

Azadliq Prospekti 83
370007 Baku, Azerbaijan
Phone: ++ (99412) 498 03 35
Fax: ++ (99412) 498 93 12
E-mail: HuseynguliyevMM@state.gov

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

U.S. Ambassador's Remarks In Memory of Elmar Huseynov

March 4, 2005

A tragedy brings us together today. The murder of Elmar Huseynov is both a personal tragedy for his family, friends, and colleagues, and a national tragedy for Azerbaijan.

Today I hope everyone can put aside their political differences and come together to honor this great man.

I knew Elmar and I liked him very much. He loved life and he often had a smile on his face; he was a man full of passion. I was impressed by his intelligence and his dedication to the democratic reform of his country. He was unique in his ability to analyze the situation in Azerbaijan, to speak about issues of great importance clearly and freely. He cared passionately about his country and he wanted to see it free and open and democratic. He believed in this goal and he worked tirelessly towards realizing it.

Elmar's murder reminds us all of the vital responsibility that democratic governments and societies have to protect those people dedicated to the advancement of its best interests – media freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. It is because of such people that countries become great, in the eyes of their own people and in the eyes of the world. Those passionate, dedicated individuals need to be safeguarded like the precious resources that they are. They need to be able to work without intimidation or risk to their safety, and indeed, their life.

On this tragic day, I urge all of us to reflect on how much we owe people such as Elmar

Huseynov, and to redouble our efforts to support their work and their goals.

The death of Elmar Huseynov leaves a hole in all our lives. He was a son, a husband, and a father. His loss will be great for his family. And we grieve with them, because it is a great loss for all of us, as well.