

Ministry of Internal Affairs
Col.-Gen. Ramil Usubov
7 Azerbaijan Prospekti
Baku AZ1005
AZERBAIJAN

Dear Minister

Re: Presidential candidate's convoy attacked

We write to express our concerns over continued persecution of dissenting voices in your country.

We understand a convoy carrying Presidential candidate Isa Gambar of the Musavat party was attacked by a mob on 13 January. This followed a peaceful protest in Baku the previous day that was stopped and activists charged with taking part in an unauthorised protest.

Ten vehicles attempted to block the convoy at the entrance to Lenkoran where he was to campaign. A mob of over 100 pelted the presidential convoy with rocks and eggs from nearby trucks, damaging vehicles' windows. During the melee, nine people in Isa Gambar were punched and kicked, and Gulagha Aslanli, Musavat Party deputy leader, was run over by a car.

Mehman Karimov, a Musavat Party photographer, was detained and questioned by plain clothed men who appeared to be directing the mob. He was released when they returned his camera.

It would appear that the police did not intervene. Isa Gambar and his convoy only managed to escape after a truck rammed them and several cars followed them for some kilometres.

We therefore call on the Azerbaijani authorities to conduct an immediate investigation on the attack on the Musavat Party convoy at Lenkoran city, and the absence of police intervention.

We further urge you to launch an urgent investigation to identify those responsible for causing the injuries to the members of the convoy and the damage to their vehicles, and to bring them to justice.

Finally, we call on the authorities to stop selectively prosecuting political and civil society youth activists.

We look forward to your immediate response to these serious matters.

Yours sincerely

cc President Ilham Aliyev, Office of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
HE Mr Fakhraddin Gurbanov, Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan