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5 December 2014

## Azerbaijan: Detention of journalist Khadija Ismayilova a blatant bid to gag free media



Azerbaijani investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova. © Private.

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### Background

Azerbaijan: Investigative reporter faces harassment: Khadija Ismayilova Public Statement, 15 October 2014

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Today's court order authorizing two months of pre-trial detention for the well-known Azerbaijani investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova is just the latest move to silence independent media voices in the country, Amnesty International said.

"This move has all the hallmarks of another blatant attempt to gag free media in Azerbaijan – Khadija Ismayilova is one of the last remaining independent voices in the country," said John Dalhuisen, Europe and Central Asia Programme Director at Amnesty International.

"Today's detention order comes hot on the heels of a long series of attempts to silence her. The Azerbaijan authorities must stop this harassment of journalists just for doing their jobs."

Khadija Ismayilova, who reports for Radio Free Europe and other outlets, has been an outspoken government critic and has published several articles exposing corruption and human rights violations. She faces the unexplained charges of "inciting someone to attempt suicide". If found guilty, she could face three to seven years of imprisonment.

On 12 October she was prevented from leaving the country to attend an international conference on freedom and human rights issues in Prague, Czech Republic, as a result of a travel ban issued by the Prosecutor's Office. On 3 October she was searched and detained for four hours at Baku International Airport as she returned from Strasbourg, France, where she had briefed members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on the deteriorating human rights situation in Azerbaijan.

Khadija Ismayilova is also facing an unrelated criminal trial for defamation linked to her posting an image of an alleged official document revealing that an individual was an informant for Azerbaijan's intelligence services.

“ This move has all the hallmarks of another blatant attempt to gag free media in Azerbaijan – Khadija Ismayilova is one of the last remaining independent voices in the country. ”

John Dalhuisen, Europe and Central Asia Programme Director at Amnesty International.

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Issue: Activists Freedom Of Expression Country: Azerbaijan Region: Europe And Central Asia

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