



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing

Azerbaijan: Do Human Rights Matter?

Panel I



Khadija Ismayilova is an Azerbaijani investigative journalist and radio show host for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. She also works with the [Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project](#), authoring numerous award-winning investigations that uncovered high-level corruption in Azerbaijan, including [lucrative business deals of the Azerbaijani president's family members](#), hidden interests of the president's siblings in national contracts and mismanagement in the state financing sector. In retaliation for her work, Ms. Ismayilova was arrested on December 5, 2014 on trumped up charges and sentenced to 7.5 years in prison on September 1, 2015. She was released on May 25, 2016, following an international advocacy campaign. However, she is prohibited from leaving Azerbaijan, and is not fully acquitted of the charges against her. Ms. Ismayilova holds a degree in philology from Baku State University. She previously worked for the Russian-language newspaper *Zerkalo*, the English-language *Caspian Business News*, and Voice of America.



Turkel Karimli is the son of opposition leader Ali Karimli, board member of the National Council of Democratic Forces, which is a joint council of several of Azerbaijan's political opposition parties, and chairman of The Popular Front Party of Azerbaijan. Turkel is present for the hearing today because his father is unable to travel abroad, the Azerbaijani government having refused to reissue his passport. Turkel himself has been targeted by the Aliyev regime for political association with his father. During the

2013 presidential elections in Azerbaijan, Turkel was detained by the government and jailed for 25 days. Turkel Karimli was born on May 21, 1993. He is a law graduate of the University of Bristol in England, where he was president of the Azerbaijan Society in 2012-13 and president of the Jurisprudence Society in 2013-14. Upon completion of law school, he trained as a barrister (attorney at law) in London and is a member of The Honourable Society of the Inner Temple, one of the oldest bar associations in the world.



Ambassador Richard Kauzlarich is Co-Director of the Center for Energy Science and Policy and Adjunct Professor at the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University. He joined the Institute after a 32-year career in the Foreign Service. He served as United States Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1997-99 and to Azerbaijan in 1994-97. He was Senior Deputy to the Secretary of State's and the President's Special Representative to the Newly Independent States (NIS) in 1993-94. From 2003 until 2011, he was National Intelligence Officer for Europe at the National Intelligence Council. Formerly he was Director of the Special Initiative on the Muslim World at the United States Institute of Peace. He is a co-author of "Aid During Conflict: Interaction Between Military and Civilian Assistance Providers in Afghanistan, September 2001-June 2002," published by RAND in 2004. Ambassador Kauzlarich received his A.A. from Black Hawk College, B.A. from Valparaiso University, and M.A.s from Indiana University and the University of Michigan. He was a non-resident senior fellow at the Center on the United States and Europe at Brookings. He is a visiting fellow at the Joint Forces Staff College of National Defense University.