

**Ազգային ժողովում քաղաքական կոնսենսուսի, բանավեճի և հաղորդակցության կարողությունների հզորացում**

**Strengthening National Assembly in Building Political Consensus, Debate and Communication**

**Համառոտագիր  
Policy Brief**

# How Can Joint Projects Stop the Bleeding of Armenian Politics?



International  
Center for  
Human  
Development

a Think Tank

## **“Shura, have you ever watched a bullfight?”**

Even an unsubstantiated optimist will fail to describe Armenian politics as ‘friendly’ or ‘harmonious’. Similarly, it is difficult to describe the current political discourse as ‘future-oriented’. Ultimately, the ‘new’ keep vigorously rejecting the ‘old’, and the ‘old’ keep scolding the ‘new’, whether the latter deserve the rebuke or not. In the result, the public, which has turned into a mere audience, continues to wonder: “Nothing changes in this world...”. This is the political reality you and I have today, and it resembles a kindergarten well-disguised behind resplendent words.

For the non-politicized segment of the public this reality might have been entertaining were it not actually so perilous. We do not have the luxury of being situated within the Central Europe, where political scenes do not necessarily entail serious risks. Eventually, the imperative of being ready for universal unassailable consolidation at any moment has not been canceled for Armenia. Moreover, with every other sunrise this imperative becomes more pressing, as we hear news from Movses, Areni, Yeghnikner and Mekhakavan.

## **Pan-Armenian Games: New opportunity**

Anyway, we will not give up and will take each and every opportunity to point out a possibility to be tapped into if the political actors, which keep bleeding from the verbal ‘bullfight’, decide to start on the difficult road of cooperation.

In August the Pan-Armenian Games will open in Stepanakert. This can turn into another appropriate opportunity for developing solidarity in the political arena and for undertaking joined actions towards a common goal. We need to make this important event internationally known, and therefore, we need to ensure participation of foreign high-ranking officials at the opening ceremony. If willing, the key political actors in Armenia can make this happen: they can cooperate for the common good of Armenia.

It is another matter what mechanisms can be used for this cooperation to happen and for these actors to support organization of the event. There is already a committee that deals with the organization of the Games. MPs and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of both the Republic of Armenia and Republic of Artsakh are already actively involved in the process. There is an agreement between the factions of the National Assemblies that during their exchange visits, MPs will discuss possibilities of participation of their foreign counterparts in the Games.

## **Large consolidation around a feasible goal**

Clearly, there is a certain process going on at the state level, and obviously, this will yield results. It is also clear that a wider political consolidation would ensure more significant results. The previous leaders have information, experience, personal contacts, and the current ones have the levers. Therefore, cooperation between the present and previous leaders can yield significantly more serious results. However, what is needed for this to happen is to address this issue at the state level.

This is one of the cases when what really matters is not simply the fact that more results can be gained due to wide cooperation, but the experience of cooperation itself is of utmost importance: it is an end in itself, which can yield more results in a larger context.



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However, it is obvious that consolidation of opportunities at the disposal of various political actors cannot happen in an aggressive political milieu. It is simply impossible to swear at each other in the morning, and then get together in the evening to organize Olympics. If no truce is agreed on, and if no safe environment is ensured for everyone concerned, no cooperation would be possible.

For the last year there were more significant opportunities than these Games, even of national importance, around which the political actors could have come together. However, none was used. The Pan-Armenian Games are a successive chance. Will it be used? Then we'll have a possibility of initiating a new political environment in Armenia. Will it be lost? Then it's not the time yet. Then the political poles still believe that they've not bled enough.

And then we'll just wait for another opportunity and will publicly make another recommendation, just like this one.



*The policy brief is elaborated based on the opinions passed by the participants of the off-the-record discussion "The role of political entities in building political consensus: Is collaboration an opportunity or a necessity?". The discussion, which took place on 27 May, 2019, was attended by independent analysts, government officials, and representatives of international development partners.*

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