



Coalition for Media Advocacy on Possible Dismissal of GPB Employees

Georgian media outlets report that tens of employees of the Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB) have received proposals, according to which the terms of their employment contracts should be either changed or terminated. We suppose that this proposal is unjustified and may aim at dismissing tens of employees. Recent developments around GPB raise a number of questions and even the latest statement [released by GPB] does not provide answers to them.

Coalition for Media Advocacy deems it necessary that GPB management answers the following questions:

- **Who made the decision?** The proposal notes that management decision of the administration, A hourly employment has been assigned to certain positions. It should be noted that the decision on staff policy is a prerogative of the GPB Director General. Therefore, it should be indicated who has made this particular decision and under what powers.
- **How were selected employees who received proposals?** The fact is that only some people employed on the similar positions received proposals. Therefore, the management should clarify the criteria for selecting these individuals. It is unclear, if

hourly employment was assigned to particular positions, why were not all persons working on the same positions offered similar terms of employment?

- Why should the public television move to hourly employment now and why does it cover only particular persons working on some positions? The public is still unaware about the principles and motives of the GPB [] decision to move to hourly employment. GPB [] claims about low job attendance do not answer these questions. Apparently, neither GPB [] Board of Trustees has comprehensive information about this issue; moreover, its inaction arises additional questions amid ongoing developments.

- Why and how did the Public Broadcaster hire tens of new employees on these positions under old terms in 2017-2018 if it was planning to move to hourly employment? An answer to this question is very important especially as the Georgian Public Broadcaster still does not have any staffing schedule and pay rules approved by the Board of Trustees. Thus, the GPB Director General is not bound by regulations and can easily make decisions on such issues unilaterally.

The Coalition for Media Advocacy calls on:

- GPB [] Director General to refrain from making unjustified decisions and along with all relevant units of the public television develop a fair and unbiased mechanism that will help evaluate qualification of the staff, and only after that make decisions on mass dismissals, if the GPB has this need. The Georgian civil society has long been focusing on the necessity of staff optimization; however, this process should be pursued in a transparent, fair and well-justified manner;

- The Board of Trustees to pay attention to the processes ongoing in the public television; to demand from the Director General to present a vision on staff policy and approve GPB [] staffing schedule and pay rates as envisaged by the Georgia Law on Broadcasting;

- The Parliament of Georgia to pay attention to the situation at GPB and focus on the fact, why the Board of Trustees does not fulfill its obligations.

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