

# Caucasus ELECTIONSWATCH

A weekly review of elections related processes in the Caucasus Region

13 November 2012

## Armenian Opposition proposes transition to Parliamentary Republic.

**Ahead of next year's presidential elections in Armenia it is not yet clear who the contestants are going to be. But as Karina Gould reports for CEW the debate is shifting from personalities to process as radical new ideas for constitutional changes are proposed.**

The Prosperous Armenia Party (PAP), the second largest faction in the Armenian National Assembly, while it has not confirmed whether it will be fielding a candidate in next year's February Presidential election has indicated what kind of candidate it would support.

Such a candidate, party spokesperson Naira Zohrabyan said, would be a "technical" president, willing to embark on the tough road of political reform seeking to implement a completely list-based proportional representation (PR) system for parliament, eradicating the single-mandate constituencies, and moving from a presidential to a parliamentary form of government in an effort to curtail the sweeping powers of the President in Armenia. Zohrabyan also mentioned that after touring the regions to get a feel for the political sentiments, its likely that PAP leader Gagik Tsarukyan – though the media continues to speculate about the candidature prospects of former Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian, currently under investigation on charges of money-laundering.

As it stands, the executive powers of the President of the Republic of Armenia are far-reaching. According to an International Crisis Group report following the May 2012 parliamentary elections, the current constitution, adopted in 2005, "gives the president strong executive powers." The president nominates and appoints the prime minister and the cabinet, the prosecutor general, judges and the president of the Central Bank, who are then approved by parliament. However, the report notes that parliamentary oversight is, at best, "weak." It is noteworthy that most legislation comes directly from the office of the President, with parliament acting more as a rubber stamp approving the President's decisions rather than holding the executive to account. The president enjoys direct control over the army, police, national security service and the justice system.

The idea of parliamentary reform is by no means a new one in Armenia. In fact, opposition parties such as the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), the Armenian National Congress (ANC) and the Heritage Party have long advocated for parliamentary reform and have all expressed their support for the PAP suggestion, leading political analysts in Armenia to speculate that this might be a broad enough policy proposal to unite the opposition forces behind a single candidate to compete against incumbent President and Republican Party of Armenia candidate Serzh Sargsyan. Apart from Heritage Party leader, Raffi Hovannisian, no other candidates have officially emerged so far.

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**The VII Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was held in Baku from 6-9 November 2012. In the run-up to the event, local and international human rights watchdog organisations have voiced concerns about freedom of expression online in Azerbaijan. Marion Kipiani followed the event and spoke to some of the participants. Read her report on pages 4 and 5.**

**After less than three weeks since the opening of the new session of the Georgian Parliamentary following the 1 October elections, the opposition has started a boycott of parliament sessions. Karina Gould examines why on page 7.**

Caucasus Elections Watch is a specialised weekly publication focusing on elections related processes in the Caucasus, with news and analysis compiled by experts with long experience of the region.

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## Kutaisi

**The Committees on European Integration, Foreign Relations and Defence and Security of the Georgian Parliament held a joint sitting on 9 November to consider the 2013 State Budget. The Committee hearing was held in camera. David Ebralidze, Deputy Minister of Finance and the Parliamentary Secretary presented the country's main financial document.**

He introduced the main parameters and priorities of the budget to the Committee members.

According to the draft budget, the 2013 state budget's amounts to 8,730 million GEL. It is proposed to allocate 670 million GEL to Defence sphere, 76 million GEL to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and 869 million GEL to public order and security.

MPs were told that the priority for next year's budget is the social sphere.

Members of the parliamentary opposition did not participate in the discussion of the draft budget. ■

## Yerevan

**Armenia's National Assembly on 12 November rejected three laws that had been proposed by opposition members.**

The bills related to the Harsnaqar case, creation of anti-corruption commission and increase in pensions.

The MPs did not back the bill authored by Heritage party MPs Zaruhi Postnajyan and Ruben Hakobyan on creation of an ad hoc commission to study the cases of crimes by high ranking current or former officials. The bill is connected with the case of severe beating of military doctors in Harnsaqar restaurant on June 17, 2012 that caused the death of one of them and death of Poghos Poghosyan killed by a bodyguard of a former president in a café in 2001.

The bill was backed by 41 MPs, while the majority (62 MPs) voted against it.

Another bill initiated by the same MPs and relating to corruption and the creation of an anti-corruption ad hoc commission was backed by 35 MPs while 70 voted against and 1 abstained.

The parliament voted against the Armenian National Congress (ANC) opposition bloc's bill authored by faction's MP Hrant Bagratyan on raising the amounts of all pensions. Forty-five MPs voted against whilst forty three members voted for the bill. ■

## Baku

**Azerbaijan on 12 November marked Constitution Day. The Constitution of independent Azerbaijan was adopted in a referendum on November 12, 1995.**



The constitution adopted in 1995 is the first Constitution of independent Azerbaijan and the fourth constitution of the republic. Azerbaijan People's Republic failed to adopt the main law of the state in 1918-1920. The history of Azerbaijan's Constitution began during the Soviet period. The first Constitution of Azerbaijan was adopted in the 1st All-Azerbaijani Congress of Councils on May 19, 1921. The Constitution of Azerbaijan SSR edited in accordance with the USSR Constitution 1921 was adopted in the 4th All-Azerbaijani Congress of Councils on March 14, 1925. The last Constitution of Azerbaijan SSR adopted on April 21, 1978 had also been complied with the USSR Constitution.

After Azerbaijan gained its independence a special commission was set up under the leadership of President Heydar Aliyev. The first Constitution of independent Azerbaijan was adopted in a referendum on November 12, 1995.

The Constitution consists of 12 chapters and 158 articles. Annexes and amendments were made to the Constitution in a referendum in August, 2002 and in March, 2009. In controversial changes in 2009 President the restriction on the term that can be served by the president was removed, enabling the present incumbent, who has already been elected for two terms, to contest the next election in October 2013.

The Constitutional Court of Azerbaijan Republic was established on July 14, 1998. ■

## Armenian Opposition proposes transition to Parliamentary Republic.

“One can only welcome [the] PAP’s coming to the same conviction,” noted Vahan Hovhannisyan, a Member of Parliament of the ARF, recalling that the ARF has always advocated for PR electoral reform as well as a stronger parliament. “Naturally,” he said, “consultation with them [the PAP] around this issue [is] possible.” The ARF in addition to parliamentary reform hopes that the dialogue initiated by the PAP could include reserving leadership opportunities for opposition parties in the Civil Service Council, State Commission for the Protection of Economic Competition and the Public Services Regulatory Commission, in order to dilute the power of the executive.

Armen Martirosyan, Vice-Chairman of the Heritage party, also expressed his party’s interest in the proposed reform, “especially [since] we ourselves have repeatedly spoken in favour of this reform and even came up with a relevant legislative initiative during the last session of parliament.”

The ANC has also expressed its interest in furthering discussions with the PAP and hopes that these talks will lead to “a broader programme of real mechanisms and steps for the consolidation of political and public forces against the ruling regime.” Proposed reforms by the ANC include, joint mechanisms of no confidence votes, rallies to support civil engagement, and a plan to tackle corruption.

The governing Republican Party of Armenia (RPA), however, has been less receptive to the proposed amendments, calling the PAP suggestion “short-sighted” and “politically motivated.”

Eduard Sharmazanov, RPA spokesperson, alluded that the reforms are coming from former President Robert Kocharyan, who “simply [wishes] to come to power.” Sharmazanov continued that “the true faces of real players will be revealed shortly.”

Kocharyan, who some believe to be the force behind the PAP and suspect to have had a role in the PAP’s decision following the May

2012 parliamentary elections to withdraw support for the RPA, has remained silent on the issue.

The PAP, on the other hand, has been quick to come back and defend its motivations.

“That decision,” confirmed Zohrabyan to RFE/RL’s Armenian service, “was entirely ours.” “It’s up to the Republican Party to decide whether to participate in discussions,” she added.

So far all four opposition parties (though the PAP prefers to refer to its party as a political “alternative” rather than an “opposition party”) have begun to conduct discussions and consultations about what exactly political reform in Armenia would like and by when. The ARF has suggested they would be interested in seeing reforms initiating in late 2015, whereas the PAP are proposing full transition in 2017.

Either way, the proposal appears to be laying the framework for both positive political discussion and perhaps even a platform on which the non-government parties can find common ground, moving towards the possibility of nominating a single candidate to run against incumbent President Sargsyan.

Uniting behind a single candidate, however, is not necessarily an easy task as the PAP, ARF, ANC, and Heritage parties all have different ideas as to what and when electoral reform should be. Moreover, the heritage party has already announced that its leader will enter the presidential race, which might represent a challenge if other candidates present themselves from the remaining three parties, especially as the PAP, though they have yet to announce a candidate, has alluded to the “technical” presidential candidate of 2013 coming from within their ranks. ■

Report prepared by Karina Gould for CEW with additional reporting from RFE/RL and Armenianow.com.



# The state of the Internet what impact on the ele

**The VII Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was held in Baku from 6-9 November 2012. In the run-up to the event, local and international human rights watchdog organisations have voiced concerns about freedom of expression online in Azerbaijan. Marion Kipiani followed the event and spoke to some of the participants.**

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is an annual meeting convened by the United Nations Secretary-General, bringing together governments, civil society and other stakeholders to discuss public policy issues related to the internet. This year's IGF, hosted in Baku from 6 to 9 November 2012, focused on the role of Internet governance in promoting development.

In addressing greetings to the participants of the IGF, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev said his government was paying special attention to the development of information and communication technologies (ICTs). The President in his statement said Azerbaijan was respecting the freedom of the Internet, as shown by a number of Internet-based radio and TV stations, electronic newspapers and magazines, and the availability of social networks. The statement further noted that thousands of bloggers in Azerbaijan were freely engaging in their activity online.

Local and international human rights watchdog organisations begged to differ. In a briefing paper released just days before the start of the IGF, Human Rights Watch (HRW) noted a "shrinking space for media freedom" in Azerbaijan. The government of Azerbaijan, HRW says in the briefing paper, has a "worsening record on freedom of expression, online and offline." The paper details the cases of eight journalists and three human-rights defenders who are currently serving prison sentences, as well as cases of intimidation and harassment of independent journalists and civil society activists. HRW further states that the Azerbaijani authorities are misusing narcotic and defamation charges to silence criticism and unduly restrict the right of assembly. Giorgi Gogia, a senior South Caucasus researcher with HRW said in press statement that in order to fully realize the Internet's potential for human development, "Azerbaijan should protect its citizens' ability to express themselves online and off without fear of reprisal."

Fear of reprisals and the effects it can have on freedom of expression online was among the major concerns addressed by a pre-event to the IGF entitled "Human Rights and Internet Governance Must Go Hand-in-Hand". The pre-event was

organised on 5 November by the Expression Online Initiative, a coalition of non-governmental organisations comprising the Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety (IRFS), Human Rights Club (HRC) and the Azerbaijan Media Centre (AMC), and featured United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression Frank La Rue, as well as speakers from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and international NGOs Freedom House and Index on Censorship. The Expression Online Initiative launched during this event their report on the state of Internet freedom in Azerbaijan entitled "Searching for Freedom: Online Expression in Azerbaijan".

In presenting the key findings of the report, IRFS Director Emin Huseynov said that even though in Azerbaijan the use of filtering to block websites is not widespread, the country does have "Internet dissidents". Mr Huseynov drew attention to the fact that journalists, human rights defenders and bloggers are being imprisoned for their online activities, and that this leads to the establishment of self-censorship in Azerbaijan. The IRFS Director also noted the poor quality of the Internet infrastructure in Azerbaijan, particularly in the regions. He told the event audience that these infrastructural problems could be solved by the government within one year, if only there were sufficient political will to do so.

Dunja Mijatović, the OSCE's Special Representative on Freedom of the Media, said in her keynote speech at the pre-event that it was not admissible anymore to divide freedom of expression into its online and "offline" aspects. "The Internet is not only a virtual space. It is already an important part of our lives. [...] Freedom of expression has no boundaries," Ms Mijatović told the audience. She noted as positive what she called an "open door" policy of the government of Azerbaijan and the readiness of the authorities to resolve problems, as exemplified by the recent release of several journalists and online activists from detention. Nevertheless, Ms Mijatović also emphasised that there are still journalists and bloggers imprisoned in Azerbaijan and that the arrest, physical harassment and any other form of pressure on journalists is absolutely inadmissible.

In comments to Caucasus Elections Watch Razi Nurullayev, Chairman of Board at "Region" International Analytical Centre (RIAC) and Deputy-chairperson for Foreign Affairs of the opposition Popular Front Party of Azerbaijan noted that despite

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**The 2012 Internet Governance Forum in Baku. (Photo: Mehman Huseynov).**

the absence of massive gross violations of Internet freedom in Azerbaijan, specific persons who are politically and socially active are under surveillance. In addition, the websites of media critical to the government may suffer attacks. In this respect Mr Nurullayev mentioned the case of the opposition newspaper “Azadliq”, the online presence of which has been attacked several times. (The bank accounts of “Azadliq” were frozen last week in order to recover a fine imposed on the paper in a pending libel case brought by the son of the transport minister of Azerbaijan, Ziya Mammadov.)

Rebecca Vincent, the coordinator of the International Partnership Group for Azerbaijan (IPGA) for Article 19 and a co-author of the Expression Online Initiative’s report, told CEW that cases of targeting of online activists are likely to have a chilling effect on freedom of expression online in the run-up to the presidential elections of October 2013. She noted that such cases usually become more frequent during politically sensitive times, citing recent experiences from the wave of protests in Azerbaijan in March and April 2011 following the Arab spring and around the Eurovision Song Contest in Baku in May 2012. Ms Vincent said human rights defenders in Azerbaijan feared that harassment and detention of online activists could again become more widespread in the pre-election environment.

Any such attacks would definitely have a big impact on campaigning and the voting process, said Arastun Orujlu, Director of the East-West Research Centre think-tank in Baku, because the Internet is rapidly evolving as the most popular information source in the country and remains one of the few spaces of freedom of expression. This view was echoed by Anar Mammadli, Chairman of the Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Centre. Mr



Mammadli told CEW in a comment that the Internet has turned into an alternative space for election campaigning in Azerbaijan particularly after the 2010 parliamentary elections. Former election candidates, political parties and civic groups have since developed new media strategies for their public outreach activities during the election process.

However, these strategies are being hampered by the problems identified in the Expression Online Initiative’s report, especially by pressure exerted on social media activists through state organs and the low speed of dial-up Internet connections in the regions, which makes the upload and download of materials difficult. Nevertheless, Mr Mammadli said, the Internet will be playing a vital role for election watchdog groups in Azerbaijan in the context of the 2013 elections. Social media will be giving these groups increased opportunity to communicate with voters to receive evidence on the violation of electoral standards during voter registration, the pre-election campaign and on voting day. In addition, they will be used to recruit volunteer election observers as well as bloggers and citizen journalists for civic watchdog processes, and to distribute information on election monitoring and voter education materials.

The state of the Internet in Azerbaijan therefore will be a crucial determinant of how voters in Azerbaijan will form their electoral choices, of how contenders will be able to bring across their messages, and of what impact election watchdogs can have on the voting environment. With the spotlight of the Internet Governance Forum now receding, both international and local stakeholders will need to keep up their efforts of defending freedom of expression online. ■

Report prepared for CEW by Marion Kipiani

# UNM parliamentarians walk out of legislature in protest.

**All 59 of the United National Movement (UNM) Members of Parliament walked out of the Georgian Parliament on 8 November in protest of the arrest of three senior defence officials (see story in this issue) on allegations of abuse and what they deem an unnecessary tax audit of the Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB).**

David Bakradze, parliamentary leader of the UNM, told journalists on Thursday that his party would not work under the hostile conditions imposed by the Georgian Dream administration.

After staging the walk out on Thursday, Bakradze stated that the UNM was suspending its work in parliament given the “current conditions” in which “the authorities are trying to establish control over the military and the televisions.” He did not specify under which circumstances the UNM parliamentarians would return.

UNM lawmakers accuse the Ivanishvili administration of political motivations in these two developments, stating that the Georgian Dream fabricated the charges laid against the chief of staff of the military to put their own candidate in place. A charge which the government denies.

With regard to the tax audit, UNM lawmakers say this has been in development ever since the campaign.

“I clearly remember the threatening tone which the current Prime Minister used, when he was talking with journalists saying that they will have to change their rhetoric. I think that it is the beginning of his revenge,” said UNM member Maia Nadirashvili.

Davit Darchiashvili supported his UNM colleague stating that, “The government is overstepping its legal rights and is trying to interfere in the administration of GPB.”

President Mikheil Saakashvili, in a televised address on Wednesday, went so far as to call the audit “completely unacceptable” and “a threat directed against free media.”

The audit, which the GPB said was initially scheduled for 2013, took place ahead of schedule and without warning.

However, Aleko Mchedlishvili, a Revenue Service Officer, explained that the Revenue Service is not required to provide the agency under review

with advance notice. “It is random and any time the Revenue Service feels the need to conduct an audit it has the right to do so.”

Following the October elections it was revealed that the GPB might owe over 4 million GEL in taxes, which might have prompted the current audit.



While GPB directors and UNM lawmakers decry the “long term effects that their audit and investigation will have on GPB” government officials feel confident that that the audit will not disrupt day-to-day activities at the public broadcaster.

The walk out will, however, effect the day-to-day activities of the legislature, as UNM Members of Parliament will not be participating in key debates and reviews, especially of the upcoming budget plans for 2013.

“We won’t be able to continue our usual work [over the] next few days,” said Bakradze, “pretending as if everything develops democratically and normally.” Expressing the interest of the UNM to discuss the draft for next year’s budget with the Deputy Minister of Finance, Bakradze explained that they could not go on in the current condition as “much more” was at risk.

That “much more” is democracy itself according to the UNM who fear that political retribution will ripple through the ranks of the newly minted opposition.

“Today,” exclaimed Bakradze, “everybody has seen the performances of the majority, full of aggression towards the opposition, where our colleagues were speaking about the list of people to be arrested. We won’t continue working as if nothing has happened in the country,” Bakradze said.

The leader of the opposition described the prosecution as “the first very serious test for the new government,” explaining that the administration’s actions will define “if it is ready to work according to the law or will choose the path of political and personal revenge.”

Opposition MPs left the parliament in Kutaisi for Tbilisi in solidarity with former Minister of the Interior Bacho Akhalaia.

The Prime Minister and his government remain adamant that neither the investigation of Akhalaia nor the audit of the GPB are politically motivated and are based in lawful procedures. ■

Report prepared for CEW by Karina Gould

# Ex-Georgian Minister Charged.

**Bacho Akhalaia, former Minister of the Interior and of Defence in Georgia, has been arrested and officially charged with “abuse of power” for alleged physical and verbal abuse of six Georgian servicemen in 2011 as well as a separate charge for the “illegal deprivation of freedom.”**

Tbilisi City Court on Friday, 9 November, reports [civil.ge](http://civil.ge), ordered Akhalaia be sent to administrative detention while the investigations proceed. Initial court hearings will take place on 25 December 2012.

Akhalaia, who resigned as Minister of the Interior in late September 2012 due to mass public outrage that sparked calls for his resignation amidst the outbreak of a prisoner abuse scandal, was arrested shortly before midnight on 6 November.

He is accused, along with Army Chief of Staff, Giorgi Kalandadze, and Commander of the 4th Brigade of the Georgian army, Zurab Shamatava, with physically and verbally assaulting six Georgian soldiers from the 4th Brigade while he was serving as Minister of Defence. Kalandadze and Shamatava were released on bail set at 20,000 GEL each, just over 12,000 USD.

All three officials maintain they did nothing wrong.

Akhalaia also faces a separate investigation for the “illegal deprivation of freedom” of an unnamed individual who claims he was illegally confined and physically assaulted by the former Minister of Defence, Kalandadze and former director of the prison system, Davit Tchakua.

Chief Prosecutor, Archil Kbilashvili, hinted that Akhalaia might face further charges, as investigations are being carried out in reference to “dozens” of requests from citizens into other violations committed by the ex-Minister of the Interior during his time in office both as Minister of Defence (2009-2012) and Head of the State Penitentiary System (2005-2009).

The United National Movement (UNM), Georgia’s governing party from 2003 until October’s parliamentary elections and now main opposition in parliament, have accused the government of “political retribution.”

“Today the people of Georgia saw the first wave of arrests without clear explanation about why and how they were detained,” said minority leader Davit Bakradze in the Georgian Parliament on Wednesday.

Both the President of the Republic, Mikheil Saakashvili and the head of the National Security Council, Giga Bokeria, called for the current administration to uphold the rule of law and respect democratic processes. Bokeria demanded the immediate release of the accused men fearing the new government was acting out of revenge.

“Use of the prosecutor’s office,” said Bokeria, “for political purposes and for political retribution is evident.”

Georgian Minister of Justice, Tea Tsulkiani, responded to the accusations made by the opposition, stating “this is not an act of political revenge like the former government used to carry out.” Instead, she explained that the new government is fulfilling its promise to “restore justice” to the Georgian population, warning that if there are other ex-officials who are accused of violations while they were in office they will also face investigation.

Prime Minister Ivanishvili also added his voice to the fray, supporting the decision of the Prosecutor’s Office.

“It was not a political detention and as far as I know, it had legal grounds,” stated Ivanishvili. Adding, “It was done by the people who had to do this and everything was done according to [the] law.”

The Prime Minister and his government promised voters they would tackle allegations of wrong-doing under the former UNM administration, trying to assure the opposition at the same time that this will not result in a full-blown witch hunt. One Georgian Dream lawmaker while acknowledging that “society has been waiting for the punishment of this person [Akhalaia] for a very long time” added that unless proven guilty, he will not be prosecuted.

The New York Times reports that according to the statement issued by the Chief Prosecutor’s Office concerning the charges, a Sergeant, who is simply identified as “B”, said he was hit over the head with the handle of a knife by Akhalaia after being shown a video recording of him “cursing the Minister.” Sergeant “B” was then taken along with five fellow soldiers to Vaziani military base, where he alleges they were beaten by the former Minister and the other two defence officials mentioned. Following the beating, the soldier states they were forced to stand at attention in an empty cell shouting “Fame to the Fourth Brigade” every hour for three days.

All six soldiers were dismissed from the military in 2011 after being charged with attempted mutiny.

Several ex-Ministers in the former UNM government left Georgia following the victory of the Georgian Dream in October, Akhalaia was one of them. He returned to Georgia at the beginning of last week, saying he was prepared “to answer whatever questions” the new government had.

Another former Defence Minister, Dmitri Shashkin, has also left Georgia and has stated he has no intent to return so long as Ivanishvili retains power. Zurab Adeishvili, the former Minister of Justice has also left the country. ■

Report prepared for CEW by Karina Gould

# OSCE, Council of Europe, European Commission representatives highlight importance of media freedom in Azerbaijan.

**At the end of a meeting with the Azerbaijani media in Baku on 7 November 2012 on the safety of journalists, Dunja Mijatović, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Nils Muiznieks, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, and Neelie Kroes, a Vice-President of European Commission, stated that they stand ready to support progress in Azerbaijan in the field of securing the right to freedom of expression and media freedom, both offline and online.**

Welcoming the readiness of the Azerbaijani authorities to engage in dialogue with them and to pursue co-operation activities in these fields, they stressed that a clear sign of the Azerbaijani Government's commitment to enhancing freedom of expression would be the initiation of effective and transparent investigations into crimes against journalists, thereby putting an end to continuing impunity in this field.

Another sign of progress would be the release from detention of all those journalists, bloggers and citizens reporting, who have been deprived of their liberty as a result of expressing their views.

The adoption of the necessary legislative changes, including the decriminalization of defamation in compliance with the relevant judgment of the European Court of Human Rights would also testify to this commitment.

Finally, steps to strengthen the independent and impartial review of cases related to freedom of expression by the judiciary would be key in this respect.



**Dunja Mijatović, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, meeting with Azerbaijani Interior Minister Ramil Usubov (I) during her official visit to Azerbaijan, Baku, 9 November 2012.**

**Photo courtesy of the Interior Ministry of Azerbaijan/Salman Babayev.**

Mijatović, Muiznieks and Kroes also stressed the role of the media profession itself in upholding genuine freedom of expression with adherence to high professional standards and in developing a shared vision of these issues and solidarity among all sections of the media.

The three officials reiterated their willingness to continue to work with all stakeholders, including the authorities, media professionals, other online actors and civil society, to achieve the attainment of the aforementioned goals. ■

Source: [www.osce.org](http://www.osce.org)