



Open letter to the Azerbaijani authorities

- Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan Republic (office@pa.gov.az)
- Mr. Teymur Musayev, Ministry of health (health@health.gov.az)
- Mr. Farid Ahmadov, Ministry of Justice (contact@justice.gov.az)

6 March 2025

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the World Medical Association (WMA), the global federation of medical associations representing millions of physicians worldwide, acting for the advancement of good practice, medical ethics and medical accountability internationally.

Our attention has been drawn to the very worrying situation of Mr Ruben Vardanyan, who has been detained in Azerbaijan since September 2023. According to various sources, his conditions of detention are highly questionable with practices contrary to human rights standards and amounting to torture, including prolonged solitary confinement, punishments and deprivation of health care and basic hygiene. The health condition of Mr. Vardanyan is deteriorating rapidly.

The right to health is a basic human right enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which Azerbaijan is a signatory. We urge the Azerbaijani authorities to ensure that Mr. Vardanyan receives the necessary medical attention without delay, in conformity with the [United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners](#), which set clear benchmarks on how to uphold safety, security and human dignity of all prisoners. It is critical that the relationship between physician and prisoners is protected in accordance with the ethical principles of the medical profession, including by promoting high-quality care, patient and physician autonomy, trust and confidentiality.

Furthermore, we call on the Azerbaijani authorities to respect their other international obligations, in particular the right to a fair trial under the International Covenant Civil and Political Rights, and the prohibition of torture and other ill-treatments under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. As Azerbaijan has ratified both conventions, it is therefore bound by these obligations.

We very much hope that the Azerbaijani government will take swift and decisive action to ensure the fundamental human rights of Mr. Vardanyan are fully respected without delay.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Dr Ashok Philip
President of the World Medical Association

Copy: Mr Galib Israfilov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva (geneva@mission.mfa.gov.az)