



# HUMAN RIGHTS IN ARMENIA AND THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA

FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 6:30 PM 16 BEAVER STREET, 4TH FLOOR, NY, NY  
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION HOSTED AT 16 BEAVER GROUP



Photo by Aramatz Kalayjian



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## WHY, DESPITE A STRONG DIASPORA, ARE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES LEFT TO THE CITIZEN'S OF ARMENIA?

Meanwhile members and organizations within the Armenian Diaspora directly and indirectly assist the Armenian government to "develop" Armenia. The government of Armenia, however, is mainly occupied with developing its own criminal nature, with the assistance they receive from the outside. Why is this so?

Does the Diaspora know what is going on in Armenia?

- *Hundreds of young soldiers are being abused, raped and killed in the Armenian army by Armenian officers yearly,*
- *Armenian parliamentarians, as well as the Speaker of Parliament have their own security guards, who terrorize people everywhere. Just last month they arrested villagers (among them women, children and elders) and beat them.*
- *Every election in Armenia since its independence is a source of violence against people. In the municipal elections of Yerevan, last May, there were hundreds of cases of violence, frauds and crimes.*
- *Have you seen the videos of brutality against journalists, shootings at people on March 1, 2008, during post-election demonstrations?*

- *Video-reports from the court sessions,*
- *People, have been removed from their own homes, for no legitimate reasons*
- *Harsh exploitation of natural resources led to the real environmental disaster*
- *In police stations, jails, other detention facilities in fact people are treated as slaves*

The violence, abuse and corruption are characteristic of a situation in Armenia nowadays. The brutality against journalists, activists and people is openly practiced by state bodies, political figures and the police. The judicial system, prosecutor office and courts became the source of falsification, permanent human rights abuse and torture. In the last few years criminality within the state has greatly increased, and there are terrifying facts of violence in Armenia, which should not be a part of any nation, especially the one referring to its ancient history and global culture...

At the same time the Armenian Diaspora keeps supporting Armenian authorities with statements and continues funding.

HOW CAN WE DENY the existence of the crimes taking place now! How can we keep on blaming Turkey for their denial, but be in denial of our own reality WE must UNDERSTAND THAT WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR TIMES!!!

Let's meet and discuss about WHAT the DIASPORA can DO. Let's first learn about what is happening in Armenia from those who have had first hand experience and find ways to address these issues and HELP PEOPLE IN ARMENIA PROTECT their RIGHTS!

**Arsen Kharatyan**, a human rights activist and youth movement leader engaged in founding of pro-democracy civic groups Sksele and Hima. In the months following the presidential elections, he was arrested three times for political activity, was severely beaten and was forced to leave the country.

**Karen Hakobyan**, musician, and human rights advocate/trainer, the president of Hujs (Hope) human rights organization for over 13 years. He has been monitoring abuses in Armenia and organized a number of advocacy campaigns on human rights issues Karen has used his expertise to participate in policy making at government level (National Assembly and Government) in Armenia and international organizations such as UNDP Armenia and USAID. This year he had several public presentations and talks in New York related to contemporary issues in politics and arts.

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