



TO  
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## Question

1) In response to the question posed by the Committee on 1 February 2016, the organization mentioned that in 2010-2012 it organized a summer school on Human rights and monitoring, which initially aimed to involve participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh. It appears from this list that Nagorno-Karabakh is viewed as an independent state, rather than an inalienable part of Azerbaijan. Please clarify the organization's position regarding Nagorno-Karabakh.

## Response

Dear Sir/Madam,

We would like to stress once again that Helsinki Citizens' Assembly-Vanadzor is a non-political, non-religious, non-profit NGO, which unites individuals who acknowledge the supreme principles of **democracy, tolerance, pluralism and human rights** as values.

None of our aims and objectives relates to political settlement of any territorial conflicts. In this field, we pursue only one mission, namely promoting peaceful resolution of conflicts, building a dialogue and mutual trust between the conflicting societies and addressing the issues faced by victims of conflicts to show the grave consequences of the armed methods of conflict settlement by emphasizing the responsibility of the states for resolving the issues of conflict victims. As for Nagorno-Karabakh being a part of Azerbaijan, we would like to mention that this issue is under immediate jurisdiction of the OSCE Minsk Group. The OSCE Minsk Group currently negotiates with the conflicting parties, visits both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan and holds meetings with their representatives.

HCA Vanadzor is primarily guided by the principle of universally recognized international human rights law, and the Organization's activities completely focus on the human with his/her dignity, rights and freedoms. The Organization aims, among others, to improve the human rights protection mechanisms in the region, which will contribute to improved



human rights situation of the people, regardless of their ethnicity, nationality or legal status and place of residence. The Organization believes that human rights protection should not be ignored in conflict and disputed territories and the protection mechanisms should not be reduced due to the status of such territories. Moreover, in conflict territories, human rights are most vulnerable and the situation of human rights protection has the broadest scope of risk factors which is also a consequence of inadequate control by relevant interstate human rights institutions.

In cases examined by the ECtHR, the Republic of Azerbaijan argued that it did not exercise effective control over Nagorno-Karabakh and Lachin corridor area. Therefore, as for the project above, Azerbaijan cannot be considered as a state responsible for the protection of the rights of persons residing in Nagorno-Karabakh during police actions and restoration of their violated rights. Therefore, in the context of human rights protection in police actions, the Organization does not consider Azerbaijan as a state responsible for human rights violation in the filed concerned on the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.

At the same time, the Organization is concerned over the large-scale violations of the right to life of persons, including civilians as a result of the conflict. HCA Vanadzor invites Committee on NGOs attention to the fact that the Project in question intended to involve participants not only from Nagorno-Karabakh, but also from South Ossetia and Abkhazia, as well as Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. This Project aimed to open space for a dialogue between the residents of the conflicting territories and states. And dialogue and communication between the residents of conflicting territories and states is a factor contributing to reduced hatred flared due to conflict and peaceful settlement of conflict.

It is also noteworthy that HCA Vanadzor is a member of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly International Network. HCA Azerbaijan National Committee is also a Network member, and its Chairman Arzu Abdullayeva is a Co-Chair of HCA international network. HCA Vanadzor carried out a number of regional projects jointly with HCA Azerbaijan National Committee on the issues of missing persons and building of mutual trust. Under such projects, visits of our Azerbaijani partners and journalists to Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh were arranged.



HCA Vanadzor NGO sincerely hopes that the "national identity" of the Organization and the geography of its human rights activities will not affect the professional approach of the Committee on NGOs regardless of its composition, and it will not show discriminatory attitude towards the Organization.