

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ADVISORY

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Eurovision contestants unite to demand Azerbaijan respects freedom of expression

- **Amnesty International to publish interactive briefing on repression in Eurovision 2012 host country**
- **Mass Twitter campaign calling on authorities to respect freedom of expression**

Musicians from across Europe, including former Eurovision winners and contestants, join with Amnesty International to demand the authorities in Azerbaijan respect freedom of expression.

The capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, will host this year's Eurovision competition on 22-26 May 2012.

On Monday 2 April, Amnesty International is launching a mass Twitter and Facebook campaign calling on the European Broadcasting Union – organizers of Eurovision - to do more to ensure the authorities in Azerbaijan respect human rights.

Exactly one year after scores of peaceful protesters were arrested during an anti-government demonstration, 14 remain behind bars, Amnesty International is stepping up its campaign for their immediate release.

Max Tucker, Amnesty International's campaigner on Azerbaijan said:

“The Eurovision Song Contest celebrates free expression, and the organizers claim to champion media freedom. Yet Azerbaijan has one of the worst environments for media and free expression in Europe. Ordinary Azeris struggling to speak freely have been living in an atmosphere of fear for the past twenty years.”

“The Azerbaijani government has spent millions of dollars on preparing to host Eurovision 2012, and is eager for the event to be a success. The European Broadcasting Union therefore has a unique opportunity to demand the government respects freedom of expression beyond the short period when the rest of Europe is watching in May. That would be a genuine legacy for this year's competition.”

Former Eurovision contestants from Denmark, Finland, Holland, Iceland, Norway, Poland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom have signed up to the campaign, as have artists from Bulgaria, Germany, and Azerbaijan itself.

For further information on the campaign or to request a copy of the briefing or an interview please contact:

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