

Podgorica, 18 December 2009

**Joint public statement on the occasion of testimony of Goran Stankovic,  
one of the accused police officers in the case of police torture over  
Aleksandar Pejanovic**

**We support the brave appearance of police officer Mr. Goran Stankovic before the court and Montenegrin public. We believe that his testimony will contribute to clarify the case of abuse of Mr. Aleksandar Pejanovic and illegal performance of police officers.**

**Bearing in mind the testimony of police officer Stankovic and the complexity of the case, we believe that all relevant authorities, particularly the Supreme State Prosecutor's office and the Police department, have legal obligation to provide all necessary support and protection to police officer Goran Stankovic against retaliation of any kind.**

**We appreciate that the State prosecutor's office should expand the investigation and urgently, impartially and effectively investigate the allegations of Goran Stankovic on the participation of uniformed persons, which Stankovic has described, and their supervisors in the abuse of Aleksandar Pejanovic.**

**All police officers, suspected of the crime of police torture since the start of the investigation, and especially from the start of prosecution for that offense, had to be suspended – removed from performance of duties.** The Committee against Torture in its concluding observations on Montenegro in 2008, stated that when there is serious doubt for the torture or abuse, the accused must, as a rule, be suspended from performing the service during the procedure, and this requirement of the Committee is in accordance with applicable Law on the police stating that the police officer being processed for a criminal act ex officio is unworthy to carry out service.

**Goran Stankovic must be protected against dismissal and other forms of retaliation.** The Committee against torture has also emphasized that persons who resist unlawful orders or who cooperate in the investigation of torture or ill-treatment, including by superior officials, as in this case, should be protected against retaliation of any kind. Protection of employees who report suspected corruption has also been provided by the Law on State Employees and other Civil Servants.

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**Tea Gorjanc Prelević**, LL.M., programme director, Human Rights Action  
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