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## 429 complaints sent to RA Ombudsman's Office given positive solutions

NOYAN TAPAN - 12/3/2009

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5 800 citizens applied to RA Ombudsman's Office in 2008. 429 applications were given positive solutions, RA Ombudsman Armen Haroutiunian reported on March 10 when presenting his 2008 report on the situation the in human rights sphere.

Among human rights violations the Ombudsman mentioned violations of the right of freedom of gatherings: according to him, in more than 90 cases the opposition was not permitted to hold a mass action. While experience showed that opposition's events proceeded peacefully and calmly, and it is not clear, on the basis of what information the authorities did not permit their holding.

Among problems of freedom of expression and journalists' security the Ombudsman mentioned, in particular, the fact of a policeman's hitting Gohar Vezirian, a correspondent of the Chorrord Ishkhanutyun newspaper and throwing her on the ground, which has received no response by the authorities so far. He also mentioned the fact of dismissing from her work at Gladzor University Karine Haroutiunian, a correspondent of the Zhamanak Yerevan opposition newspaper. "She proved not to meet the lecturer's title after some stage," Armen Haroutiunian noted.

The Ombudsman mentioned two cases of non-differentiated approach of the law, cases of the GALA TV company and the Bjni mineral waters factory. He emphasized that Ombudsman's Office did not examine the issue of whether the above mentioned companies have problems with the law or not.

The Ombudsman classed as alarming the atmosphere of "very big" fear at penitentiary institutions, because of which people do not confess the fact of tortures. He also mentioned one of the cases of violating the principle of presumption of innocence.

According to A. Haroutiunian, the situation in the sphere of protection of ownership right is very serious: Ombudsman's Office has received more than 100 complaints regarding the problem, which, in particular, concern the fact of valuing real estate lower than the cadastral value. The Ombudsman emphasized that no citizen won any trial on protection of the above mentioned right over 7 years in Armenia, whereas RA citizens applying to the European Court of Human Rights mostly win the trials.

A. Haroutiunian said that Ombudsman's Office has received many complaints regarding the issue of dismissal from work: according to him, the dismissals are grounded from point of view of the letter of the law, but their number is rather big.

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