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Secretary General calls for better protection of journalists in Azerbaijan

Strasbourg, 20.04.2012 – Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland today issued the following statement :

"The most recent attack against journalists perpetrated by the security staff of a state-owned oil company is yet another sign that freedom of expression in Azerbaijan is under attack.

The government should do its utmost to investigate and bring to justice those responsible but also to ensure that journalists in Azerbaijan are able to carry out their work without fear for their professional integrity and physical safety. Failure to do so would risk further undermining the country's reputation when it comes to respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Azerbaijan will host the next Eurovision song contest, but no glitter and glamour of a pop music show can compensate for failure to comply with obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights.

I encourage the authorities to take up our offer of assistance and advice on how to bring legislation and practice to the level required of all Council of Europe member States."