

Statement of Javakheti political activist Vahagn Chakhalyan

THE GEORGIAN AUTHORITIES ARE AGGRAVATING THEIR POLICY OF VIOLATION OF THE JAVAKHETI ARMENIANS' RIGHTS

July 15, 2010. Prison 6 Rustavi, Georgia

On July 5, 2010 the Supreme Court of Georgia made a decision to leave the appeal on the verdict against my father- Ruben Chakhalyan, my younger brother- Armen Chakhalyan and me without hearing. Our sentences were once again upheld.

The Supreme Court's ruling was predictable and consistent with the decisions of the First Instance Court and the Appeals Court, as it humbly executed the order of the Georgian authorities, trampling on the basic norms of a fair trial.

This Supreme Court's decision is completely consonant with the latest trends of intensification of the policy of violation of political, civil, linguistic, educational, religious and cultural rights of Javakheti Armenians, carried out by the Georgian authorities:

- The active members of the Javakheti Armenian social-political organizations are under police surveillance, they are subjected to political and economic pressure, some of them were forced to leave the country;
- The traditional policy of the Georgian authorities to change the ethno-demographic picture of the Armenian-populated districts (Samtskhe-Javakheti-Tsalka) is getting new manifestations; the process of resettlement of Ajarians in Javakheti is resumed;
- Under the pretext of improving the knowledge of the Georgian language the government takes measures to accelerate the process of georgianization of the Armenian schools, the Armenian teachers, undesirable to the authorities, are getting fired;
- The "black list" of the Armenian politicians and public figures, who are banned entry to Georgia due to their activity aimed at defending the Javakheti Armenians' rights, is supplemented with new names.

The Georgian authorities respond to the growing concern of the international community about this situation, by spreading misinformation and categorically denying the facts of violation of the Javakheti Armenians' rights.

Under these circumstances, the feeling of discontent, alienation, frustration and apathy among the Javakheti Armenians is being gradually intensified. This attitude has been recently manifested by means of a boycott by the Javakheti Armenians of the municipal elections of Georgia held on May 30, 2010. This boycott has impelled the Georgian authorities to falsify the results of the elections in Javakheti, by "picturing" 75-78% electoral participation and creating a vast army of "dead soul" voters for the ruling party.

Given the above, I reiterate my commitment to a consistent struggle for restoration of justice with regards to my family members and me in all international structures.

I remain confident that all the steps aimed at suppressing through prisons and repressions the protest of the Javakheti Armenians will not achieve their goal. I am convinced that our struggle will continue until the Georgian authorities are forced sooner or later to succumb to the

imperative of solving the existing problems through dialogue. To create a common ground for dialogue the Georgian authorities must first stop their policy of suppression, threats and violence against the Javakheti Armenians, and in particular to:

- Stop the persecution of the Javakheti socio-political activists;
- Cancel the unfair sentences passed against my father, my younger brother and me;
- Permit the return of all Javakheti Armenian activists, who had to flee the country, as a result of repressions;
- Conduct a fair and impartial investigation of the events preceding my arrest in Akhalkalaki;
- Abolish the "black list" of the Armenian politicians and public figures, who are banned entry to Georgia.

The political, civil, linguistic, educational, religious and cultural problems of the Javakheti Armenians must be resolved in full accordance with the international standards for the protection of the rights of the national minorities.

All the programs aimed at changing the ethnic and demographic picture of the Armenian-populated regions must be stopped.

The International organizations must take a clear stance on inadmissibility of the discriminatory policy of the Georgian authorities against the Armenian population of Georgia. Double standards, uncertain and vague steps will only aggravate the existing problems, will increase instability and create a possibility for unpredictable developments.

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