

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST DETAINED ON TRUMPED-UP CHARGES

Intigam Aliyev, a prominent Azerbaijani human rights defender, has been placed on three months' pre-trial detention on trumped up charges. Amnesty International considers Intigam Aliyev a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his work as a human rights defender.

Intigam Aliyev, head of the NGO Legal Education Society, was summoned on 8 August to the Prosecutor General's Office of Azerbaijan as a witness in a criminal case against a number of NGOs. He was detained later that day, while police searched his home and office, confiscating equipment such as laptops and reports containing information on his work as a human rights defender.

The same day Nasimi regional court in Baku ordered three months pre-trial detention of Aliyev on charges of tax avoidance (article 213.1), illegal entrepreneurship (article 192.2.2) and "abuse of power entailing grave consequences" (article 308.2) under Azerbaijan's Criminal Code.

Intigam Aliyev is one of the few human rights defenders in Azerbaijan who have provided legal assistance and representation to the victims of politically motivated persecution and submitted some of these cases to the European Court of Human Rights. Intigam Aliyev was also one of a group of experts and human rights defenders who compiled a list of politically motivated arrests in Azerbaijan and cooperated with international organizations to demand their release.

Please write immediately in Azeri, English or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to release Intigam Aliyev immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his work in defence of human rights;
- Urging them to stop harassing and persecuting human rights defenders and civil society organizations;
- Insisting on full respect for, and protection of, the right to freedom of expression in Azerbaijan.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 SEPTEMBER 2014 TO:

President

Ilham Aliyev
Office of the President of Azerbaijan
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

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.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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.

Independent human rights and pro-democracy organizations have long faced harassment and severe restrictions in Azerbaijan. In the latest move, the Azerbaijani authorities have reportedly frozen the personal and organizational bank accounts of leading human rights organizations, including of Media Rights Institute; Democracy and Human Rights Centre; the Human Rights Union, Azerbaijani Lawyers Association; Institute for Reporters Freedom and Safety (IRFS) and others. The IRFS premises were also raided and sealed off by the authorities on 11 August, in absence of any explanation, sanction or court decision.

Over the past few years, the European Court of Human Rights has issued several decisions finding the Azerbaijani authorities responsible for violating the right to freedom of association by arbitrarily denying or delaying the registration of NGOs. NGO leaders often have no choice but to operate behind this strict legal framework, especially when it comes to receiving and registering grants. This is then used by the authorities to instigate criminal case against them based on financial irregularities.

Amnesty International has documented dozens of cases like that of Intigam Aliyev and has recognized at least 21 people as prisoners of conscience in Azerbaijan, jailed solely for their peaceful attempts to exercise their right to freedom of expression and association.

For more information, see: *Behind bars: Silencing dissent in Azerbaijan* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR55/004/2014/en>).

Name: Intigam Aliyev
Gender m/f: m

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