



## **PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT : AZERBAIJAN**

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## PROFILE SUMMARY

Latest government's statistics show a population of 570,000 internally displaced persons in the government-controlled territory of Azerbaijan (Azerbaijan State Committee for Refugee and IDPs October 2001). This population, in majority ethnic Azeris, fled the autonomous republic Nagorno-Karabakh, a predominantly ethnic Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan, and neighbouring districts, following ethnic violence and fighting between Armenian and Azeri forces between 1990 and 1994. Since a ceasefire was implemented early 1994, only a small fraction of the displaced has returned to their homes. The majority of the displaced has remained unable to go back to their areas of origin, either under Armenian occupation or in war affected areas along the ceasefire line. Several thousands ethnic Armenians in Azerbaijan were reported to have moved to the areas under Armenian occupation in the early stages of the conflict (Hayne 1998). As a result of a lack of international access, except for ICRC, the Norwegian Refugee Council has not been able so far to document internal displacement in those areas .

Ethnic tensions between Azeri and Armenian communities in the autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabakh in western Azerbaijan were already manifest before the independence of Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1991. Armenian communities were forced to leave Azerbaijan for Armenia between 1988 and 1991, while ethnic Azeris in Armenia took flight in the opposite direction. In 1991, the situation degenerated into an armed conflict between forces of the self proclaimed "Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh", supported by Armenia, and Azeri armed forces. The biggest wave of displacement occurred in 1993, when Karabakh Armenian forces made significant military gains beyond Nagorno-Karabakh, displacing an estimated 450,000 to 500,000 ethnic Azeris. An offensive in April 1994 led to further territorial gains by the Armenian forces in districts north and northeast of Nagorno-Karabakh. This led to the displacement of another 50,000 persons. When the fighting stopped as a result of the cease fire agreement in May 1994, Azerbaijan had lost about 20 per cent of its own territory to Armenian and Karabakh forces, including the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and large portions of neighbouring districts. (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 2000)

Negotiations held under the auspices of the OSCE's Minsk Group have so far failed to bring significant concessions from the contending factions, in particular regarding the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and the participation of the Armenian leadership in Stepanekert in negotiations. Several rounds of talks between the two parties in 2001 do not seem to have enabled parties to make significant progress (IFRC 7 September 2001). Since September 2001, new attention given by the United States, one of the co-chairs of the Minsk Group, to moderate Muslim countries, such as Azerbaijan, may create conditions more conducive to a settlement (U.S.DOS 6 November 2001, EurasiaNet 5 November 2001).

Pending a solution to the conflict, the displaced in Azerbaijan have remained in precarious conditions. Most of the displaced have settled in areas close to their region of

origin along the ceasefire line, forming a so-called "IDP belt" around the occupied area while a quarter of the internally displaced population has moved further to the capital Baku. In general, the shelter conditions of the displaced have been inadequate with most households living in camps, or public buildings, with insufficient access to water or sanitation facilities. A survey conducted in Southern Azerbaijan shows that prevalence rates for disability, chronic and acute diseases are higher among the displaced than the rest of the population. Displaced households mention financial constraints as the main obstacle to receiving medical care (IMC November 2000).

According to international organizations, an estimated 70 percent of households in conflict-affected areas are poor, with 35 percent of these categorized as very poor (USAID Caucasus Mission January 2001). The displaced households typically depend on subsidies and pensions from the Government and direct assistance from humanitarian organizations for their survival. Only a small minority of the displaced has access to land which they can often not cultivate as a result of financial constraints. Displaced persons have been excluded from the land privatization process which is open only to Azerbaijani citizens in their home districts (UNDP 1999). Lack of economic opportunities in the areas of displaced have obliged male displaced to leave their families in camps and move to urban areas or third countries, such as Russia (UN CHR 25 January 2000).

The various measures taken by the State in response to the needs of the displaced show a "sense of solidarity" with the affected population. (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 2000) The state provides most of the displaced with various subsidies and they are exempt from all taxes and utility and public transportation costs. The Law on the Status of Refugees and Forcibly Displaced Persons (persons displaced within Azerbaijan as a result of "military aggression, natural and technological disasters") and the Law on the Social Protection of Forcibly Displaced Persons, both adopted in May 1999, guarantee subsidies and other exemptions. However, the impact of these laws remains seriously limited by financial constraints faced by the State (WFP November 1999, UNHCR 7 March 2001). A presidential decree signed in August 2001 compelled the State Oil Company to transfer an amount equivalent to 190,000 US\$ to the State Committee for Refugees and IDPs on a monthly basis. Part of this money will be used to fund food aid distribution to the displaced in need (Coordination Meeting Report September 2001).

The Government of Azerbaijan has long been reluctant to encourage any resettlement of the internally displaced, fearing that it might undermine the prospects for return of the displaced to territories now occupied by Armenian forces. The lack of any perspective for return in the near future and the decreasing donor support have obliged the government to show more acceptance for programmes aimed at the integration of the displaced into new communities. (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 2000).

In the line of this new policy, international agencies and NGOs have replaced progressively humanitarian assistance with development oriented activities. WFP expects to gradually scale down the group of beneficiaries from 300,000 in 1999 to 70,000 in 2002 and give priority to recovery assistance through food-for work and food-



for-training schemes (WFP 28 April 1999). In charge of seven camps in southern Azerbaijan, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has decided to disrupt direct food assistance to most of the camps residents and reduce dependency on external assistance through agriculture projects and social mobilisation (IFRC 7 September 2001). Another major contribution to strengthening the self-help capacity of the displaced comes from Mercy Corps International whose "Azerbaijan Humanitarian Assistance Programme" now primarily focuses on community support and the development of economic opportunities for the displaced (Mercy Corps May 2001). Upon a proposal by the World Bank, a Social Fund for the Development of IDPs was also created in December 1999 with a seed investment of 10 million US\$ from the World Bank and other international donors. The Fund will support development-oriented projects, in particular in the areas of community mobilisation, income-generating activities and micro-credit (Coordination Meeting Report 25 April 2000).

Efforts have been undertaken to improve the housing conditions of the displaced still residing in camps. During 2001, UNHCR and IFRC have addressed water and sanitation needs in various selected settlements of displaced persons. During 2001, UNHCR created new settlements for a few hundred displaced households on sites provided by the authorities, with improved housing, livelihood and access to basic infrastructure and services (UNHCR July 2001). Reconstruction plans have also been designed for regions along the ceasefire line in western Azerbaijan, mainly the districts of Fizuli, Agdam and Terter, from which a significant portion of the displaced is originating. A multi-year reconstruction programme benefiting some 36,000 returnees and 250,000 persons who remained in the war-damaged area was initiated by the Government in 1998, with the support of UNDP, UNHCR, the World Bank and the European Union (Thompson 2000). Through its "Fizuli Repatriation Project", the IFRC currently supports the repatriation of 160 families through the provision of building materials, while the government provides water, electricity and irrigation. IFRC is planning to facilitate the rehabilitation of an additional 160 houses in another village of the Fizuli district for 2002 (IFRC 7 September 2001).

So far, return programmes have not had a significant impact on the caseload of internally displaced persons in Azerbaijan, which decreased by of 5,000 in the course of 2001. Although various organisations have received financial contributions from international oil companies based in Azerbaijan (such as IFRC and UNHCR), decreasing support from the donor community has obliged international organisations to reduce their ambitions (USCR 2000, UNHCR December 2000). Donor interest is likely to increase only to assist the implementation of a peace agreement (UN Azerbaijan 22 May 2000).

(Updated December 2001)

## CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT

### Causes of displacement

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**Internal displacement is a direct consequence of the conflict with Armenia over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh (1988 to 1994)**

- The deteriorating relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan between 1988 and early 1991 led to a forced exchange of populations between the two countries
- With the eruption of the internal armed conflict between the Karabakh Armenian forces and those of the Government of Azerbaijan Fall 1991, the displacement crisis became predominantly internal in nature
- In 1992 there was wholesale displacement of ethnic Azerbaijanis, Kurdish and Meskhetian Turk populations
- The biggest wave of displacement occurred in 1993 when Karabakh Armenian forces displaced 450,000 to 500,000 persons
- An offensive in April 1994 by Karabakh Armenian forces led to the displacement of another 50,000 persons

"As internal displacement in Azerbaijan is a direct consequence of the conflict, the patterns of displacement followed developments in the hostilities and, like the conflict itself, occurred along ethnic lines. The first phase of displacement, which was predominantly cross-border in nature, occurred between 1988 and early 1991 when ethnic tensions resulted in what essentially was a wholesale exchange of populations on the basis of ethnicity between Azerbaijan and Armenia, with over 300,000 ethnic Armenians fleeing from Azerbaijan to Armenia and some 185,000 ethnic Azeris fleeing from Armenia to Azerbaijan. In the spring of 1991, and with the aid of Soviet forces, the Government of the then Azerbaijani Soviet Republic conducted an exercise known as "Operation Ring", ostensibly for the purposes of internal passport control, which resulted in the forced displacement of ethnic Armenians from several villages on the periphery of Nagorno-Karabakh into the enclave or to Armenia. / See Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, Seven Years of Conflict, pp. 4 and 59./ Some of this latter group of displaced returned to their home areas in late 1991 and in 1992.

Beginning in the autumn of 1991, as ethnic violence and tensions erupted into internal armed conflict between the Karabakh Armenian forces and those of the Government of Azerbaijan, the displacement crisis also changed character to become predominantly internal in nature. A series of violent attacks, by which Karabakh forces gained control of the cities of Khojaly and Shusha in Nagorno-Karabakh in the spring of 1992 and of a land corridor between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia in the area around Lachin in June 1992, resulted in the wholesale displacement of the ethnic Azerbaijani and Kurdish populations, as well as of Meskhetian Turk refugees settled in these areas. Counter-offensives by Azerbaijani forces beginning in late June 1992 displaced some 40,000

ethnic Armenians. The biggest wave of displacement occurred in 1993, when Karabakh Armenian forces not only reversed earlier losses but also made significant military gains beyond Nagorno-Karabakh, including the entire Lachin district connecting the enclave to Armenia and the whole or large parts of the predominantly Azeri-populated provinces surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh, displacing an estimated 450,000 to 500,000 persons. An offensive in April 1994 led to further gains in the northern parts of Nagorno-Karabakh and districts to the north-east, displacing another 50,000 persons." (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 2000, paras. 29-30)

## **Background to the conflict**

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### **The ethnic conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh (1988-1994)**

- Nationalist aspirations of ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, in western Azerbaijan, created ethnic tensions from 1988 onward
- Ethnic Armenian in Nagorno-Karabakh proclaim independence (6 January 1992), leading to civil war between Karabakh Armenian forces and Azerbaijan
- At the time of the cease-fire (12 May 1994), "Armenian forces" controlled most of the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, including between 17 to 20 percent of Azerbaijani territory

"Internal displacement in Azerbaijan is a direct consequence of the conflict over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, a mountainous and fertile region (the literal translation of its name being "Mountainous Black Garden") covering some 1,700 square miles in western Azerbaijan. The territory is close to - in some parts by only a few kilometres - but not contiguous with Armenia. Ethnic Armenians constituted the majority of its pre-war population of 180,000, although there also was a significant presence of some 40,000 ethnic Azeris.

Nagorno-Karabakh is a region to which both Azerbaijan and Armenia claim historical ties stretching back centuries. However, the roots of the present conflict can be traced to the early twentieth century. After the Russian revolution, Azerbaijan and Armenia fought as newly independent States over Nagorno-Karabakh. The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 recognized Azerbaijan's claim to the territory. After Azerbaijan and Armenia were incorporated in the Soviet Union, this territorial arrangement for Nagorno-Karabakh was retained, while Armenia was awarded the district of Zangezur which had connected Azerbaijan to its westernmost region of Nakhichevan. Thus, on the resulting map of the region, Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhichevan were enclaves whose inhabitants were separated from their ethnic kin in the titular republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan respectively. The Soviet handling of the nationalities issue, as reflected in the manner in which borders were drawn, formed part of a wider strategy aimed at safeguarding the centralization of power in Moscow by keeping nationalities in the peripheral regions divided and interdependent so that none would be able to break away from the Union. [...] However, rather than resolving nationalist disputes, this strategy had the reverse

effect of reinforcing them, by raising grievances about the treatment of ethnic minorities outside of their titular republics.

Towards the end of the Soviet era, nationalist aspirations in Nagorno-Karabakh resurfaced with renewed force. Beginning in 1988, ethnic tensions intensified and began to take a violent form targeting Azeris in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia and ethnic Armenians in Azerbaijan, with particularly violent attacks occurring against the latter in the city of Sumgait in February 1988 and in the capital, Baku, in January 1990. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in autumn 1991, both Armenia and Azerbaijan became independent States. On 6 January 1992, the ethnic Armenian leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh proclaimed the "Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh" - a claim which neither Azerbaijan nor the international community recognizes - and the dispute entered a new phase of civil war.

While the conflict concerns and is concentrated on territory falling within the internationally-recognized borders of Azerbaijan, it also has an unmistakable external dimension which has the effect of 'internationalizing' it. It is generally accepted that the Karabakh Armenian cause has received considerable economic and military support from Armenia and the ethnic Armenian diaspora. [...] For this reason, analyses of the conflict tend to describe the conflict as one between the Government of Azerbaijan and "Armenian forces", the latter, deliberately ambiguous, term referring to the Karabakh Armenian forces and their wider membership, which may include citizens of Armenia, mercenaries and members of the armed forces of Armenia. [...] The United Nations Security Council resolutions on the conflict reflect its international dimension in explicitly referring to the deterioration of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the resulting tensions between them, urging the Government of Armenia "to continue to exert its influence" over the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians, and urging 'States to refrain from the supply of any weapons and munitions which might lead to an intensification of the conflict or the continued occupation of territory'. / Security Council resolutions 822 (1993) of 30 April 1993, 853 (1993) of 29 July 1993, 874 (1993) of 14 October 1993 and 884 (1993) of 12 November 1993./ Another manifestation of the international dimension of the conflict is found in the economic blockade imposed against Armenia by Azerbaijan. In this connection, the Security Council has expressed, by means of a statement by its President, 'deep concern at the devastating effect of interruptions in the supply of goods and materials, in particular energy supplies, to Armenia and to the Nakhichevan region of Azerbaijan' and called on Governments in the region 'to allow humanitarian supplies to flow freely, in particular fuel'. / Statement by the President of the Security Council on 29 January 1993 (S/25199), in connection with interruptions in supply of goods and materials, in particular energy supplies, to Armenia and to the Nakhichevan region of Azerbaijan./ The continued imposition of this blockade is a reflection of the fact that while the ceasefire has put an end to active hostilities, serious tensions remain.

At the time that the Russian-brokered ceasefire came into force on 12 May 1994, 'Armenian forces' controlled all but the north-eastern-most section of Nagorno-Karabakh, all of the surrounding districts to the west and south of the enclave and portions of the

districts of Fizuli, Terter and Agdam to the east, collectively covering some 17 to 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan. The war thus affected a much larger area and population than that of the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh centrally at issue, uprooting approximately 1 million people from and within Azerbaijan and from Armenia, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 persons, injuring countless more and leaving an unknown but not insignificant number missing or taken hostage. [...] The war also exacted severe material damage, because hostilities often took on a pattern of looting and systematic burning of captured areas." (UN Commission for Human Rights 25 January 1999, paras. 20-24)

### **Peace efforts (1992-1998)**

- Since the summer of 1992, the OSCE has engaged in efforts to achieve a peaceful solution under the aegis of its 11-country Minsk Group
- Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia have both declared a commitment to settling the conflict by peaceful means, but significant differences remain regarding the terms on which to do so
- The absence of hostilities appears to have removed the urgency for peace

Since the summer of 1992, the OSCE has engaged in efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the conflict under the aegis of its 11-country Minsk Group, currently under the co-chairmanship of France, the Russian Federation and the United States. / The Minsk Group (named for the city where a peace conference ultimately is envisaged) consisting of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey, the United States and "interested parties in Nagorno-Karabakh"./ Following the conclusion of the ceasefire, the OSCE Budapest Summit of December 1994 agreed on the eventual establishment of a peacekeeping force - the first of its kind for the Organization. This proposal has yet to be realized. Meanwhile, conflict settlement efforts continue.

A proposal presented by OSCE to the parties in September 1997 had generated considerable optimism within the international community that a solution to the conflict would be found before the end of the year. Azerbaijan had accepted the proposal and Armenia, under the leadership of President Levon Ter-Petrossian, had also accepted it, with reservations, as a basis for future negotiations. However, political developments in Armenia in the spring of 1998, namely the resignation of Ter-Petrossian and the holding of presidential elections in which the Government's approach to the peace negotiations proved to be a major issue, resulted in the election of Robert Kocharian as president. It then became necessary to clarify the positions of the parties. With this aim, the Minsk Group co-chairmen undertook a visit to the region in mid-May [1998], just days prior to the visit of the Representative, and ascertained that there existed considerable differences in the approaches of the parties to the conflict settlement process. On the positive side, the parties reaffirmed their adherence to the ceasefire and their commitment to continuing conflict negotiations within the framework of the Minsk Group. Yet, in stark contrast to the optimism of late 1997 that considerable progress had been made on the path towards

peace, the prevailing view at the time of the Representative's visit was that it could not be predicted with any certainty when and in what manner the conflict will be resolved. While open calls, on both sides, to consider a military solution represent a minority view, they nonetheless indicate that the threat of a return to armed conflict cannot be dismissed. It should be noted that the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia have both declared a commitment to settling the conflict by peaceful means, but significant differences remain regarding the terms on which to do so.

To be sure, the fact that the ceasefire, initially agreed upon for a period of three months, has held for more than four years is a significant achievement. Nonetheless, it falls far short of a lasting solution to the conflict and its concomitant displacement crisis. The conflict, in other words, is in a stage neither of active war nor of active peace. The durability of the ceasefire thus could be considered as a victim of its own success: the absence of hostilities appears to have removed the urgency for peace. Moreover, while the ceasefire put an end to large-scale hostilities, sporadic skirmishes along the border continue.

In the absence of a lasting solution to the conflict and in the light of the security incidents that continue to occur in the border areas, the option of large-scale return of the displaced populations also remains elusive. Some return has occurred and more is at present taking place in certain formerly occupied areas of Azerbaijan, the so-called 'war-liberated' areas. However, for those internally displaced from the significant amount of territory still under occupation, the resolution of the conflict remains a prerequisite to return. (UN Commission on HR 25 January 1999, paras. 25-28)

#### **Peace talks: conflicting parties express desire to reach a settlement (2000)**

- OSCE Minsk Group welcomed recent pledge by the Armenian and the Azerbaijani leaders to try to reach a peace agreement before their respective terms in office end of 2003
- Azerbaijan is prepared to grant the disputed enclave only "the highest degree of autonomy" within Azerbaijan but Armenia continues to favor the so-called "common state" model
- The participation of the Nagorno Karabakh leadership in the peace process remains an issue of contention between Armenia and Azerbaijan

"The recent visit by the co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group to Ankara, Yerevan, Stepanakert, and Baku has again raised hopes that a solution to the Karabakh conflict may be within reach. The co-chairs apparently hope that the promise of substantial economic benefits could induce the conflict parties to rethink their positions and show a greater readiness for compromise than they have done in the past. And the stopover of two of the three co-chairs in Ankara highlights the role envisaged by the international community for Turkey in providing economic assistance to both Armenia and Azerbaijan once a final peace agreement is reached.

The U.S. co-chair, Carey Cavanaugh, told journalists in Yerevan on 11 December after his meeting with Armenian President Robert Kocharian that 'the impression we have now is that all conflicting parties want to move forward and get a concrete result as soon as

possible.' The previous day, Cavanaugh had lauded as 'a wonderful idea' the recent pledge by both Kocharian and his Azerbaijani counterpart, Heidar Aliyev, to try to reach a peace agreement before their respective terms in office end in 2003.

Notwithstanding Cavanaugh's optimism and the stated desire of the two presidents to hammer out a permanent settlement, there are serious obstacles to any steps forward. First, it remains unclear what form the final settlement might take. Armenia continues to favor the so-called 'common state' model proposed by the Minsk Group in November 1998, which envisages horizontal relations between Azerbaijan and the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. Azerbaijan, however, rejects the 'horizontal' in favor of the 'vertical' model and is prepared to grant the disputed enclave only 'the highest degree of autonomy' within Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Vilayat Guliyev told Vienna's 'Die Presse' earlier this month that any settlement is contingent on compromise by Armenia. Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian, for his part, told the same newspaper that "as long as Azerbaijan insists Karabakh must remain under its control as an autonomous region, there will be no solution to the conflict."

True, the Russian Minsk Group co-chairman, Nikolai Gribkov, told journalists in Yerevan on 11 December that all four peace proposals offered by the Minsk Group since early 1997 remain on the table. Oskanian had suggested in July that it may prove possible to draft a new peace plan that combines elements of two or more of those proposals. He said that Yerevan would not rule out that approach provided that Karabakh's status is not pre-determined and the 'package,' rather than the 'phased,' approach is adopted.

Given that Stepanakert rejected the two 'package' peace proposals offered by the Minsk Group in May and July 1997 and that Azerbaijan voiced serious reservations about those proposals, the most promising framework from which to select elements of a new composite peace plan is the September 1997 Minsk Group proposal. According to Gerard Libaridian, who served as adviser to former Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian, that proposal, though based on the 'phased' rather than the 'package' approach, was more acceptable than the two previous drafts to both Armenia and Karabakh insofar as it did not include a mention of either Azerbaijan's territorial integrity or of Karabakh's future status vis-a-vis Baku. In addition, it provided security guarantees for the enclave's population that were absent from the two earlier drafts. Azerbaijan formally signaled its acceptance of that draft in October 1997, while Armenia agreed to it 'in principle' but 'with reservations.' But the Karabakh leadership, despite Yerevan's urging, rejected it.

Moreover, it is unclear who is to assume responsibility for crafting a new, composite draft peace plan. Aliyev has said that he considers that it is the Minsk Group's responsibility to do so. The co-chairs, in turn, have said that they do not intend to offer yet another draft peace proposal but that the OSCE will endorse any settlement that Aliyev and Kocharian agree to.

Nor is the peace plan itself the only bone of contention. Armenia and Azerbaijan also disagree over the participation of the Nagorno Karabakh leadership in the peace process. Armenian President Kocharian has consistently argued that the Azerbaijani leadership

should conduct direct talks with Stepanakert. Meeting in Stepanakert on 11 December with the co-chairs, Nagorno Karabakh President Arkadii Ghukasian argued that Karabakh representatives should participate in the ongoing series of talks between Kocharian and Azerbaijan's President Aliiev. But Guliev in his recent interview with 'Die Presse' ruled out talks with what he termed 'a puppet regime,' arguing that "it was Armenia that supported and waged the war."

It could be argued that Baku's rejection of Stepanakert as a negotiating partner calls into question the sincerity of the Azerbaijani leadership's stated desire to resolve the conflict. But Baku's action could, however, reflect its concern that direct talks with the Karabakh leadership could trigger mass protests in Azerbaijan by the estimated 800,000 persons forced to flee their homes during the 1993 Armenian offensive, most of whom still live in appalling conditions in temporary housing.

The Armenian leadership, too, must contend with a domestic opposition that has repeatedly warned against 'selling out' Karabakh. But Oskanian told 'Die Presse' that in light of the 'preparatory work' conducted by the two presidents during their meetings since July 1999, he hopes it may prove possible to reach a settlement in 2001." (RFE/RL 15 December 2000)

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See also "[Karabakh ceasefire violated](#)" RFE/RL, 23 October 2000 [Internet]

For more details about the various peace proposals, see "[OSCE Karabakh Peace Proposals Leaked](#)", in RFE/RL Caucasus Report Volume 4, Number 8, 23 February 2001 [Internet]

### **Azerbaijan and Armenia join the Council of Europe (January 2001)**

- Accession of Azerbaijan follows monitoring by the Council of Ministers of democratic developments
- The Parliamentary Assembly made a series of recommendations concerning the necessary reforms

"25 January 2001 is the date set by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for the ceremony marking the accession of Armenia and Azerbaijan to the Council of Europe, bringing the pan-European Organisation's membership to 43 member States.

The ceremony will take place during the Parliamentary Assembly session, in the presence of President Robert Kocharian of Armenia and President Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan and their respective foreign ministers.



This decision follows the Resolutions adopted on 9 November 2000, simultaneously inviting Armenia and Azerbaijan to join the Organisation, to be confirmed when setting the date for the accession ceremony. The Committee of Ministers decided at the time to monitor democratic development in the two countries in the light of the commitments undertaken. The Chairman of the Committee of Ministers travelled to Armenia and Azerbaijan on 3 and 4 January 2001 to review with the authorities what progress had been made and what still remained to be done.

The Ministers had also asked the Government of Azerbaijan to submit a report within a month answering the criticisms voiced by the international observers following the parliamentary elections of 5 November 2000, and to rectify the instances of fraud reported. This report was examined by a monitoring group set up specially by the Committee of Ministers, which also went to Azerbaijan to monitor the partial general elections held on 7 January 2001, following the malfunctions detected in the 5 November elections.

In order to keep up this momentum the Committee of Ministers has decided to step up co-operation programmes with the two countries and continue to monitor their democratic development following their accession.

The accession process for the two countries got under way in 1996, when they were granted special guest status with the Parliamentary Assembly (on 26 January and 28 June 1996 respectively). They subsequently applied for membership on 7 March and 13 July that same year.

The Parliamentary Assembly endorsed the two accessions on 29 June 2000, at the same time making a series of recommendations concerning the reforms the countries would have to implement in order to bring their legislation and practice into line with the principles and standards of the Council of Europe.

The two new members will have 4 and 6 seats respectively in the Parliamentary Assembly. Armenia will contribute 0.12% and Azerbaijan 0.20% of the Organisation's budget." (COE 17 January 2001)

#### **Development of peace efforts in 2001: Minsk Group gives new impulsion to the peace talks**

- Three rounds of talks have failed to produce sufficient common grounds between Azerbaijan and Armenia
- Officials in Baku have warned that Azerbaijan may opt to resume hostilities if negotiations continue to show no signs of progress
- US lawmakers have sought to mollify Azerbaijan by voting to lift trade restrictions against Baku, known as Section 907 (October 2001)

"The continued territorial dispute [between Azerbaijan and Armenia] over Nagorny Karabakh remains unresolved. The Armenian and Azeri presidents have held three

rounds of peace talks regarding the status of Nagorny Karabakh since the beginning of the year - in Paris in January and March, and at Key West (USA) in April. The talks are being held under the auspices of the Minsk Group of eight countries operating under the umbrella of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The Minsk Group is jointly chaired by Russia, France and the US. Talks have so far failed to produce sufficient common grounds, although the makings of a framework for an agreement are slowly emerging. Azerbaijan demands to include securing of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity while agreeing to substantial autonomy for the region's Armenian minority, and ensuring that Azerbaijan refugees can return to their homes in Nagorny Karabakh and the surrounding Azerbaijani territory currently controlled by Armenia. However, even if negotiations make progress, a lasting agreement will not be possible without firm domestic political support." (IFRC 7 September 2001, p. 2)

"As the anti-terrorism campaign builds in Central Asia, diplomats are pressing to reinvigorate peace talks to settle the long-running conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh in the Caucasus. An altered regional geopolitical reality has created 'new perspectives,' increasing optimism that a breakthrough can be achieved, according to a top US official involved in Karabakh negotiations.

The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, which is spearheading the search for a Karabakh settlement, are visiting the region to gauge peace possibilities. On November 4, the co-chairs met with Azerbaijani President Heidar Aliyev, who repeated calls for an equitable peace deal.

The security challenges posed by the September 11 terrorist attacks increase the importance of resolving regional conflicts, said Rudolf Perina, the newly appointed American co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group. Prior to embarking on the fact-finding mission, Perina told journalists that 'new perspectives have opened for us to commence new work in the region.'

Russian Co-chair, Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov said mediators are intent on putting an end to the 'neither peace, nor war' situation, and reach a fair settlement of the conflict,' the Interfax news agency reported November 5.

The lack of a Karabakh settlement has been a major source of instability in the Caucasus, diverting attention and resources away from economic development issues in both Armenia and Azerbaijan. In addition, the Karabakh question constitutes a major obstacle to the development of Caspian Basin natural resources, especially the construction of the US-supported pipeline, known as Baku-Ceyhan. And, according to Perina, 'stability is a major factor for success in the fight against terrorism.'

Sources in Armenia and Azerbaijan report that Armenian President Robert Kocharian and Aliyev are willing to reopen talks, even though neither side reportedly seems prepared at this time to make any new proposal that could break the existing deadlock.

The chief stumbling block to a settlement is the political status of Karabakh. Armenia says any settlement must leave Karabakh independent of Azerbaijan. Baku, meanwhile,

has offered Karabakh broad autonomy, but has insisted that the region remain under Azerbaijani jurisdiction.

Trubnikov told the ITAR-TASS news agency that the Minsk Group was maintaining the parameters for a Karabakh settlement as discussed during summit meetings earlier in 2001 in Paris and Key West, Florida. He said Kocharian and Aliyev must now demonstrate 'civil courage to settle for a compromise.' The Minsk group is co-chaired by France, Russia and the United States.

Perina said the United States considers Nagorno-Karabakh an integral part of Azerbaijan, adding that other states involved in the Minsk Group peace process felt the same way.

On October 31, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe issued a joint statement that urged Armenia and Azerbaijan to renew efforts to reach a political settlement on Karabakh. The statement cautioned Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders to avoid 'moves that might lead away from a peaceful resolution' of the Karabakh issue.

In recent weeks, officials in Baku have warned that Azerbaijan may opt to resume hostilities if negotiations continue to show no signs of progress. During the talks with Minsk Group officials, Aliyev reportedly repeated the threat to restart the war.

US lawmakers have sought to mollify Azerbaijan by voting to lift trade restrictions against Baku, known as Section 907. Meanwhile, Perina downplayed the notion that renewed fighting would result in Azerbaijan's reconquest of Karabakh. The US envoy attributed Azerbaijan's bellicose statements to 'disappointment over the unsuccessful talks.'

According to a public opinion survey of 196 Azerbaijanis conducted by the Ekho newspaper in Baku, almost two-thirds of those questioned said they didn't believe the Aliyev government's threats about resuming the Karabakh war." (EurasiaNet 5 November 2001)

*See also:*

- *"Baku ignores Minsk Group's caution against sabre-rattling" and "But former Azerbaijani officials seek support for military option", Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 6 August 2001 [[Internet](#)]*
- *"Negotiations over Nagorno-Karabakh at a sensitive stage", U.S. Department of State, 6 November 2001 [[Internet](#)]*

## **Natural disasters**

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### **Earthquake in the area of Baku causes widespread damage (November 2000)**

- More than 2,500 persons evacuated from severely damaged houses
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"A strong earthquake, measuring 7,0 on the Richter Scale, occurred in Azerbaijan on 25 November 2000. The earthquake, which was felt in Baku, Sumgait and other 13 regions, caused widespread damage. Aftershocks are still continuing.

As a result of the earthquake, 31 people died and 600 were injured. The State Emergency Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which started its work after the earthquake, also coordinated the activities of all governmental and non-governmental agencies to address the consequences of the earthquake.

Measures undertaken by the State Commission allowed to assess that 450 buildings in Baku and Sumgait, including 363 private houses, had been severely damaged. 656 families (2,694 persons) have been temporarily evacuated from severely damaged houses. 354 buildings in other 13 regions of Azerbaijan, including 330 houses and 24 public buildings, were damaged seriously and different extent of damage was also caused to 5,761 buildings. The assessment of scope and total amount of damage caused to buildings is still continuing. At present, 804 buildings in Azerbaijan, including 693 private houses and 108 public buildings, remain damaged. Reconstruction work is being carried out on some 90 buildings." (UN OCHA 5 January 2001)

### **Risks of displacement as a result of natural disasters**

- Although to a far lesser extent than armed conflict, natural disasters affects civilian population in Azerbaijan
- Cases of Earthquakes (June 1999: Agdash district), landslides, floods (as a result of dam and reservoirs constructions and rising level of the Caspian sea)

"Natural disasters are the plague of peoples who live in precarious regions. In Azerbaijan natural disasters are far outweighed by those caused by human conflicts; nevertheless they must be part of any consideration of human settlement issues.

Earthquakes. The whole of Azerbaijan is liable to suffer from earthquakes of a magnitude of 8-9 on the 12 magnitude scale. Among the parts of the country with high population density most liable are the Apsheron Peninsula and the North Caspian region. The slopes of the Greater Caucasus Moun-tains are considered to be the most dan-gerous. Gandja is in the zone of force 8-9 earthquake risk.

Landslides. These occur typically on the North-Eastern and Southern slopes of the Caucasus Mountain range. Very often landslides are caused by earthquakes. In 1986 there were landslides in the Ismailly region after an earthquake. Landslides occur in Baku also, a fact not always taken into consideration in urban planning policy.

Floods. The construction of dams and reservoirs for hydro-electric power, irrigation and water supply along the main Kura river, has practically stopped its regular natural flooding. The collapse of these dams could lead to massive flooding of the country's most densely populated areas. In December 1994 such a disaster occurred on the Apsheron Peninsula, and part of a Baku suburb was flooded. Flooding of mountain rivers are also dangerous for settlements and agriculture.

Rise in the level of the Caspian Water Basin. Disastrous consequences for Azerbaijan are resulting from the current rise in the level of the Caspian Water Basin. Already thousands of square kilometers of coastal areas in Azerbaijan have been flooded. Flooding of industrial enterprises and harbours on the shores of the basin have had serious consequences for the ecology and economy of the area. 50 settlements and thousands hectares of resort and recreation areas have already been flooded. Another 30 settlements and 30,000 people have had to abandon their homes because of flooding and the rising water level. More than 1,000 homes have been flooded in the south of the country.

Historically the level of the Caspian Water Basin has fluctuated between 26-28 metres below the world ocean level. People who lived near the Caspian shores were aware of this phenomenon and accordingly developed settlements above the highest level. When the Caspian level was low they used the land for temporary purposes only. In 20th century, particularly during the Soviet period, this policy was ignored. Factories and housing were constructed on land historically at risk." (UNDP 1996)

#### Earthquake in Agdash and neighbouring districts (June 1999)

"Mr. Elchin Rehberli, Territorial Development Department, Cabinet of Ministers, mentioned that, on 4 June 1999 at 2.13 p.m., an earthquake measuring magnitude 7 (by a 12-scale system) struck Agdash and neighbouring districts namely Ujar, Yevlakh, Kurdamir, Zardob, Tovuz, Mingechevir and Sheki. Luckily, no casualties were reported, though 70 persons were injured.

According to a preliminary damage assessment report, approximately 1,000 dwellings were damaged in Agdash town as a result of the earthquake, of which about 150 houses were either destroyed or heavily damaged (and are currently dangerous to live in). Fortunately, the quake was not followed by rains which could increase the number of either destroyed or damaged houses, since the cracked houses were constructed of mud-brick or river stone.

The Government allocated 500 million manats to alleviate the consequences of the earthquake. Rehabilitation and reconstruction works have been started in the affected districts, cost estimates are being defined in Agdash, Kurdamir, Yevlakh, Sheki, Kurdamir and Zardob.

A preliminary damage caused by the quake is estimated at approximately US\$ 5 million of which the damages caused to Agdash and affected districts are estimated at about US\$ 2.5 million respectively.

Primary concern of the Government is rehabilitation of the affected educational institutions and public buildings. An assistance will be provided for 2,500 families whose houses were either destroyed or heavily damaged, since the houses were not insured. Different Ministries, government structures will be also providing assistance to the affected families, once the extent of the damage is finalised." (Coordination Meeting Report 19 July 1999)

## POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

### Global figures

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**Total internally displaced population in the government-controlled territory: 570,000 persons (as of October 2001)**

- Available figures show a very slow decrease of the internally displaced population in 2001
- Internally displaced population had reached a peak in 1993 with 778,000 persons
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Number of refugees and IDPs temporary located in regions and towns of Azerbaijan

	Families	Persons
IDPs	145,498	569,811
Refugees	45,484	214,616
Total	190,982	784,427

Note: the number of refugees from Chechnya, Uzbekistan (Meskheti Turks), Georgia (Meskheti Turks) and others are not included.

(Azerbaijan State Committee of Refugees and IDPs and Azerbaijan State Statistics Committee, October 2001)

*For IDP figures by district, consult the detailed statistical table compiled by the State Committee for Refugees and IDPs, October 2001 [Internet]*

population (2001) (Government statistics)

Date	Families	Persons
January 2001	145,826	575,268
April 2001		571,099

(UNHCR 7 March 2001 & 10 November 2001)

"At the end of 1991, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan escalated into war. Between 1992 and 1994 almost 20 percent of the Azerbaijan's territory, including six districts of Azerbaijan in addition to Nagorno-Karabagh, were under Armenian control, resulting in mass population displacement within the country. The State estimated the number of internally displaced persons at 778,500 by the end of 1993, and 604,574 as of 1 March 1998. UNHCR estimates are lower, with 551,000 persons at the end of 1997." (IOM 1999, p. 40)

## Internal displacement in areas under Armenian occupation (1998)

- At least 44,000 ethnic Armenians were reported to move to Nagorno-Karabakh in the early 1990s

"Intercommunal conflict between Armenians and Azeris was exacerbated by the entry of Soviet forces into Baku in January 1990, causing a migration of more than 100,000 ethnic Russians from Azerbaijan to the Russian Federation. Armenians also began to leave Azerbaijan, with approximately 279,000 fleeing to Armenia and 44,000 to Nagorno-Karabakh. In the autumn of 1991, civil war broke out between Karabakh-Armenian forces and Azeri government forces, resulting in the entire Azeri and Kurdish population of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Lachin region fleeing the violence. Counterattacks by Azeri forces with help from Russian units, resulted in large numbers of Armenians being forcibly displaced from Shaumyan to north Nargorno-Karabakh." (Hayden 1998, p. 167)

## Disaggregated figures

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### Gender and age breakdown: women and children make up 70% of thee displaced population (April 2001)

Internally displaced persons:

Age Group	Male (in absolute numbers)	(in %)	Female (in absolute numbers)	(in %)	Total (in absolute numbers)	(in %)
0-5	35,678	47.5	39,307	52.5	74,985	13.1
6-15	59,278	48.1	63,836	51.9	123,114	21.6
16-59	135,862	46.3	157,703	53.7	293,565	51.4
60 and >	35,264	44.4	44,171	55.6	79,435	13.9
Total:	266,082	46.6	305,017	53.4	571,099	100

Major locations: Aghjabedi, Barda, Beylagan, Bilasuvar, Imishli, Saatli, Sabirabad, Terter, Mingechevir, Sumgayit, Ganja, Baku.

Source: the Government of Azerbaijan, April 2001  
(UNHCR 20 November 2001)

### Ethnic Azeris constitute overwhelming majority of the displaced population (1998-1999)

- The remainder are some 4,000 Kurds from the Lachin and Kelbajar districts and several hundred persons of various other ethnic groups, mostly Russian
- Most of the displaced come from regions outside Nagorno-Karabakh while only 42,000 persons were displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh itself

"More than 568,000 persons from western regions of Azerbaijan under Armenian occupation since 1993, including 42,072 from Nagorno-Karabakh, remained displaced



within the country. Most were displaced from regions just outside Nagorno-Karabakh, including Fizuli (133,725 persons), Agdam (128,584 persons), Lachin (63,007 persons), Kelbadjar (59,274), Jabrayil (58,834 persons), Gubadli (31, 276), Zangilan (34,797), Terter (5,171) and Adjabedi (3,358)." (USCR 2000)

"The more than 600,000 displaced Azerbaijanis constitute the largest group of IDPs in the Caucasus. The displaced include the entire Azeri population of Nagorno-Karabakh and a wide area surrounding it. They comprise a broad range of professionals, farmers, and workers and include men, women, and children of all ages. Because of the ethnic basis of displacement in Azerbaijan, the IDPs there are virtually all Azeri (Turkic) peoples. Most of them are nominally Shia Muslim, but many of those from Lachin and Kelbajar Provinces are Sunni Muslim Kurds." (Greene 1998, p. 254)

"The overwhelming majority, over 99 per cent, of the internally displaced population are ethnic Azeris. The remainder are some 4,000 Kurds from the Lachin and Kelbajar districts and several hundred persons of various other ethnic groups, mostly Russian." (UN Commission for Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 31)

(Status as on 01 January 2001; Figures from the State Committee for Statistics)

Ethnic Composition		
	Azerbaijanis	569,209
	Kurds	4,536
	Russians	792
	Turks	641
	Others	90

(UNHCR 7 March 2001)

See also [Statistical Information on Origin and Current Location of IDPs](#) (Status as of 1 July 1999) [Internet]

### **A quarter of the internally displaced population is located in Baku (2000)**

- The general pattern however remains that most internally displaced have moved to areas close to their region of origin

"IDPs are dispersed throughout Azerbaijan. With the exception of IDPs living in Baku and Sumgait, far from the areas from which the IDPs were displaced, IDPs have moved to areas fairly close to their region of origin. For example, IDPs from Fizuli are mostly located in Imishli and Sabirabad, and those from Agdam are in Mingeshevir, Yevlakh, and Sheki. Several hundred IDPs (many from Shusha, Nagorno-Karabakh) live in former vacation hotels in the Apsheron Peninsula north of Baku. Many others are in school buildings in cities such as Mingeshevir and Ganja" (Greene 1998, p. 255).

For the latest figures by district, consult the statistical chart compiled by the Azerbaijan State Committee and IDPs in October 2001 [[Internal link](#)]

See also [Regional distribution of the IDP population \(as of 1 April 2000\)\(map\)](#) [Internet]

See also:

- [Statistical information on origin and current location of IDPs \(status as of 1 July 1999\)](#), Azerweb [Internet]
- [Statistical information on origin and current location of IDPs of Baku district \(status of 1 July 1999\)](#), Azerweb [Internet]

### **More than 50 percent of the internally displaced live in public buildings (1999-2000)**

- 50% of the IDPs live in public buildings and 13 % live in camps (1999)
- The number of IDPs in tented camps has declined since 1994 as many of them have been transferred to other accommodations, including prefabricated one-room houses furnished by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO)

Status as on 01 January 2001 (Figures from the State Committee for Statistics)

IDPs in Urban areas	310,892	54.04 %
IDPs in Rural areas	264,376	45.96%

(UNHCR 7 March 2001)

"To date, more than 50% of the IDPs are accommodated in public buildings and some 90,000 are living in 15 IDP settlements, dependent upon external assistance." (UNHCR September 1999)

In 1998 the number of IDPs in camps [was] probably between 75,000 and 100,000. Many of the camps are located in southern Azerbaijan near the Aras River. These include Sabirabad, two camps at Saatli, and four camps at Bilasuvar. In January 1996 the population of these four camps was 44,000. The Sabirabad camp alone, one of the least salubrious, and located at some distance from towns and villages, housed 12,000 IDPs. The number of IDPs in tented camps has declined since 1994 as many of them have been transferred to other accommodations, including prefabricated one-room houses furnished by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO). Most of the IDPs who returned to Fizuli had been in camps. The April 1996 UNHCR survey stated that approximately 5 percent of its respondents were in camps. Only a small percentage of the people who became displaced in 1993-94 have merged into the communities where they live" (Greene 1998, p. 255).

### Mobility of the displaced

"Displaced persons are mobile both within and beyond the country's borders. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Azerbaijan, 3,239 families of displaced persons changed their place of residence in 1997. It is hard to monitor this movement accurately,

however. Records of the State Committee of Statistics show that 2,992 families of displaced persons left their place of residence in 1997, but only 1,507 families were re-registered at a new place of residence. Moreover, in 1997, 5,148 families were not living where they had been registered by the authorities." (IOM 1999, p. 42)

Shelter	Number of IDPs	Percent of Total
Public buildings, schools, kindergartens, and hostels	167,133	29.0
With relatives and friends	149,843	26.0
Tented camps and other settlements	94,517	16.4
Uncompleted buildings	42,648	7.4
Railway wagons and roadside settlements	39,190	6.8
Illegally occupied apartments	34,003	5.9
Farms and dugouts	31,121	5.4
Sanatoria, rest houses, tourists bases, and health camps	17,866	3.1
Total	576,321	100.0

Source: Government of Azerbaijan  
(UNDP 1999, p. 50)

*See also the map "IDP camps and settlements", Azerweb [Internet]*

**Educational and occupational profile: 71 per cent have some, if not full, secondary school education (1998-2001)**

- The occupational background of at least a third of the displaced population is agriculture

"The occupational background of 40 per cent of the displaced is agriculture, 6.1 per cent education, 5.4 per cent health care, 4.8 per cent construction, and 11.4 per cent various other professions, while one third are without any formal profession. The level of education of the internally displaced is relatively high: 71 per cent have some, if not full, secondary school education, 10 per cent have completed higher education and 10 per cent have completed technical education or incomplete higher education" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 31).

(Status as on 01 January 2001; Figures from the State Committee for Statistics)

Education level		
Percent		
100	Above age of 16	376,172
9.19	High education	34,584
12.28	Uncompleted high and/or special secondary education	46,178
36.56	Secondary	137,543

31.25	Uncompleted secondary	117,541
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Professional skills level		
Percent		
100	Able to work	295,971
32.61	Agricultural employees	96,525
6.79	Teachers	20,096
3.34	Health employees	9,896
5.13	Construction employees	15,171
16.79	Others	49,679
35.34	Unskilled	104,604

(UNHCR 7 March 2001)

# PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

## General

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### **IDPs have settled mostly in urban areas (1991-1998)**

- Settlement patterns changed significantly in the summer of 1993, with the establishment of tent camps

"The internally displaced are dispersed throughout the country. In the initial phases of internal displacement, they settled in a spontaneous manner, mostly in urban areas where they found accommodation with relatives or in public buildings such as schools, dormitories, technical institutes and rest houses. Settlement patterns changed significantly in the summer of 1993, with the establishment of tent camps in the southern and central parts of the country, around the towns of Imishli, Sabirabad and Bilasuvar in the south and Agjabedi and Barda in the central regions. The camp populations, which had peaked at over 100,000, at present stands at some 74,000 persons. Towards the end of 1993, and particularly in 1994 and 1995, settlements of pre-fabricated houses were built with the help of international agencies. Abandoned railway cars, in which some 4,300 internally displaced still reside, were also used as spontaneous settlement. [...]

"At present [1998], just over half of the internally displaced are located in urban areas, especially in the capital, Baku, and the nearby city of Sumgait on the eastern coast and in the cities of Ganja and Mingchevir north of Nagorno-Karabakh. The trend among the displaced towards urban migration, especially to the capital and its suburbs, suggests that this percentage is likely to rise. In the cities of Imishli and Beylagan, it is estimated that internally displaced persons constitute as much as 50 per cent of the population" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, paras. 32-33).

### **The patterns of settlement often run counter to the former livelihood and geographic environment of the displaced (1998)**

- Many internally displaced have moved to areas fairly close to their region of origin

"The patterns of settlement often run counter to the former livelihood and geographic environment of the displaced. For instance, most of the agricultural workers among the displaced live in urban areas. Conversely, most of the internally displaced persons originating from mountainous regions did not settle in the north and south-east areas of the country, where the climatic conditions most closely resemble their previous environment. Concern that the influx of internally displaced persons into these areas would result in fewer economic opportunities for the local population and, in turn, risk conflict among the number of ethnic minorities living there is reportedly the reason why

significant settlement did not occur in these areas" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 34).

"IDPs are dispersed throughout Azerbaijan. With the exception of IDPs living in Baku and Sumgait, far from the areas from which the IDPs were displaced, IDPs have moved to areas fairly close to their region of origin. For example, IDPs from Fizuli are mostly located in Imishli and Sabirabad, and those from Agdam are in Mingeshevir, Yevlakh, and Sheki. Several hundred IDPs (many from Shusha, Nagorno-Karabakh) live in former vacation hotels in the Apsheron Peninsula north of Baku. Many others are in school buildings in cities such as Mingeshevir and Ganja" (Greene 1998, p. 255).

### **Increasing mobility of the displaced (1997-2000)**

- Reports of displaced households not living in the areas where they had been registered

"IDP families have become increasingly mobile and camp registrations difficult to accurately carry out. Throughout the current survey many of the children who remain on the camp registration and continue to collect nutritional support no longer live within the region and many now reside as far away as Baku." (IFRC November 2000 Introduction)

"Displaced are mobile both within and beyond the country's borders. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Azerbaijan, 3,239 families of displaced persons changed their place of residence in 1997. It is hard to monitor this movement accurately, however. Records of the State Committee of Statistics show that 2,992 families of displaced persons left their place of residence in 1997, but only 1,507 families were re-registered at a new place of residence. Moreover, in 1997, 5,148 families were not living where they had been registered by the authorities." (IOM 1999, p. 42)

## **PROTECTION CONCERNS**

### **Right to life and personal security**

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#### **A third of the regions in Azerbaijan are believed to be contaminated by landmines (2001)**

- Return areas in western Azerbaijan are mine affected

"The conflict with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh resulted in twenty percent of Azerbaijan's territory being occupied by Armenia and fifteen percent of the Azeri population becoming internally displaced. UNMAS estimated that 19,500 square kilometers of land is mine-affected. Western areas of Azerbaijan including the Fizuli, Agdam, Ter-Ter, and Geranboy districts are mine affected.

UNMAS has also stated that approximately 24 of the 65 Azerbaijan regions are believed to be contaminated, that seven Azeri regions controlled by Armenians are suspected of having mines, and that 14 other regions 'contain defensive minefields laid by the Azerbaijan Defense Forces'.

A limited Level One Survey was completed in the Fizuli region. Funded by the UN Development Program and the Norwegian government, it targeted reconstructed areas. With the results of the survey, the National Mine Database was created to help improve the National Mine Action Plan. Other surveys are on-going in the Khanlar, Ter-Ter, and Geranboy regions." (Landmine Monitor Core Group 2001, Azerbaijan)

#### **No apparent threats against the life and physical security of the displaced (1998)**

- The sense of solidarity between the internally displaced and the authorities means that the IDPs are not regarded as the enemy and targeted for attacks
- Significant needs exist to fulfill the rights to food, shelter, health care, education and employment

"Internally displaced persons require and are entitled to protection and assistance. In Azerbaijan unlike in many other situations, the sense of solidarity that exists between the internally displaced and the authorities means that the displaced are not viewed as the 'enemy' and targeted for attack by the authorities. Threats to the life and physical security of the displaced, of the type protected against in Guiding Principles 10 to 13, are not apparent" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 58).

"Protection, however, extends beyond safeguarding physical security to encompass the broad range of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights provided for under international human rights law. For instance, the rights to food, shelter, health care,

education and employment also fall within the meaning of protection. In Azerbaijan, government officials, both national and local . . . acknowledged that significant needs remain in these various areas.

Guiding Principle 18 relating to the right to an adequate standard of living provides that at a minimum, regardless of the circumstances, and without discrimination, competent authorities shall provide internally displaced persons with, and ensure safe access to: essential food and potable water; basic shelter and housing; appropriate clothing; and essential medical services and sanitation. [T]here remain outstanding needs in these various areas, as well as in education and income generation" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, paras. 59-60).

### **Clearance of land mines is an essential prerequisite to return (1998)**

- The actual extent of mine contamination is not known, as detailed records of minefields were not made

"While many of the internally displaced appear anxious to return, an essential prerequisite to ensuring that they do so in safety is the removal of land-mines from areas of return. The mine-awareness activities undertaken by ICRC are invaluable in this respect. The actual extent of mine contamination is not known, as detailed records of minefields were not made. To begin to address this problem, in 1998 UNDP commissioned a mine survey in Fizuli region, selected as the priority area to be surveyed on account of the reconstruction programme under way there. Further funding is required to extend the survey to other areas of Azerbaijan where return is currently taking place or might be anticipated in the future. There is also a need to establish a national institutional body to manage mine action. Important steps towards this end have begun to be taken by the Government, with a draft decree for the establishment of the Azerbaijan National Agency for Demining (ANAD) and the purchase by ARRA of basic mine-clearance equipment. However, there remains a lack of national capacity and a need for training local personnel in humanitarian mine clearance, a skill that, in the event of large-scale return, will be very much in demand" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 107)

## **Freedom of movement**

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### **Vestiges of the residence permit system from the Soviet-era which restricted individuals to one legal place of residence (1998-2000)**

- Restrictions on freedom of movement related to old regulations limit IDPs' ability officially to establish residence

"An area where the legislative framework is particularly in need of reform relates to the propiska, or residence permit, system which was in force throughout the Soviet Union



and of which vestiges remain. The propiska, in the form of a stamp in internal passports, restricted individuals to one legal place of residence and, on that basis, regulated many aspects of daily life as it was required in order to work, attend school, get married and engage in other important civic activities. Although the Constitution of Azerbaijan has officially abolished the propiska system, a number of laws continue to refer to it so that, in certain regards, the propiska system remains in place. The resulting restrictions on freedom of movement place particularly undue hardships on the displaced by limiting their ability officially to establish residence in areas, other than those to which they were initially assigned, where they may wish to migrate in search of better economic opportunities. The remnants of the propiska system still evident in Azerbaijan as well as in several other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries are inconsistent with the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose one's residence enshrined in article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and reflected in Guiding Principle 14. In accordance with the Programme of Action of the CIS Conference on Forced Migration and in cooperation with UNHCR, OSCE and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Government has begun to reform legislation relating to the propiska, but there is a need to accelerate this process in order to ensure full respect for the right to liberty of movement and choice of residence" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 45).

"The Constitution provides for the right of citizens to choose freely their place of domicile and to travel abroad and return, and the Government generally respects these provisions; however, at times the Government restricted freedom of movement. At times it limited the movement of members of opposition parties. The internal residence regime ('propiska') still is imposed on internally displaced persons, who are required to register their location with the authorities, and may reside only in approved locations." (US DOS February 2001, sect. 2d)

## **SUBSISTENCE NEEDS (HEALTH NUTRITION AND SHELTER)**

### **Food and nutrition**

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#### **IFRC conducts nutritional survey in the southern camps prior to the reduction of humanitarian food aid (November 2000)**

- The Federation is planning to stop the provision of humanitarian aid in the form of nutritional supplementation by March 2001
- Current nutritional support provided by the IFRC in southern camps is intended to cover approximately 50% of the IDP's daily nutritional requirements
- As a result of the increasing mobility of the displaced, nutritional needs in the southern camps have become difficult to assess accurately
- IFRC is supporting a more sustainable approach to managing the nutritional needs of the population
- A huge proportion of families stated that their major source of food was humanitarian aid
- Displaced are however able to supplement its nutritional intake through other sources
- Considering the small proportion of families who grow some of their own food, continued assistance to increase this form of subsistence may be useful

"Since the arrival of internally displaced persons (IDP's) in the southern camps of Azerbaijan in the region surrounding Sabirabad, Saatli and Bilasuvar, the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan in conjunction with the Federation has been providing humanitarian assistance and support. One part of the integral approach has been in the form of nutritional supplementation. Currently the support given is intended to cover approximately 50% of the IDP's daily nutritional requirements.

By, at the latest March 2001, the Federation will no longer provide humanitarian aid in the form of nutritional supplementation to these IDP's. One reason behind this is that it has become difficult to make assessment about the nutritional requirements of the IDP's. IDP families have become increasingly mobile and camp registrations difficult to accurately carry out. Throughout the current survey many of the children who remain on the camp registration and continue to collect nutritional support no longer live within the region and many now reside as far away as Baku. It is anticipated that registration data will become more accurate and easily obtainable once the nutritional support has ceased. Those IDP families no longer in the region will cease to benefit from remaining on the camp registration lists. By ceasing the provision of support in this form it will again become possible to determine the extent of the need amongst the actual IDP population. A survey similar to this carried out following the cessation of nutritional support will more accurately indicate the prevalence of malnutrition amongst this population. Additionally, now that the emergency phase of this operation has passed, the Federation is supporting a more sustainable approach to managing the nutritional needs of the population. This includes a kitchen garden programme and agricultural training with the

aim of increasing the independence of this IDP population and reducing their dependence on humanitarian aid.

[...]

The aim of this nutritional survey is to answer two fundamental questions, whether the nutritional requirements of IDP children living in the targeted camps are being met and to what degree their families rely upon humanitarian aid to meet these needs." (IFRC November 2000, Introduction)

"This survey found overall an acceptable nutritional status of surveyed children and therefore indirectly the broader camp population. According to The Sphere Project (2000, pp91-92) nutrition survey results provide an estimate of the prevalence of malnutrition. The most widely accepted practice is to assess the level of malnutrition in children under five years old as a proxy for the rest of the population. Only 6.4 % of children showed levels of malnourishment that can be a cause for concern. Although there are difficulties in making a comparison with the surveys from 1997 and 1999 due to a lack of information about methodology and the different sample frames, overall prevalence of malnutrition appears to be decreasing. The prevalence of stunting was detected to be 23.1%, reflecting similar findings to those of 1999, but a considerable decrease since 1997.

There is a cause for concern when looking at the types of food consumed most frequently by the surveyed children, as this would not appear able to meet their nutritional requirements. However their intake is not limited to the foods provided by the Federation. It is likely that the daily intake of many of the sampled children is supplemented by food that is not provided by the Federation yet not reflected in the findings. Although a huge proportion of families stated that their major source of food was humanitarian aid, discussion with health promoters suggested that the IDP population is nervous about the loss of Federation nutritional support and was anxious not to admit to obtaining food from any other source. Considering this in light of the calculated prevalence of malnutrition (6.4%) it would seem that in the event of the withdrawal of Federation food support, that the population would continue to maintain their nutritional intake through increasing the food already taken from other sources. However it is impossible to confidently predict the impact that will follow the withdrawal of Federation nutritional support. The dependence on food aid suggested by some of the findings could be either real or simply a factor of ease and accessibility even though other options are available.

Considering the small proportion of families who claim to grow or raise some of their own food, continued assistance to increase this form of subsistence may be useful in maintaining the nutritional status of the population, once the current form of humanitarian support ceases.

Additionally it is recognized that some families are abusing nutritional support provided by the Federation and this is reflected in the camp lists. As discussed earlier many of the children whose families remain beneficiaries of humanitarian aid provided by the Federation no longer live in the district. It is difficult to therefore gain an accurate picture of the nutritional status of this type [of] IDP population, as so few could be included in

the final sample. It is probable that at this stage the classification of these IDP's is no longer valid." (IFRC November 2000, Conclusion)

### **Degrading food security sharp increase of the food prices (1999)**

- Half of the WFP beneficiaries are not able to meet their basic food needs
- 43 % of the IDP household income come from the State (Salaries; pensions; three subsidies: bread, children and fuel)
- Many factors hindering self-sufficiency at the household level: expensive input for cultivation, lack of job opportunities, lack of expertise in private business

"The sharp increase in prices following the shift from a state economy to a market one while keeping the same rates of income eventually reflected on the diet of the majority of the population. The share spent on food by households has progressively risen from about 53 percent of their income in 1990 to over 75 percent in 1997. The value of the minimal per capita food basket needed to meet energy, protein and fat requirements is estimated at 53,000 manat per month (13.7 dollars), compared to the average government monthly salaries of 15 to 20 dollars.

In 1998 WFP conducted a food economy survey among its beneficiaries. The survey showed that half of them are not able to meet their basic food needs at varying levels and that they rely on four sources of revenue in different proportions: the Government at 43 percent in the form of salaries/pensions and allowances; the household at 27 percent deriving mainly from keeping livestock, cultivation, casual labour, and small business; WFP at 24 percent; and the NGOs through micro-credit schemes, at 6 percent. In addition, the survey showed that women managed food aid in most households and that they received it directly in one third of them. Also, women managed the budget in 25 percent of the cases. Finally, 60 percent of the single-parent households were headed by women.

The main factors hindering self-sufficiency at the household level are many. The inputs for cultivation are too expensive, job opportunities are limited and expertise is lacking to run private businesses." (WFP 28 April 1999)

### **Breakdown of IDP Household Income**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Direct and Indirect Sources of Household Income</b>	<b>Percent of Household Income</b>
State	Salaries; pensions; three subsidies: bread, children and fuel	43
Household activities	casual labour; cultivation; livestock for consumption; livestock for sale; sale of belongings; sale of privatization vouchers, kitchen garden; others (various)	30
Food aid	WFP's assistance	23
Cash aid	Micro-credits to start small businesses from other aid agencies	4

(WFP November 1999, p. 5)

### **Reports of malnutrition among the displaced population (1999)**

- 1996 data reveal that IDPs suffer disproportionately from malnutrition and anaemia (especially children)
- Severe iodine deficiency among the people of Azerbaijan (including IDPs) reported early 1999
- One-fourth of the food consumed by IDPs come from international humanitarian organizations, according to a 1997 survey
- IDPs rely heavily on bread as the most significant component of their diets
- Families that returned to settlements in the liberated territories have better access to food as a result of continuing agricultural rehabilitation

"Data from nationwide nutrition and health surveys conducted in 1996 by WHO, UNICEF and the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention reveal that IDPs suffer disproportionately from malnutrition and anaemia (especially children), physical disabilities and psychological trauma. In April 1998, WFP's implementing partner, World Vision International (WVI), conducted a nutrition survey among the IDPs receiving food aid from WFP to measure the malnutrition rates among children under five years old. The survey showed that three percent of the children suffered from severe malnutrition, seven percent from moderate and 20 percent from mild malnutrition.

In September 1998, WVI conducted another survey for the returnees in Horadis village (Fizuli District). All the 307 households living in Horadis were surveyed to assess their food security situation and levels of malnutrition. It was found that only 48 percent of the children enjoyed adequate nutritional status. Following these surveys, around 110 households in 11 districts were chosen as samples for follow-up visits on a bimonthly basis to monitor the development of their nutritional status. The visits of March-April 1999 showed that the nutritional status of a number of children had declined from mild to moderate malnutrition since the January-February visits. The results showed rates of 11 percent mild and 16 percent moderate malnutrition in March-April compared with 14 percent mild and 11 percent moderate malnutrition in January-February. These visits took place in the period following a reduction in the WFP ration in September 1998 owing to funding problems.

A survey conducted by Médecins du Monde (MDM) Greece early 1999 revealed that there was a severe iodine deficiency among the people of Azerbaijan (including IDPs) resulting in widespread goitre problems, stunted growth among children and miscarriages among expectant mothers. WFP subsequently added iodized salt to its food basket for IDPs in the PRRO that started in July 1999.

IDPs rely heavily on bread as the most significant component of their diets. A 1997 survey of IDPs by the Sigma Center found that during the previous week, 65 percent had eaten no vegetables or fruits, and almost half had not eaten meat or meat products (UNDP 1998). Up to one-fourth of the food consumed by the households surveyed came from

international humanitarian organizations. Families that returned to settlements in the liberated territories have better access to food as a result of continuing agricultural rehabilitation." (WFP November 1999, p. 6)

### **Food is the most important need of most internally displaced families (1998)**

- IDPs concentrated in urban areas receive better and more food aid than those in rural areas
- Food assistance is especially needed in rural areas, where limited opportunities for income generation create higher levels of dependency
- The land to which internally displaced persons have access tends to be of too poor soil quality to enable self-sufficiency

"According to the 1996 survey of IDPs commissioned by UNHCR, food is the most important need of most IDP families. Food aid is an important component of assistance to IDPs because of the IDPs' low incomes and their inability to earn money. Urban areas with a higher concentration of IDPs receive better and more food aid than rural areas. In November 1993, WFP began distributing food to approximately 450,000 IDPs throughout Azerbaijan, using donations from the EC, the Netherlands, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. Several NGOs also have food assistance programs for the IDPs, many of them supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)" (Greene 1998, p. 263).

"Food assistance, two 1996 surveys found, is the most important need for the majority of internally displaced persons. This is especially the case in rural areas, where limited opportunities for income generation create higher levels of dependency. The World Food Programme (WFP) defines a household as 'food secure' when it has access, at all times, through home production or purchasing power, to food, in adequate quantity, safety and acceptability, needed to provide a healthy life for all its members. Several years after being displaced, many internally displaced households continue to lack food security. A survey conducted by World Vision International in the spring of 1998 indicated that the problem is most acute in Barda, Oguz and Ujar districts. In outlying areas, limited economic opportunities partly explain the higher levels of food insecurity. Generally in rural areas, the land to which internally displaced persons have access tends to be of too poor soil quality to enable self-sufficiency, notwithstanding the support provided by several agencies for gardening activities. For instance, internally displaced persons in one camp explained that they could cultivate only onions. The food assistance provided by international agencies is designed to cover 50 per cent of nutritional needs, providing items such as flour, oil and pulses (edible seeds such as peas, beans, lentils, etc.), with the beneficiaries attempting to supplement this with vegetables, meat and by means of the bread subsidy provided by the Government. However, the high rates of malnutrition that have been found to exist, especially among children and the elderly, indicate that the food assistance needs of the internally displaced are not being met adequately" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 61).

"The internally displaced need ongoing assistance to meet their essential food needs. It must be emphasized that this assistance need not consist of mere hand-outs but instead could take the form of 'food for work' programmes, at least for the vast majority of the displaced who are able and indeed very willing to work" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 62).

## **Water**

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### **Water is a major problem in Azerbaijan (1998)**

- The water supply for the general population is limited and often unreliable
- IDPs in urban areas generally have better access to water supplies than those in rural areas

"Water is a systemic problem in Azerbaijan, as it is elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, but the quality of water is no worse for IDPs in public buildings than for the general populace. IDPs in urban areas generally have better access to water supplies than those in rural areas, although some of the camp population have clean water from new wells. One third of IDPs have received water or had their water source repaired by a humanitarian organization or the government. One third of IDP families have received a latrine from a foreign assistance organization" (Greene 1998, p. 264).

"On the issue of access by internally displaced persons to potable water, it must be noted that the water supply for the general population is limited and often unreliable. The water supply tends to be better in the cities, though its quality is poor in the dilapidated public buildings where many internally displaced persons in urban areas are accommodated. Projects for the rehabilitation of these buildings include attention to the replacement of water pipes, but for those in buildings not yet benefiting from these projects serious problems relating to water quality remain. Similarly, in rural areas, efforts are being undertaken by humanitarian organizations and the Government to provide potable water, including through the construction of wells or supply of water tanks in camps and settlements. However, the demand is great, leaving many internally displaced persons still in need. The lack of clean water for drinking and other purposes was a common concern raised by the displaced in a number of the camps and settlements visited by the Representative. Existing wells often prove inadequate for a number of reasons. In one camp visited by the Representative, the well was reported to be only two metres deep. In the Lachin Winterland Camp, there are only old artesian wells and the construction of a water pipeline is required to provide the displaced with proper access to water. In the light of these conditions, it would be important for the Government and international agencies jointly to identify the priority areas for improving access to potable water" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 65).

## **Shelter**

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### **Earthquake hits IDP centres in the area of Baku (November 2000)**

- Immediately after the earthquake 100 buildings were found unsafe and 3,500 people (800 families) were evacuated
- 5 collective centres for internally displaced are also evacuated with 400 families forced to move

"On Saturday 25 November 2000, at 22:10 local time (18:10 GMT), Azerbaijan was struck by an earthquake measuring 5.9 on the Richter scale, followed by a quake a minute later measuring 6.3. according to the US Geological Survey, the epicentre was in the Caspian Sea 25 km to the south south-east of Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. The earthquake was felt as far away as Georgia's capital Tbilisi, 600 km north west of the epicentre.

The earthquake affected the northern-eastern coastline of Azerbaijan, with the main damage occurring between the Absheron peninsula and the Russian border. Baku is situated on the south side of the Absheron peninsula which stretches into the Caspian Sea. Minor earthquakes are a common phenomenon in this area. This earthquake is however the strongest experienced in 150 years and the first to hit Absheron in many years. Absheron, including Baku, is the home of approximately 4 million people, half the country's population. This is a very densely populated area that has grown substantially over the last 10 years in terms of population but not housing, which means the number of occupants per housing unit has grown. Many of the refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh have found refuge here.

According to the government of Azerbaijan, 31 people died as a result of the earthquake, 26 of them immediately after the quake and 5 people a day later in a gas explosion. A total of 412 people were either hospitalised or sought medical assistance. Everything from distress to serious fractures are reported. Of the patients that were hospitalised, 42 remains of which 10 are said to be in critical conditions.

Immediately after the earthquake 100 buildings were found unsafe and 3,500 people (800 families) were evacuated by local authorities. These families have been accommodated in old hotels without running water and heating. A further 1,000 buildings are expected to be damaged to such an extent that evacuation in the near future may be necessary with the potential of up to 35,000 people forced to leave their homes. Severe damage has been observed in the case of 19 educational institutions of which 11 are primary/secondary schools and 8 colleges and universities. A total of 6 health and social institutions are severely affected. Up to 500 patients were moved within the current facilities to other hospitals and institutions.

5 IDP collective centres are also evacuated with 400 families forced to move. These families have been accommodated in old factories and administration buildings not designed for human habitation, with negative public health implications. "(IFRC 6 December 2000)



"The internally displaced people (IDPs), who are the most vulnerable of the evacuees, are relocated from the heavily damaged buildings to run-down factories and hostels not suitable for human habitation, with negative public health implications." (Monthly Inter-agency Meeting, December 2000)

"As a result of the earthquake, nearly 400 IDP families were evacuated from 5 collective centres to buildings not designed for human habitation. According to preliminary information, 83 public buildings occupied by a total of 18,810 IDPs have been affected. Out of 46 damaged hostels, 12 hostels are severely damaged. It should be stressed that the earthquake did not cause major destruction to the public buildings occupied by IDPs/refugees thanks to the maintenance activities carried out by international NGO community throughout the past 3-4 years." (Monthly Inter-agency Meeting December 2000)

### **Accommodations of IDPs in public buildings (1998)**

- About one quarter of the internally displaced live with friends or relatives
- About two-thirds of the displaced households live in one-room shelters
- Typical public building accommodation provides cramped living space lacking electricity, heating and water

"According to government statistics, about one-quarter of the internally displaced live with friends and relatives, while the remainder live in tent camps, public buildings (such as schools), partially constructed buildings, tourist and health facilities, railway wagons, dugouts, and other temporary settlements [...]. In a recent survey of its beneficiaries, which include the majority of IDPs living in rural areas, the World Food Programme (WFP) found about two-thirds of households live in one-room shelters, 70 percent do not have kitchens, and 40 percent share toilets with other families. Another recent survey, sponsored by the World Bank, found similarly dire shelter conditions: the majority of the surveyed IDP households in both urban and rural areas live in one-room shelters, and 18 percent are without access to water inside or even nearby their residences." (UNDP 1999, pp. 49-50)

"Personnel of the Department of Refugees and Displaced Persons noted that shelter is the area of basic need where the difference in the conditions of refugees and the internally displaced is most noticeable. While almost all refugees arriving from Armenia have found permanent accommodation, most of the internally displaced remain, after over five years of displacement, in temporary shelters of the most basic nature, including tents, railway wagons and public buildings" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 66).

"While the public buildings in which an estimated 50 per cent of the total internally displaced population live provide a more permanent structure, this type of shelter is not without serious defects. The reportedly typical public building accommodation visited by

the Representative provides cramped living space, with extended families occupying single rooms originally designed to house one student attending higher education or technical institutes. In the public buildings visited in the Xatai district outside Baku, an average of seven to eight people occupy a room of 9 to 12 square metres; in the buildings visited in the Binagady district, an average of five to six people occupy each room. The rooms were bereft of doors, thus raising concerns regarding lack of privacy and security. In the communal kitchens, where an average of 20 families share a single gas cooker, gas poisoning and other safety problems were reported to exist. Throughout the buildings, electrical wires were exposed and over-used, with multiple makeshift connections apparent. The entrance areas and stairwells were dark, even during the daytime visits of the Representative. Moreover, although the Representative visited in the early summer [1998], it was apparent from the frequent lack of window panes and the holes in walls and roofs that the buildings were not winterized and would fail to provide adequate protection against the strong winds characterizing the winter months in Baku and its surroundings. Plumbing problems and water damage were evident and sanitation facilities were clearly inadequate, creating a fertile breeding ground for disease" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 68).

For figures of displaced persons by type of settlements, see also "[54 % of the IDPs live in urban areas \(January 2001\)](#)" [Internal link]

### **IDP camps are located mainly in southern Azerbaijan (1998)**

- Between 75,000 and 100,000 IDP living in camps in 1998
- IDPs in tents are worst off, as tents provide inadequate protection against the harsh winters and the stifling heat in summer (1998)

"In 1998 the number of IDPs in camps [was] probably between 75,000 and 100,000. Many of the camps are located in southern Azerbaijan near the Aras River. These include Sabirabad, two camps at Saatli, and four camps at Bilasuvar. In January 1996 the population of these four camps was 44,000. The Sabirabad camp alone, one of the least salubrious, and located at some distance from towns and villages, housed 12,000 IDPs. The number of IDPs in tented camps has declined since 1994 as many of them have been transferred to other accommodations, including prefabricated one-room houses furnished by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO). Most of the IDPs who returned to Fizuli had been in camps. The April 1996 UNHCR survey stated that approximately 5 percent of its respondents were in camps. Only a small percentage of the people who became displaced in 1993-94 have merged into the communities where they live" (Greene 1998, p. 255).

"Worst off would seem to be those internally displaced persons who continue to live in tents, which are often damaged. These fail to provide sufficient protection from the harsh

winters and, as was apparent during the Representative's visit in late May, retain stifling heat in the warmer months. The problem of water seepage through the ground, due to a high water table, was evident in a number of tents and other temporary shelters visited by the Representative" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 67).

**Problems with location of shelters underscore needs for proper consultations with IDPs (1998)**

- Prefabricated houses found unsuitable for displaced semi-nomadic Kurds
- Location, e.g. proximity to market place, found more important than quality of shelter
- Single-room dwellings could benefit from partitions in order to conform with cultural norms

"In addressing shelter conditions, as with all other needs, it is essential to consult with the intended beneficiaries themselves. Two examples regarding shelter that came to light in the course of the Representative's visit underscore the importance of doing so. The first example concerns the Lachin Winterland camp, where . . . semi-nomadic Kurds displaced from the Lachin area found refuge in the subterranean dug-out dwellings of their traditional winter settlement areas. When displacement forced this Kurdish community to remain in these settlements year-round, an international project constructed numerous prefabricated houses for them. However, today these remain largely unoccupied owing to the fact that the intended beneficiaries had no intention of leaving their traditional dug-out dwellings, especially as these had been purposefully built in close proximity to the grazing land for their livestock. Although the dug-out dwellings were not designed as permanent residences and required repair in certain aspects, the preference of the residents to remain in their traditional dwellings near the grazing lands provides a cautionary example of the need not to assume that more sophisticated, not to mention more expensive, structures will necessarily correspond to the needs and preferences of the intended beneficiaries" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 72).

"A second example relates to the situation of the thousands of internally displaced persons who have made makeshift homes in abandoned railway carriages. The shelter that these structures provide is far from adequate in that they, like the tents, lack insulation against the wind and cold and prove stiflingly hot in the summer months. Nonetheless, the residents of one railway carriage settlement visited by the Representative in the Barda region proved unwilling to move out of these conditions when given the option. In this case, the reason concerned less the type of alternative shelter offered than its location, several kilometres away from the market place adjacent to the railway car settlement where most of its residents make their living. Given the desire of these internally displaced persons to remain in the railway carriages rather than be relocated far from the centres of economic activity, efforts might more usefully be targeted at improving, in whatever ways possible, the shelter in which the displaced currently reside" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 73).

"One suggestion for shelter improvement raised by several government officials and some international NGOs, (but, notably, not by any of the displaced with whom the

Representative met) was the construction or provision of a partition in the single-room dwellings in which most internally displaced families reside. This measure is considered important in order to conform with cultural norms according to which adolescent girls and unmarried women are to sleep in rooms other than those occupied by their male relatives. Government officials noted that in respect of these cultural traditions even the poorest family would have a two-room dwelling. One family whose railway carriage dwelling the Representative visited had been provided with a partition by OXFAM. Other agencies with whom the Representative raised this request replied that they had not responded on account of limited resources." (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 74).

### **The shelter conditions of many IDPs have improved as a result of various rehabilitation and construction programmes (1998)**

- Programmes include the public building rehabilitation, limestone shelter and mud-brick construction projects

"Marked and much-needed improvements in the shelter conditions of internally displaced persons have been made as a result of the public building rehabilitation, limestone shelter and mud-brick construction projects. After having witnessed first-hand the potential for significantly ameliorating the temporary living conditions of internally displaced persons in a cost-effective manner and often with positive side effects in terms of income generation, skills development and the moral of the displaced, the Representative considers that the dismal shelter conditions in which the large number of internally displaced persons, who have not yet benefited from these programmes remain, are all the more difficult to tolerate. In the light of the poor prospects for imminent return for the large number of internally displaced persons, the temporary shelter conditions must be improved to a minimum level of decency, at the very least. To this end, greater financial support from international donors and, to the extent possible, the Government, is required" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 71).

## **Sanitation and health**

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### **Low income affects health conditions of the displaced in southern Azerbaijan (2000)**

- Survey conducted by international NGO shows that birth rates among the displaced and refugees is slightly higher than in the rest of the population
- Disability, chronic and acute diseases prevalence is highest in the displaced population
- Displaced give financial constraints are the main obstacle to medical care

*[International Medical Corps ((IMC) commissioned a Survey to Curation International Foundation (CIF) in order to assess population health needs, utilization of health*

*services and the cost of treatment in Southern Azerbaijan: Sabirabad, Saatli, Bilasuvar, Fizuli, Imishli and Beylagan.]*

"The death rate equaled to 14.1 per 1,000 population. It was higher among the rural residents 15.0 comparatively to urban residents to DPs (12.8 and 12.1 respectively). In 56.9% death is caused by illness followed by old age 24.%)% and accident 18.2%. The birth rate was 18.3 per 1,000 population. DPs had the highest birth rate 19.5, while urban residents had the lowest 17.8- Share of 'stillborn' babies was very high in rural areas 13%, followed by DPs 4% and finally urban areas 1%, mean for the surveyed districts being 9%. "Stillbirth" rate was 88.2 per 1,000 live born babies.

Disability prevalence was highest in the DP population group was highest in the DP population group ~30 per 1,000 population, compared to population in rural and urban areas of southern Azerbaijan. Major limitation was more frequent among rural and DP population (7.99 and 7.75 per 1,000 population) then among urban residents 3.47.

Prevalence of chronic disease was 152,8 per 1,000 population. There was a significant difference found between different population groups. DPs reported highest prevalence of chronic diseases 199.6 and rural residents lowest 134.0 while urban residents reported 176.2 per 1,000 population.

Incidence rate of the acute diseases over the period of June-August 2000 was ~200 per 1,000 population. DPs had the highest incidence of acute diseases ~233, while residents of urban areas had the lowest 124 per 1,000 population. Most commonly observed illnesses were diseases of respiratory organs 49.1 per 1,000 population, followed by infectious diseases 33.6 and by acute cardio-vascular diseases 31.5.

Incidence rate of acute diseases among children 05 years old was 197 per 1,000 population of same group during the past 3 month. Up to 70% of this illnesses occurred mainly due to following three diseases: 39.5% - ARI, followed by infectious diseases (19.6%) and gastrointestinal diseases (10.8).

Utilization of medical services offered by the local providers was very low in the selected districts. Population mainly refers to either self-treatment without consulting any provider (26%) or treatment at home with consultation (37%). Population mainly refrains from seeking medical care due to financial reasons. Among different population groups, DPs named to l[a]ck of financing most frequently as a major reason not to seek medical services (30.7%)."

(IMC November 2000, p. 10)

### **Malaria spreading in camps (2000)**

- A combination of poor sanitary conditions, hot summer weather and pools of stagnant water have contributed to a favourable environment for disease to spread, particularly malaria.

- Federation has launched a campaign to spray camps twice a year in an attempt to reduce mosquito numbers

"The Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society is running a major campaign to protect people living in camps for the internally displaced from malaria. Red Crescent health promotion officers and volunteers from among the camps' inhabitants are spraying the camps with insecticide.

The 10-day programme is spraying seven camps, which are home to 32,000 internally displaced people (IDPs). A combination of poor sanitary conditions, hot summer weather and pools of stagnant water have contributed to a favourable environment for disease to spread, particularly malaria.

Significant progress in eradicating the illness was made between 1996 and 1999 when the Federation, along with the Azerbaijan Government and the Azeri Red Crescent, carried out an anti-malaria programme in seven districts including, those hosting the camps.

However, since the initiative ended there has been a rise in reported cases of malaria and the Federation has responded with a campaign to spray camps twice a year in an attempt to reduce mosquito numbers." (IFRC 20 September 2000)

#### **Lack of adequate health care and sanitation have caused a deterioration in the health of the internally displaced (1998)**

- IDPs in Azerbaijan have generally suffered a deterioration in their health since their displacement

"Internally displaced persons in Azerbaijan typically have suffered a deterioration in their health since their displacement. A nationwide health and nutrition survey undertaken in 1996 noted elevated rates of chronic malnutrition among children and the elderly, and high levels of anaemia and iodine deficiency. Scabies, especially among children, and other skin infections, respiratory illnesses, malaria, diarrhoea and vitamin A deficiency are also prevalent health problems, especially in the camps" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 76).

"IDPs report an increase in sickness since their displacement. Because most IDP shelters have no bathing facilities, scabies is common among IDP children. Respiratory diseases and mental illness are also common problems for IDPs, particularly in camps. WHO has focused on immunizations, particularly for diphtheria and polio. About one fifth of IDPs receive treatment from Mobile Health Units and receive free drugs" (Greene 1998, p. 264).

#### **Displacement behind mental health problems (1998)**

- Having their hopes for imminent return dashed time and again has a psychological impact on the IDP

"Displacement has also created problems in the area of mental health. The psychological stress experienced by the displaced is not only war-related, but also stems from the cramped and poor conditions in which many of them live, as well as from feelings of isolation and uncertainty about their future. In this latter regard, the psychological impact on the displaced of having their hopes for imminent return dashed time and again cannot be underestimated: indeed, a number of international humanitarian staff noted a marked deterioration in the mental health of the displaced since the stalling of the peace process in early 1998. Local NGOs added that the current uncertainty as to whether international humanitarian assistance would continue has placed additional psychological stresses on the displaced. Guiding Principle 19 provides that, when necessary, internally displaced persons shall have access to psychological and social services" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 77).

#### **Health needs of displaced women and children (1998-2001)**

- Programmes have been developed to provide health education and services specific to the needs of women in the areas of gynaecological health, safe motherhood, and breastfeeding

"Special efforts to address the psychological and all other needs of displaced children are required, as Guiding Principle 4 provides. Important efforts to address the psycho-social needs of internally displaced children in Azerbaijan have been made by a number of international agencies, as well as local NGOs. One notable example is the UNICEF programme by which some 300 internally displaced persons have been trained as social workers to provide early childhood education and psycho-social rehabilitation activities to some 4,000 displaced children. The involvement of WFP means that the social workers participating in this programme receive not only training and meaningful employment but also food assistance for their work, while the children are provided with biscuits as part of the programme.

[...]

Special attention to the health needs of women, including in the area of reproductive health, and to the prevention of contagious and infectious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, is also called for in the Guiding Principles. In Azerbaijan, internally displaced men and women request contraceptives, particularly for the purposes of family planning. At the same time, programmes have been developed to provide health education and services specific to the needs of women in the areas of gynaecological health, safe motherhood and breastfeeding" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, paras. 78,79).

*See also "Reproductive health and family planning issues among IDPs and refugees", Mercy Corps Office, Baku, March 2001 [[Internet](#)]*

#### **Local health-care facilities need strengthening through support for infrastructure and the provision of supplies (1998)**

- Reports of delays in development of new health facilities (1998)

- Mobile health units have been organized to visit internally displaced communities
- Some IDPs unable to obtain medical services without payment

"In addition to training and expertise, local health-care capacities may require strengthening through support for infrastructure and the provision of supplies. In the Lachin Winterland camp in Agjabedi district, the construction by the local authorities of a medical clinic to serve the needs of the several thousand internally displaced persons in this settlement remains incomplete: the building . . . reportedly consists of only a basic frame with a roof, but no walls.

[...]

In the town of Horadiz in Fizuli district . . . the community hospital . . . had been reconstructed and rehabilitated but . . . lacked sufficient medical equipment, beds and other supplies. UNDP . . . [advised] . . . that it had earlier compiled a list of needed equipment and provided it to donors, who had responded by providing some essential drugs and medicines. However, there clearly remained a need for basic equipment.

[...]

While it is evident that there is a continued need for the international community to support the strengthening of national and local capacities in terms of health-care expertise, infrastructure and supplies, it is also incumbent upon the national and local authorities to do their part to ensure that what is in principle free access to State-sponsored medical services actually exists in practice. A number of internally displaced persons reported experiencing the problem of being unable to obtain medical services without payment. Although this practice is not officially sanctioned, and indeed is safeguarded against in national legislation, the national and local authorities arguably could do more to curb its occurrence. Guiding Principle 19 provides that all wounded and sick internally displaced persons, as well as those with disabilities shall receive to the fullest extent practicable and with the least possible delay, the medical care and attention they require, without distinction on any grounds other than medical ones.

[...]

Problems of access to medical services also may arise in terms of physical accessibility, especially in areas far removed from urban centres. Mobile health units have been organized to visit internally displaced communities but, as the Deputy Minister of Health noted, they are unable to reach all those in need. The frequency of visits varies, with some communities having been found to go unaddressed entirely. Even in urban areas, physical access to medical services may be difficult. Internally displaced women in one of the public buildings visited by the Representative in the Xatai district on the outskirts of Baku pointed to the need to establish a regular health clinic to service the most basic health-care needs of the residents of the grouping of public buildings. At the very minimum, they required the installation of a communal telephone line reserved for contacting emergency medical services when necessary" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, paras. 81, 82, 83).

#### **Sanitary infrastructure poorly developed or maintained in IDP shelters and settlements (1998)**



- Poor sanitation is one of the main factors contributing to the health problems of internally displaced persons

"Poor sanitation servicing is one of the main factors contributing to the health problems of internally displaced persons. While the sanitation infrastructure is weak in many parts of the country, it is particularly poorly developed or maintained in internally displaced persons' shelters and settlements owing to overcrowding and their perceived 'temporary' nature. After years of displacement, many internally displaced persons continue to lack adequate bathing facilities. In a camp in the Barda region that has been administered by the local authorities since the withdrawal of the Turkish Red Crescent which established it, each of the more than 6,000 camp residents is entitled to a 15-minute shower once a week in the communal bath-house, according to established schedules. However, camp residents informed the Representative that water was often not available during their designated time. When sufficient water supply is available, the problem of water drainage arises, as was clearly evident in the men's section of the bath-house at the time of the Representative's visit [in May 1998]. Moreover, it was at this same camp that the well is only 2 metres deep and where scabies and diarrhoea were reported to be common" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 84).

"In another government-run camp, in the Agjabedi region, similar problems of water supply were mentioned. Moreover, inadequate garbage collection was evident: a patch of land in the middle of several dwellings was strewn with refuse. In addition to creating unsanitary conditions for the camp population as a whole, this situation posed other problems. One woman explained that her family remained without its own shelter as the land allocated to her was in the affected area. Internally displaced persons reported that although the camp authorities had made arrangements for regular garbage collection, in practice it occurred infrequently and there had been little effort to address the specific problem of the makeshift dump" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 85).

# ACCESS TO EDUCATION

## General

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### **National legislation contains provisions for education of IDP children and adolescents (1998)**

- In 1996 many IDP children did not attend school at all or attended irregularly
- Accommodation of IDPs represents a strain on education infrastructure (1998)
- UNHCR support for mobile library units to reach IDPs (1998)

"Guiding Principle 23, reaffirming the right of every human being to education, calls upon the authorities concerned to ensure that the internally displaced receive education which is free and compulsory at the primary level. [N]ational legislation relating to internally displaced persons contains provisions for the education of children and adolescents, without discrimination." (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 87).

"The impact of internal displacement on education extends beyond the displaced themselves to affect also segments of the population at large. The accommodation of the displaced in the student dormitories of universities or technical schools and in schools has resulted in disruptions and difficulties in the education of the non-displaced, creating a certain resentment on the part of host populations. While these disruptions may have been tolerable on a short-term basis, after more than five years there is a need, not only for the well-being of the displaced but also for the educational system as a whole, to provide alternative arrangements for shelter" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 90).

"A total of 28 infant schools catering for 7,300 children and 712 general secondary schools are operating in refugee centres. Additional measures are being taken to organize an educational programme for the remaining refugee children.

Orders of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 128 (1 April 1993), No. 328 (25 June 1993), No. 403 (21 July 1993) provide for a range of measures to improve the situation of the children or refugees and forcibly displaced persons who have fled their homes owing to the Armenian aggression. These measures include the provision of temporary schools, pre-school facilities and a lump-sum benefit payment.

The Government is continuing to do everything it can to improve the social status of refugees and forcibly displaced persons. A Presidential Order of 17 September 1998 approved the State programme to address the specific problems of these groups, thereby underscoring the importance of this matter.

This programme envisages the following measures:

In general secondary schools provision of free text books for the children of refugees or forcibly displaced persons;

Summer holidays for children of refugees and forcibly displaced persons and pupils living in tent cities and camps." (UN HRC 5 May 2000, paras. 588-591)

**High value placed on education by Azerbaijani society is evident among the internally displaced (1998)**

- Achievements in the area of education are remarkable given the difficult circumstances in which schools for IDPs operate
- IDP schools are short of school materials such as desks, chairs, blackboards and notebooks

"The high value that Azerbaijani society places on education was evident among the internally displaced whom the Representative met. At a camp in Barda district, the internally displaced teachers with whom the Representative discussed educational issues in some detail proudly reported the maintenance of high educational standards within the school system established in the camp. As an illustration of this point, they cited the fact that the students from the camp who had gone on to university had found themselves to be comparatively very well prepared. The camp school had recently won an award at a music competition for the Barda district, which was an accolade in which the entire camp population, many of whom originated from the Agdam district, famous for its music and art, took great pride. In the Binagady district outside Baku, the Representative received a warm reception from a choir of school children, as was the case at a government-run camp in the Agjabedi region where young people performed an impressive poetry recital in celebration of the country's national holiday" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 88).

"These achievements in the area of education are particularly remarkable given the difficult circumstances under which the schools for the internally displaced often operate. The students consulted at the Barda camp indicated first and foremost the need to replenish the supply of school materials, including desks, chairs, blackboards and notebooks. They suggested that there exist significant contrasts in this regard between camps, citing the example of two camps nearby where the schools serviced by the International Islamic Relief Organization are supplied with textbooks, uniforms and medical services. Regarding the buildings themselves, problems of overcrowding and lack of heat during the winter months were reported, as was the lack of resources on the part of the local authorities to address them. In a country so rich in oil and energy resources, the lack of fuel to heat schools is a disparity that is even harder to accept. In other cases, even the physical structure of education facilities is inadequate, such as in the Lachin Winterland camp where the school building is incomplete. As with the unfinished medical clinic at the camp, the authorities and displaced alike stressed that support simply to ensure completion of the construction of the school building would be of considerable assistance" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 89).

### **Issues of integration with the host populations related to education of IDPs (1998)**

"In the education of the internally displaced, issues of integration with the host populations also arise. In the Xatai district, for instance, the local authorities stated that internally displaced children were educated in schools separate from the host population. It was suggested that doing so facilitated the children's adaptation to their displacement by educating them with other children in a similar situation. However, in a situation of displacement lasting several years, it also segregates them from the local population, and thereby impedes the process of integration, which is particularly important as alternative solutions to return are increasingly required" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 91).

# ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

## Self-reliance

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### **IDP groups implement projects in association with international NGOs (2001)**

- IDPs groups have a lesser tendency to implement self-funded projects than local groups
- They also seem to have poorer relations with regional and local leaders
- 

"Close to half of all the groups had self-funded projects, though those funded by IDPs tended to be smaller. In fact, IDP groups in general implemented smaller projects than the other two groups sets. [...]

IDP groups also seem to have poorer relations with regional and local leaders, perhaps reflecting the nature of the IDP situation. Though all groups are more likely to make project decisions as a group, both mixed and IDP groups show a higher tendency to turn to the community as a whole. All group sets appear to be active in their activities geared towards outreach to the community at large.[...]

[T]he groups who have greater affiliation with INGOs also, apparently, have greater dependence upon these organizations. mixed and IDP groups receive financing for ongoing project maintenance and operation from INGOs to a greater extent that do their local villager group counterparts. They also demonstrate a lower propensity for planning future self-financed projects. Though all groups show a greater percentage of multiple inputs contributed to projects, IDP groups have a higher frequency than the others of contributing only labor.

[...]

a number of differences were apparent across the three categories. Most groups had less than 10 members, though more mixed groups and IDPs than local groups fell in the over 10 members category. [...] A greater number of mixed and all IDP groups indicated that they have worked with INGO than local groups." (CHF 2001, pp. 25-26)

*[On behalf of USAID and Mercy Corps' Azerbaijan Humanitarian Assistance Programme (AHAP) and within the context of CHF's Social Investment Initiative (SII), CHF designed its Social Inventory Assessment (SIA) to take stock of the social investments made to date in Azerbaijan. Surveys took place in over 4500 villages and settlements in three separate regions of the country (16 districts of the country): Southern and Central Azerbaijan and Baku and Sumgait. An average of 32 groups was targeted in each districts. The mix of groups interviewed was comprised of local villagers, IDP/Refugee, and mixed communities.]*

### **International community classifies over 70 per cent of the IDPs as "poor" (1998-2000)**

- 41 per cent of the IDPs are considered "extremely poor"
- Figures show a slight improvement since World Bank Survey in 1998

\*International organizations estimate that over 70 percent of households in conflict-affected areas are poor, with 35 percent of these categorized as very poor." (USAID January 2001)

"Azerbaijan, like other former Soviet countries, is currently in a phase of transition from a centrally planned to a market-based economy. Coinciding with this difficult period of structural reform, the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh has complicated the transition process and further constrained the capacity of the Government to address the socio-economic needs of its people. According to an assessment conducted by the World Bank, 68 percent of household surveyed are classified as 'poor', of which 24 percent are 'extremely poor'. The highest poverty level, of 79 percent, is found among the internally displaced, of which 41 percent are considered 'extremely poor'. The fact that the social security system no longer exists in as extensive a form as during the Soviet period further exacerbates the plight of the poor. Compounding the high level of poverty are growing inequalities in the distribution of income. This gap is expected only to widen with the anticipated influx of wealth from oil revenues" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 16).

### **Displaced remain dependent on state subsidies (1999)**

- 36% of the displaced consider themselves formally unemployed, according to World Bank survey
- Only a small minority of the displaced has access to land which they can often not cultivate as a result of financial constraints
- Displaced persons are excluded from the land privatization process which is open only to Azerbaijani citizens in their home districts
- The displaced households typically depend heavily for their survival on subsidies and pensions from the Government and food aid from international humanitarian organizations
- Skill development, retraining, and income generation programmes need to be expanded

"Most IDPs have been displaced from their homelands for five to seven years, during which their employment opportunities have been severely limited. According to government statistics, only one-third of the IDPs who are able to work are employed. Thirty-six percent of the IDPs interviewed in the recent World Bank-sponsored survey consider themselves formally unemployed, whereas only 8 percent considered themselves unemployed before warfare forced them from their homes. WFP estimates that about two-thirds of the country's rural IDPs are unable to meet their minimal food and non-food requirements.

Many IDPs (at least 80 percent) have agricultural backgrounds, but most of them live in circumstances that prevent them from working in agriculture. They are effectively

excluded from owning land because Azerbaijani citizens are eligible to participate in land privatization only in their home raions. The recent WFP survey found that only ten percent of WFP's rural IDP beneficiaries have access to land for cultivation and that financial constraints prevent one-third of them from cultivating that land.

A tremendous need has emerged for skill development, retraining, and income generation. A number of international organizations and NGOs have responded to this need by funding programs that give start-up loans and training to IDPs wishing to establish small business. Programs of this sort have supported small enterprises ranging from bakeries and car repair shops to womens' cooperatives. Some of them are expected to become self-sustaining, with the money from repaid loans being used to finance additional businesses.

The reach and effectiveness of the microcredit programs have been weak, however, because of the absence of clear regulations on credit programs outside the banking sector. WFP estimates that only 4 percent of rural IDP household income is generated by these programs and that income earned from the programs covers only about one-quarter of the total needs of the IDP households that participate in them. A recent Presidential Decree on Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees gave support to the expansion of micro-credit programs, raising hopes that the regulatory gap in this area will be addressed in the near future.

IDPs typically depend heavily for their survival on subsidies and pensions from the Government and food aid from international humanitarian organizations. The government subsidies include a monthly 'bread subsidy,' which was recently increased to 15,000 manats (about \$ 3.50). and a children subsidy of 9,000 manats (about \$ 2.10) for each child whose per capita income is less than 16,500 manats (about \$ 3.85). IDP and refugee households are also eligible for a monthly government subsidy of 30 liters of kerosene during the 5 winter months.

These subsidies are not large, but they contribute a significant proportion to most IDP household budgets, and many IDPs are willing to incur substantial travel expenses to obtain them. The recent WFP survey showed that all of the IDP families receiving WFP food rations collect the bread subsidy and almost half of them collect the subsidy for children. Together these subsidies cover 18 percent of the total cash and in-kind income of WFP's beneficiaries." (UNDP 1999, pp. 50-51)

Sources of income (cash and in-kind) for rural IDP households receiving WFP food rations

Government salaries, pensions, and subsidies: 34 percent

Household activities, including casual labor, cultivation of gardens, raising of livestock, and the sale of privatization vouchers, livestock, and other possessions: 30 percent

WFP food rations: 23 percent

Small business activities financed with micro-credits from humanitarian organizations: 4 percent

(UNDP 1999, p. 51)

### **Risk of dependency on food aid (1999)**

- To minimize the risk of food aid dependency, WFP provisions have been limited to supplementary rations

"During the recent visit of the Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs (RSG) (May 1998), a prime concern expressed by donors, international agencies and NGOs was the dependency of the displaced and the government on international assistance. The displaced in particular have indicated strong willingness to work in order to provide for themselves. To minimize dependence on food aid, the RSG recommended that more food-for-work and training activities be introduced to assist IDPs to resettle and reintegrate .

To minimize the risk of food aid dependency, WFP provisions have been limited to supplementary rations. All beneficiaries receive a unified ration providing half the energy required per person per day (around 950 kcal), with 25 g of protein and 28 g of fat." (WFP November 1999, p. 15)

### **Two-thirds of the 300,000 internally displaced persons in a position to work are unemployed (1998)**

- Most of those having jobs are employed in the public sector
- Seasonal agricultural work, occasional construction work or temporary menial work in the public sector provides a source of income for others
- An unknown number of internally displaced men have migrated temporarily to the capital or further afield to Russia in search of income to support their families

"According to the most recent government figures, two thirds of the over 300,000 internally displaced persons in a position to work are unemployed. The majority of those having jobs are employed in the public sector, mainly as teachers and health-care professionals, with about a third employed in the private sector. Outside of regular employment, seasonal agricultural work, occasional construction work or temporary menial work in the public sector provides a source of income for others. However, payment, especially for agricultural work on state farms or bigger privately owned plantations, was reported by internally displaced persons as being irregular and delayed. Moreover, the opportunities for agricultural work are often limited: in Barda region, only 5,000 out of the 80,000 internally displaced persons in the region have work. The local authorities explained that although many of the displaced have an agricultural background, they lack skills in cotton and silk cultivation, which are the main agricultural activities in the region. For the internally displaced persons living in the railway wagon settlement in Barda town, the 60,000 manat (approximately \$17) average monthly earnings in the market are sufficient not to accept offers of better shelter elsewhere. Also



as noted earlier, an unknown number of internally displaced men have migrated temporarily to the capital or further afield to Russia in search of income to support their families, finding economic opportunities mostly in informal trading activities from which the amount of income generated varies. One woman in a camp told of her young son's experience in Baku where he had been trading in the markets since 1996 but had as yet not been able to send any money home to his family owing to corruption: any income earned, aside from that spent for his basic upkeep, was needed to pay officials in order to be able to continue to operate" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 93).

**Limited opportunities for employment contrast starkly with the IDPs' willingness to work (1998)**

- Internally displaced men and women, both in Baku and in the other regions, have expressed a strong desire for work
- The internally displaced represent a significant pool of underutilized skilled and educated labour
- Expansion of food-for-work programmes suggested as a measure to smooth the transition period

"The limited opportunities for employment and other means of income-generation available to the displaced contrasts starkly with their willingness to work. A strong desire for work was a common wish expressed by internally displaced persons, men and women alike, both in the Baku area and in the regions. For example, a group of women with whom the Representative met in the Xatai district outside of Baku indicated that, aside from the ultimate goal of return, their main concern was to have opportunities for work. They emphasized that they would be willing to do anything, including working with their hands or doing menial tasks, notwithstanding the fact that several of them said they had diplomas and university education. They also expressed a keen interest in being trained in new skills." (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 94)

"Over the course of the mission, the Representative developed the notion that this dilemma might most effectively be managed by continuing to pursue peace and the preferred solution of return while undertaking efforts to strengthen the capacities of the displaced for self-reliance with a view to preparing them for the possibility of return. Cast in this light, the provision of skills training and income-generation opportunities for the displaced can be seen as being a contribution, rather than a concession, to the goal of eventual return. Moreover, whether it be in the agricultural or industrial sectors or in the area of entrepreneurship, the internally displaced represent a significant pool of underutilized skilled and educated labour which, if channeled into appropriate areas of activity, could help contribute to the economic growth of the country as a whole. Along this line of thinking, the Minister of Social Security, in a very fruitful and frank exchange of views with the Representative, spoke of the high intellectual potential of the displaced and the considerable amount of current foreign investment in the country, suggesting that these two elements combined could be capitalized upon through skills-training and job creation in the field of the latest technology" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 112).

"Owing to the present state of the economy, the self-reliance of the internally displaced will take some time to cultivate and, in the light of this fact, the need for humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs will remain for some time to come. These two considerations, however, need not be mutually exclusive but, rather could be addressed in a complementary manner. To stave off the risk of chronic dependency, while at the same time providing meaningful activity and skills development for the displaced, 'food for work' programmes, of which an example in the area of health care was provided above, could be expanded to cover other areas of activity and smooth the transition from dependency to development." (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 117).

#### **Government of Azerbaijan more receptive towards income-generating projects for the displaced (1998)**

- The Government supports programmes like vocational and business training; small loans for the purchase of sewing machines, shoe repair materials, or for the formation of IDP cooperatives
- The reconstruction of some villages provides returnees with income as well as opportunities for skills development (1998)

"In a welcome trend, international agencies and NGOs reported that in recent years, the Government has become more receptive to income-generating projects for the displaced, in contrast to its previous strong reluctance to allow such efforts for fear that they would interfere with the overriding goal of the return of the displaced. Programmes currently undertaken by international agencies and NGOs support micro-enterprise development in a number of ways: vocational and business training; small business grants or loans to individuals for the purchase of needed equipment and materials such as sewing machines, cloth, hand-knitting materials and yarn, knitting machines, shoe repair materials, car mechanics' tools, hairdresser and barber kits, and carpentry, masonry, welding and plumbing kits; loans to groups of internally displaced persons organizing small business cooperatives, such as wheat mills; and the establishment and support of women's cooperatives. The Government also sponsors some income-generating activities of its own: for example, a sewing project for women whose handiwork the Government purchases for distribution to the "martyrs' families" (a number of which are internally displaced persons) who have lost a family member in the conflict and receive special assistance packages. Local NGOs, their international counterparts noted, could also play an important role in sponsoring micro-credit programmes, but are constrained from doing so by national legislation requiring that an institution must have the equivalent of US \$5 million in order to engage in lending activity. To enhance the access of the internally displaced to credit, the Government is encouraged to create a more conducive environment for the micro-credit programmes of NGOs" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 95).

"As with the shelter component of the programme [for reconstruction and rehabilitation], beneficiary involvement is a central characteristic of the efforts to rebuild the physical infrastructure of areas of return. More than 6,000 persons, most of whom are residents of

the Fizuli district, are involved in the reconstruction of the town of Horadiz and other villages in the region, thereby providing returnees with income, as well as opportunities for skills development." (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 105).

See [Azerweb map "Income Generation"](#) (December 1999) [Internet]

## **Public participation**

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### **Growing influence of women in camps (2000)**

- Displaced women in southern camps elected a women's committee which will lobby on various issues such as access to drinking water and kindergartens

"Women's involvement in democratic decision making in Azerbaijan is becoming more obvious by the day. Nowhere is this better demonstrated than in the southern camps for displaced families from different districts around Nagorno Karabakh where 11 mothers have recently been elected to a women's committee. Everyone admits that the women in the camps are stoical. Not only do they manage the daily chores of cooking, cleaning and looking after their families, they are also involved in identifying and solving other problems of camp life - with the help of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Encouraged by Arja Nykanen, the Federation's community development delegate in the sub-delegation in Sabirabad, and Lisa Natoli, the public health delegate, the camp women recently chose their 11 committee members from scores who put themselves forward for selection. The fact that so many wanted to take part showed how eager the women are to make an effort to change their lives. The first meeting was held in a new social activity centre, one of several built in the southern camps by the International Federation with funding provided by the Exxon Azerbaijan Operating company. The Women's Committee will play an advocacy role, lobbying on issues that affect most women in Azerbaijan - access to an adequate supply of safe drinking water and kindergartens for their children." (IFRC 18 May 2000)

### **Report of a demonstration of displaced persons in Baku (November 2000)**

"Several hundred Azerbaijanis made homeless during the Karabakh conflict blocked traffic in Baku for 30 minutes on 14 November, Turan reported. They demanded the "liberation" of Nagorno-Karabakh, the resignation of President Heidar Aliiev, and the advent to power of the opposition Musavat party, for which most of them voted on 5 November. They also demanded the resumption of electricity supplies to their temporary accommodation, claiming that those supplies had been cut because they did not vote for Yeni Azerbaijan." (RFE/RL 15 November 2000)

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## **Right to vote of the displaced during parliamentary elections (December 2000 and January 2001)**

- Internally displaced are entitled to vote in both the proportional ballot and single mandate contests organised for occupied districts
- The failure of the Central Election Commission to issue specific instructions reduced the transparency of the process of registration and voting in IDP constituencies

"As a result of the armed conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan has a large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) of whom some 250,000 are registered to vote. They are entitled to vote in both the proportional ballot and the single-mandate constituency contests. Nine constituencies are partly or wholly in occupied territory. [Endnote 11]

In the case of districts wholly in occupied territories, constituency commissions 'in exile' were established. IDP voter lists were created on the basis of information supplied by the Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons and the local executive authorities 'in exile'. The IDPs are dispersed throughout Azerbaijan, with some concentration in Baku. They voted in their places of temporary residence, but their votes were accounted for in their original constituencies.

While IDPs in Azerbaijan have equal rights, freedoms and duties with other citizens, the CECs failure to issue specific instructions for IDP voting reduced the transparency of the process, led to an ad-hoc administration of the process, and prevented observers from following the registration and voting in IDP constituencies.

Endnote 11: These are constituencies 41, 42, 45, 47, 48, 71, 86, 90 and 95."  
(OSCE ODIHR 15 January 2001, sect. V.D)

*See "A poor human rights record and a persisting economical crisis (2000-2001)"*  
*[Internal link]*

## DOCUMENTATION NEEDS AND CITIZENSHIP

### General

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#### **A new Law on Citizenship makes those who fled Armenia between 1988 and 1992 eligible for Azeri citizenship (1998)**

"Azerbaijan has taken legislative steps to reduce the number of refugees, providing automatic citizenship to tens of thousands of persons. Under the country's new Citizenship Law, those who fled neighboring Armenia between 1988 and 1992 as a result of the fighting in Karabakh are now eligible for citizenship" (Forced Migration Alert, 25 November 1998). The new law, elaborated with assistance from the UNHCR and the Council of Europe, was adopted by Parliament on 30 September 1998 (UN Commission on Human Rights 17 March 1999).

Under Article 52 of the Constitution, the right to citizenship is given to persons having political and legal connections with the Republic of Azerbaijan, while Article 53 guarantees the legal protection to all citizens of Azerbaijan (NGO Resource and Training Centre, June 1999).

## ISSUES OF FAMILY UNITY, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

### General

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#### **Despite the displacement, community links have often proved resilient (1998)**

- The preservation of community structures is particularly evident among the internally displaced Kurds
- Whenever possible, families remained together or rejoined after displacement

"In several of the public buildings, camps or other settlements, large numbers of internally displaced persons from the same community or region can be found. In some places, this concentration has lent itself to community structures recreating themselves. In a camp near the town of Barda, for example, the camp population of more than 6,000 persons have settled and organized themselves on the basis of their area of origin. One manifestation of this trend is in education, where parallel school systems have been established for students and teachers from each of the four main home communities represented in the camps" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 35).

"The phenomenon of community structures remaining intact is particularly evident among the internally displaced Kurds. At the Kelbajar Winterland Camp located at the Auberon site south of Barda and at the Lachin Winterland Camp in the Agjabedi district, the Representative visited communities of internally displaced Kurds from Kelbajar and Lachin respectively who had settled on lands to which they traditionally migrated on a seasonal basis. These Kurdish communities are semi-nomadic peoples who would spend the spring and summer months grazing animals in the mountainous regions around Kelbajar and Lachin, both of which are located between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia in what is now occupied territory, and then migrate with their animals to less mountainous regions in central Azerbaijan in the winter months. Shelters (which in the case of Lachin Kurds consisted of dugouts on a dusty plain) for the population and their livestock, as well as other structures and cemeteries, had existed in these areas for years. The historic migration pattern of this community is well recognized, to the extent that it was reflected in the system of land distribution to regional authorities. The Auberon site settled by the Kelbajar Kurds, for example, had been allotted to the Kelbajar Executive Committee in 1972, even though geographically the land is located outside of its administrative district. With the outbreak of conflict and the concomitant displacement of these communities, the seasonal settlement of the Kurdish communities in central Azerbaijan took on a permanent nature" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 36).

"Whenever possible, families remained together or rejoined after displacement. However, economic circumstances have often compelled the separation of families, as

men of working age leave the family in search of a livelihood in the cities or as far afield as Russia where there exist opportunities for seasonal employment" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 37).

**The experience of displacement has affected gender roles within the family structure (1998-2000)**

- Displacement has compelled many internally displaced women to assume new or at least increased responsibilities
- Gender roles differ between urban and rural internally displaced communities
- Men reportedly leave their families and camps and move to Baku to find work in Baku

"Within the family, the experience of displacement has affected gender roles. According to the traditional family structure in Azerbaijan, men are responsible for providing income while women act as the principal family care-givers by undertaking all household chores, cooking and caring for the children, in addition to whatever economic activity they may have been engaged in. Displacement has compelled many internally displaced women to assume new or at least increased responsibilities for financially supporting the family, because of the death, disablement or unemployment of the men in the family" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 38).

"The changes in gender roles, however, are not fully reflected in the social structures of internally displaced communities. A difference was noticeable between the internally displaced populations visited in urban and rural areas. In urban areas, men and women alike were represented in the groups of internally displaced who came forth to meet with the Representative; indeed, the women tended to be the most outspoken and assertive in communicating the community's concerns. By contrast, in several of the camps it was predominantly, and sometimes exclusively, men who assembled in public areas to meet with the Representative; the women remained close to their homes, although efforts were made by the women comprising his delegation to consult with these women on an individual basis. Even when gatherings of camp populations were mixed, the men and women tended to be clustered separately" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 39).

"Some are leaving the camps, mostly young men hoping to find work in Baku. The old and young are left behind to survive as best they can.

Women occupy themselves with household chores, child-rearing and small enterprises. Jobless, men spend most of their empty days in the camp's 'entertainment hall' playing backgammon and smoking. One relief worker says, 'All their lives these men were told what to do by the Soviets. Now they live in a desert without any options. It's hard to say who is to blame.'

Azad Ifazozade, a psychologist and former army officer who visits the camp each weekend to counsel children traumatized by the war, says poverty and isolation are

straining marriages and families to the breaking point. In traditional Azeri culture, men provide for the family, while women raise children and keep house.

As women become both breadwinners and housekeepers, they have gained status in the community, particularly in the eyes of the children, and the men feel diminished.

Azad says 'children don't respect their fathers or their grandparents anymore. In the villages people have always looked to the family for support, but if that falls apart, where will they turn? Certainly not the government.'

Esmira affectionately ruffles her son's hair and asks her husband to help her fix the TV reception. He obliges, then trudges off to see his friends.

"When we lived in Fizuli, we had an orchard, a farm and the children went to school," she says dreamily. "Now we live in a salty desert, and no one seems to remember us. We need to go home soon, or there will be nothing left of us, or of the old ways." (Christian Science Monitor 19 October 2000)



## PROPERTY ISSUES

### General

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#### **Members of the Armenian and Russian minorities in Azerbaijan reportedly evicted from their apartments by Azeri displaced (1999)**

- The fact that many Armenians and Russians were protected by their Azeri relatives helped to keep the scale of this problem relatively small

"The main problem of the Armenian, Russian and other Slav minorities remained the illegal seizures of their apartments by Azeri refugees from Armenia and displaced persons from Nagorno Karabakh, or by criminals, as well as other criminal activities related to their real estate. An act prohibiting the removal of refugees from the apartments remained in force. The fact that many Armenians and Russians were protected by their Azeri relatives helped to keep the scale of this problem relatively small.

[...]

Attempts of the Society of Homeless People of Azerbaijan to defend the rights of Armenians in courts or assist them in other ways were met with negative media coverage." (IHF 2000, p. 62)

## PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

### General

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**Since the end of 1994, at least 50,000 displaced Azeris have returned to regions bordering ethnic-Armenian controlled Nagorno-Karabakh (2001)**

- Return has been mostly to the Fizuli and Agdam regions

"The number of IDPs who have returned to the liberated areas in 2000 has not been specified by the Govt, but according to the same source, since the beginning of the return movement in late 1990s, some 50,000 persons have returned." (UNHCR 7 March 2001)

"Since the end of 1994, an estimated 69,000 displaced Azeris have returned to regions bordering ethnic Armenian-controlled Nagorno Karabakh, mostly to the Fizuli and Agdam regions, according to UNHCR. At the end of 1997, the Azeri government reportedly had plans to return about 36,000 displaced persons to these areas" (USCR 1998).

*See also "Programme for the Resettlement and Reconstruction of the Liberated Areas (1998)" [\[Internal link\]](#)*

### **Return affected by damage of property and security risks (1998)**

- Extensive damage to shelter and personal property, to infrastructure, agriculture, transport and communications, etc., as well as land mines
- Some families are returning in advance of the reconstruction of their homes (1998)

"In the case of those from areas at present under government control, return has begun but its pace is slowed by problems of damage and security risks resulting from the conflict. A damage assessment of what are referred to as the 'war-liberated' and 'war-damaged' areas that was conducted in 1997 by the Azerbaijan Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency (ARRA), found extensive damage in a number of sectors: shelter and personal property; infrastructure in the areas of education, public health, social and culture structures, electricity, gas and water supply, irrigation systems, transport and communication; industry; agriculture and agricultural industry; and the presence of large numbers of land mines. More than 30 per cent of housing, 25 per cent of agricultural land and 8 to 10 per cent of education, agricultural industry and energy infrastructure requires reconstruction or rehabilitation. In the districts of Gazakh, Agdam and Fizuli, the damage exceeds 50 per cent" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 100).

"Between July 1996 and June 1998 the population of Horadiz doubled in size to 2,857 and continues to steadily rise, with an average of five to six families a week applying to the local authorities indicating their desire to return. Some families are returning to the area in advance of the reconstruction of their homes. The Representative visited one woman, for instance, who had moved with her family from a tent camp to live in a railway carriage in Horadiz in order to be one step closer to returning home." (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 106)

## **Search for durable solutions**

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### **IFRC Fizuli Repatriation Project supports the return of 160 families (2001)**

- Families return to areas recaptured by Azeri forces during the fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh
- The Federation provides construction materials and the returnees are responsible for the actual construction work
- The returning families also benefit from the loan-credit scheme for developing sources of income and support to community mobilisation
- The Federation is seeking funding to facilitate repatriation of another 160 families

"Construction work is proceeding according to plan in the Federation's innovative pilot project, the Fizuli Repatriation Project (Shukurbeyli Pilot Project), which aims at repatriation of 160 families to areas lost and recaptured by Azeri forces during the fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh. To reporting date, 124 homes were built or rehabilitated with the co-operation and input of the homeowners. The Federation provided construction materials while government provided water, electricity and irrigation, and the returnees were responsible for the actual construction work. The Federation has hired teams of professional builders that are overseeing the house reconstruction/rehabilitation. In order to ensure a safe environment for returnees, the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) carried out clearance of mines or any unexploded devices. Mine awareness information was also distributed before the project began. The repatriation process is gaining its momentum. There are more and more families willing to return to their places of origin. Thanks to the Federation intervention, 124 families have resumed normal life.

The Community Mobilisation initiative undertaken within the framework of the operation has put a strain on developing a sense of community spirit and implementing a number of community based initiatives among the returnees. Over the quarter, the repatriated families were assisted to establish a women committee. A series of workshops will now be organised for the committee in community mobilisation, effectiveness and self-reliance. The attention will also be directed towards developing needs assessment skills and action planning. A number of community meetings have been held to identify main concerns in the village. The returning families also benefit from the loan/credit scheme for developing sources of income. So far, 112 small loans of USD 1,000 have been issued. Most of them are related to cattle breeding and agricultural projects along with some

other creative businesses such as a mass transit vehicle connecting Shukurbeyli with the camps in Sabirabad, a fuelling station, and small retail shops. Eighty per cent of the loan will have to be repaid within one year of receiving the money of instalments as agreed with the Federation. The income generating projects have been closely monitored by a beneficiary committee to avoid misuse or failure. The repayment has been progressing satisfactorily.

The rehabilitation and repatriation project is seen as a natural extension of the capacity building measures undertaken by the Federation in the Southern Camps, as it ends years of displacement and reliance on outside assistance for the families involved. The Federation is seeking funding to facilitate repatriation of another 160 families from the camps by rehabilitation of another 160 houses in liberated villages. A suitable village has been already identified in consultation with relevant government bodies, the National Society and potential returnees. Subject to availability of funding, registration and interview with families willing to be repatriated or resettled to the selected village will be carried out." (IFRC 7 September 2001, pp. 8-9)

### **Reconstruction and rehabilitation of the war-torn territories (2000)**

- UNDP assisted the Government in organising the voluntary resettlement of approximately 36,000 internally displaced to the so called "liberated territories"
- The former regional industrial centre of Horadiz was chosen as the site for a UNDP pilot reconstruction project
- By January 2000, more than 1,800 houses had been occupied after their rehabilitation throughout the Fizuli region
- UNDP currently supports microcredit programmes to initiate business activities among returnees to make them able to achieve financial independence

"Those who have had the opportunity to return to liberated homelands - a relatively small number of IDPs, thus far - face a staggering task of reconstruction. To co-ordinate this task, a number of international development agencies are supporting a programme for resettlement and rehabilitation. To implement the goals of the programme, US \$ 117 million will be required; as of January, 2000, donors had given or committed a total of \$ 76 million, with the most acute funding deficit being in the provision of shelter. The fact that only 10% of the damage to liberated territories will be addressed by the first initiative makes clear the magnitude of the tasks ahead.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) assisted the Government of Azerbaijan in establishing ARRA [Azerbaijan Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency] to organise and coordinate all reconstruction-related activities in war-damaged areas. This includes providing support for the voluntary resettlement of approximately 36,000 IDPs; rebuilding housing, infrastructure, health care facilities and schools creating employment; and establishing relationships with potential donors and partners.

Due to their experience and success in similar situations, the UNDP, the World Bank, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the European Union

were asked to assist in the rehabilitation of war-torn areas in the Fizuli, Agdam, Terter districts. Because it was formerly a regional industrial centre, Horadiz was chosen as the site for ARRA reconstruction activities to implement a UNDP pilot project. Those who have returned to the Fizuli area found their liberated villages to be heavily damaged - homes, schools, hospitals and all other forms of social and physical infrastructure were left either barely standing or were completely destroyed. Thus, the initial phase of the project involved the reconstruction of homes and a combination hospital/educational facility. To provide employment for returnees, contracts with construction companies stipulated that at least 90% of the workforce must be comprised of IDPs.

'Everyone in the tent camps wants to go back,' stressed Adil Zeynalov, ARRA Operations Manager. 'So the agency signs agreement with the leaders of the families. They agree to participate in the rebuilding of houses, and that their families will return once the structures are finished. At the moment, for example, 270 houses are being reconstructed. In four months, when they have been completed, about 1,000 more people will be able to return to the area.'

By January, 2000, more than 1,800 houses had been occupied after rehabilitation by ARRA and international NGOs - funded by UNHCR, the Exceptional Assistance Programme (under TACIS) of the European Union, the European Community Humanitarian Office and Unocal - in liberated villages throughout the Fizuli region. In Horadiz alone 350 homes have been rebuilt by ARRA, along with a school, kindergarten, hospital, bank, drugstore, public bathhouse, administrative building and communication and sewer systems. More than 500 jobs were created through these activities. The town, which had a population of over 7,000 prior to the war, is now again home to 2,500 people.

Yet much of the settlement remains in ruins. It is an eerie feeling to walk through what was, only five years ago, a war zone, and to see the broken remains of buildings which now are little more than barely-standing shells. Though returnees receive salaries of US \$60-80 dollars monthly while employed in reconstruction, it is clear that the income generation and empowerment activities which constitute the second phase of the rehabilitation programme are desperately needed if families are to be able to achieve financial independence.

UNDP funds valued at just over one billion manats (US \$228,000) have been dispersed as micro-credits among 423 families in Horadiz and surrounding villages by World Vision, an American NGO that has been subcontracted by ARRA to initiate business activities among returnees.

Proof that there is hope is found in microcredit recipients such as Mr. Shakhmamedov and Hussein Abassov. One of the first IDPs to return to the region, Abassov lived in a rail wagon during his first two years back in Horadiz. But his fortunes improved rapidly after he was able to strike an agreement with the Fizuli Region Executive Committee: a plot of agricultural land in exchange for the donation of 20% of his production to feed IDPs. A \$5,000 credit from UNDP (through World Vision) and the donation of a baking oven by

the Islamic Bank allowed Abasov to establish a bakery in which 150kg of bread is now produced daily. The business provides employment for fifteen people.

Before receiving a loan, potential recipients are assisted in the development of business plans. The received credits are utilised for a variety of purposes. According ARRA statistics, over 74 per cent of the loans in the Horadiz region went for purchasing livestock (particularly cattle and sheep). Fourteen percent of the credits were employed for trading purposes, while 7 loans - 2 percent - were used to establish small enterprises. To increase the number of loans to small enterprises is one challenge faced by those implementing the credit scheme being tested in Horadiz." (Thomson 2000)

*See also "The Programme for the Resettlement and Reconstruction of the Liberated Areas (1999-2000)" [Internal link] and "Law on the repatriation of the displaced in preparation (March 2001)" [Internal link]*

### **The Government and the internally displaced share the overriding goal of return (1998)**

- Search for durable solutions facilitated by solidarity between the Government and the internally displaced

"There is in Azerbaijan a "strong sense of solidarity between the Government and the displaced. This feature stems from the nature of the conflict causing the displacement, which has an external dimension, and the ethnic kinship existing between the national authorities and the overwhelming majority of the displaced. As a result, and unlike in many other countries, the internally displaced are not associated by the authorities with the 'enemy' and targeted for abuses and attack on this basis.

[...]

The sense of solidarity between the Government and the internally displaced also extends to the search for durable solutions . . . [with] return [being] the common and overriding goal of the authorities and the displaced alike. However, it is difficult to predict when peace will materialize and create the possibility for large-scale return to occur" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, paras. 2, 4).

*See also "Programme for the Resettlement and Reconstruction of the Liberated Areas (1998)" [Internal link]*

### **Durable peace a precondition for return (1998)**

- The peace process is followed closely by the internally displaced population
- It remains difficult to predict when peace will provide the possibility for large-scale return

"Return undeniably is the solution preferred by the majority of the internally displaced, as well as their Government. Time and again, internally displaced persons, in urban and

rural areas alike, told the Representative that they wished, above all, to return home. At the same time, those expressing this desire acknowledged that a precondition for their return is a durable peace. It is thus perhaps not surprising that the internally displaced so closely follow the peace process, as demonstrated by their citation of specific initiatives undertaken by OSCE towards the resolution of the conflict and their knowledge of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions on the matter. In this connection, on numerous occasions during the mission Government officials and internally displaced persons alike referred to the lack of attention to the conflict by the Security Council in recent years, interpreting this as a signal of abandonment by the United Nations of concern for their plight. While the United Nations long has supported the lead taken by the OSCE Minsk Group in the conflict negotiation process, the ongoing stalemate has led to suggestions for the United Nations to play a more direct role in the peace process. In fact, for some time now, the United Nations has advocated that humanitarian concerns be integrated into the peace process. With mass displacement being such a defining element of the conflict, equitable solutions for the great number of refugees and displaced persons in Armenia and Azerbaijan will be essential if peace, whenever it comes, is to endure.

[...]

For the moment, it remains difficult to predict when peace will provide the possibility for large-scale return. To be sure, even in the absence of peace, some return is occurring in formerly occupied areas and otherwise war-damaged regions in the districts of Fizuli, Terter and Agdam that have come back under government control. Return as a potential solution thus currently divides the internally displaced population into two groups: those from the formerly occupied or war-damaged areas where the possibility for return now exists; and, making up the majority of the displaced, those originating from territory that remains outside government control and for whom the prospects for return are less certain." (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, paras. 98, 99).

"...[T]he status quo of the situation of internal displacement in Azerbaijan is simply no longer tenable. After at least five years of displacement and dependency on emergency-type relief, the displaced deserve and, increasingly, are demanding more durable solutions to their plight. While return is now a possibility for some, the vast majority remain in a sort of economic, legal and social limbo between the eventual goal of return and the need, in the interim, for a decent and dignified way of living. The conditions of deprivation in which many of the internally displaced continue to be forced to exist and the increasing frustration of donors and the displaced at the sense of dependency created by the continuation of an emergency-style approach require that the Government urgently address the current situation, specifically the pressing needs of the displaced in the areas of food, shelter, health and income generation." (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 118).

"Given the slowness of the conflict-negotiation process between the parties to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the extent of damages in the occupied Azerbaijani regions, an early return of the displaced population is unlikely. UNHCR is active in promoting legal reforms in Azerbaijan, with the aim of developing domestic legislation that reflects international legal instruments and accepted norms, particularly in the areas of refugee protection, reduction of statelessness and national NGOs. A draft law on

citizenship, which incorporates UNHCR's comments, was approved by the Azerbaijani Parliament in September 1998." (UNHCR December 1998, p. 228)

**Government reluctant to allow reintegration as this may undermine the goal of return and a political settlement (1998)**

- The Government has been reluctant to allow their reintegration for fear of undermining the goal of return or the prospects of a political settlement
- The Government has conceded to the concept of "long-stayers"
- For the Government and the majority of the internally displaced, return remains the overriding aim
- For those not yet able to return, the possibility of resettlement must be explored

"For the large number of internally displaced persons originating from the 20 per cent of Azerbaijani territory still under occupation, where return is not possible at present, alternative solutions must be sought. The Government, however, has been reluctant to allow their reintegration, for fear that this will undermine the goal of return and even the prospects of a political settlement, on which this goal depends. In this regard, the concentration of the internally displaced in camps, settlements and public buildings seems to serve as a means of leverage in the conflict negotiations, providing tangible evidence of the impact of the war on Azerbaijan and the pressing need to regain the territories lost. It seems that from the Government's perspective, the resettlement and reintegration of the internally displaced would appear as a serious concession in the political negotiations as it would remove the humanitarian imperative for regaining control of the occupied territories in order to allow return" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 109).

"In accordance with Guiding Principle 28, the authorities are expected to facilitate the reintegration of returned or resettled internally displaced persons. While doing so appears to the authorities to be an anathema because of the overriding goal of return, some progress in the search for alternative solutions has been made recently. Most notably, the Government has conceded to the concept of 'long-stayers', that is, that there are among the internally displaced some who are unlikely to return even if peace did materialize and who should thus receive more than strictly temporary shelter and assistance. Agencies also reported that the Government's reluctance to allow or sponsor income-generation activities has relaxed somewhat" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 110).

"[T]he enthusiasm of the Government and of the international community for the return and reconstruction project currently under way for those among the displaced originating from areas returned to government control must be tempered by the desperate conditions of the large number of internally displaced persons not yet able to return. An alternative solution, that is, resettlement, must be therefore explored. The authorities' responsibility relating to the creation of conditions for durable solutions, is not limited to the return of



the displaced but also includes the possibility of voluntary resettlement in other parts of the country" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 118).

# HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

## General

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### **The United Nations and other international humanitarian organizations have not been allowed access to Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding occupied territories (1998)**

- The Government believes that doing so would risk conferring international legitimacy upon the occupied territories
- As a result, there is no clear picture of the nature and extent of the humanitarian and reconstruction needs in those areas
- International organizations have been able to operate in the rest of Azerbaijan

"A corollary of [Guiding Principle on Internal Displacement 25] is that all authorities concerned shall allow and facilitate the free passage of humanitarian assistance and grant persons engaged in the provision of assistance rapid and unimpeded access to the internally displaced. In this connection, it should be noted that the authorities have denied the United Nations and other international humanitarian organizations access to Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding occupied territories since 1992 [on the grounds that it] would risk conferring international legitimacy upon the occupied territories and, as such, contravene Security Council resolutions affirming the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. It should be recalled that within the occupied territories there are internally displaced persons, mostly of Armenian ethnicity, from elsewhere in Azerbaijan, as well as ethnic Armenian residents of the enclave who were displaced in the early phases of the war and have since returned. While some international organizations not falling under the United Nations umbrella have managed to circumvent the Government's decision by gaining access to the occupied territories through Armenia, in the absence of full international access to these areas, there is no clear picture of the nature and extent of humanitarian and reconstruction needs. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, while acknowledging the necessity of needs assessment in the occupied territories, expressed the view that it should be undertaken only after peace is achieved. Even then, he suggested, some 8 to 12 months would be required to meet what were mentioned as other prerequisites of a needs assessment mission, namely the deployment of the peacekeeping force authorized by OSCE and the achievement of measurable progress on the implementation of a peace agreement. The issue of needs assessment in the occupied territories remains central to the search for solutions to the problem of internal displacement in Azerbaijan" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 53).

"Throughout the rest of Azerbaijan, international organizations seem to have been able to operate, as Guiding Principle 26 requires, in an environment where they are respected and protected, and are not the object of attack or other acts of violence" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 54).

#### Landmines

"In any case, it is not possible to access the territory from Azerbaijan because of the front line (military border), as well as the minefields. UNDP has initiated a project for mine clearance in the liberated areas where resettlement projects are under way at a cost of 5 million dollars." (WFP November 1999, p. 11)

## **NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES**

### **National operational and legal framework**

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#### **Governmental institutions dealing with IDPs (1998-2001)**

- The State Committee for Refugees and Displaced Persons, together with regional Executive Committees, renders direct assistance to the displaced
- The Department of Repatriation was created as part the State Committee in 1999 to coordinate repatriation of the displaced in the event of peace
- The Executive Committees have a representative in large settlements of internally displaced persons
- The Department for Refugees and Forced Migrants oversees the implementation of legislation relating to the displaced
- The Republican Commission on International Humanitarian Assistance coordinates the receipt and distribution of international humanitarian assistance
- The Republican Commission on International and Technical Assistance, through its Working Group, coordinates all programs in designated provinces of Azerbaijan

#### **The State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons**

"Regarding the institutional framework, a number of government bodies are involved in addressing the plight of the internally displaced. The Ministries of Health, Education, Labour and Social Affairs, as well as parliamentary commissions for social policy and for human rights, address aspects of the needs of the internally displaced within their respective areas of activity. More focused attention is provided to the internally displaced by the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, which has primary responsibility for these populations. Branch offices in the various affected regions have been established to work closely with the Executive Committees, or regional authorities, in rendering direct assistance to the displaced. Within each Executive Committee, there exists a working group on refugees and internally displaced persons, with a representative in each camp or other large settlement of internally displaced persons" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 46).

The Department of Repatriation: The Department of Repatriation was established in summer of 1999 with the decree of the President of Azerbaijan Republic to play the major role during the repatriation of IDPs in case of the peace. The department is an independent judicial person within the structure of the State Committee on Affairs of Refugees and IDPs. In addition, it is the major player within the State Plan of Repatriation that is still in the process of working out. Up to date the department has been regulating the repatriation of IDPs to the liberated villages of Agdam and Fizuli through keeping track records, processing petitions and verifying facts of IDPs for repatriation to liberated areas. Moreover, the department has the regularly updated statistics and

database of IDPs residing in different cities and villages of Azerbaijan in addition to refugee camps. (Mercy Corps 4 December 2001)

### **The Department for Refugees and Forced Migrants**

"At the national level, there is also the Department for Refugees and Forced Migrants within the Cabinet of Ministers. Represented in this Department and its working group of experts are the various national bodies relating to displaced persons, including the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, as well as the "Executive Powers" (district authorities) of the areas from which the internally displaced originate. The Department has oversight over the implementation of legislation relating to the displaced. Accordingly, its staff undertake on-site visits and it deploys representatives to tent camps and shelters where internally displaced populations reside" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 47).

### **The Republican Commission on International Humanitarian Assistance**

"Another important national body, the Republican Commission on International Humanitarian Assistance, coordinates the receipt and distribution of international humanitarian assistance. The Commission, which is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, Izzet Rutamov and is comprised of 16 representatives of relevant government bodies (including the presidential apparatus, a number of ministries, the Customs Committee and the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons) meets on a monthly basis. Its working group is charged with implementing the decisions of the Commission and managing issues relating to international humanitarian assistance on a day-to-day basis. Each member of the working group is charged with liaising with specific international organizations and NGOs and coordinating programmes in specific areas of Azerbaijan. Members of the working group also undertake visits to the regions to monitor the distribution of aid and implementation of the decisions of the Commission at the local level" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 48).

"The creation in 1995 of the Republican Commission on International Humanitarian Assistance was reported, by government and international representatives alike, to have significantly improved cooperation within the Government, between the Government and local authorities, and, in particular, between the Government and humanitarian aid organizations and donors. Even so, Government officials themselves were the first to acknowledge that greater coordination is needed within the Government and among the national and local authorities. An important step in this direction has been taken with the efforts by the Government to establish, on the basis of a framework developed by IOM, a State Commission for Development of the Unified Migration Management Programme to cover the five separate but interrelated programme areas of: refugees and internally displaced persons; labour migration; policy and management; border management; and migration information systems" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 50).

### **Development:**

"By the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers dated 9 February 1999, the Department of IDP/Refugee Problems, Migration Issues and Liaison with the International Humanitarian

Organisations was established to replace the Working Group of the National Commission of the International Humanitarian Assistance." (Coordination Meeting report 19 July 1999)

### **The State Commission for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation**

"There is [...] the State Commission for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation, established in the summer of 1996, and chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Abid Sharifov. Falling within the framework of the Commission is the Azerbaijan Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency (ARRA) which was established to coordinate all external and internal inputs geared towards reconstruction" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 49).

### **The Republican Commission on International and Technical Assistance**

"At the top of the 'IDP organization hierarchy' is the Republican Commission on International and Technical Assistance, headed by a deputy prime minister. It was created in December 1994 against the advice of the Baku UNHCR office, which noted that a similar commission already existed, at least on paper, but had become moribund. The commission meets at least once a month. Its head is essentially a figurehead" (Greene 1998, p. 265).

"In 1995 the commission established a seven-person Working Group to deal with humanitarian issues on a day-to-day basis. Each member of the Working Group is responsible for dealing with specific agencies (international organizations, NGOs) and for coordinating all programs in designated provinces of Azerbaijan. In 1996, using a new registration system for IDPs in the Baku area, the Working Group determined that the number of IDPs there had dropped from 196,000 to 123,000. A substantial number of IDPs had moved out of Baku, and the new system eliminated many double registrations. One NGO official described the Working Group as having 'control without responsibility'. Nevertheless, the Working Group appears to have important coordinating functions. Despite the uncertainty generated by the absence of prospects for peace, and with it the return of IDPs, the Working Group encourages income-generation projects. It also deals with issues such as the problems created by a rise in the level of the Caspian Sea, which has forced 2,000 families out of their homes in Lenkoran, south of Baku" (Greene 1998, p. 265).

### **State Refugee Committee plans funding for IDP farmers (October 2001)**

- The loans will not be secured by mortgage

"The State Refugee Committee will start soon distributing 1 billion manats among refugees and IDPs participating in agricultural projects. The funds are allocated from the State Budget. 5 million manats given for two years falls on each IDP farmer. The United Universal Joint Stock Bank was chosen as agent bank (it developed crediting rules and mechanism). The relevant agreement was signed between the Committee commission and

UUJSB. The bank prepared specialists to make regional groups led by the Committee officials.

The SRC regional branches are to receive applications from refugees. The loans will not be secured by mortgage. The main condition for credit receiving is presentation of three documents: application, a document confirming that a person is refugee and land ownership certification. The repaid loans and interests will be repaid to Committee's special accounts. Bank's major task will be ensuring collection of funds and other banking services.

Deputy Prime Minister Ali Hasanov also emphasized that 5 million manats to be got by an IDP farmer is not a large sum, and will hardly influence his common position if to take into account that 200,000 out of 300,000 IDPs are unemployed. He refuted information that international humanitarian organizations stopped fully financial support, saying that 70 of 81 them are continuing to work with Azerbaijan." (Mercy Corps October 2001, p. 2)

#### **Law on the repatriation of the displaced is in preparation (March 2001)**

The Parliament of Azerbaijan is drafting a Law on Repatriation of IDPs to liberated areas. UNHCR is currently in contact with the Parliamentary Commission responsible for drafting the Law and will provide advisory expertise on it to make sure to the maximum extent that returnees rights are guaranteed and safeguarded. At this stage it appears that the Law will apply to both to those IDPs who have already returned to liberated areas as well as to those who may return in the future if more territories were to be liberated. (UNHCR 7 March 2001)

#### **Government uses oil money to fund humanitarian assistance to the displaced (2001)**

- Azeri President ordered State Oil Company to contribute to the budget of the State Committee for Refugees and IDPs (August 2001)
- Money will be spent on food assistance and resettlement and return schemes

"President Heidar Aliev has issued a decree ordering SOCAR to transfer 906 million manats (\$190,000) every month to the bank account of the State Committee for Refugees and Displaced Persons in order to provide food for the inmates of displaced persons camps, Turan report on 15 August." (RFE/RL 16 August 2001)

Given that some relief international organizations have discontinued delivering food aid to a certain part of the IDP population, the President of Azerbaijan signed on 15 August 2001 a Decree, which is aimed at lifting problems caused by the food aid disruption. The State Oil Company of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SOCAR) was instructed to transfer monthly the amount of 906 million AZM to the State Committee for Refugees and IDPs

to distribute food aid to 57,000 IDPs, provided that the established food norms are met." (Monthly Inter-agency meeting, September 2001)

*See English translation of the [Presidential Decree on food assistance to the displaced, August 2001](#) [Internet]*

#### The State Oil Fund's Expenditures for Refugees and IDP's

"On September, 2001 the President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev signed a Decree on the main directions of using and expending the resources of the State Oil Fund (SOF) in 2001. The main expense items of the SOF resources will be spent on solving the settlement problems of the Azeris driven out from Armenia. It is also planned to spend the funds for settling a part of the internally displaced people (IDP's) from the districts of Agdam and Fizuli. In total, the Azeri Government is going to spend about 85 billion manats for solving refugee and IDP's problems. " (Mercy Corps November 2001)

*See English translation of the [Presidential Decree on measures for the settlement of IDPs, September 2001](#) [Internet]*

#### **Government adopts plan of action to remove obstacles to relief and development activities (June 2000)**

- Plan of Action confirms recommendations made by the Azeri President at a conference on "strategic directions towards development" (May 2000)

"On 30 June 2000, the Cabinet of Ministers issued a Decree # 128 to adopt an Action Programme which aims to follow up the recommendations and instructions made by his Excellency President Heydar Aliyev in his statement at the 18 May Conference on IDP/refugee issues entitled "Strategic Directions Towards Development". The Action Programme will, hopefully, help remove all bureaucratic obstacles impeding the relief and development organizations in addressing the needs of IDPs and refugees in the country." (Monthly Inter-Agency Meeting July 2000)

*See the full text of Decree 128, 30 June 2000 (English translation) [[Internet](#)]*

#### **The Social Fund for Development of IDPs (2000)**

- Creation of the Social Fund approved by the Government on December 1999
- The fundamental objective of the Social Fund is to improve living conditions and raise the living standards of IDPs
- The Board of the Fund includes representatives of the government, donor agencies, NGOs and the private sector
- The Fund has started a pilot phase of implementation to test the systems and procedures developed, as well as evaluate the role of NGOs



"In 1998, the Government of Azerbaijan developed a strategy aimed at shifting from relief to development assistance. This strategy is reflected in the National Programme on Settlement of the Problems of Refugees and IDPs, which was adopted by Presidential Decree No. 865 (dated 17 September 1998). To implement this strategy, the Government, with the joint support of the State Committee for Refugees and IDPs and the World Bank, prepared an Action Plan. In the process of the preparatory work to improve the living conditions and raising the living standards of IDPs, the World Bank proposed the establishment of a Social Fund for development of IDPs (SFD) with a seed investment amounting to USD 10 million. Experience has shown that such a fund, which has been established in more than 40 countries, could provide an opportunity to respond immediately to the most pressing needs of IDPs.

The Government of Azerbaijan attaches primary importance to the needs of IDPs and has expressed its interest in setting up an attractive structure for mobilizing donors' aid. By Decree No. 215 (dated 6 December 1999), the President of the Republic ratified the Charter of the SFD. The Cabinet of Ministers approved the establishment of a Board of Directors composed of 9 members. The Board is chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Ali Hasanov and consists of three Deputy Ministers, the Heads of three donor agencies (UNDP, USAID and UNHCR), as well as representatives of the NGO community and the private sector.

The activities of the SFD are regulated by the Operational Manual. A World Bank Consultant, Mr. Piet Goovaerts, has been adjusting the Manual to reflect the current situation in Azerbaijan. The document is nearly completed; it will be distributed to international relief and development organizations for their consideration and amendments. In compliance with the Manual, the fundamental objective of the SFD is to improve living conditions and raise the living standards of IDPs. This will be achieved by rehabilitating the main physical and social infrastructure, as well as through the opening of new job places. To speed up the response to the needs of IDPs, decision-making procedures have been considerably simplified compared with the traditional methods of the World Bank. Micro-projects will be identified by IDPs themselves and will be implemented with their active participation." (Coordination Meeting Report 25 April 2000)

"SFDI was created to strengthen the social security of IDPs and the implementation of the actions envisaged in the State Program 'Solution of the IDPs' and Refugees' Problems'. The project officially will end in March 2002.

The key objectives of SFDI are:

- To establish the SFDI as an efficient, transparent and accountable local institution, to manage and monitor the funding of IDP development-oriented assistance, and to become a key player in the return efforts of the IDPs once a peace agreement is reached;
- To raise the living standards of communities by providing funding for the rehabilitation of small-scale, social infrastructure;
- To provide assistance in employment and enhancement of the capacity of socially vulnerable people who have been engaged in income generating activities, particularly

through the financing of reconstruction and rehabilitation, of micro-projects in the social sphere and loans.

There are two main bodies in the SFDI: the Board of Directors and the Executive Office. The SFDI has started a pilot phase of implementation to test the systems and procedures developed, as well as evaluate the role of NGOs. The SFDI will fund three categories of micro-projects: 1) Community works & Community services; 2) Income generating micro-projects, and 3) Micro-finance programs." (Mercy Corps March 2001, p. 4)

*See the full text of the National Programme on Settlement of the Problems of Refugees and IDPs, which was adopted by [Presidential Decree No. 865](#) (dated 17 September 1998) (Unofficial English translation provided by the UNDP Baku) [Internal link]*

### **Demining activities: the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA)(2000)**

- UNDP demining project signed with the Government in April 1999
- ANAMA will undertake activities involving all aspects of mine action, including clearance, surveying, public awareness, victim support and management training

"A fundamental requirement for the successful repatriation of IDPs is the successful rehabilitation of liberated areas. Major concerns regarding the level of security for returning families remain outstanding, including the threat of unexploded mines and devices left by the conflict.

A nationally executed UNDP project signed with the Government of Azerbaijan in April 1999, the mission of ANAMA is to make Azerbaijan safe for the people to live free from the threat of mines and unexploded devices. The role of the agency is in monitoring, coordinating and managing the mine action assets that are utilized within the country. International and national NGOs will be contracted to implement specific activities.

The Governments of Azerbaijan, Norway, Japan, Canada and Switzerland, the UNDP and the World Bank have contributed funds or in-kind contributions to ANAMA totaling US\$ 2,265,000. However, activities requiring financial support in 2000 amount to approximately US\$ 3.5 million. Foremost among these activities are equipment procurement and support for the national NGO which will soon be selected for training in mine clearance.

The ANAMA headquarters in Baku is now operational, a National Strategic Plan for Mine Action and National Standards for Mine Action have been drafted, development of a training/base camp has commenced, and the activities of the agency have received the full support and approval of the government. Over the coming months, mine awareness and victim support plans will be developed and a general survey on the prevalence of minefields will commence.

Eventually, ANAMA will undertake activities involving all aspects of mine action, including clearance, surveying, public awareness, victim support and management training. Azerbaijani people will benefit in several ways from the programme. In addition to the social impact of ensuring a safe return of IDPs to their homelands, the project will have a positive economic impact for those who return to liberated areas, through the training of local human resources, facility development, provision of salaries and local purchasing." (Coordination Meeting Report 31 March 2000)

### **Presence of a legal framework protects IDPs and defines entitlements (1999)**

- Azerbaijan was the first of the former Soviet States to adopt a national law on internally displaced persons in 1992
- Persons covered by the law are entitled to such things as living accommodation, medical assistance, education, access to food and industrial goods, among others
- Law on refugees and IDPs has been adopted in May 1999, together with a new law on the social protection of IDPs and people with equivalent status
- A February 1998 presidential decree on human rights contains several provisions pertaining to displaced persons

*A new law on the status of refugees and forcibly displaced (persons displaced within the country) persons, 21 May 1999 was adopted. See full text of the [1999 law](#) and the [Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Implementation of the Law "on Status of refugees and forcibly displaced persons"](#), 8 July 1999 (unofficial English translation provided by UNHCR BO Baku) [Internal links]*

#### Law on the Status of Refugees and Displaced Persons, 29 September 1992

"Recognition by the Government of Azerbaijan of its responsibilities towards the internally displaced is reflected in the national legislative framework. Azerbaijan was the first of the former Soviet States to adopt a national law on internally displaced persons. Although the Law on the Status of Refugees and Displaced Persons, adopted on 29 September 1992, does not expressly refer to 'internally displaced persons', they are covered by the term 'displaced person', which applies, article 1 stipulates, inter alia, 'to persons having to leave the place of their habitual residence and go to another place on the territory of Azerbaijan' (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 41).

"Persons covered by the law are entitled to a number of guarantees, including: free living accommodation in an assigned place of temporary residence; free transit and transportation of property to the place of temporary residence; free medical assistance at the place of temporary residence for the aged, children, the poor and families without any means of income; education for children and adolescents; the purchase of food and industrial goods in populated areas on equal conditions with permanent residents; receipt of (unspecified) special grants and allowances; payment of pensions and allowances; exemption from payment for apartment rental and for public utilities (except those used for industrial and economic activity); tax privileges; the possibility of compensation for material and other damage caused by displacement; choice of the place of permanent

residence from among the choices suggested by the relevant authorities, who are to take into account the place of work; allocation of land; and choice of the place of work, again as suggested by the authorities. Furthermore, the law affirms that the persons to [whom] it applies shall have the same rights, freedoms and duties of all citizens of Azerbaijan and are entitled to apply to the relevant government bodies and to judicial bodies in defense of their rights. Principle 1 of the Guiding Principles affirms that internally displaced persons shall enjoy, in full equality, the same rights and freedoms under international and domestic law as do other persons in their country and shall not be discriminated against in the enjoyment of any rights of freedoms on the ground that they are internally displaced" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 42).

"The law as adopted in 1992 provided for the cessation of its application inter alia upon the return of the internally displaced to their place of habitual residence, their receipt of another place of residence free of charge in the same region or the lapse of five years since the granting of displaced person status under the law. In the light of the fact that many of the internally displaced have now been uprooted for over five years and are still unable to return to their areas of origin, in April 1998 amendments were made to the law to allow for the prolongation of status beyond the five-year time limit, on an annual basis. Those who are able to return continue to be covered by the law on displaced persons for one year" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 43).

*See full text of the [1992 Law on the Status of refugees and displaced persons](#) (unofficial English translation provided by UNHCR BO Baku) [Internal link]*

#### Other provisions

"[I]n the summer of 1999, the Government ratified a Law on Social Protection of IDPs and People with Equal Status. The Law, along with other relevant measures, envisaged providing IDPs with credits. In compliance with the instruction of the President of the Republic, the Cabinet of Ministers has been working out guidelines for the disbursement of credits to IDPs. However, the credit-givers have not been identified yet due to the current economic and financial constraints, and this fact is impeding completion of the document. A Task Force was set up recently to speed up the preparation process, and the final document is expected to be submitted within 10-15 days. The interest rate for the credits is still uncertain, though it is supposed that the rate will not be higher than that provided by international NGOs." The Law also exempts the internally displaced population from taxes (Monthly Inter-Agency Meeting April 2000)

"[T]he Law on Social and economic Rights of IDPs of May 1999 does not appear to be fully implemented.

UNHCR is planning to monitor the implementation of this law and, in partnership with other international and national actors, will raise awareness on the social and economic rights of IDPs and advocate for an effective implementation of this Law." (UNHCR 7 March 2001)

*See full text of the [Law on "Social Protection of Forcibly Displaced Persons and Persons equated to them"](#), 21 May 1999 and the [Decree of the President of the Republic on Implementation of the Law on "Social Protection of the Forcibly Displaced Persons and Persons equated to them"](#), 8 July 1999 [Internal link]*

"At the regional level, Azerbaijan has signed the Agreement on Assistance to Refugees and Forced Resettlers, and has ratified the Agreement on Priority Measures to Protect Victims of Armed Conflicts as well as the Convention on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities." (IOM Migration Web, 1997)

"Another relevant piece of legislation is the presidential decree on human rights issued in February 1998 in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and which contains several provisions pertaining to displaced persons. The decree calls upon the Cabinet of Ministers to formulate proposals for more effectively ensuring the economic and social rights of several particular groups of persons, including refugees and forced migrants. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is charged with ensuring that applications are made to appropriate international organizations with a view to redressing the rights of refugees and forced migrants violated as a consequence of the conflict, and to obtaining compensation for damage suffered. In this connection, the law further stipulates that representatives of the Government in various international forums are to reinforce efforts for the restoration of the rights of persons displaced by the conflict" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 44).

### **Programme for the Resettlement and Reconstruction of the Liberated Areas (1998)**

- Objectives of the Government's "Programme for the Resettlement and Reconstruction of the Liberated Areas"(1998) are to facilitate the return of some 36,000 displaced to their home area and to provide rehabilitation assistance to those who have already returned or have remained in the war-damaged areas
- The Government's multi-sector Programme has been carefully appraised jointly by UNHCR and the World Bank, and by UNHCR and NGOs
- The Government has agreed with the World Bank to contribute from its own funds to the shelter component of the overall multi-year Programme an amount of US\$ 4 million against a total figure of US\$ 30 million
- EU Technical Assistance in the CIS (TACIS) focuses on the physical infrastructure and economic opportunities in areas of return

"In preparation for peace and the potential massive return of displaced people to the areas presently occupied, UNHCR, in close partnership with the World Bank and UNDP, has been promoting contingency planning and the design of an international strategic framework for assisting the Government of Azerbaijan to address the challenges of post-conflict resettlement, reconstruction and rehabilitation of war-torn areas. These efforts, which have focused on war-damaged areas to which the displaced can already return in safety, have resulted in the creation in June 1996 of the official Azerbaijan Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency (ARRA), and the establishment in April 1998 of an

International Advisory Group (IAG) to assist the Government to implement a comprehensive multi-year US\$ 123 million 'Programme for the Resettlement and Reconstruction of the Liberated Areas.'

The Government's multi-sector Programme has been carefully appraised jointly by UNHCR and the World Bank, and by UNHCR and NGOs. It aims to facilitate the return of some 36,000 displaced persons to their areas of origin in a safe, voluntary and sustainable manner, and to provide an integrated package of cost-effective physical and social infrastructure and income generating activities for those returning, as well as for several thousand people who have already returned, and about 250,000 persons who remained in the war-damaged areas.

The keystone of the Programme is the shelter sector. The Government has requested UNHCR to assume a leading role in shelter rehabilitation in close partnership with ARRA, to coordinate for the donors the resettlement efforts, and to launch a Special Appeal for funding. This role has been worked out within the synergetic partnership formed by the World Bank, UNDP and UNHCR and is reflected in their agreed division of labour, including the mobilization of funding, in a joint pilot resettlement/reconstruction project in support of the Government's broader Programme.

At the request of the Government and as part of an integrated solutions-oriented strategy developed jointly with the World Bank and UNDP, UNHCR is therefore launching a Special Appeal to raise an initial US\$ 5.5 million to finance the first phase, until the end of 1998, of a US\$ 12 million, 24-months Programme for Shelter Rehabilitation for Displaced Populations Returning to War Damaged Areas. This initial Appeal will be followed by a follow-up submission in 1999 for the second tranche, subject to a World Bank/UNHCR evaluation of the 1998 achievements and the ongoing needs assessment.

This first phase will provide some 2,000 households in Terter, Agdam and Fizuli districts with minimum locally acceptable housing conditions. In order to benefit the greatest number in the shortest time period, the programme focuses on construction of basic replacement housing and the distribution of construction materials, coupled to technical advice for self-help repair of damaged homes, along with mitigation of environmental hazards.

UNHCR's shelter activities will complement simultaneous activities in other sectors by ARRA, international organisations and NGOs to provide a seamless, comprehensive resettlement package addressing the immediate and middle-term needs of the population to enable them to sustain their return.

The Government has agreed with the World Bank to contribute from its own funds to the shelter component of the overall multi-year Programme an amount of US\$ 4 million against a total figure of US\$ 30 million. Consequently, the UNHCR-funded shelter activities will be complemented for 13 percent by Government-funded activities in the same sector." (UNHCR 31 May 1998)

#### TACIS support

"However, to be sustainable, return requires the restoration not only of the homes of the displaced but also of the physical infrastructure and economic opportunities in areas of return. The programme for reconstruction and rehabilitation combines efforts to meet both of these ends by involving the displaced in reconstruction and rehabilitation activities, as well as by creating longer-term opportunities for their self-reliance. At a pilot project of the programme in the town of Horadiz in Fizuli district, the Representative visited the reconstructed hospital, school and railway station undertaken by ARRA with the support of UNDP. The community bath-house and post-office had also been restored and plans were under way for the rebuilding of the community centre, library, pharmacy, town roads and street lighting. Meanwhile, the Technical Assistance in the CIS (TACIS) programme of the European Union concentrates on large infrastructure projects, including the railway, power and water supply and irrigation systems. TACIS is also supporting the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector and of agri-business through the distribution of grain, fertilizers and machinery to return to operation over 100 farms employing a total of 2,000 persons. The planned expansion of the project is expected ultimately to provide employment to some 10,000 persons" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 104).

*See also "UNHCR 's Reintegration Activities in Fizuli" (September 1999) [Internet] and "The Azerbaijan government's resettlement and reconstruction programme", 31 May 1998 [Internet]*

*See also National Programme on Settlement of the Problems of Refugees and IDPs, Presidential Decree No. 865 (17 September 1999) [Internal link]*

#### **Government's capacity to effectively respond to the plight of the IDPs also constrained by insufficient funds (1998)**

- Displaced families receive various subsidies and are exempt from taxes and from paying for utilities and public transportation

"[T]he government, due to the prolonged conflict, lacks sufficient capacity and funds to respond adequately to the needs of IDPs. However, the government's assistance is tangible. All IDPs are entitled to the State bread subsidy of 15,000 manat per person per month (about 4 dollars). This subsidy has been increased from 7,000 manat as of February 1999. Some families receive the child subsidy of 9,000 manat per month for each child below 16 years if the family's per capita income is less than 16,500 manat a month. It was found that almost half of the families receive this subsidy. Families who have lost one of their members in the war receive a State allowance of 40,000 manat a month; those with an invalid member receive between 20,000 and 40,000 manat a month depending on the level of disability. The government provided shelter to tens of thousands of displaced people in public buildings. Moreover, all IDPs are exempt from all taxes and from paying for utilities and public transportation." (WFP November 1999, p. 9)

**The donor community supportive towards projects for national capacity-building and the promotion of self-reliance among the displaced (1998)**

- Frustration among donors, international organizations, NGOs and the displaced themselves at the growing sense of dependency by the Government and the IDPs on international assistance

"[Strengthening the capacities of the displaced for self-reliance] would appear to be very much in line with the view of the donor community which, in a meeting with the Representative, expressed keen interest in supporting projects for national capacity-building and the promotion of self-reliance among the displaced but, at the same time, frustration with the lack of government support for these goals. The meeting of the Representative with the Minister of Social Security and, subsequently, with the Prime Minister and later the President, with whom the same issue was discussed, strongly suggest a closer convergence of views. Accordingly, it would appear timely to convene a meeting between government officials and representatives of the international community for the purpose of devising a common strategy for addressing not only the present, and very pressing, needs of the internally displaced for continued humanitarian assistance, but also their own expressed desire to become more self-reliant through increased access to opportunities for employment and other means of income-generation. The Representative, since his return from Azerbaijan, has shared this recommendation with the Secretary-General, the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the heads of several international agencies to solicit their support. Through the present report, he aims to share this suggestion with the international donor community at large, while recalling to the Government of Azerbaijan the constructive dialogue held on this issue in the hope that the recommended meeting will indeed occur. The Representative himself stands ready to assist this process in any way possible" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 113).

"The frustration expressed by donors and international agencies and NGOs with regard to the growing sense of dependency of the displaced and the Government on international assistance is echoed by the displaced themselves, who indicated their willingness and strong desire to work in order to provide for themselves. It is worth noting that the internally displaced, in view of their large number, represent a potentially significant political force in Azerbaijan. The risk of the radicalization of the internally displaced population, should their needs in the areas of legal protection, basic humanitarian assistance and reintegration continue to be inadequately addressed, must not be underestimated" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 116).

**Claimed that fragmented structure results in the Government of Azerbaijan leaving much of the planning to the international organizations and NGOs (1998)**

- Government's capacity to effectively respond to the plight of the IDPs also constrained by insufficient funds (1998)

"The government of Azerbaijan has established several organizations to deal with IDPs, refugees, and related problems. These organizations are somewhat unwieldy and



fragmented, and it is not always clear which ones have clout. Government officials are the first to acknowledge this.

[...]

As a result of this fragmented administrative structure, the government of Azerbaijan leaves much of the planning to the international organizations and NGOs. An official from an international organization described the government as friendly and helpful in its dealings with the international community but concluded that 'Azerbaijan is not doing anything for the IDPs, leaving it to the NGOs. The more the NGOs are here, the less the [government] has to do' (Greene 1998, p. 265).

"Aside from the issue of coordination, the capacity of the Government to respond in a comprehensive and effective manner to the plight of its internally displaced population is constrained by insufficient resources relative to the considerable needs resulting from internal displacement of such magnitude and duration. For instance, the monthly government subsidy that internally displaced families receive is only 7,000 manats (equivalent to US \$2); it is known as 'bread money', in reference to the small range of basic needs that it covers" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 51).

## **International operational framework**

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### **Mine action in coordinated by the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) (2001)**

- From June to late November 2000, 40 kilometers of roads were reportedly demined and restored in Fizuli district
- ICRC, UNDP and the Halo Trust implement mine awareness programmes in Nargorno Karabakh
- UNICEF and ANAMA have received funds for the US government for mine awareness activities in the rest of Azerbaijan
- In 1994, the ICRC, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Defense, established a prosthetic and orthopedic center in Baku
- Psychosocial or physical rehabilitation programs are almost non-existent in Azerbaijan

### **"Mine Action**

UNDP and the government of Azerbaijan were to jointly finance the 'Azerbaijan Mine Action Program,' which they launched in April 1999. On 10 March 2000, The Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action [ANAMA] announced that donors had provided US\$2,265,000 for the project (of a total needed of US\$3.5 million). It was also announced that a national plan on demining was developed and published. Several administrative buildings were constructed, training zones for deminers were determined, and equipment purchased. In the autumn of 2000, the Norwegian government announced that it would be donating US\$112,140 to construct ANAMA's building in Goradiz, Fizuli district.

In April 2000, the UK-based Mines Advisory Group (MAG) was contracted by UNOPS to provide training and supervision to a national NGO, Relief Azerbaijan, under the coordination of ANAMA. A total of 27 deminers and 16 mine surveyors were trained in 2000. MAG continues to provide supervision under contract until August 2001.

According to the United Nations, in the year 2000, a total of 163,860 square meters of land were cleared, along with the marking and fencing of 289,991 square meters. Press accounts state that from June to late November 2000, 40 kilometers of roads were demined and restored in Fizuli district; during this work 2,592 UXO, 1,117 shells and 37 mines were neutralized. The mines were mainly of former Soviet production, although some Italian antipersonnel mines and other 'hand-made UXO' were found. [...]

In September-November 2000, under the 'Beecroft Initiative,' US military personnel conducted humanitarian demining training of Georgian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani soldiers at a military base in Georgia. The initiative was designed to 'speed the pace of reducing the landmine threat that endangers populations in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, and to strengthen confidence and security in the southern Caucasus....' Once trained, the soldiers were to carry out demining operations in their own countries, as well as teach other soldiers current demining techniques. The US military provided \$48,000 in demining assistance to Azerbaijan between October 1999 and September 2000.

#### Mine Awareness

Since 1996, the ICRC, UNDP, and the HALO Trust have carried out mine awareness programs in Nagorno-Karabakh. The US Department of State granted US\$500,000 on 18 May 2000 to the UNDP for its work." (Landmine Monitor Core Group 2001, Azerbaijan)

"UNICEF, with funding provided by the US Government, is implementing the [Mine/UXO Awareness (MA)] project in cooperation with ANAMA. The project is aimed at eliminating the potential incidents of mine fatalities and injuries among children, women, and other vulnerable groups of population in Azerbaijan, through enhancing the health and educational systems, and incorporating MA methods into school curriculum with proper teaching materials and raising MA among parents. The project considers such activities as analysing database of mine victims; developing and producing training and educational materials for teachers, students and schoolchildren; producing information materials for public education; training of teachers and health personnel on MA, and incorporation of MA in the curriculum. One of the activities is training of the theatre groups for social mobilization - drama actions on MA were performed for children in 17 districts and IDP/refugee settlements. Nearly 800 teachers and 500 health staff were to participate in a series of training courses in mine awareness to be facilitated by 15 trainers." (Monthly Inter-Agency Meeting, September 2001)

#### "Survivor Assistance

In 1994, the ICRC, in the ICRC, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Defense, established a prosthetic and orthopedic center in Baku. In 2000, 89 mine victims were treated and 103 prostheses supplied. A second center in Baku, operated by the government, provided 166 upper leg prostheses and 768 lower leg prostheses in 2000. However, no statistics are kept by the center to identify the number of patients who received their injuries because of a landmine explosion. In 2000, the cost of operating the government center was US\$350,000.

Psychosocial or physical rehabilitation programs are almost non-existent in Azerbaijan. The ACBL pays special attention to the needs of the disabled, particularly those injured by landmines. A special program was designed to involve more mine victims in public life. However, due to the absence of donor support the implementation of this program has been delayed.

Due to the absence of donor funding, the victim assistance component of the National Mine Action Plan,[30] budgeted to cost US\$150,000, has not been implemented." (Landmine Monitor Core Group 2001, Azerbaijan)

#### **International assistance has progressively turned from relief to development (2000)**

- Vulnerability of the displaced has prompted inter-agency efforts to help the government to fight poverty
- Continued support from donors for both relief assistance and sustainable human development is still needed

"[The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh] drew the initial responses of the UN System to Azerbaijan. The republic has one of the highest per capita populations of internally displaced persons (IDP) in the world, and this population has existed since 1993. Slowly, international assistance to Azerbaijan has turned from relief to development, but the majority of the IDP population remains in temporary living conditions and funds for their support are diminishing. Some efforts at rehabilitation and reconstruction have been made, notably in Horadiz, but the failure to find a resolution keeps this population at risk and as a burden for Azerbaijan's development.

[...]

In relation, poverty in Azerbaijan seems to have grown at alarming rates, as have disease, unemployment, and decreases in school attendance. Poverty eradication is a major focus for the UN System, Bretton-Woods Institutes, and other international organizations. Cooperation and collaboration between Agencies has been important for the development of the Social Fund for the Development of IDPs (SFDI) as well as the coordination response in advisory assistance to the GoA in the creation of national policies and legislation. It has helped introduce a new strategy to address the needs of the IDP population. UNCT has also been encouraging inter-agency effort to help the government fight poverty, which is reflected in the on-going discussion for establishment of a technical assistance framework for poverty eradication to assist the Government of Azerbaijan (UNDP, WB, UNICEF, and Asian Development Bank, which will become part of the UNCT upon opening a resident office).

The late turn from relief to development, joined with the goals of UN Reform and the Millenium Summit, has provided a new challenge for the UN System in Azerbaijan. The creation of the Common Country Assessment has been a useful tool in focusing this work. The second national conference on development entitled "Strategic Directions towards Development" also helped the aid community return to basic groundwork for future cooperation between the GoA, the UN agencies, international NGOs, national NGOs, and donors. However, continued cooperation in maintaining a consistent partnership with GoA will depend on the UN System's maintenance of a strong, neutral position, more integrated programming, and continued support from donors for both relief assistance and sustainable human development." (UN Azerbaijan 2000, pp. 2-3)

### **The Programme for the Resettlement and Reconstruction of the Liberated Areas (1999-2000)**

- The Government and the international community have taken significant steps toward facilitating the voluntary repatriation of IDPs to the liberated areas
- A \$ 117 million Programme for Resettlement and Reconstruction of the Liberated Areas has been designed to support the return of more than 36,000 IDPs to liberated and war-damaged areas
- World Bank UNDP, UNHCR, the European Union, and WFP have jointly committed to financing projects in support of this national program
- UNDP and the Government have initiated a major humanitarian mine action program, involving de-mining actions, victim assistance, and mine awareness activities

"One fifth of the territory of Azerbaijan is still under occupation, but some parts of Azerbaijan that were once occupied have now been liberated, and IDP have begun returning to 22 villages in these areas. Surveys have consistently found that the great majority of IDPs want to return to their homes; this was indicated, for example, by 99 percent of the IDPs interviewed in the recent World Bank-sponsored survey.

As the displaced look forward opportunities to return to their homelands, however, the country faces a staggering task of reconstruction and rehabilitation. The war-damaged areas are contaminated with land mines, and homes, schools, hospitals, and all other forms of social and physical infrastructure have been damaged or destroyed. The total damage to the war-torn areas under Azerbaijani control has been assessed by the Government at \$922 million.

The Government and the international community have taken significant steps toward facilitating the voluntary repatriation of IDPs to the liberated areas. A Presidential Decree has extended the government benefits provided to IDPs and refugees to returnees for three years from the date of their return, and the process of reconstructing and rehabilitating the accessible war-torn areas is well underway under the leadership of the State Commission for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation and its implementing arm, the Azerbaijan Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency (ARRA).

The reconstruction and rehabilitation process started in 1996 with a UNDP-funded pilot project in the severely damaged settlement of Horadiz in the Fizuli district. During the past three years, UNDP, UNHCR, the World Bank, and the European Union have helped the Government to reconstruct homes, irrigation systems, power and water supplies, and public buildings through a variety of projects. The focus of support in the liberated areas is now shifting increasingly toward income generation and local capacity building.

Building on the successes of the pilot projects, the Government has developed a \$ 117 million Programme for Resettlement and Reconstruction of the Liberated Areas, which envisions returning more than 36,000 IDPs to liberated and war-damaged areas. The program encompasses shelter reconstruction and rehabilitation, employment generation, and rehabilitation of health care facilities, schools, power and water supplies, transportation facilities, and communication links in the Fizuli, Agdam, and Terter districts. The World Bank UNDP, UNHCR, the European Union, and WFP have jointly committed to financing projects in support of this national program.

The presence of landmines and unexploded ordnance in the war-damaged areas presents a major obstacle to all efforts to help IDPs repatriate. To address this problem, UNDP and the Government have initiated a major humanitarian mine action program, involving demining actions, victim assistance, and mine awareness activities. The program has begun to build national capacity in this area through the establishment of a national mine action agency and the training of national deminers." (UNDP 1999, pp. 52-53)

*See also "Azerbaijan's Displaced People Seek a New Life" UNDP, 31 December 2000 [Internet]*

*See IFRC Press release "Second phase of Fizuli Repatriation and Rehabilitation Programme started", 6 February 2001 [Internet]*

*See also "Reconstruction and rehabilitation of the war-torn territories (2000)" [Internal link]*

#### **Private oil sector supports humanitarian work (2000)**

- The International Federation of the Red Cross received assistance from several international oil companies
- Italian oil company funded UNHCR settlement projects for internally displaced in western and central Azerbaijan

"The international oil companies operating in Azerbaijan have a commitment through their agreements with the Government to support the humanitarian work. The Federation has established a cooperation with Exxon Azerbaijan Operating Company, one of the main partners in the exploration and production of oil in the Caspian sea. The International Federation has also received some assistance from Texaco. It is expected

that the cooperation with Exxon will continue while the possibility for assistance from other companies remains an option." (IFRC country strategy 2000-2001)

"Efforts to gather support from the private sector (notably oil companies) in Azerbaijan led to some positive results. ENI Group/AGIP agreed to finance an integrated settlement project for some 400 IDP families in Khanlar and Beylagan in western Azerbaijan. In a first phase, the construction of 50 housing units was completed and a further 100 units have been started. The target for 2000 is 300 units. The project also aims to improve access to potable water of some 13,000 IDPs living in difficult conditions in the "Lachin winter grounds" in central Azerbaijan. Technical assessments have been conducted there and construction of a water distribution system has started. Preparations for digging some 20 wells are in progress. Activities in micro-credit, training, education and sanitation in the project area will start later in the year." (UNHCR July 2000, pp. 185-186)

**The integrated approach developed by UNHCR and the World Bank in Azerbaijan is an example of excellent cooperation in areas of mutual concern (1998)**

- The effectiveness of the partnership was evident at the joint appraisal mission to review the Programme
- While UNHCR plays a major role in coordinating donors on resettlement and housing activities, the World Bank coordinates donors on reconstruction

"The integrated approach developed by UNHCR and the World Bank in Azerbaijan provides an excellent example of the importance and usefulness of partnership and cooperation between the two organizations in areas of mutual concern. It is based on the joint recognition that for return to be sustainable, short-term resettlement activities should go hand-in-hand with longer term efforts aimed at rebuilding the physical and social infrastructure and of income generation possibilities" (UNHCR May 1998).

The effectiveness of the partnership between UNHCR and the World Bank was exemplified in the joint appraisal mission initiated by the latter to review the Azerbaijani Government's completed Programme for the Resettlement and Reconstruction of the Liberated Areas. It took place from 15 February 59 6 March 1998 and produced catalytic results, helping to move forward the Government's proposed Programme by: (i) consolidating an enlarged institutional framework for coordination between donors and the Azerbaijani Government; (ii) identifying areas of assistance in which the World Bank, UNHCR and UNDP should undertake complementary activities; (iii) obtaining a commitment from the Government to make funds available for selected sectors of the Programme, in particular shelter; (iv) securing the agreement of the Government for the involvement of local and international NGOs in the Programme and to UNHCR's coordination role as requested by the IAG, and (v) ensuring that there is consensus among all concerned as to the importance of returns taking place in a voluntary and safe manner and being sustainable" (UNHCR May 1998).

"As for the actual agreed division of labour in the UNHCR/World Bank joint pilot resettlement/reconstruction project in support of the Azerbaijani Government's broader multi-year Programme, UNHCR is playing a major role in donor coordination for resettlement and housing activities, with the World Bank playing this role in donor coordination for reconstruction, and UNDP for the de-mining agency. While UNHCR seeks funds for the housing and shelter rehabilitation activities, the World Bank has undertaken to provide the Government of Azerbaijan with a soft loan for US\$20 million to financial essential health, education and other activities which will be implemented in conjunction with UNHCR's shelter programme" (UNHCR May 1998).

**The International Advisory Group (IAG) was established in 1998 as a result of cooperation among international organizations, NGOs and donor countries**

- The IAG was established to assist the Government in implementing the "Programme for the Reconstruction and Resettlement of the Liberated Areas"

"In what could well prove to be an exemplary effort to meet the challenges of post-conflict reconstruction and resettlement in war-torn areas, international humanitarian and development agencies, and financial institutions have forged partnerships amongst themselves and with the Government with the common aim of assisting the Government in creating possibilities for return as a durable solution. In April 1998, these partnerships became more formalized with the establishment of an International Advisory Group (IAG) to assist the Government in implementing a comprehensive multi-year \$123 million "Programme for the reconstruction and resettlement of the liberated areas" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 101).

"The enhanced cooperation established among the major international organizations, NGOs and donor countries, and especially the intense UNHCR/World Bank/UNDP consultations and preparations within the framework of the contingency planning process, has resulted in the formal establishment on 3 April 1998 of an International Advisory Group (IAG), co-chaired by UNDP and the World Bank, in close partnership with the European Commission. Its purpose is to assist the Azerbaijani Government in formulating policy in relation to the resettlement and reconstruction programme for displaced people." (UNHCR May 1998)

## **IDP activities by International agencies**

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**UNHCR assists some 45,000 vulnerable displaced currently living in temporary settlements (2001)**

- UNHCR assists the settlement of vulnerable IDPs in sites provided by the authorities
- UNHCR also implements a programme to address the lack of potable water in Lachin Wintergrounds area in Aghjabedi region, where some 13,000 IDPs live

- UNHCR aims to improve livelihood of the IDPs in three regions through micro-credits, skills training and in-kind grants
- UNHCR and UNICEF implement a programme on community-based primary schools in various regions of Azerbaijan
- Distribution of non-food items have also been done in southern and central regions (the "IDP belt")

"Of the approximately 560,000 IDPs, UNHCR assists some 45,000 most vulnerable. These people reside in public buildings (schools, dormitories, hostels), uncompleted buildings, roadside settlements, dugouts, railway wagons, tented camps, prefabricated houses, limestone settlements.

### **Integrated Settlements:**

***Harami settlement:*** UNHCR aims to assist some 145 IDP families selected based on their vulnerability by providing them access to improved housing, livelihood and to basic infrastructure and services (electricity, water, sanitation, education, health). The Government of Azerbaijan (GoA) has allocated land for settling IDPs. UNHCR's Implementing Partner (IP) Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has chosen to implement the project by its own construction teams, rather than using contractors. Moreover, NRC prioritizes the future residents of the settlement when hiring workers for the construction teams. This improves the cost-effectiveness of the project, thereby allowing improvements to the design of the houses without increasing the unit cost.

***ENI-funded settlements in Khanlar and Beylagan:*** In early 2000, ENI/AGIP provided funds to UNHCR for two integrated settlements in Khanlar and Beylagan regions, for a total of 387 families (300 families in year 2000 and 87 in 2001). The construction in 2001 started only in April, partly due to late receipt of LOI allowing signature of sub-agreement and partly due to different views of UNHCR and the GoA on which of the two sites the last shelters should be constructed. However, by the end of June, half of the houses were almost ready and the other half under construction. In terms of the 'soft sectors' of the project, as the project ends in August, the new beneficiaries will not benefit from the full range of income generating (IG) activities like those who settled to the site earlier. The overall objectives of the project are not compromised, but some tension in the Khanlar site can be anticipated due to this fact. Mobilization of the population in the two settlements has progressed well during the last six months.

UNHCR also implements a programme to address the severe lack of potable water in Lachin Wintergrounds area in Aghjabedi region, where some 13,000 IDPs live. The project was to end in August 2001. However, due to delays in starting the project implementation, a request for a no-cost-extension until the end of November has been made to the donor. By the end of June, 3 wells had been rehabilitated as planned, the main storage and distribution system surveyed and repair work had started. The 1st new well was under construction. However, the mission of Aquater drilling expert in late June revealed serious flaws in the technical / contractor management by the IP, the State Committee for Refugees. Agreement was reached during the mission on how to best address these shortcomings and an action plan was agreed.

### **Income-Generation:**



UNHCR aims to improve livelihood of the IDPs in three regions of Azerbaijan by providing them access to micro-credits, skills training and, to most vulnerable IDPs, in-kind grants (livestock).

***Micro-credit portfolio:*** The activities are proceeding as planned. Any delays in start up have been made up and field activities are starting to show results. The only constraint is the speed at which UNHCR's loan portfolio can be consolidated and placed under DRC management. Furthermore, DRC is in the process of registering a separate legal entity that will have a limited banking licence in order to "legally" provide loans to IDPs directly. This is a time consuming process and may delay the implementation of part of this project.

***Vocational skills training:*** ADRA's project is right on schedule. Stated goals, objectives and targets are being tracked carefully and monitoring indicates that ADRA is reaching approximately 5% more beneficiaries than originally planned. The project design envisages the nationalization of the vocational training school to a local institution by the end of the project. ADRA has faced a few obstacles in helping the new national NGO to register. Provided that no new delays are encountered with the Azerbaijani legal system, the national NGO will be registered only three months behind schedule.

***Small livestock distribution project:*** This project started approximately two months behind schedule. However, given the IP's (Hayat, a national NGO) experience with this kind of project and their familiarity with the operational area, any lost time has already been made up. It should be noted, however, that this project includes a significant community development component and that the IP field staff is in need of some basic training in this field. Steps have been taken to remedy this shortcoming.

### **Education:**

UNHCR and UNICEF implement a 3-year programme on community-based primary schools in various regions of Azerbaijan. UNHCR's role, limited to 1 year, is to mobilize 15 target communities to improve physically their schools and to organize parent-teacher associations to strengthen the link between the community and the school. UNICEF has the overall financial management responsibility for the project, and provides technical assistance to the teacher and curriculum development. The signing of the MOU for the project as well as the project implementation have been delayed. This is partly due different approval, implementation and financial procedures of the two organizations. For example, UNICEF that normally works through the Government Ministries, can only reimburse the costs against receipts proving the expenditure. For the national NGOs implementing the UNHCR-funded part of the project, this demand creates great problems. However, it looks as if the implementation will finally start in the 2nd week of July.

### **Distribution of Non-Food Items:**

From 2001, management of UNHCR logistics operation, previously under Relief International, has been entrusted to national NGO UMID. UMID took over experienced warehouse/logistics staff and also hired additional distribution staff. UMID conducted surveys of beneficiaries mostly in Southern and Central regions (i.e. in “IDP belt”), where IDP numbers are the largest. National and international NGOs were involved in assessments and later, in distribution of humanitarian assistance. Post-distribution surveys have taken place. During the reported period some 40 transports have been organized for the humanitarian assistance from UNHCR warehouse to the above regions. The humanitarian assistance included:

- some 16,500 quilts (donated by Lutheran World Relief , LWR)
- 29,000 pieces of second-hand clothes (LWR)
- 1,840 bags of vegetable and flower seeds (Canadian Feed the Children).

In addition, UNHCR liaised with LWR to secure additional humanitarian assistance. Twelve 40-foot containers are to be shipped to Azerbaijan in summer, with humanitarian assistance items worth some US\$1.6 mio." (UNHCR July 2001)

#### **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): Background (2000)**

- UNHCR began its work in Azerbaijan in 1992 by protecting and assisting refugees and internally displaced persons
- Since 1996, assistance priorities have shifted from emergency relief to the search for durable solutions
- UNHCR is an active partner in the Government's programme for internally displaced persons returning to war-damaged areas

"In front of what is increasingly perceived as a static conflict situation, a decline of international donor support in the humanitarian sector and considering the evolution of the IDPs and refugees needs since 1993, international organisations, including UNHCR, are progressively looking toward humanitarian long-term options and mobilising additional resources. These options should aim at reducing IDPs and refugees' dependency on external assistance and at bringing their living standard on par with that of the host population. Given prevailing uncertainties concerning the future outcome of the ongoing negotiation process and risk of further deterioration of living conditions of vulnerable groups, contingency planning and capacity building dimensions must also be integrated in this long-term approach.

During the emergency phase the UNHCR target population covered the whole IDP and refugee caseload as no discrimination could be realistically done, selecting target population being a matter of accessibility and funding. In 1996, it was decided to adopt a more rational and practical approach, based on assessment made by UNHCR in close cooperation with the Government of Azerbaijan over the previous three years. UNHCR implementing partners identify target population through direct assessment among the IDP and refugee community in the field, thereby ensuring the impact on the targeted group through direct implementation and close liaison and co-ordination with the affected communities. In 1998, close to 200,000 persons have been reached through sectors such

as health and education having the largest impact and income-generation (micro-credit/agriculture activities) the narrowest. It is important to note, however, that shelter assistance and repair of schools and dispensaries is an one-time assistance only. Nearly all of 2,800 families who received UNHCR shelter assistance (including 615 returnee families in Fizuli district) are today considered self-sufficient.

The UN General Assembly passed Resolution A/RES/48/114 of 20 December 1993, requesting the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to continue her efforts with the appropriate United Nations Agencies and inter-governmental, governmental and non-governmental organisations, in order to consolidate and increase the essential services to refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was among the first international organizations to arrive in Azerbaijan in December 1992. To respond to the emergency situation, UNHCR came forward with a substantial amount of assistance, followed by other United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organisations. As of January 1998, UNHCR received some USD 45 million in cash and as in-kind contributions to carry on its humanitarian mission in Azerbaijan.

The operational objective focuses on the provision of an integrated assistance programme to persons of concern to UNHCR Azerbaijan and to meet the needs of destitute people: IDPs and refugees. In particular, emphasis is placed on the promotion of local settlement through housing improvement and facilitation of access to sources of income. An integrated approach has been developed to strengthen the co-operation with the Government of Azerbaijan in programme activities so as to ensure the sustainability of achievements obtained through the UNHCR programme in the country.

Since 1996, UNHCR's sectoral assistance priorities started to gradually shift from relief assistance to activities aimed at reaching durable achievements in the areas of shelter, health, education and income generation. The same year, in parallel with the assistance to IDPs, UNHCR began facilitating the return of IDPs to accessible areas of origin in partially occupied front-line districts with a limited shelter rehabilitation programme. (UNHCR 1999)

In accordance with a Presidential Decree of September 1998 and with the application of a joint Aide Mémoire signed by UNHCR, UNDP, the World Bank and the Government in February 1999, UNHCR's assistance programme in 1999 intends to promote self-reliance among IDPs, as well as the returnees in the war-torn regions, in order to bring their living conditions to par with that of the local population. Shelter activities remain the most important sector of the programme (28% of the budget). Assistance also includes income-generation, health care, education and community services. UNHCR also supports the transition from humanitarian assistance to development through capacity-building activities, including legal, technical and material support to the Government and national NGOs." (UNHCR September 1999).

#### Main objectives for 2000

- Provide multi-sectoral assistance to promote local integration of ethnic Azeri and Meskhetian refugees.
  - Provide multi-sectoral assistance to promote temporary local integration of internally displaced persons (IDPs).
  - Assist IDPs to return home to accessible but war-damaged areas of the country, and to reintegrate.
  - Provide protection and material support to refugees originating from outside the CIS region.
  - Strengthen the capacity of the Government and national NGOs to respond to forced displacement of populations and to assist persons of concern to UNHCR.
  - Implement a gradual hand-over to development-oriented national entities and international organisations of UNHCR's assistance to IDPs and to ethnic Azeri and Meskhetian refugees."
- (UNHCR December 1999, p. 185)

*For a comprehensive list of international agencies operating in Azerbaijan, consult Azerbweb "[Directory of Relief and Development Organizations](#)" [Internet]  
You can also consult Azerweb "[Humanitarian Aid Activity Map](#)" [Internet]*

#### **UNICEF receives US funds for programmes targeting the displaced population (June 2000)**

- The Children agency signed an agreement with USAID to implement a project of nutritional assistance to 343,000 internally displaced in 174 settlements
- UNICEF also received a grant from the US government for a project of mine awareness among the displaced population in districts along the ceasefire line

"Dr. Nazim Agazade, Project Officer, UNICEF, briefed those in attendance on two agreements which were recently signed between UNICEF and USAID and the US Embassy, on behalf of the US Government, respectively.

The first agreement is aimed at the revitalizing of Primary Health Care (PHC) services in IDP/refugee settlements. The project, under a USAID grant amounting to US\$ 580,000, will target 343,000 IDPs/refugees, with a focus on children, young people and women, who are residing in 174 settlements. The project will cover 15 districts of Azerbaijan: Agjabedi, Agdam, Barda, Beylagan, Bilasuvar, Fizuli, Goranboy, Imishli, Khanlar, Mingchevir, Saatli, Sabirabad, Sheki, Terter and Yevlakh. The goal of the project is to improve the health, nutrition and micro-nutritional status of IDPs and refugees (with a special focus on children, adolescents, youth and women), to reduce regional disparities and to increase the preparedness of the target beneficiaries in the repatriated territories.

Another agreement signed between UNICEF and the US Embassy is aimed at increasing mine awareness among the IDP population residing in settlements in districts such as Fizuli, Agdam, Terter, Goranboy, Gazakh, Agjabedi, Beylagan and Khanlar. The US Government provided US\$ 221,000 out of the total estimated cost of the project (US\$ 300,000). The goals of the project are to sensitize the IDP and refugee population of the

danger of mines and to reduce/eliminate the potential incidence of mine fatalities and injuries in Azerbaijan. The project objectives are to enhance the education system and incorporate mine awareness methods, messages and curriculum with proper teaching materials, as well as to strengthen mine awareness activities and raise mine awareness among parents.

The main strategies of the project are capacity building of teachers, parents and families to raise awareness on mine dangers, utilizing child-to-child or child-to-mother methods through the existing education system to ensure mine awareness among children and parents. Then, to develop and disseminate public information materials such as posters, pamphlets and brochures in order to develop an integrated approach for the mine awareness system as a component of the Azerbaijan National Strategic Corporate Plan For Mine Action." (Monthly Inter-Agency Meeting June 2000)

*See also [UNICEF country programme for Azerbaijan](#) in UNICEF website [Internet]*

#### **The International Organization for Migration (IOM): capacity building activities (1999-2000)**

- Agreement between the Government of Azerbaijan and IOM signed on December 1999 and endorsed by the Parliamentary Assembly on February 2000
- IOM current activities include capacity building for the government and local NGOs in the area of migration, refugee and IDP policy

The International Organization for Migration established its presence in Azerbaijan in 1996 to assist the Government in its capacity to deal with migration issues.

On December 8, 1999 the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the International Organization for Migration was signed by Mr. Vilayat Gouliyev, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Government of Azerbaijan and Mr. Joost van der Aalst, Head of IOM Mission in Azerbaijan, on behalf of IOM. The Agreement establishes legal basis for further development of friendly cooperation between Azerbaijan and IOM in handling migration issues. This Agreement was endorsed by the National Assembly on February 8, 2000.

IOM offers a systematic and regional programme that supports implementation of the Programme of Action adopted in the Geneva '96 CIS Conference on Migration. The CIS Conference process is a unique and innovative response to population movements in the region. Implementation of the Programme of Action took place against the setting of a transition process that has been more complex than expected. This process was designed for a five years time frame and is currently reviewed for its extension.

#### Current projects

1. IOM and the Government of Azerbaijan Capacity Building in Migration Management Program (CBMMP)

Status: Ongoing since February 1998

#### Background & Benchmarks:

Migration Management became one of the biggest challenges for newly independent Azerbaijan as a result of opening of the international borders that allows freedom of movement, poor economic condition, a large number of Refugees and IDPs as a result of conflict over Nagorny Karabakh. In April of 1997, the Prime Minister established by decree the State Commission for a Unified Migration Management Programme in the Republic of Azerbaijan. IOM together with the State Commission formulated goals and created structures in a framework of Capacity Building in Migration Management. In 1998, this framework was formally established through the Capacity Building in Migration Management Programme (CBMMP) for Azerbaijan.

Overall objectives of CBMMP are to formulate and develop a migration policy, to provide a strong legislative basis and to enhance accountable migration management structures. First priority is given to the formulation of migration policy through consultation mechanism which is open for continued policy review and institutionalising its management structures.

Complementary to this is the creation of information systems - including border management data systems and the provision of a strong legislative basis for regulation of migration processes. Within the Programme structures five inter ministerial Task Forces analysed the Azeri Migration Management in five project areas: Policy and Management, Legislation and Procedures, Border Control and Migration Information Systems, Refugees and IDP's, and Labor Migration and in accordance to terms of reference endorsed by the State Commission. In December 1999, the State Commission identified the CBMMP objectives.

#### 2. Azerbaijan National NGO Migration Sector Development

The project purpose is to strengthening and support self-development of Azerbaijan national NGO migration sector. This project aims - in a regional context to broaden knowledge and awareness of national NGO's in their role to play for national Azeri commitments to address migration issues.

#### 3. Community Development and Micro Credits

The project purpose is through community development with low-income groups and potential migrants to reduce poverty and increase self-sufficiency by means of credit assistance, training and marketing in Nakhichevan. Simultaneously repair and rehabilitation activities in potable water systems will be targeted.

#### 3A. Women Production Cooperatives for Nakhchivan

The objective of this project is to improve sustainable employment opportunities among women entrepreneurs through support in brand building and marketing activities. Activities comprise women's group formation in villages, business development and quality assurance training, provision of product manufacturing equipment, and support on supply chain development to ensure efficient marketability of the product.

#### 4. Migrant Movements

IOM coordinates the movements of migrants to countries which have approved these migrants for permanent resettlement. Once receiving countries have approved a case for resettlement, IOM coordinates medical screening, travel documents, transportation and if required travel orientation for migrants.

#### 5. Base-line Survey on Trafficking and Economic Migration from Azerbaijan

This pilot project has been initiated by IOM with financial support from the Government of Netherlands for the purpose of study and assessment of the current state of knowledge about migrant trafficking and pull-push factors for economic migration from Azerbaijan. The study will examine the scale of the problem, the spontaneous versus organized character and the profiles of migrants.

(IOM in Azerbaijan 12 February 1998)

*For more information on IOM in Azerbaijan, see Azerberb <http://www.un-az.org/iom/> [Internet]*

*For a comprehensive list of international agencies operating in Azerbaijan, consult Azerbweb "[Directory of Relief and Development Organizations](#)" [Internet]  
You can also consult Azerweb "[Humanitarian Aid Activity Map](#)" [Internet]*

#### **The World Food Programme: phasing out planned for 2002 (1999)**

- WFP began an emergency operation in Azerbaijan in 1993 to help maintain the nutritional status of the displaced population
- A new operation has been approved in May 1999 for the period July 1999 to June 2002 for direct assistance to the displaced and the returnees and recovery assistance (Food-for-work, food-for-training) to help IDPs to become more self sufficient
- WFP expects to phase down its assistance to IDPs gradually, from 200,000 beneficiaries in the first year of the PRRO to 70,000 in the third year
- WFP's assistance is currently targeted to around 200,000 among the most food-insecure IDPs who live in rural areas in collective settlements whose needs are not covered by other agencies
- In the design of the food assistance programme, efforts have been made to involve the beneficiaries, especially women

"WFP began an emergency operation in Azerbaijan in 1993 to help maintain the nutritional status of the displaced population affected by the military conflict and the

ongoing economic crisis. In total, WFP's assistance up to June 1999 amounted to some 52,000 tons of food commodities, at a value of 33 million dollars, covering an average of 215,000 beneficiaries per year.

In May 1999, the WFP Executive Board approved a new PRRO for Azerbaijan for the period July 1999 to June 2002, at an estimated cost of 23.2 million dollars. WFP will collaborate with the government and other humanitarian organizations under the PRRO by focusing on relief and recovery issues. The three major components will cover: (i) relief and supplementary assistance to IDPs and other vulnerable groups; (ii) assistance to refugees/returnees and their resettlement; and (iii) recovery assistance: food-for-work and food-for-training activities to benefit those who have reached basic levels of food security and are about to reach self-sufficiency, and for integration of IDPs into their new communities and provide support to those returning to their previous homes." (WFP November 1999, p. 10)

"Although most of WFP's assistance is targeted to IDPs, a provision has been made in the PRRO document to assist 5,000 non-IDPs in vulnerable groups from 1999 to 2002. WFP also expects to phase down its assistance to IDPs gradually, from 200,000 beneficiaries in the first year of the PRRO to 120,000 in the second year and 70,000 in the third year.

"Increasingly, food assistance is expected to take the form of food-for-work and food-for-training activities to help IDPs become more self-sufficient. These activities will help meet the food needs of the internally displaced as well as provide shelter, health, education, skills training and income-generating activities, especially for women." (WFP November 1999, p. 14)

"Other UN agencies such as UNHCR, UNDP and UNICEF are active in Azerbaijan and are shifting their programmes towards development, reconstruction and reintegration. WFP collaborates with a number of these agencies to support vulnerable groups. For example, UNICEF provides psychological rehabilitation to some 3,000 children traumatized by the war in 40 centres countrywide. WFP provides food-for-work incentives for displaced women and children attending courses offered by this project. WFP and UNDP have jointly supported a government project to establish a database on the status of displaced women and children covering areas such as demography, education and employment." (WFP November 1999, p. 10)

*See also WFP project document "Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation - Azerbaijan 6121.00: Relief and recovery assistance for vulnerable groups", 28 April 1999 [Internet]*

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#### Targeted population

"Since 1993, relief efforts in Azerbaijan have focused on the distribution of basic foodstuffs to people displaced by the conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh. IDPs are clearly among the most vulnerable groups; their food security declined following their displacement as a result of losing land, assets and employment. Rural IDPs are more vulnerable than those in urban areas owing to lack of infrastructure, employment and income-generating activities. The State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced



Persons plays an active role in determining which IDPs and returnees are most vulnerable.

Initially, food aid was intended to meet the urgent needs of the displaced on a short-term basis since the magnitude of the crisis and its future direction were unclear at the time. Early distributions in 1993-1994 by food aid agencies were on an ad hoc basis although they covered all the IDPs scattered throughout the country. By 1995 the operation had become more regular and it reached its peak during 1995 and 1996. All agencies provided supplementary food aid to help displaced households secure their minimum food needs and avoid malnutrition.

By the end of 1996, the agencies agreed to halt food aid distributions in Baku and Sumgayet — where around half of the 600,000 IDPs had settled — noting that living conditions had become better than those of rural areas in terms of job opportunities, services and shelter. The decision coincided with: a) the government policy to discourage further influxes of IDPs into these two cities by halting any new registration; and b) the funding problems the aid organizations started to face. The other 300,000 IDPs settled in rural areas continued to receive supplementary food aid.

WFP's assistance is currently targeted to around 200,000 among the most food-insecure IDPs who live in rural areas in camps, wagons, dug-outs and whose needs are not covered by other agencies. WFP has developed criteria for registration of beneficiaries by implementing partners. Beneficiary lists are drawn up on the basis of information provided by the local government authorities and screened by WFP monitors. All beneficiaries are registered on the beneficiary/ration cards, clearly indicating the name of the head of family, the number of dependants, previous and current residence and food rations received to date. Once a card is issued, the beneficiary's identification card is stamped in order to prevent double-targeting. All beneficiary lists are computerized and gender-disaggregated, enabling WFP to cross-check them with the lists of other humanitarian agencies to prevent double-targeting.

WFP international staff and national monitors conduct field trips to various distribution sites to ensure that these criteria are applied and that the beneficiaries are receiving the appropriate ration. Monitoring has shown that female beneficiaries come to the distribution sites to collect the ration and they manage the food at household level. After food distributions, monitors randomly visit selected families to check if food aid was actually received and how it was used. Random monitoring is also conducted on a bimonthly basis by a nutrition team to monitor changes in the nutritional status of beneficiaries." (WFP November 1999, pp. 13-14)

#### Involvement of beneficiaries

"In the design of the food assistance programme, efforts have been made to involve the beneficiaries. WFP provided the example that the input of beneficiaries had led to a change in the composition of the food assistance package, green peas being replaced with white beans, as was the expressed preference of the beneficiaries. Principle 18 calls for special efforts to be made to ensure the full participation of women in the planning and

distribution of basic supplies, including food. As part of the follow-up process to the Beijing World Conference on Women, WFP has set out objectives which include involving more women in the decision-making process and developing more gender sensitive programming. Noteworthy in this latter regard is the WFP policy of distributing food directly to women and the practice of its implementing partner, World Vision International, of ensuring the presence of women staff during food distributions" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 64)

#### Gender focus

"The gender focus of WFP assistance also provides important linkages with protection of women. Agreements with implementing partners reflect WFP's goal of gender equity by providing women with equal access to food. Twenty percent of the families assisted by WFP are headed by single parents; 60 percent of these single parents are women. Food-for-work activities targeted to women will contribute to their empowerment. WFP plans to continue increasing women's participation in food planning, management and distribution." (WFP November 1999, p. 16)

"WFP's Commitment to Women and the Azerbaijan country office agreements with implementing partners seek to assure women full participation in and equal access to food programmes. For example, gender provisions specified in WFP's agreement with WVI include (i) regularly monitoring the ratio of female to male recipients at distribution sites and encouraging women to come to the sites to receive their family entitlement; (ii) giving women equal opportunities of recruitment by WVI; and (iii) checking on who in the family decides on the food budget and how the food aid is used. WFP confirmed that more than 50 percent of the food distribution staff of WVI is made up of women and 95 percent of WFP food is managed by women at the household level." (WFP November 1999, p. 18)

*For a comprehensive list of international agencies operating in Azerbaijan, consult Azerbweb "[Directory of Relief and Development Organizations](#)" [Internet]  
You can also consult Azerbweb "[Humanitarian Aid Activity Map](#)" [Internet]*

## **IDP activities by NGOs**

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### **Mercy Corps: Assistance Humanitarian Assistance Program (AHAP) (2001)**

- Mercy Corps manages a six-year US\$ 45 million programme to support community development efforts towards IDPs and conflict-affected population
- The programme provides support to community development, economic opportunities, sustainable health care activities and social investment initiatives

#### **Program Overview**

Objective: Increase community development efforts to integrate, resettle and provide economic opportunities to IDPs and conflict-affected population within Azerbaijan.

MC is the umbrella grant manager for six-year \$45 million AHAP program. The current & future programs represent a transition towards longer-term sustainable development. [...] Below are the sectors in which MC subgrants are operating.

### **Integrated Community Development**

The Integrated Community Development Program represents the culmination of lessons learned in each of other four sectors. The main objectives of this new program are to:

- Expand the range of basic community development intervention through the formation of clusters
- Increase access to multi-sectoral services through community linkages
- Establish the foundations for a regional development process

### **Economic Opportunities**

*Increased availability of credit and support services*

Economic opportunities is one of the key sectors under the program strategy. Activities play a leading role in the IDP resettlement and integration efforts. Activities to be supported include micro-credit, business development services, and agricultural training. Programme targets & activities include:

- Disburse 12,000 group & individual loans
- Provide fee based services to 8,500 clients
- Create and sustain 5,000 jobs
- Form 25 associations

### **Community Development**

*Community organised & mobilized, with strengthened capacity to address self-defined needs*

Activities focus on enabling communities to identify, prioritize and address their own needs. Micro-projects to be implemented under this sector will be demand-driven and will require a 25% community contribution. Activities & targets include:

- Form and train 200 community groups
- Capacity building of groups and communities
- 124 Community-based micro project activities

### **Health Care**

*Community organized & mobilized to manage more accessible & sustainable quality health care*

The Health sector targets improved access to sustainable health care for the conflict-affected population. Current externally supported health activities identified as high priority will transition into locally run programs that are able to sustain themselves through cost recovery schemes. Program targets & activities include:

- Rehabilitate 110 Primary Health Care Facilities
- 199 communities participating in health initiatives
- 61 communities with cost recovery mechanisms

### **Social Investment Initiative**

*Rehabilitated community economic & social infrastructure through community organization & mobilization*

Social Investment Initiatives focus on community well being and self-reliance through the implementation of demand-driven, highly participatory micro-projects in three areas. micro-projects require a minimum 20% community contribution with 5% cash. Anticipated results and targets:

- 180 community implemented micro-projects
- 100,698 direct beneficiaries
- 40 communities linked with other programs
- \$420,000 in community contribution leveraged.

(Mercy Corps May 2001)

*For more information, consult the website of the Mercy Corps in Azerbaijan [Internet: <http://www.mercycorps.az/>]*

### **IFRC provides assistance to the displaced in the "Southern Camps" (2000-2001)**

- The 7 "Southern Camps" are home of about 40,000 internally displaced originating mainly from the Fizuli district
- The objective of the International Federation is to increase the self-reliance of the displaced whilst ensuring the provision of basis assistance

"Since August 1993, the International Federation, in cooperation with the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society, has been providing multi-sectoral assistance to the vulnerable in Azerbaijan. The main programmes have consisted of comprehensive assistance to the IDPs residing in the 'Southern Camps', and to the lonely elderly pensioners throughout Azerbaijan.

Conscious of the financial dependency on external aid and the need for long-term sustainability, of the organisational weakness of the Society and of possible demand for emergency intervention, the Federation's Delegation in Azerbaijan held three strategic workshops in 1998, followed by a review and further elaboration of the Strategic Work Plan in 1999.

The objectives set by the International Federation in Azerbaijan are as follows:

- Intensify the focus on capacity building of the National Society.
- Ultimately hand over responsibilities for implementation of appropriate service activities to the National Society in accordance with its capacity and strategic plan.
- Increase the self-reliance of the IDPs whilst ensuring the provision of basic assistance.
- Establish a capacity for emergency intervention.

Depending on the number of supported programmes and amount of mobilised resources the Delegation of the International Federation in Azerbaijan is planned to be composed of

7-10 expatriate delegates and almost 300 local staff. Expert support is also planned to be provided through the regional infrastructure." (IFRC 2000)

See [map of the Southern Camps in Azerweb](http://www.azerweb.com/Emergency_Profile/IDP_Southcamps.html) [Internet: [http://www.azerweb.com/Emergency\\_Profile/IDP\\_Southcamps.html](http://www.azerweb.com/Emergency_Profile/IDP_Southcamps.html)]

See also

*IFRC appeal for 2001* [Internet]

*Azerbaijan: Earthquake: IFRC Appeal* 6 December 2000 [Internet]

*IFRC Programme Update No. 3* (April-June 2001), 7 September 2001 [Internet]

*"Summer Camp"*, IFRC Newsletter, August 2001 [Internet]

*"Children in the Southern Camps start a new school year"*, IFRC Newsletter, September 2001 [Internet]

*"Women Committees participate in implementation of the Special Assistance Project targeting 150 most vulnerable IDPs in the Southern Camps"*, IFRC Newsletter, September 2001 [Internet]

See also *"Private oil sector supports humanitarian work (2000)"*, *"Growing influence of women in camps (2000)"* and *"IFRC conducts nutritional survey in the southern camps before disruption of humanitarian food aid (November 2000)"* [Internal links]

### **NGOs in Azerbaijan: shift from emergency assistance to development activities (1998-1999)**

"More than forty NGOs actively assist IDPs in Azerbaijan. Representatives of the NGOs meet monthly in Baku and on an ad hoc basis as specific questions arise. Far fewer NGOs operate in Azerbaijan than in Armenia. Most of the more recent arrivals have been created by private Azerbaijani groups. Many of the ongs are shifting from emergency assistance to development-related activities, taking care to be sensitive to government concerns that their programs not imply permanency in the IDPs' status." (Green 1998, p. 267)

For a comprehensive list of international and local NGOs operating in Azerbaijan, consult Azerbweb *"Directory of Relief and Development Organizations"* [Internet]

You can also consult Azerweb *"Humanitarian Aid Activity Map"* [Internet]

### **The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): one the few non-indigenous organizations working in Nagorno-Karabakh (1999)**

- ICRC 1999 activities include: protection activities (prisoners of war, missing persons), orthopedic programmes, tuberculosis control project, dissemination of international humanitarian law, mine awareness programmes

"ICRC is one of the few non-indigenous organizations working in Nagorno-Karabakh, to which it gets access from Yerevan. ICRC's 1996 appeal indicated plans to restore a measure of self-sufficiency in several villages in the enclave. ICRC has arranged a number of prisoner exchanges since the start of the conflict" (Greene 1998, p. 267).

The ICRC has been working in Azerbaijan since March 1992. The delegation is located in Baku. A total of 14 expatriate delegates and more than 60 national employees are implementing the ICRC programmes. (ICRC June 1999)

Programmes (1999)

- Tuberculosis control project inside the penitentiary system of the Azerbaijani Republic
- Protection activities

The ICRC's Protection activities in Azerbaijan focus on two closely connected traditional ICRC fields - work on behalf of prisoners and on behalf of the families of missing persons.

- Orthopaedic programme in Azerbaijan
- Preventive action

Inclusion of International Humanitarian Law in National Legislation

Dissemination of International Humanitarian Law

In academic circles

Among arms carriers

To children

- Cooperation with the Azeri Red Crescent Society
- Mine Awareness Programme

Following the pattern of most modern conflicts, many antipersonnel landmines and other explosive devices have been left behind on the battlefields. A mine awareness programme aimed at people living close to the front line and internally displaced persons (IDPs) was started in October 1996. The programme included a large-scale distribution of leaflets and posters with promotional material warning people of the danger of mines.

Since 1998, this programme has been streamlined, and more precise and complete information has been given to the IDP community. Seminars are organised for teachers in IDP schools situated close to the front line and those scattered all over the country. Pupils are taught about the reality of the danger of mines. In turn, the children pass on the message to their parents so that the whole community is informed. Today, about 500,000 people have received information about the danger of mines.

(ICRC June 1999)

*For a comprehensive list of international agencies operating in Azerbaijan, consult Azerbweb "[Directory of Relief and Development Organizations](#)" [Internet]  
You can also consult Azerbweb "[Humanitarian Aid Activity Map](#)" [Internet]*

## Constraints

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### **Donor involvement likely to decrease further (2000-2001)**

- Level of donor involvement is unlikely to increase significantly unless either a peace agreement is signed with Armeni or significant structural changes take place within the Government

"Resource mobilization must become one of the highest priorities for UNDP in Azerbaijan. The level of donor involvement is not particularly high and is unlikely to increase significantly unless either a peace agreement is signed with the Republic of Armenia, or significant structural changes take place within the Government to raise donor confidence." (UNDP 22 May 2000, para. 38)

"In 1999 and 2000, UNHCR gradually handed over its projects, which have increasingly focused on development assistance, to the government, national nongovernmental organizations, the UN Development Program (UNDP), and the U.S. Agency for International Development. UNHCR's annual appeal for Azerbaijan decreased 61 percent, from \$12 million for 1999 to \$4.7 million for 2000." (USCR 2001)

*See also "Bleak future for Karabakh refugees - International community cuts back on aid for Azeris displaced by fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh", Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 12 October 2001 [Internet]*

### **Dialogue initiatives taken by the civil society in Azerbaijan meets hostility of government, according to the International Helsinki Federation (2000)**

- Civil society organisations in Azerbaijan have complain against the lack of transparency in the process of settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict
- Human Rights and refugee support organisations have started to build contacts with sister organisations in Armenia
- The government in Azerbaijan remains hostile to these initiatives

"Numerous civil society organizations in Azerbaijan have expressed their frustrations at the lack of transparency regarding the process of resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh problem--the worst social and humanitarian problem facing the country.

Azerbaijani NGOs' have expressed their desire to strengthen contacts with their counterparts in Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh region through organizing meetings in the respective countries themselves, but complained of obstacles to such initiatives, which might be considered treasonous by officials. Azerbaijani human rights and refugee-support organizations-- for example women's and journalists associations-- started such contacts in order to build better relations that will help normalize the situation between the two countries and allow refugees from all sides to return to their homes.

But a number of civil society groups in Azerbaijan are reluctant to express their belief that a peaceful solution to the problem is possible and urgent. There is a generalized fear that expressing criticism openly may likely be viewed as "provocations" by state authorities; refugees in particular expressed this fear.

Attacks on the freedom of expression are commonplace. For example, on 29 April, at a rally organized by the opposition to demand democratic parliamentary elections, seventeen journalists were mistreated and one severely beaten. In another incident, on 27 May, 15 policemen attacked the editorial offices of "Bu gun" newspaper.

The official practice of intimidating public displays of political opinion could also be seen when members of the political opposition were prevented from placing flowers on a monument to the Martyrs of War in Gazakh on Azerbaijani National Day on 28 May. The flowers were confiscated by the police. Earlier, on 12 May, members of the Congress of Azerbaijan Women organized a peaceful rally to protest the harsh economic situation and demand fair elections. Numerous women reported having been beaten by the police. Although there are allegations of provocations to the police, nothing can justify their brutal behaviour, which contravenes Azeri law as well as international standards.

The IHF visited a settlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Djeyranbatan, who had been forced from their homes either in the Nagorno-Karabakh region or other disputed territories. Some had lived in the settlement for as many as seven years.

We are deeply disturbed by the deprivations suffered by these people, who expressed the view that their government does not assist them. Conditions are unsanitary and an eight-month old child had died that day because his parents could not afford proper medical care. One doctor, himself an IDP, cares for over 1,000 people with no supplies or sanitary facilities. He earns ten dollars per month. The residents of the settlement received only five dollars per person per month as IDPs, and claimed not to have received humanitarian assistance for four years.

Representatives of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) met with Azeri civil society groups and officials in Baku between 27-30 May 2000. The IHF is engaged in an analysis of the views of civil society groups in Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Nagorno-Karabakh region concerning human rights aspects of the ongoing dispute and the prospects for its solution. IHF representatives will visit Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh in June.

The IHF delegation included Aaron Rhodes, Executive Director, and Brigitte Dufour, Deputy Executive Director. They met with Novruz Mammadov, Head of the Foreign Relations Department of the Office of the President; Hidayat Orudjov, State Advisor; and were scheduled to meet with the Foreign Minister, Deputy Foreign Minister, and President on 30 May." (IHF 30 May 2000)



**NGO activities are constrained by domestic and a cumbersome registration and taxation system (1998-2001)**

- In Azerbaijan, NGOs are subject to a mandatory registration process and to a high level of taxation
- Local NGOs are constrained by legislation in their efforts to sponsor mini-credit programmes (1998)
- A new law on Registration of Legal Entities has been recently discussed by Parliament (2001)

"[I]nternational humanitarian organizations attempting to address the needs of the internally displaced have faced other operational constraints. Specifically, the legal and administrative environment in which NGOs are required to operate impedes their effective functioning and the fulfillment of their full potential. NGOs are subject to a mandatory registration process, which is cumbersome and lacks transparency, and to a high level of taxation. Creating an operating environment more supportive of the work of NGOs in Azerbaijan is important not only for the work of the NGOs themselves, but also for international agencies which rely on NGOs as implementing partners. As part of the follow-up process to the CIS Migration Conference, UNHCR (in cooperation with the Open Society Institute and the Washington-based International Centre for Not for Profit Law) has been assisting the Government in drafting a new law regarding NGO activity in order to conform with commonly accepted principles and practices elsewhere in the world. The law is expected to delineate the types of associations and foundations eligible for classification as charitable, set out the procedures for registration and regulation of charitable activities, and define the responsibilities of the Government towards NGOs" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 55).

"In terms of access to income-generating activities, while the Government is receptive to income-generating projects for the displaced, "local NGOs [which play an important role in sponsoring micro-credit programmes] are constrained from doing so by national legislation requiring that an institution must have the equivalent of US \$5 million in order to engage in lending activity. To enhance the access of the internally displaced to credit, the Government is encouraged to create a more conducive environment for the micro-credit programmes of NGOs" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999, para. 95).

"The Law on Registration of Legal Entities has been a stumbling block for the development of a national NGO-sector in Azerbaijan. The law is currently being amended, and UNHCR and the Council of Europe has intervened with the Government, offering legal advice and technical expertise to amend the law to an acceptable international standard." (UNHCR September 2001, p. 205)

**Some donor policies have also negatively affected efforts to respond to the humanitarian needs of IDPs (1998)**

- In the United States the Freedom Support Act of 1992 limits government-to-government assistance

"Until recently, donor policies, in particular that of the United States, also negatively affected national and international efforts to respond to the humanitarian needs of the internally displaced. Specifically, section 907 of the Freedom Support Act of 1992 prohibited all forms of government-to-government assistance, including humanitarian aid. The ban had a particularly deleterious effect on health care, which is state run, though other areas of activity also faced problems as a result of the restrictions. In addition to limiting the scope of activity of USAID-funded international NGOs, section 907 also impeded efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Government of Azerbaijan to assume a greater role in addressing humanitarian needs themselves, thereby contributing to the current problems. It must be noted that recent amendments to section 907 remove the restrictions on the provision of humanitarian aid to the Government and provide for programmes in the areas of democracy building and economic reform. [As a result], the United States now has become the largest donor of humanitarian assistance and is increasing its contributions in this area. This development is particularly noteworthy given the current tendency of other members of the donor community to reduce funding for basic humanitarian assistance in favour of reintegration and development projects" (UN Commission on Human Rights 25 January 1999 para. 56).

In the United States, "Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act severely hamper[ed] U.S. aid to non-governmental organizations in Azerbaijan. It provides that 'United States assistance under this or any other act . . . may not be provided to the Government of Azerbaijan until the President determines, and so reports to the Congress, that the Government of Azerbaijan is taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Section 907 was opposed by the executive branch of the government but adopted by Congress at the urging of Armenian groups in the United States. Section 907 puts constraints on humanitarian assistance, as a result of which many NGOs have decided not to set up programs in Azerbaijan" (Greene 1998, p. 268).

"As originally interpreted, Section 907 barred governmental and private agencies from aiding or working with institutions or facilities even indirectly controlled by the government of Azerbaijan. Revised guidelines have made it somewhat easier to carry out programs in compliance with Section 907; it is now possible to work with officials in the government of Azerbaijan under some circumstances. The fact that all of Azerbaijan's public health system is state controlled, however, has severely limited the ability of U.S.-government-funded NGOs to assist in this important sector. Under the terms of Section 907, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) was only able to assist a dispensary serving IDPs in a hotel that had been taken over by IDPs because the hotel was owned by a trade union and not the government" (Greene 1998, p. 268).

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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ANAD	Azerbaijan National Agency for Demining
APF	Azerbaijan Popular Front
ARRA	Azerbaijan Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency
CASPIAN	Community Action for Shelter and Public Infrastructure Assistance Needs
CBMMP	Capacity Building in Migration Management Programme
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
FCU	Field Coordination Unit
IAG	International Advisory Group
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MSDP	The Migration Sector Development Program
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OSCE	Organization for Security and cooperation in Europe
OSI	Open Society Institute
PBR	Public Building Rehabilitation Project
RFE/RL	Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
RI	Relief International
TACIS	Technical Assistance in the CIS programme
UMCOR	United Methodist Committee on Relief

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