



**BY PRIORITY AIRMAIL**

Mr. President Ilham Aliyev  
The Presidential Palace,  
19 Istiqlaliyyat street,  
Baku, AZ1066  
Republic of Azerbaijan

Amsterdam 27 July 2023

**Subject:** Suspension of the bar license of Mr. Elchin Sadigov

Your Excellency,

Lawyers for Lawyers is an independent and non-political foundation that seeks to promote the proper functioning of the rule of law by pursuing freedom and independence of the legal profession. Lawyers for Lawyers has Special Consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council since 2013

Lawyers for Lawyers is concerned about the suspension of the bar license of Mr. Elchin Sadigov as of 6 July 2023.

Mr. Sadigov is a prominent lawyer at the Bar Association of Azerbaijan. As part of his work, he defended the rights of political prisoners, journalists, media, political figures, activists and LGBTQ+ community.

According to information that we have obtained, his arrestation on 10 September 2022 was based on a smear campaign. Currently, Mr Sadigov is released from prison but the criminal case against him is still pending criminal case is still pending and resulted in retention of his phones and computer as well as in a travel ban.

Furthermore, we were informed that the disbarment proceedings were based on the complaint made by Eynulla Fatullayev, who is a journalist, even though Mr. Sadigov did not have any relationship with him – not as his lawyer not as opposing party. Moreover, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Vilayat Eyvazov, stated in his appeal to the General Prosecutor's Office of Azerbaijani Republic that Mr Sadigov had obstructed the investigative and operational measures conducted by the police. Based on these circumstances, the Disciplinary Commission of the Bar Association found Mr. Sadigov guilty of "misconduct" and following the Presidium of the Bar Association suspended his bar license.

It must be mentioned that Mr Sadigov was and is the only lawyer in Azerbaijan who opposed torture and sent complaints relating to torture to the European Court of Human Rights. He demanded the recognition of the violation and publicised cases of torture. For this important and necessary work, Mr Sadigov has been suspended. At present, he fears for his profession, health and even life.

We are concerned that the suspension of his bar license is based on the incorrect facts and directly contributes to repression of him as human rights lawyer.

We draw your attention to the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers<sup>1</sup>, especially to Principle 16 and Principle 17 which read as follows:

Principle 16

*“Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.”*

Principle 17

*“Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities.”*

In the view of the above, we respectfully urge you to:

- order the termination of the criminal case against Mr. Sadigov;
- order the resumption of the bar license of Mr. Sadigov.

We thank you for your attention and consideration to this very important matter. We hope that the authorities of Azerbaijan will give this case the attention it deserves. We will continue to monitor this case closely.

Yours sincerely,

Lawyers for Lawyers

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<sup>1</sup> The UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (Basic Principles) provide a concise description of international norms relating to the key aspects of the right to independent counsel. The Basic Principles were unanimously adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in Havana, Cuba on 7 September 1990. Subsequently, the UN General Assembly “welcomed” the Basic Principles in their ‘Human rights in the administration of justice’ resolution, which was adopted without a vote on 18 December 1990 in both the session of the Third Committee and the plenary session of the General Assembly