

## AZERBAIJAN

### Shia Muslims

#### **Sardar akif oglu BABAYEV**

**Date of birth:** 12 March 1974.

**Date and place of arrest:** On 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017, in the Masalli District.

**Charges:** Leading worship after having gained theological education outside of Azerbaijan.

**Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code:** Article 168-1.3.1.

**First court decision:** On 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017, he was sentenced to pre-trial detention for one month and seven days by Judge Nemat Musayev of the Masalli District Court.

**Last court decision:** He was sentenced to three years in prison in July 2017.

**Place of detention:** Kurdakhani Investigation Prison, AZ-1104, Baki Shahari, Sabunchu rayonu, Zabrat-2 qasabasi, Baki Istintaq tacridxanasi.

**Other information:** He is an imam and completed his studies at Al Mustafa University in Iran. His lawyer was unable to attend the first court hearing, for he was informed of it on extremely short notice. While in prison, he has been denied access to the Quran and to a prayer mat.

**Source:** [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2263](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2263)

#### **Elshan Mustafaoglu MUSTAFAYEV**

**Age:** 41 years

**Date and place of arrest:** In December 2014, in Baku.

**Charges:** Treason, spying for Iran.

**Statement of the defendant:** He rejects the accusations.

**Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code:** Criminal Code Article 274 (State betrayal, that is deliberate action committed by a citizen of the Azerbaijan Republic to the detriment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, state security or defensibility of the Azerbaijan Republic: changeover to the enemy side, espionage, distribution of state secrets to a foreign state, rendering assistance to a foreign state, foreign organization or their representatives in realization of hostile activity against the Azerbaijan Republic. Punishments include possibly confiscation of property and twelve years to life imprisonment).

**Place of detention:** Baku

**Other information:** He was sent by Azerbaijan's Education Ministry to study in Iran in the 1990s, and defended his dissertation in 2007. In 2001, he founded the public organization Spiritual Purity, and in 2005 a research center. He also anchored a series of religious programs on various Azerbaijani TV channels. In 2011 Mustafayev co-founded the Initiative Group for the Support of the Human Rights of Religious Citizens, which helped to organize a petition to President Ilham Aliyev against the 2010 ban on the hijab in schools and

universities. After two years studying in Norway, he returned to Baku in early 2014 and worked with the state-backed Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Caucasus.

*Source:* <http://www.rferl.org/a/azerbaijani-theologian-faces-spy-charges/28163683.html> and [http://forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2203](http://forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2203)