

Your Excellencies,

As you might be well aware of the Presidential Election that took place in Armenia on February 19, 2008 and hope that you have already sufficient information on its results and have received preliminary evaluation that have been conducted by group of OSCE/ODHIR and Council of Europe observers, we would like to bring your attention to that document, evaluation and formulations that has been given by these observers to this extremely important for the fate of our country process.

The unspeakable violations of human rights in election process, such as violation of the right to have free elections, violence and beating of women, members of electoral clusters and entrusted by candidates persons, kidnapping, beating and intimidation of journalists and electorate have been qualified in preliminary report as “administered mostly in line with OSCE and Council of Europe commitments and standards.”

These have been received, mildly putting, with surprise and discontent in Armenia. These observers, representing respected European organizations, whose mandate is promotion of democracy, protection of human rights, equality, are quietly closing their eyes on gross violations of human rights in the name of loose and fuzzy concept of “regional stability” which in this context has accepted certain form of unexplainable cliché and raises wide dissatisfaction among population. It is quite unthinkable that organizations, that have been promoting women’s active political participation and developing wide programs on fight on violence against women can consider this process as “step forward“. This cynicism and careless attitude of these observers towards their responsibilities turns them in the eyes of the people into participants and supporters of criminal acts and violations that have been taking place during elections and results are already obvious. While many opposition leaders (Aram Karapetian, leader of “New Era” party, Gagik Jhangirian, ex-first vice prosecutor in chief, among others) have been arrested, in interview to “Kommersant” newspaper, press secretary of Republican Party stated: “We understand that clashes cannot be accepted, but Robert Kocharian and Serge Sarkissian won the war and would not sit idle and look how the new war is being waged. At the same time our strategic partners Russia and Europe have already congratulated Serge Sarkisian with victory, which means that our strategic partners understand what is happening here ...”

All these discredit not only these international organizations that have taken the highest mission and role of International referee that these organizations have taken, but also discredit the trust in European values.

As persons who have been working for long time as experts with these organizations, respecting their values and mandate, we are deeply concerned with the approach taken by these observers.

In attaching copy of preliminary report of Observers Mission and article written in response of it, as well as Report made by Human Rights Watch, we hope that conclusions

you will made after receiving these documents and the final report of Observers Mission would be fair and objective and would coincide with the will of hundred thousands of Armenians, gathered today in the Freedom square at such important for destiny of our people time.

Sincerely,

Gulnara Shahinian

Member of the Board of Trustees of UN Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery,  
Member of Board of NGO “Democracy Today”

Anahit Bayandur

Co-chair of Armenian Committee of Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly,

Olof Palme

Memorial Fund Peace Award Winner

Attached:

<http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2008/02/21/armeni18128.htm>

[http://www.osce.org/documents/html/pdf/html/29775\\_en.pdf.html](http://www.osce.org/documents/html/pdf/html/29775_en.pdf.html)