

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
WORKING SESSION 2
Fundamental freedoms I, including freedom of expression

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As delivered by

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Mr. Moderator,

I would like to start by thanking Ms. Dunja Mijatovic, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media for their important contribution and guidance in framing discussions.

Freedom of expression is not merely one of fundamental freedoms. It is unalienable right and level of its protection is the best indicator of overall situation of human rights.

The Armenia's progress in protecting freedom of expression is well recognized by the national and international stakeholders including OSCE institutions. Armenia has decriminalized the libel and subsequently addressed the issue of regulating the financial penalties which eventually led to the significant drop of overall cases. Armenia has been closely cooperating with the Office of the Representative of the Freedom of Media, including on her inquires. Her guidance on international and regional good practices is well appreciated by a number of Armenian state agencies.

The effective address of crimes perpetrated against freedom of expression should remain high on the agenda of the OSCE. The Armenian delegation raised on a number of occasions, including at the level of the Permanent Council, the urgent need to combat impunity against those who try to silence voices of journalists and community leaders through the most brutal and violent means. We appreciate the role of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in keeping up with eminent cases and her determination to pursue the right to the truth for the victims.

The violations of freedom of expression and the freedom of the media have different dimensions. The overt propaganda of war and advocacy of hatred launched by public figures are usually part of overall policy of limiting free public space of expression. Unfortunately, there are consistent efforts to silence voices of peace, reconciliation and finally democracy in the OSCE region. The stigmatization and persecution of journalists and civil society members who are involved in the confidence building measures under the charges of espionage activities are a sad reality in the OSCE area. Finally, we would like to submit a relevant recommendation to the participating states:

To refrain from persecuting journalists and civil society representatives involved in the confidence building measures in the conflict related environment.

Ensure the ability of independent media to investigate issues of public interest, such as corruption and to publish the results of that investigation without fear of prosecution, persecution or physical harm.

I would also like to recommend to the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media to promote of regional cooperation and confidence building between free media.

Thank you.