



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT ON THE IMPRISONMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST
RASUL JAFAROV AND HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER INTIGAM ALIYEV
IN AZERBAIJAN**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 23 April 2015

Mr Chairman,

We share the concerns expressed by Latvia on behalf of the European Union and by other speakers before me, about the sentencing of human rights activist Rasul Jafarov, to six and a half years in prison, and yesterday's sentencing of the prominent human rights lawyer Intigam Aliyev to seven and a half years in prison.

In statements following these two rulings, we have expressed our growing concern about the situation for democracy and human rights in Azerbaijan.

MFA State Secretary Bård Glad Pedersen described Rasul Jafarov as a courageous and outspoken young pro-democracy activist, underlining that Azerbaijan needs a free and vibrant civil society, not more activists behind bars.

The State Secretary reiterated our particular concern over the situation of imprisoned activists who need medical care, such as Leyla and Arif Yunus.

Foreign Minister Brende stressed that our concern is further deepened by yesterday's ruling against Intigam Aliyev. Both through his contributions to legal education as well as by bringing numerous cases to the European Court of Human Rights, Intigam Aliyev has over many years played a very important role in efforts to strengthen the rule of law in his country.

We again call on Azerbaijan, as a member of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, to stand fully by its commitments and respect fundamental rights. Rule of law must be upheld, and no-one must be imprisoned on the basis of trumped-up charges.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman