

Bergen, Norway, 21.10.2014

Appeal to Azerbaijani Government for immediate protection of the human rights of Ilgar Nasibov and Malahat Nasibova

It has been brought to our attention that journalist and human rights defender Ilgar Nasibov, the husband of Rafto Human Rights Laureate 2009 Malahat Nasibova, was brutally attacked on August 21st 2014.

Several men ransacked the office of the Democracy and NGO Development Resource Center of Nakhchivan, and attacked Ilgar Nasibov. He was beaten unconscious and suffered a concussion; his cheekbones, nose and ribs were broken; and he temporarily lost the vision on one eye. After Nasibov received essential first aid at a local hospital, new threats caused Malahat Nasibova to move her husband elsewhere for security reasons. International human rights NGOs coordinated emergency medical treatment for Nasibov, but he is still in urgent need of medical expertise to secure his recovery.

In a particularly cynical twist on September 20th, Nasibov was charged with assaulting one of the men who attacked him. Due to this charge Ilgar Nasibov and his wife have received travel bans, and cannot leave Nakhchivan.

As Rafto laureates and human rights defenders we hereby declare our support to Malahat Nasibova and Ilgar Nasibov in their struggle for freedom and democracy in Azerbaijan, and call upon the Azerbaijani authorities to immediately

- ensure that Ilgar Nasibov is given immediate access to medical expertise and unobstructed passage to seek medical attention in Baku or abroad;
- lift the travel bans on Ilgar Nasibov and his wife Malahat Nasibov;
- waive the charges against Ilgar Nasibov;
- initiate an effective, impartial and transparent investigation of the brutal attack on Ilgar Nasibov capable of bringing those responsible to justice.

Nasibova and her family have for years been subjected to physical and psychological pressure because of their human rights work. The Resource Center is the only independent group in Nakhichevan, and is working on sensitive cases to restore justice to victims of human rights violations.

We remind the government of Azerbaijan about its international human rights obligations and call upon them to take effective measures to protect human rights defenders and allow them to conduct their human rights work without hindrance, as provided in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders of 9 December 1998¹.

Yours sincerely,

**Ph.D. Pavel Chikov, Russia
for Agora, Rafto Laureate 2014**

Lawyer and human rights activist; Head of Inter-regional
Association of Human Rights Organizations Agora,
Kazan, Tartarstan

**Executive Director Dr. Frank Mugisha,
for Sexual Minorities Uganda,
Rafto Laureate 2011**

**Head of International Office Travis Brimhall,
for Bahrain Center for Human Rights,
Rafto Laureate 2013**

**Fr. Raul Véra OP, Mexico,
Rafto Laureate 2010**

Bishop of Saltillo, founder of Fray Juan de Larios Centre
for Human Rights; Honorary Doctor of the Humanities;
Recipient of the Merit of Honor of Mexico City

**Rev. Bulambo Lembelembe Josué, DR Congo
Rafto Laureate 2008**

Peace Ambassador and Coordinator for "Peace and
Reconciliation" Program, Church of Christ in DR Congo

**Most Venerable Thich Quang Do, Vietnam
Rafto Laureate 2006**

Head of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam,
former Professor of Oriental Philosophy and Buddhist
Studies; democracy activist

**LL.M. Paulos Tesfagiorgis, Eritrea
Rafto Laureate 2003**

Senior advisor, Democracy and Constitution-making,
International IDEA; Founder of Regional Centre for
Human Rights and Development in Eritrea, co-founder
and former Head of the Eritrean Relief Association

**Sidi Mohamed Daddach, Western Sahara
Rafto Laureate 2002**

President of the Committee for the Defense of the Right
to Self-determination for the People of Western Sahara
CODAPSO

**Shirin Ebadi, Iran
Rafto Laureate 2001**

Nobel Peace Prize winner 2003,
founder of Defenders of Human Rights Center, Honorary
Doctor of 18 international universities; recipient of the
Legion of Honor of the Republic of France

**Professor Ph.D. Ian F. Hancock, USA
Rafto Laureate 1997**

State Commissioner, The Texas Holocaust and Genocide
Commission; Director of Romani Archives and
Documentation Centre, Honorary Vice-Chancellor,
Roma Sabhyati University in Delhi

**Peter Molnar, Hungary
Rafto Laureate 1989**

Research Fellow, Center for Media and Communication
Studies, Central European University in Budapest; poet;
playwright; co-founder of FIDESZ and former Member
of the Parliament of the Republic of Hungary

**Trivimi Velliste, Estonia,
Rafto Laureate 1988**

President of the Baltic Assembly;
Member of Estonian Parliament;
former Minister of Foreign Affairs and
Representative of Estonia to the UN

¹ Article 12 of the Declaration

<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/770/89/PDF/N9977089.pdf?OpenElement>

Copies of this letter are sent to:

President of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev
Office of the Prosecutor General of Azerbaijan
Republic of Azerbaijan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department in the Nakhchivan
Autonomous Republic
Minister of Internal Affairs for the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr Ramil Usubov
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Mr. Rafael Ibrahimov accredited to the
Finland and Norway
Representative at UN office in Geneva and other international organizations
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent representative Mr. Akram
Zeynalli
Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Børge Brende
Norwegian Minister of Trade and Industry Monica Mæland
Norwegian Minister of Petroleum and Energy Tord Lien,
Political Adviser to Norwegian Minister of Trade and Fisheries Morten Storebø
Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Fisheries Director for corporate social responsibility
Anne Kristin Sydnes
Ministry of Petroleum and Energy Deputy Ownership Section Director General Johan
Alstad
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Senior Adviser
Norwegian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Bård Ivar Svendsen
Statoil
OSCE Chairman Didier Burkhalter
OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Baku Alexis Chahtahtinsky
OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Baku Rashad Huseynov
OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Thomas Rymer
OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatović
Principal Adviser to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Roland Bless
Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Gunnar Vrang
EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus Herbert Salber
Political advisor to EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus Bjoern Kuehne
EU Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis
Political advisor to EU Special Representative for Human Rights Mychelle Rieu
Political advisor to EU Special Representative for Human Rights Caroline Stein
Personal Assistant to EU Special Representative for Human Rights Souad Azghoud EU
Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Head of Cabinet Bernard Brunet
EU High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Vice-President of the Commission Head of Cabinet James Morrison
MEP Heidi Hautala
MEP Iris Hoffmann
MEP Kateřina Konečná
MEP Amtanas Guoga
MEP Sajjad Karim
Secretariat of the Committee of Ministers
Head of Council of Europe Office in Baku Head of Office
Secretariat of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhumane or
Degrading Treatment or Punishment
Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights
Council of Europe Member of the House of Representatives Peter Omtzigt
UNDP Nordic Office Trygve Olafsen
UNDP Oslo Governance Centre Program Specialist Eirik Talleraas
United Nations Development Programme in Azerbaijan
Committee to Protect Journalists
International PEN Writers in Prison Committee
Article 19
Reporters Without Borders

Frontline Defenders
Human Rights Watch
Amnesty International
Human Rights House Network
Norwegian Helsinki Committee
People in Need Foundation

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