



AZ 1001, Bakı şəhəri, N.Rəfibəyli küç.,7
Tel.:(99412) 361-00-07, Faks (99412) 497-08-48

7 N. Rafibaily str., Baku, AZ 1001
Tel.: (99412) 361-00-07, fax: (99412) 497-08-48

«07» 07 2026

№ 2-2-14/2-1227xid-26/2026

Michael O'Flaherty
Commissioner for Human Rights
of the Council of Europe

Dear Commissioner,

I have carefully considered your letter of 30 June 2026. I regret to note that it contains a number of assertions and conclusions which, in our view, are neither supported by the facts nor reflective of the legal circumstances of the case. In particular, your call for the "immediate release of all human rights defenders, journalists and civil society activists" lacks a sufficient factual and legal basis. I respectfully encourage future engagement with Azerbaijan to be guided by objectivity, due regard for established legal processes, and a balanced assessment of all relevant circumstances.

We also consider it important to recall that, during the nearly thirty years of occupation of Azerbaijani territories, the institutions of the Council of Europe, despite Azerbaijan's repeated appeals, did not respond with the same level of attention to the grave violations of the fundamental rights of hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis who were subjected to ethnic cleansing, forced displacement and other serious consequences of the conflict. Regrettably, the approach reflected in your recent correspondence, consistent with a pattern observed on previous occasions, risks undermining confidence in the impartiality expected of the Office of the Commissioner.

Against this background, and in the spirit of the constructive dialogue that Azerbaijan has consistently maintained with the Council of Europe, I would like to clarify several factual and legal aspects concerning the ongoing criminal proceedings against the Azerbaijani national, Mr Afgan Sadigov.

Following judicial review of complaints submitted by the victims, the competent court exercising judicial oversight over the investigation quashed the investigator's earlier decision to terminate the criminal proceedings and ordered that the investigation be reopened.

Subsequently, Mr Sadigov was charged under Articles 182.2.1, 182.2.2 and 182.2.4 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan in connection with specific alleged acts of extortion that form the subject of the ongoing criminal proceedings. These charges are supported exclusively by evidence obtained during the course of the investigation. Having taken into account the rights and legitimate interests of the victims, as well as the existence of grounds indicating a risk that the accused might abscond or otherwise obstruct the administration of justice, the competent court, upon the prosecutor's request and in accordance with the applicable legislation, ordered his pre-trial detention.

The evidence collected during the investigation indicates that Mr Sadigov used his social media platforms to disseminate defamatory information and exert pressure on various individuals with the aim of extorting property through threats. It is also relevant that he had

previously been convicted of similar offences and was subsequently granted a presidential pardon. Furthermore, the investigative authorities continue to receive complaints alleging similar conduct.

The pre-trial investigation is currently being conducted fully, comprehensively and objectively, in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the country's international legal obligations. Upon completion of the investigation, the competent authorities will adopt the appropriate procedural decisions only after a comprehensive legal assessment of the entirety of the evidence collected.

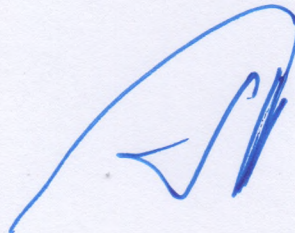
It should also be noted that, under the applicable domestic legal framework, Mr Sadigov is not recognized as holding the legal status of a journalist. In any event, an individual's claimed professional status has no bearing on the legal assessment of the alleged criminal offences under investigation. Neither the status nor the claimed status of a journalist or human rights defender exempts an individual from criminal responsibility where there is evidence of alleged criminal conduct.

It should further be recalled that the prosecuting authorities are under a legal obligation not only to safeguard the procedural rights of the accused, but also to conduct an effective criminal investigation capable of protecting the rights and legitimate interests of victims while maintaining public confidence in the administration of justice.

Finally, we consider it essential to respect the fundamental principles of the rule of law, including judicial independence and the integrity of ongoing criminal proceedings, which must be permitted to proceed independently and free from undue external influence or interference.

We trust that the information set out above provides a clear and comprehensive explanation of the position of the competent authorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, sweeping initial 'A' followed by several vertical strokes, likely representing the name 'Aliyev'.

Dr. Kamran Aliyev