

## Statement

I am making this statement on behalf of three non-governmental organizations from Armenia to voice our big concern about the situation of right to freedom of assembly in the Republic of Armenia.

The Law on “Freedom of Peaceful Assembly” was adopted on 2011. According to the Law, in case of more than 100 participants the authorities should not only allow the assembly, but take the notification into consideration to insure security. In addition to assemblies demanding prior notification, the Law also foresees the right to prompt and spontaneous assemblies. The progress of the Law is expressed in the approach that irrespective of the nature of the assembly, if it is peaceful, the police is obliged to facilitate the assembly. The regulations of the Law are, generally, in line with international standards. However, the provisions of the Law are not fully implemented. During the last 2014 year Helsinki Committee of Armenia monitored more than 100 peaceful assemblies where many cases of violence were observed and recorded. We would like to bring the following cases as examples of police violence during peaceful assemblies.

On 15 January, 2015, in Liberty Square in Yerevan the assembly took place in the memory of the family, killed by the Russian soldier in Gyumri. During this assembly, unknown people in civilian clothes, as later turned out police officers, as well as police officers in uniforms used violence against the participants of peaceful assembly and forcibly took dozens of them to various police departments.

On 11 February and on 13 May 2015 in the front of president’s residence the police used a force against the peaceful group of military servicemen parents who were trying to bring attention on ineffective investigation of deaths of sons, soldiers lasted more than six years. The police rudely shoved the parents forcibly drove them away to the opposite sidewalk of the street.

More massive instances of violence were observed in the morning of 23 June during the rally and sit-in staged by the “No to Plunder!” initiative which was dispersed by special police units and other servants. Numerous instances of violence and excessive use of force were observed while dispersing the rally and arresting the participants.

Even after the rally was dispersed, the police went on in areas near Liberty Square with pursuing and detaining the participants of the already terminated rally, that were frequently accompanied with violence and the use of extremely excessive force. The total number of arrested demonstrators was 237.

For all such actions the police remained unpunished and unaccountable to the public.

The monitoring results and discussed examples prove that the Armenian authorities fail to ensure the protection of freedom of assembly, moreover, all possible measures are taken to suppress and silence any protest activity.

In this regard, we claim from the RA authorities to respect and ensure the effective implication of the right to freedom of assembly.

Helsinki Committee of Armenia



Protection of Rights without Borders



Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor Office

