Open letter calling for the immediate release of Dr. Gubad Ibadoglu
7 May 2024

We, the UNCAC Coalition and the 240 undersigned organizations and individuals from 88 countries across the globe, are deeply concerned about the unjustified arrest and extended imprisonment of Dr. Gubad Ibadoglu in Azerbaijan. Dr. Ibadoglu is a prominent anti-corruption expert and human rights defender who has been active in the UNCAC Coalition and other civil society networks for many years and served as a Board Member of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). We call for his immediate release as well as the release of other political prisoners in Azerbaijan.

Dr. Ibadoglu has exposed corruption in Azerbaijan’s oil and gas sector and advocated for transparency of the country’s public revenues. He also advocated for seizing Azerbaijani oligarchs’ assets that were stolen from the state and stashed offshore through money laundering schemes. In June 2023, Dr. Ibadoglu established an education foundation in the United Kingdom with the goal of returning the confiscated assets to the people of Azerbaijan through scholarships for students.

Dr. Ibadoglu has been imprisoned in Azerbaijan since 23 July 2023, when he was brutally beaten, arrested, and detained by police authorities on unsubstantiated charges of money counterfeiting and connection to terrorism. Despite the lack of evidence, his pre-trial detention has been extended twice, once on 16 November 2023, and most recently on 15 February 2024. After spending 9 months in a prison facility, on 22 April he was placed under house arrest in Baku and is still waiting for a trial. To date, Dr. Ibadoglu’s contacts with his lawyers and his family have been restricted. His health, already fragile due to diabetes and high blood pressure, has deteriorated significantly in prison because he has been denied proper medical care. He is now at a high risk of having a heart attack and diabetic coma.

Therefore, the UNCAC Coalition and the undersigned organizations and individuals urgently call for the unconditional and immediate release of Dr. Ibadoglu and for him to be given access to the medical care he desperately needs. We also urge the authorities of Azerbaijan – which will also host the UN Climate Change Conference in Baku later this year – to respect their international commitments regarding due process in the administration of justice and human rights, consistent with Articles 9 and 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 9.3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 13 of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

Furthermore, the UNCAC Coalition expresses serious concern for all other human rights defenders, anti-corruption advocates, whistleblowers, journalists and other members of civil society who have been arbitrarily detained or are threatened by government authorities in Azerbaijan and in other countries across the globe. We call upon governments to respect international human rights standards, including the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, in order for civil society to operate without fear of intimidation, harassment, reprisals and persecution. Furthermore, we call upon governments and the international community to step up efforts to protect and defend Dr. Ibadoglu and all other civil society members in Azerbaijan coming under attack for their anti-corruption work.

Sincerely,
Non-Governmental Organizations:

1. Albanian Center for Economic Research (ACER), Albania
2. Action Jeunesse pour le Développement (AJED-Congo), Republic of Congo
3. Access Info, Spain
4. Africa Centre for Open Governance (AfriCOG), Kenya
5. Africa Freedom of Information Centre (AFIC), Uganda
6. Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice (ANEEJ), Nigeria
7. African Centre for Media & Information Literacy, Nigeria
8. ALTAX, Albania
9. Aman Coalition, Palestine
10. Amnesty International, United Kingdom
11. Anti-Corruption Trust of Southern Africa, Zimbabwe
12. ARTICLE 19, United Kingdom
13. Asociación civil JAPIQAY, Memoria y Ciudadanía, Peru
14. Association Burkinabé pour le Développement des Energies Renouvelables (ABDER-BIO-DEV/ Burkina), Burkina Faso
15. Association femme et Action pour le Développement, Guinea
16. Association Guinéenne pour la Transparence, Guinea
17. AWTAD Anti-corruption Organization, Yemen
18. Bahrain Transparency, Bahrain
20. Cameroon Anti Corruption Youths Movement, Cameroon
21. Cameroonian Human Rights League, Cameroon
22. Care for the Physically Challenged and Destitute Foundation (CAPCADF), Nigeria
23. Center for Civil Liberties, Ukraine
24. Center for Peace and Advocacy (CPA), South Sudan
25. Centre de Recherche sur l'Anti-Corruption (CERC), Democratic Republic of the Congo
26. Centre for Development and Democratization of Institutions, Albania
27. Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), Pakistan
28. CiFAR - Civil Forum for Asset Recovery e.V., Germany
29. CISE Malawi, Malawi
30. Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC)/ TI-Nigeria, Nigeria
31. Club Ohada Thies, Senegal
32. Coalition Nationale Publiez Ce Que Vous Payez Guinée, Guinea
33. Community Information and Advocacy Initiative, Nigeria
34. Community Outreach for Development and Welfare Advocacy (CODWA), Nigeria
35. Corner House, United Kingdom
36. Crude Accountability, USA
37. Crudo Transparente, Colombia
38. Derecho Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (DAR), Peru
39. Dialogue and Research Institute (DRI), South Sudan
40. DiXi Group, Ukraine
41. EITI MEXICO, Mexico
42. Family Therapy Association of the Gambia, Gambia
43. Fundación Jubileo, Bolivia
44. Foundation For Environmental Rights, Advocacy & Development (FENRAD NIGERIA) Nigeria
45. Freedom Files, Poland
46. Freedom for Eurasia, Austria
47. Friends of the Earth Australia, Australia
48. Fundación Libertad Ciudadana - Transparency International Panama, Panama
49. Fundación Multitudes, Chile
50. Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo - TI El Salvador, El Salvador
51. Global Actions for Humanity (GOAH), South Sudan
52. Global Witness, United Kingdom
53. Government Accountability Project, USA
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114. Rencontre pour la Paix et les Droits de l’Homme (RPDH), Congo, Republic
115. Repatriation Group International, USA
116. Réseau Nigérien Anti-Corruption, Niger
117. Romanian Academic Society, Romania
118. ROTAB, Niger
119. Rural And Urban Aid for Youth Development Initiatives, Nigeria
120. Rural Initiative for Change, Nigeria
121. Rwenzori Anti Corruption Coalition, Uganda
122. Samata, India
123. Semillas para la Democracia, Paraguay
124. Sensitisation Against Hazard and Crime Initiative, Nigeria
125. Society for the Widows and Orphans, Nigeria
126. Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), Nigeria
127. Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS), Somalia
128. Southern Africa Resource Watch - Coalition Against SLAPPs in Africa (CASA), South Africa
129. Spotlight on Corruption, United Kingdom
130. Stakeholders Alliance for Corporate Accountability, Nigeria
131. Swedish International Liberal Centre (SILC), Sweden
132. Syri i Vizionit, Kosovo
133. Terra-1530, Moldova
134. The Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation, Malta
135. The Financial Accountability and Corporate Transparency Coalition, USA
136. The Lebanese Oil and Gas Initiative-LOGI, Lebanon
137. Transparencia por Colombia, Colombia
138. Transparency and Economic Development Initiative TEDI, Nigeria
139. Transparency International, Germany
140. Transparency International - Initiative Madagascar, Madagascar
141. Transparency International - Macedonia, North Macedonia
142. Transparency International Australia, Australia
143. Transparency International Bangladesh, Bangladesh
144. Transparency International Cambodia, Cambodia
145. Transparency International EU, Belgium
146. Transparency International France, France
147. Transparency International Germany, Germany
148. Transparency International Ireland, Ireland
149. Transparency International New Zealand, New Zealand
150. Transparency International Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone
151. Transparency International Taiwan, Taiwan
152. Transparency International U.S., USA
153. Transparency International Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe
154. Transparency Maroc, Morocco
155. Turkmenistan Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Bulgaria
156. UK Anti-Corruption Coalition, United Kingdom
157. UNCAC Coalition, Austria
158. UNISHKA Research, USA
159. United Action for Democracy, Nigeria
160. Uzbek Forum for Human Rights, Germany
161. Veille Citoyenne Togo, Togo
162. Whistleblowers of America, USA
163. World Dynamics of Young People, Cameroon
164. Yemeni Observatory for Human Rights, Yemen

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225. Sarah Backstrand, USA, Fundraising Associate, Natural Resource Governance Institute
226. Shaazka Beyerle, USA, Author
227. Sihem Bouazza, Tunisia, Radio Director
228. Silas Olan’g, Tanzania, Human Rights Activist
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233. Suzanne Hoff, The Netherlands, International Coordinator, La Strada International
234. Tamika Halwiindi, Zambia, Programme Coordinator - TI Zambia & CSO Board member (alternate) EITI
235. Tara James, USA, Program Coordinator, Rutgers University
236. Thomas de Waal, United Kingdom, Writer and scholar
237. Thomas Prusa, USA, Professor of Economics
238. Tom Devine, USA, Legal director, Government Accountability Project
239. William Field, USA, Rutgers University
240. Zoé Spriet-Mezoued, United Kingdom, Strategic Communications and Campaigns Manager, Publish What You Pay International