

Doc. 15646

25 October 2022

Growth in number of political prisoners in Azerbaijan

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Maurizio BUCCARELLA and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

The growing persecution of journalists, human rights defenders and oppositionists in Azerbaijan, and the corresponding increase in the number of political prisoners there, is worrying.

On 10 September 2022, journalist Avaz Zeynalli and human rights lawyer Elchin Sadigov were detained on trumped-up charges. Despite calls from the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, to immediately release and stop the politically motivated persecution of Zeynalli and Sadigov, a day later the authorities detained another journalist Elnur Shukurov.

Despite journalistic organisations' appeals, the authorities imposed a 4-months arrest on Zeynalli and Shukurov, and a 4-months house arrest on Sadigov.

In mid-2022, journalist Abid Gafarov was imprisoned on fabricated defamation charges. Similarly, the Azerbaijani authorities initiated three criminal cases against oppositionist Ali Aliyev.

In May 2022, blogger Rashad Ramazanov was arrested on trumped-up charges.

Zeynalli and Ramazanov are former political prisoners. After being released, they resumed their journalistic activities, leading to new persecution by the Azerbaijani authorities. Former and other political prisoners also receive threats of criminal prosecution from the authorities.

The authorities continue to persecute their critics outside Azerbaijan. On 2 October 2022, Azerbaijani journalist and human rights defender, now Ukrainian citizen, Elkhan Nuriyev, was detained by Polish law-enforcement agencies on a politically motivated Interpol request of Azerbaijan, which demands his immediate extradition, which poses a real threat to his life and safety.

The Parliamentary Assembly should carefully consider and study the existing cases of political prisoners in Azerbaijan.

The Assembly should call on the Government of Azerbaijan to comply with the European Convention on Human Rights and release all political prisoners, as this is a fundamental obligation of Azerbaijan assumed when joining the Council of Europe.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

BUCCARELLA Maurizio, Italy, SOC
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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