

10 August 2026

JOINT APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

CONDEMNATION LETTER

On the Armenian Government's Violations of Its Rehabilitation and Reintegration Obligations Toward Released Hostages

On January 14, 2026, four Armenian hostages were released from Azerbaijani captivity: Gevorg Sujyan, Davit Davtyan, Vicken Euljekjian, and Vagif Khachatryan. Before any medical or forensic assessment could determine their condition, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan hastily declared that all four men were in ["satisfactory health."](#) To leave no room for doubt as to what he meant, once they reached Armenian soil, Pashinyan announced that all but Vagif Khachatryan had "no health issues," describing Khachatryan's condition as "satisfactory" based on a preliminary assessment. At the same time, Armenia's National Security Service (NSS) framed the release of the four hostages as part of an ["established peace process between the two countries,"](#) melding an inter-State political process with obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law incumbent upon the detaining State.

Such framing sets a dangerous precedent by legitimizing Azerbaijan's use of human beings as instruments of political bargaining, with the release of the four hostages repackaged as a [gesture of peace](#)—notwithstanding that it occurred alongside Armenia's extradition of two Syrian nationals convicted in Armenia for mercenary activity and international terrorism. These statements raise serious questions not only about the Armenian Government's rehabilitation policies for released captives, but more fundamentally, about the lens through which it views them. Before any of the released hostages had the opportunity to articulate their own experiences, an official narrative had already been instilled—one that appeared to prioritize the political meaning of their return over acknowledging and addressing the profound consequences of the torture they survived.

The politicization of their release is evident in the stark contradiction between the Government's public portrayal of the released hostages' condition and its own prior address to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights dated March 11, 2025, where it unequivocally acknowledged "signs of torture," "evident deterioration of [the hostages'] health," and the "use of prohibited measures against Armenian prisoners of war, hostages and other detainees." This contradiction is all the more striking given that, in the same address, Armenia's

Mission to the United Nations invoked the language of human rights and specifically referenced the Convention Against Torture (CAT). Under the Convention, the rehabilitation of victims of torture is not contingent upon the identification or prosecution of perpetrators. If anything, this obligation is particularly significant in a context where the perpetrating State continues to hold at least 19 other Armenian hostages, and benefits from geopolitical opportunism and petrodplomacy that lends its impunity for its gross violations of international law. Accordingly, rehabilitation remains a State obligation requiring appropriate measures by every State Party to the Convention, including Armenia.

The appropriateness of rehabilitation measures is clearly set out in the UN Committee against Torture's [General Comment No. 3, Implementation of Article 14 by States Parties, U.N. Doc. CAT/C/GC/3 \(2012\)](#). According to this General Comment, rehabilitation must be "holistic and include medical and psychological care as well as legal and social services." It further provides that "[r]ehabilitation for victims should aim to restore, as far as possible, their independence, physical, mental, social and vocational ability; and full inclusion and participation in society." Importantly, the State's duty is not discharged by offering a predetermined pathway; rehabilitation must be individualized, ensure the victim's meaningful participation in decisions concerning their recovery, and be directed toward restoring the victim's dignity and autonomy. In other words, a victim's potential non-cooperation with a particular service cannot absolve the Government of its inherent obligation to provide appropriate measures of rehabilitation.

The General Comment also notes that adequate compensation for torture must be sufficient to address "any economically assessable damage resulting from torture or ill-treatment, whether pecuniary or non-pecuniary." Specifically, it identifies the following forms of compensable harm:

- Reimbursement of medical expenses already incurred and provision of funds to cover future medical or rehabilitative services necessary to ensure the fullest possible rehabilitation of the victim;
- Pecuniary and non-pecuniary damages resulting from the physical and mental harm caused by torture or ill-treatment;
- Loss of earnings and earning potential resulting from disabilities caused by torture or ill-treatment; and
- Lost opportunities, including those related to employment and education.

Against this legal and normative framework, reinforced by Armenia's constitutional obligations under [Articles 23, 25, 26.3 and 31](#), Mr. Vicken Euljekjian's case lays bare a profound failure by the Armenian Government to fulfill its responsibilities. Since his release, his irreversible and severe physical, sensory, and psychological injuries have continued to deteriorate amid systemic governmental neglect, deflection, and denial. While this letter focuses on Mr. Euljekjian's circumstances, its implications extend beyond his

individual case. It must not be treated as an exception, but rather prompt the consistent application of the same standards to all released hostages.

We, the undersigned, denounce the Armenian Government for violating its legal and moral obligations to ensure the rehabilitation, reintegration, and compensation of veterans and citizens who endured prolonged inhumane captivity and torture at the hands of the Azerbaijani state.

Mr. Euljekjian was abducted by Azerbaijani forces on November 10, 2020, after the ceasefire had entered into force following the Second Artsakh War. Independent monitoring of his illegal detention was severely restricted throughout most of his captivity, undermining fundamental safeguards against torture and ill-treatment. Since his release, Mr. Euljekjian has been undergoing vital and extensive medical procedures for permanent injuries developed and sustained during his captivity.

Belying Prime Minister Pashinyan's January 2026 assessment that Mr. Euljekjian had no health issues, Mr. Euljekjian has been officially certified as having a Group III disability and diagnosed with several health conditions, including, but not limited to:

- Multi-level degenerative-dystrophic changes in the cervical and lumbar spine, including multiple protrusions and stenoses, resulting in chronic severe pain and significantly impaired mobility.
- Bilateral moderate-to-severe sensorineural hearing loss.
- Arterial hypertension and associated cardiovascular complications.

As of today, and despite the severity of his deteriorating health condition, the Armenian Government has failed to provide any financial coverage for Mr. Euljekjian's medical treatment. The only support identified to date, which has yet to be implemented, was determined for Mr. Euljekjian following six months of relentless appeals to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia. It consists of no more than a token bathroom chair, two hearing aids, and a disability benefit amounting to a mere 46,000 AMD per month (approximately 125 USD)—an amount grossly insufficient to cover his basic living costs and monthly medication expenses, let alone his weekly hospital visits and surgeries. The financial burden of his medical treatment has therefore fallen almost entirely on his family, who live and work tirelessly in Lebanon to support him.

The emotional, financial, and social strain imposed on the Euljekjian family was compounded by the deaths of both of Vicken's parents, his brother, and his sister-in-law, all of whom passed away during his captivity. As a result, Vicken's wife became the primary caregiver for his late brother's two orphaned children, while their daughter was forced to abandon her academic studies to help the family make ends meet. Following more than five years of forced separation, Mr. Euljekjian and his daughter were only able to reunite five months after his release from captivity through a civil society fundraising campaign that covered the cost of her travel to

Armenia. Beyond these profound personal and familial consequences, the dispossession of Mr. Euljekjian's assets and means of livelihood at the time of his captivity continues to hinder his ability to regain economic autonomy. Stolen assets valued at approximately 12 000 USD, including a vehicle that, according to Mr. Euljekjian, would have enabled him to work as a taxi driver upon his return, were taken by Azerbaijani forces and have neither been returned nor compensated.

By May 2026, these hardships left Mr. Euljekjian in a state of homelessness. Rather than remedying this grave failure to ensure even basic subsistence, State officials continued to rely on and disseminate the unsubstantiated claim that Mr. Euljekjian had refused assistance previously offered to him. His formal requests for clarification regarding the source of this information and for correction of this false accusation received no response from either the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Arsen Torosyan, or the High Commissioner of Diaspora Affairs of Armenia, Zareh Sinanyan. Even if the statement were true, it remains incomprehensible and unjustifiable that the Government has not provided Mr. Euljekjian with appropriate assistance, particularly in light of his more than sixteen appeals to the responsible State authorities. Once again, it was civil society that stepped in, through a grassroots fundraising campaign, to secure temporary accommodation for Mr. Euljekjian while he continues to undergo strenuous medical treatment in Yerevan.

We, the undersigned, refuse to accept a reality in which a war veteran and survivor of over five years of torture and a genocide in Artsakh has to depend on the goodwill of civil society for his most basic subsistence upon his release. What kind of freedom from captivity is this, if a letter such as this one, which necessarily exposes Mr. Euljekjian's suffering and compels him to relive these horrors, is required for him to receive attention from State officials? He should not have to publicly expose and substantiate his suffering for the State to fulfill the fundamental duties it owes him under national and international law.

We demand that the Armenian Government:

- Immediately ensure that Mr. Euljekjian's rehabilitation and reintegration process is conducted with his active participation and fully respects his dignity, autonomy, expressed wishes, and individual needs, in accordance with the victim-centered rehabilitation standards established under the Convention against Torture and the Committee against Torture's General Comment No. 3 (2012).
- Immediately provide emergency social, psychological, and financial assistance proportionate to the severity of his disability, medical condition, and exceptional circumstances as a survivor of prolonged inhumane captivity and torture—including facilitating his reunification with his family in Armenia, and supporting his vocational reintegration.

- Secure safe, stable, and permanent housing for Mr. Euljekjian, including all necessary housing-related support required for his well-being and autonomy.
- Provide full compensation for:
 - All past, ongoing, and future medical expenses arising from the physical and psychological consequences of torture and captivity.
 - All material losses resulting from the unlawful dispossession of his property and means of livelihood during captivity.
- Immediately conduct a comprehensive reassessment of Mr. Euljekjian's disability status, recognizing that the current determination fails to reflect the full extent of his functional impairments, medical needs, and the lasting consequences of the harm inflicted upon him. The government must ensure that the reassessment meets international humanitarian and disability rights standards.
- Immediately investigate and officially rectify the false allegations and inaccurate information disseminated regarding Mr. Euljekjian, including the unfounded claim that he personally refused assistance, and ensure that:
 - All such statements are formally withdrawn and removed from all relevant institutional records.
 - The Armenian Government publicly acknowledges and remedies the reputational harm caused by the dissemination of these false allegations, particularly where they were relied upon or repeated by State-backed institutions (including the Soldier's Home Foundation) resulting in the dismissal of Mr. Euljekjian's legitimate requests for assistance.
 - Any potential non-cooperation with a particular service is not used as a basis to deny assistance or shift responsibility onto Mr. Euljekjian; under CAT, rehabilitation requires a long-term, integrated approach responsive to a survivor's individual needs and circumstances.
 - The relevant State authorities account for their failure to meaningfully respond to more than sixteen appeals for assistance submitted by Mr. Euljekjian following his release, acknowledge the potentially retraumatizing impact of repeatedly recounting his experience in the face of prolonged neglect, and ensure that such failures are not repeated.
 - The Government immediately ceases any politicization, tokenization, or instrumentalization of released hostages, and ensures that their treatment is guided by their rights and rehabilitation needs rather than political considerations or public messaging.

If, by the end of the month, the relevant authorities fail to act, Mr. Euljekjian will once again find himself without a home. We will not normalize the appalling treatment and violations of the fundamental rights and dignity of a descendant of Armenian genocide survivors who left his life behind in Lebanon in service of the survival of the Armenian people, only to later become a victim of genocide himself, be taken hostage for no other reason than because he is Armenian,

and return to Armenia only to find himself homeless, with his health deteriorating without adequate care.

Should the Armenian Government fail to fulfill the above-mentioned demands and remedy its violations of its legal obligations in a timely manner, we will consider pursuing this matter before the relevant international human rights mechanisms.

The undersigned:



Aghmoog Collective



Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Human Security



"HayaQve" National Civil Union



Eye for an Eye Doc community NGO



Free Armenian Hostages



Theophanu Club Germany



Academics & Staff for Palestine - Concordia



ARMENIAN
LEGAL
CENTER
FOR JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Armenian Legal Center



ZAD - Zentralrat der Armenier in Deutschland - Central Council of Armenians in Germany



Ararat Berlin

CAAS
Council of Armenian and Armenophile Organizations
of Switzerland

Council of the Armenian and Armenophile Associations of Switzerland



Armaras Collective



Armor Coalition