Resolution on the arbitrary arrest and sentencing of academics Bahruz Samadov and Igbal Abilov in Azerbaijan

2025/3028(RSP) - 18/12/2025 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 477 votes to 7, with 69 abstentions, a resolution on the arbitrary arrest and sentencing of academics Bahruz Samadov and Igbal Abilov in Azerbaijan.

Since the beginning of 2025, the number of political prisoners in Azerbaijan has surged to almost 400 individuals, arbitrarily detained on politically motivated charges, among them civil society activists, opposition leaders, journalists, academics, and human rights defenders.

Igbal Abilov, a Talysh ethnic minority researcher and editor-in-chief of Talysh National Academy News, and Bahruz Samadov, a PhD student at Charles University, were sentenced to 18 and 15 years' imprisonment respectively on charges of high treason. The trials of both academics were held behind closed doors, in violation of international fair trial standards and the presumption of innocence. The alleged evidence consisted solely of contacts and exchanges with Armenian scholars.

Parliament strongly condemned the arrest, prosecution and sentencing of Bahruz Samadov and Igbal Abilov on politically motivated charges and called for their immediate and unconditional release. It expressed particular alarm at the misuse of national security provisions as tools for judicial harassment, intimidation, and the criminalisation of freedom of expression, peace advocacy and public criticism. Members also expressed deep concern at the continuing erosion of academic freedoms and cultural rights in Azerbaijan.

The resolution called on Azerbaijan to align its legislation with international human rights standards. It also urged the EU to consider **targeted sanctions** against responsible officials and to further support human rights and democratic governance in Azerbaijan.

Lastly, Parliament called for close monitoring of the cases by the EU Delegation in Baku and for progress on any future partnership agreement to be **conditional on tangible advances** in human rights, the rule of law and respect for EU values and principles.