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<http://www.rsf.org/azerbaijan-rauf-mirkadyrov-should-not-be-in-18-07-2014,46661.html>

Europe/Ex-USSR - Azerbaijan

Persecution

Rauf Mirkadyrov should not be in prison!

18 July 2014

Court orders well-known reporter held for four more months

Reporters Without Borders is outraged to learn that a Baku court extended journalist **Rauf Mirkadyrov's** pre-trial detention for another four months on 15 July at the prosecutor-general's request.

A well-known correspondent for the independent Russian-language newspaper *Zerkalo*, Mirkadyrov [has been held since 18 April](#) on a charge of high treason. In reality, he is one of the latest victims of the government's campaign to stamp out all criticism

"By keeping Mirkadyrov in detention, the politicized judicial system is showing that it is bent on persecuting him," said Johann Bihr, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Eastern Europe and Central Asia desk. *"His only crime is an independent attitude. We again call on the authorities to drop the charges and free him at once."*

The prosecutor-general said there was a danger Mirkadyrov would try to flee if granted a conditional release. Mirkadyrov responded that, when released for three days at the end of May to attend his father's funeral, he neither tried to escape nor violate the confidentiality of the judicial investigation.

The court rejected his request to take account of his mother's poor health and allow him to stay with her.

Mirkadyrov's last position with *Zerkalo* was its correspondent in Ankara, where the Turkish authorities arrested him on 18 April and immediately extradited him back to Baku. The Azerbaijani authorities arrested him on arrival on a trumped-up charge of spying for Armenia.

One of *Zerkalo's* leading writers for many years, he is known for being critical not only of the Azerbaijani government but also the Turkish and Russian ones. *Zerkalo* was [forced to suspend publishing](#) in May after being economically throttled.

Azerbaijan is ranked 160th out of 180 countries in the [2014 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

Read our previous statements on this case:

- [Deprived of income, Azerbaijani paper is forced to stop publishing](#) (20.06.2014)
- [Well-known journalist arrested on spying charge after deportation](#) (22.04.2014)

(Photo: *Zerkalo*)
