

To: Norwegian Helsinki Committee, UN, ICRC, International Aid Agencies based in Tajikistan, Embassies and Diplomatic Missions

From: citizens of Tajikistan from around the world

Date: July 26, 2012

RE: Potential humanitarian crisis in GBAO

Three days have passed since the start of the military action by Tajik military and security forces in Khorog, GBAO and the situation remains uncertain. On 25 July 2012 at around afternoon various independent media, quoting the Governor of GBAO Qodiri Qosim, reported that the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, ordered a cease-fire and a start of peace talks between the governmental commission on the ground and representatives of local authorities and communities. We welcome this development, but at the same time are concerned with the fact that this information has not been confirmed by state-owned television and news agency Khovar. While the cease-fire is maintained, it is not clear if it is a permanent or temporary measure. Some reports by the independent media say that the authorities condition a complete cease-fire and an end to the operation on the surrendering by leaders of local armed groups, and it is feared that if those persons refuse to surrender, the operation will resume, leading to further violence and loss of human lives.

In the circumstances, we urge the international community not to stay aside but to intervene into situation via diplomatic and other channels, demanding from the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan to announce a permanent and complete cease-fire and restore all communication channels.

In addition, we ask the international community, especially aid agencies based in Tajikistan and outside of it, to take contingency measures to address a potential humanitarian crisis in the area. There are unconfirmed reports of scattered corpses on the streets of Khorog, which may lead to epidemics. It is not clear whether those who have been wounded receive adequate first medical aid and aftercare treatment. While roads to Khorog and areas beyond it remain blocked for more than three days, there is an imminent risk that food supplies, which are almost 100% transported by road, will be finished soon and the population will start starving. We request that international community demand from the authorities of the Republic of Tajikistan opening of a humanitarian corridor and organise aid convoys with food and medicines to the area of the conflict. Many of us would volunteer to accompany such convoys and participate in the delivery of aid to the affected population.