Azerbaijani Journalist Seymur Hazi Detained in Run-Up to Protests

**SOURCE OF THREAT**  ➤ State  ➤ 1 Journalist in detention

**CATEGORY**  ➤ Detention and imprisonment of journalists

On 17 October 2019, in the run-up to protests against alleged corruption and low wages, and in favour of government reform, police arrested Seymur Hazi, a reporter for the independent news website Meydan TV, as he was leaving his house in Baku, according to news reports and his wife, Nigar Hazi, who spoke with CPJ. Later that day, the Khetai district Court in Baku found Hazi guilty of minor hooliganism and noncompliance with police orders and sentenced him to 15 days in detention, his wife said. Hazi planned to cover the protests for Meydan TV, she said.

In the days before the protests began, police arrested about 100 people whom they suspected would be involved, according to a statement posted to Facebook by the opposition Popular Front Party. Police arrested dozens more people during the protests on 19 and 20 October 2019, according to media reports. The deputy head of the Baku police, Sakhlab Bagirov, confirmed to Reuters on 19 October 2019 that some people had been detained, but declined to provide an exact number. CPJ's phone calls to the Ministry of the Interior of Azerbaijan went unanswered.

Hazi was released on 29 August 2019 from a five-year prison term on retaliatory charges for his journalism, in which he had alleged government corruption and human rights abuses, according to CPJ research.

**FOLLOW-UPS**

12 Dec 2019 | In her report following her visit to Azerbaijan from 8 to 12 July 2019, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights regrets that no progress has been made regarding the protection of freedom of
expression and calls on the authorities to release all those detained because of the views they expressed, notably journalists.

_statement by Dunja Mijatović_

25 Oct 2019 | OSCE Media Freedom Representative deplores obstruction of work of journalists in Azerbaijan, calling on authorities to ensure safe working conditions.

_statement by Harlem Désir_

**JOURNALISTS IN DETENTION**

Currently in detention (1):

Seymour Hazi