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The unsavoury human rights record of 2012 Eurovision host Azerbaijan

Ahead of the 2012 Eurovision singing competition in Baku, Amnesty International is urging host Azerbaijan to address the unsavoury truth of its record on human rights and release 16 prisoners of conscience held since April 2011 in the wake of anti-government protests.

“Azerbaijan will no doubt offer an opulent stage to voices from across Europe, but outside the concert hall, few critical voices are tolerated. Opposition protests have effectively been criminalised. Peaceful protesters have been detained, while journalists and NGOs have faced threats and harassment,” said John Dalhuisen, Europe and Central Asia Deputy Programme Director.

Amnesty International’s briefing, [*Azerbaijan: No more running scared: 2012 EUROVISION host country Azerbaijan must allow all voices to be heard*](#), summarizes the organization’s human rights concerns in the country.

“Corruption and forced evictions, torture and ill-treatment, unfair trials and harassment – these all go unpunished, while restrictions on freedom of expression tie the hands of civil society activists,” John Dalhuisen said.

“For much too long the international community has been turning a blind eye to repression in Azerbaijan. The 2012 EUROVISION song contest should lift the glitzy curtains and expose human rights abuses to millions of people.”

For more information and to arrange an interview with Amnesty International experts and Azerbaijani activists please contact:

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