

I am writing to express my deep concern that **Leyla Yunus**, a human rights defender, President of the Azerbaijani NGO, the Institute for Peace and Democracy, and her husband, **Arif Yunus**, were detained. I believe that both of them are Prisoners of Conscience.

I also express my concern that Leyla Yunus has been denied the right to be defended by lawyers of her choice, which is an essential element of the right to fair trial.

I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Leyla and her husband, Arif Yunus.

I also urge you to provide full respect for, and protection of, the right to freedom of expression in Azerbaijan.

Sincerely yours,