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Mass arrests and abuse of LGBTI people in Azerbaijan

Written declaration No. 640

This written declaration does not reflect the position of the Assembly; only of those members that have signed it. It will not be considered further by the Assembly.

In September 2017, police in Baku are reported to have arrested approximately 80 members of the LGBTI community. The authorities have explained the arrests as a crackdown on prostitution, partly for public health reasons. Local activists and lawyers describe indiscriminate arrests of gay men and transgender women in organised raids on apartments and bars, as well as arrests on the street.

Fear of further punishment has made it difficult to document the full extent and circumstances of the arrests. However, information from some detainees record beatings, verbal abuse, forced medical examinations, and the shaving of transgender women's heads. Some were reportedly released only after giving up the addresses of other LGBTI persons, who were in turn arrested. Some were sentenced to 20 or 30 days of administration detention.

We call upon the Azerbaijani authorities to launch a full and effective investigation into these events and to put in place comprehensive initiatives to ensure that members of the LGBTI community are not subjected to discriminatory treatment in future, including anti-discrimination legislation, training for law enforcement officials, and wider awareness raising in society, consistent with the Committee of Ministers' recommendation on combating discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

BRUYN Piet, De, Belgium, NR
BEUS RICHEMBERGH Goran, Croatia, ALDE
BİLGEHAN Gülsün, Turkey, SOC
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ESTRELA Edite, Portugal, SOC
HIGGINS Alice-Mary, Ireland, SOC
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ORELLANA Luis Alberto, Italy, SOC
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THIÉRY Damien, Belgium, ALDE
TORNARE Manuel, Switzerland, SOC
VERCAMER Stefaan, Belgium, EPP/CD

Total = 20

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group