

Azeri Police Arrest Deputy Head of Opposition Party Over Riots

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BAKU, Azerbaijan — Azerbaijan's police arrested the deputy head of the biggest opposition party over a protest last month where thousands demanded the resignation of a provincial leader.

Tofik Iagublu, deputy head of the Musavat Party, was arrested Tuesday along with Ilgar Mamedov, leader of the rights group Republican Alternative (ReAl), on charges of organizing and taking part in the unrest in the northern town of Ismailli, the Prosecutor General's Office said.

Allies of the two men said their arrests were politically motivated since neither of them had been in Ismailli during the riots on Jan. 24 and they only visited the town, about 200 kilometers northwest of the capital Baku, the next day.

Mass protests are usually quashed quickly by police in Azerbaijan.

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