



Helge Lund
BP p.l.c.
1 St James's Square
London SW1Y 4PD

13 March 2025

Subject: Case of Dr. Gubad Ibadoghlu

Dear Mr. Lund,

We are a group of concerned UK parliamentarians writing to raise the case of Dr. Gubad Ibadoghlu, and the arbitrary detention and human rights abuses carried out against him by the Azerbaijani government.

On 23 July 2023, Dr. Gubad Ibadoghlu, a distinguished London School of Economics (LSE) academic and anti-corruption campaigner, was dragged from his car in Baku and arrested on spurious charges. During the assault, his wife was also beaten and injured. Dr. Ibadoghlu himself has been in indefinite detention ever since, awaiting a trial that has been continuously postponed. While being kept in this purgatorial state, he has been denied essential medical treatment; as a sufferer of diabetes and heart conditions, this neglect could prove fatal at any moment.

We, the undersigned parliamentarians, are writing to you because BP enjoys a level of power in Azerbaijan that is unmatched by any other UK institution, and with that power comes clear corporate social responsibility. BP is the largest foreign direct investor by a long way, and we understand it plans to invest a further \$11 billion (£8.5 billion) between now and 2050¹ on exploring new extractive fields in the country. At a September 2024 ceremony to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of former President Heydar Aliyev, BP recommitted to “a long-term partnership” with the government of Azerbaijan. We understand that you personally attended this ceremony.²

BP’s significant influence in Azerbaijan stems from its decades of shrewd investment, not to mention the resolute support of every UK Government since Azerbaijan first came to exist in its current form. **We therefore urge you to use your unique position of power to raise human rights abuses like the case of Dr. Ibadoghlu with the government of Azerbaijan.** Dr. Ibadoghlu must be released from house arrest and allowed to leave Azerbaijan to receive medical treatment. Given Dr. Ibadoghlu’s medical condition, we urge you to act swiftly, as any delay could result in a tragic outcome.

As a further incentive to act, we would note that Dr. Ibadoghlu has played his own part in BP reaching its venerated position in Azerbaijan. He worked closely with BP within the framework of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) for 12 years. In this role, he tried to counter corruption risks in the Azeri extractive industry – which would have had the result of increasing BP’s long-term profit. He conducted seminars for BP employees on family budgeting, and attended BP Sustainability Report presentations for nine years. He also served as a civil society representative on the EITI Board for six years from 2013 to 2019.³

The ethical, political and corporate reasons for acting in this case are therefore very clear.

We would be very pleased to discuss these matters with you further, or to provide you with more information, should you require.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Powell MP
Phil Brickell MP
Lloyd Hatton MP
Alex Sobel MP
Cat Eccles MP
Rachel Blake MP
Blair McDougall MP
Marie Rimmer MP
Lord Alton of Liverpool
Brendan O'Hara MP
Chris Law MP
Baroness D'Souza
Ellie Chowns MP
Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP
Sir John Whittingdale MP
Sir Julian Lewis MP
Kirsty Blackman MP
Baroness Lister of Burtersett
Rachael Maskell MP
Sarah Olney MP
Siân Berry MP
John McDonnell MP

[1] Charlie Cooper, 'Britain Hugs Oil Giant BP While Preaching Climate Action' (Politico, 11 November 2024) <https://www.politico.eu/article/bp-fossil-fuel-oil-gas-keir-starmer-cop29-baku-azerbaijan/> accessed 12 March 2025.

[2] 'Ilham Aliyev Received Chair of BP Board' (President of Azerbaijan, 20 September 2023) <https://president.az/en/articles/view/61106> accessed 12 March 2025).

[3] Rt Hon Helen Clark, 'Statement from the EITI Board Chair on the Continued Detention of Mr. Gubad Ibadoghlu' (EITI, 19 March 2024) <https://eiti.org/news/statement-eiti-board-chair-continued-detention-mr-gubad-ibadoghlu> accessed 12 March 2025.

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