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The problem of political prisoners in Europe and the necessity to investigate the issue of political prisoners in Armenia

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Rafael HUSEYNOV and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

The existence of politically motivated arrests and pursuits in some Council of Europe member states generates serious concern. The assertion that “The existence of even one political prisoner in a Council of Europe member state is unacceptable” is a principal position of the Parliamentary Assembly. In order not to let this extremely fair approach be simply a statement there is serious need for taking concrete actions.

The issue regarding the mass and systematic violation of human rights in Armenia, a Council of Europe member state since 2001, was repeatedly raised in the Assembly and serious documents were made up in this respect. Despite the fact that the existence of the above-mentioned problem was addressed every time within the debates on the obligations and commitments of Armenia with the Council of Europe and proposals on applying sanctions against this country were sounded several times. Unfortunately neither Armenia took real actions to normalise the situation nor did the Assembly take effective steps towards Armenia who is not willing to move forward.

There are sufficient numbers of crying facts about the use of force-including arms-against the people's protests due to the numerous breaches of law which took place during the Presidential elections of 19 February 2008 in Armenia. Brutal oppression of the civil demonstrations including mass arrests, murders and truncheoning of participants were reflected in the Assembly relevant reports ([Resolution 1609 \(2008\)](#) on the functioning of democratic institutions in Armenia; [Resolution 1620 \(2008\)](#) on the implementation by Armenia of Assembly [Resolution 1609 \(2008\)](#); [Resolution 1643 \(2009\)](#) on the implementation by Armenia of Assembly [Resolutions 1609 \(2008\)](#) and 1620 (2008)) on this country as well as in the news of Human Rights Watch regarding the above-mentioned events in Armenia (Armenia: “Police Beat Protesters in Yerevan”, “Police Beat Protesters”) and the websites of the well-known mass media.

Today there are hundreds of political prisoners in Armenia and the Armenian authorities are continuing their unlawful deeds regardless of the continuous appeals by the NGOs dealing with the issues of human rights protection, the Council of Europe and a number of other international organisations. Instead of solving the problem, newcomers increase the number of political prisoners, Armenian citizens increasingly emigrate in order to escape political pursuit and terror as well as to get rid of the antidemocratic regime ruling the country.

The Council of Europe should not leave the Armenian people alone in such a complicated situation but should take urgent measures in order to stabilise the situation, to ensure the prevalence of international law standards as well as respect for human rights. All five principles on the notion of political prisoner defined by the expert group set up by the Council of Europe (“The problem of the determination of universally admissible criteria for the concept of “political prisoner”” ([Doc. 9652](#) of 10 January 2003, motion for a recommendation



presented by Mr. R. Huseynov and others)); “Political prisoners in Europe” ([Doc. 9465](#) of 21 May 2002, motion for an order presented by Mr Jurgens and others)) and confirmed by the Assembly today can include the hundreds of persons put in prisons by the authorities of Armenia.

Taking all the afore-said into consideration the Assembly strongly recommends appointing a special rapporteur for a thorough investigation of the problem of political prisoners in Armenia and preparing a detailed report on the matter.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed¹:

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