

On 19 February 2004 a 26 years old Armenian Army Lieutenant Gurgen Margaryan was hacked to death by Ramil Safarov, a Lieutenant of the Azerbaijani Army, while asleep. Both were participants of the NATO-sponsored "Partnership for Peace" program held in Budapest, Hungary. Having been detained by the Hungarian police, Safarov not only confessed to the act of murder, but also made statements to the effect that he would kill another Armenian as soon as he was set free. On 16 April 2006, a Hungarian court of first instance sentenced Safarov to life imprisonment without the right of appeal until 2036. On 22 February 2007, the Hungarian Cassation court upheld the ruling following an appeal filed by Safarov's lawyer.

Regrettably, this heinous crime has consistently received public praise in Azerbaijan and been cited as an example of patriotism for the Azerbaijani youth from the very first day.

The Government of Armenia has on numerous occasions informed the authorities of Hungary about the environment of glorification and justification surrounding Ramil Safarov's murderous act, actively cultivated in Azerbaijan on all official levels, including that of the President of Azerbaijan.

The Government of Hungary, at the highest levels, has consistently assured the Government of Armenia that it will not take any steps whatsoever, which would result in the termination of the service of justice by the perpetrator of the direful murder, and explicitly excluded any option for the execution of a transfer to Azerbaijan.

However, in defiance of all commitments, Hungary's Ministry of Public Administration and Justice announced on the 31st of August 2012, the authorization to transfer Ramil Safarov to Azerbaijan. The decision has been carried out without delay. Immediately upon his arrival in Baku, the President of Azerbaijan issued a decree granting pardon to Ramil Safarov, and the latter already enjoys freedom in Azerbaijan.

The action and the manner in which the Government of Hungary has acted in respect of this case are a matter of serious concern. Instead of attempts to build the confidence so desperately needed in the region, the government of Hungary has directly exacerbated the situation and endangered the prospects of on-going OSCE-sponsored peace talks between Armenians and Azeris. Through its despicable actions, the Government of Hungary directly and enthusiastically sponsors the Azerbaijani government's fiendish policy, which gives Azeris a license and incentives for the killing of Armenians outside of a setting of war, under an umbrella of not only impunity but also glory.

The Government of Armenia deeply regrets the above decision of the Government of Hungary, considers it an unfriendly act, and suspends its diplomatic relations with Hungary.

The Government of Armenia and its people fully expect Germany, as one of the leading powers in the Euro-Atlantic structures, to express its verdict regarding the actions of Hungary and Azerbaijan.

Berlin, 31.08.12

Embassy of Armenia to Germany