

Petro Poroshenko, President, Ukraine
Volodymyr Groysman, Prime Minister, Ukraine
Andriy Parubiy, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine
Pavlo Klimkin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ukraine
Pavlo Petrenko, Minister of Justice, Ukraine
Jürgen Stock, Secretary General, Interpol

12 March 2018

**Statement by the EaP CSF Steering Committee
on ensuring the safety of Fikret Huseynli, a journalist and Dutch citizen
of Azerbaijani origin, and upholding the rule of law in Ukraine**

Fikret Huseynli, a Dutch citizen of Azerbaijani origin, is currently in hiding in Kyiv, after escaping from a group of men claiming that they had come to enforce his extradition to Azerbaijan, at his residence in Kyiv on March 5.

The group was accompanied by Azerbaijani speakers, which suggests the involvement of the Azerbaijani authorities. The perpetrators, who attacked Mr Huseynli before he managed to escape, were acting following the granting, by a Ukrainian court, of bail to Mr Huseynli on October 2017, after he was detained at Boryspil airport on October 2017. The court asked the Prosecutor's office to report on the validity of the request for extradition by March 2018.

Mr Huseynli's detention was accomplished, in the presence of Azerbaijani speakers, by Ukrainian border guards acting on an Interpol red extradition notice. The Azerbaijani authorities claim that Mr Huseynli has committed fraud and illegally crossed international borders.

This incident follows a case in Georgia last year when Afgan Mukhtarli, an exiled Azerbaijani journalist, was kidnapped in Tbilisi and taken by force to Azerbaijan, where he was brought and sentenced to six years in prison for allegedly illegal crossing of the frontier.

Previously, Alexander Lapshin, an Israeli-Russian-Ukrainian blogger, was extradited from Belarus to Azerbaijan, where he was tried for travelling to Nagorno-Karabakh.

We demand that Mr Huseynli's freedom and safety be secured by the Ukrainian authorities and that he should be permitted to leave Ukraine for a destination of his own choice. This is a test of Ukraine's commitment to the rule of law. Ukraine must not allow informal groups supported

by foreign agents to interfere with its legal procedures. Mr Huseynli's legal rights must be respected.

We demand that Interpol reviews its internal procedures to ensure that Member States do not exploit extradition rules to persecute political emigrants who have been granted asylum in other countries. Interpol must reject requests from member states who make false charges to secure extradition orders. Interpol has to review the case of Mr Huseynli in which the charges laid against him are clearly fabricated.

Members of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum