

Azerbaijan Network of the South Caucasus Human Rights Defenders

STATEMENT

concerning Eynulla Fatullayev's imprisonment on 06.07.2010

The Members of the South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders condemn the sentencing of imprisoned Azerbaijani journalist Eynulla Fatullayev to two and a half years on 6 July 2010 and consider this as a violation of the freedom of expression in Azerbaijan.

E.Fatullayev is already serving an eight and a half year prison sentence on charges of terrorism, defamation, incitement to racial hatred and tax evasion instituted against him in 2007 by the authorities in Azerbaijan. In its judgement on Eynulla Fatullayev's case on 22 April 2010 the European Court of Human Rights found violation of E.Fatullayev's rights and ordered his immediate release.

However, instead of providing immediate release of journalist, the Azerbaijan authorities initiated new criminal case against him on the basis of fabricated charges on possession of drugs. The pre-trial investigation and the trials in the case were conducted with rough violations of the national legislation and international acts indicate that the charges against Fatullayev were groundless and unlawful. The imprisonment of this journalist questions the impartiality and independence of the courts considering the case.

The Network Members highlight the role of the press freedom in the democratic society, and the importance of displaying tolerance to the critical views of the journalists by the Azerbaijan Government.

The Network calls the Azerbaijan Government to implement the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights on immediate release of Fatullayev and to stop unjustified criminal prosecution against the journalist.

Undersigned organisations,

Legal Education Society

Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety

Media Rights Institute

Association for the Protection of Women's Rights in Azerbaijan after Dilara Aliyeva

Democracy and Human Rights Resource Centre Public Union

Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center

Public Association for Assistance to Free Economy

Society for Humanitarian Research