## <u>Press Releases: Statement on the Abduction and Arrest of Afgan</u> Mukhtarli

Press Statement Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

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The United States is disturbed by the reported abduction in Tbilisi, Georgia, and subsequent arrest in Azerbaijan of Azerbaijani journalist Afgan Mukhtarli on May 30. We are also troubled by the May 25 arrest in Azerbaijan of deputy Popular Front Party chairperson Gozal Bayramli.

We urge the government of Azerbaijan to release all those incarcerated for exercising their fundamental freedoms in accordance with its international and OSCE commitments.

We are closely following the Georgian investigation into the reported abduction, and urge that it be full, transparent, and timely.

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