

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

ARMENIA: APPEAL CASES

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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.

Recommended

actions:
Whom to write

Please send politely worded

<u>President</u> <small>English Russian</small>	<u>Procurator General</u>	<u>Foreign Minister</u>	<u>Minister of the Interior</u>
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¹ Please use this "Appeal Case" sheet as the basis for your letter-writing until further notice.

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Salutation: Dear President	Salutation: Dear Procurator General	Salutation: Dear Minister	Salutation: Dear Minister

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)