

## **Azerbaijan urged to transfer Irina Zakharchenko to house arrest**

HRWF (14.12.2015) - On December 3, 2015, the UN Human Rights Committee granted an urgent application on behalf of Irina Zakharchenko and asked the government of Azerbaijan to transfer her immediately from jail to "house arrest or other adequate alternative." Concern for her deteriorating health prompted the urgent request.

Irina Zakharchenko and Valida Jabrayilova, two female Jehovah's Witnesses, have been held in pretrial detention for ten months. On December 10, 2015, the Baku Pirallahi District Court began hearing the case against both women on the charge of allegedly violating the criminal code by sharing religious literature and their beliefs "without permission."

The two women appeared to be in bad condition. Irina Zakharchenko is now very skinny and looked very tired. She is psychologically and emotionally very weak and her voice was faint.

The lawyers presented three motions on behalf of the two women: (1) motion to allow them to sit beside their lawyers rather than be in an infamous cage at trial; (2) motion to transfer them to house arrest; and (3) motion to terminate the criminal proceedings.

The prosecutor asked the judge not to satisfy the motions. All three motions were dismissed.