**STATEMENT**

**A Statement in Support of Marina Poghosyan**

The Human Rights House in Armenia, with the full support of all the institutions and individuals mentioned below, urges the law enforcement bodies in Armenia to stop the groundless criminal prosecutions against the Director of human rights protection NGO “Veles”, in regards to her ongoing lawful activities.

In particularly, “Veles” revealed unlawful and suspicious activities such as corruption and money laundering, involving former and current high-ranking officials from the prosecutor's office and the judiciary department. These officials, based on personal self-interests to not be exposed as being corrupt, are using law enforcement and judicial leverages in an illegal and unlawful manner in order to intimidate Ms. Marina Poghosyan not to continue her campaign in exposing corrupt government officials. In doing so, these criminals have violated, and continue to violate her human rights.

It has been three years, she has continued to be experience harassment and threats accompanied by different kinds of baseless prosecutions in an attempt to silence her. The unlawful and baseless prosecution towards Ms. Poghosyan only came after her attempt to reveal the corruption, shadow economy, fraud, usury, and money-laundering that *Veles* revealed.

The NGO “Veles” supports people that are the victims of violations of the judicial system, and represents their interests in order to take steps towards the protection of their rights. In order to eliminate all barriers and to support Ms. Marina Poghosyan's human rights activities, we announce that we will be closely following her trial, and apply all possible legal and human resources in order to protect her rights.

The Human Rights House in Armenia, and all the institutions and individuals mentioned below, gives great importance to this case, so that the unlawful and fabricated prosecution of human rights defender won’t become another tool to silence human rights defenders.

We call on all international human rights organizations and anti-corruption institutions to closely monitor the campaign against Ms. Marina Poghosyan's prosecution and take appropriate action.

1. Members of Human Rights House Yerevan
	* Journalists’ Club Asparez
	* Real World, Real People
	* The Rule of Law
	* Women’s Resource Center
	* Public Information and Need of Knowledge (PINK Armenia)
	* Helsinki Association for Human Rights
	* Helsinki Citizen’s Assembly Vanadzor
	* “Shahkhatun” Women’s Democracy Support
	* “Socioscope” Societal Research and Consultancy Center NGO
2. 50/50 Civic Initiative
3. Analytical Centre on Globalization and Regional Cooperation NGO
4. “Ecological Right” Environmental NGO
5. The Foundation Against the Violation of Law NGO
6. Coalition to Stop Violence against Women
7. Transparency International Anti-corruption Center NGO
8. Protection of Rights without Borders NGO
9. Women’s Rights Center NGO
10. Cooperation for Democracy NGO
11. For Equal Rights NGO
12. Society without Violence NGO
13. Yerevan Center for Human Rights Protection NGO
14. New Generation NGO
15. Sose’s Women NGO
16. Spitak Helsinki Group NGO
17. Anna Shahnazaryan
18. Nare Sahakyan
19. Nona Shanazaryan