Statement

Of the Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center

On the arrest of prominent opposition activist Tofig Yagublu

Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center (EMDS) considers the decision of the Nizami district court on 3 September 2020 to imprison Tofig Yagublu for 4 years and 3 months unlawful and regards the judgement as a result of unfair and politically biased attitude.

EMDS notes that the allegations of the car crash between parked car of Tofig Yagublu and “VAZ-2107” belonging to Elkhan Jabrayilov and attack of Yagublu to Jabrayilov and his wife, causing bodily injuries on March 22, have not been proved and the event was considered as pre-planned provocation by independent observers.

Additionally, it became apparent during the court trials that the video filming of the event taped by Yagublu had been deleted from his phone by police officers. The court trials were accompanied by contradictory witness testimonies and refusal of petitions raised by the defendant. SMDT regretfully notes that the court did not take Tofig Yabulu’s age, his status of Karabakh war veteran and medical condition of chronical allergic-asthma bronchitis he is suffering from, into account.

EMDS regards the arrest of Tofig Yagublu as politically-motivated and part of the political repression intensified during the pandemic and states that the right to liberty and right to fair trial of Tofig Yagublu enshrined under both the Constitution of Azerbaijan and the European Convention on Human Rights have been severely violated.

EMDS calls Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the relevant institutes of the European Union and international human rights organizations to support the domestic efforts to free the Tofig Yagublu

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