

Original: ENGLISH



United States Mission to the OSCE

Arrest of Independent Election Observer Anar Mammadli in Azerbaijan

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
December 19, 2013

The United States is deeply troubled by recent developments affecting civil society in Azerbaijan, including the December 16, 2013 arrest of Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies (EMDS) Chairman Anar Mammadli on charges of illegal entrepreneurship and subsequent sentencing to three months' pre-trial detention. The details of the charges are still unclear, but we question whether Mr. Mammadli's detention is related to his organization's election monitoring and reporting activities. The United States has raised this case with senior members of the Government of Azerbaijan and will continue to do so.

We urge that Mr. Mammadli be released immediately while the legal process continues.

As we have stated throughout this year, we urge the Government of Azerbaijan to observe due process of the law and ensure transparency and fairness in the judicial process.

We will continue to closely monitor the investigation of EMDS and the International Cooperation of Volunteers Public Union.

We also take this opportunity to urge President Aliyev to return the draft NGO legislation to parliament and to request ODIHR and United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association Maina Kiai to identify opportunities to bring it in line with international standards and OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.