

# URGENT ACTION

## LAWYER AND FAMILY THREATENED AND HARRASED

**Prominent lawyer Elchin Sadigov was threatened by an official from the Ministry of the Interior for exposing torture of his client on 2 November. Since then, he and his family have been subjected to harassment, including online.**

Prominent Azerbaijani lawyer **Elchin Sadigov** was threatened on 2 November by an investigator from the Main Organized Crime Department (MOCD) of the Ministry of the Interior after disclosing information about alleged torture of his client, journalist Fikret Farmazoglu, to the media. According to Elchin Sadigov, the investigator approached him at the security desk of the MOCD while he was retrieving case materials on Fikret Farmazoglu and told him that he would "pay a high price" for publicly accusing the staff of the MOCD of torture. Fikret Farmazoglu is currently detained at the MOCD.

Since the threat was made on 2 November, Elchin Sadigov and his family have been subjected to ongoing intimidation and harassment. The next day, an online media outlet published an article accusing Elchin Sadigov of a secret affair with Fikret Farmazoglu's wife. Elchin Sadigov's Facebook page, where he wrote a post refuting this allegation, was hacked shortly after. His photos and information relating to him and his family were posted on other sites. Simultaneously, several fake accounts were created using his name and photos reaching out to his Facebook contacts.

Also on 2 November, police visited Elchin Sadigov's family home in Goygol region, in north-western Azerbaijan, and served his brother with summons for questioning. The following day, his brother was interrogated at the local police department and was asked to provide information about Elchin Sadigov, Elchin Sadigov's wife and children and their place of registration as residents. The police later told Elchin Sadigov that they had received a request to collect data about him and his family, but declined to disclose the reasons.

Elchin Sadigov explained that while he had received numerous threats during his 10 years-long career as defence lawyer, he is particularly concerned about these latest incidents, and specifically about the nature of the threat and additional warnings that he has received.

### **Please write immediately in Azeri, English or your preferred language:**

- Urging the authorities to promptly, effectively and impartially investigate the threats and incidents of harassment of Elchin Sadigov and his family, including those made online, and ensure that anyone found responsible is brought to justice;
- Calling on them to ensure Elchin Sadigov's safety to continue performing his duties as a defence lawyer;
- Calling on them to ensure that all lawyers in Azerbaijan are able to perform their professional duties without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference, in accordance with the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 DECEMBER 2016 TO:**

President Ilham Aliyev  
Office of the President of Azerbaijan  
19 Istiqlaliyyat Street  
Baku AZ1066, Azerbaijan  
Fax: +994 12 492 0625  
Email: office@pa.gov.az  
**Salutation: Dear President**

Prosecutor General Zakir Garalov  
7 Rafibeyli Street  
Baku AZ1001, Azerbaijan  
Email: contact@prosecutor.gov.az  
**Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** HIS EXCELLENCY MR TAHIR TAGHIZADE, Embassy of the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 4 Kensington Court, London, W8 5DL tel: 020 7938 3412 email: london@mission.mfa.gov.az,

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Elchin Sadigov is a prominent criminal lawyer in Azerbaijan who, over the course of his ten years-long career, has defended several prisoners of conscience and other persons who faced politically motivated charges.

Elchin Sadigov is currently also the defence counsel of youth activist and prisoner of conscience Giyas Ibrahimov. On 25 October, after Giyas Ibrahimov was sentenced to 10 years in prison on fabricated charges, Elchin Sadigov's email and Facebook accounts were hacked and his phone was blocked for six hours. On 27 August he was openly threatened by another MOCD investigator during the court hearing into another criminal case. After he left the courtroom and got into his car, he discovered that someone had broken into the car and damaged the gearbox, causing the oil leakage and exposing the car to fire hazard.

Defence lawyers in Azerbaijan who work on politically sensitive cases are often themselves exposed to threats and human rights violations by members of the authorities, including law enforcement officials, who often perceive them as an obstacle in their work preventing them from fulfilling their functions. Intigam Aliyev, a prominent human rights lawyer, was sentenced to seven and a half years in prison on trumped-up charges of illegal entrepreneurship, abuse of power, fraud and tax evasion in connection with his role as a defence lawyer in several politically motivated criminal cases. Another prominent defence lawyer Asabali Mustafayev has been arbitrarily placed under a travel ban and had his personal and organization bank accounts frozen. Lawyer Alayif Huseynov was charged with criminal label in 2015 shortly after revealing that his client Leyla Yunus had received threats against and been subjected to beatings while in custody.

Amnesty International has documented a growing number of cases of increasingly serious harassment, intimidation and persecution of human rights defenders and human rights lawyers by the Azerbaijani authorities in recent years. The string of arrests and various forms of harassment of prominent human rights defenders and other civil society activists, in connection with their professional activities, has effectively paralyzed civil society in Azerbaijan.