
Serge Sargsyan : I Advise Everybody To Act Within The Law

S. HOVHANNISYAN

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After the meeting with the leadership of the police and a number of police officers, President SERGE SARGSYAN also answered some questions of the journalists

`Mr. President, as far as we know, a demonstration is going to be held on the 20th of June. What will you say in that regard?'

`Frankly speaking, I am unaware of the demonstration, but I know that there's going to be a meeting and I see nothing extraordinary there. There have always been meetings in our country, and this will continue in future as well. I have announced many times that I am going to protect our citizens' right to express their protest. And as you see, people now express their protest on television and in the printed press; and a demonstration is one of the forms of expressing a protest.

We all must realize that our rights cannot be more preferable than the rights of others. The rights of each of us end where the other people's rights begin. We must realize this.

I hope you are aware that the Mayor's Office yesterday offered the claimants to hold their meeting in another place at the appointed hour. They are welcome to go anywhere and hold their meeting.

What I don't understand is why they have been intimidating all of us for already a month and flooding the press with veiled hints. Whoever wants to hold a meeting is welcome to apply for it, and the Mayor's Office and the law enforcement agencies will by all means meet their request half-way and give them the opportunity to hold the meeting. No need to be anxious; the event will be held in peaceful and normal conditions; everything will be all right.'

`The opposition often mentions that it is not properly represented in the Parliament, and that's the reason many of them make demands for parliamentary elections. It would be interesting to know your opinion in that regard.'

`I believe what they want is to hold extraordinary parliamentary elections, but common sense says there's absolutely no need for that. Parliamentary elections were held in our country just one year ago, and all those who wanted to participate in them could have done that. By the way, such participation began with the radical and irreconcilable opposition, but then they gave up the idea for some reason. Are we to blame that they didn't run for election?

You know, there are now many people in our country who like to speak about European standards, about the practice that exists in Europe. I offer you to take a retrospective glance and see and estimate the developments that took place in the largest European states in the course of the recent year. Those countries held presidential and parliamentary elections, but a few months later, these were followed by elections to the local self-government bodies, and the winners of the former elections turned out losers in the latter. It doesn't mean that there were extraordinary parliamentary elections in those countries.

I am under the impression that instead of striving to live by European standards very many people simply demonstrate a selective approach. When something is advantageous to them, they say 'the Europeans live like this', when it isn't, they say, 'this isn't the right way'. So, time will come, and our parliament will make a full use of its mandate, and thereafter elections will be held again.'

'Mr. President, what will you advise the opposition?'

'I don't think they are waiting for my advice, but I advise all, both the authorities and the opposition, to act within the law. There are dissatisfied people in all the countries after any elections. There may be no dissatisfied people only in those countries where 100 percent of the population participates in the elections, and one of the parties or candidates receives 100 percent of votes. We all realize that it never happens. And if anything of the kind were to happen, that would be possible only in fairytales. Those who win should realize that there are losers; those who are dissatisfied should realize that there are dissatisfied people as well.'

Here, the dialogue should not be devoted to the issue when to hold elections again; it should be devoted to the 'rules of the game'. That's to say, we all should act in the legal domain.

Now you know that elections to the local self-government bodies are going to be held in autumn. So, all those forces which consider that they enjoy much more public trust are welcome to participate in those elections, receive the people's vote of confidence and head the local self-government bodies. You know that it is planned to hold elections for the Mayor of the town of Yerevan. They are welcome to have their participation; it is actually one thirds of the Republic. Let them participate in the elections, hold victory and show us how well they can work.'
