



SOCIETY FOR ORPHANED ARMENIAN RELIEF (SOAR)
Buenos Aires Chapter
Luciana Minassian, Buenos Aires Chapter President & Attorney at Law

Buenos Aires, 17 March 2026

Ms. Sabina Aliyeva

Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsperson)
Republic of Azerbaijan
Baku, Azerbaijan

Re: Urgent Appeal — Access, Legal Rights, and Humane Treatment of Armenian Prisoners Held in Azerbaijan, including Mr. Ruben Vardanyan

Dear Commissioner Aliyeva,

I write to you in my capacity as President of the Buenos Aires Chapter of the Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR) and as attorney and legal representative of several of the Armenian prisoners currently detained in Azerbaijan. This letter constitutes a formal appeal to your office, as the designated institution responsible for upholding human rights within the Republic of Azerbaijan, to urgently intervene on behalf of the prisoners named herein and to ensure that their basic legal rights and humane treatment are guaranteed without further delay.

I must note at the outset that the submission of this letter through formal channels is itself a measure of last resort. On 13 March 2026, Mr. Ruben Vardanyan, one of the prisoners on whose behalf I write, attempted to personally address your office during a brief telephone call with his family, the only communication channel currently available to him. That call was forcibly terminated before he could complete his appeal. This followed ten consecutive days during which my attempts, as his legal counsel, to reach your office through written requests and telephone calls went unanswered.

I. Matters Requiring Urgent Attention

A. Denial of Access to Verdicts

More than one month has elapsed since the conclusion of the trials of the Armenian prisoners. To date, none of them -including Mr. Vardanyan- have received the official texts of their verdicts in any language, whether Russian, Armenian, or Azerbaijani. They

remain unaware of the precise legal basis for their convictions. This is a fundamental violation of the right to be informed of the charges and judgment against one, a principle enshrined in international human rights standards to which Azerbaijan is bound. We call upon your office to urgently ensure that all convicted prisoners receive copies of their verdicts in a language they understand.

B. Absence of Information Regarding Transfer

The prisoners have not been informed of where they will serve their sentences, nor of the date of any impending transfer. The uncertainty surrounding their fate is causing severe distress to both the prisoners and their families, who are left without any reliable information about their loved ones' whereabouts or condition. We respectfully request that your office ensure that prisoners and their families are promptly notified of any transfer decisions, in accordance with elementary principles of humane treatment.

C. Conditions of Detention and Health Concerns

The physical condition of the prisoners released and returned to Armenia on 14 January 2026 was deeply alarming and speaks to the difficult conditions endured during their detention. We have serious concerns about the welfare of those who remain in custody. We urge your office to conduct or facilitate an independent assessment of the physical and psychological condition of all remaining Armenian prisoners and to take immediate steps to address any identified deficiencies in the conditions of their detention.

D. Restriction of Family Contact

Family communication has been reduced to rare and brief telephone calls, which now constitute the sole remaining channel of contact between the prisoners and their relatives. There are credible fears that even this minimal form of communication may soon be suspended entirely. We call upon your office to guarantee the continuation and regularity of family contact as a non-negotiable humanitarian safeguard, and to ensure that no retaliatory measures are taken against prisoners who seek to exercise this right.

II. The Role of Your Office

As Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Azerbaijan, your office bears a special responsibility to safeguard the rights of all individuals detained under Azerbaijani jurisdiction, regardless of their nationality or the nature of the charges against them. The right to be treated with dignity, to know the legal basis of one's conviction, to maintain family contact, and to be held in humane conditions are not contingent upon the outcome of criminal proceedings. They are universal and inalienable.

We further note the departure of the International Committee of the Red Cross from Azerbaijan, which has left these prisoners without any independent institutional oversight or protection. In the absence of such external safeguards, the role of your office as the principal domestic human rights institution becomes all the more critical and, we would respectfully submit, all the more consequential for Azerbaijan's international standing.

III. Specific Requests

In light of the foregoing, SOAR formally requests that your office:

- Ensure the immediate provision to all Armenian prisoners of the official texts of their verdicts, in a language they understand;
- Ensure that prisoners and their families are notified in a timely manner of any decisions regarding transfer, including the destination facility and the date of transfer;
- Facilitate an independent assessment of the conditions of detention and the physical and psychological condition of each remaining prisoner;
- Guarantee the continuation of regular family contact, including telephone communication, without restriction or reprisal; and
- Confirm receipt of this letter and provide a substantive written response within fifteen (15) days of the date hereof.

Transparency, access to information, and the preservation of basic human dignity are not matters that can be indefinitely deferred. The prisoners on whose behalf I write are human beings entitled to the full protection of their rights under Azerbaijani law and international human rights standards. I call upon your office to act with the urgency that this situation demands.

I remain available to provide any additional information your office may require and am prepared to engage in direct dialogue with a view to resolving the matters raised herein. I trust that your office will discharge its mandate with the independence and integrity that the protection of human rights requires.

I await your prompt response.

Respectfully yours,



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