



# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## ARMENIA: APPEAL CASES

October 2001<sup>1</sup>; AI Index: EUR 54/010/2001; public

Further information on Appeal Case sheet EUR 54/005/2001 (2 May 2001)

### **Alleged ill-treatment at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and subsequent anonymous intimidation of journalist Vahagn Ghukasian**

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 on the October 1999 shootings in the Armenian parliament. Moreover, around the time of the publication of a series of articles by him on the same subject in May and June 2001 he is said to have received threatening phone calls and his workshop was burnt down. AI is concerned at allegations that the ill-treatment and intimidation were designed to punish him for exercising his right to freedom of expression, and that the intimidation may also have been designed to stop him from pursuing further his complaint of ill-treatment against an official from the Ministry of Internal Affairs.



On 27 May 2000 Vahagn Ghukasian published a brochure entitled "Observer's version" about the investigation into the events of 27 October 1999 in the Armenian parliament. Vahagn Ghukasian told AI that he explains in the brochure his opinion that an official from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, whom he names, should not be participating in the investigation into the shootings, and gives his reasons for that.

On 6 June 2000 Vahagn Ghukasian was reportedly summoned to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Two officers 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. 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.

About one year later, on 20 May 2001, Vahagn Ghukasian reportedly got a phone call, one day after the publication of the first of three articles in *Haykakan Zhamanak* newspaper in which again he wrote about the events of 27 October 1999. The anonymous caller allegedly warned him not to 'play with

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

fire', and demanded that he stop his writing activities. On 24 June, the day after the publication of the third article, his workshop was burnt down. The workshop was Vahagn Ghukasian's main source of income for himself and his family. The anonymous telephone calls allegedly continued after this incident, threatening that if Vahagn Ghukasian continued to 'stick his nose into other people's business' his house would be burned down.

Vahagn Ghukasian told AI that he thought that the destruction of his workshop was either aimed at punishing him for the publication of his articles, or was meant as a warning not to give evidence to the Procurator's office against one of the Interior Ministry officials who had reportedly ill-treated him in June last year.

## **Recommended actions:**

Please send politely worded  
letters in English Russian

## Whom to write

<b><u>President</u></b>	<b><u>Procurator General</u></b>	<b><u>Foreign Minister</u></b>	<b><u>Minister of the Interior</u></b>
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:

- Chairman of the Human Rights Committee at the Office of the President, Paruir AIRIKIAN

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375077 g. Yerevan 77  
pr. Marshala Bagramyana, 26  
Apparat Prezidenta RA  
Komitet po pravam cheloveka  
pri Prezidente Respubliki Armeniya  
Predsedatelyu AIRIKIANU P.

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- 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 WC1X 0DW; United Kingdom)**