

URGENT ACTION

ALL LGBTI PEOPLE DETAINED IN MASS RAIDS RELEASED

All LGBTI persons detained during the raids carried out across Baku on 23 September have been released. The authorities must ensure prompt, impartial, thorough and effective investigations are carried out into the mass raids and all allegations of torture and ill-treatment of persons while in custody.

On 2 October, all LGBTI people detained in the mass raids carried out across Baku were released. More than 100 LGBTI individuals were rounded up by the police in public spaces and detained on 22 September across the capital. While some were released, at least 48 people - whose identities are known to Amnesty International - were sentenced to administrative detention, ranging from 10 to 20 days. They were accused of resisting the police's legitimate orders, and found guilty on the basis of the police's allegations, without any further evidence. Many of the detainees allege they were beaten by the police and faced other ill-treatment while in custody.

Amnesty International believes the international attention the case received, as the world condemned Azerbaijan for its vicious crackdown on LGBTI people in the country, played a significant role in the authorities' decision to release all those detained, many of whom still had a few days of their administrative detention left to serve.

In a statement shared on their official website, Azerbaijan's Ministry of Internal Affairs confirmed 83 persons were detained in what they claim was for the 'purpose of checking whether they are carriers of skin and venereal diseases and taking other preventive measures.' The Ministry of Affairs goes on to argue the arrests and subsequent detentions were carried out in compliance with Article 510 (hooliganism) and Article 535.1 (resistance to the lawful request of a police officer) of the Code of Administrative Offenses, despite there being no evidence, other than police claims, to support such allegations. Amnesty International believes the raid and subsequent detention of LGBTI people in Baku was arbitrary and unlawful, and was orchestrated by the authorities as a deliberate attempt to intimidate and humiliate LGBTI persons in Azerbaijan.

While Amnesty International welcomes news of the release of all those detained in the raids, it believes the authorities must ensure prompt, impartial, thorough and effective investigations are carried out into the mass raids carried out on 23 September, as well as some detainees' allegations of torture and ill-treatment, and that the authorities ensure the rights of all people in Azerbaijan, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity, are respected, protected and fulfilled.

Amnesty International will continue to monitor the situation closely and request further action when necessary.

Thank you to all those who sent appeals. No further action is requested from the UA network.

This is the first update of UA 223/17. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur55/7176/2017/en/

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