



[Imprisoned 'Muslim Unity' leaders start hunger strike in protest against alleged torture](#)

The head of the Muslim Unity movement, Taleh Bagirzade, and his deputy, Abbas Huseynov, have started a hunger strike in protest against their alleged mistreatment in jail

Arannnews-Both men are currently serving a 20-year prison sentence after being convicted of planning to overthrow the government and inciting ethnic and religious hatred in the country's high-profile and controversial [Nardaran case](#). Zumurud Yagmur, the wife of opposition politician Fuad Gahramanli, who was sentenced to ten years in the same trial, said that Huseynov's family had told her about the hunger strike. Bagirzade is reportedly already on day six of his hunger strike, while Huseynov is on his third day. "When he [Huseynov] tried to tell his relatives about the pressure he is subjected to in prison, they did not allow him to finish and took his phone away", Yagmur says. Taleh Bagirzade is reportedly denied the right to speak with his relatives on the phone. The religious activists are held at Gobustan prison, a high-security prison for particularly dangerous criminals some 70 kilometers outside of Baku. Bagirzade and Huseynov have both [complained](#) about [abuse](#), torture and the degrading conditions in prison before, which the Penitentiary Service and the Ministry of Justice deny. In the end of January 2019, an [appeal](#) from Bagirzade was circulated on social media, asking local and international human rights organizations not to be indifferent towards "the human tragedy in Gobustan prison", where other Nardaran-convicted prisoners were reportedly suffering torture. On 26 November 2015, a security operation was conducted in the village of Nardaran near Baku to detain Taleh Baghirzadeh, the head of the Muslim Unity movement. There were clashes between police and his supporters in the course of the operation. Six people were killed, including two police officers, and several people were injured. One of those injured later died from the inflicted injuries. More than 70 people were detained, including Taleh Baghirzadeh. Azerbaijani authorities accuse the Muslim Unity movement of attempting to change the constitutional system through violence and establish a religious state governed by Sharia law. In January 2017, the Court for Serious Crimes in Baku passed sentences against 17 defendants. It sentenced the leader of the Muslim Unity movement, Taleh Baghirzadeh, and his deputy, Abbas Huseynov, to 20 years in prison. The others, charged with terrorism, illegal possession of weapons and failure to obey the lawful demands of a police officer, received prison sentences .between ten and 19 years