

# **SALAFIST RISKS IN AZERBAIJAN | ASSESSING SUNNI ISLAMIST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**



**As in many other places, political Islam grows in Azerbaijan, both in its Sunni and Shia versions. There is undoubtedly here an Azerbaijani specificity. Representing something like 35% of the population, the Sunnis today appear to be the most active and well-organized. That paper intends to shed light on Sunni salafist developments in Azerbaijan over the past decade. It argues that salafist maturation has been mainly locally managed without however being able to prevent the internal rise of the more radical and violent jihadi line. It questions finally whether salafism has ever constituted a threat in the country.**

**Laurent VINATIER** | Research Fellow at the Thomas More Institute

Azerbaijan is a secular state with an overwhelmingly moderate Muslim population (International Crisis Group, 2008 [3]). Among those people, it is usually said that Shia predominate but no one really knows by how much as it does not exist yet any exact and reliable figures of religious affiliations within the society. Building on various objective estimations (Motika, 2001 [111]), the proportion Shia/Sunni appears to reach a 65%-35% level<sup>1</sup>. The authorities themselves are not really interested into those figures, as they are steadily playing down the differences between Sunni and Shia Islam and are trying to find ways to unite the different sects within Islam (Motika, 2001 [117,119]). A few Shia<sup>2</sup> but mostly Sunni groups have emerged which refuse the spiritual authority of the official clergy (International Crisis Group, 2008 [10]). Azerbaijani Sunnis however are by far the most active, mobilized and visible groups. Within Sunnism, the Salafist orientation, whose militant proponents associate with the earliest followers of the Prophet, only represents one trend among more moderate others.

That paper<sup>3</sup> details Sunni salafist developments in Azerbaijan over the past decade. It argues that salafist maturation has been mainly locally managed but could not prevent the internal rise of the more radical and violent Jihadi line. It questions consequently whether salafism has ever constituted a threat in the country. The first section recalls the general framing of salafism in Azerbaijan, clarifying history and explaining its radicalization. A second section tries then to categorize contemporary Azerbaijani salafism, while a third and last one particularly highlights the current Salafist jihadist path, including its interactions with the Caucasus Emirate and the war in Syria.

That research relies on a field work undertaken by the author for a major International Non-Governmental Organization in December 2012. That operational bias provided the opportunity to go as close as possible to some salafist practitioners in various mosques of Baku, i.e Abu Bakr Mosque, the "Lezgin Mosque" and the "Turkish Mosque", as micro-approach is preferred in that case by the NGOs. Individuals – their choice, their representations and their ideas – matter. Priority is clearly given to a bottom-up perspective singling out experts (or involved activists) and focusing on their stories of reality. That gives to that research an assumed constructivist bias, avoiding thus a too general perspective.

Concretely, meetings started with a formal discussion with the official or unofficial head of the visited Mosque at the time of the prayers for all the three mentioned mosques. In Abu Bakr and the Lezgin Mosque, it was possible afterwards to facilitate several informal interviews with random present parishioners. Those mosques were visited respectively two and four times. The Turkish Mosque proved to be less welcoming and was visited only once. In Sumgayt, no one was available at the Arab Mosque. All discussions were held in Russian (without translator) and none has been recorded in order to reach quickly more spontaneity in the exchanges<sup>4</sup>. In total, a dozen of persons for the whole three selected mosques, most of them anonymous, have been given questions. To frame the research and up-date the background, experts have been solicited.

That most recent research completes many previous field works on similar or close topics<sup>5</sup>, such as Chechen refugees' networks. They have been conducted in Baku every two or three years since 2003 and are substantially helping to better assess the lastly collected interviews. The present investigation also builds on the existing academic literature whose main titles are listed in a joint bibliography. Among them, Bayram Balci's regular talks and papers on Islamic issues, quite often associated with Altay Goyushov, as well as the more occasional International Crisis Group reports, prove to be the most valuable resources for their accuracy and detailed approach.

---

1. Author's proposed estimation.

2. For a comprehensive assessment of Shia Islam in Azerbaijan, please report to Sofie Bedford, *Islamic Activism in Azerbaijan: Repression and Mobilization in a Post-Soviet Context*. Stockholm: Dep of Political Science, 2009.

3. I am really grateful to Dr Ansgar Jödicke from the University of Fribourg for all his precious advice regarding the structure and argumentation.

4. The formal interviews have been transcribed afterwards on the basis of notes taken during the exchanges.

5. See for example: Laurent Vinatier et Michel Makinsky, "L'Azerbaïdjan au centre d'enjeux globaux", *EurOrient*, n°28, 2008.

# 1 | Featuring Azerbaijani Salafism

Salafist practices have been growing in Azerbaijan since the mid-1990s [Balci, 2007 [11,12]], as they do in some extra regions in the world. The Salafists believe themselves the only correct interpreters of the Koran and consider moderate Muslims to be infidels. They advocate a pure, ideological and political form of Islam. Azerbaijani salafism, however, did not straightaway appear as a radical movement (Cornell, 2006 [55]). Only part of it developed extremist views and practices after the mid-2000s.

## | Historical Shaping

Salafism in Azerbaijan mainly thrives around the Abu Bakr Mosque in the centre of Baku. The mosque has been built with Saudi money and is administered by Gamet Suleymanov, a Saudi-Arabia educated imam (Balci, 2007 [12]). The latter, which has a strong legitimacy among the majority of Sunnis in Azerbaijan, has for 15 years helped to consolidate and to anchor socially Sunni Islam in the country, including and especially in its Salafist version, as he expressed himself.

*I am a Salafist. I follow the salafist practice. This mosque [Abu Bakr] can be said a salafist mosque but I am against any form of external jihad. In the past, several hundreds of persons used to attend the Friday prayer. It was very popular.’<sup>6</sup>*

Salafism in Azerbaijan has developed mainly in urban areas with no distinction whether they are Sunni or Shia (Cornell, 2006 [56]). Given the traditionally tolerant and opened Azerbaijani Shia identity framework, it is not uncommon for young and educated and urban men in search of mobilising ideals to feel attracted by a radical religious discourse, as well as by all the personal and philosophical safety that a Salafist community can offer. The group usually arises and structures around a mosque that becomes the centre of the social life in the area. Gradually, the emerging community privatizes its immediate environment by making easier for its salafist members to rent flats in the neighbourhood or to take over shops that are soon turned into Islamic premises. It then progressively replaces the regulating and ruling authorities, reaching even a higher level of legitimacy among the inhabitants than the local city government<sup>7</sup>.

Also, salafism in Azerbaijan is not ethnically determined. That assertion may sound slightly paradoxical as historically, Sunni Islam in Azerbaijan is linked to ethnic groups in the north, mainly Avars and Lezgins whose populations also reside in Dagestan (Russian Federation) (Motika, 2001 [112]). This cross-border presence of the same ethnical and Sunni peoples did not however imply any particular solidarity or exchange other than classical trading between themselves<sup>8</sup> (Balci, 2006 [22]). In addition, it is to notice the presence of Sunnis in the eponymous ethnic Azeri group (from Turkic origin), as well as in smaller ethnic groups such as Tsakhur and Tat. Azerbaijani identity patently superseded all other references, particularly the Sunni one. Despite Azerbaijan’s large ethnic diversity, it proved to be pretty solid and homogeneous, stronger at least than the religious Sunni feature (Motika, 2001 [111]) (Bedford, 2012 [10]). The Northern Lezgins for example, as a whole, consider themselves more as an integrated part of the Azerbaijani nation, rather than as a trans-state ethnic community. A Lezgin father is more likely to give his daughter to an Azeri (Turkish ethnicity) or to any other non-Lezgin Azerbaijanis than to a Dagestani Lezgin. Similarly, a Lezgin Salafist in Azerbaijan will be closer to a Salafist Azeri than to a Dagestani Lezgin whoever he is, Salafist, Atheist or Nationalist. An interviewee from Lezgin origin even adds the religious factor, supposed to go over ethnic and national identities.

*‘There is no particular solidarity or proximity between Lezgin in Azerbaijan and Lezgin in Dagestan. We tend to privilege rather the Islamic factor. I feel closer to a Salafist French man than to a secular Lezgin (Dagestani or Azerbaijani) man.’<sup>9</sup>*

Actually, that appears quite exaggerated. That quotation must be rather read as the rejection of any ethnic cross-border solidarity. It seems that even the Salafi radicalization in Azerbaijan primarily proceeds in a national framework.

6. Interview, Baku, December 2012.

7. Interview, Baku, December 2012.

8. Interview, Baku, December 2012.

9. Interview, Baku, December 2012.

## | Radicalization

Radicalization of Azerbaijani Sunni Islam did not start overnight. It dates back to the 90s, when many young Azerbaijanis can benefit from new and freer religious teaching opportunities in neighbouring Dagestan (Cornell, 2006 [56]). This Caucasian Republic, part of the Russian Federation, revives then its intellectual tradition of religious studies and activism. Many young Azerbaijanis attend so the courses in Makhachkala by the renowned Dagestani Salafist preachers and ideologues. In the 2000s and the rise of violence in the whole Northern Caucasus, Azerbaijani authorities start to more closely monitor the possible ideological and material spill-over (ICG, 2008 [6]). That process accelerates and reinforces in 2007 just after the North Caucasian rebel leader Doku Umarov declares an Emirate, a military Islamic State all over Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia and Kabardino-Balkaria. Even though the fighting Emirate has never pretended to integrate the Sunni areas in Northern Azerbaijan populated by Lezgins and Avars from Caucasian ethnical descent, pressures and controls over the local Azerbaijani salafist communities are levelled-up. Ideas have been exchanged for sure. Maybe weapons have transited in one way or another in the first years. Some Azerbaijani nationals in any case go to the North-Caucasian battlefields and come back home (ICG, 2008 [6-7]). It triggers two violent salafist outbursts in 2008 and 2012.

The first started at the end of 2007. Ilgar Mollachiyev, an Azerbaijani citizen, from the Tsakhur ethnic group, coming from Zaqatala, engaged in the Dagestani movement of the Caucasus Emirate. He has just spent the previous years in Makhachkala, the Dagestani capital, studying Islam. Educated, he quickly reached a commanding position within the Dagestani/Emirate insurgency. He seems then to have been instructed by Doku Umarov to come back to Azerbaijan and set-up there an armed religious community (*Jamaat*). Called the "Forest Brothers", the *Jamaat* was tasked to initiate a *Jihad*. Mollachiyev had, however, to face Gamet Suleymanov's non-violent and anti-jihadist stance. He couldn't really oppose the Abu Bakr Mosque's imam and the two men regularly clashed. In August 2008, Mollachiyev organised an attack against the crowded mosque on a busy Friday. The imam was injured and more than a dozen of believers were killed (Bedford, 2012 [9]). Mollachiyev then fled to Dagestan where he was shot dead two days later by the Russian security services<sup>10</sup>. Consequently the Mosque has been closed by Azerbaijan's Government and is not reopened four years later.

During the four next years, no other significant event occurs. Suddenly, in April 2012, just a few days before the ceremony of Eurovision to be held in Baku, Azerbaijani security services forcibly dismantled a jihadist cell in the city of Ganja, an exclusively Shia city. Weapons seemed to have been found. The group's leader, announced as Vugar Padarov, was killed. Other members were arrested. There is actually no evidence that these men had violent intentions. It later came out that in reality, the announced leader, Vugar Padarov, has been eliminated as early as 2008 with Mollachiyev in Dagestan<sup>11</sup>. Given the uncertainty that continues to surround this operation, it is absolutely not confirmed that armed jihadist cells have settled and developed in Azerbaijan since the abortive attempt in 2008.

Nevertheless, the radicalization of Salafist groups became a political topic. Very early in the 2000s, just after September 11, Arab non-governmental organizations with dubious practices were banned (ICG, 2008 [5]). The experience of Salafist 'extension' and control over its immediate outreach, as it existed around the Abu Bakr Mosque, appeared also to be politically suspicious. Some elements of this Salafist influence can still be experienced today in the Abu Bakr neighbourhood but on a much lower level<sup>12</sup>. Same is true in Sumgayt around the so-called 'Arab' mosque in reference to the funders that presided over its renovation. Other examples of such salafist neighbourhoods can be found in Ganja of course, but also in the suburbs of Baku, in Qobustan, in Müşvüqabad or in Garachukhur. In all these cases, the Salafist 'community', numbering a few hundred individuals, have been reduced. Every time it came to the Interior Ministry of Azerbaijan to break or constrain, more or less violently, their 'extension' (Cornell, 2006 [57]), (Goyushov, 2008 [79]). Many of those Mosques have been closed, Abu Bakr first after the explosion in 2008. Like-minded mosques in Ganja, where the April-disbanded group met, and in Sumgayt, the Arab one<sup>13</sup>, are now closed as well. On the remaining still tolerated Sunni Salafi mosques, control is tight. Almost all of them have lost their official state registration and face multiple restrictions, such as the impossibility to pray in the streets immediately surrounding the mosque, which significantly limits the Friday attendance. The unofficial manager of the Lezgin Mosque in Baku tells the absurd red tape to overcome.

10. Interview, Baku, December 2012.

11. Interview, Baku, December 2012.

12. Compared observations, March 2006 and December 2012.

13. The Arab Mosque in Sumgayt has been closed in 2010. Interview, anonymous, Sumgayt, December 2012.

*'Our Mosque, the Lezgin Mosque has lost its registration a few years ago. Since then, it proved impossible to re-obtain an authorisation. At the State Committee on Religious Affairs, they say that we need to be an officially-registered religious organization to claim a Mosque, but when we answer that we are the Lezgin Cultural Association, they do not recognize us because we do not have any affiliated Mosque.*

*In average, between 200 and 300 persons come for the Friday prayer as the Lezgin Mosque is one of the last tolerated Sunni places in the old city. All others have been closed. The problem is that our prayer room is very small. Most of our believers then used to pray in the street, which is no longer permitted.'*<sup>14</sup>

The administrative burden is the common tool in all the Post-Soviet countries to impose control on a specific group. It works quite effectively to reduce the scope and the strength of a group. In that case, the Mosque can continue working but its ability to play a social or political centre, at least before or after the Friday prayers, is strongly put into question. As a complementary policy, the authorities give priority to some very consensual structures, such as the Asia Committee or the Azerbaijani International Islamic Congress (IDRAK), promoting inter-faiths dialogue, are favoured. One of his officials explains his duties.

*'We are disseminating and teaching the real principles of Islam. Very often young people who are interested into Islamic practices do not really understand what they are. They think that all of them must be taken as granted without taking into account the geographical and historical contexts.'*<sup>15</sup>

By putting the emphasis on geographical and historical differences, IDRAK's official implicitly criticizes the crude and un-nuanced approach of those who claim to imitate the *salaf*, the first followers of the Prophet. Their main targets obviously are the young Sunnis who are coming under increasing radical violence and who must be brought back to a more flexible and moderate stance.

## 2 | Categorizing Contemporary Azerbaijani Salafism

Taking into account the previously-determined historical, sociological and ethnic characteristics of the Azerbaijani Salafism, that section aims at more accurately categorizing the different types of political behaviours observed in Azerbaijan. Obviously, the Jihadist inclination opposes the non-violent options. Among those latter, it must also be distinguished two subgroups.

### | Loyal Salafism

Loyal Salafism clearly and explicitly condemns violence. It conversely advocates respect for the authority of the State and its officials. It tends to strictly separate Islam from politics and to devote itself exclusively to religious aspects (Cornell, 2006 [55]) (Balci, 2007 [31]). Loyal Salafism recognizes, at least in appearance, Azerbaijani Mufti's religious and institutional legitimacy, even though he is a Shia. Gamet Suleymanov who still today acts as the imam of the Abu Bakr Mosque despite its closure, effectively embodies that tendency. Asserting and confirming regularly his loyalty to the Azerbaijani government, he is allowed to continue running at a lower profile the Abu Bakr Mosque. The great room is sealed but the small room in the basement still welcomes some of the believers who are personally acquainted to Gamet or his deputies, as he asserts himself.

*'For security reasons, the small room in the basement of Abu Bakr is reserved for the persons I know or my deputies know.'*<sup>16</sup>

Most of them, interestingly, live in the immediate neighbourhood. To some extent, the Salafist extension over the immediate neighbourhood is still tolerated by the authorities around Abu Bakr but on a much lesser level.

Gamet is not the only accepted Salafist imam, of course. A bunch of other Saudi-Arabia-trained imams officiate in Sunni allowed Mosques in Baku. The Saudi connection, involving even more widely the entire Arabic Peninsula, exists (Goyushov, 2008 [79]). Gamet and its affiliates often get funding from Saudi Arabia or from the Emirates for some social projects they may want to develop. Private Emirati Sponsors have thus financed recently a Baku-

14. Interview Baku, December 2012.

15. Interview, Azerbaijani International Islamic Congress, Baku, December 2012.

16. Interview, Baku, December 2012.

based Salafist radio<sup>17</sup>. There is not a priori a hidden political agenda. Relationships and processes are institutionalized and supervised in any case by the Azerbaijani State authorities.

## | Independent Salafism

Independent Salafism exists and grows mainly in mosques that have officially lost their registration with the authorities but whose activity may continue to be tolerated by the state to certain restrictive conditions. These independent Salafist absolutely refute Azerbaijani Mufti's moral supremacy and limit as much as possible their contact with the Shia and with the official Islamic authorities. They prefer to pray at home or in the small places, they are still tolerated to manage, rather than to attend major official mosques (ICG, 2008 [11]). Scattered over the territory, those independent Salafist communities are nationally uncoordinated. Some even gather clandestinely. Their social horizon usually does not exceed the place and its surroundings where they can meet. Very divided, they have no real leader. However, it seems that a certain Iachar, who studied with Gamet in Saudi Arabia, enjoys some influence among those Salafist followers, just because he is perceived as still relatively independent and honest.

The Salafist faith of those persons who try to strictly follow the Islamic laws outside the formal and authorized frames appears to be largely reactive. The more they suffer pressures at work or in access to housing and health care, the more they will radicalize ideologically. They simply would like to avoid recurrent constraints by the State authorities. They aim at freely practising their version of Islam in decent places. They remain obviously non-violent. They show relative neutrality towards *Jihad* and any armed engagement.

## | Jihadist Salafism

There is clearly a violent Salafist tendency in Azerbaijan, embodied into the 'Forest Brothers' *Jamaat* which succeeds to a less-known group terminated in the late 90s Jeyshullah (Cornell, 2006 [61]). It was firstly organized around Mollachiyev and possibly relayed by Vugar Padarov more recently. That orientation however does not seem as pregnant as it could appear. It is quite unlikely for instance that the Ganja's cell had effectively envisaged conducting attacks as part of a *Jihadi* process. That said, Azerbaijan definitely hosts a small contingent of young individuals willing to fight, wherever it may be possible, in the name of Allah and for the legal establishment of the Islamic Law. In Azerbaijan itself, this group has hardly more than a few dozen of people today<sup>18</sup>, while around 100 to 200 Azerbaijanis<sup>19</sup> in total are estimated to be involved abroad, particularly in Syria and in Afghanistan, current fronts of the global *Jihad*.

# 3 | Azerbaijani Salafism's international links

Azerbaijani salafist figures in their writings and declarations did not and do not yet seem to gear particularly towards the Northern Emirate or any other external source of influence (Goyushov, 2008 [66]). Interactions appear to have been quite low suggesting that external influence on Azerbaijani salafism should not be overestimated. Today, both Jihadist and non-Jihadist Azerbaijani Salafism is rather getting global.

## | The Caucasus Emirate Abandoned Option

Azerbaijani Salafists do not care so much about the North Caucasian issues. The two areas, however adjacent, enter only sporadically in interaction. Never, for example, during interviews, Salafi sources have voluntarily referred to the Caucasus Emirate. As seen above, Lezgins on both sides of the border do not sustain specific relations beyond trade and economic contacts mainly. When asked about their fighting northern neighbours, independent salafists<sup>20</sup> usually neither condemn the existence of the Emirate nor deny their *raison d'être*. They

---

17. Interview, Baku, December 2012.

18. Interview Baku, December 2012. Author's personal estimation for 2013.

19. Interview, Baku, December 2012. Author's personal estimation for 2013.

20. Interviews, Baku, December 2012.

would not qualify them however as a 'terrorist structure'. They rather argue that those armed Islamist groups defend their territory against a predatory and dictatorial occupying force, as they are legitimately entitled to do under the Sharia terms. It does not mean in their opinion that this insurgency model should be replicated in Azerbaijan. They are fully aware of the huge contextual differences. Enemies and objectives in Russia and in Azerbaijan have simply nothing in common.

*Jihad can be legitimate to defend its territory. I can understand the Dagestani Salafists. I see however no reason why a Jihad must or should be led in Azerbaijan. I, together with my friends here rather stand for a peaceful Salafism.<sup>21</sup>*

On the operational jihadist level so far, the 'Forest Brothers' on the Emirate's behalf have never been able to establish a permanent basis on the Azerbaijani territory. After 2008 no financial transfers, no militants' crossings could be significantly reported between Azerbaijan and the restless Russian region. Only an Emirate representative, probably an Istanbul-based Dagestani, is said to regularly tour the North Caucasian communities for some unspecified business, including probably managing isolated cases of wounded fighters<sup>22</sup>. There is no doubt that the close and effective monitoring by the Azerbaijani security services at the borders and in the country has largely narrowed the human and material flows coming from Dagestan, considerably thus reducing the Emirate's ability to encourage the development of home-grown, and supportive, salafist-jihadist structures.

## | The Virtual Frontier

Azerbaijani Salafism appears to be a dynamic movement in its loyal and independent forms. Its jihadist version, less successful, mainly tends to unfold on the net. Jihadist Salafism in Azerbaijan remains quite a virtual engagement for now. A myriad of jihadist-devoted sites, mostly in Azerbaijani but also in Russian languages, can easily be found (Yunusov, 2012 [...]). The most important one used to be <http://milleti-ibrahim.info/><sup>23</sup> updated once or twice a month but he has been closed recently. It is interesting to note that the publications in Russian and Azerbaijan do not necessarily match, suggesting that the site actually recycles translations taken from other sites. Again, references to the Caucasus Emirate prove to be very rare.

Beyond the sites, the social networks specifically Facebook and its Russian correspondent, vkontakte (vk.com) play a key role in the process of radicalization within the Azerbaijani youth. They are naturally not only focused on jihadism. Independent salafism disseminates also quite broadly and substantially. But it is true nevertheless that on those virtual forums the most extremist discussions and violent commitments have free rein. There is still however the reality threshold to cross.

## | Azerbaijani Global Jihad

For the real jihad, young Azerbaijani volunteers have to leave the country. It is not (yet) possible to fight in Azerbaijan (Ismailadze, 2005). Waging a holy war there will hardly mobilize enough people, at least for now. In the past those apprentice fighters would go and engage on the other side of the Caucasus but the current flow is marginal (ICG, 2008 [6]). Today young Azerbaijanis, perhaps around a hundred, rather prefer joining the more active fronts in Afghanistan and Syria.

It has been impossible to confirm however the existence in Azerbaijan of underground platforms dedicated to these kinds of transfers towards external Salafist theatres of operations. In Azerbaijan, the jihadist stance remains essentially a virtual mobilization. Concretely, taking action could prove extremely difficult and unlikely, except for individuals who have already been in contact with some special channels outside. In any case, there is nothing systemic or mechanical from and within Azerbaijan.

Commitments to international fronts are made from abroad, particularly from Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia or Egypt, where usually the volunteer has come to follow an educational curriculum. The passage occurs indirectly. In those intermediary places, he connects with some formalized networks which make him reach the neighbouring or closest jihadist front. Once in the system, he is able to move between different theatres. It should not be surprising that some Azerbaijanis today in Syria could have previously fought in Afghanistan. Part of them also would have probably transited through Turkey.

---

21. Interview, Baku, December 2012.

22. Interview, Baku, December 2012.

23. Website lastly checked on June 21, 2013 and suspended at that time.

## | Conclusion

Salafism was long not considered as a threat in Azerbaijan despite its occasional links with the restless Russian southern region of North Caucasus. Legitimately concerned by both a possible spill-over of the armed conflict in the North Caucasus and the rise of the Turkish influence proposing, on the AKP model, a liberal and democratic form of Sunni Islam, the Azerbaijani authorities have established a suppressive politics of religion instead of the traditional ecumenism.

Undoubtedly the strong pressures that the Azerbaijani State has exerted for the past few years on the Sunni communities have prompted their radicalization. But tight police control over the whole territory and effective Azerbaijani secret police have prevented the most radical groups to mature and operate locally. True, some individuals or mini-cells still exist underground but remain without any operational capacity and opportunity. Most of the radical salafist have left Azerbaijan to engage on the different fronts of the on-going global *Jihad*.

Laurent VINATIER

---



## | References

Bayram Balci, « Renouveau islamique en Azerbaïdjan, *Les Etudes du CERI*, CERI, n°138, Paris, 2007

Sofie Bedford, *Islamic Activism in Azerbaijan: Repression and Mobilization in a Post-Soviet Context*. Stockholm: Dep of Political Science, 2009.

Sofie Bedford, "Oppositional Islam in Azerbaijan", *Caucasus Analytical Digest n°44, Islam in Azerbaijan*, 2012

Svante E. Cornell, « The politicization of islam in Azerbaijan », *Silk Road Paper*, Central Asia – Caucasus Institute, Uppsala University, October 2006

Altay Goyushov, "Islamic Revival in Azerbaijan", *Current trends in Islamist Ideology*, vol°7, Hudson Institute, 2008

International Crisis Group, "Azerbaijan: independent Islam and the State", *Europe Report n°191*, International Crisis Group, Brussels, 25 March 2008

Fariz Izmailadze, *The rise of Islam in Azerbaijan*, Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, 28 March 2005

Raoul Motika, « Islam in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan », In "Islam et politique dans le monde ex-communiste", *Archives des sciences sociales des religions*, n°115, juillet-septembre 2001

Laurent Vinatier et Michel Makinsky, "L'Azerbaïdjan au centre d'enjeux globaux", *EurOrient*, n°28, 2008.

Arif Yunusov, *Islamic palette of Azerbaijan*, Institute of Peace and Democracy, Baku, 2012