



**Permanent Mission
of the Republic of Azerbaijan
to the UN Office and other
International Organizations**

GENEVA

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The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and with reference to the Joint Communication AL AZE 1/2026 of 16 January 2026 sent by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, has the honor to transmit herewith the response of the Government of Azerbaijan, prepared based on information received from respective institutions.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 16 April 2026



Enclosure: 3 pages

**Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights
GENEVA**

Response of the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan

The Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan hereby submits its response to the joint communication dated 16 January 2026 (AL AZE 1/2026) by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences; Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; and Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers.

In the joint communication it is alleged that Ms.Ulviyya Guliyeva's arrest and detention, including the threat and violence she allegedly experienced and the denial of her right to fair trial is reportedly linked to her activity as an independent journalist.

The Government categorically rejects, in their entirety, all allegations in the joint communication and states that no one is persecuted, charged or arrested for his/her professional affiliation in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The due process with respect to Ms. Guliyeva is carried out in full compliance with the national legislation and the relevant international obligations. The Government provides comprehensive information, as well as its observations with regard to the case in question, in the spirit of constructive engagement with the international human rights mechanisms.

Factual and legal basis of Ulviyya Guliyeva's arrest

Ulviyya Guliyeva was arrested on 7 May 2025 by the decision of Baku City Khatai district Court on the basis of criminal case initiated under Article 206.3.2 (smuggling committed by a group acting in prior collusion) of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The preliminary investigation was conducted by the Baku City Main Police Department on 6 December 2024, based on a fact that U.Guliyeva, along with other persons, claiming to be employees of "Meydan TV" and "Baku School of Journalism", smuggled 596.014,18 manats out of 1.006.882,62 manats of foreign grant. This amount was acquired via grant contracts from foreign donor organizations lacking the authority to provide grants in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2019-2024 without official registration, as required by the national legislation. She legalized significant amount of money gained through illegal means and engaged in illegal entrepreneurship and evaded taxes in the amount of 79.589,77 manats.

The evidences collected during the preliminary investigation of the criminal case and the materials acquired through operational-search activities established reasonable suspicion that U.Guliyeva could be hiding illegal money, documents and other items that may constitute evidences for the criminal case in question. Based on the decision of Baku City Khatai district Court, search and seizure measures were carried out on 6 May 2025 in her apartment located in Baku. Certain number of banknotes in euro (total amount of 6700 euro) that were acquired through illegal entrepreneurship activities and smuggled into the country by evading customs control and official declaration, were revealed and seized during the process. Search and seizure measures were carried out in full conformity with the requirements of criminal procedure legislation with the participation of U.Guliyeva and Mr. Ramil Rafail Guluzade, who was living with her at the time. In his testament as a witness R.Guluzade confirmed that he and U.Guliyeva were not subjected to any type of physical violence or mental influence during search and seizure activities or arrest.

The charges against U.Guliyeva include the following articles of the Criminal Code: 193-1.2.1 – Legalization of properties gained through illegal means (193) committed by a premeditated group of persons; 193-1.3.2 – committed in a vast amount; 206.3.2 – smuggling (206) committed by a group acting in prior collusion; 192.3.2 – illegal entrepreneurship committed by acquiring particularly vast amount of money; 193-1.3.1 – committed by an organized group or criminal organization; 193-1.3.2 – committed in a vast amount; 206.4 – committed by an organized group; 213.2.1 – evasion of taxes, unemployment insurance, compulsory health insurance or compulsory state social insurance contributions (213) committed by an organized group; 320.1 – Forgery or illegal preparation of a certificate granting rights or relieving of duty or other official document for the purpose of use, or sale of such document, as well as preparation or sale of a fake state award, stamp, seal, or letterhead of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the same purpose; 320.2 – knowingly using forged documents as specified in Article 320.1.

Access to lawyer

Since the moment of her arrest, U.Guliyeva has had an immediate access to legal defense of her choosing, as well as public defender. On 7 May 2025, U.Guliyeva requested to be defended by Zibeyda Sohbat Sadigova, member of the Bar Association of the Republic of Azerbaijan that works independently. Z.Sadigova was invited to the Investigation Department of the Baku City Main Police Department, yet she stated that she was abroad and cannot defend U.Guliyeva, as she does not have contract with her, therefore asked for her defense by a public lawyer. U.Guliyeva was provided with public defense with her own request and stated that she would be defended by another lawyer based on contract starting from the next day. Sevdiyar Gulu Bayramov, member of the Bar Association of the Republic of Azerbaijan, was assigned as her public lawyer and participated in all investigative and procedural actions during the day.

Elvin Dadash Alamov, member of the Bar Association of the Republic of Azerbaijan, submitted his documents to the investigative authority on 7 May 2025 and acted as U.Guliyeva's lawyer at the time she was charged with Article 206.3.2 of the Criminal Code. In the later stages of the investigation, Turkel Humbat Suleymanov and Beyrak Gurban Taghiyev also signed contracts with U.Guliyeva's family members and participated in all investigative and procedural actions as her defense. U.Guliyeva's rights to immediate contact, confidential consultations with her defense, as well as access to proper legal assistance were duly respected throughout the stages of the primary investigation and her defense rights were ensured in accordance with the Criminal-Procedural Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Access to healthcare

U.Guliyeva was subjected to primary medical examination on 7 May 2025 upon her admission to Baku Pre-Trial Detention Center. There were not any injuries or trauma marks on her skin. Examination of her skull with an X-ray in two projections on 8 May 2025 showed no signs of traumatic or destructive deformation. As the result of primary examination, she was diagnosed with pituitary microadenoma and tertiary (Class III) obesity. According to the documents submitted by her relatives, she was diagnosed with microadenoma in the left half of the adenohipophysis detected by MRI on 29 November 2017. She was examined

with the presence of neurologist on 10 May 2025 and no serious pathology was detected. Currently her condition is satisfactory and her health is being monitored.

Allegations of violence during investigation and other procedural actions

In the later stages of the preliminary investigation, U.Guliyeva claimed of being subjected to physical violence by police officers in the duration of investigation and other procedural actions and included written comments about the alleged violence in various procedural documents. Copies of those documents were sent to Baku City Prosecutor's Office, that is responsible for conducting preliminary investigation, to provide legal opinion on the allegations. Department of Service Investigations of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Azerbaijan initiated an investigation on the claims based on the appeal of U.Guliyeva's lawyers. The investigation could not find element of crime within the materials that were collected regarding the case. On 21 June 2025, the criminal case on the torture claims was rejected based on Article 39.1.1 of the Criminal-Procedural Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Pre-trial detention period

On 28 August 2025, U.Guliyeva was additionally charged with 192.3.2, 193-1.3.1, 193-1.3.2, 206.4, 213.2.1, 320.1 and 320.2. Pre-trial detention period for U.Guliyeva has been prolonged several times, the last time on 26 November 2025. On 28 November 2025, the criminal case regarding U.Guliyeva was sent to Baku Court on Grave Crimes. Preparatory meeting of the Court on 12 December 2025 decided to send the case to the court review. Meantime the case is being examined by the Court.

Conditions of detention

U.Guliyeva was admitted to the Baku Pre-Trial detention Center on 7 May 2025 and her rights and duties were explained, she was provided with living space, which included a bed and necessary material conditions for living, in accordance with the law. In the duration of pre-trial detention, U.Guliyeva was not subjected to any pressure, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, her rights were not violated, her safety and appropriate detention conditions were ensured.

In accordance with the legislation, U.Guliyeva held telephone calls with her close relatives, met with her family members, no restriction was implied on her written correspondences, she was informed of her right to send complaints and suggestions via the management of the detention center. During her stay at the detention center, U.Guliyeva held 103 telephone calls, received parcels 44 times and met with her close relatives 39 times. She had confidential meetings with her lawyers without any restrictions.

U.Guliyeva was visited by members of the National Preventive Mechanism of the National Human Rights Institution (Ombudsperson) of the Republic of Azerbaijan and held confidential meetings with them. Her appeals were received and brought before the management of the Baku Pre-Trial Detention Center, issues regarding her health and detention conditions were resolved immediately.