



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
TO THE OSCE

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**Statement
in response to the report of
Mr. Jan Braathu OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media
as delivered by Ambassador Andranik Hovhannisyan
at the 1517th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

10 April 2025

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Armenia warmly welcomes Mr. Jan Braathu and thanks for his comprehensive report. As this is your first appearance before the Permanent Council in current capacity, we would like to extend to you, Mr. Braathu, our best wishes for a productive and impactful tenure. Please be assured of our support and cooperation.

We firmly believe that only through genuine and collective efforts can we, as an organization, address the complex and evolving challenges facing media freedom today.

The deterioration of the security environment across the OSCE area, wars and conflicts have significantly impacted the implementation of commitments in this field. Journalists have been deliberately targeted in the conflict zones. Freedom of speech and opinion has been restricted or even banned often under the guise of security concerns. In reality, such restrictions frequently serve to obscure gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, such as war crimes, blockade, starvation, forced displacement, and ethnic cleansing.

Investigative journalists and those promoting peace and reconciliation are often marginalized, persecuted, or silenced. There is a notable correlation between the number of imprisoned journalists and the number of atrocity crimes committed by the same states during conflict. Crackdowns on media freedom not only violate fundamental rights but also further destabilize security situations.

Moreover, conflicts do not arise in a vacuum. They are often preceded by state-sponsored incitement of hatred, identity-based intolerance, and overt calls for violence, frequently voiced by public and official figures. We would like to recall in this regard that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights clearly prohibits both propaganda for war and incitement to hatred.

We believe that the Representative on Freedom of the Media is uniquely mandated to assume early warning functions to monitor, identify and report on such cases of human rights violations and destabilizing patterns of shrinking media space, thus contributing to conflict prevention.

Mr. Representative,

We appreciate your focus on the safety of journalists. Alarming cases of intimidation, harassment, and blackmail are in clear violation of international human rights obligations. Journalists, particularly those engaged in investigative reporting or exposing corruption cases, face increased risks of reprisal. We wish to highlight, in this regard, the troubling instances of journalists being abducted or killed abroad as a means of silencing dissent.

We also share your concern regarding the specific vulnerabilities of women journalists, who may be targeted through gender-based discrimination or subjected to online and offline harassment, including blackmail with private content.

We further echo your concerns about the spread of hateful narratives in the online media and the challenges presented by the digital age. While digital technologies and artificial intelligence offer significant opportunities, their misuse can pose serious threats to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Online platforms, if misused, can amplify hate speech and contribute to national, ethnic, racial, or religious polarization.

We recognize the need to strike a careful balance between safeguarding freedom of expression and combating misinformation. This balance must be anchored in democratic governance, robust human rights institutions, and vibrant civil society. Measures to combat disinformation must not be used as a pretext for suppressing independent media or silencing critical voices. Blocking or banning media outlets is not a solution to the phenomenon of disinformation and propaganda, as it can lead to arbitrary and politically motivated actions.

Mr. Chairperson,

Armenia has faced increasing hybrid threats in recent years, including foreign interference through information manipulation. As part of our response, we have prioritized building resilience against such tactics. Media literacy has been integrated into state education standards and the teacher certification process. Additionally, Armenia organizes Media Literacy Weeks in schools to equip younger generations with critical thinking and analytical skills.

Ensuring the independence of the media remains a top priority for the Government of Armenia. According to the World Press Freedom Index, Armenia has continuously improved its standing, now ranking 43rd out of 180 countries. Armenia is also consistently recognized by Freedom House as a country with internet freedom.

In conclusion, Armenia remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing media freedom and views the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media as a key and trusted partner in this endeavour. We look forward to continued close cooperation.

Thank you.