



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



Failure to cover the activities of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia over a period of time in violation of the legislation creates a reasonable assumption of the existence of an agreed policy of the Council of the Public Broadcaster and Public Television

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The Human Rights Defender of Armenia has addressed official letters to the Council of the Public Broadcaster, Commission on the Television and radio of Armenia, as well as to the Public Television, to request clarifications on the banning of the coverage by the “Lurer” (the name of the new program) program of the activities of the only constitutional state institution mandated to protect human rights by the Constitution of Armenia, and to demand explanations about the policies violating human rights, legislation, and international requirements, and the non-compliance with state obligations.

The Human Rights Defender of Armenia presented the results of the targeted monitoring conducted over a period of 5 months through a comprehensive statement on December 28, 2021, stressing that the Public Television, being an institution established by the Government of Armenia, continues to ignore the publications of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia about the important events taking place in the country in its "Lurer" program, and operates on the principle of excluding the broadcasting of the Defender's activities to the extent maximum possible.

This statement of the Human Rights Defender can be found here: https://www.ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/2067. The results of the mentioned monitoring are presented to your attention in a separate file.

The situation has worsened since the publication of the above-mentioned statement.

The issue refers to making the numerous publications, analyses, reports, and public awareness-raising activities of the Human Rights Defender inaccessible to the public, and hiding issues related to the rights of people and the proposed solutions, starting from combat against hate and insult, women's and children's rights, the rights of persons in psychiatric and penitentiary institutions, as well as the security of the border residents.

The “Lurer” program of the Public Television is “closed” specifically to statements related to protection of the rights of the border residents, the unlawful actions of Azerbaijani servicemen, and the proposals of the Human Rights Defender to remove them from the vicinity of the villages and the roads between the communities of Armenia.

This situation not only does not promote a correct public discourse and citizens' oversight of the State, but People in Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora are not informed about the ways to remove Azerbaijani

servicemen from the vicinity of villages and roads of Armenia from a human rights perspective. The development of a discussion on how security and human rights are interconnected is not being developed.

Moreover, there are many issues which are under the exclusive awareness of the Human Rights Defender, as a part of the legal mandate by the Constitution and laws. That is, information on certain issues is accessible only by the Office of the Human Rights Defender.

Ignoring the coverage for a long period of time does not allow the Human Rights Defender to work effectively in solving systemic issues. For example, the total blockade of broadcasting awareness raising videos on the fight against hate speech or domestic violence hinders activities of the Human Rights Defender. In other words, it is obvious that the constitutional mission of the Human Rights Defender is being hindered. It is of particular importance since the Public Television is the only one, with maximum coverage, including regions.

This policy violates the RA Law on Audiovisual Media, at the same time violating the European Convention on Human Rights, international requirements set by PACE, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the OSCE, as well as a number of other international requirements.

The fact that the coverage and the high public access to the Office of the Human Rights Defender is an important indicator of the level of democracy in the country, and is at the basis of the international accreditation of the institution. That is, the issue is related to an institutional attitude.

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned, detailed inquiries have been to the competent bodies.

In the letter addressed to the Council of the Public Broadcaster, it is stressed that if the raised concerns are not substantially addressed, the current and ongoing concerning situation will be perceived as a result of the policy of the Public Broadcaster and H1, taking into consideration the results of the monitoring conducted by the Office of the Defender. The current existing factors already create such a reasonable assumption.

It appears as if a “lesson” is being taught to the only national constitutional body for the protection of human rights. It means that if the political or the Government attitude towards the institution alters, the attitude of the Public Television established by the Government will also alter, stopping the coverage of the activities of the Defender, even at the expense of violating the legislation.

At the same time, the objective coverage of human rights issues, the public discourse, including the promotion of critical information, is the positive obligation of the state, which in this case is the responsibility of the Public Television and the Council of the Public Broadcaster.