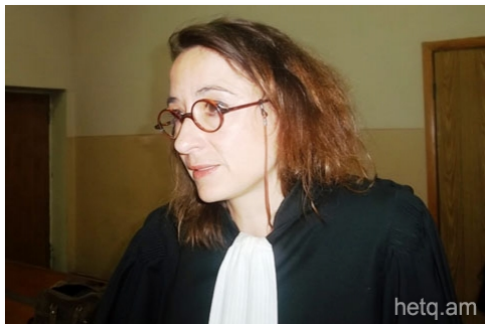




Vardan Petrosyan's French Attorney : "This is Not Justice, this is Revenge"

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French attorney Marie Dosé is defending Armenian actor, comedian Vardan Petrosyan's interests in court. Hetq spoke with Dosé about Petrosyan's case ; and the similarities and differences between justice and legislation in France and Armenia.

During the trial, you said that the legislation is the same in Armenia and France in terms of the criteria for precautionary measures. Can you elaborate?

To deprive someone of liberty, to arrest or prolong his detention, can be done only in the presence of clear criteria, only in exceptional cases. These are [the following]: putting pressure on the victims, repeat offense, avoiding the investigation and trial, and flight risks. In Armenia as well as in France, these criteria are the same.

In French legislation, is the alternative to detention also bail?

Yes, in exchange for a security guarantee and money, a person is not detained. Bail is often used as a precautionary measure in France.

What is your opinion of the investigation and trial in Vardan Petrosyan's case?

Based on the legal standards on the use of detention, Vardan Petrosyan's [pre-trial] detention is definitely unlawful. He was not under the influence of alcohol. He was approved by signature [protocol]. He did not exceed the speed limit and wasn't talking on the phone, so he is not guilty. And it has been two months already that the judge hasn't said why my client continues to remain in prison — because he too doesn't know the reason. The reason simply doesn't exist. In total, Vardan has been imprisoned for 6 months. If you told me that he is being kept in detention because there are two victims, I would say this is no longer democracy, it's not justice, this is more so [seeking] revenge. Madame, the issue is not that there are two victims that a criminal case was launched. It was an unfortunate accident, which might be no one's fault. This is simply drama, and drama is not a crime. It's not right to search for guilty persons in drama.

That is, you think that there should be an acquittal?

First, Vardan Petrosyan, in general should not have been kept in detention because the grounds for this, I repeat, were absent and don't exist now either. The material acquired during the investigation was already sufficient for detention not to have been the precautionary measure that was adopted. He is already innocent — don't you see that?

What is the reaction to Vardan Petrosyan's case in France?

Vardan Petrosyan's case is covered in the French press, and on national television and radio because he is a public figure. Dozens of articles are published about this case in influential newspapers and magazines.

Do you have experience in participating in cases involving road traffic accidents?

Yes, in France, as well as in Armenia, there are such trials every day. But that which I see here... we have to respect the memory of the victims, but it's wrong to connect this to justice.

Are the court proceedings in Armenia similar to those which you see every day in French courtrooms?

No, this seems to be a media circus. Here, justice is viewed as a performance. In France, they respect justice — here [in Armenia], they pollute it. This is my impression.

Attorney Marie Laure Dosé has been covering criminal cases in France for 15 years. She was invited by Vardan Petrosyan and his family to defend Petrosyan's interests in court in Armenia.

The conversation was translated from French to Armenian by Hasmik Khachatryan, while the English version was translated from the Armenian.