

On July 18, 2013, Henrik Navasardyan, the Head of the Transportation Department, Yerevan Municipality, announced about the transport fare increase. Navasardyan mentioned that the fare increase was preconditioned by the increase of the prices of fuel and spare parts during the last 10 years. The decision was enforced two days after the announcement.

Public discontent in regards to the decision caused protests held by the civic activists in Yerevan.

Karen Andreasyan, the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, with official notice referred three questions to Yerevan Mayor Taron Margaryan.

1. The intercity transport fare increase is possible solely with Yerevan Mayor's decision. Did You sign such a decision and promulgated it in accordance with the law, and if not, isn't it obvious that without proper announcement such a decision cannot legally exist?
2. Will all the passenger transporting companies that increased the fare of the transport without the decision of the Mayor, be sentenced to liability?
3. If the passenger transporting companies applied with a request to increase the transport fare, isn't it necessary to announce a new tender, to which new companies are possible to apply with a proposal for 100 AMD instead of 150 AMD.

Karen Andreasyan also noted, "Increase of the transport fares is unacceptable without proper public discussions, but it's more condemnable when such an increase in the price is made with a serious breach of the law. We are sure, that if the increase of fares was made with a violation of the law, the perpetrators shall not only be subjected to strict liability, but also our citizens who have paid additional money starting from July 20 should be given relevant material compensation."

After the press release of the Defender's notice was spread through different means of media, the Mayor's decision was promulgated on the official website of Yerevan Municipality. Widespread protests continued to be held in Yerevan. The citizens refused to pay 150 AmD instead of 100AmD.

On July 25, Mayor of Yerevan, Taron Margaryan, ordered to suspend the decision on the increase of transport fares.

However, dozens of young people continued holding a sit-down protest in front of Yerevan municipality demanding to hold responsible those officials who made an illegal decision.

On August 8, 2013, the activists again addressed to the Ombudsman, Karen Andreasyan, in particular noting the lack of protection from the scorching sun. Hours later, the Ombudsman sent an official letter to the Police. In his letter, Mr. Andreasyan stressed that during the peaceful protests installation of a tent or an umbrella should be viewed not only as a legitimate act, but also as a humane act, if it is necessary for the protection of the lives and health of peaceful demonstrators, and if those defensive structures do not impede the traffic, the free movement of the passers-by, and the smooth functioning of state and other bodies.

In particular, Mr. Andreasyan mentioned in his letter: “Deeply concerned about the health and security of the peaceful demonstrators, I request to you to assign the relevant officials to ensure the security and health of the sit-in demonstrators.” The Ombudsman offered in cases of extreme necessity not to interfere with the legitimate placement of a tent or an umbrella, as well as to strengthen the security of the demonstrators in absence of light at night.