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FREEDOM NOW

**November 18, 2010  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**VIDEO BLOGGER ADNAN HAJIZADE  
RELEASED FROM PRISON IN AZERBAIJAN;  
*Emin Milli Remains Illegally Imprisoned***

Washington, D.C.: The Azerbaijani government released Adnan Hajizade, an Azeri human rights activist and social media blogger, from his imprisonment today. The government has wrongfully detained Adnan along with his fellow activist, Emin Milli, since July 8, 2009, on “hooliganism” charges. Emin remains illegally imprisoned in violation of international law.

The Baku Appeal Court issued a decision today to release Adnan, overturning the trial court’s refusal to grant Adnan’s petition for mid-term conditional release. Prior to Adnan’s release, many in the international community, including foreign diplomats, appealed to the Azerbaijani government to release Adnan and Emin. Emin is also eligible for mid-term release.

“We welcome Adnan Hajizade’s release from his unjust imprisonment,” said Freedom Now’s Executive Director Maran Turner. “However, we call on President Ilham Aliyev to immediately release Emin Milli, who remains in prison in violation of his right to be free from arbitrary detention and right to freedom of expression.”

Known throughout Baku as a vocal critic of the government, Adnan is a youth leader and active member of civil society. He is a founding member of the OL! Azerbaijani Youth Movement, a non-violent group that promotes youth education and development. Adnan is also a well-known producer of activist videos.

In June 2009, Adnan created and posted a satirical video of a donkey holding a press conference on his personal video blog Internet site and on the OL! video blog Internet site. The video mocks the Azerbaijani government’s purchase of two donkeys for over \$20,000 each, while the government neglects the health care and human rights of its citizens. Emin helped disseminate the video to wider audiences. Both activists were arrested 10 days after the video’s online posting.

On July 8, 2009, Baku police arrested Adnan and Emin after the two activists reported to police that they were attacked by two men in a local restaurant. Upon reporting the crime perpetrated against them, Adnan and Emin were arrested and charged with “hooliganism.” Although Adnan and Emin suffered severe injuries, police refused to provide them adequate medical attention. Following a joint trial that violated international due process standards, Adnan and Emin were convicted and sentenced to two and two and one-half years in prison, respectively. Since April, Adnan had been detained at Azerbaijan’s Prison No. 14 in Guzdek (Gizildash). Emin is detained at Prison No. 5 in Khalaj (Salvan).

Freedom Now, a prisoner of conscience advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C., worked on behalf of Adnan Hajizade, and continues to call for the release of Emin Milli.

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*Our mission is to free prisoners of conscience through focused legal, political and public relations advocacy efforts.*