

# URGENT ACTION

## JOURNALIST DENIED HEALTHCARE IN PRISON

Abzas Media journalist Nargiz Absalamova was sentenced to eight years in prison on politically motivated charges and has been denied a medical examination for four months despite suffering from sinusitis, shortness of breath and severe headaches. Nargiz Absalamova must be allowed access to adequate healthcare and be immediately released along with all Abzas Media journalists.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

*Ilham Aliyev*

*President of Azerbaijan  
19 Istiqlaliyyat Street  
Baku AZ1066, Azerbaijan  
[office@pa.gov.az](mailto:office@pa.gov.az)*

Dear President,

I am writing to draw your attention to the deteriorating health of Abzas Media journalist Nargiz Absalamova, serving an eight-years prison sentence at Lankaran Penitentiary Complex on politically motivated charges. I am concerned that the journalist has been denied a medical examination for four months.

Nargiz Absalamova has a pre-existing sinusitis condition that has worsened in detention. She suffers from shortness of breath and severe headaches, requiring, according to her family, an MRI scan and a medical check-up. Four months ago, she formally requested these examinations from the Lankaran Penitentiary Complex. Her lawyer, Bahruz Bayramov, filed repeated appeals to both the prison administration and the Ombudsperson's Office. The latter confirmed receipt but took no action. Prison staff told her the matter was pending approval "from above".

Several arbitrarily arrested journalists from other independent media outlets such as Meydan TV and Toplum TV, have health issues and are also denied healthcare, which may amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Additionally, the conditions under which the journalists are detained, including overcrowded cells, sexual harassment, physical threats and psychological abuse may violate Azerbaijan's human rights obligations. In May 2026, one expert affiliated with Abzas media, Ilgar Aliyev, died in custody. The Ministry of Justice attributed his death to acute cardiovascular insufficiency; forensic examination is still pending. No independent investigation has been announced, raising serious concerns about the adequacy of medical care provided to him.

**I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Nargiz Absalamova and all Abzas Media journalists and allow them to access the healthcare they need. I also call on you to ensure effective independent investigations into allegations of denial of healthcare and ill-treatment and stop misusing the criminal justice system to target independent journalists and dissenting voices in Azerbaijan.**

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nargiz Absalamova is a journalist at Abzas Media, covering alleged corrupt deals by companies connected with government officials. The outlet has also reported its findings about environmental issues such as dangerous pollution and health risks related to Gedabek gold mine near Soyudlu district in Azerbaijan. Absalamova was detained on 30 November 2023 as part of a wave of arrests targeting Abzas Media, she and her colleagues are held at Lankaran Penitentiary Complex, a remote facility far from their family members in Baku.

Abzas Media director Ulvi Hasanli, his deputy Mahammad Kekalov, editor-in-chief Sevinj Vagifgizi, and journalists Nargiz Absalamova, Elnara Gasimova and Hafiz Babali, economist and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty correspondent Farid Mehralizada were arbitrarily arrested between November 2023 and January 2024, accused of smuggling money by a group of persons through prior conspiracy. In August 2024, the prosecution also brought new false charges against them, of illegal entrepreneurship, money laundering and tax evasion. On 20 June 2025, Baku Court of Grave Crimes sentenced seven media workers affiliated with Abzas Media to prison terms ranging from seven-and-a-half to nine years. On 3 April 2026, the Supreme Court rejected the cassation appeals of Abzas Media journalists, upheld the June 2025 convictions and prison sentences.

In December 2023, Ilgar Aliyev, an expert in information security and IT governance, was arrested as part of the investigation against Abzas Media. At the time, Aliyev and his family did not want his arrest and his relations to Abzas Media to be made public. In May 2026, Ilgar Aliyev died in Correctional Facility No 13 in Azerbaijan. In his final voice recording, Ilgar Aliyev said that police officers planted narcotics and psychotropic substances in his pocket, forced him to confess under threats, and threatened to target his family if he refused. Court documents describe allegations of physical violence, pressure, denial of access to lawyers of his own choice, and falsification of procedural documents.

On 23 February 2026, several [UN Special Rapporteurs and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention](#) raised concerns about the detention conditions and transfer of Nargiz Absalamova, and other female journalists to a remote prison in the village of Gurumba, in Lankaran. The journalists were only informed about their transfer an hour before departure, and the Gurumba facility is located 250 km south of Baku, imposing a significant financial and logistical burden on their families and lawyers.

Since November 2023, the Azerbaijani authorities have arbitrarily arrested nearly 30 journalists and media workers. At least 12 of those detained since 6 December 2024 are journalists linked to Meydan TV, criminal proceedings are ongoing against several journalist of Toplum TV, including co-founder Alasgar Mammadli, journalists Farid Ismayilov, Mushfig Jabarov and Ali Zeynalov.

Detained journalists regularly report being subjected to ill-treatment, including denial of necessary medical care and being held in severely overcrowded cells (15–18 detainees confined to cells designed for eight to 10 people) and unsanitary conditions, including toilets located inside sleeping areas, causing or further contributing to the deterioration of their health.

Torture and other ill-treatment in detention are widespread in Azerbaijan and are carried out with impunity. Amnesty International has regularly reported the [denial of necessary healthcare for jailed government critics](#). Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) has publicly denounced the "persistent lack of cooperation" from Azerbaijani authorities regarding its calls to improve prison conditions and address torture and other ill-treatment.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Azerbaijani, Turkish, English and Russian  
You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 30 August 2026**

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PRONOUN:** Nargiz Absalamova (she/her)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** [Azerbaijan: Journalists face new charges and extended detention: Abzas Media](#)