Azerbaijan and International Corruption Scandals

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In Transparency International's annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2020, Azerbaijan received a score of 30, ranking 129th out of 180 countries. Compared to 2019, there was no change in terms of the score (30 points), but in terms of ranking, Azerbaijan declined by 3 places. The index reflects the perceived level of corruption in the public sector and is compiled using various reports. Typically, these reports assess countries' positions on a number of political, economic, and social criteria that impact the effectiveness of anti-corruption policies. The report on Azerbaijan for 2020 was prepared on the basis of seven different sources.

Table 1. Azerbaijan's place in the Global Corruption Perceptions Index.

Year	CPI score	Ranking	Total number of countries
2020	30	129	180
2019	30	126	180
2018	25	152	180
2017	31	122	180
2016	30	123	176
2015	29	119	168
2014	29	126	175
2013	28	127	177
2012	27	139	176

The Corruption Perceptions Index is primarily about the perception of corruption by the domestic public. Therefore,

the level of corruption in the public sector in Azerbaijan, or at least people's perception of it, is high. That is why Azerbaijan ranks 129th out of 180 countries. As can be seen from the index, the levels for 2020 and 2016 are the same, despite some variation in 2016-2018. In other words, no significant changes have taken place in the last 5 years.

Azerbaijan is involved in a new international corruption scandal almost every year. These include global scandals such as the Panama Papers, as well as various national-level scandals (Malta). The number of such scandals has been growing recently. With this in mind, we have tried to systematize the reports about confirmed and suspected corruption scandals that have been published in the international media and have become topics of discussion abroad. Below you can see the relevant information and materials arranged systematically by publication date.

International corruption scandals involving Azerbaijan

Viktor Kožený (2001)

A Czech businessman named Viktor Kožený came to Azerbaijan in 1997. When he arrived, he already had a lot of "experience." He was the founder of Harvard Capital and Consulting, once famous in the Czech Republic. For a time, the company owned 15% of all privatized property in the Czech Republic. On the other hand, this company was more reminiscent of a pyramid. As soon as local law enforcement became interested in its activities, it sold all its assets and took the money offshore.

Kožený's goal in coming to Azerbaijan was to participate in local privatization. Initially, he obtained vouchers from various companies. Seeing that the country's economy depended on oil, he turned his attention to the vouchers of the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR). With this goal, he spent about USD 150 million of his own funds and those of other investors. He then raised USD 450 million from various U.S.

investors to expand his investments (Figures vary. Kožený says the amount reached USD 450 million. Others claim higher amounts. Some won't comment at all). But the privatization of SOCAR was suspended. The investors, on the other hand, learned from an EU report that Kožený received the vouchers for USD 1 each, not USD 25. As a result, Kožený left Azerbaijan, the privatization did not take place, and US institutional investors lost money.

It later emerged that Kožený and his partners had paid bribes to various officials to privatize SOCAR in Azerbaijan. His partner, Frederic Bourke, appeared in a US court in 2009. According to court documents, Kožený and his entourage bribed the President of Azerbaijan, his son Ilham Aliyev, and two other high-ranking officials. The court accepted this fact as proven (according to the indictment, the total amount of bribes reached USD 11 million). The ruling was one of the first in the history of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. Very few cases had gone to court under this act, but the decision was a major victory for US prosecutors. Afterwards, a number of cases were brought to court.

Kožený admitted to paying bribes, but hid in the Bahamas. According to him, the idea could have worked, but local officials took the bribes and then did nothing.

Wikileaks (2010)

In January 2010, several documents related to Azerbaijan were published by WikiLeaks (an international online project created by Julian Assange which publishes leaked confidential information and documents belonging to states and corporations). Prior to that, the project had already published the correspondence of US diplomats about Azerbaijan. But this time they published a cable by Chargé d'affaires Donald Lu called *Azerbaijan: Who Owns What? Part 1 – The First Lady's Family*. The cable briefly described the property and influence of the Pashayev family, relatives of Mehriban

Aliyeva on her father's side.

Dubai Properties (2010)

On March 10, 2010, Andrew Higgins published an article in the Washington Post entitled *Pricey real estate deals in Dubai raise questions about Azerbaijan's president*. The author researched several properties in Dubai. According to the Dubai Land Department, an Azerbaijani schoolboy named Heydar Aliyev owned nine properties worth USD 44 million on the island of Palm Jumeirah. His birthday coincided with that of Ilham Aliyev's son Heydar. In total, people with the same names as the Aliyev family owned property worth USD 75 million. The author wonders how a person with an annual salary of USD 228,000, i.e. President Ilham Aliyev, could afford properties worth USD 75 million.

Boxing tournament financing (2011)

In 2011, according to the BBC, World Series Boxing (WSB) received USD 10 million from Azerbaijan. This information was confirmed by both WSB and the International Boxing Association. However, in their opinion, these funds did not belong to the Azerbaijani government. However, they confirmed that the money came through Kamaladdin Heydarov (Minister of Emergency Situations and also Chairman of the Azerbaijan Boxing Federation). The BBC claimed that the payment was made in exchange for a gold medal at the Olympics. But at the 2012 Olympic Games, Azerbaijan won two bronze medals. In 2016, other details of the operation were revealed. According to a report obtained by the New York Times, the funds were provided as loans. But the loan was never repaid. Half of it was spent in a mysterious way.

Offshore Leaks (2013)

On April 13, 2013, the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) published a database called Offshore Leaks. The database contained 2.5 million

confidential documents related to 130,000 bank accounts opened in various offshores. These accounts belonged to companies and individuals from 170 countries. Account holders used these offshores for various purposes. Some of them were used to facilitate international trade, while others were involved in money laundering. Azerbaijan is mentioned in these documents. Journalists investigating the database wrote only one article about Azerbaijan. The article was about the relationship between the president's family and Azersun:

– Offshore companies provide a link between corporate mogul and Azerbaijan's president Documents about the relationship between the leadership of Azersun and Ilham Aliyev's family were found in the database. At the same time, information is provided about the various properties owned by the Azerbaijani president.

Printing money in Austria (2013)

In June 2013, the Deputy Chairman of the Bank of Austria resigned. One week earlier, his powers had been suspended by the Austrian government. The main reason was a suspicion of corruption on the part of the Bank of Austria in printing banknotes for other countries. In early June, the prosecutor's office in Vienna filed a formal indictment. It was alleged that the chairman of the Central Bank of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Elman Rustamov, and the head of the Central Bank of Syria, Adib Mayaleh, received money in exchange for the printing of national currency banknotes in Austria. According to the allegations, in the agreement between the Austrian side and Rustamov and other Azerbaijani officials, the cost of printing new manat banknotes was increased by 20%. The chairman of the Austrian Bank, Wolfgang Duchatczek, said there had been no violation of the law. According to an article published in the Washington Post the following year, the Bank of Austria was trying to expand its scope. In 2004-2005, Azerbaijan was preparing for a currency redenomination (the replacement of old banknotes with new ones at an agreed-upon

ratio). Therefore, a representative of the Austrian Bank came to Baku. They were trying to win this contract. For this purpose, the price was increased by 20%. The head of the bank accepted these payments as a commission. Employees acknowledged corruption. The head of the bank was acquitted in this case.

Congress Members' Trips (2015)

In May 2015, the Washington Post reported, citing a confidential U.S. Congressional Ethics Report, that in 2013, SOCAR provided funding for 10 members of Congress and 32 employees to participate in a conference in Baku. Three former senior Obama aides also spoke at the event. Participants received various gifts. The estimated travel costs for each participant varied. For example, for some, the total cost of the trip was USD 113,000. Investigators from the ethics committee could not find any evidence that the participants were aware of the funding or that the gifts affected any decision. The Washington Post linked the visits to the sanctions against Iran. It was at that time that the United States imposed new sanctions on Iran. Those sanctions included exceptions for gas pipeline projects. According to the authors, these exceptions may have been adopted as a result of these visits.

TeliaSonera (2015)

In 2015, research firm Muddy Waters released a report on TeliaSonera, a Swedish-Finnish telecommunications company. According to the report, the company has been accused of several acts of corruption. The authors of the report noted that the company continued to make corrupt payments in Azerbaijan through Azertel. The authors also cited an investigation published on RFE/RL's website in 2014. According to the investigation, Azercell Telecom LLC is connected to Ilham Aliyev's family through various offshore companies. Therefore, according to the authors, the company had to pay a

fairly high amount of compensation. In general, according to the investigative journalists, this could be the largest bribe in history. With this in mind, the Swedish government launched an investigation. However, in May 2016, it was decided not to initiate any criminal proceedings. Swedish prosecutors said that despite certain suspicions, it was impossible to prove bribery. At the same time, the new management of TeliaSonera could not explain the fact that nothing had been gained as a result of the sale of shares in Azercell Telecom.

Trump Tower in Baku (2016)

In 2015, Donald Trump announced that he would run for president of the United States. The following year, he won the Republican primary. As a result, the media began to take an interest in his assets. At that time, the construction of the Trump Tower in Baku was underway. According to Trump, the building did not belong to him. He only earned royalties and management fees from it (totaling USD 2.8 million). The issue was with the owners of the building. On the Azerbaijani side, the building was owned by a company called Baku XXI Century. The founder of this company was Elton Mammadov, who was a member of parliament in 2000-2015. Mammadov was the brother of the then Minister of Transport Ziya Mammadov. The company also implemented many transportation projects. In any case, this raised suspicions of corruption. At the same time, according to the New Yorker, the Mammadov family also had ties to Iranian officials.

Panama Papers (2016)

On October 4-6, 2015, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov paid an official visit to Panama. Until then, Azerbaijani-Panamanian relations were somewhat ambiguous and little was known about them. But in April 2016, secret documents about the relationship between the two countries (and not just them) were leaked to the world.

On April 3, 2016, the International Consortium of

Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), and a number of other journalistic groups (107 journalistic organizations or media outlets) jointly published 11.5 million confidential documents belonging to Panama-based law firm Mossack Fonseca (in 2012, it was considered the leader in offshore transactions), covering the years 1977-2015. These documents were related to 214,488 offshore accounts. In 2015, the documents were obtained by the German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung. They began to investigate, inviting journalists from other countries to participate.

The investigation revealed information about a large number of companies and individuals trying to hide their income through Panama. The documents show how Mossack Fonseca customers managed to launder dirty money and evade sanctions and taxes. It turned out that more than 15,000 shell companies had been registered through this law firm. They also helped to launder money. Following this incident, Mossack Fonseca was unable to operate for a long time and closed in 2018.

The data covered many countries. OCCRP journalists wrote separate articles on the countries most often encountered. Azerbaijan was among these countries. Five articles were published on Azerbaijan. The articles were related to gold mines and a number of properties:

– Aliyevs' Secret Mining Empire is an article about the exploitation of gold mines in Azerbaijan. It shows that the companies involved in this field are connected to the president's family;

– Aliyevs Seek Five Gold Fields in Kyrgyzstan. According to this article, Redgold Estates Azerbaijan Ltd, registered in Azerbaijan in 2012, intended to participate in the purchase of gold mines for sale in Kyrgyzstan. This company was also closely connected to the family of the President of Azerbaijan;

– How Family that Runs Azerbaijan Built an Empire of Hidden Wealth. This article is about AtaHolding. Documents show that Fazil Mammadov (then Minister of Taxes) began to establish the holding in the early 2000s. Mehriban Aliyeva was invited to be a shareholder;

– Azerbaijan First Family's London Private Enclave. This article provides information about various properties belonging to the presidential family. The main part of the article is related to real estate located in London;

– People of Azerbaijan Bail out Failed Aliyev Mining Empire. This article is related to the establishment of Azergold CJSC. In 2015-2016, when Azergold CJSC was being established, according to a presidential decree, shares of the contractors in Garadagh, Chovdar, Goydagh, the Daghkasaman ore fields, the Kohnamadan field, and the Kurakchay basin deposits were obtained from the state. According to information obtained by journalists, these shares were purchased from 4 companies (Globex International, Londex Resources S.A., Willy & Meyris S.A., Fargate Mining Corporation) (5 companies were listed when the relevant share distribution agreement was approved). At least two of these companies were owned by Arzu and Leyla Aliyeva. There was no information about the other two. At the same time, one of those two companies, Londex, was in talks with the government to acquire deposits. In fact, these companies were rescued at the expense of the state budget. According to the documents, they earned USD 30 million after spending about USD 230 million.

The Azerbaijani Embassy in Australia (2016)

In April 2016, the Sydney Morning Herald published an article on the operations of the Azerbaijani Embassy in Australia. According to the information leaked to the media, the Azerbaijani embassy, using the diplomatic status of employees (including the ambassador himself), brought into Azerbaijan 2,000 liters of beer, 1,100 liters of wine, etc. Diplomatic

status allowed these products to be imported duty-free. Whether or not this was the cause, at the end of 2016, the Azerbaijani ambassador to Australia was recalled. A new ambassador has not been appointed yet.

Caviar Diplomacy (2012-2016)

In 2012, the European Stability Initiative (ESI) published an article entitled Caviar Diplomacy – How Azerbaijan silenced the Council of Europe. The article described the relationship between Azerbaijan and a number of European officials. According to the authors, Azerbaijan was trying to improve its image in Europe through a number of gifts (caviar sometimes played a key role in small gifts). The article described the general political situation.

The ESI published the second part of the article in 2016. This time, in a general way, a bribe paid directly by Azerbaijan to a number of European officials was described. The main focus of attention was the Italian MP Luca Volontè. In 2012, he was the president of a group called the European People's Party in PACE. A criminal case was launched against him in June 2016. The main charges were bribery and money laundering (By the way, in 2021 a court sentenced him to 4 years in prison. It was considered proven that he took bribes from Azerbaijan). The materials also described how and in what form the bribe was taken.

In addition, the OCCRP conducted an investigation into the case in 2017 and found that, along with Elkhan Suleymanov (a PACE member), other individuals were involved in the scheme.

Rolls-Royce (2017)

In December 2016, the US Department of Justice reached a deal on a lawsuit filed against the US branch of Rolls-Royce. Rolls-Royce admitted to paying bribes to sign contracts with relevant agencies in Kazakhstan, Thailand, Brazil, Azerbaijan, Angola, and Iraq. The relevant body in Azerbaijan was the

State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR). Of the USD 35 million paid in bribes, USD 7.8 million was paid to SOCAR. The bribes paid to secure turbine orders in Azerbaijan were made by Rolls-Royce Energy System (RRESI), the US subsidiary of Rolls-Royce. RRESI is estimated to have made more than USD 50 million from turbine deals in Azerbaijan. A similar investigation was conducted in the United Kingdom and evidence of bribery was found in six other countries. As a result, Rolls-Royce paid USD 800 million in fines to the governments of the United States, Britain, and Brazil.

Malta (2017)

In April 2017, Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia published a document related to a Maltese bank. According to the document, USD 1 million was transferred to a Panamanian company owned by the wife of the Prime Minister of Malta, Michel Muscat. The most interesting part of the document was that the funds were transferred from one of the accounts of Al Sahra FZCO, a company registered in Dubai. Despite the company's Arabic name, its owner was Leyla Aliyeva, the daughter of President Ilham Aliyev. In other words, the Azerbaijani government transferred money to the Maltese government. After the scandal broke, the prime minister's wife flew directly from Malta to Baku and then to Dubai.

In October of the same year, Daphne Caruana Galizia was murdered, but the investigation she began was not stopped. Journalists representing 18 different organizations continued her investigations. As a result, Pilatus Bank, which was actively used by the Azerbaijani government in Malta, has been closed (its owner was accused of money laundering, but in 2020 the charge was dropped). It turned out that the bulk of the bank's 150 customers are companies and individuals from Azerbaijan. The president's family and Kamaladdin Heydarov's family carried out various transactions through this bank.

At the same time, Azerbaijan has participated in a number of

energy projects in Malta (Delimara power plant). An investigation into this project did not reveal any incidents of corruption. On the other hand, businessman Jorgen Fenek, who was arrested in connection with the journalist's death, was also suspected of having ties with Azerbaijan.

The Azerbaijani Laundromat (2017)

The Danish newspaper Berlingske's first international investigation was about Azerbaijan. The newspaper received detailed documents describing 16,000 transactions of a Danish bank called Danske Bank. These documents were mainly related to the activities of the Estonian branch of this bank in 2012-2014. The documents focused on transactions involving the bank accounts of 4 fictitious British companies. The most interesting aspect was that all the documents were related to Azerbaijan. According to the documents, USD 2.9 billion was moved out of Azerbaijan through these accounts in 2012-2014. At the same time, these funds were directed to various European officials and parliamentarians. This issue caused a very serious scandal in Denmark. Even the prime minister had to speak about it.

This investigation consisted of many parts. The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), The Guardian, Le Monde, Novaya Gazeta, and other media outlets were involved in it. Each of them published an article about it. Here we note a few basic articles:

– What is a Laundromat. This article describes the Azerbaijani Laundromat in general terms. Information is provided on the companies used under this mechanism, etc.;

– The Influence Machine. OCCRP writes that in 2012-2014, against the backdrop of protests in the country, the Azerbaijani government paid for lobbying in the Council of Europe using this mechanism. According to the report, direct payments from Azerbaijan were received by three PACE members, MPs from Germany, Slovenian and Italian politicians, the

husband of the head of UNESCO, etc. For example, on October 25, 2013, former German MP Eduard Lintner was paid EUR 61,000 under this scheme. Luca Volontè, mentioned above, was also paid under this scheme;

– The Core Companies. This article is about 4 companies (Polux Management LP, Hilux Services LP, Metastar Invest LLP, and LCM Alliance LLP) used in the relevant mechanism. Two of the companies were registered in Scotland and owned by M. Ahmadov, a driver in Baku;

– Denmark's biggest bank hosted the Azerbaijani slush fund. Danske Bank's name was already mentioned in 2018 in a corruption investigation. This was related to USD 20 billion withdrawn from Russia through Moldova. In the same year, as can be seen, a mechanism related to Azerbaijan was created. In both cases, the bank's Estonian branch was used. According to official statistics, if in 2008 Estonia received EUR 37 million from Azerbaijan, in 2013, when the scheme in question was in operation, this figure was EUR 1.71 billion;

– The Origin of the Money. The source of the money is under investigation here. Quite a number of companies participated in the mechanism. Some are even companies involved in money laundering in Russia. However, Baktelecom LLC is the leader in money transfers. This company has the same name as a state company, but it is a completely different company. No information about its activities can be found. The founder of the company is Rasim Asadov (son of the first Minister of Internal Affairs of Azerbaijan). Materials on his relationship with the president's family were published in relation with the case of Luca Volontè;

– Where did the money go? The article lists the names of individuals and companies using the scheme: Ali Nagiyev (now head of the State Security Service), Yaqub Eyyubov (first deputy prime minister), etc .;

– Azerbaijan's High-Profile Beneficiaries. This article is

mainly related to Yaqub Eyyubov and his sons. According to the report, one son has several nationalities and at the same time withdrew several million dollars from Azerbaijan through Hungarian banks (some link these funds with the visit of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to Baku). At the same time, there are brief notes about the President's press secretary A. Gasimov, former Minister of Transport Z. Mammadov, academician S. Zeynalov, etc.;

– The Corruption Fighter's Hidden Empire. The article focuses on Ali Nagiyev, then head of the Anti-Corruption Commission. It describes the companies he owns and their operations. It also mentions his transactions in the Czech Republic and other countries through his relatives;

– AvroMed May Have Received Millions Through Laundromat. AvroMed, one of the largest participants in the pharmaceutical market in Azerbaijan, is the second largest company that receives funds through a laundromat. The company received USD 138 million through this scheme. However, it was not possible to fully clarify a direct relationship with the company. But according to indirect information, this connection is clear. The article also describes the company's relationship to the president's family.

Bombardier (2017)

Azerbaijan Railways CJSC is a company implementing many infrastructure projects. In order to implement its projects, it appeals to international financial institutions and acquires new locomotives, restores the railway, and so on. In 2017, one such loan came to the attention of the world media. A criminal case was even launched in Sweden over the issue. Swedish law enforcement agencies were interested in whether there was corruption in the World Bank project Rail Trade and Transport Facilitation in Azerbaijan.

In July 2013, a consortium of several companies (Bombardier Transportation Ltd, a joint venture of Russian RZD and Swedish

Bombardier; Bombardier Transportation Sweden AB, and Trans-Signal-Rabita LLC) won the tender for the reconstruction of the Baku-Boyuk Kesik railway corridor. The value of this contract alone amounted to AZN 266.7 million. According to the report, the Consortium had to perform various works for 78 months for a total of USD 268.6 million and AZN 44.6 million (a total of AZN 524 million at the current exchange rate).

Under the tender, the consortium had to replace obsolete signaling equipment on the railways. Companies from Sweden, Russia, Italy, the Czech Republic, Turkey, and even the Democratic People's Republic of Korea applied to participate in the tender. At least four proposals were cheaper than the consortium's, but other proposals were officially rejected "because they did not meet the conditions." It became clear from the Panama Papers that the terms of the tender were set in accordance with the proposal of the consortium members, and it turned out that the price of the equipment was increased five times. Interestingly, this consortium has won several such tenders (Russia, Mongolia, etc.), but corruption cases have been filed only against Azerbaijan. According to leaked information, Ziya Mammadov and Arif Asgarov were mentioned in the case.

Zamira Hajiyeva (2018)

Starting in February 2018, a rule called the Unexplained Wealth Order came into force in the UK. According to this rule, in case of suspicions regarding persons with a fortune of more than GBP 50,000, they must explain the source of their wealth. Otherwise, their wealth will be confiscated. The rule came into force after the victory of the British National Crime Agency in court and is based on the Criminal Finances Act of 2017.

The first victim of this rule was Azerbaijani citizen Zamira Hajiyeva. It turned out that she had bought a house in London for GBP 11.5 million. At the start of the trial, the house was

valued at GBP 15 million. In the UK, Zamira Hajiyeva lost her claim to anonymity after the media demanded that the public know all the facts of such a case.

Zamira Hajiyeva is the wife of Jahangir Hajiyev, the former head of the International Bank of Azerbaijan. Hajiyev was sentenced in 2016 to 15 years in prison on charges of large-scale fraud and embezzlement. There is no information about his wife's income, but over ten years she spent GBP 16 million (AZN 35.85 million) in the famous London shop Harrods. She also spent GBP 10 million to buy Mill Ride Golf Club. The British Home Office allowed Hajiyeva to live in Britain on a visa for wealthy entrepreneurs. However, the National Crime Agency told the court that Mr Hajiyev had been a government official from 1993 to 2015 and therefore should not have had the opportunity to own the wealth uncovered by wealth investigators.

Even at this point, the Azerbaijani government appealed for extradition. However, a London court rejected the claim of the Azerbaijani side. Nevertheless, Hajiyeva could not explain the source of her wealth, and therefore GBP 1.6 million worth of jewelry was confiscated. In any case, now Hajiyeva must explain her property.

PACE (2018)

In July 2018, the Committee on Rules and Regulations of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe announced that 13 members of the organization had been expelled on corruption charges. It turned out that these people had received bribes and gifts from Azerbaijan. On April 15 of the same year, PACE published a special report on the corruption allegations. The report noted that several current and former PACE members had violated the rules of ethics in relation to Azerbaijan (the names of former PACE President Pedro Agramunt and others are also mentioned). At the same time, the names of members of the Azerbaijani delegation S. Seyidov, E. Suleymanov, and M.

Mammadov were mentioned in the report.

Otis Elevators (2018)

In 2012, the Azerbaijani government decided to replace the old elevators in Baku. For this purpose, an order was signed in April 2013 and AZN 7 million was allocated to the executive authorities. The funds allocated for the modernization of the elevator industry, of course, did not end there, and there were expenditures on certain items from the state budget. And according to leaked information, in 2012 and 2014, the US company Otis was making illegal payments to officials to win local tenders.

According to the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Otis sent payments to Liftremont officials in Azerbaijan. This scheme was first used in March 2012. The deal was worth USD 1.8 million and used the bank accounts of two subcontractors to transfer 44% of the amount to Liftremont officials. According to the report, USD 790,000 was transferred to the accounts of these subcontractors.

From February 2013 to December 2014, Otis tried to get an additional contract from the Baku Elevator Repair Production Association. As a result, Otis Russia signed 9 contracts with Liftremont. The contracts were signed through four separate intermediary companies on the instructions of a "high-ranking official" of the Production Association. Otis sold Russian elevators to those intermediaries at the same price each time. According to the agreement, the intermediaries also sold the elevators to the Baku Elevator Repair Production Association at a significantly inflated price. The difference was transferred to the accounts of the union's management. The price difference was USD 11.8 million. Some of this money was intended for officials.

Eldar Mahmudov (2019)

In November 2019, a hacker attack on the Cayman National

Bank's database revealed that the family of former National Security Minister Eldar Mahmudov had created a business-property empire on the Isle of Man worth about EUR 100 million. This is stated in a joint investigation by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), Finance Uncovered, and Transparency International. The Mahmudovs' lawyers associate their wealth with their ancestor, Aslan Ashurov.

1.2 Million Euros Worth Watch (2019)

On June 26, 2019, the portal Diario de Ibiza published a small report about a theft on the island of Ibiza. A thief stole a watch from one of two young men walking along the shore. This was the fifth such theft, but this time the stolen watch was worth EUR 1.15 million. The next day, a picture of the police report began to circulate on social networks. The report stated that the name of the person whose watch was stolen was Rashad Abdullayev. On the same day, journalists identified him as the son of SOCAR President Rovnag Abdullayev. At the same time, it should be noted that despite the conflict of interests, Rashad Abdullayev is involved in many SOCAR-related businesses.

Azerbaijani Laundromat (2020)

A British court gave the Evening Standard newspaper access to court documents about GBP 14 million (USD 17 million) brought into Azerbaijan by an unnamed Azerbaijani couple as part of the Azerbaijani Laundromat scheme. There are allegations that the money was "'derived from international corruption and… laundered through a myriad of limited companies' including in Belize, the Marshall Islands and the Seychelles." The judge said that "indications that the funds came in a manner described as 'the Azerbaijani Laundromat.'" At the same time, it is noted that one of the couples is connected with "senior government officials in Azerbaijan."

German Bundestag (2021)

As a result of PACE's inquiry and the simultaneous publication of a number of documents, criminal cases were opened in several countries. Germany was no exception. The local branch of Transparency International has repeatedly appealed, and in 2019-2021, the immunity of several deputies was revoked. One of them is Axel Fischer. In 2021, the German Bundestag decided to revoke his immunity. Prosecutors accuse him of receiving payments from Azerbaijan. According to them, in return for the payment, Fischer defended the interests of Azerbaijan.

Akkord (2021)

In April 2021, the former owner of the construction company Akkord, Ilgar Hajiyev, gave an interview to a YouTube channel on his conversion to Christianity. He said in an interview that in Azerbaijan he was "threatened with arrest, death, and other threats, and first 51% of the company was confiscated, and then the entire company for the benefit of Ilham Aliyev's family." At the same time, he added that during the company's inspection, the prosecutor's office identified a shortfall of USD 100 million. In response, Hajiyev said that "the money was delivered to the president's family through Baylar Ayyubov."