

July 17, 2009

His Excellency Ilham Aliyev

President of Azerbaijan

(sent via website: <http://www.president.az/index.php?lang=en> and through Azeri Embassy)

Dear President Aliyev:

We, a group of professors at the University of Richmond, respectfully express our concerns about, and call your attention to, the recent beating and arrest of Adnan Hadjizadeh and *Emin Milli*, two promising young Azeris.

Mr. Hadjizadeh graduated from the University of Richmond in 2005 with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science; he was on a full scholarship – a testament of our belief in his promise and his country's future. As Adnan's former teachers, we remember fondly Adnan's time here as a student. At the University of Richmond, faculty and students forge a close bond and we take personal interests in our students. We firmly believe young people with progressive ideas are important for a better future. We also remember him as an outstandingly polite and respectful gentleman; it is hard to imagine he would engage in acts of "hooliganism."

We are thus disturbed by the recent news about their travails and are very concerned about their fate. We believe that it is important for the Azeri authorities to ensure the due process of law and protect the rights and safety of individuals. A thorough investigation into the incidents on July 8 involving violence against them and a fair and expeditious trial would also be helpful.

Since this case has attracted international attention, its resolution may have an impact on the scholarly exchanges between Azerbaijan and the United States. We appreciate your attention and help on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

*(Electronic signatures)*

Vincent Wei-cheng Wang, Chair and Associate Professor of Political Science

Sheila Carapico, Professor of Political Science

Michele Cox, Director of International Programs

Uliana Gabara, Dean and Carole M. Weinstein Chair of International Education

Raymond Hilliard, Professor of English

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all at the University of Richmond