



EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

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FIFTH SECTION

Application no. 60609/21
Nazeli VARDANYAN
against Armenia
lodged on 3 December 2021
communicated on 31 August 2026

SUBJECT MATTER OF THE CASE

The application concerns libel proceedings brought against the applicant – a lawyer specialised in environmental law – by a private company (“the company”) which developed the Amulsar gold mine project. As a member of a working group on responsible State mining policy (including the Amulsar mine project) the applicant participated in a meeting of the working group, during which she insinuated that the company had engaged in bribery. The event was livestreamed on Facebook. The domestic civil courts ruled against the applicant, essentially finding that, in the absence of a criminal conviction or pending criminal proceedings, her statement about bribery, made at a time of heightened tensions surrounding the company, was defamatory. She was made to pay the company 50,000 Armenian drams (around 80 euros at the material time) in damages. The final court decision was served on the applicant on 25 June 2021.

The applicant alleges a breach of her right to freedom of expression under Article 10 of the Convention.

QUESTION TO THE PARTIES

Has there been a violation of the applicant's right to freedom of expression, contrary to Article 10 of the Convention (see *Morice v. France* [GC], no. 29369/10, §§ 124-27, ECHR 2015)?