of a refutation, an apology for the information considered defamatory, and payment of 6 million AMD in compensation. The lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on May 29, with no court hearing date set by the end of the quarter.

**On the same day**, Grigor Ter-Ghazaryan, the head of *GTB Holdings,* also filed a lawsuit against the newspaper regarding the same matter. This lawsuit was also accepted for proceedings on May 23, with no trial initiated by the end of the quarter.

**On May 7**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan continued the hearing in the case of *Armenian National Interests Fund (ANIF) CJSC v. 168 Zham Ltd.,* with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information tarnishing their business reputation and pay compensation.

The lawsuit was filed on May 13, 2021. It 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.[[65]](#footnote-65) Notably, the lawsuit was examined on two occasions. On November 10, 2023, the court had dismissed the lawsuit on the grounds of expiration of the statute of limitations. Nevertheless, on March 29, 2024, the plaintiff’s appeal was upheld, and the case was remanded for a new examination.

On May 29, 2025, the court once again ruled to reject the lawsuit in its entirety, obliging the plaintiff to pay 150,000 AMD for the defendant's attorney's fee. According to the court, the plaintiff failed to prove that the disputed remarks constituted factual data and that they were tarnishing in nature.

**On May 8**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a trial in the case of

*businessman Petros Tovmasyan v. 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,”[[66]](#footnote-66) 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.

As of June 30, no date had been scheduled for the next court hearing.

**On May 8**, 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 that the defendant issue a public apology for the insult. Regarding defamation, the plaintiff sought a refutation of the information and 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[[67]](#footnote-67) and January 15, 2022[[68]](#footnote-68) 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*.

Regarding the first lawsuit, the preliminary examination has been completed, and a trial has been scheduled for September 16.

With regard to the second lawsuit, a hearing was held on May 20. On June 11, the court ruled to partially uphold it, obliging Hmayak Hovhannisyan to refute the defamatory information via *BAC TV,* to pay 100 thousand AMD in compensation, the state duties, and 150 thousand AMD as the plaintiff's attorney’s remuneration.

**On May 13**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Yerevan Mayor Tigran Avinyan v. Oragir Media Ltd.,* with the plaintiff demanding a public apology, refutation of the information considered defamatory, and payment of compensation.

The lawsuit filed on December 10, 2024 was caused by an article titled “Tigran Avinyan Buys Former Ministry Building for High-Rise Construction,”[[69]](#footnote-69) published on November 29 on *Oragir.news* website, owned by *Oragir Media Ltd.*

On June 4, 2025, the court partially upheld the lawsuit, obliging the media to publish a refutation and an apology, and pay 300 thousand AMD as compensation for insult and defamation. On June 30, the defendant appealed the verdict to a higher court.

**On May 13**, after the higher court overturned its verdict, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan received for a new examination 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*). The case was accepted for proceedings on May 22.

The lawsuit filed on March 16, 2023, with the plaintiffs demanding to obligate the media to refute the information tarnishing their honor, dignity and business reputation and pay monetary compensation, 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.” The article was published on February 20 on *Pastinfo.am*.[[70]](#footnote-70) In its ruling issued on June 12, 2024, the court partially upheld the lawsuit. On July 17, the plaintiff appealed the verdict, challenging the court's decision to award only 200 thousand AMD to each plaintiff instead of the 6 million AMD originally sought. The defendant, in turn, filed an appeal on July 19, contesting the court’s decision to uphold the lawsuit.

On February 19, 2025, the Civil Court of Appeal upheld the appeals filed by both Tigran Avinyan and *Pastinfo Ltd.* and sent the case back for a new examination. A court hearing was set for July 1, 2025.

**On May 13**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *Yerevan State University Foundation v. Oragir Media Ltd.* *(the founder of Oragir.news website),* with the plaintiff demanding that the defendant be obliged 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,”[[71]](#footnote-71) 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.

By its ruling issued on June 4, 2025, the court upheld the lawsuit, obliging the media to refute the defamatory information, to pay **one** dram as compensation for defamation, and to cover the state duties that had been paid in advance.

**On May 14**, the plaintiff in the case of *MELTEX Ltd., founder of A1+ TV Company, v. RA Government and Commission on Television and Radio,* filed a cassation appeal, challenging the March 10 decision of the appellate court. That decision had rejected the appeal against the April 6, 2021 verdict of the administrative court, leaving it unchanged. Essentially, the appellate court had refused to examine the issue of alleged discrimination against *MELTEX Ltd.,* raised by the plaintiff.

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 Administrative 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.

On June 19, 2025, the Court of Cassation rejected the appeal filed by *MELTEX Ltd.*

**On May 14**,the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *citizen Artur Vardanyan v.* *168 Zham Ltd*. *and citizen David Pirumyan.*

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on July 10, 2020, with the plaintiff demanding that the defendant be obliged 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*.[[72]](#footnote-72) On March 22,2024,theCivil Court of Appeal partially upheld the appeals filed by both the plaintiff and the defendant against the verdict of the first instance court, which had partially granted the lawsuit. The Court of Appeal ruled to send the case for a new examination.

The next hearing was scheduled for August 22, 2025.

**On May 15**, in the case of *teacher Susanna Sargsyan v. Hraparak.am reporter Shushanna Grigoryan,* the Civil Court of Appeal ruled to reject the plaintiff’s appeal against the first instance court’s verdict, which had dismissed the lawsuit on the grounds of the statute of limitations. By the same decision, the appellate court partially upheld the defendant’s appeal against the July 9, 2024 ruling of the first instance court, which had set their attorney’s fee at 150,000 AMD. According to the new ruling, that amount was raised to 400,000 drams.

As a reminder, the case concerning the demand for a public apology and refutation of the factual information considered defamatory through the same media was being re-examined by the Court of General Jurisdiction of Lori Marz (based in Vanadzor). The lawsuit filed on June 6, 2014 was caused by articles, titled “The Headmaster of Vanadzor School N8 was Fired”[[73]](#footnote-73) and “Vanadzor Teacher Received 12 Million AMD for Forced Idleness,”[[74]](#footnote-74) 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*).

The verdict entered into legal force.

**On May 16**, Khachik Vardanyan, the head of Gyulagarak community in Lori Marz, filed a lawsuit with the court of general jurisdiction of the same marz against *Oragir Media Ltd.,* demanding that the media refute the information tarnishing his honor, dignity and business reputation and pay 2 million AMD in compensation. The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “Gyulagarak Community Head is Appropriating the Lands: A Sports School Far From the Village – for Whose Benefit?”[[75]](#footnote-75) published on April 16 *Oragir.news,* a website owned by *Oragir Media Ltd*. The article claimed that Vardanyan was engaged in the appropriation of community lands, registering them under the names of his close allies, as well as modifying their cadastral status.

The lawsuit, returned on May 19, was refiled on May 23 and accepted for proceedings on May 27. By the end of the quarter, no court hearing date had been set.

**On May 20**,the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan continued the trial as part of the newly initiated proceedings in the case of *Mher Derdzyan v. Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.* This is the third time the case is being examined at the court of first instance.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on April 15, 2019 was caused by a publication, in which the newspaper suggested that Mher Derdzyan’s construction project could be a carefully devised fraud.[[76]](#footnote-76) The plaintiff demanded a public apology, along with 1.5 million AMD compensation for insult and defamation (For details see the CPFE’s annual reports for 2019-2025 in the *Reports* section on *khosq.am*).

On June 11, 2025, the court ruled to partially uphold the lawsuit, obliging the media to pay 70,000 AMD for insult, 80,000 AMD for defamation, and an additional 300,000 AMD as attorney’s fee.

**On May 21,** 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 for 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.[[77]](#footnote-77) (For details see the CPFE’s reports for 2020-2024, in the *Reports* section on *khosq.am*)

The next court hearing was scheduled for September 30, 2025.

**On May 23**, the Civil Court of Appeal rejected the appeal filed by the defendant in the case of *NA Speaker Alen Simonyan v. V.I.V. Today and Tomorrow Ltd*., *the* *founder of Ankakh.com news website,* against the ruling of the first instance court, which had partially upheld the lawsuit. The verdict was left in force.

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.[[78]](#footnote-78) 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 its ruling issued on July 15, 2024, 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. The defendant filed an appeal with a higher court, challenging the verdict.

**On May 26**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan continued the trial in the case of *former Yerevan Deputy Mayor (currently Mayor) Tigran Avinyan v. 168 Zham Ltd. and journalist Davit Sargsyan,* under newly initiated proceedings. In the lawsuit, the plaintiff demanded 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.[[79]](#footnote-79) (For details see the CPFE’s reports for 2023-2025 in the *Reports* section on *khosq.am*).

The next court hearing was scheduled for July 4, 2025.

**On May 26**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *Yerevan Mayor Tigran Avinyan v. Civilitas Foundation,* in which the plaintiff demanded a public apology, refutation of the information considered defamatory, and payment of compensation.

As a reminder, the lawsuit, initially filed on December 10, 2024 and refiled on December 27 after eliminating the identified deficiencies, was caused by an article titled [“The Avinyans’ Business Benefitting Indirectly from State Funds,”](https://www.civilnet.am/news/805426/%D5%A1%D5%BE%D5%AB%D5%B6%D5%B5%D5%A1%D5%B6%D5%B6%D5%A5%D6%80%D5%AB-%D5%A2%D5%AB%D5%A6%D5%B6%D5%A5%D5%BD%D5%A8%D5%9D-%D5%BA%D5%A5%D5%BF%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%A1%D5%B6-%D5%A3%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B4%D5%A1%D6%80%D5%B6%D5%A5%D6%80%D5%AB-%D5%A1%D5%B6%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B2%D5%B2%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%AB-%D5%B7%D5%A1%D5%B0%D5%A1%D5%BC%D5%B8%D6%82/)[[80]](#footnote-80) 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.

The next hearing in the case was scheduled for August 18, 2025.

**On May 27**, the Court of Cassation refused to accept for proceedings the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *Hovhannes Poghosyan, Deputy Head of Shirak Marz Investigative Department, v. 168 Zham Ltd. and journalist Gohar Savzyan.* The cassation complaint challenged the decision of the appellate court, which had rejected the appeal against the March 15, 2024 ruling of the first instance court (dismissing the lawsuit on the grounds of expiration of the statute of limitations). The Court of Cassation determined that the arguments presented by the appellant were insufficient to establish a violation of substantive and procedural law norms and a disruption of the very core of justice resulting from such a violation, and consequently, to accept the appeal for proceedings on that basis.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on April 3, 2023, with the plaintiff demanding a refutation of the information considered defamatory and monetary compensation, 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.*[[81]](#footnote-81) (For details see the CPFE’s reports for 2023-2025 in the *Reports* section on *khosq.am*).

**On May 29**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a preliminary hearing in the case of *Artur Poghosyan, Chairman of the RA Investigative Committee, v. Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd.,* in which the plaintiff demanded compensation for the damage caused to his honor and dignity and refutation of defamation.

The lawsuit filed on February 28, 2025 was caused by an article titled “The Chairman of the Investigative Committee Appointed His Cousin as Head: A Family Union,”[[82]](#footnote-82) which was published on February 13 on *Armlur.am* website, owned by *Zhoghovurd Newspaper Editorial Office Ltd*. The website later included the plaintiff’s refutation to the article, but kept the original headline unchanged, and this was regarded as defamation. The next court hearing was scheduled for July 16, 2025.

**On May 31**, Anna Hakobyan, the wife of the RA Prime Minister, in response to Boris Murazi, the editor of *Politik.am* website, who had stated that there are numerous legends and stories about Anna Hakobyan, and even supposed video recordings, wrote: “... According to reliable sources, Boris Murazi has been providing sexual services to Serzh Sargsyan and some of his favorite bishops. I had been hearing such claims for several years, but I did not believe them. Now it is evident. I believe that relevant authorities may also have video materials in their possession.”[[83]](#footnote-83)

**On June 2**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *citizen Arev Vratsyan v. Mediahub.am news website,* with the plaintiff demanding to refute the information tarnishing her honor, dignity and business reputation, issue an apology for insult and compensate for the damage caused.

The lawsuit filed on May 27, 2024 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.[[84]](#footnote-84)

The next court hearing was scheduled for September 22, 2025.

**On June 2**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *Photolure news agency v. Irakanum Ltd.,* with the plaintiff demanding to stop the use of the agency’s copyrighted content on *Irakanum Ltd.'s* *Irakanum.am* website and remove the previously published materials. Filed on February 3, 2025, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on February 13. The court rejected the plaintiff’s motion to secure the claim by placing a lien on the defendant’s property and financial means in the amount of the claim. On February 26, the plaintiff filed an appeal against this decision, which was also rejected on March 25. The next court hearing was scheduled for August 27.

**On June 4**,the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *Rubik Mkhitaryan v. Pastinfo Ltd. (the founder of Pastinfo.am news website),* with the plaintiff demanding a public apology for defamatory and offensive expressions and compensation totaling 6 million AMD.

As a reminder, on April 6, 2024, Judge Rubik Mkhitaryan of the Appellate Criminal Court filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan. 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”[[85]](#footnote-85) and “Authorities Shift Tactics: Rubik Mkhitaryan Withdraws Supreme Judicial Council Bid.”[[86]](#footnote-86)

The next court hearing was scheduled for August 27.

**On June 4**, RA Minister of Health Anahit Avanesyan demanded through her Facebook page that *Zhoghovurd* daily issue a refutation[[87]](#footnote-87) concerning a publication about her property.[[88]](#footnote-88) The minister phrased her demand with irony, particularly suggesting that the author of the piece had used something and had not been in a sober state.

**On June 4**, in the courtyard of the National Assembly, the security guard accompanying Arpineh Sargsyan, the Minister of Internal Affairs, obstructed the professional activities of *Zhoghovurd* daily correspondent Knar Manukyan, stepping in front of her and preventing her from asking a question to the minister.[[89]](#footnote-89)

**On June 6**, during the hearing in the case of Jalal Harutyunyan, former commander of the Artsakh Defense Army, judges of the Court of Appeal Mkhitar Papoyan, Robert Papoyan, and Lusineh Abgaryan obstructed the work of journalists.[[90]](#footnote-90) In particular, they prohibited *Aravot.am* correspondent Ashot Hakobyan and *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Armenian Service* reporter Naira Bulghadaryan from filming and recording from a convenient position, ignoring the journalists’ requests for permission. Presiding judge Mkhitar Papoyan showed rude behavior, and subsequently sanctioned the journalists by prohibiting their entry into the courtroom for an hour. Later, the Judicial Department warned the judges and urged them to allow filming, a move that also provoked annoyance from Papoyan.

**On June 6**, Arman Babajanyan, politician, founder of the *Rally for the Republic* party, filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Pastinfo Ltd.,* demanding a refutation of defamatory information. The lawsuit was triggered by an article published on April 7 on *Pastinfo.am*, which claimed that Arman Babajanyan had acquired a residence worth 1.5 million dollars in Glendale, USA and had registered it under his sister’s name.[[91]](#footnote-91) The website presented this matter as a circulation of illicit money. Notably, the plaintiff had approached the editorial office with a demand for a refutation, yet had failed to specify in his letter what exactly he disagreed with. On June 16, the lawsuit was returned due to deficiencies, and was refiled on June 20.

**On June 6**, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced on his Facebook page that he was going to sue *Hraparak* daily.[[92]](#footnote-92) The newspaper, in response to Pashinyan's posts that Catholicos Garegin II had breached his vow of celibacy and fathered a child, published an article recalling that years earlier there had been circulating rumors about Pashinyan spending hours locked in his office with his press secretary, during which strange sounds were reportedly heard.[[93]](#footnote-93) Based on this, the newspaper questioned whether Pashinyan was cheating on his wife. No lawsuit had been filed by the end of the quarter.

**On June 6**,the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *RA State Supervision Service v. citizen Susanna Muradyan and Investigative Journalists NGO,* in which the plaintiff demanded a refutation of the information considered defamatory and the imposition of a 2 million AMD compensation payment on each of the defendants.

The lawsuit filed on January 13 was caused by an article titled “The State Supervision Service Carried Out a Deficient Inspection at “Armenia” Medical Center and Covered Up Violations,”[[94]](#footnote-94) published on December 25 on the NGO’s *Hetq.am* website. In the piece, former SSS employee Susanna Muradyan spoke about corrupt deals. Notably, the website also presented the clarifications of the SSS.

The next court hearing was scheduled for July 22, 2025.

**On June 9**,theCourt of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *National Assembly Speaker Alen Simonyan v. Yerkir Editorial Office Ltd.,* with the plaintiff demanding 1 million AMD as compensation for defamatory information, 410,000 AMD for court expenses, and publication of a refutation.

The lawsuit filed on June 12, 2024 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.

The next hearing was scheduled for July 15, 2025.

**On June 12**, Aram Navasardyan, the head of *MPG LLC,* filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against politician Hrant Bagratyan and *Hayeli* *Club*, demanding a refutation of the information tarnishing his honor and dignity, an order for Bagratyan to pay 1 million AMD for defamation, and for both defendants to pay the state duty. The lawsuit was triggered by a video titled “Nikol Has Stolen 60 Billion in 7 Years via Shadow Economy,” published on May 12 on the YouTube channel of the aforementioned club’s *Hayeli.am* news website. In the video, the following statement was made: “Aram Navasardyan is under the patronage of the authorities, or else he is paid by someone and publishes fabricated figures…” The lawsuit was returned on June 23, and refiled on June 26.

**On June 13**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing in the case of *opposition politician Rubik Hakobyan v. Deputy Sisak Gabrielyan (with MELTEX Ltd., the founder of A1+ TV Company, involved as a third party),* with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to refute the information considered defamatory and pay compensation.

The lawsuit filed on February 28, 2022 was caused by comments made by Sisak Gabrielyan during a broadcast on the *A1+* YouTube channel on January 26. According to Gabrielyan, at the session[[95]](#footnote-95) of the NA Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Diaspora, Youth and Sport, Rubik Hakobyan demonstrated indecent behavior, used inappropriate language, and was under the influence of alcohol.[[96]](#footnote-96)

July 4, 2025 was set as the date for the release of the judicial act.

**On June 16**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan received the case of *citizen Artur Danielyan v. Oragir Media Ltd.,* following the annulment of the earlier judicial act on the return of the lawsuit.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on December 28, 2024, with the plaintiff demanding one million AMD in compensation for defamation, was returned on January 13, 2025 due to deficiencies in the documents. The plaintiff refiled the lawsuit on January 15, 2025, but it was once again returned on January 24. On January 28, the plaintiff appealed the decision of the first instance court to return his lawsuit, and on February 20, the Civil Court of Appeal upheld the appeal, annulling the ruling of the lower court.

The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “$2 Million Interest-Free Loan: The Price for the Silence of Former Activist Artur Danielyan,”[[97]](#footnote-97) published on December 19, 2024 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 June 26, the lawsuit was accepted for new proceedings.

**On June 17**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a hearing in the case of *Hovsep Khurshudyan, head of Free Citizen NGO, v. Asekose Ltd.* with the plaintiff 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 filed on June 3, 2024 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.”[[98]](#footnote-98) 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.”

No date had been set for the next hearing by the end of the quarter.

**On June 17**, *Nork-Marash Medical Center CJSC* filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Social Media Ltd.,* demanding a refutation of the information considered defamatory, payment of 6 million AMD in compensation and 200 thousand AMD in state duty.

The lawsuit was caused by an article titled “‘The Same Medical Team Took My Mother from Me': Citizens Speak Out About the Doctors Involved in the Tragic Incident,”[[99]](#footnote-99) published on May 26 on *Mamul.am*, a website owned by *Social Media Ltd*.

On June 30, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings.

**On June 19**, NA Deputy Arsen Torosyan made ironic remarks on his Facebook page regarding an article by *Civilnet.am*, which recapped high-profile corruption deals during Torosyan’s tenure. Torosyan specifically highlighted that journalists themselves are also complicit in corruption when they place personal interests above impartiality. The deputy from the *Civil Contract* faction specifically wrote: “Civilnet, the platform of the megastar of occupied bathrooms Vartan Oskanian, once again went off the deep end today, unleashing some of its scribblers—nestled under the patronage of certain oligarchs—to dedicate another mega-investigative article to me…”[[100]](#footnote-100)

**On June 20**, Mesrop Manukyan, a member of the *Mother Armenia* faction in the Yerevan Council of Elders, filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against Natalia Sinoryan, a member of the *Civil Contract* faction in the same body (with *Media News Ltd.* involved as a third party). The plaintiff demanded a public refutation of the information considered defamatory, along with monetary compensation. The lawsuit was caused by the remarks made by Natalia Sinoryan on June 2 on the air of *AraratNews Media TV,* owned by *Media News Ltd.* Sinoryan claimed that Manukyan was involved in corrupt dealings, and that his family had acquired a hydroelectric power plant through suspicious means.[[101]](#footnote-101)

**On June 22**, in the courtyard of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, *Euromedia 24* reporter Suzy Badoyan asked Diaspora Armenian businessman Gabriel Jemberjian why he had participated in the charity dinner of *My Step Foundation* organized by Anna Hakobyan, the wife of the RA Prime Minister, and had donated 1 million drams. The journalist hinted that the businessman sought to evade liability by establishing close ties with the authorities, given his engagement in some criminal cases. The businessman shouted at Suzy Badoyan, calling her an “idiot” and threatening her.[[102]](#footnote-102)

**On the same day**, Anna Hakobyan, the Prime Minister's wife, reacted on her Facebook page to the verbal skirmish between journalist Suzy Badoyan and businessman Gabriel Jemberjian, calling her a “hysterical woman,” a “creeping ignoramus,” and an “aggressive louse.”[[103]](#footnote-103)

**On June 23**, doctors from *Nork-Marash Medical Center*—Gagik Heboyan, Kristineh Poghosyan, Eduard Petrosyan, Ara Ananyan, Hovhannes Avdalyan and Gagik Hapetyan—filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Social Media Ltd.* The plaintiffs demanded that the media publish a refutation, provide 3 million AMD in compensation for defamation, and pay the state duties. The lawsuit was caused by videos and reports regularly published on *Social Media Ltd.*'s *Mamul.am* news website since May 30, 2025, which alarmed about the unprofessional conduct, inhumane treatment, and professional shortcomings of doctors. The publications carried the following headlines: “A Scandalous Video: '... You Are Leaving Now and Never Return Here Again' — Doctors of Nork-Marash MC to a Critically Ill Patient During Bandaging”;[[104]](#footnote-104) “Gagik Heboyan, With Your Monstrous Group You Took My 27-Year-Old Brother’s Life, Leaving Two Orphans, With a Third Child to Be Born in 25 Days: Susanna Khachikyan”;[[105]](#footnote-105) “‘Gagik Heboyan and Kristineh Poghosyan Are Guilty of My Wife’s Death': Mher Khalatyan.”[[106]](#footnote-106)

On June 23, the lawsuit was assigned to a judge.

**On June 23**, Arsen Torosyan, a deputy from the NA *Civil Contract* faction, shared on his Facebook page a correspondence between himself and Sona Grigoryan, a journalist from *Zhoghovurd* daily. The correspondence indicated that the official refused to provide a comment on the media’s information, displaying an overtly discriminatory attitude and saying he would have replied if it had been another media outlet. He went on to add: “... The daily was either supplied with false information, or it invented the false information itself, as is often the case.”[[107]](#footnote-107)

**On June 26**, businessman Narek Nalbandyan filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against *Hayeli Club* and its founder Anzhela Tovmasyan for the remarks made on May 28 in a piece titled “‘You've Been Exposed: Narek Nalbandyan’s Billions and the Trace Leading to Nikol and Anna’ — Anzhela Tovmasyan,” which was published on *Hayeli.am* news website and its eponymous YouTube page. Nalbandyan demanded an apology and a refutation of the information considered defamatory. In the piece, Anzhela Tovmasyan specifically claimed that RA Prime Minister and his wife were behind the businessman, using the following expressions: “Illiterate, immature, utterly worthless as a professional,” “This person, who is Anna’s and Nikol’s oligarch,” “a hollow person,” “These very bums, these bums who have become billionaires,” “Your two masters, Anna and Nikol, are behind this, since it’s their business and you act in concert with them,” etc.[[108]](#footnote-108)

On June 26, the lawsuit was assigned to a judge.

**On June 27**, in the courtyard of the Mother See of Etchmiadzin, when NSS officers arrived to detain Archbishop Mikayel Ajapahyan, the head of the Shirak Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, clashes erupted between law enforcement officers and the public, during which the camera of *168.am* was broken.[[109]](#footnote-109)

**On June 27**, the Civil Court of Appeal rejected the appeal filed by the plaintiff in the case of *Yerevan State University Foundation v. “Hraparak Daily Limited Liability Company” LLC., the owner of Hraparak.am website, and Hraparak Daily Ltd.,* against the first instance court’s ruling to dismiss the lawsuit. Additionally, the appellate court obliged the plaintiff to pay 50,000 AMD as the defendant’s attorney’s remuneration.

The lawsuit filed on January 30, 2023, with the plaintiff demanding a public refutation of the information considered defamatory and 1 million AMD in compensation, was caused by a December 30, 2022 article titled “Financial Deficit Emerges at YSU,” published on the aforementioned website.[[110]](#footnote-110) (For details see the CPFE’s annual reports for 2023-2025 in the *Reports* section on *khosq.am*).

On November 4, 2024, the court ruled to reject the lawsuit on the grounds of expiration of the statute of limitations. Added to that, the court obliged the plaintiff to compensate the media with 300,000 AMD as attorney’s fee. On December 30, the plaintiff appealed this decision to a higher court.

**On June 27**, the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan held a regular hearing 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 filed on May 30, 2019 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, owned by the defendants.

The next court hearing was scheduled for September 10, 2025.

**On June 30**, *Aravot.am* correspondent Roza Hovhannisyan raised the issue that the Foreign Ministry initially required journalists to outline the substance of their questions, and subsequently deprived them of the right to pose a question. Thus, on that day, at the press conference with Kaja Kallas, the Vice-President of the European Commission, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and Ararat Mirzoyan, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, discriminatory treatment was displayed, and the right of some media present to ask questions was violated. The journalist noted: “An MFA representative first tried to clarify what question we intended to address to Kaja Kallas, and then inquired about the context in which it would be posed. Upon discovering the actual content, they did not give us the opportunity to pose it.”[[111]](#footnote-111)

***3․ Violations of the Right to Receive and Disseminate Information*** *In the second quarter of 2025, the CPFE recorded* ***39*** *cases of violation of the right to receive and disseminate 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 April 7**, *Infocom.am* news website correspondent Lusineh Manvelyan sent an inquiry to the *Civil Contract* party, requesting disclosure of all monetary transfers (donations) credited to the party's accounts between February 21 and April 7, 2025. On April 28, the party rejected the request, explaining that the report on the party's financial sources and expenditures, as well as property for the given year would be published in the prescribed manner, including via media, within the timeframe set by law (by March 25, 2026). **On June 4**, the journalist submitted a second inquiry, seeking the legal basis for the refusal. This request, too, went unanswered.

**On April 8, *Infocom.am* correspondent Anna Sahakyan, in her effort to prepare a research piece, sent inquiries to 20 different structures: 7 scientific institutions (including the National Academy of Sciences, which unites 33 organizations), 10 universities, as well as the Ministries of Health and Economy, Yerevan Municipality, and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (the latter four having scientific institutions operating under their jurisdiction).**[[112]](#footnote-112) **The inquiries were related to the number of scientists, their workplace and the nature of their activities.**

**Armenian State Institute of Physical Culture and Sports did not respond to the inquiry. Armenian State University of Economics, Armenian National Agrarian University, Russian-Armenian University, the MoESCS Scientific Research Center for Historical and Cultural Heritage, A. I. Alikhanyan National Science Laboratory, Matenadaran, and Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute provided partial and incomplete responses.**

**On April 9**, *News.am*, referring to the June 2023 trilateral meeting of prosecutors initiated by Russian Prosecutor General Igor Krasnov, sent a written inquiry to RA Prosecutor General Anna Vardapetyan. The inquiry sought information on whether the Russian side or another intermediary country had suggested holding a new trilateral meeting of the prosecutors general or a bilateral meeting between the prosecutors general of Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2024 and 2025, or whether the RA Prosecutor General had approached her Russian counterpart with a proposal to initiate such a meeting. The media also asked whether the Armenian Prosecutor General had approached her Azerbaijani counterpart regarding the issue of Armenian captives held in Baku, or whether she had considered the possibility of seeking assistance from her Russian counterpart in protecting the rights and interests of Armenian citizens held in Azerbaijan or in discussing their possible return.[[113]](#footnote-113)

In their response, the Prosecutor General’s Office made reference to the trilateral meeting of the prosecutors general held on June 17, 2023, where, quite naturally, there could have been no discussions about possible developments that would take place in the future (2024-2025).

*News.am* sent a second inquiry to the Prosecutor General, seeking clarification regarding the protection of the interests of Armenian citizens currently held in Azerbaijani custody, with Ruben Vardanyan, Arkady Ghukasyan, Davit Manukyan and others among them. The Prosecutor's Office once again provided a vague response, noting: “We have already clarified that all the information that can be published about the trilateral meeting you referred to is available on the website of the RA Prosecutor's Office.”

**On April 14, *Freedom of Information Center (FOICA)* sent an inquiry to the American University of Armenia, requesting a copy of the most recent Armenian-language version of the Admissions Policy, along with details regarding the admissions procedure. A delayed response came from AUA President Bruce Boghosian, who, in a single sentence, noted that the requested information was available on the university’s website—although this was not the case. AUA violated paragraph 7.2 of Article 9 of the Law “On Freedom of Information,” which requires that if the information specified in a written inquiry is already published, the institution in question shall indicate the means, place, and time of publication.**

**Following its second inquiry on May 8, FOICA was only informed through a response letter that the Armenian version of the Admissions Policy had been added to the “POLICIES” section of the university’s official website, while the rest of the questions remained unanswered.**

**On May 27, FOICA sent another inquiry to the American University of Armenia, this time requesting information concerning the academic programs on circular economy. The inquiry was left without any response.**

**On April 16, *Infocom.am* reporter Lilit Grigoryan sent an inquiry to Goris Municipality, requesting the procurement procedures codes for the previous three years. The inquiry was left unanswered, and following numerous phone calls, the Municipality refused to provide the information, citing a lack of resources.**

**On May 8**,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 with the Court of Cassation, challenging the decision of the Court of Appeal. The appellate court had rejected the defendant's appeal against the ruling of the first instance court, which had upheld the lawsuit filed on March 1, 2023. In that lawsuit, the plaintiff demanded that the ministry be obliged 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 May 12**, the RA Administrative Court held a hearing in the case of *Union of Informed Citizens NGO,* *the founder of Fip.am fact-checking platform,* v. *RA National Security Service,* with the plaintiff demanding to oblige the defendant to provide an exhaustive response to their November 16, 2024 inquiry. The inquiry concerned the number of persons banned from entering Armenia as persona non grata.

The next court hearing was scheduled for October 2, 2025.

**On May 25**, Freedom of Information Center sent an inquiry to Artashat Municipality, requesting information on the positions and salaries of the employees of “Shahumyan Village Art School after David Rafaelyan” non-commercial state organization (NCSO). In its written response, the Municipality refused to provide the requested information, stating that it contained personal data. However, the response failed to reference the legal norm defining the information as confidential, as required by law.

At the same time, FOICA highlights that the presence of some non-disclosable data within the requested documents does not imply a total denial of access. Article 8, paragraph 2 of the Law “On Freedom of Information” stipulates that “In cases where part of the requested information contains data, which is not subject to release, the provision of information shall be ensured with respect to the remaining part.” In response to FOICA’s second inquiry, the Municipality once again refused to provide the information without any proper justification.

**On May 27**, Freedom of Information Center submitted a written inquiry to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, requesting various details regarding the “Yerevan Dialogue” conference. The Ministry issued an interim response, asking for an additional 30-day extension while offering no explanation as to what specific work required that extra time. Furthermore, by the time 41 days had passed since the inquiry was submitted, no reply had been received.

**On May 29**, *Factor.am* reporter Gayaneh Khachatryan sent an inquiry to Yerevan Municipality regarding public transport fares, sold packages, and additionally requested a copy of the contract concluded with *TELCELL* company together with its attachments. The Municipality replied with a delay, on June 12, and the response was incomplete. The requested contract was not provided; instead, only a hyperlink was sent, which contained a generic sample of the Municipality’s contracts, leaving the question unanswered.

On June 16, Gayaneh Khachatryan once again applied to the Municipality, highlighting that the link was inappropriate and reiterating her request for a copy of the bilaterally signed contract. Yerevan Municipality informed in an official communication that the requested document could not be provided at that stage, without substantiating its refusal.

**On May 29**, *Hetq.am* published an article about the investments made by the *Entrepreneur+State* foundation, a subsidiary of the *Armenian National Interests Fund CJSC (ANIF).* After the publication, Yerevan Mayor’s Press Secretary Hayk Kostanyan addressed the topic on his Facebook page. *Hetq.am* sent a request to Kostanyan inquiring about the sources for the information contained in his post and asking why he chose to respond to the article despite having no association with ANIF or the *Entrepreneur+State Anti-Crisis Investments Manager CJSC.* The request remained unanswered.[[114]](#footnote-114)

**On May 30**, the *Union of Informed Citizens NGO,* the founder of *Fip.am* fact-checking platform, filed a lawsuit with the RA Administrative Court against the RA Anti-Corruption Committee, demanding that the Committee be obliged to provide the requested information. The request concerned the alleged abuses outlined in the annual report of the RA Audit Chamber, and was presented by the NGO as a matter of public significance.

The lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on June 6, with a court hearing set for October 9.

**On June 2**, the *Union of Informed Citizens NGO,* the founder of *Fip.am* fact-checking platform, filed a lawsuit with the RA Administrative Court against the RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports and the “Service for the Protection of Historical Environment and Cultural Museum Reservations” SNCO at the ministry. The plaintiff demanded that they be obliged to provide the names of the SNCO’s officials as requested by the NGO.

On June 10, the lawsuit was accepted for proceedings, but only in relation to the MoESCS. A court hearing was scheduled for February 4, 2026.

**On June 6**, *Fip.am* fact-checking platform reached out to the RA Prime Minister’s Office, seeking clarification on the amount of taxpayer money allocated to the “Learning is Trendy” campaign, along with the procurement codes of the relevant purchases. In response, however, the Office did not provide the information, claiming that the data in question constituted a “state secret.” The reply specifically referred to [Article 15](https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/110820) of the Law “On Procurement,” which stipulates that the list of procurements containing state secrets, among others, includes the ceremonial expenses of officials, as defined by the [Law](https://www.irtek.am/views/act.aspx?aid=23175) “On Ensuring the Security of Persons Falling under Special State Protection.”

“In fact, the Office categorized the public educational initiative of a private foundation under the framework of representative-ceremonial expenditures, allocating taxpayer funds for its implementation. Moreover, by classifying these expenditures as confidential and non-disclosable, it deprived taxpayers of their right to be informed,” the website reported.[[115]](#footnote-115)

**On June 11**, the Administrative Court of Appeal 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 next court hearing was scheduled for May 21, 2026.

**On June 11**, *Factor.am* correspondent Araks Mamulyan [reported](https://factor.am/900619.html?fbclid=IwY2xjawK3bXVleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETFMdVRFU0dxOFQ0dVNKWlRhAR7lhi0_okBO1U8GmKUZcbhreNjHs9xF6x9DC5AyINUR1gq55jX7tqWSFHjAoA_aem_-zZIfpBftBWzr0nnM6EfvA) that Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's Staff continued to avoid responding to questions on the peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In response to *Factor TV's* another inquiry regarding the document, the Staff requested a 30-day extension, and 5 days before the extension expired, the inquiry was redirected to the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On June 20, the same journalist [wrote](https://factor.am/904215.html?fbclid=IwY2xjawLSFb5leHRuA2FlbQIxMQBicmlkETEzMlBIUzZNamxZSmxzbmFUAR4YvUFXGL_e2dTLq17DqLPP1vPpfsg2Yt5JDhDpS-9KEm17kuHC_vNm2-1EbA_aem_RHuTKXpPkZOvsyZ1fkEWUQ) that it took the MFA 1 month to provide a two-sentence response to *Factor TV’s* inquiry regarding the peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Thus, back on April 11, Araks Mamulyan had sent a written inquiry to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, requesting information on the internal procedures necessary for the adoption of that treaty, along with text of the document itself. The Ministry’s reply came in violation of the five-day timeframe prescribed by law and was incomplete. It merely noted that *“the draft treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan will, in due course, undergo the necessary internal procedures, as stipulated by the RA Law “On International Treaties.”* As for the treaty text, after requesting a 30-day extension, the Ministry—just 4 days before the deadline expired—refused to release the copy of the document or disclose its content.

**On June 12**, the Administrative Court of Appeal 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. On June 26, 2024, 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 judicial act is set to be released on July 10, 2025.

**On June 17**, *Freedom of Information Center* [sent an inquiry](https://foi.am/news-events/38716?fbclid=IwY2xjawLhzdtleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETFvTlVGMDBkNXFaSEVSbm9SAR6tMvKoEEnFJnqj_ox58HXfIBhjUC3I2RO0MOGNkQMONuzZmupVKAvfvDjRyQ_aem_QS_JqVTalYR3UqIyMfCl-Q) to Yerevan Municipality, seeking information on the total costs of the Yerevan International Ballet Festival, including the signed contracts, companies involved in the event’s logistics, etc. In its response, the Municipality withheld the information on the sums allocated to the participating theaters, justifying the omission by commercial confidentiality. FOICA commented: “The expenditures made from the community budget cannot be considered as a commercial secret. Furthermore, under Article 11, paragraph 3 of the Law “On Freedom of Information,” the Municipality did not specify the legal norm establishing that such information constitutes a secret and is not subject to disclosure.”

On June 26, FOICA sent a second inquiry, requesting hyperlinks to the contracts, the sums allocated to each of the theaters that performed at the festival and the purpose of those expenditures. The municipality once again provided an incomplete response, sharing the contract codes and a direct link to the general (but not specific) information available on the State Procurement System, and a photocopy of the aforementioned contract. At the same time, the municipality failed to properly respond to the question regarding the sums paid to the theaters.

**On June 18**, *Infocom.am* reported that back on March 18, they had sent an inquiry to the *South Caucasus Railways CJSC,* requesting information about the company's procurement process. After 45 days, a delayed response was received where it was stated that the process was carried out under regulations established by the company's executive director’s order and was not open for publication.[[116]](#footnote-116) Later, on May 12, the website reached out to the company, requesting the calls for procurement tenders announced throughout the past year and the contracts signed as a result of those tenders. In response, the company stated that the signed contracts could not be provided, citing the presence of commercial, banking, and personal data. The company also refused to provide the information sought in the May 15 request, in particular, the names of participants and winners of procurement tenders held during the past 10 years, together with the purchased items and the contract prices, once again referring to commercial and work-related confidential information.

*Infocom.am* tried to obtain the delivery and acceptance acts (documenting the [transfer](https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/42065#:~:text=2.%20%D5%8D%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B5%D5%B6%20%D5%BA%D5%A1%D5%B5%D5%B4%D5%A1%D5%B6%D5%A1%D5%A3%D6%80%D5%AB%D5%B6%20%D5%B0%D5%A1%D5%B4%D5%A1%D5%BA%D5%A1%D5%BF%D5%A1%D5%BD%D5%AD%D5%A1%D5%B6%20%D5%AF%D5%B8%D5%B6%D6%81%D5%A5%D5%BD%D5%AB%D5%B8%D5%B6%20%D5%A1%D) of concession assets to the Russian side), specifically detailing what railway transport facilities, real estate and movable property the Republic of Armenia had handed over to the *South Caucasus Railway* for operation. Considering that at the time of the contract’s conclusion, the Ministry of Transport and Communications was the authorized state body, with these powers later transferred to the Ministry of High-Tech Industry, and from 2019 onwards, to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, *Infocom.am* also sent inquiries to these ministries. First, the Ministries of TAI and HTI reported that the delivery and acceptance act was not in their possession. Later, however, following a letter addressed to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, the MTAI found the document and provided it. Yet, the version sent to the editorial office was incomplete, as it lacked 7 annexes containing the list of the transferred assets.

**On June 19**, *Fip.am* fact-checking platform sent an inquiry to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, requesting information on the number of traffic violations, detected crimes, and cases in which Kotayk regiment officers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Patrol Service were dispatched to incidents reported by citizens during May–October 2024. The request remained unanswered.

**On June 21**, *Pastinfo.am* [reported](https://www.pastinfo.am/hy/news/2025/06/21/%D4%BF%D5%AB%D6%80%D5%A1%D5%B6%D6%81%D5%AB-%D5%A2%D5%B6%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%AB%D5%B9%D5%B6%D5%A5%D6%80%D5%AB%D5%B6/1935754) that since June of the previous year, the outlet had been sending inquiries first to the RA Prosecutor General's Office, then to the National Security Service regarding the issuance of fake privatization certificates by the Cadastre Committee to residents of Kirants village of the RA Tavush Marz. Although these allegations were rejected in the responses, at the end of the year it was revealed that criminal proceedings had been initiated in this regard.

**In June 2025, the website’s reporter Izabel Sahakyan sent a new written inquiry to the Anti-Corruption Committee, seeking clarification on the number of people recognized as victims within the framework of the criminal proceedings and whether there was an accused person. The Committee responded that the requested details constituted a state secret. The journalist underlined that her request was not connected to the findings of the investigation, but to the mere existence or absence of victims in the case. Furthermore, she also highlighted that the Committee had disregarded the fact that the inquiry originated from a media outlet, highlighting in their written response that the information could not be provided also because the requester was not involved in the case in any capacity.**

**On June 23, *Infocom.am* reporter Susina Khachatryan sent a written inquiry to Artik Municipality, requesting some procurement contracts. The municipality did not respond to the request.**

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

**On April 16**, the defendant in the case of *Aravot.am reporter Hripsimeh Jebejyan v. citizen Khazhak Tananyan* filed an appeal with the Court of Cassation, challenging the decision of the appellate court, which had previously granted his appeal against the first instance court ruling on upholding the lawsuit.

As a reminder, the lawsuit filed on August 28, 2023, with the plaintiff demanding to protect her honor and dignity from publicly made insult, was caused by the statements made against the journalist online.[[117]](#footnote-117) The lawsuit was upheld by a verdict issued on July 10, 2024. 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.

The defendant challenged the decision, and on February 28, the Civil Court of Appeal granted the appeal. The verdict was fully overturned, and the case, in its entirety, was sent to the lower court for a new examination. The cassation appeal, grounded in the court’s biased attitude, was received by the cassation court on June 12.

**On April 22**, the RA Investigative Committee's General Department for Investigation of Crimes against the State, Fundamentals of Constitutional Order and Public Security received reports from the RA Prosecutor General's Office. These reports had been filed by citizen Nairi Hokhikyan, Mesrop Arakelyan, a member of the political council of the *Country to Live Party*, and RA NA Deputy Lilit Galstyan. According to their allegations, *Xosnak.am* (a news website associated with the authorities - CPFE) was disseminating videos that propagated hatred, used rhetoric inciting hostility and violence within society, and included calls that posed a threat to people’s lives and health. In particular, such calls had been made against residents of Gyumri and Artsakh.

In response to the CPFE's inquiry, the RA Prosecutor's Office reported that on April 23, proceedings had been initiated in the Investigative Committee regarding the incident under paragraph 2.3 of Article 329 of the Criminal Code *(Public speech aimed at inciting or propagating hatred, discrimination, intolerance or hostility, along with the distribution of materials or objects for such purposes, through the use of publicly exhibited works, media, or information or communication technologies).* The preliminary investigation is ongoing.

**On May 5**, 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,”[[118]](#footnote-118) published on June 9 on *168․am* website owned by *168 Zham Ltd.*

On March 25, 2024, 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 granted: the verdict was overturned, and the case was remanded to the same court for a new examination.

As part of the newly initiated proceedings, hearings were also held on May 22 and June 5, 2025. On June 15, the court once again rejected the lawsuit, citing the same grounds as before.

**On May 22**,the Civil Court of Appeal partially upheld the appeal filed by the defendant in the case of *Hraparak Daily Ltd. v. Deputy Artur Hovhannisyan* against the ruling of the first instance court. The lower court had obliged the deputy to refute the remarks tarnishing the business reputation of the media and pay 300 thousand AMD as compensation for defamation.

As a reminder, the lawsuit was filed on January 3, 2024, 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.[[119]](#footnote-119)

The appellate court ruled to overturn the verdict, remanding the case to the same court for a new examination.

**On May 22**, the European Court of Human Rights released its decision regarding photojournalist Ani Gevorgyan. The Court recognized that her rights had been violated under Article 10 of the European Convention. At the same time, the Court concluded that no violation had occurred under Article 3.[[120]](#footnote-120) In other words, the court acknowledged that the journalist’s legitimate professional activities had been obstructed, but that she had not been subjected to degrading treatment.

As a reminder, the matter concerns an incident that took place on February 14, 2014 on Yerevan's Mashtots Avenue, when photojournalist Ani Gevorgyan was covering a protest staged by opposition youth. The photojournalist was unlawfully taken to the police station by force, her camera was confiscated, the memory cards were destroyed, and she was slapped. No effective investigation was conducted in Armenia regarding all these circumstances, the criminal case was discontinued, and Ani Gevorgyan appealed to the ECHR. Nine years later, this international court, albeit partially, granted the application.

**On May 29**, the RA Administrative Court held a hearing in the case of *Knarik Manukyan, journalist and editor of Zhoghovurd daily, v. RA National Assembly Staff.* As a reminder, the lawsuit was filed on February 19, 2024. 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.

On June 16, 2025, the court ruled to uphold the lawsuit.

**On June 17**, *NewsAM Ltd.* filed a lawsuit with the Court of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan against Alen Simonyan, the Speaker of the National Assembly, demanding that the latter be obliged to refute the information tarnishing their business reputation and pay 1 million AMD in compensation for defamation.

The lawsuit was triggered by a statement made by Alen Simonyan on May 17 that several media, including the plaintiff, had gone to interview Robert Kocharyan in the capacity of their owner and as media outlets operating under his control.

The lawsuit was accepted for proceedings on June 26.

**On June 17**, the RA Administrative Court held a hearing in the case of *Armenian Second TV Channel Ltd. v. Commission on Television and Radio,* in whichthe broadcaster demanded to be recognized as the winner in the licensing competition for the use of the republican broadcasting slot in the public multiplex and that the CTR be obliged to adopt a decision on granting the corresponding license. This lawsuit was filed on February 6, 2023. The court scheduled the next hearing for January 20, 2026.

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9. [**https://khosq.am/en/2025/06/06/statement-134/**](https://khosq.am/en/2025/06/06/statement-134/) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
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