



Joint statement by

- the Chair of the Delegation for relations with the South Caucasus, MEP Marina KALJURAND, and
- the European Parliament's Standing Rapporteur on Azerbaijan, MEP Željana ZOVKO,

on the arrest of Gubad Ibadoghlu and the further deterioration of the human rights situation in Azerbaijan

Brussels, 21 August 2023 - *“We are seriously concerned by the arrest and rapidly deteriorating health of Mr Gubad Ibadoghlu, a well-known Azerbaijani scholar and opposition leader. Mr Ibadoghlu was arrested on 23 July 2023 on counterfeiting charges and remains in detention, reportedly with limited access to food and vitally needed medication, subject to humiliating treatment and strict limitations of contacts with his family and lawyer, in violation of his fundamental rights. We call on the Azerbaijani authorities to provide him with urgently needed health care and medication without delay and we call for his immediate release.*”

The case of Gubad Ibadoghlu highlights the state of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Azerbaijan and its further deterioration in recent months, as noted in the European Parliament’s resolution of 15 March 2023. Credible independent organisations currently list as many as 200 political prisoners in Azerbaijan, detained based on doubtful charges, including opposition politicians, as well as well-known independent journalists and civil rights activists, such as Polad Aslanov and Bakhtiyar Hajiyev. In this context, we deplore also the ongoing criminal case against prominent human rights lawyer Elchin Sadiqov and the suspension of his bar license as of 6 July 2023. We urge the immediate release of all political prisoners and the dropping of all politically motivated charges.

We call on the Azerbaijani authorities to uphold fundamental freedoms and human rights and we note that their continuous failure to do so significantly harms the country’s international image and credibility.”

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