



**MEO Composition:**

Gegham BAGHDASARIAN  
Ara GHAZARIAN  
Haykuhi HARUTYUNIAN  
Mesrop HARUTYUNIAN  
Aghnesa KHAMOYAN  
Gegham MANUKIAN  
Ashot MELIKIAN  
Mesrop MOVSESIAN  
Gnel NALBANDIAN  
Boris NAVASARDIAN  
Olga SAFARIAN  
Nouneh SARKISSIAN  
Ara SHIRINIAN  
Gegham VARDANIAN

**EXTRACT FROM THE EXPERT JUDGMENT  
OF MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY  
ON COMPLAINT BY MUSHEGH HOVSEPYAN  
AGAINST SHAMSHYAN.COM**

Citizen Mushegh Hovsepyan filed a complaint to Media Ethics Observatory against the piece “Emergency Case in Yerevan: Rescuers’ Proper Actions Prevented Children’s Suicide in the Children’s Care and Protection Boarding School. PHOTO REPORTAGE” published on Shamshyan.com website on February 28, 2016.

MEO examined the complaint at the March 3, 2016 session and stated:

1. In the disputed piece, published on February 28, names, surnames and photos of the children were reported. On February 29, upon the complaints of a number of organizations the names in the piece were replaced with initials, but the accompanying photos of the children were kept until March 2. They got only removed on March 2.

2. The same information was disseminated by other media (some without the names of the children and identifying photos) referring to Shamshyan.com.

**Examining the above-mentioned facts, MEO came to the following conclusion:**

1. The February 28 piece of Shamshyan.com violates the general principles of publishing materials on children and runs contrary to the Paragraph 4.3 of the Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists: “To be especially tactful when the sources of information or the heroes [subjects] of publications are children or minors. Be careful when disclosing the identity of juvenile detainees, defendants, convicts and victims of sexual crimes.”

2. The piece also contradicts the Paragraph 4.6 of the Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists: “To be tactful when collecting information, broadcasting video or audio materials, publishing interviews or photos of people with severe health issues, persons who committed/attempted suicide or suffered tragedy and sorrow.”

3. In the disputed piece the demands of the Principles and Guidelines for Ethical Reporting on Children, developed by UNICEF media group, as well as Paragraph 4.5 of the Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists are not respected: "Obtain permission from the child and his/her guardian for all interviews, videotaping and for documentary photographs. When possible and appropriate, this permission should be in writing. Permission must be obtained in circumstances that ensure that the child and guardian are not coerced in any way and that they understand that they are part of a story that might be disseminated locally and globally. During the interview do not harm to any child, do not reactivate a child's pain and grief from traumatic events. Do not make him/her saying or doing things merely aimed at getting a strong image or impressive reportage."

Taking into consideration the fact that the situation in children's boarding school and the emergency case stir up public interest, MEO calls on Shamshyan.com and other media, which republished the above-mentioned article:

1. To be guided by the general ethical norms when preparing such materials in the future, thus keeping the balance between the right of the public to be informed and protection of children's rights;
2. To publish the MEO judgment and both in this and other similar cases, when removing content from the website, to give clear explanations to the audience why such material has been published and why it has later been removed.

***Adopted at the MEO session of March 3, 2016,  
In the following composition:***

**Gegham BAGHDASARIAN**, Chief Editor of "Analyticon" magazine

**Ara GHAZARIAN**, Lawyer

**Mesrop HARUTYUNIAN**, Media Expert

**Gegham MANUKIAN**, Director of the News and Current Affairs Programs  
of "Yerkir Media" TV company

**Ashot MELIKIAN**, Chairman of the Committee to Protect Freedom of  
Expression

**Mesrop MOVSESIAN**, Director of "A1+" TV company

**Olga SAFARIAN**, Lawyer

**Gegham VARDANIAN**, Producer of Media.am

*[Media Ethics Observatory](#) was established by the media, joining the self-regulation initiative, which make 42 as of today. In its judgments MEO is guided by Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists, adopted at the self-regulation body's meeting on March 10, 2007, and revised on May 16, 2015.*