

# FREE NIKOL!

*Posted on December 11, 2010 by Keghart*

## *Free Speech* blog

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[Nikol Pashinyan](#) is editor-in-chief of Haykakan Zhamanak (Armenian Times). The 35-year-old journalist is a leader of Armenia's National Congress movement.

Pashinyan was jailed in 2009 during the stormy protests in Yerevan that followed the hotly disputed February 2008 elections and is now serving a 47-month sentence. Despite warnings, he continued to write articles from jail protesting and opposing the present government.

The trial and imprisonment were criticised by Council of Europe, European Union, the United States Government and many other international organisations and foreign governments.

Pashinyan has been subjected to physical and psychological abuse in prison. He has been attacked four times in the last two months. According to reports on 17 November two masked individuals assaulted him while he was asleep. Even before they launched an investigation, prison authorities issued a statement denying the charge, saying that Pashinyan had dreamt it. The journalist presented them with evidence — his bed sheet with footprints of military boots and traces of blood.

Colleagues and editors of major Armenian newspapers and websites organised a protest action in Yerevan urging the Armenian authorities to stop the assaults against Nikol Pashinyan in prison and to release him immediately, running the headline "Free Nikol" on their front pages.

"We call upon our colleagues, journalists and human rights defenders worldwide to support us in our struggle for freedom and justice. We believe that actions of international solidarity will sober the Armenian authorities and empower Armenian civil society in its fight for Armenia without political prisoners," says Isabella Sargsyan from Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Armenian Committee.

You can sign a petition for the release of Nikol Pashinyan [Release Pashinyan](#)

Nouritza Matossian is the Author of [Black Angel, A Life of Arshile Gorky](#) and director of the documentary **Hrant Dink, Heart of Two Nations**.



