

# URGENT ACTION

**PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE IN NEED OF URGENT CARE**  
**Azerbaijani prisoner of conscience Arif Yunus had to receive emergency medical treatment during the court hearing on his case, on 3 August. He and his wife Leyla Yunus, also a prisoner of conscience, are facing trumped-up criminal charges stemming from their legitimate human rights work. Azerbaijani authorities restricted access to the courtroom for international observers and journalists.**

The hearing on the case of Azerbaijani prisoners of conscience, **Arif Yunus** and **Leyla Yunus**, was scheduled at the Grave Crimes Court in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, on 3 August. Shortly after the beginning of the hearing, Arif Yunus fainted as a result of high blood pressure. An ambulance was called to provide first-aid and the hearing was postponed. Arif Yunus was transported back to the prison of the Ministry of National Security after he regained consciousness. The hearing resumed on 5 August. According to his lawyer, Arif Yunus was still feeling very weak and had to receive several injections during the hearing in order to be able to stay in the courtroom until the end of the proceedings on that day.

Arif Yunus and his wife Leyla Yunus have been detained since the summer of 2014 on trumped-up criminal charges, including a charge of treason and charges related to financial irregularities. On 6 August the prosecutor asked the Court to sentence Leyla Yunus to 11 years in prison and Arif Yunus to nine years in prison.

Arif Yunus's health has been deteriorating in detention. In April 2014, he lost consciousness, and later had two strokes. Arif Yunus's family fear that he could have another stroke after the 3 August incident. Leyla Yunus is also in poor health. She has been diagnosed with diabetes and hepatitis C and has reduced vision in her left eye. The authorities refuse to transfer Leyla Yunus and Arif Yunus to a hospital, or put them under house arrest.

The Azerbaijani authorities have been restricting access to the courtroom. On 3 August some journalists were not allowed into the courtroom and some interpreters for representatives of foreign embassies who were there to monitor the trial, were also denied entry due to "lack of available space". According to a family member of Leyla Yunus and Arif Yunus, the courtroom was filled in advance with unknown people presenting themselves as "relatives" of Leyla Yunus and Arif Yunus.

**Please write immediately in Azerbaijani, English or your own language:**

- Calling on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Arif Yunus and Leyla Yunus, and to drop all charges against them;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that Arif Yunus and Leyla Yunus urgently receive all the necessary medical treatment, and, pending their release, are transferred to hospital if required.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 SEPTEMBER 2015 TO:**

President  
 Ilham Aliyev  
 19 Istiqlaliyyat Street  
 Baku AZ1066, Azerbaijan  
 Fax: + 994 12 492 0625  
 Email: office@pa.gov.az  
**Salutation: Dear President Aliyev**

Prosecutor General  
 Zakir Qaralov  
 7 Rafibeyli Street  
 Baku AZ1001, Azerbaijan  
 Email: info@prosecutor.gov.az  
**Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General**

**And copies to:**  
Minister of National Security  
 Eldar Mahmudov  
 2 Parliament Avenue  
 Baku AZ1006, Azerbaijan  
 Fax: +994 12 493 7622  
 E-mail: cpr@mns.gov.az  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:**

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the fifth update of UA 182/14. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur55/021/2014/en/>

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Leyla Yunus is the President of the Azerbaijani NGO, the Institute for Peace and Democracy. She was arrested on 30 July 2014 on the charges of treason (purportedly spying for Armenia), tax evasion, forgery, fraud, and illegal business in relation to a grant received by her NGO which she had been prevented by the authorities from registering. Her husband, Arif Yunus, was arrested on 5 August. Arif Yunus is also facing criminal charges of treason, tax evasion and fraud in connection with his involvement in the activities of the Institute for Peace and Democracy.

Amnesty International has longstanding concerns about the Azerbaijani authorities' failure to respect their international obligations to protect the rights to freedoms of expression, association and assembly. Dissenting voices in the country frequently face trumped-up criminal charges, physical assault, harassment, blackmail and other reprisals from the authorities and groups associated with them. Law-enforcement officials regularly use torture and other ill-treatment against detained civil society activists, with impunity.

Amnesty International has recognized at least 20 people as prisoners of conscience in Azerbaijan, jailed solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression. For more information, see *Azerbaijan: the Repression Games: The voices you won't hear at the first European Games* (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur55/1732/2015/en/>), *Azerbaijan: Guilty of Defending Rights: Azerbaijan's human rights defenders and activists behind bars* (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur55/1077/2015/en/>) and *Behind bars: Silencing dissent in Azerbaijan* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR55/004/2014/en>).

Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, hosted the inaugural European Games in June 2015. The 2015 European Games was the first major multi-sport event for Europe and involved around 6,000 European athletes. Representatives of Amnesty International, as well as several other international human rights organizations and international media, were barred from entering Azerbaijan ahead of the launch of the European Games.

Shortly before her arrest, on 25 July 2014, Leyla Yunus organized a press conference at which she called for an international boycott of the European Games because of Azerbaijan's dire human rights record.

Name: Arif Yunus, Leyla Yunus

Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 182/14 Index: EUR 55/2228/2015 Issue Date: 6 August 2014