

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/azerbaidjan-two-month-detention-order-for-two-17-03-2012,42147.html>

---

Europe/Ex-USSR - Azerbaijan

Appeals rejected

## Appeal court refuses to free Khayal TV journalists held since March

20 July 2012

---

A Baku appeal court has rejected an appeal by two journalists, *Khayal TV* director-general **Vugar Gonagov** and editor-in-chief **Zaur Guliyev**, who have been detained arbitrarily since 13 March for allegedly causing rioting in the northern town of Quba.

Presided by Etibar Huseynov, the appeal court issued its ruling on 18 July, confirming an 11 July decision by a court in the Baku district of Nizami to prolong their detention for another two months. The next hearing in their case will be held on 17 September.

In a separate decision on 18 July, an appeal court presided by Mirpasha Huseynov rejected the complaint that the two journalists brought against the police officers who arrested them. Its aim was to get the police and judicial authorities to recognize that they had indeed been arrested rather than "detained as a preventive measure."

Gonagov and Guliyev are charge with "intentional destruction of property" and "organizing public disorder" under articles 186 and 233 of the criminal code.

---

### Two-month detention order for two journalists arrested in northern town

**27.03.2012**

Reporters Without Borders condemns the two-month pre-trial detention order that a court in the Baku district of Nasimi issued on 22 March for two of the four journalists arrested in the northern town of Quba on 13 March over a YouTube video that triggered major protests and clashes with the police in Quba (see below).

The two journalists – **Vugar Gonagov**, the executive director of *Khayal TV*, and **Zaur Guliyev**, the station's editor in chief – are facing up to three years in prison on charges of violating public order and abuse of authority under articles 233 and 309.2 of the criminal code.

They are currently being held at the interior ministry's general directorate for organized crime, where they have still not been allowed to receive a visit from their lawyer, Elchin Sadigov.

Little information is so far available about the investigation. From the initial interrogation sessions, it seems the police are trying to identify the person responsible for the video recording of the inflammatory remarks by the head of the Quba government that sparked rioting after it was posted on YouTube.

The two other journalists who were arrested on 13 March – **Zaur Mustafayev**, head of advertising at *Khayal TV*, and **Jamil Mammadli**, a reporter with the *Polygon* news agency – were released on 22 and 23 March respectively without being charged. Mustafayev declined to answer any questions.

---

### 17.03.2012 - Four journalists arrested over Quba riots

Reporters Without Borders deplores the arrests on 13 March of three employees of the television station *Khayal TV* — the executive director, **Vugar Gonagov**, the editor, **Zaur Guliyev**, and **Zaur Mustafayev**, the head of public relations — as well as **Jamil Mammadli**, a reporter with the *Polygon* news agency. All are accused of being implicated in the riots in the northern town of Quba in early March.

“These arrests highlight the predicament the authorities find themselves in over the disturbances in Quba,” Reporters without borders said.

“Despite the dismissal of the head of the local government the day after the uprising, they persist in their search for the source of the video recording of his inflammatory remarks. Confidentiality of sources must be respected and those who work in the media must not be made scapegoats.

“These arrests have no legal foundation and we demand that the journalists be released as soon as possible.”

The four journalists were arrested in Quba then taken to the capital, Baku, where they are being held in custody. According to information gathered by Reporters Without Borders, they have yet to be charged. Mammadli’s home was reported to have been searched.

The arrests took place two weeks after a popular uprising broke out in Quba on 1 March. Thousands of demonstrators gathered to demand the resignation of the local government head Rauf Habibov, after a video was posted on YouTube showing him making derogatory remarks about residents at a team meeting.

Clashes broke out as the protesters were being dispersed, during which several journalists were beaten up. **Rashad Aliyev**, a video cameraman with the local NGO Institute of Freedom and Safety of Reporters, was hit on the head several times.

---