

Press release

Armenia

FIDH and CSI welcome the release of Sacha Davtyan on February 26, 2010 and call for an immediate investigation of the alleged use of torture against him

Paris, Yerevan, March 9, 2010 - FIDH and CSI welcome the release of M. Sacha Davtyan and call for an immediate investigation of the alleged use of torture against him. On February 26, 2010, the Court of Appeal shortened his sentence from 4 years of imprisonment to 3 years. Moreover, the Amnesty Act decreed by the Armenian National Assembly on June 19, 2009 was applied to M. Sasha Davtyan and he was immediately released.

In September 2008, a criminal case was opened relating to the rape in August 2008 of an under-age girl, S.D., resident of the village Katnaghbyur, in Aragatsotn region. On February 6, 2009 the case was suspended due to lack of identification of the perpetrator of the crime. In May 2009, the investigation into the case was reopened under another investigator. Sasha Davtyan, the girl's father, was charged with the rape of S.D. and with ill-treatment of his two daughters S.D. and T.D., according to the articles 138. 2(3) and 119.2 (1) of the Republic of Armenia Criminal Code respectively.

In August 2009, S.D. and T.D. refuted their testimonies and submitted a claim to the Chief Prosecutor's office. S.D., who had turned 18 in April 2009, testified during one of the trial sessions as to how these testimonies had been forced from her. She assessed that S.D. and her sister T.D. had been taken to the Kentron Police station in Yerevan on May 7, 2009 and were subjected to torture, inhuman and degrading treatment by the police during four days and forced to testify that Mr. Sasha Davtyan had indeed tortured them and raped S.D. The testimonies received under physical duress served as the basis for the accusation.

As for M. Sasha Davtyan, he was repeatedly beaten and was also subjected to torture. Mrs. Souhayr Belhassen, FIDH President who visited him in prison together with Mr. Arman Danielyan, CSI President, on 5 February, 2010, documented his testimony on the ill treatment he was subjected to and certified that he had lost 8 teeth as a result of being beaten. They also met with the head of "Nubarashen" prison and the prison's doctor who presented the documents, certifying Mr Davtyan's very bad state upon his arrival in prison.

On December 17, 2009, the Court of First Instance of Aragatsotn Marz decided to acquit Sasha Davtyan regarding the rape of his daughter. However, despite the obvious physical pressure he and his daughters faced during the custody, he was found guilty by the Court of committing of the crime of ill-treatment against his daughters and was convicted for 4 years of imprisonment based on Article 119.2 (1).

FIDH and CSI, who followed this case closely, call upon the Armenian authorities:

- to launch a thorough, immediate, effective and impartial investigation into acts of torture and inhumane treatment of which both Sasha Davtyan and his daughters were victims;
- to find the real perpetrators of the rape of S.D. and bring them to justice;
- to reopen an investigation on Sasha Davtyan's involvement in the case, not taking into account his previous confessions which were given under psychological and physical duress and insure him a fair and impartial trial.

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