
ARMENIA'S EAP CSF MONITORING MISSION PRESENTS FINDINGS FROM JULY STANDOFF

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YEREVAN (EaP-CSF) [] Monitoring Mission of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) on the civil society, media and human rights situation in Armenia visited Armenia from August 9-15 2016. The Missions team was composed of leading experts in the field of human rights from Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Its work was supported by the EaP CSF Armenian National Platform.

The Missions main objectives were to assess the situation with non-governmental organizations and media in the aftermath of the political crisis that took place July 17-21, 2016, and acquire complete and accurate information about the situation in various fields of human rights.

During the visit to Armenia, the Mission interviewed the representatives of civil society, leading human rights organizations, experts and lawyers. Separate meetings were held with the Ombudsman of the Republic of Armenia and representatives of major intergovernmental organizations. Currently, the Mission is preparing the report and a wide range of recommendations.

Below are some of the preliminary findings and recommendations.

The events of July 17-31 were accompanied by disproportionate use of force by law enforcement and serious violations of human rights:

- Arbitrary detention, retention of people in the military facilities without drawing up protocols, both during and after detention and retention;
- Attacks on journalists, interference with the performance of their professional duties; cruel and degrading treatment, restriction of access to adequate medical care, illegal intrusion on the private property; denial of the right to a phone call, etc.

In the aftermath of the July 17-31 crisis, the Armenian civil society makes every effort to protect citizens fundamental rights and freedoms. It should be noted that the legal community of Armenia has taken upon themselves the provision of the legal aid to the arrested and detained.

The Mission supports the previously adopted statement of the Armenian National Platform as of July 21, 2016 and that of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum as of August 1, 2016, and urges the Government of Armenia to take immediate measures in order to restore human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the atmosphere of trust between the state and society:

- Release all detained participants of the peaceful protests, including the Steering Committee Member, Hovsep Khurshudyan, and active member of the EaP CSF, Davit Sanasaryan;
- Investigate all cases of violence against civilians; bring to justice those responsible for

violations of human rights and freedoms. Particular attention should be paid to the transparency of the process: providing human rights organizations with access to the information regarding the investigation, informing the public about the course of investigation and measures taken for its quality conduct.

- Investigate the two cases of murdered police officers with the assistance of international experts;
- Provide guarantees of safety for journalists and media activists during the performance of their professional duties;
- Ensure the safety of lawyers and human right activists activity; promote the protection of human rights.

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