

RESOLUTION

Adopted by

AZERI NATIONAL PLATFORM OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

We, the members of the National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum of Azerbaijan condemn the verdict by the Lankaran District Court against Yadigar Sadigov, the adviser to the head of Musavat Party. Sadigov has been sentenced to six years in prison and the verdict is the result of the lack of an independent judiciary in Azerbaijan.

The presidential elections year of 2013 has made the human rights picture in the country darker. The number of the political prisoners has again exceeded one hundred persons. Hooliganism, drag and weapon possession has made the list of trumped-up charges that are largely used against the dissent. Yadigar Sadigov was also charged on hooliganism for allegedly beating up a disabled war veteran. He was arrested on June 27, 2013, and on January 13 was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment in unfair trial process without any credible evidences. Most of the motions by his lawyer have not been considered and satisfied by the judge. The court did not present any convincing argument of Sadigov's guilt. This was the first time, when the Azerbaijan judiciary applied such as harsh sentence for hooliganism.

Local and international rights defenders called the verdict politically motivated and Sadigov's lawyer stated the prosecution's failure to prove the charges. "No one witness who appeared in court trial could remember where this supposed fight took place," the lawyer Khalid Bagirov said.

Yadigar Sadyghov is prominent intellectual, former professor of the Lankaran State Univesity, who was expelled for his critical thinking, devoted to liberal values, a man of high decency and honesty.

Sadigov is one of the most active and popular opposition politicians in the southern region of Azerbaijan. He has often raised the local social problems before the local authorities. He was also active on Facebook with his political views. Sadigov organized the trip of the leader of Musavat Party to Lankaran in January 2013, which was illegally thwarted by police and local activists of the ruling party.

Yadigar Sadigov is the latest opposition politician to be jailed in what human rights groups have denounced as an ongoing crackdown by the Azerbaijani government on its critics in the wake of incumbent president's re-election at polls in October 9, 2013.

We call on the authorities of Azerbaijan,

- ✓ to release Yadigar Sadigov, as well as journalists, youth, human rights and political activists held on politically motivated charges and end the use of trumped-up charges to impeach government critics.
- ✓ to ensure that everyone charged enjoys full access to thorough fair trial remedies.
- ✓ to fulfill its commitments undertaken within the framework of the Eastern Partnership Programme concerning ensuring fundamental freedoms and human rights
- ✓ The European Union,
- ✓ To call on by effective means the Azerbaijani authorities to immediately release the political prisoners and end the arrests of government critics with political motives
- ✓ To hold fundamental rights and freedoms as high priority issues in bilateral and multilateral EU-Azerbaijan dialogue, which include the immediate release of all illicitly jailed civic and political activists, rights defenders, and journalists including Yadigar Sadigov.

19 February 2014

Baku, Azerbaijan