



## HELSINKI ASSOCIATION

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Helsinki Association, having observed the 19 February 2008 presidential elections in Armenia and following closely the post-election period, states that the past elections did not correspond to democratic standards.

Ballot-stuffing, intimidation of voters, assaults on media representatives, the presence of local “criminals” at polling-stations as members of commissions, proxies or observers, vote-count fraud could not but affect the election returns. All this reasonably prompted counteraction on part of the opposition which took the form of peaceful demonstrations.

In the early morning of 1 March, upon an order of R. Kocharyan, a special police operation was carried out aimed solely at dispersal by force of a peaceful assembly of the opposition on Liberty Square. Later in the day the opposition rallied for a peaceful action of protest at Myasnikya monument, but once again the crowd was dispersed with an excessive force resulting in casualties.

Helsinki Association states with full responsibility that the Armenian authorities bear the whole blame for what happened.

Helsinki Association finds it as its duty to appeal to international organizations with the following requests:

- Not to recognize the results of the 19 February 2008 presidential elections;
- To demand that the President of Armenia, Robert Kocharyan, immediately cancel the emergency rule in Yerevan declared on 1 March 2008;
- To demand that all political prisoners currently in jail in Armenia be released;
- To demand that the Armenian authorities conduct an impartial and full investigation with an involvement of international experts into the use of excessive force against the protesters resulting in casualties.
- To suspend both the membership of Armenia in international organizations including the Council of Europe and all economic and financial aid programs for Armenia, until it fully observes the undertaken international democratic and human rights standards.

HELSINKI ASSOCIATION  
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