

**Question for written answer E-002605/2023**

**to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**

Rule 138

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Subject: Arrest and pre-trial detention of Azerbaijani economist and government critic Dr Gubad Ibadoghlu

On 23 July 2023, the renowned economist and government critic Dr Gubad Ibadoghlu was arrested by the Azerbaijani authorities and is currently in pre-trial detention for four months on charges related to the 'preparation, acquisition, or sale of forged securities to an organised group.' These charges carry a penalty of 8-12 years in prison.

1. Given the circumstances surrounding his arrest, including the alleged excessive use of force, denial of medical care, and hindrances to legal representation<sup>123</sup>, what steps does the EU intend to take to ensure an independent and impartial investigation into the arrest of Ibadoghlu and his wife, Irada Bayramova? Has the VP / HR taken any steps to press for Ibadoghlu's immediate release and ensure his safety and well-being in the light of these grave circumstances?
2. How does the EU plan to address the reported human-rights violations, in line with its commitment to upholding human rights and the rule of law in its relations with Azerbaijan?
3. Additionally, how does the EU plan to address the broader context of human rights deterioration in Azerbaijan, as highlighted by the growing number of political prisoners, restrictive media laws, and limited political diversity?

**Supporter<sup>4</sup>**

Submitted: 8.9.2023

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.omct.org/en/resources/statements/azerbaijan-urgent-call-for-the-release-of-gubad-ibadoghlu-renowned-academic-and-politician>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/25/azerbaijan-opposition-leader-arrested>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur55/7088/2023/en/>.

<sup>4</sup> This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Rosa D'Amato (Verts/ALE)