

17  
Sep 2018

▲ Lvl. 1

No state  
reply yet

Azerbaijan

Alert created on: 01 Jun 2017

## Exiled Journalist Abducted, Detained and Faces Charges in Azerbaijan

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ State

⊕ 1 Journalist in detention

CATEGORY ⓘ ▶ Detention and imprisonment of journalists

### NO STATE REPLY YET

PARTNER: Index, Article 19, CPJ, EFJ/IFJ, IPI, PEN, RSF

Freelance Azerbaijani journalist Afgan Mukhtarli was reported missing in Tbilisi, Georgia on the evening of 29 May 2017 by his wife Leyla Mustafayeva. Eurasianet reported that Mustafayeva said that her husband last called her when he was just a few blocks away from their home, but he never showed up. The Georgian police stated on 30 May that a search was underway for the journalist, but later, the independent Azeri news agency Turan reported that the Azerbaijani border service department detained Mukhtarli.

Independent investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova confirmed that Mukhtarli was kidnapped from his neighbourhood where he was forced into a car, his hands were tied and he was beaten. Mukhtarli sustained serious injuries. His lawyer, Elchin Sadigov, told the Committee for the Protection of Journalists: "He was beaten, has a broken nose, bruises all over his head and right eye, his rib may be broken." He was then taken across the border into Azerbaijan by car without his passport.

Mukhtarli is being charged with trespassing, smuggling and resistance to law-enforcement (violations of Articles 318.1, 206.1 and 315.2 of the criminal code), his lawyer confirmed. The Azerbaijani police also claim Mukhtarli was in possession of 10,000 EUR during the police search. Mukhtarli, who has contributed to various independent outlets, including Meydan TV, fled to Georgia from Azerbaijan in 2015, after receiving threats over his investigative reporting on corruption in the Azerbaijani Defence Ministry. Afgan Mukhtarli is now in pre-trial detention.

### UPDATES

**18 Sep 2018:** On 18 September 2018, the Supreme Court of Azerbaijan upheld the sentence to 6 years of imprisonment issued by the Balakan District Court against Afgan Mukhtarli.

➔ Turan agency dispatch : "Supreme Court keeps journalist under arrest"

**25 Apr 2018:** On 24 April 2018, the Sheki Appeals Court rejected the appeal of Journalist Afgan Mukhtarli.

**12 Jan 2018:** On 12 January 2018 Azerbaijan`s Balakan District Court sentenced Afgan Mukhtarli to 6 years in prison for illegal border crossing, smuggling and violent resistance to public officials.

➔ Article published by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty: "Azerbaijani Journalist Gets Six-Year Sentence In Trial Condemned By Activists"


**17 Aug 2017:** On 17 August 2017 the Nasimi District Court of Baku extended Afgan Mukhtarli`s pre-trial detention until 30 October 2017.

➔ Article published by Caucasian Knot: "Azerbaijani journalist Afghan Mukhtarly left under arrest for two more months"

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- ➔ Statement by PEN International, : "Azerbaijan: kidnapped journalist must be released immediately"
- ➔ Statement by the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum: "EaP CSF Calls for Release of Sheremet Award Winner and Respect for His Family"
- ➔ Article 19 report: "Azerbaijan: Afgan Mukhtarli abducted in Georgia and detained on smuggling and trespassing charges"
- ➔ Article published by RFERL/RL: "Demonstrators In Tbilisi Protest Azerbaijani Journalist's Alleged Abduction"
- ➔ CPJ report: "Exiled journalist abducted in Georgia to face prosecution in Azerbaijan"
- ➔ Report published on the Mapping Media Freedom platform: "Azerbaijan/Georgia: Exiled journalist abducted, detained and faces charges"

#### FOLLOW-UPS

 **15 Jan 2018** | OSCE media freedom representative Désir condemns jailing of investigative journalist Afgan Mukhtarli in Azerbaijan

- ➔ [Statement by Harlem Désir](#)



**17 Jul 2017** | The European Court of Human Rights began its consideration of Afgan Mukhtarli abduction case. On 8 June 2017, the Court sent a request for information to the Azerbaijani government.

➔ [Article published by Meydan TV: "European Court Begins Consideration of Afgan Mukhtarli Kidnapping Case"](#)



**20 Jun 2017** | Volodymyr Arieu, PACE General Rapporteur on Media Freedom and the Safety of Journalists, calls for release of Afqan Mukhtarli

➔ [Statement by Volodymyr Arieu](#)



**06 Jun 2017** | Boriss Cilevics and Kerstin Lundgren, co-rapporteurs of the PACE, urge Georgian authorities to fully investigate abduction of Afqan Mukhtarli

➔ [Statement by the PACE co-rapporteurs](#)



**02 Jun 2017** | Commissioner for Human Rights "appalled by what happened to Afgan Mukhtarli, an Azerbaijani journalist and activist, who has reportedly been abducted in Georgia and forcibly taken to Azerbaijan, where he is now facing prosecution for illegal crossing of the border and smuggling".

➔ [Facebook post by the Commissioner for Human Rights](#)

## JOURNALISTS IN DETENTION



### Currently in detention (1):

Afgan Mukhtarli