



## **ENEMO Calls Azerbaijan for Immediate Release of Anar Mammadli**

The European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) [once again](#) calls Azerbaijan Government for immediate release of Anar Mammadli of Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Centre (EMDS). EMDS chairman Anar Mammadli was imprisoned by the Court of Serious Crimes for 5.5 years respectively following the Azerbaijan presidential elections of October, 2013 when critical reports were published on the electoral process by Anar Mammadli and his colleagues.

ENEMO believes that Anar Mammadli was conducting legitimate and peaceful work as part of the EMDS observation mission In accordance with the internationally recognized standards for domestic monitoring of elections placed in the DECLARATION OF GLOBAL PRINCIPLES FOR NON-PARTISAN ELECTION OBSERVATION AND MONITORING BY CITIZEN ORGANIZATIONS. The EMDS reports strongly criticized the government for the electoral process violations and frauds, which creates the strong perception that legal grounds for the Azerbaijan human rights defenders imprisonment were fabricated.

The actions which took place in Azerbaijan regarding the arrest of human rights activists represent a political oppression on civil society organizations and pose a serious danger to the country's democratic development. NGOs in Azerbaijan have been facing restrictions in their operation for many years now, but during the last few years authorities have adopted various legislative amendments to create bureaucratic obstacles for local civil society organizations and to weaken their activities. New legislative amendments have enacted barriers for access to foreign funding, established new penalties, and broadened the range of grounds for temporarily suspending the work of an NGO. ENEMO considers that the present legal procedures, instead of ensuring the rule of law aim at repressing civil society because of their work and critical views.

Several International Organizations have made statements declaring the arrest of human rights defenders as political and called upon the Azerbaijan authorities to release them. In a joint

written declaration<sup>1</sup> submitted at the January 2014 session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), members of parliaments from Council of Europe member States have also called upon the authorities of Azerbaijan to release Anar Mammadli from pre-trial detention. Amnesty International considers Anar Mammadli to be a prisoner of conscience on account of the legitimate exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association, and calls for his immediate and unconditional release.<sup>2</sup>

ENEMO calls upon the Azerbaijan authorities to drop all the charges brought against Anar Mammadli and to release him immediately. We ask European Union, Council of Europe and other relevant international organizations to strongly condemn the imprisonment of Azerbaijan human rights activists, exert maximum pressure on the government of Azerbaijan to cease oppression of civil society organizations and fulfill Azerbaijan's commitments with the European Convention on Human Rights.

We also call upon the authorities to ensure that human rights defenders and civil society members are able to carry out their legitimate activities without fear and harassment.

*The European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) is international network of independent grass root non-partisan CSOs that supports democratic development and citizen's participation in political processes. It is composed of 22 leading domestic monitoring organizations from 17 countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, including three European Union countries. ENEMO was founded on September 29, 2001 in Croatia. All ENEMO members are committed to the principles of non-partisanship, impartiality, transparency, objectiveness and accuracy. ENEMO and its members respect and promote the international standards for free and transparent elections, as well as ways and mechanisms for education, engagement and empowerment of the people.*

**ENEMO Member Organizations: Centers for Civic Initiatives - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Center for Democratic Transition – Montenegro, Center for Free Elections and Democracy – Serbia, Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society – Kyrgyzstan, Committee of Ukrainian Voters - Ukraine; Election Monitoring Center – Azerbaijan, GONG – Croatia, ISFED – Georgia, It's your choice – Armenia, Citizens Association MOST – Macedonia, Pro Democracy Association – Romania, Republican Network of Independent Monitors – Kazakhstan, Golos – Russia, , Obcianske Oko – Slovakia, Belarusian Helsinki Committee - Belarus, Society for Democratic Culture – Albania, Monitoring Center – Montenegro, Viasna – Belarus, Promo LEX – Moldova, KRIIK Albania Association, Human Rights Centre "Viasna" – Belarus, Foundation for Support of Civic Initiatives – Kazakhstan; Kosovo Democratic Institute – Kosovo.**

<sup>1</sup> <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-DocDetails-EN.asp?fileid=20469&lang=EN&search=YXplcmJhaWphbnxzZXNzaW9ucGFydF9zdHJfZW46llwMTQgLSBGaXJzdCBwYXJ0LXNlc3Npb24i>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur55/013/2013/en/>