

URGENT ACTION

MASS RAID AND DETENTION OF LGBTI PEOPLE IN BAKU

On 22 September, Azerbaijani police conducted numerous raids on LGBTI individuals in Baku, detaining more than 100 people. While some were released, at least 48 individuals were placed in between 10 and 20 day-long administrative detention for purportedly resisting police. Those detained were denied access to lawyers of their own choosing and some allege ill-treatment by the police.

More than 100 LGBTI individuals were rounded up by the police in public spaces, and detained on 22 September. While some were released, at least 48 people - whose identities are known to Amnesty International - were sentenced to administrative detention, ranging from 10 to 20 days. They were accused of resisting the police's legitimate orders, and found guilty on the basis of the police's allegations, without any further evidence. During the summary hearings the detainees were denied fair trial guarantees as their request for access to lawyers of their own choosing was denied, and instead given state-appointed lawyers. The detainees allege they were beaten by the police and faced other ill-treatment while in custody.

International media quoted a representative of the Azerbaijani Ministry of Internal Affairs justifying the police raid by claiming it was initiated in response to multiple complaints made by local residents that LGBTI people were not "respecting others around them". The representative said police approached only those LGBTI individuals who made no attempt to conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity in public, adding that many of those detained are HIV positive and have other sexually transmitted diseases, making them dangerous for the health of the people around them. The raid appeared to target LGBTI individuals exclusively and be a deliberate attempt by the authorities to intimidate LGBTI persons in Azerbaijan.

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

- Calling on the Azerbaijani authorities to immediately release all detained LGBTI individuals arrested during the 22 September raids;
- Calling on the authorities to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of all people in Azerbaijan regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity and end their targeting of LGBTI people in Azerbaijan through discriminatory policies and practices.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 9 NOVEMBER 2017 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

Minister Ramil Usubov
Ministry of Internal Affairs
7 Azerbaijan Avenue
Baku AZ1005, Azerbaijan
Phone: +994 12 590 9222
E-mail: info@mia.gov.az
Salutation: Dear Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below: HIS EXCELLENCY MR TAHIR TAGHIZADE, Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 4 Kensington Court, London, W8 5DL tel: 020 7938 3412 email: london@mission.mfa.gov.az,

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

MASS RAID AND DETENTION OF LGBTI PEOPLE IN BAKU

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Consensual sex between adult men was decriminalised in Azerbaijan in 2000. However, strong negative attitudes towards LGBTI people are common in Azerbaijan. As a result of the general crackdown on civil society and societal homophobia and transphobia, Azerbaijan lacks a visible LGBTI movement.

Amnesty International has documented a growing number of cases of increasingly serious harassment, intimidation and persecution of different human rights defenders and activists by the Azerbaijani authorities in recent years. The string of arrests and various forms of harassment of prominent human rights defenders and other civil society activists, in connection with their professional activities, has effectively paralyzed civil society in Azerbaijan.

Name: LGBTI people in Azerbaijan

UA: 223/17 Index: EUR 55/7176/2017 Issue Date: 28 September 2017