

URGENT ACTION

ACADEMIC, CRITICAL OF GOVERNMENT, DETAINED

Gubad Ibadoghlu, a renowned political economist and civil activist, was detained on 23 July 2023 on fabricated charges of the production, acquisition, or sale of counterfeit money by an organized group. His arrest and prosecution are an apparent retaliation for his criticism of the government and political and civic activities, including helping set up a foundation that sought funding from foreign assets seized from Azerbaijani nationals abroad under anti-corruption legislation to benefit Azerbaijani students. Gubad Ibadoghlu has major health issues, and while in pretrial detention his life is at risk due to unsafe prison conditions and denial of adequate healthcare.

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

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

Dear President Aliyev,

I am writing to demand an immediate release of **Gubad Ibadoghlu**, who is being held in the Kurdekhani pretrial detention centre on fabricated charges of tendering counterfeit money. You will, undoubtedly, be aware of his prominent academic and political activities and government criticism. His detention and prosecution are apparent retaliation for these activities. He must be immediately released.

On 23 July, Gubad Ibadoghlu and his wife, Irada Bayramova, were arbitrarily detained after plain-clothed police officers in unmarked vehicles rammed their car. The police officers reportedly assaulted the couple, placed them in separate holding cells and refused to provide reasons for their arrest. Gubad Ibadoghlu was denied access to his lawyer until 5pm and Irada Bayramova was denied access to a lawyer of her choosing. While Irada Bayramova was later released without charges, Gubad Ibadoghlu was remanded in detention by Baku's Narimanov District Court on 24 July, on charges of the production, acquisition, or sale of counterfeit money by an organized group ([Article 204.3.1 of the Azerbaijan Criminal Code](#), carries a maximum 12-year prison term).

Gubad Ibadoghlu is suffering from serious health conditions, including Type 2 diabetes and hypertension. He is held in conditions that may amount to inhuman and degrading treatment, is forced to rely on poor-quality drinking water and food, and is not receiving correct medication at the right times. According to his family, his health has continually and significantly deteriorated in detention.

I urge you to take steps that will ensure Gubad Ibadoghlu's immediate and unconditional release. I also urge you to immediately ensure that he is provided with the correct medication, food and water, and is protected from torture and other ill-treatment. Allegations of his and his wife's, Irada Bayramova's, ill-treatment during their arrest and in detention and the violations of their due process rights must be promptly and effectively investigated, and all those suspected to be responsible held to account. I also urge you to end the misuse of the criminal justice system to target peaceful criticism and dissent.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Gubad Ibadoghlu is a well-known Azerbaijani economist and politician. He is the chairperson of the Azerbaijan Democracy and Prosperity Movement, established in 2014 with a social-democratic platform, 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 Economic and led the Economic Research Center, an NGO that conducted research on public finance management, good governance, and budget transparency. The Azerbaijani authorities forcibly closed the Economic Research Center and froze its bank accounts in 2014, as part of widespread restrictions on Azerbaijan's civil society. Gubad Ibadoghlu went into political exile in 2017 but returned to Azerbaijan in 2023.

On 23 July, police officers detained Gubad Ibadoghlu and his wife while they were driving to meet youth activists from the Azerbaijan Democracy and Prosperity Movement in Sumgayit, a city that is about 40 kilometers from Baku. Four unmarked cars surrounded their vehicle at about 1pm and forced it to stop by ramming it from the front and the rear. According to their daughter, 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 at 7pm, [Bayramova had multiple bruises to her arms, legs and back](#). [Gubad](#) Ibadoghlu has filed a complaint about their ill-treatment.

According to the Azerbaijani Ministry of Interior official statement made on 23 July, the arrest of several people, including Gubad Ibadoghlu, is a part of an operation against supporters of Fethullah Gülen, the exiled Turkish cleric who the Turkish authorities are seeking to prosecute, along with his supporters, under terrorism charges. Police allegedly seized US\$ 40,000 in cash, amongst other things, from the office of the Economic Research Center, which Gubad Ibadoghlu hadn't used. They also raided Gubad Ibadoghlu and Irada Baymarova's home and detained Ibadoghlu's brother, Gabid Baymalov. On 2 August, the Baku Court dismissed Ibadoghlu's complaint regarding unlawful search of his home.

Gubad Ibadoghlu's family have reported that he is held in a small cell with five other men, relying on tap water that is not safe to drink and prison food which is not adapted for his diabetes and other health conditions. His medical conditions include heart disease, type 2 diabetes, kidney diseases, jugular vein distention, stomach ulcers and severe lower back pain, and his health conditions are fast deteriorating. He is given his medication on an irregular schedule which increases his risk of a stroke and of developing further heart disease and other life-threatening conditions.

[Gubad Ibadoghlu the author of numerous academic publications and articles](#) critical of Azerbaijan and its international partners, including the EU which is not paying due attention to human rights violations in Azerbaijan and is reliant on it for gas supplies.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Azeri, English, Russian

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 18 September 2023

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Gubad Ibadoghlu (he/him)