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# PRESS RELEASE

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## **U.S. Embassy Azerbaijan Statement on the Outcome of the Ismayilli Unrest Trial**

The U.S. Embassy in Azerbaijan is deeply disappointed by the March 17 decision to sentence opposition REAL Movement Head Ilgar Mammadov and opposition Musavat Party Deputy Chair Tofiq Yagublu to lengthy prison terms on questionable charges of inciting the January 23-24, 2013, unrest in Ismayilli.

Before and during the legal process, we told Azerbaijani officials at all levels that we hoped for an open and fair trial of the defendants. While we welcomed the Azerbaijani Government's decision to allow U.S. and other international observers to monitor the trial, we and other observers saw significant irregularities in witness testimony and court proceedings. Our observations lead to the conclusion that the verdicts were not based on the evidence and were politically motivated.