

Check against delivery

I have the honor to present the clarifications and replies to questions that concern the activities of the Prosecutor's office of Armenia.

1. Let me start with the question concerning the investigations of deaths in armed forces raised also by colleagues from the United Kingdom. In 2013 we had 30 deaths in armed forces. From this 30 deaths 6 were as a result of cease-fire violations on the line of contact. In 2014 we had 44 deaths in armed forces from which 26 were cease-fire violations.

As the figures show the overall increase of death cases is due to the dramatic increase of cease-fire violations incidents on the line of contact. On the other hand, we have a positive shift in death cases not related to border incidents for example in 2013 there were 8 suicides in 2014 3 suicides.

Investigations of deaths in armed forces are traditionally under close scrutiny in Armenian society. The Prosecutor General's office periodically informs the public about any new development in each case of death in army. In some particularly complex cases the Prosecutor General invites the relatives, mass media, investigators and prosecutors and organizes an open discussions concerning problematic aspects of pending cases.

2. Concerning long-running high-profile cases let me answer to the question also raised by colleagues from Germany in connection to violent demonstrations after the presidential elections of 2008. In this regard we agree that the investigation may seem slow, however taking into consideration the volume and scale of the criminal case and the situation surrounding the events of March 1 it should not be surprising that it takes so long time to investigate such cases, only the documentary evidence in the criminal case is about 300 volumes.

The criminal case is ongoing and many investigatory and forensic activities are conducted. In November 2014 the Prosecutor General ordered to separate every case of death into different criminal cases. This was done to make it possible for the investigative body to concentrate on each of death cases separately. This case has a special importance for Armenia and law enforcement agencies do everything possible to ensure complete and objective investigation.

3. There were concerns expressed in connection of the statement from the Prosecutor's Office in May 2014, which was understood by journalists as a threat to them concerning their professional duty to report on criminal cases. I have the honor to inform that the Prosecutor General's Statement was not specifically addressed to journalist and could not have possibly been. The statement's purpose was to explain to the public that disclosure of information constituting investigation secret is a crime under the Criminal Code of Armenia. The statement was made to ensure the protection of the rights of parties, especially crime victims. Only the court can compel journalists to reveal their source of information and only in cases involving serious and particularly serious crimes, in other cases journalist are free to refuse to disclose their source.

4. There was an issue of protection of all persons at risk of extradition who have expressed a clear intention of claiming political asylum. In each case of extradition it is mandatory to clarify whether or not the person, whose extradition is sought, is an asylum seeker, or whether he or she has already been granted with a refugee status. Without this procedure the decision on extradition cannot be made. Moreover, the procedure for applying for refugee status is prescribed by law, very simple and in full compliance with international standards.

5. Some colleagues raised a concern about equality of arms in Armenian courts, depending on political affiliation or economic status of the parties. The issue of acquittal rate was also raised.

Criminal procedural legislation of Armenia contains all necessary regulations to ensure equality of arms and fair trial no matter who are the parties before the court and what economic status they have. There are a lot of cases when high-ranking officials are convicted by the courts, for example the former head of State Social Security Service of Armenia, was sentenced to 12 years in prison recently for embezzlement and official forgery.

As to the acquittal rate in Armenia it is in process of stabile increase. In 2009 the acquittal rate was 0.7% and in 2014 it was 3.6%, so the increase is evident. These numbers show that acquittal rate in Armenia is within margins accepted as normal in great majority of states. Thank you!