

22.07.2017

Second Statement of the Georgian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum on the Case of Azerbaijani Journalist, Afgan Mukhtarli

The members of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform denounce the alleged kidnapping of Azerbaijani activists and journalist, Afgan Mukhtarli. According to the victim and his lawyer, he was arrested in Tbilisi by Georgian speaking individuals and was moved illegally into the Azerbaijani border. Additionally, he has sustained multiple physical wounds.

Despite numerous calls made by public officials of various countries, international HR organizations, civil society, Georgian National Platform included, to the Georgian authorities to fully, transparently and timely investigate the journalist's case, the investigation has stalled and detailed information is still unavailable to the public. The journalist remains under arrest.

Furthermore, EU Parliament's special resolution on Mukhtarli case stresses the importance that the Georgian Government clarifies every suspicion that its secret services were involved in forced disappearance of the journalist, calls on the authorities to protect human rights undertaken by the European Convention on Human Rights and ensure, that Mukhtarli returns to his family to Georgia safely.

We, the member organizations of the Georgian National Platform believe that the investigation has had enough time to investigate the case in an objective and thorough manner, but that the process is clearly stalled, which in return, damages Georgia's image internationally and renders Georgia's human rights safeguards questionable. This is a substantial challenge faced by Georgia on its way to becoming a developing democratic country that respects rule of law above all else.

Given all of the above mentions, we the signatory organizations demand that public is immediately informed in greater details how the investigation is progressing, that the journalist's case is impartially investigated and that perpetrators are punished adequately. Furthermore, given high public interest in the case, we ask the Parliaments Human Rights Committee to summon leadership of respective agencies and hearing them out at the Committee hearing dedicated to Mukhtarli, while the Georgian Parliament must utilize every

instrument under its disposition, a temporary investigation commission included, so that questions surrounding the case are answered in a timely manner.

Signatory Organizations:

1. Liberal Academy Tbilisi
2. Free Choice
3. Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)
4. Europe Foundation
5. Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF)
6. Rondeli Foundation
7. Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)
8. Trade Union of Georgia
9. Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters (GARB)
10. Levan Mikeladze Foundation
11. The Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD)
12. Caucasus Environmental NGO network (CENN)
13. World Experience for Georgia
14. Studio RE
15. Youth Alternative
16. GRASS
17. Public Development Academy
18. Institute for Geostrategic and Euroatlantic Integration Research
19. Local Democracy Agency Georgia
20. Civil Development and HR Center
21. Association School-Family-Society
22. New Generation for Democratic Georgia
23. Georgian Press Association
24. Empathy
25. Women's Initiatives supporting Group
26. Save Future Generation
27. International Press Institute Georgia Committee
28. Economic Policy Research Center
29. IDP Association "Consent"
30. Journalist Ethics Charter
31. Association DEA
32. Georgian Policy Institute
33. Energy Efficiency Center Georgia
34. Dialogue of Generations
35. Anti – Violence Network
36. Human Rights House Tbilisi

37. The Greens Movement of Georgia /Friends of Earth
38. Human Rights Centre
39. Multiethnic Resource Center for Civil Education
40. Repatriates Union
41. Droni Association
42. Research Innovation and Technology Support International Center
43. Int. Center for Civic Culture
44. Georgian Tea Producers Association
45. Fund Sukhumi
46. Friendship Bridge- Kartlosi
47. Enterprise Innovation Development Center
48. Union – International Center for Environmental Protection
49. International Center for Democratic Initiatives
50. Fund Caucasian Ecology
51. Article 42
52. Women Entrepreneurs Fund
53. Democracy Development and Civil Society Center
54. Peaceful and Business Caucasus
55. Association Imedi for Refuge Women’s Peace Movement
56. Fund for Women Entrepreneurs
57. Women's Political Resource Center
58. Railway New Trade Union
59. Georgian Association Women and Business
60. Association Atinati
61. Journalists Resource Center
62. Association Elkana
63. Caucasus Mosaic
64. Teacher Union Education and Universe
65. Junior Achievement Georgia