

Letter from Gubad Ibadoghlu addressed to the members of the Euronest on March 20, 2024.

Dear members of the Euronest,

I, Gubad Ibadoghlu, Europe-UK based Azerbaijani academic, democracy advocate and regime critic, am greeting you from Baku Detention Center!

I am writing from a windowless, smelly, humid, dump and sultry cell overfilled with insects. Conditions in the detention facilities are atrocious, cells are crowded with mostly innocent people, including more than 200 political prisoners. I am one of them.

My research focuses on “Petro-Authoritarianism” in Azerbaijan, Russia and Kazakhstan. While abroad, as a political exile from Azerbaijan for my contentious issues such as corruption and embezzlement and my activism surrounding political transparency in Azerbaijan. During my time at LSE I meticulously documented a vast scheme orchestrated by Azerbaijan’s elite, including Aliyev’s own offspring, to hide their stolen riches in foreign properties and assets. In the article I worked on right before my arrest I investigated and exposed a scheme under which Azerbaijan is reselling the Russian Gas to the EU.

All this research is the reason for my imprisonment. However my imprisonment is not an isolated incident; it’s a part of a larger crackdown on civil liberties and dissent in Azerbaijan that has included the arrest and harassment of other political dissidents, journalists and activists.

My health has deteriorated due to poor detention center conditions. I have severe sugar imbalance, enlarged aortic aneurysm, nodules in various organs, and severe back pain. In prison I don’t have access to appropriate and proper medical care, adequate medications. The Azerbaijani authorities have repeatedly denied my requests to be examined by an independent doctor. They have also at least 3 times denied the International Committee of the Red Cross to get access to me.

I have been an outspoken critic of the systemic corruption surrounding Azerbaijan’s ruling elite. Azerbaijani authorities misused the criminal justice system to target me for my peaceful criticism and dissent. My dreadful jail situation is putting my life at risk. Therefore, only urgent action is required to save my life in prison. Otherwise it will be late, most probably I will be the next victim after Navalny.

I know I am not confronting these challenges alone: you can your colleagues stand united in solidarity with me. It fortified me and I am forced to endure and remain strong, but I can’t resist endlessly in this incredibly difficult situation.

The European Union has a lot of connections with the Government of Azerbaijan such as energy cooperation, the gas deal and supporting COP29.

All of the Azerbaijan's claims about investing into green energy are lies and all of you know it as its economy is built on oil and gas. It is just a facade designed to hide the fact that Azerbaijan has no plan to abandon fossil fuels or their export. The European Commission and the European Parliament should prioritize human rights, democracy and anti-corruption [stance] during the bilateral cooperation with the Government of Azerbaijan. Human rights should not be downplayed, they are not for sale.

Finally the EU should provide continuously support to Ukraine. Future of our region depends on the result of the Russia-Ukraine war. Slava Ukraine!

Many thanks for your attention. I highly appreciate your valuable time, kindness and support.

Sincerely,

Gubad Ibadoghlu

February, 2024

P.S. If convicted, I could face up to 17 years in prison.