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### Targeted violence against journalists in Armenia

During the past years we observe that the violence and pressure on the media in Armenia dramatically increased, especially during public protests and assemblies.

When the public protests and assemblies were brutally dispersed in Armenia during 17-30 of July 2016, such actions were justified by the government on the security and safety reasons.

However, the same violence and brutalities were used also against journalists attacking and biting representatives of the media.

On 29 July 2016 during the assemble the police asked the media representatives to group on the special area and after their gathering the police intentionally attacked on journalists using stun grenades. At least 23 journalists got physical injuries and suffered burn damages. The video and photo cameras were broken, the police blocked the streets and the medical assistance was denied at the place of attack. After two days on 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2016 the president of the country in his public speech encouraged media representatives to forget what has happened. Unfortunately, this is not the unique case.

Last year on 23 June 2015 during another public protests the police again targeted journalists and used violence against them.

13 journalists were injured. However, no person was held accountable for such actions and the criminal investigation identified four civilians to be criminally charged for the attack on journalists, however, no police officer organizing attack on journalists was engaged in the criminal investigation.

Such actions and the failure of the state to punish perpetrators confirm that the government leads and sponsors the violence and pressure on media to destroy the grounds for freedom of information and expression in the country.

Helsinki Committee of Armenia

Protection of Rights without Borders

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor Office

Union of Informed Citizens

Journalists' Club "Asparez"