

Corruption In Armenia Is Widespread

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Transparency International anti-corruption center has issued a statement on the international day of corruption which holds that both local and international experts say corruption is widespread in Armenia, and every sphere and institution is affected by corruption. Corruption continues to undermine our state, economy and morality, and failure to tackle political and administrative corruption means to endanger the present and future of Armenia.

In 2008 the anti-corruption strategy worked out, and several anti-corruption legislative acts were passed, and anti-corruption initiatives were undertaken, such as revelation of serious breaches and misuse in different spheres by the Audit Chamber of Armenia, prosecution and indictment of government officials, the corruption database on the website of the prosecutor general, the introduction of the new system of justice, amendments to the law on declaration of property of physical persons, tax legislation, the police reform, raise in salary of judges.

Nevertheless, Transparency International states that the revelations of the Audit Chamber did not get a serious response, the indicted officials are not high-ranking officials, no revelations regarding declaration of property and income were reported, the clash of interests and coalescence of political and economic interests remain unaddressed, the oligarchs and major businesses are not the target of tax reforms, justice and law are not applied equality to everyone. Moreover, during the presidential and local elections political corruption was reported (misuse of administrative, information, financial and other resources, election bribe), violence increased. Control of the media has strengthened, and pluralism is banned, reporters and political activists are assaulted, freedom of speech, assemblies and demonstrations are constrained. The wrongdoers of March 1 events are unpunished, there are a number of political prisoners, and there is no policy dialogue.

Effective battle on corruption involves three directions: prevention, revelation and public support which includes all the institutions and values of the society. Transparency International warns that the level of corruption will not go down unless freedoms of press, expression, assemblies and rallies are ensured, everyone is protected independent from their activities and political views, there are fair and independent trials, elimination of monopolization of economy, competition on the market, elimination of clash of interests, accountability of government officials, free and independent elections, participation of citizens in decision making. Corruption is impossible to overcome by separate reforms in separate spheres and arrest of separate low-ranking officials, Transparency International states.