

Azerbaijan Frees Blogger

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BAKU, Azerbaijan — Azerbaijan released on Friday the second of two bloggers whose imprisonment last year provoked an outcry among rights groups that say they were punished for satirizing the government.

U.S. President Barack Obama joined in September calls for the release of Adnan Hajizade, 27, and Emin Milli, 31, arrested in July 2009 and convicted of hooliganism over an alleged brawl in a Baku restaurant.

Their supporters say they were victims of an unprovoked attack, jailed as a warning to other activists after posting a satirical swipe at authorities in which Hajizade held a fake news conference dressed as a donkey.

Hajizade was released by the Baku appeals court on Thursday, and Milli joined him on Friday. The ruling did not overturn their convictions. ❏

(Reuters)

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