

Mr. Ilham Aliyev
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Istiqlaliyyat Street 19, Presidential Palace
AZ 1066, Baku, Azerbaijan Republic

16 September 2020

Brussels

Re: Raising concerns in regard to the sentencing of Tofiq Yagublu

Dear President Aliyev,

International Partnership for Human Rights is writing to you to raise our concerns in regard to the sentencing of Tofiq Yagublu on 3 September 2020.

We are aware that after being arrested on 22 March 2020 and having remained in custody until his trial Tofiq Yagublu, Deputy Chairman of the Musavat opposition political party, was sentenced to four years and three months' imprisonment after being found guilty on charges of 'hooliganism' after an alleged assault on a married couple following a car accident in a trial which did not meet international standards of fairness. We are concerned that the detention and trial of Tofiq Yagublu violated fair trial standards, and your government's international human rights commitments. IPHR joins other human rights groups in denouncing the charges brought against Tofiq Yagublu as unfounded and believe that they were brought in retribution for Tofiq Yagublu's political views.

The urgency of this request furthermore stems from the rapidly deteriorating health of Tofiq Yagublu. This is his third imprisonment in seven years. His health was previously affected during his last incarceration from November 2015 to March 2016. Today Tofiq Yagublu is on a hunger strike in protest against his unlawful imprisonment. As we write you it has been fifteen days since he has eaten. Due to his critical condition, Yagublu has been transferred to a hospital where he is under the doctor's supervision. His condition is reported as critical and rapidly deteriorating.

IPHR is concerned that this case is a further part of the pattern of your government's crackdown on dissident voices. The persecution of persons on the grounds of their political opinion encroaches on the fundamental right of expression, and is a serious violation of international law.

We are concerned also at reports that in recent days police officers have been deployed to disperse peaceful protesters calling for Tofiq Yagublu's release and that at least twenty people have been detained.

IPHR strongly condemns the unlawful sentence passed on Tofiq Yagublu and requests you to take steps to see that the case is immediately re-examined, and that he is immediately and unconditionally released.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Brigitte Dufour,
Director
International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR)