

Resolution on Azerbaijan, notably the repression of civil society and the cases of Dr Gubad Ibadoglu and Ilhamiz Guliyev

2024/2698(RSP) - 25/04/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 474 votes to 4, with 51 abstentions, a resolution on Azerbaijan, notably the repression of civil society and the cases of Dr Gubad Ibadoglu and Ilhamiz Guliyev.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA and the Left groups.

Freedom House's 2024 Freedom in the World index ranks Azerbaijan among the least free countries in the world, below Russia and Belarus.

Azerbaijan has intensified its repression of civil society, activists and the remaining independent media, such as Abzas Media, through detentions and judicial harassment. Civil society organisations currently list nearly 300 political prisoners in Azerbaijan.

Gubad Ibadoglu, 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. 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.

Against this background, Parliament urged Azerbaijan to:

- immediately and unconditionally release Ilhamiz Guliyev and lift the travel ban and drop all charges against Gubad Ibadoglu;
- urgently ensure that he receives an independent medical examination by a doctor of his own choosing and to allow him to receive treatment abroad;
- immediately and unconditionally release all other political prisoners, human rights defenders and journalists as well as EU and other nationals;
- repeal repressive legislation that drives independent non-governmental organisations and media to the margins of the law.

Members considered that the ongoing human rights violations in Azerbaijan are incompatible with the country's preparations to host COP29.

The Commission is called on to consider suspending the strategic partnership with Azerbaijan in the field of energy. Parliament also insisted 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.

Lastly, Members called for EU sanctions under its global human rights sanctions regime to be imposed on Azerbaijani officials who have committed serious human rights violations.