

Statement

On the occasion of International Anticorruption Day

Corruption remains a significant challenge worldwide, obstructing political, economic, and social development, while eroding public trust in state institutions.

December 9 is recognized as International Anticorruption Day—a moment to emphasize the destructive impact of corruption and the pressing need to combat it. It is also an opportunity to reflect on the achievements and shortcomings of the past year, analyze challenges, and outline future steps in this ongoing fight.

Current global anti-democratic trends create fertile ground for the spread and growth of corruption. This makes the anticorruption efforts and resilience of countries committed to democracy even more crucial.

In Armenia, numerous initiatives are being undertaken by the government and specialized anticorruption bodies as part of the 2023-2026 Anticorruption Strategy. Law enforcement agencies are handling numerous criminal cases involving high-ranking officials, both from before and after the 2018 revolution. Instances of recovering assets with illicit origins are on the rise, both in frequency and scale.

All anticorruption institutions, including state and local government bodies, businesses, civil society actors, and the media, are actively engaged in this fight.

However, the results of studies related to anti-corruption efforts remain far from encouraging.

According to Transparency International's [Corruption Perceptions Index](#), Armenia scored 47 points in 2023, showing a one-point improvement compared to the previous year, which falls within the margin of statistical error. Compared to the significant progress achieved in 2018-2019 and the expectations that followed, this result reflects stagnation, likely due to insufficient outcomes from ongoing anticorruption reforms.

Findings from the International [Republican Institute's \(IRI\) public opinion survey](#) conducted in September 2024 reveal that only 3% of respondents identified corruption as one of the top two pressing issues, ranking it 13th on the list of concerns. This, to some extent, can be seen as a positive development. However, only 2% considered anti-corruption efforts the government's greatest achievement in the past six months, while 3% cited the lack of progress in this area as a major failure. These findings indicate that corruption is not perceived as a primary concern by the public, yet government efforts to combat it are not viewed as particularly effective.

These perceptions may be influenced by the inefficiency of anticorruption institutions and the lack of tangible outcomes. Under heavy workloads, anticorruption bodies face resource and capacity constraints, hindering their ability to meet ambitious goals. Administrative and criminal proceedings, the investigation of corruption cases, judicial processes, the confiscation of assets of illicit origin, and compensation for state damages progress slowly. Moreover, there is limited visibility regarding the prosecution of corruption and illicit enrichment, especially in high-profile cases.

On the other hand, the public is concerned about the potential selective approach of competent state bodies in the fight against corruption. Specifically, officials representing the ruling political force are not being prosecuted based on the findings of journalistic investigations. When such

actions do take place, they are inadequately covered, and steps to hold these officials accountable for problematic actions and behavior remain largely invisible.

In 2024 journalistic investigations uncovered numerous problematic cases involving officials, including decision-making in situations of conflict of interest, unlawful fundraising for party finances, potential collusion in procurement processes, unjustified state budget expenditures, and other concerning incidents. A significant portion of these cases involve representatives of the ruling party, yet they have not received appropriate, timely, or visible attention from relevant bodies, including law enforcement agencies. To date, no charges have been brought against individuals allegedly involved in offering monetary incentives for participation in the “Civil Contract” party’s campaign during the Yerevan elections. The situation surrounding local self-government bodies, particularly in Gyumri and Vanadzor, is highly concerning, with unclear and contradictory interventions. Questions also arise regarding the resignations of the President of the Supreme Judicial Council and members of the National Assembly, as well as the legitimacy of external influences on their independent decision-making. In this context, the proposed amendments to RA Law on Political Parties regarding party financing are particularly troubling. These changes are poised to strengthen the foundations of a one-party and autocratic system, once again placing politics under the influence of private and oligarchic interests, effectively returning Armenia to the pre-2018 state of affairs.

The emergence of new corruption cases alongside the government’s ambitious anticorruption strategy, the consolidation of a one-party system, and the absence of effective checks and balances pose significant challenges. These factors threaten democracy, undermine the rule of law, and deepen public distrust in institutions.

Considering the ruling “Civil Contract” party’s commitment to strengthening democracy and reducing corruption, it is expected to demonstrate the necessary political will and determination in addressing these pressing issues in a timely and appropriate manner.