



For immediate release – 4 August 2009

PRESS RELEASE

**UN: ARTICLE 19 Calls Upon the Azerbaijani Government to
Implement the UN Human Rights Committee's
Recommendations**

ARTICLE 19 welcomes the United Nations Human Rights Committee's recommendations as outlined in its concluding observations on Azerbaijan's implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (the Covenant). ARTICLE 19 urges the Azerbaijani Government to take immediate, concrete measures to implement these recommendations, particularly those related to freedom of expression.

In its concluding observations issued on 3 August, the UN Human Rights Committee urged the Azerbaijani Government to take the necessary measures to put an end to direct and indirect restrictions on freedom of expression.

The Committee's recommendations included bringing defamation legislation into accordance with the Covenant and protecting media workers against attempts on their integrity and life, concerns which ARTICLE 19 had outlined in a written shadow report to the Committee.

The Committee also expressed concern at the recent arrest and detention of individuals who had expressed opinions in non-conventional media, and called upon the Azerbaijani authorities to treat users of non-conventional media in strict compliance with Article 19 of the Covenant.

"The Human Rights Committee's recommendations are spot-on, and we strongly urge the Azerbaijani Government to take them seriously," says Dr Agnès Callamard, Executive Director of ARTICLE 19. "Good first steps would be to decriminalise criminal defamation and to release bloggers Emin Milli and Adnan Hajizade by dropping the politically motivated charges against them."

ARTICLE 19 will monitor the Azerbaijani Government's implementation of these recommendations and all of its freedom of expression commitments as part of our broader efforts to promote freedom of expression in Azerbaijan.

NOTES TO EDITORS

- The full text of the Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee on Azerbaijan's third periodic report submitted under Article 40 of the ICCPR can be accessed at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hrcs96.htm>.

- The full version of the Written Comments of ARTICLE 19: Global Campaign for Free Expression Concerning the Republic of Azerbaijan for Consideration by the United Nations Human Rights Committee at its 96th Session, 13-31 July 2009 is available at <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/press/written-comments-of-article-19-global-campaign-for-free-expression-concernin.pdf>
- For more information please contact: Nathalie Losekoot, Senior Programme Officer, Europe, at: +44 796 985 6069 or nathalie@article19.org
- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works globally to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech. For more information on ARTICLE 19 please visit www.article19.org.