

Anar Mammadli Continues His Defense Statement: “*Fabricated charges are the criminalization of rights*”

At the Baku Grave Crimes Court hearing on 29 September 2025, human rights defender Anar Mammadli continued his defense speech. He declared that his civil society activities between 2020 and 2024 were entirely lawful, while the charges against him were unfounded and fabricated.

Rejecting the accusations in the indictment, Mammadli demanded the court and the prosecutor present evidence and legal justifications for the alleged charges. He provided a detailed account of the national and international legal basis of his activities from 2020 to 2024, stressing that charges of “smuggling,” “legalization of criminally obtained property,” “illegal entrepreneurship,” and “tax evasion” ran contrary to the criminal law itself. He also drew the court’s attention to numerous procedural violations committed during the investigation.

Mammadli explained that the work of the Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center (EMDSC) and his works focused on election observation, civic education of local communities, documentation of civil and political rights violations, and promotion of the use of national and international legal protection mechanisms. He noted that despite the suspension of activities during the pandemic, the investigation fabricated “project lists.” He highlighted his reports and statements on the 2020 parliamentary and 2024 presidential elections, his public assessments of quarantine restrictions, and his contributions during and after the war in documenting civilian casualties and preparing applications to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).

Mammadli underlined the absurdity of the “smuggling” charge, which rested solely on the fact of his 19 trips abroad between 2019 and 2024, despite the fact that he underwent customs inspections and filed written declarations during all of these trips. He requested the State Customs Committee to provide these written records to the court.

He further argued that his cooperation with international human rights organizations was being deliberately criminalized. Drawing parallels between his 2013 and 2024 arrests—both following critical public statements on presidential elections—Mammadli emphasized that in both cases, the investigation was not based on facts or law but on political orders designed to criminalize rights.

Mammadli also reported that his computers and phones were accessed without his or his lawyers’ presence, his personal and professional materials were distorted, and financial documents were assessed without expert review. Regarding evidence of unclear origin and authenticity, he noted: “The investigation usurped the powers of an audit and tax inspection, unlawfully conducting the process and ultimately trying to fabricate an appearance of chaotic and baseless ‘financial transactions.’”

On the charge of “legalization of criminally obtained property,” Mammadli pointed out that his car and most of the funds in his bank account came from ECtHR compensation payments awarded to him by the Azerbaijani state. The indictment, however, fails to identify any underlying crime through which the alleged property was obtained. He stressed that the two

necessary elements to establish such a charge—(i) property obtained through crime, and (ii) its subsequent legalization—were absent from the indictment. The investigation’s reliance on the notion of “grants subject to registration” itself contradicts this accusation.

Mammadli also rejected as groundless the claims of “unregistered grant agreements,” explaining that many of the files presented by the prosecution were unverified, consisting of template training and financial documents from 2009–2015, wrongly presented as “financial records,” though their authenticity and criminal character were never established.

Concluding, Mammadli argued that the investigation deliberately distorted the Criminal Code to criminalize rights guaranteed under the Constitution and international conventions. He urged the court to dismiss the criminal case built on fabricated and baseless charges.

The next hearing is scheduled for 27 October at 14:00.