



United States Mission to the OSCE

Conviction of Azerbaijani Opposition Activist Yadigar Sadiqov

As delivered by Political Counselor Christopher Robinson
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 23, 2014

The United States is concerned about the conviction and imprisonment of Yadigar Sadiqov on charges of hooliganism on January 13. Mr. Sadiqov was a political activist and an advisor to the opposition Musavat Party. He was arrested in June 2013 prior to the start of campaigning for the presidential election that was held on October 9.

The arrest and subsequent conviction of Yadigar Sadiqov is yet another incident in a series of troubling developments affecting civil society and political pluralism in Azerbaijan. We continue to closely monitor the investigation of "Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center" Chairman Anar Mammadli and the "International Cooperation of Volunteers Public Union" for alleged illegal business activities and tax evasion. We noted previously in the Permanent Council our concerns that Mr. Mammadli's detention was related to his organization's election monitoring and reporting activities. We also continue to closely monitor and urge due process in the trials of "Republican Alternative Movement" Chairman Ilgar Mammadov and Musavat Party Deputy Chairman Tofiq Yagublu, who were arrested for allegedly inciting the residents of Ismayilli to violent protest, as well as activists of the N!DA youth movement, who were arrested during protests against non-combat deaths in the military.

We call again on the Government of Azerbaijan to uphold its OSCE commitments to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including those related to due process of the law and ensuring transparency and fairness in the judicial process. Respect for citizens' rights will help Azerbaijan to advance as a prosperous and democratic nation.

We also urge President Aliyev to return recently adopted NGO-related amendments to parliament and to request ODIHR and United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association Maina Kiai to identify opportunities to bring the amendments in line with international standards and OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Madam Chair.