



## **Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition** *Defending Women Defending Rights*

The Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition is alarmed at reports of violence against Leyla Yunus in prison.

On 6 September, Leyla Yunus was attacked by her cellmate. She was verbally harassed and plates and cups thrown at her. She banged on the door for help and asked to be taken out of the cell to see the doctor. She was told that she could see the prison administrator the following Monday.

After learning that there would be a hearing, the cellmate increased the abuse. Once again Dr Yunus sought help by banging on the cell door. She was reprimanded by the guards for violating discipline, but was removed from the cell for a short time to submit a written complaint. Instead of protecting her, prison administrators instead issued Dr Yunus with a reprimand for asking for assistance by banging on the cell door. Nothing has been done about her violent cellmate and Dr Yunus is fearful of further attacks.

In addition, Dr Yunus is not being provided with adequate healthcare in prison. She has diabetes and medical problems related to her kidneys that require appropriate medication and a specialized diet. Currently she has infected abscess on her leg that she claims the doctor will not treat

Dr Yunus has been in prison since 30 July, when she was arrested on trumped up charges of treason as well as other crimes. The Nasimi District Court subsequently sentenced Dr Yunus to three months pre-trial detention, although it did not explain the basis for the charges.

### **The Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition is calling on Azeri authorities:**

- To transfer Dr Yunus's violent cellmate to another cell and conduct an immediate, thorough, transparent investigation into the above-mentioned assault, in order to identify all those responsible, bring them before an independent tribunal, and apply them the sanctions provided by the law;
- To release Leyla Yunus immediately and unconditionally
- To provide Leyla Yunus urgently with any medical attention she may require, including medication and hospitalization

### **Background**

Leyla Yunus has been recognized as one of the most prominent human rights defenders in Azerbaijan. She is the founder and director of the Institute for Peace and Democracy (IPD) in Azerbaijan, an independent human rights group formed in 1995. Her work includes projects to

protect political prisoners, defend women's rights, combat torture, corruption, human trafficking, and property rights violations, as well as monitoring court proceedings.

For more information about the arrest of Leyla Yunus see: <http://www.omct.org/human-rights-defenders/urgent-interventions/azerbaijan/2014/07/d22777/>

For more information about the health of Leyla Yunus see:  
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR55/012/2014/en/0a4ac8f8-6c94-48f7-986f-e46c7730da81/eur550122014en.html>

## Notes

The Women Human Rights Defender International Coalition is a resource and advocacy network supporting women defenders worldwide. We have 29 members:

Amnesty International (AI)  
Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)  
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM ASIA)  
The Association for Progressive Communications (APC)  
Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)  
BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights (BAOBAB)  
Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR)  
Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)  
Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL)  
Front Line Defenders  
Human Rights First  
Information Monitor (INFORM)  
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)  
International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)  
International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP-AP)  
Isis International  
ISIS Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (ISIS-WICCE)  
Just Associates (JASS)  
The Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM)  
MADRE  
Nazra for Feminist Studies  
Peace Brigades International  
Rainbow Rights Project (R-Rights), Inc.  
Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights (UAF)  
Women Living under Muslim Laws (WLUML)  
Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights  
Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice (WIGJ)  
Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC)  
World Organisation against Torture (OMCT)