

## **Aliev's Allies Desert Him Over Nagorno-Karabakh Talks**

**Author:** [Elmar Gusseinov](#)

The idea of resignation on principle - even over such a sensitive issue as Nagorno-Karabakh - is a new one on most Azeri politicians. If the wave of departures from the Azeri government have a cause, it is little to do with honour.

Azeri President Heydar Aliev is haemorrhaging his closest political associates. Foreign Minister Tofik Zulfugarov and a senior colleague have quit their posts less than a week after Aliev's influential foreign policy advisor, Vafa Guluzadeh, himself left the government citing health reasons to a disbelieving public. (See [Baku's Firm Pro-Russian Line Claims A Victim.](#))

It may be tempting in the West to regard this latest departure of Zulfugarov and Presidential Secretariat head Eldar Namazov from Aliev's team as a simple protest vote against the pace at which their elderly leader now seems to be pushing for a peace deal over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Certainly, all three were directly or indirectly working on foreign policy. Guluzadeh as a leading architect and Zulfugarov responsible for its implementation. Namazov meanwhile, was responsible for foreign policy in the presidential team

But the idea of resignation over principles - even Karabakh - is a concept not yet rooted here. Resignations are unprecedented in Azerbaijan as indeed they are throughout the former Soviet Union. Politicians and high ranking officials do not resign - they are usually 'resigned' from above.

The nomenclature represents a ruling class and guarantees considerable financial dividends as well as a high social status. Losing position means losing everything. Why then, did the three give up the positions they held for an uncertain future?

Their reasons appear to be less global and more personal. None of them could be described as 'Heydarists'. Unlike others in the government, they were not appointed to their posts out of loyalty or fidelity to the President.

Rather, each own their advancement to their exceptional skills which they hired out to Aliev in return for privileges and prosperity. In serving their Master faithfully they were duly rewarded. Eldar Namazov, for example, as a former employee of the Institute for the Investigation of Ethic Problems, was able to create a large media holding group, which included the Space broadcasting channel; Panorama newspaper, the Exclusive news agency and Delta print distribution agency.

The 'resignees' were not then afraid of street demonstrations over Karabakh and the perceived notion that their leader is ready to sell out to the Armenians. People in Baku are less concerned with Karabakh and more interested in what they will eat this winter. What the resigned ministers are more afraid of is the fact, that they've been in the near the President for a long time.

They will not have failed to register their master's worsening health. They cannot be unaware that he is unlikely to live much longer. Their resignations are most probably then much less to do with principles over Karabakh than concerns that disassociation from a fading and failing Aliev now is the best chance for them to ride a new career wave tomorrow.

Elmar Gusseinov is Editor in Chief of Monitor magazine in Baku.

**Location:** Karabakh  
Azerbaijan

**Focus:** Caucasus

---

**Source URL:** <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/alievs-allies-desert-him-over-nagorno-karabakh>