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November 28, 2005  
President Ilham Aliyev  
19 Istiglaliyat Street  
Baku, Azerbaijan

*Fax: 011 994 12 920 625*

Dear President Aliyev:

The International League for Human Rights, an international non-governmental organization with special consultative status at United Nations Economic and Social Council, is gravely concerned about the violent crackdown on the November 26 opposition rally against the results of recent parliamentary elections that took place in Victory Square in Baku.

On November 26, the Baku riot police violently dispersed peaceful opposition supporters who were protesting the November 6<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election results which, according to international observers, fell short of international standards for free and fair elections and did not meet Azerbaijan's international election-related commitments. The protesters demanded that the election results be overturned and a new vote held. The sit-down rally of approximately 10,000 participants was organized by the Azadlyg (Freedom) bloc, which includes the Democratic Party, the Musavat Party and the People's Front of Azerbaijan.

At 5:03 pm, three minutes after the rally should have ended, riot police attacked the demonstrators using truncheons, tear gas and water cannons to disperse the rally. According to opposition members, hundreds of protesters were injured. Baku deputy police chief Yashar Aliyev said that 29 people were arrested, including Lala Shovkat, leader of the opposition Liberal Party.

The League believes that the actions of the riot police were unjustified and we strongly condemn the use of excessive force against Azerbaijani citizens. The League calls for the immediate release of those who were detained and we urge you to ensure an open and transparent investigation into the causes of the violence displayed during the protest rally.

President Aliyev, we urge you to ensure a political environment where citizens can exercise freedom of expression and assembly without fear of persecution. Also, we respectfully call upon you and your administration to uphold the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which Azerbaijan is a signatory.

Thank you for your attention. We welcome your comments.

Sincerely,

Robert Arsenault  
President