Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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The investigation of events of 1 and 2 March 2008 in Armenia, in particular the exact circumstances that led to the deaths

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Christos POURGOURIDES and other members of the Assembly

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

In its Resolutions 1609 (2008), on the functioning of democratic institutions in Armenia, as well as in Resolutions 1620 (2008) and 1643 (2009), the Assembly addressed a series of concrete demands to the Armenian authorities regarding the restoration of the functioning of democratic institutions in Armenia, following the crisis after the presidential election of February 2008, clashes between the police and the protesters and the escalation of violence on 1 March 2008 resulting in 10 deaths and about 200 people being injured.

One of the most urgent demands was the credible independent investigation into the exact circumstances that led to the tragic events of 1 March, particularly the killing of 10 persons, as well as the manner in which they were handled by the authorities, including the imposition of a state of emergency in Yerevan from 1 to 20 March 2008, and the alleged excessive use of force by the police.

Regarding the requirement to ensure an independent, impartial and credible investigation into the events of 1 and 2 March 2008, the Assembly, in its Resolution 1643 (2009), welcomed the establishment by the President of Armenia, on 23 October 2008, of a "fact-finding group of experts to inquire into the events of 1-2 March 2008", following a proposal by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe.

The Assembly also stressed that it is the manner in which this group will conduct its work, as well as the access it will have to information by the relevant state institutions at all levels, that will ultimately determine its credibility in the eyes of the Armenian public.

Hence, the Assembly is alarmed by the obstacles set against the work of the Group by the Armenian authorities, is outraged by the disregard by the Armenian authorities of the facts established by the Group, particularly in regard of the causes of death of at least 4 victims and the involvement of the Army, and finally is deeply concerned with the decree of the Armenian president, dated 6 June 2009, to fully dissolve the Group.

The Assembly still believes that the core condition for achieving public reconciliation and the restoration of the functioning of democratic institutions in Armenia is the establishment of genuine facts relating to 1 March 2008 events, especially regarding 10 deaths.

Thus, in view of the above, the Assembly recalls its previous Resolutions on this matter as well as the Resolution 1532 (2007) on the honouring of obligations an commitments by Armenia and urges the Armenian authorities to undertake the following actions without any delay:

1. to formally reconstitute the Group and to give the members of the dissolved Fact-Finding Group the possibility to summarise all information that they obtained during the period of their work in the form of reports and to make them public;

2. to investigate properly the facts reflected in the reports already prepared by the Fact Finding Group or by the members of the Group, particularly concerning the prohibited ("Cheremukha-4" aerosol type gas grenade) and improper ("Cheremukha-7" type bullet grenade) manner of use by police troops of special means that led to 3 deaths at least;

3. to investigate vigorously the said 3 deaths and to prosecute those responsible, whatever the identity of the perpetrators, for that flagrant violation of Article 2 of the ECHR and thus to restore the justice, to send a clear signal, from the highest level, to all security and law enforcement officials, enjoining them to respect human rights in the execution of their duties at all times, and to eliminate the climate of impunity.

In the view of the importance of the establishment of the truth, the Assembly also strongly recommends appointing of a special rapporteur for a thorough, independent and impartial investigation of the facts relating to the events of 1-2 March 2008 in Armenia and, in particular, the exact circumstances that led to the tragic events of 1 March, particularly the killing of 10 persons, as well as the manner in which they were handled by the authorities including the imposition of a state of emergency in Yerevan and the involvement of army.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

POURGOURIDES Christos, Cyprus, EPP/CD
BERÉNYI József, Slovak Republic
HAIBACH Holger, Germany
JONKER Corien W.A., Netherlands, EPP/CD
LINDBLAD Göran, Sweden, EPP/CD
MAURY PASQUIER Liliane, Switzerland, SOC
MOTA AMARAL João Bosco, Portugal, EPP/CD
OHLSSON Carina, Sweden, SOC
POSTANJYAN Zaruhi, Armenia
POURBAIX-LUNDIN Marietta, de, Sweden, EPP/CD
SYDOW Björn, von, Sweden, SOC
VAREIKIS Egidijus, Lithuania, EPP/CD

1. EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group