

Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey
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7 December 2011

Re. the detention of the Azerbaijani lawyer Intigam Aliyev at Istanbul airport on 6 December 2011

The human rights lawyer Intigam Aliyev from Azerbaijan has been held in detention by police for more than 20 hours at the Istanbul airport since Tuesday, 6 December 2011. Mr. Aliyev was detained on his way back from the Civil Society Parallel Event, organized by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Vilnius, where he participated as the head of the organization Legal Education Society.

We ask the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey intervene and to make sure that Intigam Aliyev is released and that no measures that would prohibit him from entering Turkey or using it as a transit country in the future, are taken. According to latest information, Intigam Aliyev will be deported from Turkey this evening.

We point to the fact that Intigam Aliyev is a well-known human rights lawyer from Azerbaijan, who has participated at several OSCE events and visited the Office of the Commissioner for human rights two times accompanied by the Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF). His human rights organization Legal Education Society is a member of the Human Rights House Network, where HRHF serves as a secretariat, and a member of the South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders.

Mr. Aliyev is accused of insulting a security officer at the airport when he was refused of his passport to be returned at the checkpoint. According to Mr. Aliyev, the customs officer was rude to him, refused to give him back his passport and he opposed to it. He was handcuffed and brought to the police station. He was not provided access to lawyer before 01.22 in the night. With the assistance of HRHF and the human rights defender Ozlem Dalkiran from the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly in Istanbul, the lawyer Halil Kocabas met Mr. Alyev at the airport with the aim to assist him.

On 7 December, Intigam Aliyev was still at Istanbul airport and the police officers informed that he would be possibly deported to Azerbaijan in the evening. Since afternoon of 7 December 2011, his lawyer was not provided with access to Mr. Aliyev and his whereabouts are still unknown.

The Chair of the Lawyers' Rights Committee of the Bar, Mr. Cem Karatun, has intervened in the case and was in contact with the chief prosecutor seeking to avoid deportation of Intigam Aliyev. The Turkish mission to OSCE is informed and promised to look into the case. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the OSCE Baku office and the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe are also informed about the case, as well as the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations in Geneva, the Ministry of Interior of Turkey and the Turkish Embassy in Norway.

The Human Rights House Foundation asks the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to intervene in the case and ensure that Intigam Aliyev is released and no measures prohibiting him entering Turkey in the future would be taken.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maria Dahle', written in a cursive style.

Maria Dahle
Executive Director
Human Rights House Foundation