



press release

Friday, May 30, 2025

## **‘The Baku Connection’ Wins Special Prize at the European Press Prize: A Collaborative Investigation by Forbidden Stories with France 24 and RFI**



The collective investigation ‘The Baku Connection’ was led by the international network *Forbidden Stories*. It featured key contributions from **France 24** (Karina Chabour and Roméo Langlois from the Investigations desk; Corentin Bainier and Ershad Alijani from The Observers; and Sébastien Seibt from the web editorial team) and **RFI** (Daniel Vallot). The project was awarded the **Special Prize** at the European Press Prize, taking place on Wednesday, May 28, in Bari, Italy. Published in **February** and **November 2024**, the investigation unveiled a range of abuses by the Azerbaijani regime, including environmental destruction, corruption, prison torture, and illicit enrichment.

### **European Press Prize**

Established in 2012, the [European Press Prize](#) is awarded annually in five categories. Its mission is to promote quality journalism across Europe, support journalists facing market challenges and threats to press freedom, and encourage excellence in journalistic standards.

[Learn more about France 24 and RFI's contributions to the “Baku Connection” investigation.](#)



*Forbidden Stories* is an international network of journalists whose mission is to continue the investigations of colleagues who have been assassinated, threatened, or imprisoned. Since its creation in 2017, over 150 journalists and 60 media outlets have collaborated on investigations coordinated by *Forbidden Stories*, including ‘Project Cartel’, ‘Story Killers’, ‘Project Pegasus’, and ‘Project Rafael’.

This network provides threatened journalists worldwide with a means to safeguard their most sensitive investigations. If a journalist is kidnapped, imprisoned, or murdered, *Forbidden Stories* and its media partners can step in to carry forward their work, ensuring the stories reach a broad audience.

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