

To the Republic of Azerbaijan's Minister
of Communications and Information Technology
Mr. Ali Abbasov

INFORMATION REQUEST

From:

Reporters Without Borders Secretary-General Robert Ménard

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Dear Minister,

The Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety (IRFS) and Reporters Without Borders, are concerned about your plan to create an agency to oversee the Internet. We fear it may pose a threat to online free speech and we would like to know exactly what responsibilities it will have.

Founded on 3 May 2006 and registered with the Ministry of Justice on 29 September 2006, the IRFS defends the rights of journalists. Reporters Without Borders is an international organisation that defends press freedom and online free speech worldwide.

On 19 July, the APA news agency quoted you as saying that a plan was under way to create an agency in Azerbaijan to oversee Internet security. You reportedly said the purpose of this agency would be to prevent cyber-crimes and supervise the Internet in Azerbaijan. "The creation and activities of this body is encompassed in the International Convention on Cybercrime, and therefore cannot be considered censorship of the Internet," you said.

This statement is of interest to both the IRFS and Reporters Without Borders, and we therefore decided to send you this joint request for information.

Under the Law on Access to Information, information holders are required to reveal all information except secrets protected by law. With this in mind, we request that you answer the following questions:

- When will this agency be created?
- Which government department will it answer to?
- What exactly will its role and duties be?
- Is there any danger for online free speech?

We thank you in advance.

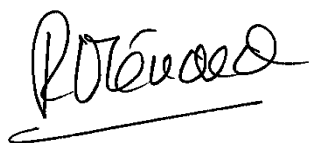
Respectfully,

Emin Huseynov

Chairman of the Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety

Robert Ménard

Reporters Without Border Secretary-General

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Ménard', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Date: 29 July 2008