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Charter

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## **EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER**

14<sup>th</sup> National Report on the implementation of the  
European Social Charter

submitted by

**THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

**Articles 11 and 14**

for the period 01/01/2016 – 31/12/2019

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**CYCLE 2021**

**THE FOURTEENTH REPORT**

**OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE**

**ARTICLES 11 AND 14**

**OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER (REVISED)**

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## Article 11. The right to protection of health

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to protection of health, the Parties undertake either directly or in cooperation with public or private organizations, to take appropriate measures designed *inter alia*:

1. to remove as far as possible the causes of ill-health;
2. to provide advisory and educational facilities for the promotion of health and the encouragement of individual responsibility in matters of health;
3. to prevent as far as possible epidemic, endemic and other diseases, as well as accidents.

*Paragraph 1. To remove as far as possible the causes of ill-health.*

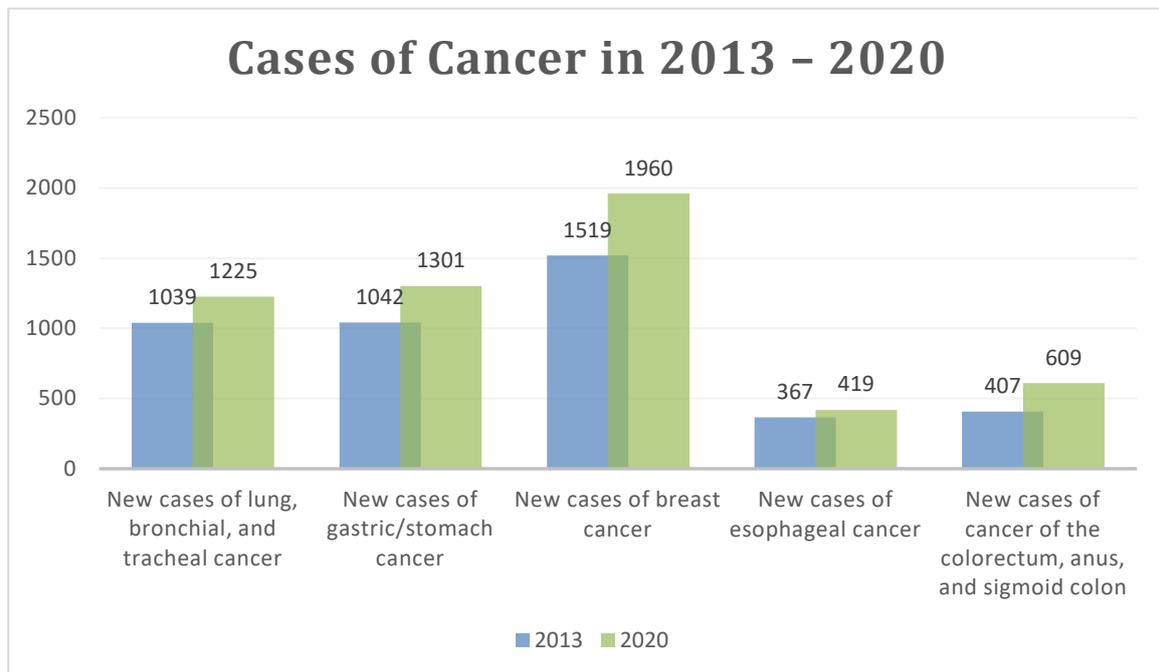
a) The number of urban population in Azerbaijan is slightly higher than rural population. As of 1 January 2021, the total population of Azerbaijan was 10 million 119133 thousand people. Life expectancy was 70.1 years for men and 76.5 years for women. It is considered an endemic region for hereditary blood diseases, whereas the prevalence of cancer among the population is about the same as in European countries. The annual rate of HIV infection is 0.09 and 0.05 percent for men and women respectively. The number of Hepatitis C infected is on average 320 per annum.

As a result of the 44-day Patriotic War, which began with the military aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan and lasted from September 27 to November 10, 2020, the territories of Azerbaijan that had been occupied by Armenia for about 30 years were liberated. However, hundreds of thousands of anti-personnel and anti-tank mines planted by Armenia in those areas have slowed the return of people exposed to ethnic cleansing. Despite the end of the conflict, Armenia refuses to hand over maps of the mines it planted in Azerbaijan. As a result, since November 10, 2020, that is since the end of the conflict, about 30 Azerbaijani citizens have died and about 120 citizens were injured as a result of mine explosions.

In 2013, the medical, treatment and preventive care institutions of Azerbaijan registered 34,681 cancer patients (prevalence), while in 2020 the number of registered cancer cases has surged to **54,403**.

The number of new cases of cancer in the country totaled 9,064 in 2013, while in 2020, it reached **11,595**. In 2013, there were 1,039 new cases of lung, trachea, and bronchial cancer; 1,042 new cases of stomach cancer; 1,519 new cases of breast cancer; 367 new cases of esophageal cancer; 407 new cases of the colorectal, anus, and sigma-like colon cancer; whereas in 2020, the number of reported new cases of breast cancer totaled **1,960** (up by **29%**); the new cases of lung, trachea, and bronchial cancer reached **1,225** (up by **17.9%**); esophageal cancer amounted to **419** new cases (up by **14.2%**); the new cases of stomach cancer totaled **1,301** (up by **24.9%**), and the new cases of rectal cancer increased to make **609** (up by **49.6%**).

Analysis of the incidence of malignant neoplasms depending on the gender of patients shows that in 2013, 4659 of all new cases occurred in women, while in 2020 the number of women diagnosed with cancer amounted to **5964**. Breast, cervical, and ovarian cancers account for the majority of cancers in women.



Notably, in **2020**, neonatal neoplasms killed **6,383** out of the **54,383** in **2013** and **9,879** out of the **7,5647** patients that died from all causes. Several screening programs admitted in the world practice and WHO, as well as widely used in different countries, depend on the treatment of some types of cancer (SVX, UYX, colorectal cancer), timely detection, and 30% of modern therapeutic measures.

Among those detained in penitentiary institutions of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 13 persons were diagnosed with cancer in 2018, 11 people in 2019, and 8 cancerous cases were recorded in the first 6 months of 2020; 42 cases of HIV were detected in 2018, 35 in 2019, and 8 in the first 6 months of 2020.

All healthy and timely newborn infants receive the vaccination on the 4-7<sup>th</sup> day after birth, i.e. one day before they are allowed to go home. Newborn infants with temporary contraindications are vaccinated in children's outpatient clinics 1-6 months after recovery and no later than 1 year of age. Children over 2 months of age with an indication of delayed vaccination should have a Mantoux test before vaccination. If the test is negative, the period between the vaccination and the test should be at least 3 days and no more than 2 weeks.

According to the official annual reports submitted by the Ministry of Health to the State Statistics Committee, the percentage of vaccinations in the Republic of Azerbaijan was as follows:

- 2018 - 96.1%
- 2019 - 96.3%
- 2020 - 84%

TB treatment in the Republic of Azerbaijan is free of charge under national regulations developed following the latest WHO recommendations. In 2018-2019, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Azerbaijan procured the first and second series of drugs used to treat drug-susceptible and multidrug-resistant (MDR-TB) patients. The Global Fund has provided a wide range of drugs needed to treat resistant tuberculosis (GDD).

b) The following legal framework strengthened sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls, while relevant state programs ensured the implementation of measures in this area:

- "State Program on the improvement of maternal and child health in 2014-2020" approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 550 dated 13 June 2014;
- "National Action Plan for the Early Prevention and Treatment of Childhood Disabilities in 2018-2020," approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 64 dated 10 May 2018;
- "Action Plan for Reducing Child Mortality in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2018-2019," approved by Order No. 70 of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 11 October 2017;
- The Decree No. 71s of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 24 February 2020 on the "Action Plan to Prevent Gender-Biased Sex Selection in the period of 2020-2025."

Infant and child mortality rates are used as key indicators to assess the state's socio-economic development and reflect the population's overall health and quality of life. If we add the number of maternal deaths to these figures, the result will clearly reflect the current level of reproductive, pediatric, and obstetric care. A number of positive results achieved to date and programs in this field continue to be implemented.

While infant deaths dropped significantly from 16.4% in 2000 to 11.0% in 2019, in 2020 it was 9,8%, the mortality rate for children under the age of five declined from 30.5% to 13.7%. As a result of direct intervention and measures implemented, the maternal mortality rate dropped from 37.6 per 100,000 in 2000 to 14.9 in 2019. It should be noted that Azerbaijan was one of the first countries to adopt the Reproductive Health Strategy. On January 30, 2008, the "National Strategy for Reproductive Health 2008-2015" was approved by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Regarding preterm births, we should note that women aged 15-17 years gave birth to 2,421 babies in 2017, 2,129 in 2018, and 2,320 in 2019.

The table below shows the average age of mothers who gave birth in the respective years in urban and rural areas.

Years	Average age of birth mothers		
	Total	in cities	in rural areas
<b>2017</b>	25.4	26.3	24.6
<b>2018</b>	25.6	26.5	24.7
<b>2019</b>	25.7	26.7	24.8

To prevent gender-biased sex selection of future children, the Azerbaijani government has mobilized efforts by involving international organizations, civil society and researchers to take the necessary steps and resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

Therefore, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan approved Order No. 71s, dated 24 February 2020, to adopt the "Action Plan on preventing gender-biased sex selection before birth in 2020-2025," and relevant government agencies, social partners, and civil society organizations currently implement the Plan.

d) The expenditure allocated for the healthcare purposes of the state budget for 2018-2020 was as follows:

For 2018 - planned 739 334 330 Azn  
executed - 709 864 775  
For 2019 - planned 1 042 488 474 Azn  
executed - 873 633 385  
For 2020 - planned 1 716 595 488 Azn  
executed 1 687 625 384

In 2018-2019, the number of vacancies for doctors in the regions was as follows:

2 050 in 2018  
2 924 in 2019

In order to provide implementation of paragraph 22.4 of the "National Action Plan on Combating Corruption for 2012-2015" according to the Presidential Order dated September 5, 2012 No. 2421 "Rules for centralized recruitment of doctors to health facilities through competition" was approved by the decision of the Board of the Ministry of Health dated 18.01.2013 No. 3.

In 2018, 299 physicians participated in the Centralized Recruitment Competition, and in 2019, 337 physicians were provided with jobs in rural areas.

At the same time, according to the "Rules for sending graduates of medical residency programmes to workplaces" approved by the Decision of the Board of the Ministry of Health dated October 13, 2014 No. 39, graduate medical specialists were sent to the regions:

117 in 2018  
100 in 2019  
138 in 2020

Repair and construction works in health care institutions in 2018-2020 years were carried out at the expense of funds allocated from the State Investment Fund and the Reserve Fund of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Information on repair, construction, and reconstruction activities carried out in health care institutions in 2018-2020:

S/S	Medical institutions	2018	2019	2020	Total in 2018-2020
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Hospital construction	3	1	8	12
2	Hospital renovation	2	9	1	12
3	Outpatient clinic renovation	2	2		4
4	Construction of an ambulance station			1	1
5	Construction of the Center for Hygiene and Epidemiology		1	1	2
6	Renovation of the Center for Hygiene and Epidemiology	1			1
7	Construction of a medical facility	7	10	4	21
8	Renovation of the medical facility	7	3		10
9	Construction of a medical facility	4	12	3	19
	Total by years:	<b>26</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>82</b>

*Paragraph 2. To provide advisory and educational facilities for the promotion of health and the encouragement of individual responsibility in matters of health.*

a) One of the priorities of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Azerbaijan is the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. The ministry is consistently organizing and holding events to discourage the use of cigarettes, drugs, and alcohol and raise awareness and motivate the public with regards to sports, healthy eating, etc.

The Azerbaijan State Youth Program for 2017-2021 approved by the Presidential Decree dated 15 September 2017 includes raising awareness and improving young people's behavior in the area of reproductive health and family planning, strengthening the necessary countermeasures to prevent early marriages, and taking appropriate measures to raise the awareness of the youth on human rights and gender equality.

The "Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for Children for 2020-2030" approved by the Presidential Decree dated 2 June 2020 No. 2073 envisages measures to strengthen the organization of educational activity, prevent early marriages, violence against children, causes, and prevalence of early marriages as well as provides for plans to conduct statistical research to study results and problems in the area of effective prevention.

An Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 23 June 2020 approved the "Rules for educating young people about the importance of family and marriage to protect and strengthen the family union from the negative consequences of early and consanguineous marriage."

Under this Regulation, awareness raising among youth is carried out in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, international treaties to which the Republic of Azerbaijan is a party, the Family Code, Rights of the Child Law, the Law on Youth Policy, the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Law on Ensuring Gender (Men and Women) Equality, and other normative legal acts.

The regulations provide for the implementation of awareness raising activities among young people in educational institutions and labor groups, the organization of the preparation and distribution of training and methodological manuals, social advertising, extensive use of the media, social networks, educational opportunities, raising the awareness of young people through the creation of certain information resources on the Internet.

According to the regulations, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan shall:

1. include topics on early marriage and the negative consequences of consanguineous marriage in textbooks for grades 9-11;
2. organize awareness-raising activities in educational institutions;
3. ensure the publication of educational and methodological materials;
4. organize outreach activities to tell parents about the dangers of early marriages and consanguineous marriage for the lives and health of young people.

In 2018, at the initiative of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan with the support of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan, a series of events were held in secondary vocational education institutions of Baku involving specialists in relevant fields to promote healthy lifestyles among young people and teenagers as well as prepare young people for family life and teach them about the reproductive health and family planning. The events covered such topics as Reproductive Health and Family Planning: Current Problems and Solutions, Healthy Lifestyle and Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases, and others. More than 600 students and faculty members participated in the events.

On 1 June 2018, on the occasion of the International Children's Day, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, jointly with the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan and UNICEF, organized and held a roundtable devoted to the subject 'My Voice - My Rights' at the Milli Majlis Conference Hall. During the event, about 100 children who had taken an active part in children's rights activities throughout the year met with members of the Milli Majlis (Parliament). Selected to participate in the 4th Azerbaijan Children's Forum, the children spoke on various topics. Children's presentations on the subject of "Shaping a Healthy Generation: a

Guarantee of Our Future" were dedicated to protecting children from such harmful substances as drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

On 27 July 2018, members of the Coordinating Council of the IV Republican Forum of Children of Azerbaijan held a training program dedicated to Children's Rights at the Hovsan Olympic Sports Complex. The training program provided information about children's rights. They were also presented with detailed information about children's rights and freedoms, the protection of children from unhealthy habits as well as shown a presentation and films on the topic.

In 2019, at the initiative of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, events were held with the support of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education (with participation of the relevant experts) to ensure the promotion of healthy lifestyles among young people and adolescents in vocational schools of Baku, the preparation of young people for family life, raising their awareness about the reproductive health, and family planning. About 700 students and faculty members participated in the events.

To ensure implementation of items 4.4.20, 4.4.23, 4.4.26, 4.4.37 of the "State program to combat illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and their precursors, and drug addiction in 2019-2024," and to raise public awareness on the harm of drug abuse to society and human health, to develop Internet resources, implement educational and prevention measures for professionals, parents, teachers, and students, in 2018 Shuvalan, Agdam, Goranboy, Saatli, Sabirabad, Hajigabul, Zagatala, and Zardabi Child and Family Support Centers (CFS) held events of various kinds with 500 participants from these regions and distributed booklets.

On 9 January 2020, the Ministry of Health's Public Health and Reform Center (PHRC), a public legal entity, organized an educational event at Boarding School No. 10 in Pirshagi settlement dedicated to the theme "Choosing a Healthy Lifestyle, Staying Away from Bad Habits!" At the end of the event, the audience received answers to their questions and the participants got educational materials prepared by PHRC.

In 2019, PHRC held a 'Let's Say No to Drugs!' campaign and a series of educational events on the topic of 'Bad Habits.'

On 6 November 2020, the Child and Youth Development Center No. 1 of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan, PHRD, Baku City Police Department, and the Baku City Narcological Dispensary jointly organized and held an online training session entitled 'Let's Protect Our Youth from Drugs!'

On 16 November 2020, the Child and Youth Development Center No. 1 of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan, PHRD, Baku City Police Department, and the Baku City Narcological Dispensary jointly organized and held an online training course entitled 'Children is Our Future!'

On 25 November 2020, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, PHRD, and the Azerbaijan State University of Economics, College of Finance and Economics jointly organized an online training seminar on 'The Importance of a Healthy Lifestyle during the Pandemic.'

Among all segments of the population (especially among young people), awareness-raising and educational activities regarding drug abuse and its consequences remain the focus of the Republican Center for Prevention and Control of AIDS (RCPCA). During the first quarter of 2020, these activities took place at five institutions of higher and secondary special education as well as in public schools of general education. Teachers, instructors, and educators from educational institutions also took part in the educational activities. In 2020, a total of 2,500 copies of printed materials were disseminated. However, the introduction and application of a national

quarantine regime due to the COVID-19 pandemic limited the possibilities to implement physical outreach activities among the general public in the second and third quarters of 2020. Nevertheless, RCPCA employees regularly organized online conferences and participated in more than 30 programs on television, radio, the Internet, and those broadcasted over websites and video channels.

On 16 December 2020, an online educational event of the IX Forum of Azerbaijani Youth for the region of Karabakh devoted to 'Healthy lifestyle, elimination of bad habits, and proper nutrition during the pandemic' was held by Azerbaijani Youth Forum under the motto 'Together we are strong!' in Goranboy district with the participation of about 300 young people.

On 26 June 2020, on the occasion of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, the Republican Center for Prevention and Control of AIDS (RCPCA), and other relevant agencies identified new opportunities to expand the country's opioid substitution therapy (OST) network as well as to rehabilitate and return patients to the community as soon as possible.

On 2 July 2020, an online event was held to commemorate the "June 26 - an International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking" attended by non-governmental organizations active in fighting against AIDS and drug abuse. The meeting included speeches and presentations on combating drug addiction in the country, the spread of HIV and other contagious infections among injecting drug users, and further strengthening of joint efforts. As a result of the meeting, a network of NGOs operating in Azerbaijan was involved in providing treatment, care, assistance to injecting drug users (IDUs), this activity is ongoing.

Discussions focused on the prospects for strengthening the OST program and increasing IDU participation in HIV testing.

To implement item 4.5.3 ("Distribution of educational materials on health topics, disease risk factors among children, and parents to attract children to medical examination") of the Action Plan for the implementation of the "State Program of Mandatory Medical Examination of Children in 2018-2022" the CFSS in Shuvalan, Goygol, Saatli, Aghdam, Goranboy, Sabirabad, and Zardab conducted in-person and online training programs with participation of 250 people.

399 people participated in a blood donation event for children suffering from thalassemia, hemophilia, and other blood diseases that took place on 7 April 2019 at the National Center of Hematology and Transphysiology in Baku.

b) Under Article 46 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, medical, scientific, or other types of experiments may not be carried out on any person without his/her consent.

Under Article 24 of the Public Health Law, a patient has the right to give oral or written voluntary consent to medical intervention.

According to Article 26 of this Law, if medical intervention is considered urgent due to life-threatening emergency or if the patient is unable to make decision due to his/her condition, the issue shall be decided by a case conference. In cases where consultation is not possible, the decision on medical intervention shall be made by informing the heads of the treatment and preventive care facility or directly by the attending (on-call) physician.

Where legally incapacitated persons and/or minors require medical intervention, their parents or legal representatives must duly provide their consent.

Under Article 28 of the Law, the informed consent of a citizen or his legal representative is not required if the provision of medical assistance (medical examination, hospitalization, observation, isolation) concerns persons suffering from illnesses dangerous to others, severe

mental disorders, or those who commit socially dangerous acts as a result of mental illness. A physician makes the decision to provide medical care to these individuals.

In the absence of a citizen's consent but with the consent of his/her legal representatives, the provision of medical care related to anti-epidemic measures is regulated by the relevant legislation.

The examination and hospitalization of persons with severe mental disorders is carried out in order provided under the legislation.

Compulsory medical intervention can be applied to individuals who committed socially dangerous acts as a result of a disease as well as to TB patients that pose a serious epidemiological threat to others and refuse hospitalization as required by law. Under the Code of Civil Procedure, compulsory measures of medical nature shall be applied to drug addicts who have not committed administrative offenses related to criminal or administrative detention but have repeatedly caused material and moral damage to close relatives by their behavior and actions, Therefore, negatively impacting children's education, grossly violating their rights, and repeatedly refusing voluntary treatment. People released from penitentiary institutions with infectious diseases and posing a serious epidemiological threat to others are subject to compulsory hospitalization if they refuse inpatient treatment under the procedure established by law.

In cases of serious threat to the life and health of cancer patients, appropriate treatment can take place without written consent.

Where the consent of a citizen or legal representative is not required or is determined by a court decision, the citizen shall be held in a treatment and preventive care facility until all reasons for hospitalization have been eliminated.

According to the Law on Psychiatric Care of the Republic of Azerbaijan, a psychiatrist's (or commission of psychiatrists) report on a person's mental disorder is required to ensure their admission to a psychiatric hospital, as well as a court decision is needed to examine and treat them as an inpatient including cases of involuntary hospitalization. A person with a mental disorder may be admitted to a psychiatric hospital only if out-patient treatment/out-patient care is deemed ineffective for implementing emergency measures. Except as provided for in the Law, mental health care shall be provided to a person at his or her own request.

Psychiatric care shall be provided subject to the patient's informed consent. This consent shall be given in writing without threat or force as well as signed by the patient or his/her legal representative and the psychiatrist.

If the nature of the mental disorder requires examination and treatment in a psychiatric hospital, compulsory treatment in a psychiatric hospital shall be ordered on the following grounds:

- a person with a mental disorder poses a direct danger to himself and/or others;
- helplessness caused by a mental disorder, i.e. the inability to independently provide for the basic necessities of life;
- failure to provide inpatient care for a person with a severe mental disorder causes permanent harm to his/her health and makes their treatment impossible.

The persons also have the right to apply directly to the chief physician of the psychiatric institution regarding the examination, treatment, and discharge of the treated patient; use an unimpeded access to the chief psychiatrist of the region, relevant executive authorities, prosecutor's office, court, and lawyer; have the right to meet in private with their legal representative, the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, a lawyer, and a religious figure.

A person forcibly placed in a psychiatric clinic shall be released from the psychiatric hospital following a report of the psychiatric commission or a court decision ensuring the refusal to extend the period of the person's hospitalization.

The Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsperson) of the Republic of Azerbaijan and members of the National Preventive Group have the right to monitor the observance of the rights and legitimate interests of citizens with respect to the provision of psychiatric care.

It should be noted that, according to the information of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan the courts heard 113 civil cases of involuntary psychiatric hospitalization in 2017, 109 cases in 2018, 120 cases in 2019, and 43 cases in the first 6 months of 2020.

*Paragraph 3. To prevent as far as possible epidemic, endemic and other diseases, as well as accidents.*

b) Article 93 of the Criminal Executive Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan regulates issues related to medical and sanitary provision of convicts. Therefore, therapeutic, preventive, and sanitary-epidemiological activities are organized and conducted in penitentiary institutions as required by law, including the rules and conditions for the execution of punishment.

To provide medical services to inmates in penitentiary institutions, medical-sanitary units and treatment facilities are established to ensure the inpatient treatment and care of infectious patients, alcohol and/or drug addicts, and patients with tuberculosis. The right of drug addicts serving a prison sentence to receive substance abuse treatment may not be restricted. Drug addicts with drug abuse abstinence syndrome serving prison sentences are kept separate from other patients.

To prevent the spread of human immunodeficiency virus in penitentiary institutions, measures on combating the disease caused by human immunodeficiency virus are taken as stipulated in the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The prison administration shall ensure the compliance of prisoners with general and personal sanitary and hygienic requirements. The forced feeding of convicts refusing to eat and endangering their lives is allowed as prescribed by a medical report.

Appropriate regulatory legal acts shall govern the provision of medical services to inmates in penitentiary institutions, the organization and implementation of sanitary control, the use of out-of-hospital medical facilities, and the involvement of their medical staff for this purpose.

Prisoners have the right to seek medical care and treatment in private medical facilities. Payment for such services and medicines shall be made by the inmate or his/her relatives. In such cases, the medical unit of the penitentiary institution and a medical facility shall provide the medical consultations and treatment under the supervision of the institution's medical personnel.

The General Medical Directorate provides medical services to inmates in penitentiary institutions and operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan. For the most part, penitentiary institutions are fully staffed to render medical services.

The minimum staff employed by all pre-trial detention facilities and penitentiary institutions providing primary and outpatient care under their staffing structure consists of doctors, dentists, psychiatrists, and narcologists. In addition, the medical facility provides specialized inpatient care for various groups of diseases, including therapy, surgery, psychiatry, neurology, infectious diseases, ophthalmology, ENT specialist, and gynecological diseases, while the specialized treatment facility treats patients with tuberculosis. The medical-sanitary unit's therapist, psychiatrist, neurologist, dentist, radiologist, TB specialists, and gynecologist duly provide detainees with medical care. If there is a need for examination by other qualified doctors, these specialists are invited from a medical facility or civilian medical institutions. Within the first 24

hours, the new coming inmates undergo a medical examination (initial screening), including a chest X-ray, an initial psychiatric check-up, tuberculosis screening, general blood tests, voluntary HIV testing, as well as ultrasound and EKG testing, if necessary. After the initial psychiatric evaluation, a psychiatrist examines those in need; if necessary, outpatient or inpatient treatment for the mental disorder is provided accordingly.

A person with suspected pulmonary tuberculosis shall provide a sputum sample that is tested with a GeneXpert device; if found 'positive,' the person shall be isolated and transferred to a specialized treatment facility. It should be noted that prophylactic therapy with isoniazid is used to prevent tuberculosis.

Antiretroviral treatment is recommended if the test for human immunodeficiency virus is 'positive.'

Provided with a set of hygienic tools, all newly arrived detainees participate in informative discussions and receive information about safety rules.

Quarantined for a certain period of time, the persons with other suspected infectious or parasitic diseases receive the necessary treatment and after recovery, they are transferred to a prison cell.

If the examination or treatment requires a highly qualified specialist that does not work in penitentiary institutions, the General Medical Administration of the Ministry of Justice requests the Penitentiary Service to transfer (transport) the prisoner to a civilian medical facility. Based on the request, the necessary safety measures are taken to transfer (transport) the prisoner to a civilian medical facility for a short time to conduct the required medical activities.

c) The programs implemented in Mashtaga, Sheki, and other psychiatric hospitals ensure the rehabilitation of patients to prepare them for future social life. Specialists develop long-term and short-term treatment programs and follow-up plans (taking into account patients undergoing long-term treatment and forensic aspects). Specialists take certain measures to seize aggressive patients suffering from acute psychological conditions. There are regular seminars and training sessions held on seizing techniques. Straitjackets are not used but only as directed by the physician. Patients can communicate with their relatives by telephone (except where doctors have justified objection to that). Teams of auditors regularly conduct unexpected inspections at psychiatric facilities. In case of any inconsistency, appropriate measures are taken immediately.

On 7 December 2018, the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Psychological Assistance was adopted. Under Clause 1 of Section I of Article 94 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, this Law defines the legal basis for psychological aid in the Republic of Azerbaijan, the rights and obligations of the recipients of psychological aid, and psychologists, as well as regulates the relations in this field. Under Article 6.2 of the Law, persons detained and arrested following the Law "On ensuring the rights and freedoms of detainees" and those serving a sentence in penitentiary institutions under the Penal Enforcement Code are entitled to receive free psychological assistance.

According to the information of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan under criminal cases processed by the courts, coercive medical treatment measures were undertaken in respect of 49 individuals in 2017, 39 people in 2018, 29 persons in 2019, and 10 people in the first six months of 2020.

The detention in penitentiary institutions of persons with psychiatric disorders, including persons with adjustment disorders (1 case in 2017), dissociative-conversion disorders (1 case in 2018 and 1 case during the first 6 months of 2020), anxiety disorders (1 case in 2019),

psychopathy (1 case in 2017, 1 person in 2018 and 1 person during the first 6 months of 2020), personality disorder (1 case in 2018), schizophrenia (2 cases in 2018), schizoaffective disorder (1 case in 2019), cycloid psychosis (1 case in 2018), depression (1 case in 2019), found among detainees of the penal institutions was considered inappropriate by medical experts.

d) The treatment of patients with drug addiction is under control of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The country provides basic WHO-approved medications - and these patients are treated free of charge.

According to Article 3 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Circulation of Narcotic Substances, Psychotropic Substances, and their Precursors", circulation of narcotic drugs and/or psychotropic substances in the Republic of Azerbaijan is only permitted for the purpose of their use in medical practice, research, and crime prevention.

Under Article 10.1 of the Law, the use of medications administered for medical purposes and psychotropic substances with limited and controlled circulation in the treatment of drug-addicted patients shall only be permitted in state narcological medical institutions.

1. Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Approval of the State Program on Combating Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances, and their Precursors and Drug Addiction in 2019-2024" dated July 22, 2019 No. 1334;;
2. The State Program "Azerbaijan Youth in 2017-2021" approved by Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 15 September 2017 No. 3236, (**promotion of healthy lifestyle**)

There is no separate statistical data on the mortality caused by alcohol and drugs. Therefore, the main and other diseases (i.e., nosologies) causing death are recorded in the protocol.

Form No. 11 On drug addiction and the contingent of drug-addicted people  
Distribution of patients by gender and age

**in 2018**

No.	Names	Number of first-time alcohol, drug, and substance abuse patients			
		Total	including by age groups:		
			0-17 years old	18-29 years old	30 years and older
1 A	2 B	3	4	5	6
1	1. Total	2573	5	572	1996
3	3. including: mental and behavioral disorders caused by alcohol consumption, total	508		31	477
11	11. drug abuse, mental, and behavioral disorders caused by the use of drugs	1995	4	515	1476

21	21. addiction, mental and behavioral disorders caused by consumption of toxic substances	19	1	6	12
25	25. mental and behavioral disorders resulting from the simultaneous consumption of several drugs and other psychoactive substances	51		20	31

**In 2019**

No.	Names	Number of first-time alcohol, drug, and substance abuse patients			
		Total	including by age groups:		
			0-17 years old	18-29 years old	30 years and older
1 A	2 B	3	4	5	6
1	1. Total	3546	2	877	2667
3	3. including: mental and behavioral disorders caused by alcohol consumption, total	515		17	498
11	11. drug abuse, mental, and behavioral disorders caused by the use of drugs	2831	2	797	2032
21	21. addiction, mental and behavioral disorders caused by consumption of toxic substances	43		16	27
25	25. mental and behavioral disorders resulting from the simultaneous consumption of several drugs and other psychoactive substances	157		47	110

**In 2020**

No.	Names	Number of first-time alcohol, drug, and substance abuse patients			
		Total	including by age groups:		
			0-17 years old	18-29 years old	30 years and older
1 A	2 B	3	4	5	6
1	1. Total	3752	7	1066	2679
3	3. including: mental and behavioral disorders caused by alcohol consumption, total	339		14	325
11	11. drug abuse, mental, and behavioral disorders caused by the use of drugs	2723	4	795	1924

21	21. addiction, mental and behavioral disorders caused by consumption of toxic substances	122		64	58
25	25. mental and behavioral disorders resulting from the simultaneous consumption of several drugs and other psychoactive substances	568	3	193	372

Form No. 11 About drug addiction and the community of drug-addicted people

**in 2018**

No.	Names	The number of monitored patients at the end of the reporting year			
		Total	including by age groups:		
			0-17 years old	18-29 years old	30 years and older
1 A	2 B	3	4	5	6
1	1. Total	52156	11	7523	44622
3	3. including: mental and behavioral disorders caused by alcohol consumption, total	20401	1	1322	19078
11	11. drug abuse, mental, and behavioral disorders caused by the use of drugs	31432	9	6101	25322
21	21. addiction, mental and behavioral disorders caused by consumption of toxic substances	227	1	60	166
25	25. mental and behavioral disorders resulting from the simultaneous consumption of several drugs and other psychoactive substances	96		40	56

**In 2019**

No.	Names	The number of monitored patients at the end of the reporting year			
		Total	including by age groups:		
			0-17 years old	18-29 years old	30 years and older
1 A	2 B	3	4	5	6
1	1. Total	49795	11	8336	41448
3	3. including: mental and behavioral disorders caused by alcohol consumption, total	16387	1	1359	15027

11	11. drug abuse, mental, and behavioral disorders caused by the use of drugs	32921	9	6822	26090
21	21. addiction, mental and behavioral disorders caused by consumption of toxic substances	249	1	72	176
25	25. mental and behavioral disorders resulting from the simultaneous consumption of several drugs and other psychoactive substances	238		83	155

### In 2020

No.	Names	The number of monitored patients at the end of the reporting year			
		Total	including by age groups:		
			0-17 years old	18-29 years old	30 years and older
1 A	2 B	3	4	5	6
1	1. Total	48467	11	9922	38534
3	3. including: mental and behavioral disorders caused by alcohol consumption, total	13567	1	1895	11671
11	11. drug abuse, mental, and behavioral disorders caused by the use of drugs	33788	9	7645	26134
21	21. addiction, mental and behavioral disorders caused by consumption of toxic substances	327	1	125	201
25	25. mental and behavioral disorders resulting from the simultaneous consumption of several drugs and other psychoactive substances	785		257	528

Under Article 26.2 of the Law, persons subject to compulsory treatment, in addition to punishment not involving imprisonment, receive inpatient or outpatient treatment at a specialized medical institution established under the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan approved the "Terms and rules of compulsory treatment in a specialized medical institution" by its order dated 26 January 2006, No. 20.

The purpose of the Presidential Decree dated 22 July 2019, No.1334 on the approval of the "State program to combat illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and their precursors and drug addiction in 2019-2024" is to ensure the appropriate strengthening of the fight against illicit drug trafficking and drug addiction, anti-drug abuse propaganda, expanding the scope of public awareness activities, preventing illicit drug trafficking and the spread of drug addiction through education, using modern information technology, application of modern technologies/new methods for treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts as well as the improvement of legislation in this area, ensuring the development international cooperation, organizing seminars to learn international experience, and conducting other large scale events.

The Internal Disciplinary Rules of Detention Facilities approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 26 February 2014 No.63 and Internal Disciplinary Rules of Penitentiary Institutions approved by the decision of the Board of the Ministry of Justice on 29 December 2011 include a list of items - drugs, psychotropic substances, and their precursors - prohibited for production, storage, carrying, transportation, or use by persons detained in the penitentiary institutions. With regard to illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, along with the crimes stipulated by the Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding the transfer or handover of prohibited items to persons held in penitentiary institutions or pretrial detention facilities, Article 317-1 of the same Code also criminalizes the manufacture, storage, carrying, transportation, or use (Article 317-2) of prohibited items by a person held in a penitentiary institution or pretrial detention facility.

5,570 detainees of penitentiary institutions in 2017, 5,151 - in 2018; 5,108 -in 2019; and 4,732 detainees in the first six months of 2020 had been involved in drug and psychotropic substance trafficking. The number of people sentenced to court-ordered compulsory drug treatment totaled 2,923 in 2017, 2,723 in 2018, 2,767 in 2019, and 2,740 in the first six months of 2020. There were 2 cases of drug-related mortality among prison inmates in 2017, 1 case in 2018, and another case in 2019.

It should be noted that penitentiary institutions do not provide substitution therapy or syringe exchange for drug users.

As part of the planned measures to combat illicit drug trafficking and psychotropic substances in penitentiary institutions, inmates convicted of drug trafficking and drug addiction underwent special registration. In such cases, penitentiary institutions paid increased attention to preventive measures.

Drugs found as a result of search operations on persons admitted to penitentiary institutions, including those found with the penitentiary institutions' convicts and detainees, are seized as required by law; the collected substances are submitted to the relevant law enforcement agencies for investigation and legal expertise; adequate action is also taken on incoming inquiries.

Following the state programs adopted in the corresponding periods, measures were taken to combat illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, their precursors, and drug addiction; awareness-raising activities were conducted among prisoners and conscripts with the participation of representatives of state bodies and public organizations; measures were taken to effectively organize leisure time of prisoners, their employment, and their involvement in education activities.

Psychologists from NGOs conduct individual and group psychotherapy sessions, psychiatrists from medical care facilities specializing in narcology conduct awareness raising sessions; pamphlets, booklets, posters are disseminated, radio spots are broadcasted, social videos are demonstrated and theater performances are staged, etc..

e) The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Environmental Impact Assessment" dated 12 June 2018 defines the legal, economic, and organizational framework for assessing the impact of economic and other types of activities as well as ensuring the assessment of the implementation of strategic documents and territorial planning on the environment and human health hence regulating relations in this area.

The Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 1 November 2018 No.637 approved the "National Strategy for Improving Solid Waste Management in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2018-2022" and the Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 7 February 2019 No.935 approved the "Action Plan to Reduce the Negative Impact of Plastic

Packaging Waste in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2019-2020." In addition, the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers dated 2 October 2019 No.425 approved the "Rules of control in the field of environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental expertise."

f) Due to the spread of coronavirus infection (COVID-19) in the world, the necessary preventive measures have been identified to protect public health and prevent the threat of a global pandemic. A special quarantine regime was announced for this purpose. The government has allocated significant funds to fight the COVID-19 virus.

On 27 February 2020, a 24/7 Task Force under the Cabinet of Ministers was established to prevent the threat posed by the coronavirus pandemic as well as to take preventive and urgent action. On 28 February 2020, the first positive case of COVID-19 was reported in the country.

From March 14, 2020, the Task Force under the Cabinet of Ministers has adopted social isolation measures throughout the country. These measures include a ban on wedding and mourning ceremonies, and other mass gatherings, the closure of cultural facilities, theaters, museums, cinemas, entertainment centers, sports centers, and other relevant facilities, and prohibition of family visits to patients in all medical facilities, among other restrictions. In order to further strengthen the fight against the pandemic, a strict quarantine was imposed in the country.

Since the first days of the pandemic, there has been a continued strengthening of the health system logistics to combat COVID-19. If there were only 3 pandemic facilities before, the end of 2020, their number increased to 46: all of these hospitals were equipped with the necessary medical equipment. These hospitals also include 9 modular hospitals recently constructed to treat coronavirus patients and opened by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Moreover, the number of laboratories for testing COVID-19 patients has increased fivefold and now stands at 31. It is well known that the increase in the number of designated hospitals has created necessary conditions to create more than 10,000 beds in the country. Capable to meet modern standards, ambulances are also of paramount importance to providing the necessary medical care to our sick citizens. 40 vehicles have been delivered to Baku. Additional 60 more ambulance vehicles will be delivered. Certainly, the role played by our medical professionals in the fight against this pandemic is indispensable. The fight against this disease will involve not only epidemiologists and infectious disease specialists but also physicians that specialize in other fields. Doctors from Turkey, Cuba, Italy, Russia, and China were invited to increase the number of active medical staff.

It should be noted that given the specifics of the services provided by midwives and junior medical assistants, the incentive supplements to their monthly wages were determined as fixed allowances depending on the position they held. 64,038 health care workers involved in fight against coronavirus received periodic allowances based on their working hours. This in turn makes up a total of 58.3 million manats. All above mentioned represent only a part of the undertaken measures.

On 6 April 2020, the country's President signed an executive order pardoning a number of inmates and releasing 176 inmates over the age of 65 who were at increased risk of contracting the virus from the remaining period of their sentences.

Under the Order of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 17 March 2020 on strengthening the fight against coronavirus (COVID-19) infection in the judicial system, during the global pandemic COVID-19, a Monitoring Group consisting of employees of relevant departments of the Ministry of Justice and representatives of civil society organizations was set

up to study the situation with the inmates' hygiene rules and ensure continuous control of the virus spread in prisons, health condition of prisoners, and convicts' food diet.

The monitoring group visited penitentiary institutions to familiarize itself with preventive and security measures implemented, conditions of detention, medical service and medicines provided, conditions and quality of food diet as well as ensured regular monitoring in this area.

Comprehensive measures were taken to protect the health of medical staff and persons detained in penitentiary institutions as well as to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection; comprehensive measures have been taken to strengthen sanitary and epidemiological control, while the Penitentiary Service and the Main Medical Administration have switched to a reinforced regime of operation. The state of health of all staff and prisoners is constantly monitored. All staff members and inmates undergo regular temperature checks.

To strengthen sanitary and epidemiological control, 'sanitary protection zones' were created at all enterprises under the relevant Action Plan: the personnel serving in these zones were provided with personal protective equipment, remote temperature measuring devices, and disinfection equipment/means. The medical personnel used the sanitary protection zone to carry out medical examinations of lawyers entering penitentiary institutions and employees of investigative bodies. For purposes of social isolation, meetings with inmates and detainees, including the delivery of gifts, have been restricted since 5 March 2020, as disinfection, medical, and preventive activities were continuously conducted in the institutions. At present, meetings with convicts and detainees, including the delivery of gifts, have resumed under appropriate security measures and social distance.

All prisoners at risk, including those released from penitentiary institutions (due to completing their term, early release on parole, etc.), were provided with their testing samples and opportunities to undergo laboratory examinations. It should be noted that there were no deaths among prisoners with COVID-19 as their disease was asymptomatic.

At the same time, the prison service intensified its awareness-raising activities to prevent the spread of the virus and its transmission to institutions; during the pandemic, employees that failed to comply with the special quarantine regime were subjected to disciplinary measures.

Various activities (legal aid, education, social adaptation/integration, drug control, promotion of healthy lifestyles, etc.) were conducted in penitentiary institutions with the participation of representatives of state and non-governmental organizations. Large scale events in prisons were postponed as part of measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

#### **Article 14. The right to benefit from social welfare services**

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to benefit from social welfare services, the Parties undertake:

1. to promote or provide services which, by using methods of social work, would contribute to the welfare and development of both individuals and groups in the community, and to their adjustment to the social environment.
2. to encourage the participation of individuals and voluntary or other organizations in the establishment and maintenance of such services.

*Paragraph 1. To promote or provide services which, by using methods of social work, would contribute to the welfare and development of both individuals and groups in the community, and to their adjustment to the social environment.*

a) To prevent the spread of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), people over the age of 65 exposed to a high risk of infection during the special quarantine regime shall protect themselves from the pandemic by staying indoors (starting from 00:00 on March 24, 2020 until 00:00 on April 20). From March 24, 2020, in accordance with the rules of the special quarantine regime, social services were provided to persons over the age of 65 in order to protect them from the pandemic. Those who were served during that period are still provided with social services. For this reason, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) of the Republic of Azerbaijan had mobilized all social workers to provide enhanced in-home daily social services to lonely people over the age of 65.

The Statute of the Social Services Agency under the MLSP was approved by Presidential Decree No. 1077 dated 30 June 2020. The activities of the Social Services Agency include the provision of social services to persons (families) in need of social services in the manner established by the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Social Services," improving their social protection and welfare as well as implementing state policy and regulation related to adoption.

The social service institutions under the Social Services Agency had implemented certain measures during the strict quarantine period.

As quarantine regime was introduced in the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the entry and exit of outsiders to/from the institutions was prohibited in the first place. The enterprises were provided with disinfectants, masks, gloves, and other necessary means of protection. During the special quarantine regime, all employees of the enterprises were fully engaged in their work. The enterprises measured temperature of residents and employees on a daily basis and closely monitored their general condition.

In 2020, the number of residents that received inpatient treatment in the social services centers of the Social Services Agency equaled to 1581 people.

During the period of April-December 2020, social workers delivered social services to the homes (household chores, purchase of basic necessities, purchase of medicines, payment for utilities, etc.) of more than 15,000 single elderly and people with disabilities living in Baku and other regions of the country. In 9 social service institutions (4 psychoneurological social institutions, 2 social service institutions for children with disabilities, vocational rehabilitation center for persons with disabilities, social service institution for the elderly, shelter for vulnerable people, and social rehabilitation institution), Social services Agency under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population provided residential social services to 1476 people. 114 of them were Iraqi citizens (41 people were placed in the Vocational Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities, 73 people were placed in the Shelter and Social Rehabilitation Institution for vulnerable groups). At the same time, social support campaigns for single-person households of elderly people and individuals with disabilities, low-income families, and other vulnerable groups conducted by both public institutions and the private sector have become an important contribution to national solidarity.

A total of dozens of thousands of food packages were distributed to single/lonely elderly persons and people with disabilities, other vulnerable groups, families with many children that have lost their breadwinners, or children with disabilities.

All these actions of social support covered the provision of food aid to about 250 thousand families in Baku and the regions of our republic.

Azermash JSC within its social responsibility campaign 'Let's protect our elderly!', allocated 100 cars and drivers to ensure the organization of prompt social services for elderly and single-person households as well as to enable social workers and volunteers to more quickly and easily visit the selected addresses and provide assistance.

The Ministry of Justice, General Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Emergency Situations, Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan, , Azerbaijan Amelioration and Water Farm OJSC, the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations, Baku Transport Agency, and other authorities provided food aid to dozens of thousands of single elderly and people with disabilities, families that had lost their breadwinners, and low-income families. In the framework its strategy of social responsibility, the Bravo supermarket network has provided food assistance to 25 thousand people in Baku and other regions of the country and provided home-based social services to 5,000 households of elderly persons living alone and persons with disabilities as well as approximately 10,000 families that had lost their breadwinners. Various companies and other entities provided a total of dozens of thousands of food packages to elderly people living alone, persons with disabilities, other vulnerable citizens, families with many children, bereaved families, or children with disabilities.

Heydar Aliyev Foundation's multidirectional measures and social projects to care for vulnerable groups became particularly widespread during the pandemic. The Foundation's Public Association "Regional Development" provided food aid to the single-household individuals and vulnerable groups in all regions and cities of the country. The Public Association provided food aid to the families of 30,000 children with disabilities.

It is necessary to emphasize the special role played and the support provided by volunteers in this work. Volunteers of various agencies and entities - including volunteers of the Public Association "Regional Development", of New Azerbaijan Party, of DOST Agency and ASAN, 'Student' Volunteer Program of the Ministry of Education, volunteers of Youth Development and Career Center under the Youth Foundation, and of 'SALIS' Union - actively supported the implemented activities.

During the special quarantine period, the MLSPP provided lump-sum financial assistance to 2,691 persons with disabilities to help them with their medical and social rehabilitation as well as to solve their social and housing problems.

To effectively organize the provision of social services to people in difficult life situations and single-household citizens over 65 years of age during the special quarantine regime introduced in the country to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed Decree No. 1982 dated 14 April 2020 "On strengthening social protection of workers involved in the provision of social services during the special quarantine regime." The Decree provides for the establishment of a temporary supplement in the amount of one (1) (tariff-based) monthly salary for employees of these social service institutions as district (city) offices of the State Social Protection Fund (SSPF) under the MLSPP, subordinate social service entities, and institutions that actively participated in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic during the special quarantine regime introduced in the country.

The decree covered 1,400 people employed by the district (city) offices of the State Social Protection Fund and 600 people working in SSPF's social service institutions: a total of 2,000 social workers.

Following the announcement of 2020 as a "Year of Volunteers," the State Committee for Family, Women, and Children's Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan supported the establishment of a wide network of volunteers and launched a "Family Volunteers" project. The main goal of the project is to promote our national and spiritual values, healthy lifestyles, a strong family model as well as spread positive life examples and stories through the transfer of knowledge and experience and promote the effective organization of family leisure time through various means of socializing/communication. As part of the project, meetings with families at risk and representatives of the older generation took place, with provision of the relevant assistance.

As part of the campaign against the COVID-19 pandemic, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and 11 Child and Family Support Centers (UADM) operating under the Committee implemented large-scale projects, informational activities, and campaigns in a range of areas. In the framework of 'Call to Families' campaign 3,245 citizens were provided with relevant information, and information booklets were sent to 1,020 families as well as 361 people were provided with psychological support. Of those, 88 were children, 37 were seniors, and 17 were lonely people. Psychological support was provided mainly to people suffering from panic attacks, depression, phobias, fear of loneliness, and fear of illness. Medical masks made by Center's volunteers were distributed among 1,562 people, while 834 children underwent online training.

As part of the Committee's 'From family to Family' support campaign, 75 families provided assistance to 594 vulnerable families.

The Women's Resource Centers held webinars to provide information in various areas to more than 120 women on opportunities to receive one-time assistance, the prevention of economic distress in crisis situations, and to women entrepreneurs.

A special booklet titled What People with HIV Need to Know about HIV and COVID-19 was developed with the support of the Ministry of Health, and other HIV-related informational materials were distributed among the population. Meanwhile, specialists from the Republican AIDS Center organized round-the-clock online consultations for citizens of the country and our compatriots living abroad using the most popular messengers.

Since April 2020, the 'Psychological Support' training programs have been underway with the participation total of 7439 people to mitigate the effects of pandemic coronavirus (COVID-19). The training courses took place online, in groups, and individually.

The State Committee on Family, Women, and Children Affairs held online meetings with psychologists to help address psychological problems in families during the period of quarantine and social isolation. Viewed by a total of 2,600 people, the online meeting titled Psychological Problems in Families during the Pandemic and Ways to Solve Them was streamed live on the Committee's official Facebook page on 22 April 2020. During the meeting, experts answered citizens' questions.

b)To provide social protection for children with disabilities, neglected children, and their families in difficult housing conditions, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population under the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Social Services" - allocates state orders in the field of social services to non-governmental and non-profit organizations since 2013, while several of social projects' implementation takes place in regions covering large numbers of children from these categories. The goal of the projects is to ensure the organization and provision of social services to support vulnerable children and their families, the referral of vulnerable children to appropriate institutions that can solve their problems, the prevention of children's entering public

child care institutions, ensuring the social rehabilitation of children with disabilities, and assistance in their adaptation in the society, the organization of treatment and leisure activities in the country and abroad, the provision of shelter and reintegration services for teenagers experiencing socially dangerous situations, the provision of legal, social, medical, and psychological types of assistance as well as assisting them in their education, ensuring the elimination of cases of school evasion to prevent children from becoming victims of child trafficking and forced labor. In addition to the 95 projects mentioned in the previous report for 2013-2015, the following projects were implemented in 2016-2019:

**In 2016**, to ensure access to social services for children and families with difficult housing conditions,

- day care centers have been established in 13 districts;
- community-based social rehabilitation centers for children with disabilities established in 9 districts;
- 3 defectology and psychological care centers established for children with autism and Down syndrome;
- 3 social rehabilitation centers established for children with disabilities;
- two rehabilitation and surdology centers established and other projects implemented for children with hearing and speech impairments.

**In 2017**, to provide children and families in difficult circumstances with access to social services,

- day care centers have been established in 13 districts;
- community-based social rehabilitation centers for children with disabilities were established in 23 districts;
- 3 defectology and psychological care centers established for children with autism and Down syndrome;
- 3 social rehabilitation centers established for children with disabilities;
- two rehabilitation and surdology centers established and other projects implemented for children with hearing and speech impairments.

**In 2018**, 47 different nongovernmental organizations implemented 87 social service projects at the request of MLSP, and more than 2,000 people with special needs benefited from these projects:

- day care centers were established in 28 districts to provide children and families in difficult circumstances with access to social services;
- community-based social rehabilitation centers for children with disabilities were established in 27 districts;
- two rehabilitation and surdology centers were established for children with hearing and speech impairments;
- 3 rehabilitation centers were built for victims of human trafficking;
- 1 center was established for children affected by domestic violence;
- 3 social rehabilitation centers established for children with disabilities;
- 3 defectology and psychological care centers established and other projects implemented for children with autism and Down syndrome.

**In 2019**, at the request of MLSP, 73 different nongovernmental organizations implemented 224 social service projects that benefited more than 9,000 people with special needs:

- day care centers were established in 70 districts to provide children and families in difficult circumstances with access to social services;
- community-based social rehabilitation centers for children with disabilities were established in 54 districts;
- two rehabilitation and surdology centers were established for children with hearing and speech impairments;
- 3 social rehabilitation centers were established for visually impaired children;
- 11 vocational and social rehabilitation centers for persons with disabilities;
- 3 rehabilitation centers were built for victims of human trafficking;
- 3 centers were built for victims of domestic violence;
- 1 center was established for children affected by domestic violence;
- 4 social rehabilitation centers established for children with disabilities;
- 1 social rehabilitation center was built for children with special needs;
- 16 centers for defectology and psychological assistance were constructed and other projects implemented for children with autism and Down syndrome.

Projects based on social orders could not be implemented in 2020 because of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The following is the table outlining the implementation of the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated April 22, 2014 No. 108 on approval of the 'Guaranteed amount of social services provided to persons (families) living in difficult housing conditions at the expense of the state budget.'

Date	Number of social workers	Number of citizens provided with social services at home
01.01.2018	1199	10964
01.01.2019	1187	10214
01.01.2020	1119	9485
01.07.2020	1083	13383

As part of the protection of the territorial integrity, independence, and constitutional order of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the families of martyrs and war disabled persons received 315 apartments in 2017, 626 apartments in 2018, and 934 apartments and individual houses in 2019. In 2020, 1,500 apartments and individual houses were provided to families of martyrs and war-disabled persons.

In 2018, the MLSPP provided 265 automobiles to persons with war-related disabilities and persons falling in the equivalent category, while in 2019 600 automobiles were provided. Another 400 cars were provided in 2020.

In addition to the work described under the "Quality of Services" section of the previous report, to ensure the application of the 'social work' model by the city and district departments of the State Social Protection Fund of MLSPP, MLSPP jointly with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Azerbaijan conducted educational seminars on the topic of 'Fundamentals of Social Work' in Baku, Gabala, and Tovuz districts in 2017 and 2018 under the "Cooperation Program 2016-2020." As part of these training programs, social workers received additional theoretical and practical knowledge. Following the completion of the training programs, the ability

of social workers to conduct social work with individuals and families was tested and they were awarded relevant certificates of advanced training.

MLSPP requires the NGOs it cooperates to meet minimum requirements for staff and professional qualifications, as social workers must have a university degree and at least two years of experience in the field.

Regarding the Effective and Equal Access section of the report, it should be noted that the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Social Services" applies to citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan in need of social services, foreigners permanently residing in the Republic of Azerbaijan, and persons without citizenship. In terms of foreigners' access to social services, there is no change with regard to the length of residence requirement.

*Paragraph 2. To encourage the participation of individuals and voluntary or other organizations in the establishment and maintenance of such services.*

a) One of the main focuses of the ongoing reforms in the field of social services is to ensure that this area of social protection complies with current international practice and international development trends.

To ensure the fulfillment of obligations arising from national legislation on social services and international instruments to which the Republic of Azerbaijan is a party and bring social services in line with constantly changing modern requirements as well as to ensure reliable long-term implementation of social services and protection measures using the best international practices, a draft "National Strategy for the Development of Social Services in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2020-2026" was prepared, reflecting the country's policy, the essence of social development, and mechanisms to regulate the development of the system of social services. To ensure the submission of comments and proposals by the relevant authorities, the draft document was sent to the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan.