



## **The Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia**



### **The statement of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia**

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In this context, it is noteworthy that Mr. Khachatryan joined the military service on September 1, 1992, only after which he participated in combat operations. Before that Mr. Khachatryan worked as an ordinary driver in Stepanakert.

Therefore, the statement of the General Prosecutor's Office of Azerbaijan that Mr. Khachatryan allegedly "committed a crime in Meshali village as part of a group of Armenian armed formations" on December 22, 1991, does not correspond to reality. This information is substantiated by archival documents, orders issued by commanders, references documenting his military service, and the testimonies of the members of his family.

Moreover, the information obtained and analyzed by the Human Rights Defender's Office confirmed the fact that there is no data in international wanted lists regarding Mr. Khachatryan, who was being transferred to Armenia for medical treatment and abducted by Azerbaijan.

The Human Rights Defender reiterates that Mr. Vagif Khachatryan was being transported to Armenia under the auspices of the ICRC to receive the appropriate and necessary medical assistance, and was a protected person under international humanitarian law. Hence, the deprivation of the liberty of the latter is a gross violation of international humanitarian law.

Immediately after the abduction of Vagif Khachatryan, calls for violence against Armenians, propaganda of hatred and enmity, also directed against Vagif Khachatryan and his relatives, gained momentum in the Azerbaijani media.

This phenomenon is yet another manifestation of the policy of Armenophobia and ethnic hatred propagated by Azerbaijani authorities. Moreover, the Azerbaijani society, including public figures, state officials, as well as mass and social media outlets labeled Mr. Khachatryan as a criminal.

The Human Rights Defender underlines that, when ethnic hatred is being propagated, and the presumption of innocence is violated, the fundamental human rights of Mr. Khachatryan cannot be guaranteed, and the proper examination of the case in correspondence with the requirements of the fair trial, by an impartial and fair court cannot be ensured.

The abovementioned gives reasons to conclude that unlawful interference with the fundamental human rights of Vagif Khachatryan by Azerbaijan has been/is being carried out in a gross violation of international

humanitarian law and international human rights law, considering that universally recognized international legal guarantees and standards are not ensured.

The full information obtained and analyzed by the Defender's Office was sent to the competent authorities and international partners.