

# From Pandemic to Recovery: Building Resilient Economies through Transparency, Integrity, and Trust

## Case of COVID-19 Hospital in Baku

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# Background

- Special quarantine regime was applied - March 2020 (approx. 830.000 infected, 10.000 fatal cases)
  - Module type COVID-19 hospital of the Ministry of Emergency Situations – opened July 2020
  - I.A (*also director of private MediStyle LLC*) was appointed as the director of the hospital
  - Anti-Corruption Directorate received a complaint – director’s assistant requested 1.800 \$ to admit applicant’s relative to the hospital
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- A criminal case was opened in April 2021 as a result of undercover operation



# Offences, Charges and Evidences

- Director I.A and head of division R.V arranged admittance of 140 patients only through ambulance service of *MediStyle LLC* - in return of 120-900 \$/person – approx. 30.000 \$ in total (without receipt)
- Through his assistants received bribes 6.800 \$ in 6 instances (from patients and their relatives)
- Head of division R.V. contracted COVID-19 himself, but the director arranged for him to leave the hospital grounds

## Charges:

- Director and head of division were charged with **Articles 139-1.2** (aggravated violation of quarantine regime), **308.2** (aggravated abuse of office), **311.3.1** (passive bribery on preliminary arrangement by a group) and **311.3.2** (passive bribery, repeatedly)
- Director's assistants were charged with Articles **308.2**, **311.3.1** and **311.3.2**

## Evidences:

- witness statements, cross examinations, interception of phone conversations/communication, forensic evidences (voice identification, financial, documents)

# Prosecution

- Pre-trial investigation finished in September 2021
- March 2022 Baku Grave Crimes Court convicted director and his 3 subordinates on all charges
- All four individuals were convicted from 5 to 8 years of imprisonment
- August 2022 Baku Appeal Court reduced sentences (3.5 to 4 years of imprisonment)
- December 2022 Supreme Court reduced sentences (2.5 to 3 years of imprisonment)

# Challenges

- Hospital was operating in a special regime – obstacle to conducting investigative actions (search, interrogation, SIM)
- Several patients forced to pay bribes died due to COVID-19
- Health risks for investigation team
- Relatives of patients-witnesses were not cooperative
- Large number witnesses (investigation team was involved)
- Lockdown – restriction on movement of citizens
- Director of the hospital was from an influential family (witness tampering)

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# Thank you!

