

## **EaP CSF Steering Committee Statement on the disproportionate use of violence by police against Bakhtiyar Hajiyev in Baku, Azerbaijan**

*29 April 2022, Brussels*

The EaP CSF Steering Committee decisively condemns the disproportionately violent response of the police against Bakhtiyar Hajiyev, a member of the Azerbaijani National Platform of the EaP CSF.

According to Mr Hajiyev, he was attacked and seized by 4 masked individuals, believed by Mr. Hajiyev to be police officers, at about 11PM on 21 April, at the intersection of Nakhchivani and Akhmedbekov streets (near the Caspian Plaza business centre) in Baku city.

As he describes, four men in black masks forced him into a car, put a black bag on his head and took him to an unknown location, all while threatening and treating him inhumanly. After a while, he was dropped off and forcibly moved to another vehicle, after which, he was brought to an apartment bathroom. While being insulted, he was questioned as to who had instructed him to write critical posts about Interior Minister Vilayar Eynazov. According to Mr. Hajiyev, the individuals urinated on him and filmed everything that happened on camera.

"This is a crime at the state level, mafia-like behaviour, trampling all moral and common human values," Hajiyev said. On 22 April, he appealed to a number of agencies. Mr. Hajiyev was invited to a meeting with the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Ismet Aliyev, while on April he was received by Interior Minister Vilayat Eyvazov. Since the kidnapping and assault took place, no charges have been brought forward, no arrests have been made and nobody has been questioned or investigated in relation to this serious crime perpetrated against Mr. Hajiyev.

The EaP CSF Steering Committee calls on the Government of Azerbaijan to respect the constitutional rights of its citizens, namely articles 24, 28 and 46 that guarantee the rights and freedoms of persons, rights to liberty and security, as well as its international obligations, namely article 7 and 9 of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and articles 3 and 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights protecting the liberty and security of persons.

The EaP CSF Steering Committee calls on the government of Azerbaijan to condemn such an excessive use of force and inhumane treatment against Bakhtiyar Hajiyev and demands the government hold the suspected police officers involved accountable.

The EaP CSF Steering Committee also calls upon the European Council and the European External Actions Service to raise the case with the Azerbaijani government and question the commitment of the Azerbaijani authorities' to protecting and enhancing political freedoms for all in Azerbaijan.



**Members of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum**