



RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION HONORING THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY'S AZERBAIJANI SERVICE

March 14, 2018

WHEREAS, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's (RFE/RL) Azerbaijani Service, known locally as Azadliq radiosu, began broadcasting to Azerbaijan on March 5, 1953;

WHEREAS, RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service has for 65 years produced journalism that promotes transparency, accountability, and pluralism in Azerbaijan, addressed issues that are absent on official media where the government controls the flow of information, and served as a guardian of the Azerbaijani nation's national and democratic values and pre-Soviet legacy of independence;

WHEREAS, the government of Azerbaijan has taken extreme measures to suppress free and independent media, including closing illegally raiding and closing RFE/RL's Baku bureau, jailing former RFE/RL contributor Khadija Ismayilova, and intermittently blocking the Azerbaijani Service's websites within the country;

WHEREAS, brave Azerbaijani Service journalists and freelancers continue to persevere with newsgathering in Azerbaijan and succeed at expanding content production and delivery from Azerbaijan via the use of new media platforms;

WHEREAS, with more than 60 million views in 2017 and almost 185,000 subscribers, RFE/RL Azerbaijani Service's YouTube channel is one of the top 3 media channels in South Caucasus, due to digital video innovation that has made high-quality, web-friendly videos and a daily 15-minute news show key products of the Service;

WHEREAS, RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service is a major source of investigative reporting within the country, including delving into the highest levels of government corruption by revealing Azeri ministers' family businesses and offshore account holders linked to President Ilham Aliyev's family, reporting which were widely cited by major international media organizations; and

WHEREAS, with its objectivity and professional reporting, RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service provides a credible and influential alternative to the official media and serves as a role model for aspiring journalists and independent journalism within Azerbaijan.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Broadcasting Board of Governors and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) that we celebrate and commemorate the 65th anniversary of RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board and CEO applaud and thank current and former members of RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service for their dedication to its audiences and to the mission of providing independent information and reporting to audiences in Azerbaijan.