



EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS

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President Ilham Aliyev
Presidential Palace
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Call for the immediate and unconditional release of human rights defender Anar Mammadli and other human rights defenders, journalists, political activists, and academics detained in Azerbaijan

Your Excellency,

we write to raise the case of Anar Mammadli, an internationally respected human rights defender. His arrest and ongoing detention raise serious concerns about Azerbaijan's commitment to international human rights obligations.

Anar Mammadli is one of Azerbaijan's most prominent voices for democratic governance and electoral integrity. He leads the Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Centre (EMDS), Azerbaijan's only independent election observation organization and is one of the co-founders of our network of citizen election monitors, the European Platform for Democratic Elections (EPDE). In recognition of his work, he received the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize from the Council of Europe in 2014.

In 2024, Mr Mammadli launched the Climate of Justice initiative in the lead-up to COP29, which was held in Baku. Just days after this announcement, on 29 April 2024, he was arrested in Baku. On 8 April 2025, shortly before the close of the investigation, the initial charges brought against him (smuggling and money laundering) were escalated (engaged in unregistered and illegal entrepreneurial activities, tax evasion, and forgery of documents). He remains in pre-trial detention awaiting trial.

His case is emblematic of the [broader repression](#) on civil society in Azerbaijan. Since January 2023, the number of political prisoners has increased by more than 250%, including the recent arrest of human rights defender Bashir Suleymanli, a long-time colleague and co-founder of EMDS.

This is not the first time Anar Mammadli has been wrongfully detained. The European Court of Human Rights found his imprisonment from 2013 to be politically motivated and in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights. That judgment remains unimplemented. The re-arrest of Mr Mammadli raises [profound concerns](#) about Azerbaijan's disregard for its international legal obligations.



Above that, we are gravely concerned about his deteriorating health in custody. Requests submitted by his legal counsel for adequate medical care have [reportedly](#) been denied. If these concerns remain unaddressed, they may cause irreversible harm to his physical and mental well-being.

On this ground, we ask you, Mr President, for the immediate and unconditional release, as well as full rehabilitation, of Anar Mammadli, Bashir Suleymanli, and all [other](#) human rights defenders, journalists, political activists, and academics currently unjustly detained in Azerbaijan.

We also ask you to guarantee access to appropriate medical care for Anar Mammadli without further delay.

Sincerely yours,

Stefanie Schiffer
Chair of Board EPDE

The EPDE is a network of 17 independent European citizen election observation organizations. The aim of EPDE is to support citizen election observation and to contribute to democratic election processes throughout Europe. EPDE is a signatory of the Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations and the Code of Conduct for Nonpartisan Election Observation. EPDE also is a member of the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM). The EPDE is supported by the Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Union.