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February 9, 2026

Vice President JD Vance
The White House
Office of the Vice President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Vice President Vance,

Ahead of your upcoming visit to Baku, I write to call your attention to the unjust detention of U.S.-affiliated journalists Ulviyya Ali (Guliyeva) and Farid Mehralizada in Azerbaijan and ask you to advocate for their immediate release to their families.

Ms. Ali and Mr. Mehralizada have done nothing wrong. They are being punished simply because they worked with media outlets supported by the United States. Ms. Ali, a former Voice of America correspondent, suffered brutal beatings at the hands of Azerbaijani authorities and her health has deteriorated as a result. Mr. Mehralizada, a journalist with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, was forced to miss the birth of his first child while imprisoned, and his wife Nargiz Mukhtarova now faces a criminal case of her own.

Azerbaijan's treatment of these journalists and their families is unconscionable and has no place in a nation seeking our partnership. These actions erode trust, violate human dignity, and directly contradict genuine efforts to build regional peace and prosperity.

We cannot allow governments to take law-abiding individuals hostage for their U.S. ties. Ms. Ali and Mr. Mehralizada deserve to be home with their loved ones, not locked behind bars for crimes they did not commit. When you meet with Azerbaijani officials this week, I urge you to press forcefully for their release.

Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

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