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The ongoing processes against Ramiz Ramazanov in Dmanisi are alarming

The signatory organizations address the alleged political harassment of Ramiz Ramazanov and call on the government to employ all measures to protect his safety and dignity.

Ramiz Ramazanov has been missing from home for 2 days already. Police are mobilized around the vicinity of his house. According to his family members, Ramiz Ramazanov is in contact with them, however, they do not know of his whereabouts and exactly what is happening to him. So far, no official explanation has been issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs or any other agency.

According to a local opposition delegate Hussein Husseinov, Ramiz Ramazanov communicated with him a few days ago that he "either has to vote for the Georgia Dream chairperson candidate or has to commit suicide." Ramaz Ramazanov entered Dmanisi City Council as a majoritarian delegate with the support of the United National Movement. He is a first-time member of the City Council, before that he was the director of public school in the village of Zemo Oruzman, Dmanisi Municipality. According to the information we received from the locals, Ramiz was competent at this job. However, after an extraordinary re-inspection 2 weeks ago, he abruptly left the service per his own statement.

In Dmanisi City Council, the votes are equally divided between the government and the opposition, due to which the Georgia Dream is unable to elect its own representative as the City Council Chairperson. Against this background, it is supposable that the end goal of ongoing processes pertaining to Ramiz Ramazanov is for the ruling party to gain his support, and, in that regard, these actions could be classified as political harassment.

The measures employed by the government to consolidate power at the local level are unacceptable. They substantially damage democratic processes. In recent years,

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there were cases in the country where, due to alleged political harassment and pressure, individuals' health has deteriorated sharply, and, some cases even ended with fatalities (for instance, the case of Ia Kerzaia, the case of Nugzar Putkaradze). It seems that in the peripheries such practices take even more severe and exposed forms.

The media reports about the illegal surveillance and mass control of school principals are alarming. This is the most severe form of political instrumentalization of educational institutions, as well as the practice of deprivation of human rights. Furthermore, the instrumentalization of law enforcement in political processes is even more worrying. This damages public confidence in the institution.

Such experiences deprive citizens of confidence in political processes and have a paralyzing effect on their political participation. It is clear that such practices in regions densely populated by ethnic minorities carry additional social derivatives, especially since a few months ago Dmanisi was a place of severe confrontations.

In these circumstances, we, the signatory organizations call on:

The Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ensure Ramiz Ramazanov [REDACTED] return home, protecting his security, freedom and dignity;

The Prosecutor's Office of Georgia

Promptly launch an investigation into the alleged political persecution of Ramiz Ramazanov and purvey information to the public pertaining to the corresponding process;

"Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia"

Recognize the dire political and social consequences of the said actions and revert processes to a democratic framework.

Social Justice Center

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy

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