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*Plenary sitting*

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**B10-0136/2024**

21.10.2024

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 136(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Azerbaijan, violation of human rights and international law  
and relations with Armenia  
(2024/2980(RSP))

**Yannis Maniatis, Nacho Sánchez Amor, Udo Bullmann, Raphaël  
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on behalf of the S&D Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Azerbaijan, violation of human rights and international law and relations with Armenia (2024/2980(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Armenia and Azerbaijan, in particular those of 20 May 2021 on prisoners of war in the aftermath of the most recent conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan<sup>1</sup>, of 10 March 2022 on the destruction of cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh<sup>2</sup>, of 19 January 2023 on the humanitarian consequences of the blockade in Nagorno-Karabakh<sup>3</sup>, of 14 September 2023 on the case of Dr Gubad Ibadoghlu, imprisoned in Azerbaijan<sup>4</sup>, of 13 March 2024 on closer ties between the EU and Armenia and the need for a peace agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia<sup>5</sup>, and of 25 April 2024 on Azerbaijan, notably the repression of civil society and the cases of Dr Gubad Ibadoghlu and Ilhamiz Guliyev<sup>6</sup>,
  - having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement of 22 April 1996 between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Azerbaijan, of the other part,
  - having regard to the joint statement of the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan of 7 December 2023,
  - having regard to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group’s 2009 Basic Principles,
  - having regard to Rule 136(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas from 11 to 22 November 2024 Azerbaijan will host the 29th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29); whereas respect for fundamental human rights and civil society participation are enshrined in the host country agreement through which the Azerbaijani Government committed to uphold these rights;
- B. whereas for more than a decade and with increasing determination Azerbaijani authorities have been reducing space for civil society, arbitrarily closing down non-governmental organisations and arresting or forcing into exile civil society representatives;
- C. whereas since the announcement that Azerbaijan would host COP29, control of critical

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 15, 12.1.2022, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 347, 9.9.2022, p. 198.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 214, 16.6.2023, p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C, C/2024/1763, 22.3.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/1763/oj>.

<sup>5</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2024)0158.

<sup>6</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2024)0369.

voices has increased, resulting in the arrest, arbitrary detention and prosecution of civil society activists, journalists and media workers, including foreign journalists;

- D. whereas an estimated 300 people are currently being detained on politically motivated charges, including human rights defenders, journalists, academics, peaceful protesters, lawyers and political and other activists; whereas they are being held in conditions that do not meet international human rights standards and they are often denied access to their family members, lawyers and adequate medical care;
- E. whereas the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) decided in January 2024 not to ratify the credentials of the Azerbaijani delegation, noting its ‘very serious concerns as to ...[Azerbaijan’s] respect for human rights’; whereas the PACE noted that its Monitoring Committee’s rapporteurs were not allowed to meet with people who had been detained on allegedly politically motivated charges, and that the Azerbaijani delegation refused to allow the rapporteur for the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights to visit the country;
- F. whereas Azerbaijan has implemented a systematic policy of bribing officials and elected representatives in Europe in order to downplay Azerbaijan’s human rights record and to silence critics, as part of a widely used strategy described as ‘caviar diplomacy’; whereas some cases have been investigated and some of those involved have been prosecuted and convicted by national courts in several EU Member States;
- G. whereas Azerbaijan has been actively involved in destabilisation campaigns against the national politics of Member States, as recently observed and well-documented in New Caledonia, where it has conducted disinformation operations and provided support for rioters;
- H. whereas on 3 July 2024, the Council of Europe’s European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) publicly denounced Azerbaijan’s ‘refusal to improve the situation in the light of the Committee’s recommendations’ and the ‘persistent lack of cooperation of the Azerbaijani authorities with the CPT’;
- I. whereas Dr Gubad Ibadoghlu, a renowned political economist, anti-corruption activist and chairperson of the Azerbaijan Democracy and Prosperity Movement, who is due to start his visiting scholarship at Technische Universität in Dresden, was arbitrarily detained on 23 July 2023, kept in prison on dubious charges with limited contact with his family and lawyer and reportedly subjected to inhumane treatment; whereas since Parliament’s resolutions of 14 September 2023 and 25 April 2024, his health has further deteriorated due to the inadequate treatment of his serious medical condition, poor detention conditions and inhumane treatment; whereas on 22 April 2024 Dr Ibadoghlu was moved to house arrest, where he is being kept under constant police surveillance without being allowed to communicate with doctors, while his health condition still gives rise to serious concerns for his life; whereas on 17 October 2024 Dr Ibadoghlu was shortlisted for the 2024 Sakharov Prize;
- J. whereas on 4 December 2023 human rights activist Ilhamiz Guliyev was arrested on politically motivated charges a few months after he gave an anonymous interview to AbzasMedia about the alleged police practice of planting drugs on political activists;

- K. whereas charges have been brought against numerous independent journalists who remain in prison or in pre-trial detention, while independent media outlets such as AbzasMedia, Kanal 13, Toplum TV and others have been shut down after key members of their staff were arrested on politically motivated charges;
- L. whereas Dr Ibadoghlu's research found that Azerbaijan was highly unlikely to be able to increase its natural gas production sufficiently in order to fulfil its promise to provide gas to the EU as set out in the strategic partnership for energy; whereas Azerbaijan's increased Russian gas imports are a cause for concern as to whether Azerbaijan can replace Russia as a gas supplier, as Baku, unable to meet European demand, may relabel Russian gas as Azerbaijani for European consumption;
- M. whereas on 19 September 2023 Azerbaijan launched an unjustified attack against Nagorno-Karabakh, resulting in several hundred casualties, the death of civilians, and the majority of the population fleeing from their homes; whereas this forced displacement of the population and offensive against the civilian population represent a de facto ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh and gross violations of international law and human rights, which may amount to crimes against humanity;
- N. whereas in December 2023 a joint statement of the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan brought about the release of 32 Armenian prisoners of war, expressed the commitment of both countries to continue their discussions regarding the implementation of more confidence-building measures, and called on the international community to support their efforts that would contribute to building mutual trust between the two countries and positively impact the entire South Caucasus region;
1. Urges the Azerbaijani authorities to address the deteriorating human rights situation in the country ahead of COP29 and to show its commitment to fundamental rights and to fundamental principles of democracy, justice, the rule of law and human dignity;
  2. Denounces the reported violations of the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, the reprisals against human rights defenders and journalists, the widespread violations of the right to a fair trial, and the abuse of the criminal justice system for political purposes;
  3. Calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all human rights defenders, activists, journalists and government critics imprisoned in retaliation for their human rights work and dissenting views; demands that freedom of the press and expression be guaranteed and that media organisations not be restricted; calls, therefore, on the Azerbaijani Government to release journalists working for AbzasMedia, including Ulvi Hasanli and Sevinj Vagifqizi, and Alasgar Mammadli who works for Toplum TV;
  4. Deplores the crackdown on civil society, as documented by Amnesty International, around major international events hosted by Azerbaijan, including Eurovision 2012 and the 2015 European Games;
  5. Takes note of the statements of the electoral observation mission of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, according to which Azerbaijan's presidential and early parliamentary elections

of February and September 2024 did not offer voters genuine political alternatives and took place within a legal framework that overly restricted fundamental freedoms and the media;

6. Reiterates its grave concern over the detention of anti-corruption activist and academic Dr Gubad Ibadoghlu, who was held in pre-trial detention for almost one year despite his deteriorating health, moved to house arrest on 22 April 2024 and continues to be deprived of liberty, and who is not allowed to leave Azerbaijan to receive the medical care he requires; calls on the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) and on the Member States to actively call for the release of Dr Gubad Ibadoghlu; calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to drop all charges against him, release him immediately from house arrest and allow him to leave the country on humanitarian grounds to receive urgently needed medical treatment abroad;
7. Expresses its concern over the case of Anar Mammadli, a prominent human rights defender and climate advocate, who was arrested on 29 April 2024 and placed in pre-trial detention, and who faces charges of conspiracy in apparent retaliation for his criticism of the government and his activism; calls for his release from prison;
8. Deplores the arbitrary detention of human rights defender Ilhamiz Guliyev and opposition leader Tofiq Yagublu and calls for their immediate and unconditional release;
9. Calls for the EU and its Member States to impose targeted sanctions on individuals responsible for human rights violations and systematic repression against civil society in Azerbaijan, as well as on Azerbaijani officials responsible for the ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh;
10. Reiterates its call for independent investigations into the abuses committed by Azerbaijani forces in Nagorno-Karabakh that could amount to war crimes; calls, further, on the Azerbaijani authorities to allow the safe return of the Armenian population to Nagorno-Karabakh and to offer solid promises regarding the protection of their rights and protection from intimidation and discrimination, guaranteed and monitored by an international presence;
11. Highlights the importance of providing continuous support to the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians who were displaced in September 2023 and beforehand through direct humanitarian aid and budget support for the Armenian Government; calls for the EU, in this regard, to provide a new package of assistance to Armenia to help the Armenian Government address the humanitarian needs of refugees;
12. Calls on the Azerbaijani Government to immediately and unconditionally release all remaining Armenian prisoners of war, hostages and captives, and to ensure transparency regarding the situation of detainees from Nagorno-Karabakh;
13. Strongly condemns the destruction of Armenian cultural, religious and historical heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh; calls on Azerbaijan to refrain from destroying this heritage in the region and calls for the protection of this heritage in line with UNESCO standards, including through the authorisation of a UNESCO mission to the area;

14. Calls for thorough investigations into serious risks of Russian gas laundering through Azerbaijan and into the Azerbaijani authorities' facilitation of Russia's circumvention of EU sanctions, which would severely contradict EU foreign policy objectives; calls on the Council to systematically tackle the circumvention of sanctions by non-EU states; calls on the Council to design a new horizontal sanctions regime to counter this circumvention, which will require a more general and holistically applicable instrument to target circumvention in all regimes implemented by the EU;
15. Insists that any partnership agreement between the EU and Azerbaijan – including on energy – must have strong conditions attached on the respect of international law, fundamental rights and international obligations, in particular on Azerbaijan making substantial progress towards a comprehensive and sustainable peace agreement with Armenia; calls on the Commission, consequently, to urgently assess and review the 2022 Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Partnership in the Field of Energy and to act accordingly;
16. Calls on the VP/HR to suspend the negotiations for a renewed partnership agreement until Azerbaijan has demonstrated its genuine readiness to faithfully engage in the negotiation of a peace agreement with Armenia and to respect the rights of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians;
17. Confirms its full and strong support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Armenia and Azerbaijan; condemns any military aggression, use of force or hybrid threats against Armenia, as well as foreign interference and attempts to destabilise the political situation in Armenia; welcomes the assistance measures under the European Peace Facility in support of the Armenian armed forces and calls for the cooperation between Armenia and the EU to be further reinforced in security and defence; welcomes the actions undertaken by several Member States to provide defensive military support to Armenia and urges the Member States to consider similar initiatives;
18. Urges Azerbaijan and Armenia to advance towards full normalisation of their relations on all pending issues and to promptly conclude a comprehensive and sustainable peace agreement; calls on Azerbaijan to demonstrate genuine efforts to this end and invites the VP/HR to continue to support efforts towards a comprehensive peace treaty;
19. Welcomes the joint Armenia-Azerbaijan statement of 7 December 2023 on confidence-building measures; firmly believes that such measures can benefit the overall peace process and pave the way for increased trust between the two sides; welcomes the progress made in the framework of the Armenia-Azerbaijan border delimitation process, which has led to an agreement on several sections of the border; encourages both sides to take further steps on the remaining sections;
20. Calls on EU and Member State officials and elected representatives taking part in COP29 in Baku not to turn a blind eye to human rights violations in the country and to use the momentum of the conference to increase diplomatic pressure on the Azerbaijani regime to respect fundamental rights and freedoms, release all political prisoners and return Armenian hostages;
21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign

Affairs and Security Policy, the President, Government and Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the President, Government and Parliament of the Republic of Armenia, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Council of Europe.