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Azerbaijan, notably the repression of civil society and the cases of Dr Gubad Ibadoghlu and Ilhamiz Guliyev

European Parliament resolution of 25 April 2024 on Azerbaijan, notably the repression of civil society and the cases of Dr Gubad Ibadoghlu and Ilhamiz Guliyev (2024/2698(RSP))

(C/2025/3706)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its previous resolutions on Azerbaijan,

— having regard to Rules 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas Azerbaijan has intensified its repression of civil society, activists and the remaining independent media, such as Abzas Media, through detentions and judicial harassment; whereas civil society organisations currently list nearly 300 political prisoners in Azerbaijan; whereas Freedom House's 2024 Freedom in the World index ranks Azerbaijan among the least free countries in the world, below Russia and Belarus;

B. whereas Gubad Ibadoghlu, a political economist and opposition figure, was arrested by Azerbaijani authorities in July 2023 and remained in detention until 22 April 2024, when he was transferred to house arrest; whereas his health has deteriorated significantly since his arrest, as a result of torture, inhumane detention conditions and refusal of adequate medical care, thus endangering his life;

C. whereas Ilhamiz Guliyev, a human rights defender, was arbitrarily arrested on 4 December 2023 on dubious accusations of drug trafficking after he testified as whistleblower about the police tampering with evidence against government critics; whereas he is facing up to 12 years in prison;

1. Urges Azerbaijan to immediately and unconditionally release Ilhamiz Guliyev; notes that Gubad Ibadoghlu has been released and placed under house arrest and calls on the authorities to lift the travel ban and drop all charges against him; calls on Azerbaijan to urgently ensure that he receives an independent medical examination by a doctor of his own choosing and to allow him to receive treatment abroad;

2. Urges Azerbaijan to immediately and unconditionally release all other political prisoners, including Tofig Yagublu, Akif Gurbanov, Bakhtiyar Hajiyev, human rights defenders and journalists Ulvi Hasanli, Sevinj Vagifgizi, Nargiz Absalamova, Hafiz Babali, Elnara Gasimova, Aziz Orujov, Rufat Muradli, Avaz Zeynalli, Elnur Shukurov, Alasgar Mammadli, Farid Ismayilov, as well as EU and other nationals;

3. Reminds the Azerbaijani authorities of their obligations to respect human dignity and fundamental freedoms and calls on them to repeal repressive legislation that drives independent non-governmental organisations and media to the margins of the law;

4. Considers that the ongoing human rights violations in Azerbaijan are incompatible with the country's preparations to host COP29; demands that the organisers ensure that human rights, fundamental freedoms and effective civil society participation are fully enshrined and guaranteed in the Host Country Agreement;

5. Calls on the Commission to consider suspending the strategic partnership with Azerbaijan in the field of energy; insists on making any future partnership agreement conditional on the release of all political prisoners and the improvement of the overall human rights situation in the country;

6. Calls on the EU Special Representative for Human Rights to request meetings with political prisoners in Azerbaijan;

7. Reiterates its call for EU sanctions under its global human rights sanctions regime to be imposed on Azerbaijani officials who have committed serious human rights violations;

8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Member States and the President, Government and Parliament of Azerbaijan.