CALL TO RELEASE THE POLITICAL PRISONERS

Erevan, Paris, June 3, 2009 - On May 28, 2009 the President of Armenia Mr. Serzh Sarkisian called on political parties and on the newly-created public council to submit their recommendations on the necessity and conditions for an amnesty to his Cabinet. The amnesty would concern opposition activists, including three members of Parliament who supported the opposition and protested against the results of February 2008 presidential elections. A number of protesters were arrested and detained on various charges in the wake of the 1st-of-March events, when the President declared a state of emergency. [see Friday 7 March 2008 - Armenia - FIDH calls for an immediate end to the state of emergency, at: http://www.fidh.org/FIDH-calls-for-an-immediate-end-to]

“If it turns out that there is a comprehensive need matured among the society, I’ll use my Constitutional right and ask the National Assembly to adopt a decision on amnesty” – the Armenian President reportedly stated.

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the Civil Society Institute (CSI) have repeatedly called upon the Armenian authorities to release all political prisoners, including those deprived of their liberty in relation to the events of 1 and 2 March 2008. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe formulated a similar request in its resolutions 1609 and 1920.

Our organisations would like to renew their call and encourage the President of Armenia to release to all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Armenia.

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FIDH is a federation of 155 non-governmental human rights organizations operating in more than 100 countries. FIDH has a consultative status before the United Nations, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe, and observer status before the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights.