

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## ARMENIA: APPEAL CASES

2 May 2001<sup>1</sup>; AI Index: EUR 54/005/2001; public

### **Alleged beatings of journalist Vahagn Ghukasian at the Ministry of Internal Affairs**

Freelance journalist Vahagn Ghukasian is said to have been beaten by officers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for around two hours on 6 June 2000 to punish him for the publication of an article critical of some Armenian law enforcement bodies, naming in particular an official from the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

On 27 May 2000 Vahagn Ghukasian published a brochure entitled "Observer's version" about the events of 27 October 1999, when a number of senior officials were shot dead in the Armenian parliament. In the brochure Vahagn Ghukasian is said to have alleged that some Armenian law enforcement bodies were involved in the events, and to have mentioned an official from the Ministry of Internal Affairs as being especially implicated.

Photo: Vahagn Ghukasian;  
© Private

On 6 June 2000 Vahagn Ghukasian was reportedly summoned to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The official named in the brochure together with a second officer are said to have ill-treated Ghukasian and only stopped when they learnt that prior to his departure for the Ministry, Vahagn Ghukasian had left a message with a reporter of the *Aravot* newspaper, telling her where he was going. The Interior Ministry official mentioned in the brochure threatened to hold Vahagn Ghukasian at the Ministry, and open a criminal case against him. When Ghukasian asked what for, the official is said to have responded: "For carrying drugs or rape. Any street prostitute will testify that you raped her". The names of both officials are known to Amnesty International. Later officials from the Ministry of Internal Affairs reportedly searched Ghukasian's home and confiscated floppy discs containing the text of his brochure. Vahagn Ghukasian told Amnesty International: "Despite the threats I wasn't harassed any more after that. I am absolutely sure that if I hadn't approached the media and human rights organizations they wouldn't have left me alone." On 9 June Vahagn Ghukasian went to polyclinic No. 19 in Yerevan where it was diagnosed that he had scratches and bruises on his chest, his right hand and his forehead.

---

<sup>1</sup> Please use this "Appeal Case" sheet as the basis for your letter-writing until further notice.

---

## Recommended actions:

Please send politely worded letters in English, Russian, Armenian or your own language,

- expressing concern at allegations that Vahagn Ghukasian was ill-treated by two law enforcement officials at the Ministry of Internal Affairs on 6 June 2000;
  - urge the authorities to open a prompt and impartial investigation into these allegations with the results made public and those found responsible brought to justice. *To stress your point you can add that this would be in line with commitment "v.iv" formulated by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) that Armenia has to honour as a member of the Council of Europe (Opinion No. 221 (2000), v.iv);*
  - stating that impunity for perpetrators of human rights violations such as ill-treatment by law enforcement officers would send a wrong signal to society.
  - To stress your point remind the authorities of their obligations to prohibit torture under international human rights treaties such as the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.
- 

## Whom to write

<u>President</u>	<u>Procurator General</u>	<u>Foreign Minister</u>	<u>Minister of the Interior</u>
Robert KOCHARIAN	Aram TAMAZIAN	Vartan OSKANIAN	Lt-General Haik HARUTIUNIAN
Respublika Armenia; 375019 g. Yerevan; pr. Marshala Bagramiana, d. 26; Prezidentu Respubliki Armeniya; KOCHARIANU, R. ARMENIA	Respublika Armenia; 375010 g. Yerevan; ploshch. Shaumiana; Prokuratura RA; Generalnomu prokuroru; TAMAZIANU, A.; ARMENIA	Respublika Armenia; 375010 g. Yerevan; Pravitelstvenny dom 1; ploshch. Respubliki; Ministerstvo inostrannykh del RA; Ministru OSKANIANU, V.; ARMENIA	Respublika Armeniya; 375015 g. Yerevan; ul. Nalbandian, d. 130; Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del RA; Ministru HARUTIUNIAN, H.; ARMENIA
Fax: + 374 1- 52 15 81; 52 17 96; 15 11 52		Fax: + 374 1- 50 72 50; 52 17 96; 151 042	Fax: + 374 1 - 52 03 10
<b>Salutation: Dear President</b>	<b>Salutation: Dear Procurator General</b>	<b>Salutation: Dear Minister</b>	<b>Salutation: Dear Minister</b>

Send copies of your letters to:

- the Ambassador of Armenia to your country (if there is one)

**PLEASE SEND ANY REPLIES FROM THE ARMENIAN AUTHORITIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. (South Caucasus and Central Asia Research and Campaign Team; Amnesty International; 1 Easton Street; London WC1 X ODW; United Kingdom)**