



## PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Megan Reid

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TEL: 416-250-9807

### **Armenians can take Responsibility for our History and our Future by Joining the Conversation**

**July 27, 2016** —Arsinée Khanjian, award winning Canadian-Armenian actress and a Director of the Zoryan Institute, was held for questioning by the police in Armenia today during a demonstration in Yerevan, related to the hostage taking, now in its eleventh day. According to the Armenian Ambassador to Canada, Armen Yeganian, she was released a short time later. There is speculation that her detention was due to her public views of the current situation in Armenia and the social, economic, political forces and environmental issues that shape the Armenian reality. A video of Khanjian expressing her views on CivilNet can be viewed at:

<https://youtu.be/1xqTKEqz9DE>

She expressed that as a member of the Diaspora, she supports the nation building process, but she explained that in the absence of clear information she does not understand what is happening. "This country has been suffering for a long time now from absence of real understanding of how it's being governed," she stated. Khanjian went on to say, "I think the Diaspora is functioning still in its commitment to support Armenia in every way. The Diaspora is terrified of the possibility of ever any civil war or any blood spilled within the country...The Diaspora is...terrified of losing the statehood [of Armenia]."

Ms. Khanjian explained during the interview that upon her arrival in Armenia, her immediate impulse was to visit the demonstration, as she believed that would be the only way she could really understand what was going on.

She further stated: "I think this conversation is a tricky one for me because on the one hand I feel that I want to be involved, at the same time, I want to be involved in a responsible way and in the absence of confirmed information, this makes my own personal ethical decision complicated, but I think this is a risk that I have to take and I think this is a risk that the diaspora has to take. And maybe the diaspora has to, the individuals in the diaspora, they have to put pressure on their own organizations that they belong to or they're around and those organizations don't have to be political parties necessarily, they can be cultural organizations, everyone has to feel that there is something at stake for all of us."

Additionally, she expressed her opinion that while many have left Armenia, those who chose to remain feel that they have something to say about the country's current political state.

Speaking about all Armenians, she declared that "We are responsible [for] our history and not only financially...[but for] our future by being in the conversation constantly."

A video of her detention can be viewed at:

<https://www.facebook.com/CivilNet.TV/videos/1699541286782407/>