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MEDIA ADVISORY

Azerbaijani Translation of “Media Law Handbook” Presented

May 16, 2011



Professor Jane Kirtley presented the Azerbaijani-language translation of her “Media Law Handbook” at an event organized by the Press Council on May 16 attended by editors of prominent newspapers and other media outlets.

Arguing that a free press is a fundamental part of democracy, Professor Kirtley presented a variety of approaches to regulate key issues to promote a free press, such as defamation laws, privacy rights, confidentiality of sources, as well as media regulation of new media sources.

Professor Kirtley told attendees that she hoped that the book could contribute to Azerbaijan’s ongoing debate about creating a legislative framework to promote a free press. She praised the Press Council’s initiative to pass legislation to decriminalize defamation, calling this a necessary step to stimulate a free press. “Journalist should not fear going to jail for something they write. Criminal liability for defamation makes journalists less likely to cover controversial issues, limiting debate that is necessary for democratic societies to function,” Kirtley told attendees. “Civil penalties provide a better mechanism to reward aggrieved parties when journalists cross the line and print defamatory material,” she added.

The Media Law Handbook is a production of the Department of State’s International Information Programs Office and was translated into Azerbaijani with the assistance of U.S. Embassy in Baku. Professor Kirtley is on a one-week visit to Azerbaijan for one week and will present her book to journalism faculties at Baku State University and Baku Slavic University, as well as to professional journalism groups and NGOs.

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