

Urgent Action Office 3-1992 Yonge Street Toronto ON M4S 1Z7 Phone: (416) 363-9933 Fax: (416) 363-3103 urgentaction@amnesty.ca
Second UA: 77/23 Index: EUR 55/7530/2023 Azerbaijan of December 12, 2023

AZERBAIJAN

JAILED ACADEMIC, GUBAD IBADOGHLU'S HEALTH DETERIORATES

Gubad Ibadoghlu is a renowned political economist and civil activist. On July 23, 2023, the Azerbaijani authorities detained him on fabricated charges of the production, acquisition, or sale of counterfeit money by an organized group. The authorities have then added charges related to "extremism". His arrest and prosecution are an apparent retaliation for his criticism of the government, as well as his political and civic activities. One of the most recent of these activities was helping set up a foundation for Azerbaijani students seeking funding from assets seized from Azerbaijani nationals under UK anti-corruption legislation. Gubad Ibadoghlu has major health issues including Type 2 diabetes and hypertension. His life is at risk while in pretrial detention.

Write to the President of Azerbaijan urging him to:

- Take steps that will ensure Gubad Ibadoghlu's immediate and unconditional release.
- Ensure that he is provided immediately with necessary medical care and is protected from torture and other ill-treatment.
- Ensure an effective investigation into the alleged fabrication of charges and evidence, and when evidence warrants so, prosecute those responsible for those specific acts of miscarriage of justice. |
- End the misuse of the criminal justice system in Azerbaijan to target peaceful criticism and dissent.

Write to:

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

And copy:

Mr. Vasif Cingiz Oglu ABUTALIBOV
Chargé d'affaires, a.i.
Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan
275 Slater Street, Suite 1203
Ottawa, ON K1P 5H9
Tel: (613) 288-0497 Fax: (613) 230-8089
Email: reception@azembassy.ca

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Gubad Ibadoghlu is a well-known Azerbaijani economist and politician. He is the chairperson of the Azerbaijan Democracy and Prosperity Movement, established in 2014. The movement 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 July 23, police officers arrested Gubad Ibadoghlu and his wife while they were driving to meet youth activists from the Azerbaijan Democracy and Prosperity Movement in Sumgayit, a city that is about 40 kilometers 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 daughter, 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 on her arms, legs and back. Gubad Ibadoghlu has filed a complaint about their ill-treatment.

According to the Azerbaijani Ministry of Interior official statement made on July 23, 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 August 2, the Baku Court dismissed Ibadoghlu's complaint regarding unlawful search of his home. The Azerbaijani authorities extended his pretrial detention by three months on November 16, until February 24, 2024.

Gubad Ibadoghlu's medical conditions include heart disease, type 2 diabetes, kidney diseases, jugular vein distention, stomach ulcers and 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 increasing his risk of a stroke and other life-threatening conditions.

The European Parliament adopted a resolution calling for Gubad Ibadoghlu's release on September 14 2023. The European Court of Human Rights acknowledging the imminent risk of irreparable harm also issued interim measures under Rule 39.

Gubad Ibadoghlu is the author of numerous academic publications and articles critical of Azerbaijan and its international partners, including the EU, COE.

*Please send your appeals until **February 24, 2024**. If there's the need for further action after that date, the UA will be duly updated.*