

PRESS RELEASE - THE OBSERVATORY

Azerbaijan: Intigam Aliyev's sentence upheld following a summary trial

Paris-Geneva, July 23, 2015 – On July 21, 2015, the Baku Court of Appeal upheld the 7.5 year imprisonment sentence against Mr. Intigam Aliyev following summary proceedings which failed to meet international fair trial standards. Mr. Intigam Aliyev is the first to be sentenced in appeal for his human rights work among many human rights defenders arrested during the 2014 crackdown targeting civil society in Azerbaijan. The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders condemns the conviction on trumped-up charges of the prominent human rights lawyer and calls for a strong reaction by the international community.

On July 21, 2015, the Baku Appeal Court dismissed an appeal filed on behalf of human rights defender Mr. **Intigam Aliyev** and upheld a 7.5 year imprisonment sentence. Head of the Legal Education Society and human rights lawyer, Mr. Aliyev has represented over 100 victims before the European Court of Human Rights. Charged with “tax evasion”, “abuse of authority”, “illegal entrepreneurship”, and “appropriation”, he was sentenced by the Baku Grave Crimes Court on April 22, 2015.

During the July 21st hearing all petitions filed by the defence were denied. Mr. Aliyev was not allowed to sit next to his lawyer and was placed in a glass cage in which he could barely hear the proceedings. Furthermore, the presiding judge repeatedly turned off the microphone when Mr. Aliyev challenged the fairness of the judicial proceedings.

“Less than a month after the closure of the European Games, Azeri authorities just waited for the departure of the international community to resume their crackdown on human rights defenders. This confirms the calls from civil society organisations to avoid that the Baku Games remain business as usual in this repressive context”, said FIDH President Karim Lahidji.

Since the beginning of his detention on August 8, 2014, Mr. Aliyev’s health has severely deteriorated. He suffers from violent headaches, loss of appetite and insomnia. A medical exam ran at the end of October, revealed that he was suffering from medical disorders – which require hospitalisation.

“This sham appeal trial is the first of what is probably going to be a long series of summary appeals to secure the detention of all dissident voices and human rights defenders in Azerbaijan. With some limited exceptions, the reaction of the international community to this wave of repression has been very mild and it is about time for a strong response”, concluded OMCT Secretary General Gerald Staberock.

On the same day, a 10-minutes long preliminary hearing in Rasul Jafarov's appeal trial was held before the Baku Court of Appeal. Mr. Jafarov was condemned by a lower court to six and a half years of jail on trumped-up charges. Several civil society representatives, journalists and diplomats were denied access to the courtroom in violation of the principle of the publicity of hearings. Next hearing was scheduled on July 31, 2015.

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (OBS) was created in 1997 by FIDH and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT). The objective of this programme is to intervene to prevent or remedy situations of repression against human rights defenders.

For more information, please contact :

- **FIDH : Lucie Kroening (French / English / German / Arabic) - Tel: +33 6 48 05 91 57 (Paris) / Arthur Manet (French / English / Spanish) - Tel: +33 6 72 28 42 94 (Paris)**
- **OMCT : Miguel Martín Zumalacárregui (French / English / Spanish) - Tel: +41 22 809 49 24 (Geneva/Brussels)**