

Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center
Monthly Human Rights Developments
In Azerbaijan
July 2025

● **July 2025**

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1. Politically Motivated Arrest and Convictions Continued in July

1.1 Azerbaijani Civic Activist Sentenced to 30 Days in Administrative Detention

Politically motivated arrests continued in July as on 11 July, the Binagadi District Court found journalist **Anar Abdullayev** guilty under Articles 510 (minor hooliganism) and 535.1 (disobedience to police orders) of the Code on Administrative Offences and ordered 30 days of detention.¹ Speaking in court, Abdulla said he was detained after getting off a bus and denied committing any administrative offence. Following his arrest, pro-government media outlets launched a smear campaign, publishing pieces where the journalist is accused of criminal activities, including smuggling grant funds into the country for other journalists and human rights lawyers.² Later on 22 July, the Baku Court of Appeal upheld the decision by the lower court and rejected the motion for release.³ Anar Abdullayev was an accused person in the criminal case against **Anar Mammadli**, the head of the Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Centre (EMDS) and had been put under police supervision since April 2025.⁴ Both Mammadli and Abdullayev are accused under Article 206.4 (smuggling by an organised group on a large scale) and other articles of the Criminal Code (CC hereinafter) and face up to 12 years in jail if found guilty. Both domestic and international observers see the case as politically motivated to punish legitimate civil society work.⁵

1.2 Civic activist Nicad Ibrahim is sentenced to 6.5 years in jail

On July 22, 2025, civic activist **Nijad Ibrahim** was sentenced to 6 years and 6 months in prison by the Baku Court on Grave Crimes, as he was found guilty under Article 126.2.4 (inflicting severe bodily harm with hooliganism intent) of the CC for allegedly stabbing Bahman Aliyev.⁶ However, previous charges under Article 221.3 (hooliganism with use of an object as a weapon) were dropped. Ibrahim, who denied the charges and asserted his innocence, stated that this prosecution

¹ Abzas Media, 'Azerbaijani civic activist sentenced to 30 days in administrative detention', (July 2025), <https://abzas.net/en/2025/7/azerbaijani-civic-activist-sen10e605da-a/>

² See: Smearing Campaign

[Lent.az](https://lent.az), 'Foreign Grant Network is activated again; money illegally smuggled to Azerbaijan in exposed', (July 2025), <https://lent.az/xeber/siyaset/xarici-grant-sebekesi-yeniden-aktivlesdi-azerbaycana-gizli-getirilen-pullar-bele-ifs-a-edildi-40642687>, [available only in Azerbaijani]

³ Abzas Media, 'Anar Abdulla's appeal is rejected', (July 2025), <https://abzas.org/az/2025/7/anar-abdullann-apellyasiya-siab15220f-6/>

⁴ Meydan TV, 'Another journalist faces charges', (April 2025), <https://www.meydan.tv/en/article/another-journalist-faces-charges/>

⁵ EU Neighbors East, 'Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum urgently call for unconditional release of Azerbaijani human rights defender Anar Mammadli', (May 2024), <https://euneighbourseast.eu/news/latest-news/eastern-partnership-civil-society-forum-urgently-call-for-unconditional-release-of-azerbaijani-human-rights-defender-anar-mammadli/>;

Amnesty International, 'Urgent Action; Release Arrested Journalists', (May 2024), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/EUR5579462024ENGLISH.pdf>;

⁶ Abzas Media, 'Civic activist is sentenced to 6 years and 6 months in prison', (July 2025), <https://abzas.org/en/2025/7/ictimai-fal-6-il-6-ay-muddticdb8afcc-d/>

is retaliation for his 2020-dated social media posts demanding President Ilham Aliyev's resignation. Ibrahim was arrested in Baku in September 2024, shortly after sharing criticisms of the Azerbaijani police, and had previously been barred from leaving the country.⁷

1.3 Religious Activist Tarlan Sayadov Sentenced to 3 Years Imprisonment

On July 23, 2025, the Baku Court on Grave Crimes sentenced **Tarlan Sayadov**, a member of the Muslim Unity Movement, to three years in prison. Sayadov was convicted under Article 234.1-1 (illegal acquisition of narcotics exceeding personal use level, without intent to sell) of the CC.⁸ In his final statement, Sayadov asserted his innocence, labelling the charges as fabricated and stating his faith is his only 'guilt'. Sayadov was arrested in March 2024, and his conviction adds to the growing number of religious activists considered political prisoners in Azerbaijan, with 241 out of 375 documented political prisoners falling into this category as of June 9.⁹

1.4 Human Rights Defender Fikrat Jafarli Arrested for Defamation

On July 29, 2025, **Fikrat Jafarli**, head of the Research Center Against Torture, was arrested in the courtroom as the Binagadi District Court charged him under Article 147.1 (defamation) of the CC and ordered 4 months of pre-trial detention.¹⁰ This came after a private prosecution claim filed by lawyer Elvin Aliyev, a member of the Bar Association's Disciplinary Commission. Aliyev accused Jafarli of defaming him and damaging his professional reputation through a post on the Research Center Against Torture's Facebook page. The post, citing a former client, alleged that Aliyev took 10,500 manats for legal defense he failed to provide and threatened his client. Jafarli denies that the information was his personal view and believes the case is a politically motivated reprisal for his criticism of the Bar Association.

2. Trials Continued in Politically Sensitive Cases During July

2.1 Toplum TV; Defendants Continue to Debunk Accusations in Court

Hearings in the *Toplum TV* case continued at the Baku Court on Grave Crimes on July 7, 14, and 21, 2025. On July 7, **Akif Gurbanov**, head of the Democratic Initiatives Institute (IDI), continued his testimony, detailing the IDI's work in youth education and explaining his refusal to cooperate with investigators due to their alleged focus on fabricating evidence.¹¹ Journalist **Farid Ismayilov** also raised motions, requesting an investigation into pro-government media leaks of alleged investigative secrets and protesting the State Tax Service's civil claim for 79,000 manats (46K USD appr.), as both motions were left unaddressed. On July 14, Gurbanov further responded to

⁷ Azeri Watchdog, 'Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center's Four-Months Review: Monthly Human Rights Developments In Azerbaijan January–April 2025', (May 2025), page 3, <https://gozetc.az/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Human-Rights-Situation-in-Azerbaijan-2025.pdf>, (EMDS Newsletter January–April 2025)

⁸ Toplum TV, 'The court sentences religious activists to 3 years in prison', (July 2025), <https://toplummedia.tv/mehkeme/pinancli-feal-3-il-azadliqdan-mehrum-edilib>, [available only in Azerbaijani]

⁹ Meydan TV, 'The list of political prisoners is updated', (July 2025), <https://www.meydan.tv/az/article/siyasi-m%C9%99hbus-siyahisi-yenil%C9%99ndi-375-n%C9%99f%C9%99r/>, [available only in Azerbaijani]

¹⁰ Abzas Media, 'Torture monitor Fikrat Jafarli arrested', (July 2025), <https://abzas.org/az/2025/7/isgnc-hallarn-monitorinq-ef87bff0a-9/>, [available only in Azerbaijani]

¹¹ Toplum TV, 'Toplum TV case; articles in the state media should be examined', (July 2025), <https://toplummedia.tv/mehkeme/pldquotoplum-tv-isirdquo-houmlkumetyoumlnluuml-mediadaki-yazilarin-arasdirilmasi-istenibnbspp>, [available only in Azerbaijani]

smuggling and tax evasion charges, explaining that the organisation was registered in Georgia due to obstacles in Azerbaijan, whereas defence lawyers also reported that Penitentiary Service employees were confiscating notes from defendants during transfers.¹² On July 21, defence lawyers for Toplum TV co-founder **Alasgar Mammadli** and journalist Farid Ismayilov requested their release to house arrest due to health issues, but these motions were denied by the court, citing a lack of medical examination reports.¹³ Akif Gurbanov concluded his testimony, describing threats faced by his family due to his activism as the next hearing is scheduled for August 4, 2025. The *Toplum TV* case, initiated in March 2024, involves 10 individuals accused all of whom deny the politically motivated charges, which include Article 206.4 (smuggling as an organised group on a large scale) and other articles of the CC, carrying sentences of up to 12 years.

2.2 Meclis.info Case Continues with Witness Testimonies and Disputed Tax Claim

Hearings in the *Meclis.info* case, involving **Imran Aliyev** (in custody), **Elgiz Gahraman**, and **Tamella Musayeva** (both under police supervision), continued at the Baku Court on Grave Crimes on July 1 and July 15, 2025. Witnesses included Imran Aliyev's father (who refused to testify) and others. Witnesses Murad Rustambayli, Shabnam Babayeva, and Sama Ahmadova testified, with Rustambayli denying any business relations with Aliyev and Gahraman, Babayeva confirming she worked for Meclis.info under contract and paid income tax, and Ahmadova stating she was a volunteer for the platform.¹⁴ A representative from the State Tax Service presented a 61,000 manat tax debt claim against Imran Aliyev, solely based on 'expert opinions' and without an official investigation, a claim the defence challenged as unsubstantiated. Imran Aliyev, arrested on April 18, 2024, was initially charged under Article 206.3.2 (smuggling by a group) of the CC, but his charges were later aggravated to 8 severe articles involving 2 new accused individuals too.¹⁵ The case, widely considered politically motivated, where defendants could face up to 12 years in jail if found guilty.

2.3. Human Rights Defender Rufat Safarov's Trial Begins Amidst Continued Detention

On July 14, 2025, the Baku Grave Crimes Court held the trial of human rights defender **Rufat Safarov**. The state prosecutor announced the indictment, which claims Safarov received over 60,000 manats from Natig Imanguliyev for the sale of a garden plot in Novkhani.¹⁶ The indictment further alleges that when Imanguliyev discovered the land wasn't transferred, he confronted Safarov at his garage, where Safarov then injured him. Safarov, however, denies the charges, asserting that only a portion of the land was sold to the alleged victim and that he first met Imanguliyev on December 3, 2024, the day of his arrest. Arrested on 3 December 2024 and charged under Articles 178.3.2 (fraud with a significant amount), 221.1 (hooliganism), and 127.2.3

¹² Toplum TV, 'Toplum TV case; State offered cooperation', (July 2025), <https://toplummedia.tv/mehkeme/pldquotoplum-tv-isirdquo-doumlvlet-bize-emekdasliq-teklif-etdip>, [available only in Azerbaijani]

¹³ Toplum TV, 'Toplum TV case; court refused to release prisoners with deteriorated health conditions', (July 2025), <https://toplummedia.tv/mehkeme/pmehkeme-sehheti-pislesen-lldquotoplumrdquoccedilulari-ev-dustaqligina-buraxmayibnbspp>, [available only in Azerbaijani]

¹⁴ Abzas Media, 'Meclis.info case; 61000 AZN tax debt for Imran Aliyev', (July 2025), <https://abzas.org/az/2025/7/meclis-info-isi-imran-liyef79e7983-9/>, [available only in Azerbaijani]

¹⁵ EMDS Newsletter January-April 2025 (n6), page 10

¹⁶ Toplum TV, 'Indicment read in Rufat Safarov's case', (July 2025), <https://toplummedia.tv/mehkeme/pruumlfet-seferovun-mehkemesinde-ittiham-akti-oxunubbr-nbspp>, [available only in Azerbaijani]

(inflicting serious harm to health) of the CC, Safarov has rejected the accusations as rights groups regard the case as politically motivated.¹⁷

2.4. Politician Azer Gasimli Rejects Charges, Claims Victim Status in Ongoing Trial

The trial of **Azer Gasimli**, director of the Institute of Political Management, commenced on July 16, 2025, at the Baku Grave Crimes Court. The prosecution accuses Gasimli of extortion through threats, alleging he demanded \$45,000 from an individual after losing money on a cryptocurrency platform, eventually coercing 6,800 manats and a \$10,000 promissory note.¹⁸ Gasimli vehemently denies these accusations, asserting he is the true victim in the case. The trial was adjourned until July 30 to ensure the presence of the alleged victim. Gasimli was arrested on December 8, 2024, under Article 182.2.3 (extortion with use of force) of the CC, allegedly for demanding money through threats of violence. The case is widely seen as an attempt to silence a critical voice, with Gasimli maintaining that the charges are fabricated to punish him for his political criticism.¹⁹

2.5. Detention Periods Extended in NGO Case Amidst Complaints of Mistreatment

The detention periods for five individuals implicated in the ongoing NGO case, **Bashir Suleymanli**, **Mammad Alpay (Mammadzada)**, **Zamin Zakiyev**, **Asaf Ahmadov** and **Ahmad Mammadli**, have been extended for another three months as of July 9, 2025.²⁰ On July 16, Suleymanli reported that during his detention extension hearing at the Baku Court of Appeal, the Judge aggressively interrupted him, preventing him from speaking and thereby violating his right to self-defence and freedom of expression.²¹ He also criticised the inhumane conditions for prisoners awaiting court hearings, describing crowded, airless rooms where 40-50 individuals, including those with health issues, are held for hours. The *NGO case* targets USAID recipients in Azerbaijan and includes 11 individuals in total (5 detainees, 3 persons under police supervision, 1 under police custody and 2 detainee in absentia) whereas they are all charged under Articles 193-1.3.2 (legalization of property obtained through crime), article 213.1 (tax evasion), 308.2 (abuse of official powers with grave consequences) and 313 (document forgery) of the CC.

2.6 Anar Mammadli's Trial Underway as Prosecution Presents Initial Charges

On July 7, 2025, the Baku Grave Crimes Court held another hearing in the case against **Anar Mammadli**, chairman of the Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center (EMDSC), and public activist **Anar Abdullayev**, where part of the indictment was read. The next hearing initially scheduled for July 28 was postponed to 4 August, since one of the accused - Anar Abdullayev was not brought to the court from the detention facility. Mammadli was detained on April 29, 2024 and

¹⁷ Voice of America, 'Rights groups, Western governments urge Azerbaijan to release human rights defender', (December 2024), <https://www.voanews.com/a/global-community-calls-on-azerbaijan-to-release-human-rights-defender/7888986.html>

¹⁸ Abzas Media, 'Azer Gasimli denies allegations, claims he is the victim', (July 2025), <https://abzas.net/en/2025/7/azr-qasml-ittihamlar-rdeccf5eaa-2/>, [available only in Azerbaijani]

¹⁹ OC Media, 'Former deputy chair of the REAL Party detained in Azerbaijan', (December 2024), <https://oc-media.org/azar-gasimli-was-sentenced-to-four-months-of-pre-trial-detention-after-being-detained-on-charges-of-extortion/>

²⁰ Abzas Media, 'Detention period of detainees in the NGO case is extended', (July 2025), <https://abzas.net/en/2025/7/qht-isi-crcivsind-saxlana780651a-9/>, [available only in Azerbaijani]

²¹ Abzas Media, 'My rights to defence is violated since I was silenced at court hearing', (July 2025), <https://abzas.org/az/2025/7/bsir-suleymanli-mhkmd-sfe4262e8-2/>, [available only in Azerbaijani]

was subsequently charged with 7 Articles of the CC along with another activist Anar Abdullayev maintains his innocence as the case is generally regarded as politically motivated.²²

3. Political Prisoners continue to face mistreatment in detention facilities

3.1 Abzas Media director Ulvi Hasanli renews hunger strike in protest

Imprisoned director of Abzas Media, **Ulvi Hasanli** resumed his indefinite hunger strike on July 20, citing the Penitentiary Service's failure to comply with a court order for his transfer back to Baku Detention Center in Kurdakhani, which severely impedes his access to family and legal counsel.²³ He was promptly put into solitary confinement following the resumption of the strike and was later reported to lose consciousness after extreme heat and lack of circulation.²⁴ Two days later, on July 22, the female journalists in the same case, **Sevinj Vagifgizi, Elnara Gasimova, and Nargiz Absalamova**, rejoined the strike. In direct response, they reportedly faced retaliation, including isolation in unsanitary cells lacking proper ventilation or shower facilities, block to access to personal items brought to them and alleged physical violence, with Nargiz Absalamova reportedly assaulted by Deputy Chief Ahad Abdiyev.²⁵ On 28 July, 3 female journalists announced the end of hunger strike citing concerns by family members.²⁶

These events coincide with an exposé released by Abzas Media employees on July 18, detailing the dire conditions in the Baku Pretrial Detention Center's women's ward, including a severe shortage of functioning refrigerators, inadequate ventilation, and critical water shortages with unsanitary water.²⁷ Despite substantial state funding allocated to the Penitentiary Service, the report underscores that these funds have not translated into improved living conditions for inmates, whose pleas for basic necessities are met with the dismissive assertions. Adding to these concerns, the family of Sevinj Vagifgizi was allegedly denied permission to provide her with a ventilator, and prison officials reportedly demanded the deletion of the critical piece exposing these conditions.²⁸

3.2 Arrested Activist Haji Valiyev Ends Hunger Strike Due to Deteriorating Health

²² EU Neighbors East, 'Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum urgently call for unconditional release of Azerbaijani human rights defender Anar Mammadli', (May 2024), <https://euneighbourseast.eu/news/latest-news/eastern-partnership-civil-society-forum-urgently-call-for-unconditional-release-of-azerbaijani-human-rights-defender-anar-mammadli/>; Amnesty International, 'Urgent Action; Release Arrested Journalists', (May 2024), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/EUR5579462024ENGLISH.pdf>;

²³ Abzas Media, 'Ulvi Hasanli resumes hunger strike after being denied transfer', (July 2025), <https://abzas.org/en/2025/7/ulvi-hasanli-begins-hunger-strike>

²⁴ Abzas Media, 'Ulvi Hasanli lost his consciousness while on hunger strike', (July 2025), <https://abzas.org/az/2025/7/aclq-edn-ulvi-hsnli-husunu3b59f2c5-b/>, [available in Azerbaijani]

²⁵ Abzas Media, 'Imprisoned Abzas Media journalists report inhumane treatment over hunger strike', (July 2025), <https://abzas.org/en/2025/7/imprisoned-abzas-media-journal2c882996-f/>

²⁶ Abzas Media, 'Female journalists of Abzas Media end hunger strike', (July 2025), <https://abzas.org/az/2025/7/abzas-mediann-qadn-jurnali39961998-0/>, [available in Azerbaijani]

²⁷ Abzas Media, 'The 196-million-manat image of the detention center', (July 2025), <https://abzas.org/en/2025/7/the-196-million-manat-image-of40dd5d76-f/>

²⁸ Toplum TV, 'Prison head demands deleting reports from journalist to allow passage of ventilators', (July 2025), <https://toplummedia.tv/mehkeme/ptecridxana-reisinin-serinkesi-buraxmaq-uumlccediluumln-jurnalistden-yazilarin-silinmesini-istediyi-deyilirp>, [available in Azerbaijani only]

On 23 July, **Haji Valiyev**, an imprisoned public activist and veteran of the Second Karabakh War, ended his hunger strike aimed at protesting his ‘unjust conviction’ from June 21, 2025.²⁹ His family confirmed that the decision was made under their insistence and due to severe health issues. Valiyev expressed deep dissatisfaction with his detention conditions and the continued lack of treatment for a serious eye problem, warning that the prolonged hunger strike had severely impacted his physical and psychological well-being, potentially leading to irreversible complications. His lawyers had previously reported that he struggled to walk and was at risk of losing vision in his remaining eye. Haji Valiyev, who is known for highlighting the issues of war victims' families and veterans, was detained on March 31, 2025, and charged under 221.3 (hooliganism with use of weapons) and 186.1 (intentional damage to property causing significant loss) of the CC, following the incident with police.³⁰ He insists on innocence and states that his arrest is due to his public activism.

3.3 Trade Union Activist Elvin Mustafayev Transferred to High-Security Prison Amid Torture Allegations

Elvin Mustafayev, a member of the ‘Workers’ Table Unions Confederation’, has been transferred to a high-security prison for six months following a July 10, 2025, decision by the Nizami District Court.³¹ The Penitentiary Service No. 6 requested the transfer, alleging Mustafayev violated internal disciplinary rules, engaged in ‘oppositional activities’, made baseless complaints, and attempted self-harm. Mustafayev vehemently denies these claims, calling them pretexts for his transfer and asserting he has been subjected to pressure, including being beaten in the prison chief’s office. He links these pressures to his participation in a hunger strike in April in support of political activist Tofiq Yaqublu and his protests against high prices at the prison shop. The Confederation released a statement on June 24, alleging Mustafayev was tortured upon his arrival at Penitentiary Service No. 6, detailing severe physical violence that resulted in a ruptured eardrum and prolonged pain.³² Mustafayev was arrested in August 2023 and sentenced to 3 years in prison on January 31, 2023 on drug-related charges he denies, is recognized by human rights defenders as a political prisoner, with his imprisonment widely viewed as politically motivated due to his activism.³³

²⁹ Toplum TV, ‘Haji Valiyev ends hunger strike’, (July 2025), <https://toplummedia.tv/mehkeme/phaci-veliyev-acligi-dayandiribnbspp>

³⁰ Institute for Reporters’ Freedom and Safety, ‘Lawyer: “The court knows well what suffering Haji Valiyev has endured”’, (May 2025), <https://www.irfs.org/az/news-feed/lawyer-the-court-knows-well-what-suffering-haji-valiyev-has-endured/>

³¹ Abzas Media, ‘Labor rights activist transferred to high-security prison for "dissident activities"’, (July 2025), <https://abzas.org/az/2025/7/iscilrin-huquqlarn-qoruyanfb18111c-a/>

³² Toplum TV, ‘Elvin Mustafayev allegedly faced torture with special cruelty’, (June 2025), <https://toplummedia.tv/mehkeme/pelvin-mustafayevin-xuumsusi-amansizliqla-zorakiliqa-meruz-qaldigi-devilirp>, [available in Azerbaijani]

³³ Human Rights Watch (HRW), ‘We Try to Stay Invisible’, (October 2024), <https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/10/08/we-try-stay-invisible/azerbaijans-escalating-crackdown-critics-and-civil-society>

Continuing Crackdown on Dissent in Azerbaijan – July 2025

July 2025 witnessed a worrying continuation of politically motivated arrests, convictions, and severe mistreatment of persons arrested in politically sensitive cases, highlighting the deepening crisis for freedoms.

The month began with the administrative detention of journalist **Anar Abdullayev** on July 11, accused of minor hooliganism and disobedience, charges he denies. This arrest is particularly concerning given Abdullayev's existing police supervision in a larger criminal case alongside **Anar Mammadli**, head of the Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center (EMDSC). Both face severe charges, including large-scale smuggling by an organized group, which could lead to 12 years in prison—a case widely seen as politically motivated to stifle independent civil society work.

Adding to the mounting convictions, civic activist **Nijad Ibrahim** was sentenced to six and a half years in prison on July 22 for allegedly inflicting severe bodily harm, charges he rejects as retaliation for his 2020 social media posts criticizing President Ilham Aliyev.

Similarly, religious activist **Tarlan Sayadov**, a member of the Muslim Unity Movement (MUM), received a three-year prison sentence on July 23 for alleged illegal drug acquisition, a charge he denies, attributing his conviction to his religious beliefs.

On 29 July, another human rights defender and head of Research Center Against Torture, **Fikrat Jafarli** was arrested in courtroom and sentenced to 4 months of pre-trial detention. Jafarli denies the charges of defamation and believes the case stems from his criticism of authorities. The cases form the latest part of broader crackdown on independent media and civil society since November 2023 whereas the number of political prisoners is reported to be 375 as of 9 of June.

Beyond arrests and convictions, trials in politically sensitive cases continued throughout July, often marked by procedural irregularities, repetitive rejections to defence motions and allegations of fabricated evidence.

In the high-profile Toplum TV case, 3 hearings on July 7, 14, and 21 saw defendants, including Akif Gurbanov, head of the Democratic Initiatives Institute (IDI), and journalist Farid Ismayilov, debunking accusations of smuggling and tax evasion. They described obstacles to their organization's registration in Azerbaijan, the confiscation of notes by penitentiary staff, and threats against Gurbanov's family. Motions for release on health grounds were denied, with the next hearing set for August 4.

Similarly, the Meclis.info case saw witness testimonies on July 1 and 15, alongside unsubstantiated tax claims against Imran Aliyev, who alongside other 2 accused persons face up to 12 years in jail on aggravated charges.

Court hearings started in the case of human rights defender **Rufat Safarov's** on fraud and hooliganism, where he denied accusations of a disputed land deal and alleged assault, maintaining the charges are politically motivated.

Politician **Azer Gasimli**'s trial for extortion began on July 16, with Gasimli rejecting the charges and claiming victim status, suggesting the case is designed to silence him.

The NGO case, targeting USAID recipients, saw detention periods for five individuals, including Institute for Civil Rights head **Bashir Suleymanli**, extended for another three months on July 9. Suleymanli, during a July 16 hearing, accused a judge of violating his defense rights by repeatedly interrupting him and detailed inhumane conditions for prisoners in transit to court, including cramped, airless holding rooms. He also reported issues with spoiled food and withheld books in pre-trial detention.

Meanwhile, the trial of **Anar Mammadli** and **Anar Abdullayev** also continued on July 7 and 28, with part of the indictment read, further extending a case widely perceived as politically motivated.

July was also accompanied by the reports of mistreatment in detention facilities targeting political prisoners. Abzas Media director **Ulvi Hasanli** resumed his indefinite hunger strike on July 20 to protest the broken promise of his transfer back to Baku Detention Center. He was promptly placed in solitary confinement. In solidarity, female Abzas Media journalists **Sevinj Vagifgizi**, **Elnara Gasimova**, and **Nargiz Absalamova** joined the hunger strike for 6 days before ending due to concerns by family members. Both Hasanli and his female colleagues immediately faced retaliatory actions, such as isolation, unsanitary cells, physical violence and block to accessing personal items, with Hasanli reportedly losing consciousness due to extreme heat and poor ventilation.

Elsewhere, public activist **Haji Valiyev** ended his hunger strike on July 23, which he began on June 21 to protest his 'unjust conviction', due to his rapidly deteriorating health and family pressure. Valiyev, who is known for advocating for war victims' families, cited persistent eye problems and overall poor detention conditions.

Lastly, trade unionist activist **Elvin Mustafayev**, a recognized political prisoner, was controversially transferred to a high-security prison for six months on July 10, based on allegations he violated rules and engaged in dissident activities. Mustafayev vehemently denies these claims, alleging he was beaten by prison officials upon his initial arrival and that the current allegations are pretexts for further punishment following his participation in a hunger strike and protests against prison shop prices.