

**THE 2011 HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING**  
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**(Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

**Working session 1.**

**The Cooperation of Ombudsman with mass-media in the field of human rights**

**Mr. Moderator**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It should be noted mass-media is the valid tribune of the democratic atmosphere, publicity, free and different thoughts in the society. Development of mass-media, its formation as the forth authority in a country that is interested in civil society building is the issue of attention.

I would like to mention that during her term in office the Azerbaijani Ombudsman has paid close attention to relations with mass-media and is developing these relations constantly.

In her annual reports the Commissioner made a number of proposals for elimination of the problems of national press. The proposal that media should play a role of bridge between the authority and the society, as well as proposals on improvement of the legislation on mass-media, making annexes and amendments for elimination of gaps in the existing legislation, elimination of the cases of polarization of national press and politicization of journalists, assuming respectful attitude towards the media rights, providing assistance to press agencies in regions and local TV and Radio Channels, etc are some of them. Regular work is being carried out in this regard.

The Commissioner for Human Rights together with the Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights organizes awareness-raising events for different groups of population as well as for the representatives of media in the capital and different regions of the country. At those events the main attention is paid to the basis of the activities of the UN treaty-bodies, and the individual complaints procedures. In trainings the participants are informed about the essence and main principles of human rights, the international system of human rights protection, human rights protection in the framework of the UN and the Council of Europe, case laws of the European Court of Human Rights regarding the freedom of expression, legal reforms carried out in the country, international legal and national

legislative acts in the field of media rights, the activity of the Commissioner in protection of the freedom of speech and expression.

The trainings and seminars aimed at promotion of provisions of international legal acts on human rights, particularly the European Convention on Human Rights, and national legislation facilitated the raising of awareness of media representatives on human rights.

The round tables entitled “Journalism and Law”, “Behavioral Ethics of Journalists” were organized at the Ombudsman Office for supporting improvement of the professionalism and raising the legal knowledge of the journalists writing on human rights, conduction of awareness raising events, and for strengthening the cooperation with the representatives of mass-media. Conduction of those events was highly appreciated by the country journalists.

Every year traditional competitions among journalist for the best articles on “Rights-for Everybody” and among children for the best paintings on “Me and My Rights” are organized at the Ombudsman Office with the support of the UN Units in the country on the occasion of December 10-World Human Rights Day.

The Commissioner highly appreciated the draft Law on “Defamation” and put forward her feedbacks, opinions and proposals in support of its adoption.

The Commissioner attaches importance to protection of media rights, ill-treatment of and acts of violence against the journalist while fulfilling their job duties are the focus of the Commissioner’s attention. The Commissioner addresses to the Prosecutor General and the Minister of Interior Affairs in relation to bringing the persons who committed such offences to the responsibility and to conduction of unbiased investigation.

The Commissioner proposed to use alternative methods of punishment of the representatives of mass-media considering the offence they committed, in compliance with relevant legislation and world practice. Moreover, the Commissioner addressed to the country President in relation to pardoning of imprisoned journalists, most of those journalists were liberated.

The Ombudsman and her staff members regularly visited both of them, got acquainted with detention and imprisonment conditions and their health status during their detention and imprisonment.

Also, during speeches and appeals the Commissioner calls officials possessing information on treating the journalists in a proper manner and observe the provisions of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Access to Information”.

This should be noted that as a result of the amendments to the Constitutional Law on the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on 24 June 2011, the Commissioner has been mandated to implement the control over the execution of the duties by the state institutions holding information, self-government institutions, and public authorities implied in the Law of the Azerbaijan Republic on “Access to Information”.

With this regard, the Commissioner conducted discussions with the mass media, representative of the state institutions holding information, outstanding experts on media rights, and heads of press services.

In these meetings, active discussions on the perspectives of the implementation of mandates given to the Commissioner, recommendations and proposals and ways for cooperation were discussed.

Each time, the press-releases were prepared on the conducted visit, published in different newspapers and put on the website of the Ombudsman in two-Azerbaijani and English languages.

The daily activity of the Commissioner is published covered in the pro-government and oppositional newspapers. In general, more than 8000 information and articles were published about the Commissioner's activity in mass-media. More than 2,500 press-releases were printed about the activity of the Commissioner and were translated into English and sent to the Council of Europe.

The Commissioner's statements are read in press conferences and briefings. The texts of those Statements addressed to the influential international organizations are printed in mass media.

**Thanks for your attention!**