

## **Other News (1-15 December 2013) Azerbaijan**

### **OKTAY AKHVERDIEV: 2 MILLION PEOPLE IN AZERBAIJAN LIVE BELOW POVERTY LINE**

/Dec 2/Panorama.am/

Despite the rosy assurances of the Azerbaijani officials, about 2 million people in Azerbaijan live below the poverty line. As the portal "Factheber" reports these are the data of the independent Azerbaijani expert Oktay Akhverdiev.

He noted that about 1.3 million pensioners live in Azerbaijan. "About 300,000 people are to be subtracted from this figure, namely civil servants who receive higher pension and pensioners whose children and relatives are helping them. Based on this, about 1 million pensioners are doomed to live by 140-150 manats a month (140-150 euros - Ed.).

For a person to live on an average level he needs at least 300 manats per month," he said.

In addition, Akhverdiev noted that the unemployed are also in the number poor in Azerbaijan, they amount to 400 thousand people. The main problem is that they live in rural areas where the majority of people cannot take up farming as they had once sold their lands, besides there are no enterprises where they could work.

Besides, there are also about 300 thousand people in Azerbaijan with disabilities and other physical limitations. If we take into consideration the poor from other categories of population, it will turn out that about 2 million people in Azerbaijan live in poverty.

These people are unlikely to be able to afford a holiday in any resort area ever in Azerbaijan, not to mention trips to the neighboring countries; they are unlikely to improve their health in health resorts.

The expert noted that Azerbaijan is a small country with huge incomes, and for that reason the number of the poor could be much less.

### **GREEN MOVEMENT: AZERBAIJAN IS TURNING INTO A GARBAGE DUMP**

/Dec 2/Panorama.am/

"The dirtiest places in Baku are far from the center. In neighborhoods of Ahmedly, Guneshli and other outskirts of Baku; there is a lot of garbage especially near the metro stations, bus stops and in residential areas," Farida Huseynova Chairman of Green Movement in Azerbaijan told the newspaper "Echo".

According to her, sometimes they simply take all the trash and burn in Azerbaijan, and this, strongly pollutes the air. Almost all the suburbs, and the outskirts have turned into landfills.

"The thing is that when the trash is taken out, it is transported in open trucks, and when it is thrown into the dump outside the city, it gets stuck to the trees. Among other things, this situation worsens the aesthetic scene. In the city center the yardman clean the streets definitely, while outside the city there are few of them," Huseynova notes.

In this way, according to the chairman of the Green Movement, Azerbaijan turns into a garbage dump. And only population itself can solve this problem. If people do not understand, then only fines can help.

Last year the capital Baku and the Azerbaijani city of Sumgait were included in the list of the most polluted cities in the world.

### **Green Movement: Azerbaijan is turning into a garbage dump**

/Dec 2/Panorama.am/

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### **Oktay Akhverdiev: 2 million people in Azerbaijan live below poverty line**

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### **Iranian ambassador to Baku: Azerbaijani MPs in Istanbul discuss issues concerning collapse in Iran**

/Dec 4/Panorama.am/

'Azerbaijani deputies in Istanbul discussed issues concerning collapse in Iran,' Mohsen Pak Ayeen, the ambassador of Iran to Azerbaijan stated as the official site of the embassy reports.

The ambassador of Iran in the interview given to Eslami Sesi news agency expressed his concern about the conferences with anti-Iranian content and noted in particular, 'A conference was held last month in Istanbul, where discussions were held on collapse in Iran. MPs of Azerbaijani Parliament have participated in this conference with anti-Iranian content.'

## **Freedom House: Azerbaijan is on wrong track persecuting journalists and civil society activists**

/Dec 5/Panorama.am/

Azerbaijan is on the wrong path because the authorities of the republic show zero respect for human rights, stated the Freedom House president David Kramer speaking in front of the audience of Johns Hopkins University at Washington, reports the Azerbaijani news agency Turan.

According to him after the Azerbaijani presidential campaign, senior American officials headed to Baku to discuss the prospect of the bilateral relations and the ways forward. After hesitation over recognizing the results of the elections, it seems, that the international community is resigning itself to dealing with the ruling regime in Azerbaijan, Kramer stated.

As the Freedom House president notes, one of the US officials who is traveling to Azerbaijan this week said in our recent meetings that they should put the elections behind: 'In my view, that's a big mistake, because I would argue that Ilham Aliyev doesn't have legitimacy, that he could have, had he permitted free and fair elections.'

According to him, backing the OSCE assessment to the October 9 vote which declared it not 'free and fair', the Obama administration fiercely debated how to respond to the election, with some officials favoring a strong condemnation of the results. The White House ultimately settled on a tempered statement on November 8, emphasizing the mutual partnership between the two countries would achieve its "full potential" if Azerbaijan bolstered democratic reforms "to deepen respect for the universal freedoms of association, assembly, and expression; to promote political pluralism and judicial independence; and to strengthen the electoral system."

"We've seen the worse crackdown against civil society, against journalists. In particular what they've done to one RFE'RL journalist and imprisoning opposition figures,' he said.

As Kramer notes, if the Azerbaijani authorities continue this crack-down, people in Azerbaijan would feel that they don't have any choices and options but to resort to more extremist options, which isn't in the interest of the authorities. Speaking about the reasons behind human rights declining in the region, Kramer said, the problem is in the corrupted increasingly authoritarian leaders, who 'are essentially focused on staying in power at any cost.'

On October 9 presidential election were held in Azerbaijan during which incumbent President Ilham Aliyev received 84.5% of votes. Jamil Hasanli, a single candidate from the opposition National Council of Democratic Forces, was on the second place. He scored 5.53% of the vote. The joint statement of the ODIHR / OSCE observation mission and the Parliamentary Assembly, noted that the presidential elections were held in Azerbaijan in terms of restriction of freedom of speech and assembly. In its turn, the Minister for European Affairs David Lidington stated that the British Foreign Ministry shares the OSCE / ODIHR's opinion that the presidential elections held in Azerbaijan failed to meet the commitments with OSCE. Opinion of the OSCE and the United Kingdom are also divided the U.S. Department of State.

## **Azerbaijani researcher claims that Nostradamus predicted Heydar Aliyev's coming to power**

/Dec 6/Panorama.am/

Even if Nostradamus didn't arrive to Azerbaijan, he still could see what would happen in Azerbaijani Gazakh region and Baku city, Azerbaijani scientist Ghazanfar Pashaev, who for 10 years carefully studied the life and work of the famous French astrologer Nostradamus, stated in an interview with the Azerbaijani news agency "Anspress."

In 2007 Pashayev published a book called "World of Wonders", which tells about Nostradamus and his predictions.

According to the scientist, the book also contains predictions of Nostradamus about Azerbaijan.

"There will come a time when in an Eastern country a person will come to power who will save the country from destruction and will pass the power to his son. I studied for a long time and came to the conclusion that he meant Heydar Aliyev and his son Ilham Aliyev," says the Azerbaijani scientist.

The book also notes that in 2015 Russia will become a great State, but only at the price of blood.

### **IWPR: 2013, Year full of Abuses for Journalists in Azerbaijan** /Dec 6/Aysor.am/

`Human right activists and political opposition of Azerbaijan say that the abuses carried out in 2013 in Azerbaijan have thus far exceeded the number of previous years', the article on the official site of the Institute for War and Peace reads.

The article states that in 2013 a large number of journalists, activists and representatives of political opposition were arrested in Azerbaijan. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International report that 2013 was a 'tough year' for journalists of Azerbaijan. Large numbers of journalists were arrested in the country, meanwhile during the whole year no one has been punished for beating a journalist.

The author states that it was a year full of protests and demonstrations, which started in January when the Azerbaijani society was protesting against the deaths of soldiers in Azerbaijani army. The activists, the participants of the demonstrations were arrested and sent to trial.

`The Press don't have an access to those trials. No one is allowed to observe them. The judges reject all the applications of the defense', said the head of Human Rights Club Rasul Jafarov.

`Before and after the election, neither opposition groups nor anyone else was accorded their right to freedom of assembly. The treatment of anyone who organized actions that the government didn't agree with was very harsh,' Miralim Huseynov, the head of the Study of Democracy Group told IWPR.

Asabali Mustafayev, head of the Democracy and Human Rights centre stated that `The persecution is so widespread and frequent that it's difficult to assess just how bad the current situation really is,'

As opposition candidate Hasanli says, `In the history of Azerbaijan, we have never seen so many political prisoners in an election year. There are now more than 140 political prisoners.'

The author sums up the article saying that such restrictions are nothing new in Azerbaijan.

### **European Commissioner Füle: Azerbaijan has a lot to do in areas such as human rights and corruption eradication**

/Dec 10/Panorama.am/

EU calls on Azerbaijan to respect its international commitments in regard of fundamental freedoms and human rights, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Átefan Füle said at the Cooperation Council between Azerbaijan and the European Union in Brussels, reports the official site of the European Commission.

`There is still a lot to be done by Azerbaijan in areas such as freedom of the media, freedom of assembly, freedom of association,' he noted.

According to the Commissioner it is equally important to bring electoral legislation in line with the recommendations of the OSCE/ ODIHR. At the same time Füle stressed that this needs to happen soon so that Azerbaijan can deliver fair and transparent municipal elections next year and parliamentary elections in 2015.

`There is also important work to be done to address corruption,' he noted and added that in all these areas, Azerbaijan can count on the EU's support.

### **Human Rights Club: there is widespread and systematic human rights violation in Azerbaijan**

/Dec 10/Panorama.am/

Azerbaijan marks International Human Rights Day, with 142 political prisoners, and they must be released, the statement of the Human Rights Club read, issued on the occasion of World Human Rights Day. As the Azerbaijani news agency Turan reports the statement expresses deep concerns about the widespread and systematic violations of human rights in Azerbaijan.

The statement noted increasing pressure on independent NGOs, and more than 1,000 NGOs are unable to obtain state registration. At the same time the Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center (EMDSC) is being prosecuted for having conducted the monitoring of the presidential election in Azerbaijan.

The statement also contains an appeal to the international community to demand from the Azerbaijani authorities a respect for their international obligations in the field of human rights. This is especially important on the eve of the country's chairmanship in the CE's Committee of Ministers in May 2014.

### **Iranian embassy in Baku calls on Azerbaijani MPs to learn lessons from Saddam Hussein's destiny**

/Dec 11/Panorama.am/

`The Iranian embassy in Baku has criticized the anti-Iranian expression of the Azerbaijani MP,' the Iranian ISNA news agency reports.

The spokesman of the Iranian embassy to Azerbaijan Seyyed Mohammad Ayatollahi has touched upon the Azerbaijani MP Rafael Husseynov's anti-Iranian expression and has noted in particular, `Those who voice baseless thoughts over Iran should learn lessons from destiny of Saddam Hussein.'

The correspondent of the Iranian source adds, `Rafael Husseynov has expressed insidious and separatist thoughts about Iran in an article published in Azerbaijani `525' newspaper, putting under suspicion the territorial integrity of Iran.'

The ambassador of Iran in the interview given to Eslami Sesi news agency expressed his concern about the conferences with anti-Iranian content and noted in particular, `A conference was held last month in Istanbul, where discussions were held on collapse in Iran. MPs of Azerbaijani Parliament have participated in this conference with anti-Iranian content.'

### **Skirmishes took place in Sumgait between Wahhabis and Azerbaijani security forces: some people were injured**

/Dec 12/Panorama.am/

The skirmishes between armed groups and the police took place in Azerbaijani town Sumgait. As the Azerbaijani news agency `APA' reports the skirmish occurred in the 10th district of the town, near `Soltan' market. Extra police forces were deployed to the place of the incident. As a result of the shootings some of the members of the armed group were wounded. The police cordoned off the scene of action.

The agency also reports the names of the injured. Those are Anar Rahimov (1982), Elmar Mamedli (1976) and Elnur Nazaraliev (1988). As the reanimation doctor of Sumgait City Hospital Nadir Tekveli said the people who were brought to the hospital had severe wounds. He assessed their condition to be moderately serious.

`APA' notes that the operation was carried out by the representatives of the Ministry of National Defense and by the Police of Sumgait. On its turn, the Azerbaijani portal `Haqqin.az' reports that the shooting took place between the security forces and Wahhabis. Another shooting occurred on 16th of October between the police and an armed group, whom media named `Wahhabis'. On that day the Azerbaijani police under the suspicion of robbery detained Edik Rustamov, a resident of the town Gusar. Rustamov led them into the woods to show the place where the money was hidden. A skirmish broke out in the wood in which the mayor of the police Galib Aliyev was killed. Other police officers, Mevlud Aliyev, Jamil Nasirov and the deputy head of Police station of Gusar Mohamed Ibrahimov were wounded. After that the Azerbaijani security forces started a special operation against the participants of the skirmish. As a result all the suspects died. The Azerbaijani forces assure that the suspects blew themselves up by grenades.

### **European Parliament called on Azerbaijan to reconsider its decision on withdrawal from ``Euronest'' parliamentary assembly**

/Dec 12/Panorama.am/

European Parliament urges the Azerbaijani parliament to reconsider its decision to freeze participation in the EURONEST parliamentary assembly, says the resolution of Eastern Partnership adopted today in the frameworks of plenary session, the site of European Parliament reports. Azerbaijan came to this decision after the EP's criticism of the conduct of the presidential elections.

European Parliament also voices concerns about detentions, fresh arrests of opposition activists, and harassment of independent NGOs and media.

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### **Outflow of 'dirty' money from Azerbaijan since 2002 to 2011 amounted to \$ 17 billion**

/Dec 13/Panorama.am/

About \$17 billion of capital of dubious origin was exported from Azerbaijan between 2002 and 2011, the study of the International Institute of Global Financial Integrity reports.

On average during this period annual outflow of money from the country amounted to \$ 1.7 billion. According to this index, which includes 144 countries, Azerbaijan is on the 44th place in the rating of the organization.

The study showed that between 2002 and 2011 about \$6 trillion was stolen from the developing countries. The major exporters of illicit capital were rated China (\$ 107.56 billion), Russia (\$ 88.10 billion), Mexico (\$ 46.19 bln.), Malaysia (\$ 37.04 billion), India (\$ 34.39 bln.).

In 2011, the losses of the developing countries have increased by 13.7% to \$ 946.7 billion compared to 2010, the document says. And the "champion" of the illegal outflow of capital in 2011 became Russia (\$191.14 billion).

## **RUSSIA AND TURKEY STARTED ARMING AZERBAIJAN TOGETHER**

/Dec 16/Story from Lragir.am News/

New developments are observed in the Russian-Turkish military cooperation that cause concerns and prove again that Russia has always supported and promoted pan-Turkism for its own designs.

Next year Turkey will supply to Azerbaijan self-propelled artillery systems (ACS) T -155 FÄrtÄna.

The contract envisages delivery of 36 units of ACS.

Information about this organization was distributed by a Turkish engineering and chemical industry (MKE).

Currently the engines produced in Russia are being testing. If the test is successful, the engines will be installed on howitzers and transferred to Azerbaijan. According to the contract, 36 self-propelled howitzers will be sent to Azerbaijan.

Recall that the contract between the two countries was signed in 2011.

However, the German MTU company which produces motors for howitzers, has imposed an embargo on the sale of motors to Azerbaijan because of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and the implementation of the contract has been put off.

This proves that the Russian Federation is continuously developing its military cooperation with Turkey that may cause instability in the Middle East and the Caucasus.