

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1215

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1215

Notice: Undefined index: et_template in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1216

AZERBAIJAN: Anti-corruption journalists detained for four months

Azerbaijani anti-corruption journalists Ulvi Hasanli and Sevinj Vagifgizi detained for 4 months

The Committee to Protect Journalists calls on Azerbaijani authorities to release Abzas Media director Ulvi Hasanli and chief editor Sevinj Vagifgizi and to disclose the whereabouts of Hasanli's assistant, Mahammad Kekalov, who has been missing since Monday.

A district court in the capital of Baku on Tuesday ordered that Hasanli and Vagifgizi remain in custody for four months on charges of conspiring to bring money into the country unlawfully, [Abzas Media](#) reported. If found guilty, they face up to eight years in prison under Article 206.3.2 of Azerbaijan's [criminal code](#).

Individuals in plainclothes who did not identify themselves took Kekalov from his home in Baku on Monday along with his laptop and cell phone, according to [news reports](#) and a source familiar with the case who spoke to CPJ on condition of anonymity, citing fear of reprisal. As of Tuesday evening, Kekalov's whereabouts remained unknown.

"The remand terms handed to Ulvi Hasanli and Sevinj Vagifgizi only serve to underline authorities' real goal, which is to silence Abzas Media's bold anti-corruption reporting," said CPJ Advocacy and Communications Director Gypsy Guillén Kaiser, in New York. "Azerbaijani authorities should release Vagifgizi and Hasanli immediately, provide information on Mahammad Kekalov's whereabouts, and allow Abzas Media to continue its vital public interest reporting."

Police [arrested](#) Hasanli on Monday, November 20, raided his apartment, and searched the Baku office of independent investigative website Abzas Media, where they said they found 40,000 Euros (US\$43,770). Officers took a computer, cell phone, iWatch, and hard disk from the apartment and confiscated a microphone and hard disk from the office, Zibeyda Sadygova, the journalist's lawyer, told CPJ.

Police [arrested](#) Vagifgizi at Baku airport at 1:30 a.m. on Tuesday as she returned from a work trip abroad and [searched](#) her home.

Hasanli and Vagifgizi have denied the charges, calling them retaliation for Abzas Media's [investigations into alleged corruption](#) by [relatives of Azerbaijan President Ilham](#)

Aliyev and state officials. Hasanli said he believes police planted the money in order to fabricate a case, according to a video posted by Abzas Media.

Abzas Media is one of a handful of independent outlets that remain in the country following a series of raids, arrests, and criminal investigations against independent media and press freedom groups since 2014.

In 2021, Vagifgizi was one of several Azerbaijani journalists whose phones were found to be compromised by Pegasus, spyware produced by the Israeli company NSO Group. Hasanli's name was also on a leaked list of individuals targeted with Pegasus, according to the global investigative network Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project.

CPJ's emails to the Baku Police Department and the Ministry of Internal Affairs did not receive any replies.

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Notice: Undefined index: et_footer_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1267

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1267

Notice: Undefined index: et_footer_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1268

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Notice: Undefined index: et_template in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1269

