

URGENT ACTION

JAILED ACADEMIC'S HEALTH DETERIORATES

Gubad Ibadoghlu is a renowned political economist and civil activist. On 23 July 2023, the Azerbaijani authorities detained him on fabricated charges of the production, acquisition, or sale of counterfeit money by an organized group. The authorities have then added charges related to "extremism". His arrest and prosecution are an apparent retaliation for his criticism of the government, as well as his political and civic activities. Most recently these included helping set up a foundation for Azerbaijani students seeking funding from assets seized from Azerbaijani nationals under UK anti-corruption legislation. Gubad Ibadoghlu has major health issues, and while in pretrial detention, his life is at risk.

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 and of extremism. You will undoubtedly be aware of his prominent academic and political activities, and criticism of the government. His detention and prosecution on fabricated charges are retaliation measures for these activities. He must be immediately released.*

Gubad Ibadoghlu and his wife, Irada Bayramova, were arbitrarily detained after plain-clothed police officers in unmarked vehicles rammed their car on 23 July 2023. 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). Charges of "extremism" were later added. His pretrial detention was extended on 16 November for an extra three months.

Gubad Ibadoghlu is suffering from serious health conditions, including Type 2 diabetes and hypertension. According to his family, his health has continually and significantly deteriorated in detention.

The European Court of Human Rights has also issued interim measures under Rule 39, requesting the Azerbaijani government to ensure that Gubad Ibadoghlu "undergoes further medical examinations" and "transfer [him] to a specialized medical institution [a hospital]" if necessary.

I urge you to take steps that will ensure Gubad Ibadoghlu's immediate and unconditional release. I also urge you to ensure that he is provided immediately with necessary medical care and is protected from torture and other ill-treatment. I urge you to ensure an effective investigation into the alleged fabrication of charges and evidence, and when evidence warrants so, prosecute those responsible for those specific acts of miscarriage of justice. I also urge you to end the misuse of the criminal justice system in Azerbaijan 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 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 arbitrarily 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, to visit his family.

On 23 July, police officers arrested 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 kilometres from capital 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, Irada [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 along with his supporters, have designated as “terrorist organization.” Police allegedly seized US\$ 40,000 in cash, amongst other things, from the office of the Economic Research Center. They also raided Gubad Ibadoghlu and Irada Bayramova's home and briefly detained Ibadoghlu's brother, Gabid Baymalov. On 2 August, the Baku Court dismissed Ibadoghlu's complaint regarding unlawful search of his home. The Azerbaijani authorities extended his pretrial detention by three months on 16 November, until 24 February 2024.

Gubad Ibadoghlu's medical conditions include heart disease, type 2 diabetes, kidney diseases, jugular vein distention, stomach ulcers and severe lower back pain, and his health is fast 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. He is also not given some of the medication he was regularly taking before his arrest, while other medications are given on an irregular schedule which increases his risk of a stroke and of developing further heart disease and other life-threatening conditions.

The European Parliament adopted a resolution [calling for Gubad Ibadoghlu's release](#) on 14 September 2023. The European Court of Human Rights acknowledging the imminent risk of irreparable harm also issued interim measures under Rule 39. (see above)

[Gubad Ibadoghlu is the author of numerous academic publications and articles](#) critical of Azerbaijan and its international partners, including the EU, COE.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Azeri, English, Russian
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 24 February 2024
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)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur55/7088/2023/en/>