

Resolution on Azerbaijan

2011/2685(RSP) - 12/05/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Azerbaijan.

The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ALDE, ECR and Greens/ALE.

Parliament expresses its deep concern at the **increasing number of incidents of harassment, attacks and violence against civil society and social network activists and journalists** in Azerbaijan. It also strongly deplores the practice of intimidating, arresting, prosecuting and convicting independent journalists and political activists on various criminal charges.

The resolution raises the case of Mr Savalan, a member of the youth group of the Azerbaijan Popular Front Party (APFP), and Mr Hajiyevev, an activist and former parliamentary candidate, who were apparently targeted for using Facebook to call for demonstrations against the government: Mr Savalan was sentenced to two and a half years in prison for allegedly possessing drugs, whilst Mr Hajiyevev now faces two years in jail for allegedly evading military service.

Parliament calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to release Mr Savalan and Mr Hajiyevev and to drop the charges against them and to release all members of the opposition, youth activists and bloggers remaining in custody after the peaceful demonstrations of 11 March and 2 and 17 April 2011.

The Azerbaijani governments is called upon to:

- respect the international conventions ratified by the government and respect freedom of expression;
- safeguard the fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and other international treaties to which the Republic of Azerbaijan is a party;
- safeguard all necessary conditions to allow the media to operate, so that journalists can work and report freely without any pressure;
- take all steps to allow individuals to freely engage in peaceful, democratic activities and to allow activists to organise freely and without government interference;
- allow peaceful demonstrations to take place in relevant locations and to refrain from intimidating the organisers by detaining them and charging them with criminal and other offences.

Parliament calls for renewed efforts by Azerbaijan to implement in full during its final year the ENP Action Plan and calls on the Commission to continue to assist Azerbaijan in such efforts. It welcomes the establishment of the new subcommittees of the EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Committee, which will strengthen the institutional framework for discussions in the field of justice, freedom and security and on respect for human rights and democracy.