

URGENT ACTION

GUBAD IBADOGHLU DENIED URGENT SURGERY

Prominent Azerbaijani economist Gubad Ibadoghlu, who remains under house arrest on trumped-up charges, is not allowed to leave Azerbaijan to receive the urgent and life-saving health care he requires. His family reports that his heart conditions have deteriorated, that his life is in danger and that he is unable to get the treatment he requires in Azerbaijan.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

*Ilham Aliyev
President of Azerbaijan
19 Istiqlaliyyat Street
Baku AZ1066, Azerbaijan
Email: office@pa.gov.az*

Dear President,

I am writing to demand that Gubad Ibadoghlu, a prominent academic and political activist arrested on trumped-up charges is released from detention immediately and unconditionally and is allowed to travel abroad to access the urgent health care he needs.

Gubad Ibadoughlu has several health conditions, including an aortic aneurysm – a serious heart condition that continues to deteriorate while he remains under house arrest, causing him increased chest pain and shortness of breath. His family says that recent medical tests show a deterioration of his heart conditions, posing imminent risk to his life that requires urgent treatment or surgery. His family also report that they are unable to find a hospital in Azerbaijan that provides the surgery he requires.

Gubad Ibadoughlu has been detained since 23 July 2023 in an apparent retaliation for his anti-corruption work, and criticism of the Azerbaijani authorities. On 22 April 2024, he was transferred from the detention centre to house arrest. He continues to face the politically motivated charges against him, and a travel ban, unable to leave the country or to be reunited with his family, all of whom are currently living in exile.

I urge you to immediately release Gubad Ibadoughlu and ensure that his travel ban is lifted without delay to allow him to access the health care he needs abroad. I also urge you to ensure that all trumped-up charges against him are dropped and to end the misuse of the criminal justice system in Azerbaijan to target government critics.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Gubad Ibadoghlu is a well-known Azerbaijani economist and political activist. He is the chairperson of the Azerbaijan Democracy and Prosperity Movement, established in 2014, that has been arbitrarily denied registration as a political party by the Azerbaijani authorities. He was a senior visiting scholar at the London School of Economics and led the Economic Research Centre, an NGO that conducted research on public finance management, good governance, and budget transparency. The Azerbaijani authorities arbitrarily closed the Economic Research Centre and froze its bank accounts in 2014, as part of a tightening of restrictions on Azerbaijan's civil society. Gubad Ibadoghlu went into political exile in 2017 but returned to Azerbaijan in 2023, to visit his family.

On 23 July 2023, police officers arrested Gubad Ibadoghlu and his wife, Irada Bayramova, while they were driving to meet youth activists from the Azerbaijan Democracy and Prosperity Movement in Sumgayit, a city about 40 kilometres from the capital, Baku. Four unmarked cars surrounded their vehicle and forced it to stop, by ramming it from the front and the rear.

According to their child, Zhala Bayramova, 20 plain-clothed officers “forced the couple out of their car, and physically assaulted them, then forced them into separate cars and drove them to the Interior Ministry’s Organized Crime Unit in Baku”. After being released later that day, Irada Bayramova had multiple bruises to her arms, legs and back. Gubad Ibadoghlu filed a complaint about their ill-treatment, which was left unaddressed.

According to the Azerbaijani Ministry of Interior’s official statement made on the same day, the arrest of several people, including Gubad Ibadoghlu, was part of an operation against supporters of Fethullah Gülen, the exiled Turkish cleric who the Turkish authorities along with his supporters, have designated as “terrorist organization.” Police allegedly seized US\$ 40,000 in cash, among other things, from the office of the Economic Research Centre. They also raided Gubad Ibadoghlu and Irada Bayramova’s home and briefly detained Ibadoghlu’s brother, Gabid Baymalov.

On 22 April 2024, Gubad Ibadoghlu was released from the detention centre and moved to house arrest. According to his lawyer, the decision was based on Gubad Ibadoghlu’s deteriorating health condition and the lack of medical examinations and care at the detention centre. According to his family, Gubad Ibadoghlu’s medical conditions include heart disease, type 2 diabetes, kidney disease, severe lower back pain, and his health is quickly deteriorating. According to his family, while his blood sugar levels and general health conditions have sharply worsened, he has not had appropriate medical examinations to determine the causes and the correct treatment plan.

On 23 October, Gubad Ibadoghlu’s family told Amnesty International that recent medical tests show a [regular deterioration](#) and severe worsening of his heart conditions, posing imminent risk to his life and requiring urgent treatment or surgery. The family also reported that they were unable to find a hospital in Azerbaijan to provide the specialist (aortic aneurysm) surgery he requires. Under the conditions of his house arrest, he is unable to leave Azerbaijan, including on medical grounds.

Gubad Ibadoghlu’s unfounded prosecution is part of the Azerbaijani authorities’ ongoing crackdown on human rights defenders, government critics, [independent media](#) and [all dissent](#). Criticism of the authorities is routinely met with repression, and those who dare to challenge the government face trumped up charges, unfair trials and lengthy prison sentences. Amnesty International has documented previously how [the Azerbaijani authorities sought to rid the country of all critical voices ahead of all major international events that Azerbaijan was hosting](#). This is a familiar pattern observed ahead of the 2024 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 29), which the country will host in November 2024 in Baku.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Azeri, English, Russian

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 30 December 2024

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Gubad Ibadoghlu (he/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur55/7943/2024/en/>

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

His Excellency Mr Elin Suleymanov
Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary
Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan
4 Kensington Court W8 5DL
020 7938 3412
Fax 020 7937 1783
london@mission.mfa.gov.az
Consular Section Tel/Fax 020 7938 5482