



# YERKIR

Union of NGO for Repatriation and Settlement  
Union d'ONG pour le Rapatriement et la Réinsertion  
Союз общественных организаций «Еркир» по репатриации и освоению  
Հայրենադարձության եւ հիմնավորման կազմակերպությունների միություն

## Press-release

January 21, 2010

### THE GEORGIAN AUTHORITIES INITIATE NEW TRIALS AGAINST JAVAKHETI POLITICAL ACTIVISTS

The Georgian authorities have initiated new legal proceedings against the Javakheti political activists Gurgen Shirinyan and Aram Batoyan. Thus, in October 2009 the Akhalkalaki district court, carrying out the trial *in absentia* sentenced Gurgen Shirinyan to three years' imprisonment on charges of hooliganism against the members of the Georgian military police in March 2005. This new sentence was added to an already existing sentence of 17 years' imprisonment that was adopted in respect of the Javakheti activist by Akhaltskha District Court in December 2008 also *in absentia*.

Currently Akhalkalaki District Court holds proceedings *in absentia* on the case of the Javakheti political activist Aram Batoyan, manager of Javakhk Sports and Culture Union's Center (organization, led by Vahagn Chakhalyan). He is charged by the Georgian authorities with possession of weapons allegedly found during the search of the building of the Center on July 21, 2008.

"Yerkir" Union is strongly convinced that by these new trials *in absentia* over the Javakheti political activists, the Georgian authorities pursue the objective of strengthening the regime of state terror in the region, and furthering the feelings of fear among the Javakheti Armenians.

Given the above, "Yerkir" Union demands from the Georgian authorities:

1. To immediately conduct a new impartial investigation into the events of July 17-21, 2008 in Akhalkalaki;
2. To revise all the sentences in respect of the Javakheti political activists and the members of their families;
3. To stop all the police repressions and political persecutions against the Javakheti political activists.

"Yerkir" Union calls on the international organizations and accredited diplomatic missions in Georgia to draw close attention to the situation in Javakheti, to step up pressure on the Georgian authorities to put an end to the repression inflicted on the Armenians in the region.