



## **GYLA calls on the authorities to work in a timely and active manner on the release of Vazha Gaprindashvili, an illegal prisoner of so-called South Ossetian occupational regime**

On November 9th, 2019, the occupation regime detained Vazha Gaprindashvili, a well-known Georgian physician and president of the Association of Orthopedic Traumatologists, at the occupation line. Vazha Gaprindashvili has been held in captivity for almost seven days by Tskhinvali occupation regime.

Occupation regime charging him with so-called illegally crossing the border. Three more Georgian citizens were detained/abducted during the same period. As of today, all three individuals have been released, so-called an administrative offense case has been filed against them and all three were ordered to pay a fine, while the occupation regime launched a criminal case against Vazha Gaprindashvili.

It is noteworthy that on September 2nd, 2019, the de facto authorities of South Ossetia arbitrarily closed the checkpoint of Mosabruni. By doing so, the occupation regime has turned the population living there into total isolation and caused a

humanitarian crisis. Following the arbitrary closure of the checkpoint, the death of two people has been reported. In both cases, the cause of death was due to inadequate medical care.

It has been reported that the purpose of Gaprindashvili's arrival to the administrative boundary line was to provide proper medical care to a resident of Akhalkalaki. In particular, Vazha Gaprindashvili's family considers one of the versions that a Georgian doctor went to assist a local resident who had fallen into a deep well in the occupied Akhalkalaki district, who was refused to be moved to Tbilisi and receive qualified medical care.

At this time there is no confirmed information on Vazha Gaprindashvili's whereabouts, his health and/or criminal proceedings.

GYLA Calls on the Government of Georgia to:

- Take prompt and effective all possible measures on the release of Vazha Gaprindashvili from illegal custody;
- Make the best possible use of all available international legal instruments to overcome the humanitarian crisis in the occupied territories so that persons living there have possibilities to receive basic necessities, including highly qualified medical care.

To the international community and relevant international organizations:

- Assist the Georgian side in resolving these problems.
- Intensify efforts to combat the mass violations of human rights in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region and to carry out their observation activities of EUMM in the occupied territories.