



‘No More Business As Usual’ for Azerbaijan

Coalition of Human Rights Organizations Call for the Immediate Release of Azerbaijan’s Political Prisoners

BRUSSELS -- November 11, Azerbaijan’s six-month chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Europe’s top human rights body, comes to an end this week. During this period Azerbaijan unleashed an unprecedented crackdown against civil society—including the imprisonment of human rights defenders and political activists who criticized the government.

International Partnership for Human Rights -- Civic Solidarity Platform member joins the Civic Solidarity Platform’s call to the Council of Europe to put real pressure on Azerbaijan to reverse its actions and release all those who have been imprisoned on unfounded charges.

“The chairmanship turned into a demonstration of strength for the Azerbaijani government. It showed that evil can be stronger than values. The government used the chairmanship in an organization which is based on human rights to prove to its citizens, and to the world, that money and power trump values.” It is time to save these values, the commitments and the soul of the Council of Europe. Now,” said Azeri investigative journalist, Khadija Ismayilova.

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland, and its democratic member states must confront Azerbaijan and consider punitive measures in response to this crackdown. To date the Council of Europe has responded with nothing more than statements of condemnation. Azerbaijan actions are an attack to European institutions and values, and this must not go unnoticed.

Those imprisoned during Azerbaijan’s chairmanship (14 May – 13 November 2014) include:

- Anar Mammadli, election monitor who received the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize.
- Leyla Yunus, justice advocate who received the French Legion of Honor.
- Rasul Jafarov, campaigner who criticized Azerbaijan at the Council of Europe and compiled with Leyla Yunus a list of 100 political prisoners in Azerbaijan.
- Intigam Aliyev, human rights lawyer who criticized Azerbaijan at the Council of Europe

Please watch *No More Business As Usual for Azerbaijan* here: <http://youtu.be/t2sjdYGGbAk>

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