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Azerbaijan: Disbarment of human rights lawyer Irada Javadova

On 14 June 2018, human rights lawyer **Irada Javadova** appealed the Presidium of the Bar Association's decision to disbar her. She had been disbarred on 11 June 2018 upon the complaint of one of her clients.

[Irada Javadova](#) has been a member of the Azerbaijani Bar Association for 13 years and has taken on numerous human rights cases. These have included violations of citizens' property rights and violations against political activists and human rights defenders. She is also the former head of NGO "Human Rights Education".

Irada Javadova had raised concerns about the possible arbitrary detention of a client of hers in an open letter, after having received a request from the client's mother to inquire about the whereabouts of her daughter. The disbarment procedure was initiated upon the complaint of this particular client. The complainant stated that Irada Javadova wrote a public letter about her case without her consent and without having a notarised power of attorney, and requested that the Bar Association take action against the human rights defender. On 11 June 2018, the Presidium of the Bar Association announced Irada Javadova's disbarment.

Irada Javadova has denied the allegations, stating that she had an agreement with her client and that she had legitimately defended her and acted within the law. She had submitted the agreement with the complainant to the Bar Association, but her colleagues expressed doubts about the authenticity of the client's signature. On 12 June, she met with the chairman of the Presidium of the Bar Association and presented additional evidence, however she was told that there would be an appeal to Baku Administrative Economic Court No. 1, where she will have the opportunity to defend her rights. Irada Javadova believes that the disciplinary commission was biased and erroneous.

A number of human rights lawyers have seen their bar membership suspended or terminated after publicly raising concerns about possible human rights violations against their clients, including [Khalid Baghirov](#), Aslan Ismayilov, Alaif Hasanov, Elchin Namazov, [Yalchin Imanov](#), Farhad Mehdiyev, Muzaffar Bakhshaliyev, Annaghi Hajibeyli, and [Intigam Aliyev](#). Disciplinary procedures for lawyers in Azerbaijan have been criticised for lacking objectivity, predictability and transparency. In 2017, Irada Javadova was the only member of Presidium of the Bar Association to vote against the disbarment of human rights lawyer Yalchin Imanov. It is believed that she lost her place in the Presidium following her defence of Yalchin Imanov.

Front Line Defenders is concerned about the ongoing judicial and administrative harassment of human rights defenders in Azerbaijan and believes that Irada Javadova's disbarment is an act of retaliation for her peaceful and legitimate work in the defence of human rights in Azerbaijan.

Front Line Defenders urges the Azerbaijani Bar Association to:

1. Immediately lift the suspension of Irada Javadova as it is believed that it is in retaliation for her peaceful and legitimate work in the defence of human rights in Azerbaijan, and ensure that the disciplinary procedures against lawyers are fair, objective, predictable and transparent, and;

The authorities in Azerbaijan to:

2. Abide by the international human rights obligations incumbent upon them along with the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers by respecting the independence of lawyers to freely practice without suffering judicial or administrative harassment and without endangering their livelihoods;

3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Azerbaijan are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.