**Albanian Helsinki Committee Albanian Human Rights Center**

**Albanian Rehabilitation Center for Trauma and Torture**

**Tirana, October 8, 2012**

**Statement for the Press**

**A Painful Act, Shocking to the Broad Public Opinion**

A group of formerly politically persecuted persons are on a hunger strike since 17 days now. They have made public their demands of an economic nature. The strikers have expressed several times their indignation about the deafness of competent state bodies that did not deign to meet and discuss with them about resolving their demands.

Today, in the morning of October 8, 2012, Gjergj Ndreca, one of the hunger strikers, set himself on fire, attempting self-sacrifice. Meanwhile, the former politically persecuted persons were holding a protest in solidarity with the hunger strike in front of the Parliament’s offices.

The Albanian Helsinki Committee, the Albanian Human Rights Center, and the Albanian Rehabilitation Center for Trauma and Torture express their profound pain and concern about today’s event.

For these reasons, we consider it essential **to call on the Government to evaluate seriously this grave and unprecedented situation and find as soon as possible the possibility for meeting with them.**

**The situation is very serious and it requires immediate solutions.** Any political statement in favor of or against this strike does not solve, on the contrary, it worsens the situation.

**We also suggest to the Assembly that in its next session or an extraordinary session it puts on the table and discuss about this problem, objectively, in order to find the best possible solution.**

**Lastly, we wish to emphasize that the right to life is a fundamental universal right today, guaranteed in the Constitution of Albania and the European Convention of Human Rights. The state has the legal and moral obligation to protect this right.**

**Albanian Helsinki Committee**

**Albanian Human Rights Center**

**Albanian Rehabilitation Center for Trauma and Torture**