

URGENT ACTION

JAILED ACADEMIC'S HEALTH IN PERIL

Gubad Ibadoghlu is a renowned economist and political activist. On 23 July 2023, the Azerbaijani authorities detained him on fabricated charges in an apparent retaliation for his criticism of the government. He suffers from serious health issues including diabetes and heart conditions. Gubad Ibadoghlu's health has severely deteriorated in custody as he is not receiving adequate health care. According to his family, his health may reach a critical point soon, unless he is released and allowed to access necessary health care.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Ilham Aliyev
President of Azerbaijan
Office of the President of Azerbaijan
19 Istiqlaliyyat Street
Baku AZ1066, Azerbaijan
Email: office@pa.gov.az

Dear President,

I am writing to demand the immediate and unconditional release of Gubad Ibadoghlu, a prominent academic and political activist. He is being targeted for his anti-corruption work and criticism of the Azerbaijani authorities, and was detained on 23 July 2023 on fabricated charges. He remains in Kurdakhani detention centre, where his health is deteriorating due to poor conditions and lack of adequate healthcare.

According to his family, he has not been provided with adequate medicine and treatment for his diabetes and heart conditions. They fear that his health may reach a critical point soon, putting his life in danger. The International Committee of the Red Cross have not been granted access to Gubad Ibadoghlu raising further concerns that the state of his health and his conditions are very poor and being concealed by the government.

In February, Gubad Ibadoghlu was able to communicate through his lawyer from prison:

"My window-less cell is damp, bad smelling and humid, infested with different kinds of insects. I remain unable to access fresh food and clean water. My miserable living conditions and my tormented environment contributed to my declining health. I am suffering from high levels of sugar in blood and aortic aneurysm (extension in the aortic vein in my heart). I am forced to switch to insulin injections with a very high dose, 22 units, in a day. My pulse is usually higher than 110 per minute. I have soaring pain in my lower back ..."

Gubad Ibadoghlu has not committed any crime and the charges against him are trumped up. The conditions of his detention and the denial of adequate health care may amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

I urge you to take steps that will ensure Gubad Ibadoghlu's immediate and unconditional release. I also urge you to ensure that he is provided immediately with the health care he requires and is protected from torture and other ill-treatment. I also urge you to end the misuse of the criminal justice system in Azerbaijan to target government criticism and dissent.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Gubad Ibadoghlu is a well-known Azerbaijani economist and political activist. He is the chairperson of the Azerbaijan Democracy and Prosperity Movement, established in 2014 that has been arbitrarily denied registration as a political party by the Azerbaijani authorities. He was a senior visiting scholar at the London School of Economic and led the Economic Research Center, an NGO that conducted research on public finance management, good governance, and budget transparency. The Azerbaijani authorities arbitrarily forcibly closed the Economic Research Center and froze its bank accounts in 2014, as part of widespread restrictions on Azerbaijan's civil society. Gubad Ibadoghlu went into political exile in 2017 but returned to Azerbaijan in 2023, to visit his family.

On 23 July 2023, police officers arrested Gubad Ibadoghlu and his wife, Irada Bayramova, while they were driving to meet youth activists from the Azerbaijan Democracy and Prosperity Movement in Sumgayit, a city that is about 40 kilometres from capital Baku. Four unmarked cars surrounded their vehicle at about 1pm and forced it to stop by ramming it from the front and the rear.

According to their child, Zhala Bayramova, 20 plain-clothed officers "forced the couple out of their car, and physically assaulted them, then forced them into separate cars and drove them to the Interior Ministry's Organized Crime Unit in Baku". After being released at 7pm, Irada Bayramova had multiple bruises to her arms, legs and back. Gubad Ibadoghlu has filed a complaint about their ill-treatment, which was left unaddressed. According to the Azerbaijani Ministry of Interior official statement made on 23 July 2023, the arrest of several people, including Gubad Ibadoghlu, is a part of an operation against supporters of Fethullah Gülen, the exiled Turkish cleric who the Turkish authorities along with his supporters, have designated as "terrorist organization." Police allegedly seized US\$ 40,000 in cash, amongst other things, from the office of the Economic Research Center. They also raided Gubad Ibadoghlu and Irada Bayramova's home and briefly detained Ibadoghlu's brother, Gabid Baymalov.

On 2 August 2023, the Baku Court dismissed Gubad Ibadoghlu's complaint regarding unlawful search of his home. He remains in pre-trial detention since his arrest in July 2023- for over eight months now. On February 15, 2024 the court in Baku further extended his pre-trial detention by another three months with the new trial date set for May 20th.

According to his family, Gubad Ibadoghlu's medical conditions include heart disease, type 2 diabetes, kidney disease, severe lower back pain, and his health is fast deteriorating. According to his family, while his blood sugar levels and general health conditions have sharply worsened, he has not had appropriate medical examinations to determine the causes and the correct treatment plan. He is also not given some of the medication he was regularly taking before his arrest, while other medications are given on an irregular schedule which increases his risk of a stroke and of developing further heart disease and other life-threatening conditions.

Gubad Ibadoghlu's unfounded prosecution is part of the Azerbaijani authorities' ongoing crackdown on human rights defenders, government critics, [independent media](#) and [all dissent](#). Criticism of the authorities is routinely met with repression, and those who dare to challenge the government face trumped up charges, unfair trials and lengthy prison sentences. Amnesty International has documented previously how [the Azerbaijani authorities sought to rid the country of all critical voices ahead of major international events Azerbaijan was hosting](#). This is a familiar pattern observed ahead of the 2024 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 29) which the country will host in November 2024 in capital Baku.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Azeri, English, Russian

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 27 May 2024

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Gubad Ibadoghlu (he/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur55/7530/2023/en/>