
Boxing With Corruption

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In essence there has been no serious attempts to bring corruption under control, in our reality. Time after time you can notice certain liveliness in this term, but very soon everything becomes quiet.

Partially it is because they do these steps in the wrong sequence, at first they announce about fighting corruption then they start to think of how to do it. In such circumstances the issue of diagnosis remains unanswered.

Today when fighting corruption is really in process, it is very important to understand which is the principal goal of this struggle.

The first version is the formation of the personal agenda and a personal political figure by the new ruling power. In that case PR is extremely important, the actions that most probably won't change the situation, but instead they will help consolidate the power and will become noticeable for the society.

The second version is that the ruling power really wants to fight corruption. What should they do?

There are lots of recipes about how to fight corruption, but those scenarios that exist in the world don't suit Armenia, because there are lots of peculiarities. We must simply choose the best one.

For example let's take the formation of electronic government from Estonia, the correlation of social security with spotless service - from the USA, the free opportunity of the civilians to use information services - from Scandinavian countries, the control on the low ranking officials - from Singapore, South Korea, etc. We must be realistic. The key element of fighting corruption is political rivalry. We should have healthy mechanisms replacing corrupted high-ranking officials. It is difficult to expect that one day this political rivalry will appear in our reality.

Yes we must impartially exercise rights; something that has never existed in our reality and it is hard to expect that one day it will appear according to the law or the decree of the President. At present we must employ comparably simple tools: for example reforming the selection of judges, punishing for corruption in law enforcement structures, etc.

Whereas we must understand that in our country it will be very difficult to live without the tradition of taking and giving bribes. So we don't exclude the demonstrative arrests of famous figures, but hardly will they reduce the number of corruption cases.

By the way we must also take into account the fact that the society is absolutely not enthusiastic about this demonstrative struggle against corruption. They are too experienced to understand the difference between the real struggle against corruption and the shows on TV how they catch certain officials red handed.

If in our reality fighting corruption moves i n its worst version: if they don't put emphases on juridical reforms, protection of small and average business and political rivalry, everything will be worse, and corruption risks will only increase.

In our view it is high time to restrict the rights of all the officials by law. Particularly it would be helpful to clearly characterize all the restrictions and requirements towards the high-ranking officials. This will be a litmus test for the recent anti-corruption initiatives.

If the ruling power fails to control the activity of the high ranking officials and their income, fighting corruption will again be postponed for a certain period of time.
