Opposition and Independent News Websites Blocked

Azerbaijan
Alert created on: 11 Apr 2017

No state reply yet

PARTNER: Index, Article 19, RSF

On 27 March 2017, three websites had their access blocked in Azerbaijan, independent news platform contact.az reported. Meydan TV, Azadliq Qezeti and the local service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty all became inaccessible inside the country. According to independent sources, Azerbaijan Saadi (Azerbaijan Hour) had also been inaccessible for the past week. Azerbaijan Hour is a YouTube video channel, managed by editor-in-chief of opposition newspaper, Azadliq, who is currently living in exile.

26 Sep 2019: On 26 September 2019, the Supreme Court cancelled the decision by the Sabail District Court of Baku to block the online media outlets Azadliq, Radio Azadliq and programmes “Azerbaiyanc Saat”, “Turan TV” and “Meydan TV”. The decision to block the news websites will be reconsidered by the Baku Court of Appeal.

Article by Musavat (in Russian): "Верховный суд Азербайджана отменил блокировку оппозиционных сайтов"

15 Aug 2018: On 7-8 August 2018, upon the request of the Ministry for Transportation, Communications and New Technologies, the district courts in Baku ruled to block four news websites, namely az24saat.org, xural.com, arqument.az and monitortv.info.

News report published on az24saat.org

06 Jun 2018: On 4 June 2018, the Supreme Court of Azerbaijan rejected RFE/RL's appeal against website blockage. RFE/RL announced their intention to take their case to the European Court of Human Rights.
19 Dec 2017: On 19 December 2017, the Baku Court of Appeal upheld the ruling to block access to RFE/RL Azerbaijani service, Azadliq, Meydan TV & 2 other Internet TVs.

15 May 2017: Court orders block to websites of RFE/RL Azerbaijani service, Azadliq, Meydan TV & 2 other Internet TV.

Article by RFE/RL: "Azerbaijani Court Orders Block On RFE/RL Website"

Article by RFE/RL: "EU Criticizes Azerbaijan's Decision To Block Independent Websites "

28 Apr 2017: A district court in Baku began on 27 April 2017 hearing a lawsuit that seeks to compel internet service providers to block access to the sites. The lawsuit was filed by the Azerbaijani Ministry of Transport, Communications, and High Technology.

CPJ report: "Azerbaijan government seeks order to permanently block news websites"

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Report published on Mapping Media Freedom platform: "Azerbaijan: Opposition and independent news websites blocked "

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 bring the legislation and practice affecting Internet freedom in line with European standards.

Statement by Dunja Mijatović

26 Sep 2017 | The CoE Commissioner for Human Rights recalls that any restrictions on access to Internet content should be based on a clear and predictable framework affording guarantee of judicial oversight to prevent possible abuses.

Comment by the Commissioner for Human Rights: "Arbitrary Internet blocking jeopardises freedom of expression"