

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

February 6, 2026

The Honorable J.D. Vance
Vice President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

CC: The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Vice President,

As Members of the Virginia delegation, we write in advance of your upcoming travel to Azerbaijan and Armenia. We welcome the Administration's continued high-level engagement with both countries and recognize the importance of sustained U.S. leadership in supporting lasting peace. Recent progress in negotiations offers a meaningful opportunity to reinforce stability, prosperity, and respect for international norms. In that spirit, we respectfully urge you to raise with Azerbaijani leadership serious concerns regarding the treatment of Dr. Gubad Ibadoglu, whose family is based in Virginia, as well as broader human rights issues that bear directly on the durability of any negotiated peace.

Recent diplomatic progress on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict has occurred in parallel to deepening concerns regarding civil society and due process within Azerbaijan. Credible international observers have documented politically motivated prosecutions, restrictions on independent media, and allegations of mistreatment in detention. We are also concerned about the broader population of political prisoners in Azerbaijan, as documented by international human rights organizations and advocacy groups such as the Free Voices Collective.

Dr. Ibadoglu is a respected economist with longstanding ties to the U.S. as an alumnus of multiple U.S. government supported academic exchange programs, including the Fulbright Scholarship at Duke University and the Junior Faculty Development Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Ibadoglu was arrested in Azerbaijan in July 2023, reportedly beaten while in custody, and charged under circumstances widely viewed as politically motivated. Although transferred to house arrest in April 2024, he remains in legal limbo, has been denied a timely trial, and continues to face serious health concerns following inadequate medical care during detention. His treatment has received bipartisan condemnation via Senate Resolution 398, which also calls for his immediate and unconditional release. On behalf of his Virginia-based family, we ask that you raise his case directly with Azerbaijan's

leadership and emphasize that meaningful progress in bilateral relations must include resolution of cases such as his.

Dr. Ibadoglu's case illustrates broader concerns with Azerbaijan's troubling human rights record, as outlined in the Department of State's August 2025 release of Azerbaijan's Country Report on Human Rights Practices. In your engagements with Azerbaijan's leadership, we ask that you to raise this specific case and make clear that meaningful partnership with the United States is strengthened by respect for due process, academic freedom, independent journalism, and the protection of peaceful expression. As the bilateral relationship deepens, including through engagement in the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace process and associated economic and regional development initiatives, we believe that this positive trajectory should create new opportunities for constructive engagement on the release of other unjustly imprisoned individuals, particularly those with a clear nexus to the United States.

Sincerely,



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Eugene Simon Vindman
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress