

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/azerbaijan-journalist-beaten-unconscious-in-23-08-2014,46836.html>

Europe/Ex-USSR - Azerbaijan

Brutal assault

Journalist beaten unconscious in Azerbaijani exclave

23 August 2014

His wife, a fellow journalist, suspects that the authorities were responsible for the attack

Reporters Without Borders is deeply shocked to learn that **Ilgar Nasibov**, a journalist and human rights defender, was [beaten unconscious](#) yesterday in Nakhchivan, the capital of an autonomous western exclave of Azerbaijan. His wife, fellow journalist **Malahat Nasibova**, suspects the authorities.

A reporter for [Radio Free Europe](#) and the independent news agency [Turan](#), Nasibov also works for the "Resource Centre for Promoting NGOs and Democracy". He was found last night unconscious in pool of blood in the centre, which had been ransacked.

He is now in intensive care with concussion and with multiple nose, cheekbone and rib fractures. Despite a dozen stitches to the face and head, he was still losing a great deal of blood 12 hours after the attack. The doctors also fear a cerebral haemorrhage.

His wife, who freelances for various media including [Turan](#), said she did not know the reason for the assault but suspected that the Azerbaijan authorities were to blame. "This attack is part of a crackdown on civil society that recently began in Azerbaijan," Nasibova said.

In 2011, Nasibova described the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic as a "laboratory of repression" in which "repressive methods are tested" and "are then applied on a large scale in the rest of Azerbaijan."

Nasibov were sentenced to a year in prison in 2007. The couple are often the targets of threats and the lock of their home was forced on 6 August.

"We are deeply shocked by this brutal attack on Ilgar Nasibov," said Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Christophe Deloire. *"If his wife's suspicions about the role of the authorities turn out to be correct, an unacceptable threshold will have been crossed in their attempts to silence the last critical voices in Azerbaijan."*

"Whoever was to blame, this bloody assault must be fully investigated and those responsible must be punished. We urge the international community to react so that this kind of violence does not keep recurring."

Already ranked 160th out of 180 countries in the [2014 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#), Azerbaijan has seen an [unprecedented crackdown](#) on civil society, independent journalists and media support organizations since late July.

An Azerbaijani exclave bordered by Armenia, Iran and Turkey, the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic is notorious for [violence against journalists](#).
