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**OFFICE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER**

**OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**

**PUBLIC RELATIONS UNIT**

**Any increase in tension may result in irreversible impact on human rights**

Given the current situation, all efforts should be made for peaceful settlement of the situation. Any increase in tension may result in irreversible impact on human rights.

Right to freedom of peaceful assemblies is a fundamental right and a cornerstone for democratic society. It is a fundamental value. Protection of a right to freedom of assemblies is essential for creating tolerant and diverse society, where people with different views and intentions, including minority groups can peacefully coexist. The Constitution guarantees that everyone shall have the right to freely participate and organise peaceful, unarmed assemblies.

Therefore, the Human Rights Defender demands from the police and other competent state bodies to consider that presumption should always be in favor of exercising the right to freedom of assembly. In current situation, it is necessary to operate with exceptional restraint and ensure journalists’ unhindered professional activities.

On the other hand, we call the participants of the demonstrations to preserve the exceptional peaceful nature of the demonstrations and other requirements prescribed by the law. Only peaceful demonstrations, held in accordance with the law, are protected by this right.

The right to freedom of assembly may be restricted only by measures prescribed by the law, pursue a legitimate purpose and are necessary in a democratic society.

  It should be taken into consideration that the exercise of the right to freedom of assembly assumes that it is necessary to act during the assembly on the principle of not allowing disproportionate restriction of the fundamental rights and freedoms of others. Please note, that if blocking of a street or a bridge is the only purpose of the action, it may be a ground for limiting the demonstration, but should be exclusively based on the circumstances of the particular situation. At the same time, it would not matter whether or not there is an act of violence in a particular situation.

The Human Rights Defender’s Office works 24-hour under emergency scheme. All the calls may also be addressed to ***116 hotline*** in a 24-hour schedule.