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Oral statement on Azerbaijan

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Politically motivated prosecution and imprisonment of government critics and other dissenting voices has been one of the longstanding and contested human rights issues in Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani authorities disingenuously deny a well-established fact: they continue to lock up their critics and political opponents on politically motivated charges. Over a hundred persons who are victims of politically motivated prosecutions still languish in Azerbaijani jails.

Amnesty International, like other human rights groups, has documented numerous cases of prosecution and imprisonment on trumped-up charges in Azerbaijan, in proceedings that are manifestly in breach of international law and standards relating to fair trial. Many victims have alleged **torture and other ill-treatment**. These human rights violations have been the hallmarks of politically motivated prosecutions in Azerbaijan.

Whilst denying these well-documented human rights violations, the Azerbaijani authorities continue to **obstruct legitimate human rights work**. Moreover, virtually all prominent Azerbaijani human rights defenders themselves have been victims of politically-motivated prosecution and imprisonment, or have fled the country. Those released from prison often remain under travel and other restrictions, while many international human rights monitors, including Amnesty International, are **denied entry to Azerbaijan**.

We call on the international community to address the issue of politically motivated prosecution in Azerbaijan. It should acknowledge and support the work done by frontline Azerbaijani human rights defenders in documenting politically motivated prosecutions and other violations, and engage with the Azerbaijani authorities on every case of politically motivated prosecution in the country, demanding victims' release or prompt reviews of their case in proceedings that are fully compliant with international law and standards relating to fair trial.