

Ref: CommHR/MOF/sf 096-2026

Mr Kamran ALIYEV
Prosecutor General of Azerbaijan

Strasbourg, 30 June 2026

Dear Prosecutor General,

My mandate is to foster the effective observance of human rights in all member states of the Council of Europe. An important part of my work is to engage in dialogue with authorities in member states, and to assist them in addressing possible shortcomings in implementing human rights obligations in their laws and practices.

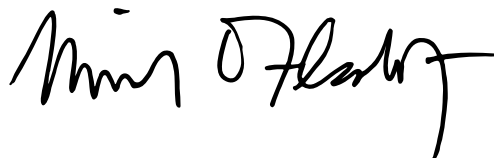
In my [letter](#) addressed to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan published in November 2024, I expressed concern about arbitrary criminal proceedings against human rights defenders, journalists and civil society activists in Azerbaijan and asked for the immediate release of all human rights defenders, journalists and civil society activists imprisoned for their legitimate work or for expressing dissenting or critical opinions, as well as for the charges against them to be dropped. I also referred to the European Court of Human Rights' conclusion in the case of [Aliyev v. Azerbaijan](#) (judgment of 20 September 2018) that there was a "troubling pattern of arbitrary arrests and detentions of government critics, civil society activists and human rights defenders through retaliatory prosecutions and misuse of criminal law in defiance of the rule of law".

I am now writing in relation to the criminal proceedings against the journalist Afgan Sadigov, who was arrested by Azerbaijani law enforcement on 8 June 2026 and subsequently remanded in pre-trial detention. Previously, Mr Sadigov had been arrested in Georgia on the basis of an extradition request from Azerbaijan in relation to criminal charges of extortion. He was released on bail by the Georgian authorities on 16 April 2025 after the European Court of Human Rights indicated that he should not be removed to Azerbaijan. After the Azerbaijani authorities terminated the criminal case against Mr Sadigov on 1 April 2026, he was deported to Azerbaijan on 5 April 2026.

I note that before relocating to Georgia in 2023 Mr Sadigov had faced repeated criminal and administrative prosecution in Azerbaijan. In this context, I am concerned about the current criminal proceedings against him. Moreover, I note that pre-trial detention should remain an exceptional measure, and its necessity must be regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with international human rights standards. Accordingly, I respectfully request clarification as to the grounds on which the criminal case against Mr Sadigov was first terminated and subsequently apparently reopened, and the reasons for seeking pre-trial detention instead of less intrusive measures.

I look forward to receiving your comments and continuing a constructive dialogue with you.

Yours sincerely,



Michael O'Flaherty