



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Plenary sitting

16.9.2014

B8-0095/2014

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on Persecution of human rights defenders in Azerbaijan
(2014/2832(RSP))

Cristian Dan Preda, Davor Ivo Stier, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Giovanni La Via, Tunne Kelam, Monica Luisa Macovei, Petri Sarvamaa, Eduard Kukan, Jeroen Lenaers, Csaba Sógor, Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa, Róża Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Jaromír Štětina, Dubravka Šuica, Pavel Svoboda, László Tóké
on behalf of the PPE Group

B8-0095/2014

**European Parliament resolution on Persecution of human rights defenders in Azerbaijan
(2014/2832(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Azerbaijan, in particular those concerning human rights,
- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and Azerbaijan which entered into force in 1999 and to the ongoing negotiations between the two parties on a new association agreement to replace the previous one
- having regard to the statement of 8 th September 2014 of European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Füle in Baku on the crucial role played by the civil society in the Eastern Partnership and his announcement of a new EU support programme for civil society in Azerbaijan, providing € 3 million in 2014-2015
- having regard to the 2013 ENP country progress report on Azerbaijan released on 27th March 2014,
- having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure;

A. Whereas in the last few years the general human rights climate in Azerbaijan has been deteriorating, with a major escalation of government repression, pressure and intimidation of NGOs, civil society activists, journalists and human rights defenders undergoing over the last several months;

B. Whereas since July 2014 numerous prominent human rights defenders have been imprisoned on politically motivated charges, including Leyla Yunus, director of the Institute for Peace and Democracy and her husband Arif Yunus; Rasul Jafarov, chair of Azerbaijan's Human Rights Club; Intigam Aliyev, chair of the Legal Education Society and Hassan Huseyni, head of the Intelligent Citizen Enlightenment Centre Public Union;

C. Whereas prominent human rights organisations Amnesty International and Clovek v Tisni (People in Need) have moved for the immediate release of Intigam Aliyev from custody;

D. Whereas Ilgar Nasibov, a human rights activist, has been assaulted and seriously beaten by unknown assailants in Nakhichevan City;

E. Whereas new restrictive laws have been implemented regulating nongovernmental organizations, according to which only officially registered NGO's are entitled to receiving

foreign donations, which need to be registered in the Ministry of Justice, which effectively forced many NGOs to shut down;

F. Whereas on 14 May 2014 Azerbaijan assumed the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (CoE);

1. Expresses its serious concern over the continuing deterioration of the human rights situation in the country;
2. Reminds that human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are key elements of the Eastern Partnership and also pillars on which international organisations are founded on, such as the Council of Europe, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which Azerbaijan is a member of;
3. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the arrest and detention of Leyla Yunus, Arif Yunus, Rasul Jafarov, Intigam Aliyev and Hasan Huseyni and demands their immediate and unconditional release as well as dropping all charges against them; demands an immediate and thorough investigation into the assault on Ilqar Nasibov and to bring all those responsible to justice;
4. Urges the Azerbaijani authorities to immediately release all prisoners of conscience and political prisoners held in the country;
5. Calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to cease its harassment and intimidation of civil society organisations, opposition politicians, independent journalists and not interfere in and undermine their valuable work for democracy development in Azerbaijan;
6. Reminds the paramount role played by a vibrant and independent civil society in building democracy, defending fundamental freedoms and upholding the rule of law;
7. Calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to reverse the recently adopted legislation curbing the activities of NGOs and civil society and undertake necessary human rights reforms to overcome the widespread climate of intimidation and harassment;
8. Calls on the EEAS and European Commission to seriously assess the current crackdown on human rights defenders in Azerbaijan and evaluate the possible implications of the EU's relations with the country, in accordance with the "more for more" principle;
9. Calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to respect the freedom of media, guarantee internet freedom, including uncensored access to information and communication, which are universal rights of the same importance as freedom and democracy;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the EEAS, the Governments and Parliaments of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the EU Member States, and the UN Human Rights Council.