

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/azerbaidjan-online-journalist-sentenced-to-18-09-03-2012,42047.html>

Europe/Ex-USSR - Azerbaijan

Journalist sentenced

Online journalist sentenced to 18 months in prison

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Reporters Without Borders is dismayed to learn that a court in the Baku district of Absheron yesterday sentenced online journalist **Ramin Bayramov**, the editor of the *Islamazeri.az* website, to 18 months in prison on charges of illegal possession of drugs and firearms. He has been detained since 11 July 2011.

"Bayramov is almost certainly just the latest victim of a crackdown on pro-Iranian religious sectors in Azerbaijan," Reporters Without Borders said. "[Baku and Tehran must stop making journalists pay for the diplomatic dispute they are waging](#). Freedom of expression and information must be respected and Bayramov must be allowed the right to express his views whatever they may be."

There have been doubts about the reasons for his arrest from the outset. He was arrested on same day as one of the leaders of the Azerbaijani Islamic Party (IPA), Arif Ganiyev, and it was initially reported that the National Security Ministry suspected Bayramov of having links with the Iranian Cultural Centre in Baku and belonging to the radical Shiite group Jafari.

But the prosecutor's office nonetheless decided to charge him under criminal code articles 228.1 (illegal possession of firearms) and 234.1 (illegal possession of drugs). Ganiyev was convicted on the same charges on 26 January.

The Islamazeri.az website covers Azerbaijani politics and current affairs from a conservative viewpoint that is critical of the government. It has, for example, opposed the government's ban on wearing the hijab in schools.

Photo : <http://goo.gl/1SwF8>

Other images



JPEG - 25.9 kb
400 x 300 pixels
