

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST HELD INCOMMUNICADO, RISKS TORTURE

Political activist Faraj Karimov, a dedicated critic of the Azerbaijani government, went missing on 23 July. It was later revealed that police had detained him, but his whereabouts are still not known, and he is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. His brother Siraj Karimov had been arrested six days earlier.

Faraj Karimov is an active member of the youth branch of opposition political party Musavat. He is also a blogger and an outspoken critic of the government in social media.

Faraj Karimov called his father in the morning of 23 July to say he was being followed by people in civilian clothes. After that, his phone went dead. His father made several calls to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but received no information about his son.

Later that day, the Azerbaijani authorities announced that Faraj Karimov had been detained on drug charges. However, the authorities have not disclosed his location and have allowed neither Faraj Karimov's lawyer nor his family to contact him. His family fear that Faraj Karimov is being tortured or otherwise ill-treated. They are also concerned about Faraj Karimov's health, since he has been suffering from serious medical conditions of his heart and lungs.

Faraj Karimov's older brother, Siraj Karimov, had been arrested on drug charges on 17 July. Police claimed to have found drugs in his pockets. The family insist that neither Faraj nor Siraj Karimov used drugs. The family believe Siraj Karimov was arrested solely because of his brother's political activities.

Amnesty International has previously documented cases in Azerbaijan of political activists and human rights defenders being held incommunicado, while being severely beaten to make them "confess crimes". The Azerbaijani authorities have also used trumped-up drug charges against outspoken critics.

Please write immediately in Azeri, Russian, English or your own language:

- Expressing concern that the charges against Faraj and Siraj Karimov are politically motivated and insisting that the drug allegations are impartially investigated, and release them immediately if these allegations are proven wrong;
- Calling on the authorities to notify Faraj Karimov's family about his whereabouts immediately, ensure his safety and that he is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- Calling on them to allow Faraj Karimov immediate access a lawyer of his choice;
- Insisting on full respect for, and protection of, the right to freedom of expression in Azerbaijan.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 SEPTEMBER 2014 TO:

President

Ilham Aliyev
Office of the President of Azerbaijan
19 Istiqlaliyyat Street
Baku AZ1066, Azerbaijan
Fax: +994 12 492 0625
Email: office@pa.gov.az
Salutation: Dear President Aliyev

Prosecutor General

Zakir Qaralov
7 Rafibeyli Street
Baku AZ1001, Azerbaijan
Email: info@prosecutor.gov.az
Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

Minister of Internal Affairs

Ramil Usubov
7 Azerbaijan Avenue
Baku AZ1005, Azerbaijan
Fax: +994 12 590 9699
Email: info@mia.gov.az
Salutation: Dear Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation
Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST HELD INCOMMUNICADO, RISKS TORTURE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International has longstanding concerns about the Azerbaijani authorities' failure to respect their international obligations to protect the rights to freedoms of expression, association and assembly. Dissenting voices in the country frequently face trumped-up criminal charges, physical assault, harassment, blackmail and other reprisals from the authorities and groups associated with them. Law-enforcement officials regularly use torture and other ill-treatment against detained civil society activists, with impunity.

Amnesty International has documented dozens of cases like that of Faraj and Siraj Karimov, and has recognized at least 19 people as prisoners of conscience in Azerbaijan, jailed solely for their peaceful attempts to exercise their right to freedom of expression. For more information, see *Behind bars: Silencing dissent in Azerbaijan* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR55/004/2014/en>).

Name: Faraj Karimov, Siraj Karimov
Gender m/f: m

UA: 186/14 Index: EUR 55/008/2014 Issue Date: 25 July 2014