

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
WORKING SESSION 6
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 her important contribution and guidance in framing discussions.

We subscribe to the view that 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 inquiries. Her guidance on international and regional good practices is well appreciated by a number of Armenian state agencies. As a result of this cooperation very important decision has also been taken with regard of the protection of confidential sources of investigative journalists and a criminal case was dropped in this regard.

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 brutal murders. 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.

At the same time other criminal offences against journalists should be also effectively addressed. Ms. Mijatovic referred to the necessity of practical steps to ensure safety of journalists reporting mass protests in Armenia. I would like to inform on some of them. Most recently the Special Investigative Service of Armenia brought criminal charges and arrested eight persons who allegedly attack and impede the work of journalists providing coverage of

a protest action. The investigation was accomplished with regard to the four persons and their case was submitted to the court.

Armenia is committed to the protection of journalists and bringing all those who attack or impede the work of journalists to justice.

Thank you.