

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Amnesty International ends cooperation with Eynulla Fatullayev

Amnesty International regrets that it has been forced to cease cooperation with former prisoner of conscience and Azerbaijani journalist Eynulla Fatullayev after he misled the organization about the source of funding for a project he had requested Amnesty International involvement in.

The organization campaigned for Eynulla Fatullayev's release for four years, after he was imprisoned on defamation charges in 2007. His case highlighted a long-term government offensive against critical journalists, bloggers and activists in Azerbaijan which continues unabated today.

In December 2012, Fatullayev invited several human rights experts, including a spokesperson from Amnesty International, to take part in a research project on human rights abuses in Germany, stating that the project was funded by the Black Sea Trust of the German Marshall Foundation.

He invited experts to join an all expenses paid trip to Brussels to speak at the launch of his report.

Amnesty International believed it unlikely that the Black Sea Trust would spend tens of thousands of Euros on a project on Germany as opposed to the Black Sea countries it was established for, and therefore declined to send a speaker to the Brussels event and contacted the Trust.

Despite this, Fatullayev circulated an agenda which included details of a speaker from Amnesty International. He also tried to attract support for the event by claiming Amnesty International's involvement.

The Black Sea Trust have since confirmed that they had no involvement in the project. Despite repeated requests, Fatullayev has been unwilling to disclose the true source of his funding. In light of this, Amnesty International has decided to discontinue any collaboration with Eynulla Fatullayev and his organization, the Azerbaijani Public Union for Human Rights. Any claims made by Mr. Fatullayev that Amnesty International is supporter or partner organization for his activities should be disregarded.

Eynulla Fatullayev has since issued a statement in which he claims Amnesty International is opposed to his project's criticism of Germany's human rights record. This is not the case. Amnesty International has issued a number of critical reports on human rights abuses in Germany. Indeed, Amnesty International stands by the criticisms made by the representative of its German office during an interview given to Fatullayev's organization

While Amnesty International believes his attempt to portray the extent and gravity of human rights abuses in Germany as on a par with violations in Azerbaijan is misleading, the organization entirely respects his right to express his views, on Germany or any other country.

Amnesty International considers this matter an unwelcome distraction from the grave human rights concerns in Azerbaijan being discussed at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) this week. On Wednesday PACE will vote on two resolutions calling on the Azerbaijani government to end its policy of using harassment, assault and imprisonment to silence critical voices, just as they did against Eynulla Fatullayev.

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