

Committee to Defend the Rights of Imprisoned Satiric/ Journalist Sakit Zahidov (Mirza Sakit)

APPEAL TO THE OSCE, ODIHR AND PARTICIPANTS OF THE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING IN WARSAW, POLAND

2 October 2006
Baku, Azerbaijan

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STOP INNOCENT AZERBAIJANI JOURNALIST FROM BEING CONVICTED!

On 3 October 2006, at 3 p.m. Baku local time, Grave Crimes Court Judge Azer Orujov will hand down the verdict in a politically-motivated criminal drug case against revered Azerbaijani satirical journalist Sakit Zahidov. The local and international community has one last chance to express its concern about the completely groundless case against Zahidov, prevent his conviction, and call for his release.

INNOCENT JOURNALIST FRAMED AND IMPRISONED!

Zahidov has been in police custody since he was arrested on 23 June 2006. He was initially charged with possession of a large amount of drugs with intent to resell it. On the day of Zahidov's arrest, 10 grams of heroine was found in Zahidov's pocket while he was being searched in the police station. However, Zahidov has always maintained that the illegal substance was planted on him by police and that he neither uses, nor deals drugs.

In a small break during the last changed the drug dealing use charge, as they were that Zahidov dealt drugs. evidence to back up the drug

Police admitted in court that an Zahidov on the day of his arrest called to testify in court denied Zahidov. According to them, documents that Zahidov was a subjective, visual has said a blood sample taken the authorities showed traces used to carry out an HIV test.

The prosecution has asked the to three years of imprisonment. from the 12 years of was initially seeking in its drug dealing case against Zahidov, it remains absurd, since Zahidov is *NOT* a drug dealer, *NOT* a drug user and certainly *NOT* a drug abuser.



During his preliminary hearing, S. Zahidov vowed to continue his fight against corruption and injustice in Azerbaijan, even from prison.

court hearing, the prosecution charge against Zahidov to a drug unable to provide any evidence However, there is also no use charge.

"express" urine drug test given to came back clean. And doctors ever performing a drug test on statements they wrote in medical drug user, were based only assessments. Zahidov's lawyer from Zahidov, which according to of illicit substances, was in fact

court to sentence Sakit Zahidov While this is a welcome change imprisonment the prosecution

SEND APPEALS TO AZERBAIJAN'S AUTHORITIES BY OCT. 3, 3 P.M. BAKU LOCAL TIME!

The international community must unite and put pressure on Azerbaijan's government and authorities to prevent this innocent father of five and sufferer of chronic heart problems from wasting away in prison for three years for no reason.

We, the Committee to Defend the Rights of Imprisoned Satiric/Journalist Sakit Zahidov and the Institute for Reporter Freedom and Safety, appeal to you. We ask that you write appeals to the presidential administration of Azerbaijan at office@apparat.gov.az before 3 p.m. Baku local time, tomorrow (Oct. 3), and call for Azerbaijan's leadership to encourage the country's judicial system to hand down a fair and objective verdict in Sakit Zahidov's case, so this innocent man can be freed.

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