

Adopted resolution

Human rights violations and lack of democracy in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan has been in a downward spiral in terms of democracy and human rights for many years now. There have been numerous well-documented cases of human rights violations, particularly in relation to opposition parties, independent media and youth organizations. International organizations monitoring the situation in Azerbaijan have been outspoken in their observations, for example Freedom House, which has consistently ranked Azerbaijan at the bottom of the global list of countries when it comes to political and civil freedom, as well as Reporters without Borders, which has called the Azerbaijani leader an 'Enemy of the Press'.

Democratic structures are disregarded, democratic bodies" have been created such as Media Council, Council for Supporting NGOs and Youth Council NAYORA to keep Mass Media, NGOs and youth organisations under control of the government and to monopolize and control the relations between the Mass Media, NGOs and youth organisations from abroad. The long-time president of the NAYORA s a Member of Parliament for the ruling party (Yeni Azerbaijan Party) and a well-known and fervent supporter of the authoritarian government. As an example, he led the election campaign for the current leader Mr. Ilham Aliev, in the severely flawed Presidential elections of 2008, which were not considered free or fair by any reputable international organizations. Particularly in the context of Azerbaijan's authoritarian government, it is simply unrealistic to expect Nayora to be able to act independently of the government.

This became particularly clear in the case of the arrested youth activists and bloggers Adnan Hajizade and Emin Milli. These young people were beaten up on the 8th of July in a restaurant in Baku by two strangers and were subsequently detained and prosecuted on accusations of hooliganism themselves. This attack followed the appearance of a video blog produced by Adnan and Emin just a week earlier in which they criticized the corruption of the authorities. On the 11th of November, after a long and severely flawed trial, they were imprisoned for 2 and 2.5 years respectively. International observers from the European Union, Council of Europe, OSCE and the United States have been vocal about their concern regarding the political nature of the trial. Media all over the world, from Agence France Press to the New York Times and the BBC, have picked up on the story. The European Parliament adopted a cross-party resolution on Azerbaijan at its plenary meeting in Strasbourg in December which explicitly refers to Adnan and Emin and calls for their release.

Another problem is connected with political parties. The Azerbaijan government does not register some opposition political parties so as to keep these under control of the government. One of them is Greens' Party of Azerbaijan that was established in 2006 and was adopted by the EGP in 2008 as an observer party. Letters were sent twice by EGP and MEPs to the Azerbaijan president asking him to make more exact the motives delaying the registration of Greens' Party of Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, there has been no answer from the government on registration issue of the Greens' Party of Azerbaijan for the last 3 years. It is direct evidence of a violation of Human Rights.

We, the European Greens, demand in the strongest possible terms respect for democracy and the protection of human rights in Azerbaijan as laid out in the European Convention of Human Rights. Considering that it is stated in our human rights policy that the 'Greens will continue to resist attempts to compromise the right of expression', the European Greens therefore once more call for a release of the unjustly imprisoned activists Adnan Hajizade and Emin Milli. Moreover, the European Greens are of the opinion that Nayora should no longer be a member of the European Youth Forum unless and until it improves its democratic policies and distances itself from the government and registers Greens' Party of Azerbaijan. Also, the European Green party continues to support all initiatives undertaken to combat violations of human rights in Azerbaijan.