



**Statement of the Azerbaijan National Platform  
of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum**

*December 9, 2022, Baku*

The Azerbaijan National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum finds the decision to prosecute Mr. Bakhtiyar Hajiyev, a political activist, representative of civil society, as well as a member of the National Platform on December 9, 2022, by the Baku City Chief Police Department as biased, and follow-up ruling of Khatai district court of Baku city on the pre-trial detention for 1 month and 20 days as illegal and groundless.

As the National Platform, we declare that the decision on Bakhtiyar Hajiyev is political, and the decision to prosecute him under Articles 221 and 289 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan shall be immediately revoked, without any delay, and his constitutional rights shall be restored. The mere fact that the said accusation was issued on the eve of the International Human Rights Day, December 10, once again illustrates the value attached to human rights by the political leadership.

The National Platform calls on the Government of Azerbaijan to refrain from any illegal actions in relation to B. Hajiyev, as well as to ensure his health, interaction with the close relatives, and to take full advantage of legal protection means.

In conclusion, the members of the Azerbaijan National Platform are concerned that the events in Belarus and Ukraine, as well as the gas crisis, have reduced the attention of European institutions to the human rights situation in Azerbaijan. This approach deteriorates the human rights situation in Azerbaijan, weakens the position of the European-oriented supporters of Azerbaijan, and discredits European institutions in the eyes of the Azerbaijani society. We hope that the European institutions will provide enhanced support for the restoration of justice in the matter of the arrest of our colleague, as well as for the restoration of a favorable environment for the descent activity of the civil society in Azerbaijan as a whole.

The Azerbaijan National Platform will continue its activities and support to civil society in order to ensure democratic values, human and civil rights and freedoms at the highest level.