



Statement of Member Organizations of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform regarding the case of Afgan Mukhtarli, Azerbaijani journalist

We, member organizations of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform hereby express our deep concern due to the suspicious disappearance of Afgan Mukhtarli, Azerbaijani journalist and activist. As declared by his lawyer, he was arrested by Georgian speaking persons in Tbilisi and illegally transferred to Azerbaijan through the border. In addition, he was suspiciously found with 10 thousand Euros in pocket after being brought in the investigative body. Also, as stated by the lawyer, Mr. Mukhtarli has signs of physical injuries. Azerbaijan government charged Afgan Mukhtarli with the illegal crossing of border and transportation of contraband.

Afgan Mukhtarli has been living in Tbilisi for past two years' since he had to leave the country due to his critical opinions about the Azerbaijani government. Like Mr. Mukhtarli, many other journalists find shelter in Georgia since they have belief of protecting their rights in the country. It is unfortunate that Georgian authorities failed to ensure their safety.

Statements made by the representatives of government raise more and more questions. The society is not still aware of detailed information and it is not clear how did the journalist "disappeared" in Tbilisi end up in Azerbaijan investigation bodies, how did he pass the border while his passport was still in Georgia.

Considering the above-mentioned, the below signatory organizations categorically request immediate investigation of Afgan Mukhtarli case and punishment of guilty persons. In addition, we request the government to provide detailed explanations to the public. The Georgian authorities shall make political qualification of the fact. Such cases do hinder integration of Georgia into Euro-Atlantic organizations since protection of human rights is the key Western value, which has been placed under question in Georgia! We call upon the government to use all available resources and clarify the case to persuade public that living in Georgia is safe for everyone irrespective of his or her opinions in relation to the governments of other countries.

Signatory Organizations:

1. *The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics*
2. *European Initiative – Liberal Academy Tbilisi*
3. *European Fund*
4. *International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy*
5. *Georgian Young Lawyers' Association*
6. *Human Rights House Tbilisi*
7. *Union "Article 42 of the Constitution"*
8. *Institute for Development of Freedom of Information*
9. *The Economic Policy Research Center*
10. *The Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia*
11. *Human Rights Centre*
12. *World Experience for Georgia*
13. *Association "Toleranti"*
14. *Bridge of Friendship "Kartlosi"*
15. *Youth Initiative for Democracy*
16. *Association for Internally Displaced Women "Tanxmoba"*
17. *Multiethnic Resource Center on Civic Education Development*
18. *Civil Society Institute*
19. *Local Democracy Agency Georgia*
20. *The Greens Movement of Georgia/Friends of the Earth – Georgia*
21. *Association "Merkuri"*
22. *Youth Alternative*
23. *Studio Re*
24. *Union "Healthy Children"*
25. *Georgian Tea Producers Association*
26. *Development and Engagement Center*
27. *Youth Association "Droni"*
28. *Gori Information Center*
29. *International Center for Support of Research, Technologies and Innovations*
30. *Institute for Nationalism and Conflicts Studies*
31. *Scientific-Intellectual Club "Dialogue of Generations"*
32. *Association "School-Family-Society"*
33. *PMC Research Center*
34. *Center for Civil Development and Human Rights*
35. *Public Advocacy*
36. *Georgia Reforms Association*
37. *Levan Mikeladze Foundation*
38. *Joint Civil Movement "Multi-National Georgia"*
39. *New Generation – For the Democratic Georgia*
40. *Association "European Studies for the Innovative Development of Georgia"*

41. *Georgia International Development Agency*
42. *Georgia Alliance for the Safe Roads*
43. *Free Choice*
44. *Human Rights Center*
45. *Caucasus Network of Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations*
46. *Energy Efficiency Center Georgia*
47. *Repatriate Union*
48. *Society for Support of Harmonic Development of Human*
49. *Foundation of Entrepreneur Women*
50. *Enterprise Innovation Development Center*
51. *Education Development and Employment Center*
52. *Georgian Press Association*
53. *Civil Council for Defense and Security Matters*
54. *Journalistic Research Center*
55. *International Center for Democratic Initiatives*
56. *Association "Green Alternative"*
57. *Junior Achievement Georgia*
58. *Center "Empathy"*
59. *Association "Peaceful and Working Caucasus"*
60. *International Prison Reform*
61. *Coalition for the Independent Life*
62. *Women Information Center*
63. *Civil Forum*
64. *International Center of Geopolitical research*
65. *Center for Development of Civil Society and Democracy*
66. *The Association of Business Consulting Organizations of Georgia*
67. *Community Development Academy*
68. *National Anti-Violence Network*
69. *Association "Atinati"*
70. *Foundation "Genius Loci"*
71. *Georgia Association for Regional Broadcasters*
72. *Union "International Environment Protection Research Center"*
73. *Foundation "Caucasus Ecology"*
74. *Energy Efficiency Fund*
75. *Georgian Committee of International Press Institute*
76. *Union of Pedagogues "Education and Universe"*
77. *Association "Hope" – Movement of Internally Displaced Women for the Peace*
78. *Save The Future Generation*
79. *Georgian Association "Woman in Business"*
80. *Biological Farming Association "Elkana"*
81. *Georgian Trade Union Confederation*

82. *Railway Workers New Trade Union*
83. *Cultural-Humanitarian Fund "Sukhumi"*
84. *Youth Union Euro Club*
85. *Abkhazeti – My Home*
86. *Institute for Euro-Atlantic integration and strategic studies*
87. *International Organization of Human Rights protection and Prisoners social welfare*
88. *Samtskhe-Javakheti Regional Association "Toleranti"*