

President Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev
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Dear President Aliyev,

I am writing to express my grave concern over the imprisonment of **Jabbar Savalan**, a 20 year old student who was sentenced to two and a half years in prison on May 4, 2011. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression and condemns his conviction on fabricated drug charges. I urge you to bring about his immediate and unconditional release from prison.

On February 4 2011, Jabbar Savalan had posted on Facebook calling for protests against the government in Baku. He was arrested the next evening without explanation in Sumgayit and later charged with possessing 0.74g of marijuana. Despite the blood test taken following his arrest, which showed that he had not used drugs, Jabbar Savalan was convicted and sent to prison. Reports show that he was questioned without a lawyer for two days during which he was slapped and intimidated into signing a confession. His lawyer, Anar Gasimov was also threatened by the interrogating police after the trial.

I respectfully urge you to recognize that the charges against Jabbar Savalan were fabricated and overturn his conviction immediately and unconditionally. I further call on you to launch a full and impartial investigation into the allegations that police planted evidence on Jabbar Savalan, ill-treated him in detention and threatened his lawyer Anar Gasimov.

I am deeply concerned by the systematic violation of individuals' rights to freedom of expression and assembly, and by numerous violations of individuals' right to a fair trial in the country. As such, I call on the Azerbaijani authorities to cease punishing activists for their peaceful activities, online and otherwise and to allow them to continue their political activities unimpeded and without further prosecutions.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Copy to:

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