

ANNOUNCEMENT

About condemning the actions of those who spread stigma and discrimination towards the organizations and human rights defenders who protect the rights of LGBTIQ people in Armenia

Though Armenia has ratified various international documents which call to protect the rights of all people, the discriminative attitude towards the LGBTIQ people and human rights defenders in Armenia continues to grow. This is highlighted in the articles published by the Armenian Mass Media.

On May 16th, 2014 after the “Eurovision-2014” song contest, the Armenian Jury members - Inga and Anush Arshakyans - called the winner of the competition “mentally sick” and mentioned that they hated such people. After their announcement the civic activists, human rights defenders expressed their concern.

On May 17, 2014 Iravunk.com Media published an article spreading hate and antagonizing individuals fighting for their basic domestic and international freedom of speech rights. The article written by Hovhannes Galajyan called out certain individuals involved in the movement to liberate Armenia, calling them “enemies of the Nation and State”. The article included a black list of “enemies.” The list, among others, included “New Generation” Humanitarian NGO employees Arman Sahakyan, Grigor Gevorgyan and HovhannesMkrtchyan. The article called for all “blacklisted citizens” to be fired. On May 29, 2014, “New Generation” Humanitarian NGO requested the head of the board of “Iravunk Media” LTD, Hayk Babukhanyan, to recant the article and publicly apologize for spreading lies, hate, and bigotry. The president of “New Generation” Humanitarian NGO, Sergey Gabrieliyan, mentioned that the organization will support its co-workers during all litigation processes in Court.

On June 6, 2014, in the 62nd issue the “Iravunk media” LTD published a newspaper article called “When the grant sucker defenders of homo-addicted people receive state support” insulting the name of the “New Generation” Humanitarian NGO calling them “Grant sucker”, “human trash protector”, “the Freedom Day desecrator with pacifist–tolerant action”. “The Iravunk media” LTD, which belongs to Mr. H. Babukhanyan, the deputy of National Assembly of RA threatens the NGO's works, violates they're rights and puts all the human rights international documents signed by Armenia under question. This media source promotes discrimination in the society towards the LGBT community and the human rights defender organizations.

With this letter we call to all human rights defender organizations and our colleagues to join us and sign this document, which will condemn the media and the "Iravunk Media" LTD for its anti-democratic actions and spreading of disinformation by promoting hate and intolerance.

It is our belief that such articles violate fundamental human rights and freedom, spread a big wave hate speech towards NGOs, their representatives and try to damage their reputation.

We, the undersigned human rights defenders and non-governmental organizations dealing with the problems of civil society:

- Strongly condemn the actions of “Iravunk media” that are aimed to belittle NGO and other civil right movements.
- Request the Government of Armenia to take appropriate measures to prevent hate spread by "Iravunk Media" LTD.