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**RELEASE
NEWS**

THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION / EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OPENING CEREMONY FOR ANTI-CORRUPTION LEGAL ADVOCACY CENTER

July 19, 2005, Baku, Azerbaijan

The United States Agency for International Development, through its implementing partner the American Bar Association Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI), in partnership with Transparency Azerbaijan, announces the opening of the first Anti-Corruption Legal Advocacy Center in Azerbaijan.

The opening ceremony will take place at the Anti-Corruption Legal Advocacy Center (ALAC) on Wednesday, July 20, 2005, at 11:00am. The ALAC is located at Jafar Jabbarli Street 16, Flat 7. Opening comments will be given by U.S. Ambassador Reno Harnish, Transparency Azerbaijan and ABA/CEELI representatives.

The goal of the ALAC is to provide citizens with the means to become actively involved in the fight against corruption in Azerbaijan. The ALAC staff and volunteers will operate a toll-free hotline which will take calls from citizens from all around the country regarding allegations of corruption and will assist callers on how to use official complaint mechanisms. In addition, the ALAC staff will maintain statistics and use the information gained to provide ministries with concrete suggestions on ways to improve processes and address corruption. The ALAC has a full-time staff attorney who can assist callers and walk-in clients with legal questions regarding corruption.

NOTE TO MEDIA: Press is invited to the event. For additional information please contact the US Embassy press service at 498 03 35/36/37.