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RFE/RL: AZERBAIJANI PRESIDENT CAUTIONS REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS NOT TO PRESSURE BUSINESSMEN

Addressing a conference in Baku on 11 February to mark the first anniversary of the launch of his five-year program to promote the socioeconomic development of Azerbaijan's rural regions, Ilham Aliyev called on district administrators to assist local businessmen rather than create problems for them through repeated needless inspections, Azerbaijani media reported. He warned that local administrators who continue to harass businessmen will lose their jobs. He also instructed local bosses to respond swiftly to complaints by local residents. Aliyev said that over the past year 90,000 new permanent jobs have been created in rural areas. He said that in 2005, 200 billion manats (\$40.76 million) will be made available in grants for local businessmen, which is double the amount allocated in 2004. LF