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The group of civil society organizations make this statement to underline the circumstances of increasing violations of the right to freedom of assemblies in Armenia.

The police impunity, wield spared arbitrariness and violence are used to suspend all illustrations of activism and protest.

On July 17 2016 the wave of peaceful assemblies was propagated against the ruling regime demanding meaningful changes and resignation of the president in Armenia. The public protests and peaceful assemblies continued 14 days. The assemblies were of exclusively peaceful nature.

As a response to the peaceful protests and assemblies, the authorities used the violence and massive arrests to suspend and disperse the protest.

At least 730 people were illegally detained while exercising their right to peaceful assemblies. The detention was accompanied by violence and ill-treatment. People were kept in police stations up to 32 hours without food, water and use of toilets. The access of lawyers to the police stations was denied and detained persons did not get legal assistance.

The criminal cases were fabricated against at least 30 people on the grounds of organizing mass disorder and participation in unauthorized assemblies.

On 20th of July and on 29th of July the police used excessive force and special means such as stun grenades that caused physical injuries and damages; more than 130 people were taken to the hospitals after suffering burn injuries.

The representatives of mass media were targeted and attacked by law enforcement agencies, the journalists were bitten, the cameras and video materials were broken in order to demolish the records and reports on human rights violations during the protests.

The authorities justified such brutal interventions as being imposed for security and safety reasons.

Later, the president of the country publicly expressed his appreciation for the effective and efficient work of the law enforcement agencies. He encouraged the media representatives to forget about the events and

violations. Despite the numerous acts of abuse, violence and humiliation no police officer is held accountable for the massive violence and illegalities.

We believe that such actions are incompatible with the requirements to respect and protect the right to freedom of assembly. The state should ensure the accountability and liabilities for all violations of law enforcement agencies to demonstrate meaningful commitment to the international standards on human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Helsinki Committee of Armenia

Protection of Rights without Borders

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor Office

Union of Informed Citizens

Journalists' Club "Asparez"