



OFFICE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
PUBLIC RELATIONS UNIT



A summary statement on the activities of April 19 in regard to ensuring the rights of participants in demonstrations and marches

19.04.2018

1. From the early morning of April 19, representatives of the Human Rights Defender continued to conduct monitoring of demonstrations and marches, visits to police units, as well as discussion of complaints and reception of citizens at the Defender's Office.

Nine groups have been formed for visits to police units. Before each visit, concrete issues have been presented to the visitors, and the results were summarized after the visits.

2. Throughout the day, twenty-seven calls about the rights of participants in demonstrations and marches have been received through the hotline of the Defender's Office. Visits were organised to the Police Central, Erebuni, Malatia, Arabkir, Kanaker-Zeytun, Nor Nork, Shengavit Divisions and Davtashen Units. Private conversations with 109 persons have been conducted during the visits, and 22 of them were juveniles. Most of them were apprehended on the ground of charges of administrative offenses.

3. Private conversations with those apprehended and examination of apprehension documents revealed issues related to failure to inform the apprehended individuals about the grounds of apprehension, failure to fill in complete data in police registries, keeping people at police units for a time period exceeding that prescribed by law. Several attempts of impeding access of advocates to police units were also recorded, which were, however, prevented with the support of the Defender's representatives. On April 19, the apprehended individuals did not raise complaints about communicating with the person of their choice or about their right to make a call.

We specifically emphasize that regardless of whether apprehensions happened within administrative or criminal proceedings, the apprehended individuals shall enjoy the rights of persons deprived of liberty, which are internationally recognised and are supported with enhanced guarantees following RA constitutional amendments of 2015.

These rights are, at least, the following:

- to be promptly informed, in the location of apprehension and in language which the person understands, of the reasons of apprehension;

- to remain silent;
- to inform the person of his/her choosing of the location of apprehension.
- the right to lawyer;
- to undergo medical examination, including examination at his/her own expense and by the doctor of his/her choosing;
- to be informed about their rights.

5. Examination of information received through the hotline of the Defender's Office and as a result of visits to police units revealed incidents when persons apprehended on suspicion of having committed administrative offence continue to be kept in those units for a time period exceeding that prescribed by law, as a witness or, in several cases, as a suspect in the framework of criminal proceedings, in order to be interrogated. Any such case was recorded and requests for clarifications were immediately sent to the Police.

6. The presence of juveniles and in some cases pupils in Police units is of particular concern. Representatives of the Defender follow special principles in holding their private conversations with each of them, and special attention is paid to the grounds of their apprehension and the guarantees for their rights.

7. The Human Rights Defender's Office obtained information about the existence of cars without registration plates and incidents of apprehensions of demonstrators by persons in civil uniform and violence against them. This information shall immediately be verified in order to prevent any such incidents.

8. The Human Rights Defender received complaints that police officers had transferred personal cars to areas specially protected by the police. This information was communicated to the Defender by Arayik Harutyunyan, member of the Department of the Civil Contract political party.

The police was requested to provide clarifications about the transfers of citizens' personal cars to specially protected areas and the reasons of keeping the cars in those areas. A respective statement was sent to the Police.

9. We have also recorded publications that today, at around 16:50, activist Davit Petrosyan and advocate Araks Melkonyan were attacked by 20 unknown persons in the yard of "Surb Grigor Lusavorich" Medical Center. According to the publication, they had received physical injuries.

This deeply concerning information shall be immediately verified in the framework of properly conducted criminal proceedings with the purpose of revealing rapidly all the circumstances of the incident. This question will be under the immediate attention of the Human Rights Defender. All the details subject to publication are about to be summarized by the Defender's Office. Respective statements will be addressed to the Police and the investigative authority.

10. The Defender issued a statement about the question of initiating an examination procedure in respect of violence against Tirayr Muradyan. We stress again the importance of ensuring the unimpeded performance by journalists of their professional activities. Any similar incidents shall be immediately prevented, and the perpetrators, irrespective of their status, shall be subjected to severe measures of liability.

11. On the basis of all the mentioned data, examination proceedings have been initiated following the procedure determined by the Human Rights Defender. Requests for both written and oral clarifications have

been submitted to respective State authorities. There have been requests for stopping the violations at the police units and immediately releasing people apprehended without legal grounds or deprived of liberty for a time period exceeding that prescribed by law.

12. The Human Rights Defender's Office works to the fullest possibilities of its resources and mandate, under emergency regime. All the measures within the Defender's legal mandate are being taken with a view to protecting human rights.