



Statement to demand the release of Gubad Ibadoghlu

We, the undersigned organisations, are deeply concerned about the continued imprisonment of Dr. Gubad Ibadoghlu. We demand that the Government of Azerbaijan immediately release Dr. Ibadoghlu, and call on companies and international institutions with links to Azerbaijan to use their leverage to ensure he is treated humanely and released immediately.

Dr. Gubad Ibadoghlu is a tireless and dedicated advocate for responsible natural resource governance and accountability in the extractive industries in Azerbaijan, Central Asian countries and globally. He served as a civil society representative to the international board of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) from 2013–2019.

Dr. Gubad Ibadoghlu was [violently detained on the 23rd of July](#) on fabricated charges of development, acquisition, or sale of large amounts of counterfeit money or securities. On July 24th the court in Azerbaijan remanded him in detention for 3 months and 26 days until his trial. Subsequently, Azerbaijani authorities brought new criminal charges against Dr. Ibadoghlu, attempting to affiliate him with an extremist religious group.

These charges appear to be nothing more than an attempt to silence a peaceful critic of the Azerbaijani government.

Dr. Gubad Ibadoghlu's health has deteriorated rapidly over the past 50 days. According to statements from his lawyers, Dr. Ibadoghlu has lost 15 kg since the beginning of detention. Dr. Ibadoghlu has been denied medication and treatment for his diabetes, hypertension, aortic aneurysm and chronic fatigue. Urgent action is required to ensure he doesn't develop further health issues in prison. Despite this, petitions submitted by his lawyers to change his detention to house arrest where he can be treated and his health monitored have not been accepted.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has requested to visit Dr. Ibadoghlu, but a meeting still needs to be arranged by authorities. Meanwhile, Dr. Ibadoghlu's immediate relatives have been banned from leaving the country, even though they have nothing to do with the criminal case opened against him.



There are reports that Dr. Ibadoghlu has faced obstacles in accessing his lawyer and was unable to meet his lawyer in private until the 27th of July, 4 days after his arrest. We understand that disciplinary proceedings were started against Dr. Ibadoghlu's lawyer, Zibeyda Sadygova, by the Bar Association but these were later dropped.

A free and open civic space - where human rights and the rule of law are respected - is critical to achieving prosperity and development in countries where natural resources are being extracted. A successful and stable business environment also depends on respect for civic freedoms.

We urge the **Government of Azerbaijan** to take action to ensure Dr. Gubad Ibadoghlu's immediate and unconditional release and we call on Azerbaijani authorities to immediately provide Dr. Ibadoghlu with the medication and treatment he needs. We also demand that the rights of Dr. Ibadoghlu, his family and those supporting and representing him are respected and not subjected to reprisal.

We call on **international companies** with business interests in Azerbaijan (including BP, Equinor, ExxonMobil, Itochu, Inpex, Molgroup, Turkish Petroleum, Abu Dhabi National Oil Company and ONGC Videsh and others) and **international financial institutions** (such as the World Bank, EBRD, IMF and the Asian Development Bank) to use their leverage to push for the release and proper treatment of Dr. Gubad Ibadoghlu, and for the respect of civic freedoms and the rule of law in Azerbaijan.