



## MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY OF ARMENIA

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### EXPERT OPINION OF MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY

*Regarding the complaint submitted by attorney Elen Sargsyan on tiv1.am publications containing offensive remarks addressed to Berd community official Vagharshak Grigoryan*

#### A. FACTS

1. On December 26, 2025, attorney Elen Sargsyan submitted a complaint to Media Ethics Observatory, stating that journalist Edgar Babayan had made multiple posts on Facebook and on “tiv1.am” news website owned by “Tiv 1 Media” Ltd. According to the attorney, these publications contained defamation and insults and tarnished the honor and dignity of her client Vagharshak Grigoryan, the head of Berd Community’s Department of Urban Development, Land Management, Agriculture and Property Administration. Specifically, the complaint indicated that in an [open letter](#) addressed to the Prime Minister of Armenia and in a separate Russian-language [publication](#), certain crimes had been attributed to V. Grigoryan. However, it stressed that no criminal proceedings had been initiated regarding the alleged actions, and, as a result, there was no court verdict indicating a crime.

The complainant expected MEO to assess the compliance of a number of Facebook posts by Edgar Babayan, as well as the articles published on “tiv1.am” website on 03.07.2025 (“*On Man-Made Obstacles to the Investment Environment in the Border Town of Berd*”) and on 29.11.2025 (“*Как долго центральная власть будет закрывать глаза на то, что Берд живёт в режиме параллельного государства?*”; English translation: “*How long will the central authorities turn a blind eye to the fact that Berd lives as a parallel state?*”) with the principles of journalistic ethics.

2. Upon reviewing the complaint, MEO tried to reach out to “tiv1.am” website to obtain clarifications; however, no response was received from the site.

#### B. LEGISLATIVE AND ETHICAL NORMS

##### I. [Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists](#)

... editors and journalists are obligated:

- 1.1. prior to publishing, to check the accuracy of information from any source, not to conceal or distort facts, and not to publish obviously false information;
- 1.4. to clearly distinguish facts and information from opinion, comment and

analysis;

1.5. to rely on accurate facts and trustworthy information when making analysis and comments;

6.2. to be ready to meet with persons or representatives of organizations who feel offended or defamed by a certain publication, and provide an opportunity of response for all those against who criticism and accusations have been made in the publications.

## **II. MEO Regulations**

5.3. Complaints regarding the publications by non-member media of the Self-Regulation Initiative can be reviewed with the media's consent.

Nevertheless, if such consent is not granted, MEO reserves the right, after reviewing complaints regarding publications by non-member media, to adopt and issue an expert opinion or statement.

## **C. EXPERT OPINION**

Having examined the complaint submitted by Elen Sargsyan, the legal representative of Vagharshak Grigoryan, the head of Berd Community's Department of Urban Development, Land Management, Agriculture and Property Administration, MEO notes the following:

- The two pieces published on "tiv1.am" website contain a number of allegations against Vagharshak Grigoryan, which are presented as factual information, yet they are not accompanied by concrete evidence or relevant sources. In particular, the Armenian-language piece states that Grigoryan "is involved in several criminal cases," while also claiming that "this is political revenge," and that investments are being stifled "due to official irregularities." The Russian-language article uses formulations that portray Grigoryan as "an accomplice and witness to criminal cases" ("соучастник и свидетель уголовных дел"), a person "involved in criminal cases" ("фигурант уголовных дел"), highlighting also the "long-standing record of criminal incidents" ("многолетний шлейф уголовных эпизодов").

The above-mentioned formulations may be perceived as a manifestation of crime or unlawful conduct, whereas the pieces lack official sources, documents or references that would substantiate these allegations. Furthermore, the publications do not present the position of Grigoryan himself or Berd community authorities. The absence of clear distinction between facts and value judgments, coupled with the failure to provide the opposing party with an opportunity to respond, runs contrary to paragraphs 1.1, 1.4, 1.5 and 6.2 of the Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists.

- MEO refrains from evaluating the Facebook posts mentioned in the complaint, given that they were made on Edgar Babayan's personal profile, and, furthermore, are no longer available (having been either removed or hidden).

MEO urges media, and specifically "tiv1.am" website, to disseminate this Opinion through the channels at their disposal.

**Adopted on February 25, 2026  
by the following MEO composition:**

**Davit ALAVERDYAN**, Chief Editor of “Mediamax” news agency

**Narineh AVETISYAN**, Executive Director of Vanadzor “Lori” TV Company

**Suren DEHERYAN**, Founding Editor of “Ampop.am”

**Arsen KHARATYAN**, Founder of “Aliq Media” news and analytical website

**Ashot MELIKYAN**, Chairman of Committee to Protect Freedom of  
Expression

**Margarita MINASYAN**, Director of “Tsayg” TV Company

**Gnel NALBANDYAN**, Chief Editor of “Newmag” Publishing House

**Boris NAVASARDIAN**, Honorary President of Yerevan Press Club

**Ara SHIRINYAN**, Member of the Council of Public Broadcaster of Armenia

**Arevik SAHAKYAN**, Executive Director of “Factor TV”

**Nouneh SARKISSIAN**, Managing Director of Media Initiatives Center

**Vigen SARGSYAN**, Chairman of the Commission on Professional Ethics of  
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**Anzhela STEPANYAN**, Editor of Armavir “Alt” TV Company

*[Media Ethics Observatory](#) has been established by the media that have joined the Self-Regulation Initiative, which counts 100 members as of today. MEO is guided by the Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists, adopted on March 10, 2007 and revised at the May 18, 2024 general meeting of the Self-Regulation Initiative.*