



PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT : AZERBAIJAN

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PROFILE SUMMARY

The large number of internally displaced persons in Azerbaijan has been the most visible sign of the unsettled conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. Almost 10 years after the ceasefire agreement in 1994, more than 570,000 persons displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding districts under Armenian occupation continue to live in very precarious conditions, compared to the rest of the population (UNDP 2002). Since 2001, the government of Azerbaijan has initiated a more comprehensive response to the needs of this population, by devoting more of its oil revenues to resettlement programmes and social aid. These new plans demonstrate some willingness from the part of the State to depart from its policy of instrumentalisation of IDPs as a way of putting political pressure on Armenia or donors. However, in a context of declining support from the international community, the extent of the needs on the ground overcomes the objectives of the government programmes.

High vulnerability

The vast majority of IDPs continue to live in substandard shelters, the most noticeable indicator of their destitution. As of early 2003, 135,000 internally displaced persons live in tented camps, makeshift huts, uncompleted buildings and railway wagons (IFRC January 2003). These temporary shelters generally offer insufficient insulation from rain and extreme temperatures in winter and summer. The rest of the displaced have found accommodation with friends or relatives, or live in public buildings, such as schools, tourist or health facilities. They rarely have more than one room per family, with no proper kitchen installation, haphazard electrical wiring, sporadic water supply and insufficient sanitation facilities (IFRC January 2003, RI 17 December 2002).

IDPs continue to be exposed to serious threats to their health and psycho-social well-being. Poor housing conditions, with insufficient water supply and dilapidated sanitation facilities have contributed to the spread of various diseases, such as gastrointestinal infections or malaria (UNDP 2002). It is estimated that 26 % of IDP households suffer from malnutrition, compared to 10% nationwide. Every third displaced child below 5 years of age suffers from nutritional insufficiency, while infant mortality among displaced children is 3-4 times higher than in the rest of the population (Government of Azerbaijan 2003). School attendance of displaced children, particularly among girls, has been falling during the past decade, as parents cannot afford school expenses. Occupation of schools by displaced persons has also aggravated the effect of the influx of displaced children in the national educational facilities: most children, displaced and local, attend school in shifts (UNDP 2002).

Compared to the rest of the population, IDPs remain more vulnerable to poverty. Unemployment among the displaced population is extremely high, as only 20 percent of the displaced are employed and earn regular wages. Allocation of land to the displaced population has been insufficient to relieve them from aid dependency: a food economy survey conducted by WFP showed that the percentage of IDPs unable to meet their food and non-food requirements increased from 74 percent in 1998 to 90 percent in 2001 (WFP November 2001). A significant proportion of displaced persons have left their rural settlement and moved to urban/peri-urban areas, where the poorest segments of the IDP population concentrates. There, IDPs face difficulties to find jobs on the labour market, as they have no access to information on vacancies and lack the skills in demand in cities (UNHCR February 2003). As a result, 63 percent of the displaced population live below the poverty line, compared to 49 percent for the total population (Government of Azerbaijan 2003)

Improved attention from the State

In recent years, the displaced population has received more attention from the government of Azerbaijan. In 2001 and again in 2002, the president of Azerbaijan adopted several decrees ordering the State Oil Fund to

provide funds to improve shelter and social-economic conditions for the IDPs through the State Committee for Refugees and IDPs. An annual average of 40 million US\$ has been allocated to the assistance and search for durable solutions for IDPs (UNHCR February 2003). Thanks to oil revenues, more than 3,000 displaced families currently living in camps will be relocated to new villages. (IFRC 9 April 2003). With the support of the IMF and World Bank, the government of Azerbaijan also released a National Poverty Reduction Strategy, which targets IDPs as one vulnerable group. The strategy includes an activity plan for 2003-2005 which foresees the design of a new repatriation plan, the rehabilitation of the so-called "liberated areas", housing for more than 5,000 families, upgrading infrastructure in IDP camps, addressing employment problems of IDPs, education and health. The World Bank, the IMF and the Asian Development Bank have committed funds for this strategy (Government of Azerbaijan 2003, IFRC 9 April 2003). This approach shows some willingness from the government to give IDPs a chance to live as normal citizens, while IDPs have long been left in precarious living conditions as a "visual reminder" of the unsolved conflict (RI 5 November 2002).

IDPs receive substantial social assistance from the government, but much remains to be done to normalize their status. In addition to food assistance from various international organizations, the government grants a monthly food subsidy of 25,000 AZM (5.2US\$) per person (Government of Azerbaijan 2003). A decree in 2001 also substituted various privileges granted to IDPs, such as tax exemption or free public utilities, with minimum social benefits to be paid to IDPs. Although seen as bringing the IDP regime closer to other social vulnerable groups, these measures continue to perpetuate a dependency of IDPs on external aid, and fail to support IDPs' coping mechanisms (UNHCR February 2003). There is a widespread recognition among the international humanitarian community that more should be done to support the self-reliance capacity of the displaced community, through the development of income-generating activities or community mobilization (for instance Mercy Corps December 2002). Furthermore, many aspects of the social and legal status of IDPs continue to be discriminatory, such as the obligation to register as residents in approved locations (U.S. DOS 31 March 2003)

Large-scale return unlikely

The integration of IDPs into local communities should be further promoted as return to areas under Armenian occupation remains highly hypothetical. Talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan under OSCE sponsorship have not produced any significant results, despite numerous meetings between the two presidents since 1999. No breakthrough is expected before the next presidential election in Azerbaijan in October 2003 (RFE/RL 15 August 2002). Furthermore, Armenia has indicated its opposition to settle separately the status of the districts around Nagorno-Karabakh which are still under its occupation, arguing that these territories serve as a security zone for Nagorno-Karabakh (RFE/RL 3 October 2003). There have also been reports that Armenia has resettled ethnic Armenians in the areas under its occupation (U.S. DOS 31 March 2003). Landmines and occasional violations of the ceasefire also complicates return of IDPs in many villages on the Azeri side of the former confrontation line (International Campaign to Ban Landmines 2002, U.S DOS 31 March 2003). Return programmes remain limited, such as the one implemented by the IFRC for a total of 300 families in two villages in the Fizuli district (IFRC 21 August 2002)

Shifting international attention

Despite the vast needs on the ground, the international community has been progressively reducing its attention to IDPs. Taking advantage of the increasing involvement of state authorities on behalf of IDPs, several international organizations have decided to focus their activities on other groups or to mainstream IDPs into their development programmes. This is in particular the case of UNHCR, who will continue to reduce its activities on behalf of IDPs in 2003. Lack of donor support has also been a problem, for instance forcing UNHCR to cut much needed support to urban IDPs end of 2002 (UNHCR February 2003). It is also not sure that the support of international donors to the National Poverty Reduction Strategy will be sufficient to meet the objectives defined for 2005 (IFRC April 2003). Finally, amendments to the Law on Grants, which imposes higher social contribution upon NGOs' budget, have obliged NGOs to negotiate a

special taxation regime with the government of Azerbaijan to avoid a reduction of their activities (Eurasianet 24 February 2003, IWPR 17 April 2003).

Conflict with Armenia

Ethnic tensions between Azeri and Armenian communities in the autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabakh in Western Azerbaijan were already manifest before the break-up of the Soviet Union and 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. Following the 1994 ceasefire agreement, Azerbaijan had lost about 20 percent of its own territory to Armenian and Karabakh forces, including the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and large portions of neighbouring districts (UN CHR 25 January 2000).

(Updated April 2003)

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT

Causes of displacement

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

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 proclaimed 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-Petrosian, 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-Petrosian 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)

Parties in conflict 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 Aliiev, 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 Guliev 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-Petrosian, 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. Aliev 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 Aliev 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 Aliev. 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)

Peace talks (2001-2003): both parties have not reached any agreement

- Despite numerous meetings since 1999, presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan have not reached any agreement on conflict settlement
- A breakthrough is unlikely before Azerbaijan's presidential election in October 2003

- No progress has been made in normalizing bilateral relations, such as railway connection, before addressing Karabakh-related problems
- Armenia insists for a global settlement ("package" peace accord), and refuses to deal with territories around Nagorno-Karabakh separately
- US President suspended restriction on aid to Azerbaijan (January 2002)

"The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan ended yesterday [14 August 2002] yet another bilateral meeting on an optimistic note, pledging more efforts to resolve their long-running conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. Presidents Robert Kocharian and Heidar Aliev also vowed to maintain the eight-year cease-fire regime around the disputed Armenian-controlled territory. But they stopped short of announcing a breakthrough on any of the sticking points. [...]

Armenian President Robert Kocharian and President Heidar Aliev of Azerbaijan are no strangers, having met with one another more than with any other foreign leaders in recent years. The two men smiled and appeared in positive moods after four hours of one-on-one talks yesterday at the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

It was the 18th Armenian-Azerbaijani summit since 1999, and the first face-to-face contact between Aliev and Kocharian since last November. It was also their longest single encounter.

Speaking at a joint press briefing, Kocharian said: 'Our mood is good, and we are on the whole satisfied with the course of the meeting. At the same time, we cannot tell you anything concrete...because the whole [peace] process is quite complicated. It slowed down recently. Nonetheless, we hope that this meeting will push the stalled process forward.'

Aliev likewise noted that the talks had been 'very useful.' 'The president of Armenia and I looked into many variants of solving this problem [Nagorno-Karabakh]. We analyzed the results of our previous meetings and agreed that the negotiating potential has not yet been exhausted,' Aliev said.

And yet there was nothing in the two presidents' words that would give commentators reason to expect a peace deal on Nagorno-Karabakh before presidential elections in Armenia and Azerbaijan scheduled for February and October 2003, respectively. Both presidents will be seeking re-election and facing challengers opposed to major concessions on the issue, which strikes a chord with large parts of Armenian and Azerbaijani societies. Aliev and Kocharian will thus be vulnerable to attack if they agree on, let alone implement, any compromise peace formula.

Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Vilayat Guliev acknowledged this reality yesterday when he told Armenian journalists: 'The conflict's resolution requires certain concessions from both sides. But it is difficult to make any concessions before the presidential elections.'

While little appears to threaten the 79-year-old Aliev's tight grip on power in Azerbaijan except his ailing health, his Armenian counterpart's re-election is by no means a foregone conclusion. Confronting Kocharian will be a pool of opposition candidates quick to exploit the Karabakh problem for political aims. Only one of his potential challengers, former President Levon Ter-Petrosian, favors a softer line on the issue.

Nagorno-Karabakh is a mainly Armenian-populated enclave that broke away from what was Soviet Azerbaijan in 1988. The Karabakh Armenians, backed by Armenia proper, waged a secessionist war against Azerbaijani forces that was stopped by a Russian-mediated cease-fire agreement in May 1994. Nagorno-Karabakh is still internationally recognized as a part of Azerbaijan, but the region has become closely integrated with Armenia.

If there was any real chance of ending the 14-year dispute before 2004, it was lost last year when the two sides were as close to signing a peace accord as ever. According to French, Russian, and U.S. negotiators sponsoring the peace process, Aliev and Kocharian hammered out the key points of a Karabakh peace deal in April 2001, during an intensive round of negotiations in Key West, Florida.

The peace conference was preceded by two separate Aliev-Kocharian meetings in Paris mediated by French President Jacques Chirac. The two presidents reportedly agreed on the main principles of the final agreement in the French capital. The Armenian side reportedly claimed that it would uphold Karabakh's de facto independence by putting it into a loose Bosnia-type confederation with Azerbaijan.

That agreement was widely expected to be signed by the parties in Geneva in June 2001. However, the summit was abruptly canceled for unknown reasons. Officials in Yerevan and Karabakh Armenians later accused Aliev of renegeing on the Paris and Key West agreements. They say Baku demanded additional Armenian concessions shortly after the Florida talks.

The Azerbaijani leadership denied the existence of such agreements and blamed the Armenians for the deadlock. But last June, Aliev admitted that 'a number of agreements' had been reached in Paris. But he claimed that it was Kocharian who subsequently scrapped them, a charge angrily rebutted by Yerevan.

Foreign Minister Guliev, meanwhile, continues to contradict Aliev by insisting that there are no 'Paris principles' of a peace settlement. The Armenians, for their part, say that a return to those principles is the only way of reviving the peace process.

[...]

The ethnic Armenian leadership of the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR) had already voiced skepticism about the long-awaited meeting. The NKR president, Arkadii Ghukasian, said he had lost faith in Aliev while he was being re-elected on 10-11 August in a popular vote denounced as illegitimate by the international community. 'I think that Aliev is no longer capable of adopting a constructive position and fostering the conflict's settlement. I think that Aliev has exhausted his potential. Unfortunately, the hopes pinned on him, thinking that he is the most constructive Azerbaijani politician, have not been justified,' Ghukasian said." (RFE/RL 15 August 2002)

"Azerbaijani President Heidar Aliev on 28 September accused the Armenian side of intransigence on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, saying that it has rejected his offer to lift the Azerbaijani blockade of Armenia in return for a partial return of occupied Azerbaijani territories. But a spokesman for Armenian President Kocharian rejected Aliev's claim two days later as untrue.

Reports from Baku said Aliev complained to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group co-chairmen on 28 September that during their face-to-face talks in Sadarak on 14 August he proposed to Kocharian to reopen rail communication between Azerbaijan and Armenia if the latter ensures the return of four out of six Azerbaijani districts around Karabakh. Aliev said Kocharian told him that Armenia's struggling economy 'does not need' a rail link with Russia via Azerbaijan. He said this stance shows that long-standing Armenian complaints about negative effects of the Azerbaijani blockade are baseless.

But speaking in Yerevan on 30 September, Kocharian's press secretary, Vahe Gabrielian, said that Aliev had only alluded to the 'rail link for territory' exchange which, Gabrielian continued, Armenia has consistently rejected every time Baku raised it, most recently during talks in Prague this summer at deputy-foreign-minister level. That proposal is a modified version of the so-called phased resolution of the Karabakh conflict that would delay indefinitely agreement on the disputed region's status -- the main bone of contention. The current leadership of Armenia and the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic find that option too risky, pushing instead for a 'package' peace accord. Gabrielian said on 30 September that 'the conflict has to be settled in a packaged manner and no component must be taken out of that package. The question of the [Azerbaijani] territories, which serve as a security zone for Karabakh, is an integral part of that package.'" (RFE/RL 3 October 2002)

Other meetings between presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia

· ["Aliyev and Kocharian talk about Karabakh, no progress reported"](#), AFP 6 October 2002 [Internet]

· ["Armenia, Azerbaijan make 'small step' to resolve Karabakh conflict: reports"](#), AFP 21 November 2002 [Internet]

See also:

· ["Poll suggests both Azerbaijanis and Armenians favor peaceful settlement of Karabakh conflict"](#), 15 July 2002 [Internet]

· ["Has the focus of the Karabakh talks shifted?"](#), Radio Free Europe, 26 August 2002 [Internet]

· ["US envoy optimistic about disputed Nagorno-Karabakh enclave"](#), AFP, 27 September 2002 [Internet]

· ["Armenia denies rejecting Aliev's Karabakh-settlement proposal"](#), Radio Free Europe, 3 October 2002 [Internet]

"In January 2002, president G. Bush signed a document waiving a measure adopted in 1992 that restricted all aid to Azerbaijan, with the exception of humanitarian aid and aid for democracy (Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act). The waiver on section 907 will lead to the US assistance to Azerbaijan aimed at strengthening its border security, with a particular view to assisting in the campaign against terrorism." (IFRC 21 August 2002)

See U.S. Department of State, "Lifting restrictions on Azerbaijan permits more cooperation", 30 January 2002 [Internet]

Situation in Nagorno Karabakh: collapsed agriculture and reports of population resettlement (2002-2003)

- Agriculture provides only a small number of households with sufficient income
- Land privatization has resulted in most farms being unsustainable
- "Presidential" elections took place in August 2002, despite absence of recognition from international community
- Armenian immigrants have reportedly resettled in parts of Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding districts

"For centuries, Karabakh's rich farmland was famous for its wine, fruit and corn. Yet the heavy rains that lashed the country for most of the spring have stripped the once-fertile land of its bounty.

'If we are lucky with the weather and have the necessary equipment, there will be a harvest and we will not starve,' said Abramian, who lives with his family in the village of Astkhashen. 'But we have no back-up from any authority or non-governmental organisation.'

In April and May the rainfall was around twice the average. Hail struck the grain crops, potato plants and vines of the Askeran region, causing more than 300 million drams - 500,000 US dollars - of damage.

Agriculture was also suffered during the war with Azerbaijan, and it has not flourished since the end of the conflict in 1994, when Karabakh came under Armenian control.

In the Seventies, the region produced 100,000 tons of grain. It now struggles to grow a third of that. And where it once boasted a tonne of grapes per head of population, now only a fraction of this amount hangs on the vine.

'Perhaps around five per cent of the 130 households here are able to farm and receive a steady income from the harvest,' said Abramian.

When the republic privatised the land, he was assigned 12 hectares. However, the farmers are expected to pay for the use of equipment they do not own, pushing up the cost of harvesting - and making it harder to earn a profit.

The agriculture ministry sees the solution in a consolidation programme, where farms are merged to form larger, more profitable units. It's a return to the collectives of the past, most of which did not survive the war or its aftermath.

'Excessive speed and a slapdash approach to the privatisation process, which began immediately after the ceasefire in 1994, led to many collective farms breaking up,' said agriculture minister Benik Bakhshian.

'Shared property and equipment was split up, while the farmers - who did not have any entrepreneurial skills - were in no state to do good business.'

Karabakh's whole environment has suffered over the past fifteen years. The famous forests were hit hard before and during the war, and the government has recently taken steps to tackle this problem.

'From 1988 to 1995 the forest was being felled practically without control,' said Yaroslav Gasparian, a forester in charge of the woods of the Martuni region. 'But since 1996, thanks to the efforts of the authorities and in particular the forestry authority of the republic, there is more protection. Trees are being classified and fines imposed for unlawful felling.'

There is also concern about rivers and streams, as most which have their source in Nagorny Karabakh dry out in the summer and are not replenished by rainwater. The country's irrigation infrastructure was practically destroyed during the war, and this has left most farmers at the mercy of the elements.

The government has devised a new irrigation programme but there are fears that its estimated cost - 100 million dollars - will be well beyond its capacity. Experts believe the problem is exacerbated by Azerbaijan's refusal to cooperate with the Karabakh Armenians.

The local authorities proposed a joint scheme to provide irrigation for regions on both sides of the ceasefire line, and to fight the rodents that plague both peoples. However Baku, which does not recognise the legitimacy of the Karabakh Armenians, refused.

Many of the government's ambitious plans for turning Karabakh's agriculture around will come to nothing without investment. Today, most of the population buys imported food, even though it would prefer local produce. Karabakhis believe this situation will remain unchanged for as long as the international community refuses to recognise the republic." (IWPR 12 July 2002)

Elections (August 2002)

"Voters in the disputed Caucasian territory of Nagorno-Karabakh overwhelmingly re-elected Arkady Gukasyan as president in defiance of the international community which considers the poll illegal, results showed Monday.

Gukasyan took 88.4 percent of Sunday's poll while his nearest rival, former parliamentary speaker Artur Tovmassian, received 8.1 percent, local officials said.

The figures were based on a count of 95 percent of the vote, also fought by two other candidates, Christian Democratic leader Albert Kazaryan and the chief of the republic's Unity party Grigory Afanasyand.

Officials said 73 percent of the 90,000 electors turned out for the poll in this mountainous enclave whose residents are predominantly Armenian.

Though formally part of Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh declared independence in 1991 in a move that is not recognized by the outside world apart from Armenia.

Gukasyan, elected for a second, five-year term, has vowed to pursue economic reforms in this enclave whose unrecognized status has deprived it of much-needed international aid." (AFP 12 August 2002)

Resettlement policy

"There were credible reports that Armenian immigrants from the Middle East and elsewhere, had settled in parts of Nagorno-Karabakh and possibly other Azerbaijani territories occupied by Armenian forces." (U.S. DOS 31 March 2003, sect. 2d)

See also "Azerbaijani Foreign Minister warns Iraqi refugees not to settle in Nagorno-Karabakh", Radio Free Europe, 1 April 2003 [Internet]

See also recommendation by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers to avoid the settlement of non-indigenous population in the occupied territories, in: "Situation of refugees and displaced persons in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia", 7 February 2003, para. 6 [Internet]

Other causes of displacement

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

- More than 2,500 persons evacuated from severely damaged houses

"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 Mountains are considered to be the most dangerous. 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

Total internally displaced population in the government-controlled territory: 570,000 persons (as of January 2003)

- Available figures from the government suggest a slight decrease of the internally displaced population during 2001
- Internally displaced population reached a peak in 1993 with 778,000 persons

State Committee of Statistics:

	Families	Persons
January 2001	145,598	575,268
January 2002	145,905	572,012
2002	142,995	570,459

(State Committee of Statistics January 2002, UNHCR 7 March 2001, UNDP 2002)

For detailed statistics by district, see "[Regional distribution of the IDP population \(as of 1 January 2002\)](#)", map and statistical data compiled by the State Committee of Statistics (Azerweb) [Internet]

UNHCR: Number of IDPs of concern to/assisted by UNHCR

January 2001	572,451
December 2001	572,955

(UNHCR May 2002, table 15)

"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 (1998-2002)

- The Armenian government has resettled refugees originating from Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas
- At least 44,000 ethnic Armenians were reported to move to Nagorno-Karabakh in the early 1990s

"According to the de facto government of Nagorno-Karabakh, the population of the enclave stood at about 143,000 in 2001, slightly higher than the ethnic Armenian population in the region in 1988, before the conflict. Government officials in Armenia have reported that about 1,000 settler families from Armenia reside in Nagorno-Karabakh and the Lachin Corridor, a strip of land that separates Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia. According to the government, 875 ethnic Armenian refugees returned to Nagorno-Karabakh in

2001. Most, but not all, of the ethnic Armenian settlers in Nagorno-Karabakh are former refugees from Azerbaijan. Settlers choosing to reside in and around Nagorno-Karabakh reportedly receive the equivalent of \$365 and a house from the de facto authorities." (USCR 2002, Armenia)

"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 Nagorno-Karabakh." (Hayden 1998, p. 167)

Disaggregated figures

Government of Azerbaijan acknowledges need for regular monitoring (2003)

- There is a need to collect data for regular comparison of living standards of IDPs with other sections of the population
- This should help to identify vulnerable sections of the IDP population and better target use of resources

"There is a need for a regular monitoring of IDP living standards to allow us to monitor changes in their conditions, and also their living standards in comparison to other sections of the population. The [State Committee for Refugees and IDPs (SCRIDP)] collects full and regular administrative data on IDPs, including settlement type, employment, incidence of disease, school enrolment. However only survey data will allow us to look at differentiation in living standards within IDP/ refugee population, and to compare these with living standards for the rest of the population. This is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies to help IDPs/ refugees, and to establish which sections of the IDP/refugee population are particularly vulnerable, and on which sections most resources should be targeted. It is considered to cooperate with the WB, UNDP and other donors in the future to carry out regular surveys of the IDP/ refugee population." (Government of Azerbaijan 2003, p. 161)

Gender and age breakdown: women and children make up 70% of the displaced population (2001-2002)

- The average size of displaced families is significantly lower than for the rest of the population
- There is an above-average prevalence of women among the displaced population
- Gender imbalance can be explained by conflict-related losses, a lower life expectancy for male displaced linked to psychosocial stress, and labor migration

"[T]he average IDP/refugee family has 3.9 people. A distinct decrease in the average family size is observed when compared to the 1989 data (Figure 5.22).

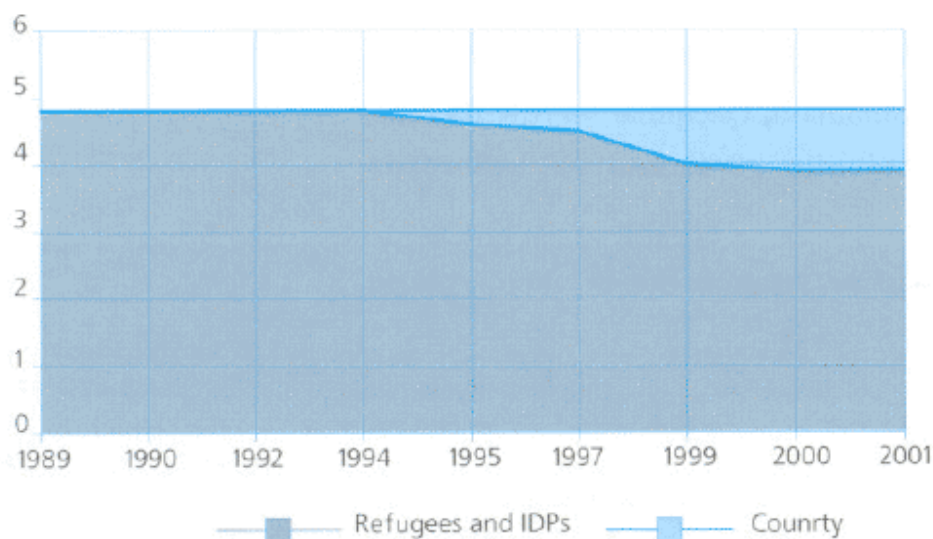


Figure 5.22 Average family size (number)

This drop is more alarming when the figure is compared to the national average family size of 4.8 people. Since the majority of refugees and IDPs come from rural areas, which have traditionally large families, this indicator attests to the profound impact of poverty and destitution on the refugees and IDPs.

People of working age comprise the largest age group among the IDPs and refugees (53.1 percent). Those above working age amount to 14.1 percent, while a significant number (34.6 percent) are below working age (younger than 15 years old). These statistics indicate a problem for labor resource regeneration among this population, and if no real measures are taken to address their situation, serious challenges will remain in their fight against poverty.

The gender structure of the refugees and IDPs is given in Figure 5.23.

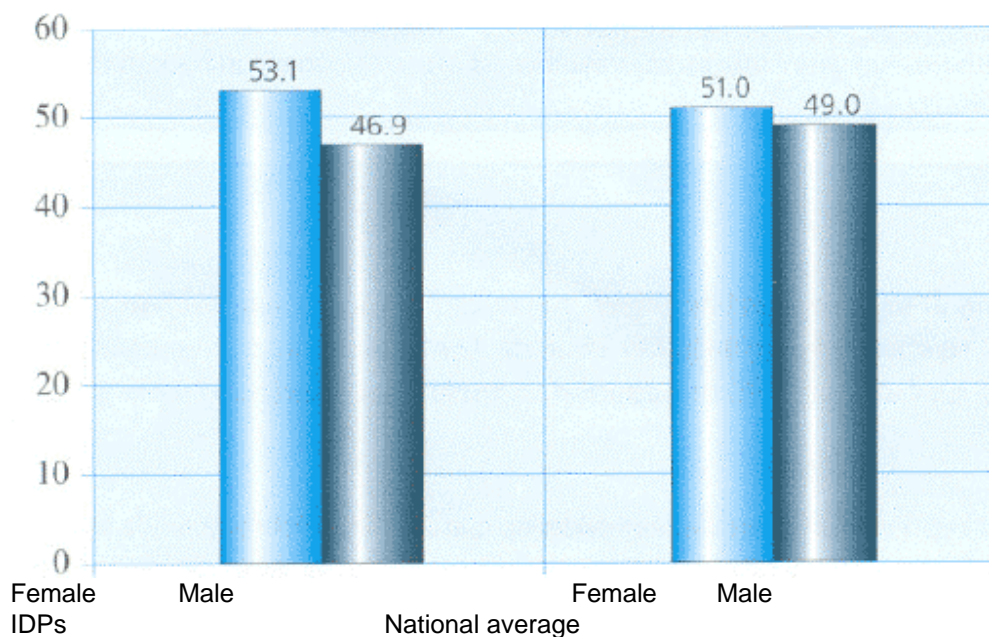


Figure 5.23 Gender structure of refugees and IDPs, 2001, percentages

Demographic analysis reveals a significant difference between the number of male and female refugees and IDPs. The current gender imbalance considerably exceeds the national average indicator of 51.0 percent women and 49.0 percent men. A more disturbing trend may be identified in the births and number of boys under 14 years of age, which are higher than the numbers for girls. There is a prevalence of women among the working age and fertile age groups; for more than 100,000 of these women, there are no corresponding male peers.

In addition to losses sustained during the conflict, which account for 18,000 men (not including disabled veterans), poverty has led to a major decrease in male life expectancy and increased labor migration. Higher mortality rates are recorded among males. [...]

Only 10 percent of men are capable of providing for their families. The resultant psychological stress and frustration of not being able to meet the needs of their families tends to decrease their life expectancy. Deprived of the ability to fulfill basic social and psychological responsibilities, the men often succumb to alcoholism, fatal diseases and suicide. In fact, the suicide rate among the males of this age group is 2.5 times higher than that of women.

The resulting gender imbalance thereby emerges as a direct consequence of forced poverty." (UNDP 2002, sect. 5.2)

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 Mingeshchevir, 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 Mingeshchevir 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 \(as of 1 January 2002\)\(map\) \[Internet\]](#)

"About 40 percent of IDPs have been settled in urban areas. There are 146,000 (25.6 percent) in Baku, 43,169 (7.6 percent in Sumgait), 14,400 (2.5 percent) in Ganja and nearly 17,300 (3 percent) in Mingeshchevir. These groups have fared badly even though they receive substantial humanitarian aid. They are housed in makeshift shelters and live in harsh conditions often unsuited for human habitation. Many of them suffer from severe psychological stress. They travel regularly – and often unsuccessfully – to the city in search of jobs. According to a survey, almost 95 percent of urban IDPs wish to return to their former homes. Out of the small minority of 5 percent who did not want to return, nearly 70 per cent had married and built their own houses." (UNDP 2000, pp. 53-54)

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)

The majority of IDPs still live in temporary accommodation (2002)

- After 10 years of displacement, the majority of IDPs continue to live in substandard shelter
- Many new families have appeared within IDP households, increasing the need for additional housing
- Types of shelter include public buildings, camp settlements, uncompleted buildings, railway cars
- The rest live with relatives or friends, farms, specially built houses, or illegally occupied apartments

"Within the IDP population, there is still a sizeable group living in unsatisfactory and sometimes unsanitary living quarters. After 10 years, over 55,000 of them still live in tent camps, 32,000 in prefab houses, 57,000 in farms and dig-outs, 8,000 in railway cars and the rest of them live in hostels, public buildings, in incomplete buildings, and other unsatisfactory and unsanitary living quarters with no utilities. Many new families have already appeared within the IDPs whose separate housing has become an urgent problems." (Government of Azerbaijan 2003, pp. 40-41)

IDPs in collective shelters

"Today 135,000 internally displaced still live in tented camps, uncompleted buildings and railway wagons. The rest have found accommodation with friends or relatives or live in public buildings, such as schools or tourist and health facilities, with generally no more than one room per household (UNDP 2000)." (IFRC 1 January 2003, pp. 2-3)

"More than half of the displaced persons still live in 'temporary' accommodations at year's end, such as public buildings (83,037 persons), hostels (77,309), schools and day-care centers (40,586), abandoned railroad cars (6,512), partially constructed buildings (13,489) sanatoriums (25,740), camp settlements (46,889), and makeshift roadside settlements (14,332).

The more fortunate (or well-to-do) lived with relatives or host families (117,303 persons) on farms (28,542), in houses built by humanitarian agencies (35,889), or houses built by the State Committee for Refugees (7,848). Another 48,566 were living in apartments that they occupied illegally." (USCR 2002, Azerbaijan)

"A majority of IDPs lives in extremely harsh conditions in tents, camps and public premises. These places are not congenial as permanent places of residence. About 18.7 percent of IDP families live in camps, 19.1 percent in railway wagons, 23.3 percent in schools, 16.6 percent in hostels and 14.4 percent in sanatoria or camps for children. The remaining 10.9 percent live in rented accommodation or with friends and relatives. Only 2.9 per cent have been able to afford their own homes.

Some IDPs have resettled in rural regions, close to the area of hostilities. There are about 18,000 resettlers in Agjebedy, 19,000 in Sabirabad, 20,000 in Imishly, 21,000 in Belsavus and 51,000 in Barda. These groups have fared better. They have concentrated on improving their economic status and have found work mostly in the production and processing of agricultural products. They have also invested in rebuilding family and community ties." (UNDP 2000, p. 53)

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)

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

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)

86 percent of the displaced population have been displaced between 7 and 8 years (2000)

In general, refugees and IDPs can be classified into groups according to the number of years they have spent in migration as follows:

More than 9-12 years – accounting for 13 % of the total displaced population. This corresponds to the start of forced migration and the beginning of hostilities.

Between 7-8 years – accounting for 86 % of the total displaced population. This corresponds to the period of full-scale hostilities.

Nearly 6 years – affected people account for just 1 percent of the total population. These are people affected by the last wave of conflict. (UNDP 2000, p. 54)

Categorization of IDPs by the year of forced migration

Years of migration	Share in total number of households	Region of permanent residence
1988-1989	0.4	Nagorno Karabakh, adjacent villages of Gazakh
1990	3.7	
1991	9.1	
1992	24.8	Lachin, Kelbedjar, Jebrail, Zangelan, Gubadly; partially: Fizuli, Agdam, Geranboy, Terter
1993	61.0	
1994	1.0	Fizuli, Agdamm Geranboy,
Total	100.0	

Source: State Committee on Refugees and IDPs, 2000
(UNDP 2000, p. 55)

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

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 Mingeshev, 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 Mingeshev 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)

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Physical security

Ceasefire violations hamper safe return in areas along front line (2002-2003)

- 5 people died in 2002 as a result of ceasefire violations in 2002
- Exchanges of fire continued to be reported in the first quarter of 2003
- In the exclave of Nakhchivan, Azeri IDPs have been forced to return to villages overlooked by Armenian army posts, Human Rights Watch reports in 2002

"Cease-fire violations by both sides in the conflict with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh occasionally resulted in deaths and injuries to both civilians and soldiers. During the year [2002], there were five dead and 28 injured." (U.S. DOS 31 March 2003, sect. 1a)

"One Azerbaijani serviceman was injured and a second taken prisoner on 8 January following an exchange of fire with Armenian troops on the front line in Agdam Raion in northwestern Azerbaijan, according to Turan and ANS TV, as cited by Groong. Noyan Tapan reported on 7 January that there have been repeated exchanges of fire since 30 December on the Baghanis section of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. (RFE/RL 9 January 2003)

The 8 January incident on the Agdam section of the Line of Contact between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces was the result of an attempt by Azerbaijani forces to enter the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR) on a reconnaissance mission, Interfax and Caucasus Press quoted an unidentified NKR Defense Ministry official as saying on 9 January. (RFE 13 January 2003)

Andrzej Kasprczyk, who is the special representative of the OSCE chairman-in-office for the Karabakh conflict, has expressed concern that violations of the 1994 cease-fire between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces are becoming more frequent, according to the Azerbaijani newspaper 'Zaman' on 18 February, as cited by Groong. Also on 18 February, an Azerbaijani serviceman taken prisoner by Karabakh Armenian forces was handed back to the Azerbaijani side, Turan reported." (RFE/RL 19 February 2003)

"One Azerbaijani soldier was shot dead and two Karabakh Armenians were injured during an exchange of fire late on 25 February, according to Arminfo and Mediamax on 26 February, as cited by Groong. Armenian Defense Ministry spokesman Colonel Seyran Shahsuvarian said Armenian troops prevented an attempt by an Azerbaijani reconnaissance mission to penetrate Karabakh-Armenian lines." (RFE/RL 27 February 2003)

"Armenian forces opened fire with mortars, machine guns and grenade launchers on Azerbaijani army positions in the village of Alikhanly in Fizuli Raion during the night of 7-8 April, Turan reported on 8 April, quoting the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry. The Azerbaijanis returned fire. No injuries were reported." (RFE/RL 9 April 2003)

"In the exclave of Nakhchivan, the regional authorities reportedly mounted an intimidation campaign in late 2001 to force displaced persons to return to insecure border villages near Sadarak, which were now overlooked by Armenian army posts." (HRW 2002, Azerbaijan)

Mine clearance: a prerequisite to return (2002)

- Areas close to the front line with Armenia are mine-affected heavily
- Agricultural areas, irrigation systems, river basins, and power lines are among the most affected
- Mine clearance efforts have been undertaken in return areas

"As reported in *Landmine Monitor Report 2001*, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) believes that up to 45 of Azerbaijan's 65 regions may be mine-affected.

In 2001, the International Eurasia Press Fund conducted a limited level one (general) survey on the territory of 11 districts where combat operations had occurred and which are close to the front line. The survey, which was funded by Norway, the United States, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), was completed in September 2001. It found that some 50 million square meters of territory are affected by mines. According to the Fund, 84 minefields were discovered and marked and the local populations were informed of the danger.

The most heavily mine-affected areas are farmland and cropland, but mines are also found in the irrigation systems, river basins, and near high voltage power lines, wells with drinking water and approaches to them." (International Campaign to Ban Landmines August 2002, Azerbaijan)

"Areas targeted for mine clearance [in 2001] have been: the high voltage power lines in the Fizuli district, water channels, houses, and two schools of the Goranboy district. As a result of clearance operations in the Fizuli district, some 26,000 people have returned to the area." (International Campaign to Ban Landmines August 2002, Azerbaijan)

See also "Fact Sheet: U.S. humanitarian demining programs in the Caucasus", 14 February 2003 [Internet]

Freedom of movement

Vestiges of the residence permit system from the Soviet-era which restricted individuals to one legal place of residence (1998-2002)

- 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 of 1995 provides for the right to free movement and choice of residence.

In 1996, the Parliament adopted a new Law on Registration According to Permanent Residence and Sojourn. It was followed by a Government Order on the implementation of the Law on Registration.

However, the new legislation still gives the law enforcement agencies the right to deny registration for a variety of reasons, which makes the new registration system very similar to propiska. In particular, propiska has been de facto maintained in its original form in Baku. Access to social rights and employment is to a large extent preconditioned by registration. Moreover, the registration stamp is entered into the identification card which has replaced former passports.

Internally displaced persons from occupied areas of Azerbaijan have difficulties in choosing their place of residence since they can only obtain humanitarian assistance in a camp or settlement where they are registered." (COE 12 October 2001, para. 75-79)

"The internal residence regime from the Soviet system ('propiska') still was imposed on IDPs – i.e., those forced from their homes following the Armenian occupation of western areas of the country – who were required to register with the authorities and could reside only in approved locations." (U.S. DOS 31 March 2003, sect. 2d)

Discrimination

Reports of discrimination against ethnic minorities (2002)

- Kurdish persons displaced from the Lachin region have complained of discrimination
- Ethnic Armenians who have stayed in Azerbaijan after the conflict also face problems

"Many indigenous ethnic groups live in the country. The Constitution provides for the right to maintain one's nationality and to speak, be educated, and carry out creative activity in one's mother tongue or any language, as desired. However, some groups have complained that the authorities restricted their ability to teach or print materials in indigenous languages. Separatist activities undertaken by Farsi-speaking Talysh in the south and Caucasian Lezghins in the north in the early 1990s engendered some suspicions in other citizens and fostered occasional discrimination. Meskhetian Turks displaced from Central Asia, as well as Kurdish displaced persons from the Armenian-occupied Lachin region, also complained of discrimination. A senior government official was responsible for minority policy. Some members of other ethnic groups also complained credibly about discrimination. Preventing this discrimination was not a government priority.

Some Armenians and persons of mixed Armenian-Azerbaijani descent have complained about being unable to register their residences, find work, and get access to medical care and education due to their ethnicity. The approximately 10,000 to 30,000 citizens of Armenian descent complained of discrimination in employment, schooling, housing, and other areas. They also complained of discrimination and harassment at workplaces, and of the refusal of local government authorities to pay pensions. Most shielded their identity or tried to leave the country. Some changed their nationality, as reported in their passports.

Armenian widows have had permits to live in Baku revoked. Some persons of mixed Armenian-Azerbaijani descent continued to occupy government positions. Public figures whose parents reportedly were of mixed-Armenian and Azerbaijani marriages, or had such marriages, were attacked publicly by colleagues in the press." (U.S. DOS 31 March 2003, sect. 5)

See also "Caught on the wrong side of the front-line: Armenians in Azerbaijan", Agence France Press, 1 November 2002 [Internet]

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS (HEALTH NUTRITION AND SHELTER)

Food

Nutrition status of the displaced population is deteriorating (2002)

- Every third displaced child below 5 years of age suffers from nutritional insufficiency
- WFP survey in October 2001 reveals a serious degradation of IDPs' ability to meet basic food needs
- Azerbaijani authorities report that IDPs's nutrition and health status is substantially worse than for the rest of the population

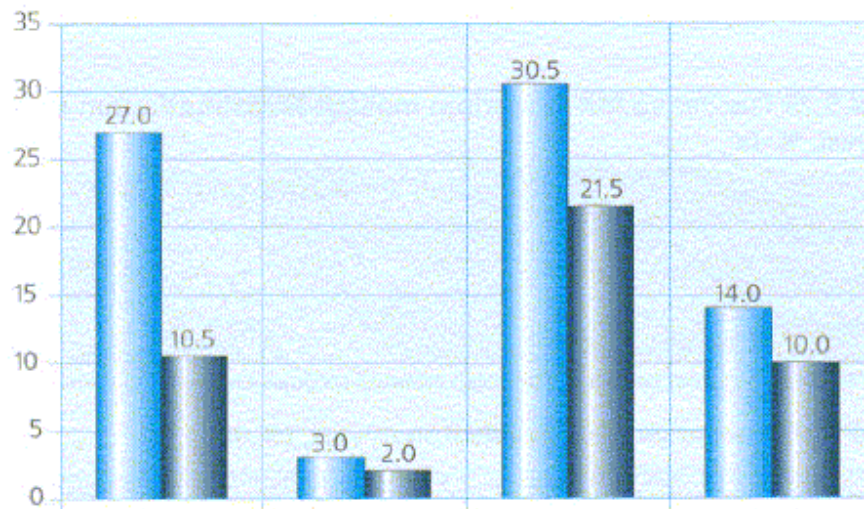
"Mass poverty severely restricts this population group's access to adequate nutrition. Studies show that the majority of refugees and IDPs are deprived of the opportunity to enjoy adequate nutrition (Table 5.27)

Food staples	Share of refugees and IDP families below norms
Bread and bread products	25.4
Milk and milk products	100.0
Meat and meat products	73.5
Fruits and berries	66.5
Vegetables and melon crops	96.1
Potatoes	38.6



Table 5.27 Food consumption according to the required norms, percentages

Close to a quarter are below the required physiological norms in consumption of bread and bread products, three fourths are below the norms for eating meat and meat products, and two-thirds are below the norms for eating fruit. One hundred percent of the surveyed families are below the required norms for consumption of milk and milk products as well as vegetables and melons.

It should be noted that while consumption levels of certain food items by the general population of Azerbaijan is already below the required norms, the indicators among the refugee and IDP population are event worse (Figure 5.24).



Household with food consumption deficiencies	Underweight (6-59 months)	Underweight (6-59 months)	Older children with deficiencies
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 Local population
 IDPs

The insufficiency of food consumption among the refugees and IDPs, both in terms of total consumption by all households and consumption by vulnerable groups (children and pensioners), is considerably higher than that registered by the rest of the population. This malnutrition manifests itself in refugee and IDP population who have with weights and heights far below normal.

According to the State Committee on Refugees and IDPs, there are twice as many families among the refugees and IDPs suffering from dystrophy than among the rest of the population. Of the refugee and IDP children below five years of age, 23.4 percent suffer from diarrhea, while the nationwide indicator stands at 15 percent. Corresponding rates of chronic dystrophy for refugee and IDP children aged 6-59 months stand at 30.5 percent whereas the national rate stands at 21.5 percent. First degree croup is registered in 23 percent of adult refugees and displaced persons, but nationwide this indicator stands at 9.8 percent. Every third child below 5 years of age in the refugee and IDP families suffers from nutritional insufficiency; these children are expected to fall behind in their later development as well.

It is clear that nutrition of the refugees and IDPs is highly insufficient in energy value and daily nutritional intake. Similar statements can be made about the vitamin and microelement composition of their diet." (UNDP 2002, sect. 5.4)

"A WFP household food economy survey conducted in October 2001 revealed serious deterioration of IDPs's living conditions in the two years since the previous survey. In 1998-1999, for example, 44 percent of the sample were able to meet basic food needs; in 2001, the proportion was 19 percent. Average monthly income for an IDP family is equivalent to US\$46. minimum food requirements cost US\$82 if meat, fish, poultry and milk are included, or US\$60 without them. The WFP food ration is an essential support, given the few prospects for additional income.

According to the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced People (SCRIDP), indicators of IDP's health and nutritional status are substantially worse than the nation-wide rates. Twenty-six percent of IDP households have members suffering from malnutrition, as opposed to 10 percent nation-wide. Chronic

malnutrition among IDP children of 6-59 months is 30 percent compared with 21 percent nation-wide. Anaemia among IDP women is 41 percent as opposed to a national figure of 35 percent. Grade 1 goitre among adults is 23 percent compared with a national rate of 10 percent." (WFP 3 April 2002, paras. 9-10)

See also "WFP's survey shows deterioration of IDPs' self-reliance capacity (2001)" [Internal link]

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

Source	Direct and Indirect Sources of Household Income	Percent of Household Income
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 and sanitation

Water is a major problem in Azerbaijan (1998-2002)

- Poor water supply and sanitation facilities in IDP settlements contribute to the spreading of diseases
- Water is delivered by vehicles to 32 percent of the IDPs (2000)
- 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

"Most shelters and settlements of the IDPs have a poor water supply and dilapidated sanitation facilities. Poor sanitary conditions and hot weather contribute to the spread of various diseases." (IFRC 1 January 2003, p. 3)

"Fifty six percent of temporary settlement sites are provided with artesian water. Thirty eight per cent of sites depend on water from channels and rivers. For about 32 percent of the population, drinking water is delivered to IDPs by vehicles. The percentage of IDPs provided with water through mains is sufficiently high – around 64 percent. The water supplied through mains does not often meet quality standards. Besides the supply of water is irregular and it is not always stored hygienically." (UNDP 2000, p. 57)

"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 and non-food items

Government gives more attention to housing of IDPs (2002)

- Money from the State Oil Fund has been allocated to the housing of displaced persons living in camps
- This signals a change of attitude from state authorities which had been criticized for hampering the social-economic integration of IDPs
- Human Rights Watch reports the forceful eviction of IDPs from their settlements near Baku in 2002

"Within the IDP population, there is still a sizeable group living in unsatisfactory and sometimes unsanitary living quarters. After 10 years, over 55,000 of them still live in tent camps, 32,000 in prefab houses, 57,000 in farms and dig-ours, 8,000 in railway cars and the rest of them live in hostels, public buildings, in incomplete buildings, and other unsatisfactory and unsanitary living quarters with no utilities. Many new families have already appeared within the IDPs whose separate housing has become an urgent problem.

[...]

Since 2001 the government has taken serious measures to re-allocate IDPs from the worst conditions in tent camps temporarily to new settlements and to provide them with land for agricultural purposes. ARRA and Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action is operating with support from EU, IDP, IFRC, USAID, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WB and some donor countries to alleviate the results of military conflict and to provide housing to the population in the liberated areas." (Government of Azerbaijan 2003, pp. 40-41)

"In June [2002] the government allocated U.S.\$75 million from the State Oil Fund to build housing for the population of five camps for refugees and internally displaced persons, and began providing microcredit to internally displaced persons from a World Bank loan. This signaled a welcome change in the government's treatment of people displaced since 1993-4 from territories overrun by Karabakh-Armenian and Republic of Armenia forces. Many observers had criticized the government for failing to integrate the half million internally displaced into local economies and communities.

Nonetheless, there were instances when local authorities grossly abused groups of displaced persons. At the end of May [2002], two hundred riot police and a demolition crew were sent to a settlement near Lake Ganli Gel outside Baku, where, in several incidents over three days, police beat several women and bulldozed seventeen of the sixty-two houses built there by internally displaced persons since 1995." (HRW 2002, Azerbaijan)

IDPs face difficult housing conditions, Refugees International reports (2002)

- Herders live in their winter settlements, which they have tried to improve, but many suffer water damages
- Old metal boxcars have also been used by the displaced, but most families have made a living space underneath as a summer resting place
- Less destitute IDPs live in concrete, crowded buildings in urban areas
- There remain shanty communities, which have been used as showplace to attract attention from donors
- Housing units newly provided by the government or NGOs lack access to land

"Housing for the war-displaced in Azerbaijan is unique because it varies as much as the Azeri topography. Instead of living in camps, internally displaced people (IDPs) have made homes for themselves in converted buildings and on lands that have either been officially or unofficially allocated to them. This article discusses the five most common types of IDP settlements in Azerbaijan. Aside from the urban IDPs, most IDPs live in a region referred to as the IDP belt; an area in central Azerbaijan stretching from Mingechevir to Bilesuvar.

Semi-nomadic herders have historically spent their winters in the Agebedi region. Since the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, the region has now become a year-round settlement and the herders are now IDPs. Their homes are built as holes in the ground covered, in most cases with dirt, but also with sticks, plastic and cardboard. In warmer weather and after heavy rains, many of the dwellings suffer severe water damage. If the occupants are fortunate enough to have a sheet of plastic to insulate their ceiling, water and mold often collect and make for chronically damp conditions. In the ten years since wintergrounds have become year-round settlements, the IDPs have made raised wooden platforms about 8 feet off the ground to sleep on. IDPs report that this protects them from mosquitoes and makes for cooler, more comfortable, conditions than sleeping underground. Although the slight summer breeze helps shake off the heat, the children still complain about mosquitoes [and malaria], however.

Lined in rows on tracks, old boxcars are used as protection from only the most extreme elements. The metal structures are like an oven in the summer and a refrigerator in the winter. Most families have made a living space underneath the boxcars as a summer resting place. In the winter, IDPs use the under space as a place to store goods. They build up the sides of the bottom of the boxcars with straw walls for privacy (and sometimes shade). Inside the boxcars there is electricity and a single burner to cook on. However, the cooking in the hot months is mostly done outside between cars. They cook large tortilla-type flat bread on a grill shaped like an upside down bowl. Very little light gets in between the cars because there are clotheslines connected between the boxcars. Water is often scarce and the clinics and schools are barely adequate.

IDPs with enough money to relocate to the city, live in old Soviet blocks in towns with dying or dead industries. There is usually electricity, but not always throughout the day. The wiring is haphazard and large burn marks are evident on the walls where electrical fires have occurred. The conditions are crowded - up to six or eight people living in one room. Sometimes dormitories from a school or building project are used to house the war-displaced. If the dormitory is used, there is no infrastructure for a kitchen - so the kitchen is carved into a bathroom or spare room where several families can cook. Plumbing is either outside at an exterior faucet, or shared. Water is sporadic, except in a real urban area where the IDPs can tap into city water.

The houses are boards stuck together by any means available with little or no electricity and no indoor plumbing. A non-governmental organization (NGO) might have come along and built a clinic or put up a brick school, but generally conditions in shanty communities are poor. They are often the showplace for potential donors to pass through. In Bilusavar, the residents have had many foreign guests come through and they have figured out what sorts of sights arouse the attention of assessment teams.

Some of the newest housing units are government developments and those provided by non-governmental organizations. The houses consist of a simple room or two with a porch of equal footage. The floors are wooden and, in the case of government-funded housing, there is a fresh coat of paint over poor quality cement. Cooking is usually done on a single electric burner. The primary problem with these places is that they are built in communities with no economic opportunity, so it seems the houses have the potential to eventually be deserted. The houses are arranged in straight rows and there is an outhouse for every few houses. The water is trucked in. There is no land close by to farm on, so people simply wait for outside aid. Last year firewood was delivered to residents, but there is little consensus whether that will happen this winter." (RI 17 December 2002, 23 October 2002)

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)

For more information on the response of the International Red Cross Federation to the victims of the earthquake, including IDPs, see Azerbaijan, [Earthquake Appeal No. 35/00 – Final Report, 26 November 2002](#) [Internet]

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).

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).

Health

Low income affects health conditions of the displaced in southern Azerbaijan (2000-2002)

- There is a low availability of medical services to displaced population
- 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

"Poverty undoubtedly affects the state of health of the refugees and IDPs. The experience of psychological stress, incomplete and insufficient nutrition and limited access to health services has led to an increase in disease. A number of surveys conducted by WHO and UNICEF reveal that the state of health among refugees and IDPs is considerably worse than that of the rest of the population.

Analysis of the indicator regarding coverage of the refugees and IDPs by physicians and other medical personnel attests to the extremely limited availability of medical services. Similarly, there are unfulfilled needs for medicines, medical equipment for treating diseases of nervous and digestive systems and cardiovascular diseases. Likewise, not enough X-ray and fluorographic machines, electrocardiograms or ultrasound equipment is available." (UNDP 2002, sect. 5.4)

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 [a]ck of financing most frequently as a major reason not to seek medical services (30.7%)."
(IMC November 2000, p. 10)

Diseases	IDPs	Nationwide
Households with malnutrition	26.3	10.4
Children down to 5 years with diarrhoea (for 2 weeks prior to examination)	23.4	15.2
Children of age of 6-59 months with acute malnutrition (body mass deficiency)	1.3	3.0
Children of age of 6-59 months with chronic malnutrition (physical retardation)	30.5	21.5
Elders with malnutrition	10.1	13.7
Children of age of 12-59 months with anaemia	46.1	43.3
Non-pregnant women with anaemia	40.7	35.5
Men with anaemia	34.4	25.0
Adults with 1 grade goiter	23.0	9.8

Source: State Committee on Refugees and IDPs, 2000
(UNDP 2000, p. 56)

Health needs of displaced women and children (1998-2002)

- Displaced women have special health related concerns
- Infant mortality among displaced children is 3-4 times higher than in the rest of the population
- 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

"There is much concern among the IDP women in terms of issues related to gender, family planning, protection of child health and etc. Currently, 40,000 IDP women suffer from various diseases (infectious, gastrointestinal infections, virus infections, skin diseases, malaria, diphtheria, typhoid, nervous disorders, tuberculosis, anaemia, diabetes) and disease incidence among children is increasing due to poor living conditions and lack of access to clean drinking water. Infant mortality is 3-4 times higher than the republican average." (Government of Azerbaijan 2003, pp. 41-42)

See also "Differences in welfare and access to care among internally displaced and local women: seven years after relocation in Azerbaijan", in: Journal of Refugee Studies, Volume 15, No. 3, 2002 (pp. 296-303). This article presents the main findings of a survey implemented in 1999 in rural districts of Barda, Yevlack and Terter. The survey investigated the differences in demographics, economic status, and the use of reproductive health care services between local and internally displaced women. It showed that internally displaced women are economically disadvantaged seven years following their displacement. The survey's authors concluded that there was a "need for continued attention to providing health care and economic support for displaced women in Azerbaijan". [This article is not available on line to non-subscribers to the Journal. An abstract of the article can be found on the website of the Journal [\[Internet\]](#)

See also "Azerbaijan: New Year chill for Azeri refugees", Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 9 January 2003 [\[Internet\]](#)

"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).

"About 13.2 percent of the IDP and refugee women suffer from various diseases. Approximately 4.7 percent have diseases of the nervous system, 1.5 percent suffer from malaria, 1.1 percent from tuberculosis, and 9.4 percent have anaemia. Another 16.9 percent suffer from diseases of internal organs. 1.8 percent from diabetes, 8.1 percent from hypertonia, 12.7 per cent have gynaecological diseases, 8.8 percent suffer from stomatitis and 7.2 percent from heart diseases." (UNDP 2000, p. 57)

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

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).

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

Decreasing school attendance among displaced children, despite existing national legislation on IDP education (1998-2002)

- The lack of educational infrastructure obliges displaced and local children to attend schools in shifts
- More than 20 percent of the displaced families do not send their children to school (1998)
- Displaced destitute families are not able to purchase school supplies and uniforms
- Literacy rate among IDPs is high but the proportion of IDPs without secondary education is significantly higher than in the rest of the population
- School attendance has been falling among displaced children, particularly among girls
- Distance to school has been identified as an obstacle to school attendance among children living in IDP camps
- Early measures have been taken by the government includes the provision of temporary schools and textbooks

"The literacy level among IDP population can be considered as high as in other sections of the population. Thus, 60% of this population have general, secondary and higher education.

Women and children are considered the most vulnerable subgroup of this population group. 200,000 of the IDP population are children; more than 86,000 are under school age, and about 98,000 are schoolchildren. In order to involve children in education over 703 schools have been established, some in prefab buildings, some in sub-standard buildings. Schools work shifts due to the lack of classrooms. This as well as the lack of modern educational technical equipment affect negatively the quality of education." (Government of Azerbaijan 2003, p. 42)

"Modern concepts of fighting poverty are based on measures that secure knowledge-based development. The occupation of the Azerbaijani territories rendered a destructive blow to the educational system, especially the education and training of refugees and IDPs. Research conducted by the Sigma Center in 1998 shows that only 62.4 percent of refugee and IDP families have children who regularly attend school; children in 21.8 percent of these families do not attend school at all. No practical improvements have yet taken place to change this situation. The government and various international organizations have sponsored initiatives to provide assistance to IDP and refugee education facilities, including ad hoc provision of school equipment, materials and school repairs, but this has not radically improved the situation.

One-fifth of all schools in Azerbaijan, primarily those in the occupied areas, were lost because of the conflict. Access to education, not just for the children of refugees and IDPs, but for all Azerbaijani children has been restricted as a result. More than half (54.5 percent) of the IDP and refugee children attend schools in their host communities during second, and even third, shifts in the same buildings as their local peers. The nation's middle schools, even those in Baku, are filled beyond their capacity. The majority of these schools (76 percent) have a two- and three-shift schedule for classes, as compared to 59.5 percent in 1990. About 36 percent of all secondary school students attend schools during second or third shifts, compared to

only 27.4 percent in 1990. The burden of these additional students has drastically increased the pressure placed on the remaining schools. Accordingly, school attendance and quality of studies are not high.

Poverty has also considerably affected the procurement of school supplies for the children of refugees and IDPs. Costs of school uniforms, books and supplies have risen dramatically, and it has become nearly impossible for impoverished families to purchase these items. As seen from Table 5.25,

	Share of total families
Completely able	5.2
Unable	27.7
Partially able	67.1

Table 5.25 Ability of refugee and IDP families to procure school supplies, percentages

for the vast majority of the refugees and IDPs (94.8 percent of the surveyed families), only partial school supplies can be purchased, or none at all.

Children comprise 34.7 percent of the families, and 60.4 percent of the families have schoolchildren of various ages. Of the families with schoolchildren, 27.2 percent have one, 33 percent have two, 25.6 percent have three, and 11 percent have four. The share of children aged 0-6 years is also high, standing at 15 percent.

As for the educational levels of the refugees and IDPs, State Committee for Refugees data shows this indicator as rather high. The literacy rate among refugees and IDPs is estimated at 97.1 percent (Table 5.26).

Higher Education	Unfinished Higher Education	Secondary School	Incomplete Secondary	Primary	Illiterate
11.0	13.9	37.3	30.7	4.2	2.9

Table 5.26 Educational levels, percentages

A secondary school education is mandatory in Azerbaijan, according to national legislation. The percentage of refugees and IDPs above 16 years of age who have not completed the mandatory education is twice the national average (20.6 percent). This situation was even worse for the inhabitants of districts affected by the hostilities (60.3 percent), who for a long period were deprived of the opportunity to attend their schools, which had been damaged in the hostilities or were occupied as residential buildings by expelled people. It should also be noted that among this population group, a significant proportion are teachers (30.8%).

Poverty has worsened the refugee and IDP populations' already restricted educational opportunities. This absence or lack of access to education must be considered as a significant factor for poverty alleviation and human development." (UNDP 2002, sect. 5.3)

"Although 36,764 IDP children attended primary schools in 2001, attendance has been falling, particularly among girls, from close to 100 percent in the early 1990s to between 80 and 84 percent at present." (WFP 3 April 2002, para. 22)

"In many refugee and IDP settlements, schools are either in very bad shape, or non-existent.

Another serious problems is the distance that some children need to travel so school- if children need to travel by bus or other means of transportation, transportation cost is often prohibitive, and leads to poor attendance. This issue is especially prevalent in remote villages and refugee/IDP camps." (ISAR Azerbaijan January 2002, pp. 6-7)

"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." (UN HRC 5 May 2000, paras. 588-590)

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).

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 SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Self-reliance

IDPs remain dependent on external aid (2002-2003)

- Only 20 percent of the displaced population are employed and earn wages
- State programmes provide financial assistance to IDPs but average income remain lower than for other citizens
- 63 percent of the displaced population (including refugees) live below poverty line
- Unemployment problems are particularly acute among IDP women
- The number of displaced persons receiving food aid from humanitarian organizations has decreased
- Destitute displaced persons have migrated to urban areas where the poorest IDPs have concentrated
- IDPs face practical more than institutional problems on the labour market: lack of information, lack of required skills, inadequate working hours for women

"Income poverty is characteristic of nearly all of those categorized as refugees or IDPs. Studies reveal that the average monthly per capita income of refugees and IDPs stands at 84,384 AZM (18.1 USD).

Table 5.29 shows that approximately half (48.5 percent) of the refugees and IDPs have an average per capita monthly income of about 6 USD. Another large group of refugees and IDPs (21.6 percent) has an average per capita monthly income of around 11 USD. It is clear that these two groups, more than 70 percent of those surveyed, comprise the poorest part of the refugees and IDPs. Daily per capita income comprises 0.20 USD and around 0.30 USD respectively.

Salary only accounts for 49 percent of the average monthly per capita income of a working displaced person. Only around 19.7 percent of the total number of refugees and IDPs are employed and earn wages. The remainder of the average per capita income comes from aid, pensions and casual earnings.

State programs provide financial assistance to refugees and IDPs in various forms. The government pays 25,000 AZM monthly to each one. This population is exempt from payment of utilities (electricity, water and sewage). Firms operating in areas where refugees and IDPs are temporarily concentrated are exempt from paying certain forms of taxes and transfers: value-added tax, property tax, automotive tax and social security transfers.

According to the data shown in Table 5.31,

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Total population	12.2	13.6	17.6	23.8	42.0	45.8	48.3	53.4
Refugees and IDPs	7.95	8.56	9.9	13.4	14.6	15.5	16.1	18.1

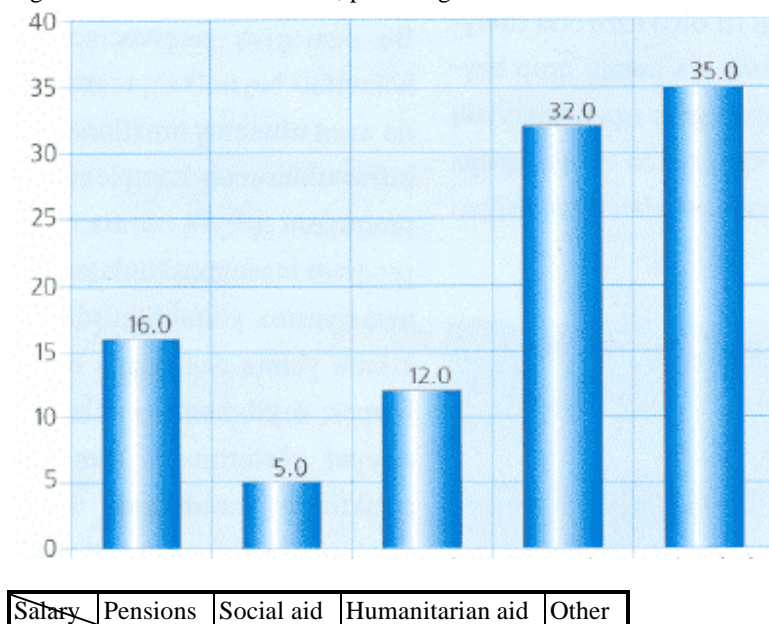
Table 5.31 Comparative income levels, USD

per capita income of the refugees and IDPs is almost half the national average. Annual income growth rates for the refugees and IDPs are considerably lower (12.5 percent) than the national growth rates (23.4 percent).

The official minimum living wage in Azerbaijan is 69.4 USD. Using this as a base, it becomes clear that the subject group lives well beneath the poverty line.

The data shown in Figure 5.26 reflects the most up-to-date information concerning the income structure of refugees and IDPs. The survival of this group depends considerably on aid and other social allowances."

Figure 5.26: Sources of income, percentages



(UNDP 2002, sect. 5.5)

"The Household Budget Survey results confirm that households with refugee or IDP status have a relatively higher risk of being poor, especially IDPs. Poverty incidence among IDPs is 63% using the absolute poverty line. However, the sample size is too small to allow us to look further at differentiation within the IDP/refugee group. Anecdotal and other smaller surveys suggest, however, that there is considerable differentiation in living standards within the IDP/refugee population. Apart from the housing conditions/unsanitary conditions, the vulnerability of some of this group is often increased through loss of main breadwinners due to death or invalidity caused by war." (Government of Azerbaijan 2003, p. 41)

Unemployment among IDPs

"Provision of employment to IDPs remains a problem. It is estimated that, 300,000 out of 400,000 able-bodied IDPs are without work; over 70% of the working age IDP population. A certain share of IDPs is employed in non-permanent and part-time jobs. Unemployment problems are particularly acute among IDP women, in that 175,000 out of 380,000 are able bodied. 38,000 of them have been provided with employment.

Most displaced households currently depend on assistance from the government and humanitarian organizations for their survival. But humanitarian assistance has been decreasing sharply in scale especially during the last 2-3 years. Thus, the number of IDPs receiving food aid from those organizations has

decreased to 214,000 during the last 2 years and also the volume of food provision per capita has been reduced from 20kg to 4-5 kg. These difficulties have adversely affected the natural increase of the IDP population and this indicator has decreased 2-3 times compared to 1990." (Government of Azerbaijan 2003, pp. 42-43)

"To support the planning, the WB launched with the GoA a country-wide poverty survey, to update the assessment done in 1995-96. Based on the earlier survey, IDPs are among the poorest segments of the populations. In order to assess with more accuracy the extent of poverty among the IDPs as compared to the local population, the WB requested UNHCR's help in designing a specific survey questionnaire on IDPs. The report shows that despite the measures taken by the GoA and international donors in the past 10 years to improve the situation of the IDPs, they remain one of the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the Azerbaijani society. The survey showed that poverty among IDP is largely contained with massive transfers from the State budget (various allocations and subsidies) thereby leaving them with little coping capacities of their own and very fragile in case of budget reduction. The survey also revealed an important new trend where the poverty seems to have "migrated" from the rural to urban areas. The poorest of the poor are now the IDPs living in urban suburbs of Baku, Sumgait, etc." (UNHCR 28 February 2003)

"UNHCR carried out with the its local implementing partners research in the context of the World Bank-sponsored Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper in an attempt to identify challenges faced by the IDPs in employment issues. The implementing partners met with the business community in order to ascertain the willingness in the business sector to employ IDPs. Meetings were also organized in IDP communities to identify the most common problems preventing IDPs from being successfully employed. The research showed that many of the problems were very practical, rather than institutional: how to obtain regular information on vacancies (some newspapers have job advertisements but not for unskilled or less skilled labor; buying such newspaper, travelling to interview, etc. all costs money that IDPs have very little to spare); skill profiles don't match current demand in cities; for women, working hours required are too long for women with family responsibilities; etc." (UNHCR February 2003)

WFP's survey shows deterioration of IDPs' self-reliance capacity (2001)

- Comparison with survey in 1998-1999 suggest that food security of IDP has not improved
- The percentage of displaced households who are not able to meet their food and non-food needs has increased from 74 to 90 percent
- Only 22 percent of the displaced households have some kind of income
- IDPs have exhausted their coping mechanisms, in particular by selling their few assets
- IDPs have been unable to use kitchen gardens for their own consumption
- WFP food aid has become increasingly critical in preventing malnutrition among IDPs
- Allocation of land to IDPs will not be enough to relieve IDPs from aid dependency

WFP household food economy survey conducted in October 2001:

"In comparison with the previous survey conducted in late 1998-early 1999, the main findings of this survey are as follows:

The average size of a household (HH) has increased from 4.9 to 5.6 persons per family while the average number of food recipients remains at 4.9 persons per HH. Twelve percent of HH members do not receive food aid, linked to the fact that WFP stopped new registration three years ago.

The food security situation has not improved, as families have to share the same ration with more members such as newborn babies and people returning after completing their education or military service. Thus, the average period WFP ration covers has decreased from 18 to 16 days in two months.

The number of female food recipients has increased from 31 to 33.8 percent, and the percentage of women controlling food at the HH level has increased to 99 percent, compared to 96 percent in the 1998-99 survey.

The percentage of the HHs who are not able to meet their food and non-food needs has increased from 74 to 90 percent. At the same time, the percentage of the HHs able to meet their food needs only, has dropped from 44 to 19 percent.

Only 22 percent of the HHS have some kind of income, with an average salary of 125,000 manat per month (equivalent to US\$26).

The cost of an estimated minimum food basket required by a family of five is about US\$ 82 per month, including meat/poultry/fish. The non-food requirements are estimated at an additional US\$ 30 per month. The average monthly HH income is approximately US\$ 46 and includes the following items: total salary of those HHs with some kind of income; total earnings of those with pension; total earnings of those with other irregular income such as casual labor; and total government subsidies such as for bread, child and fuel.

Although meat/poultry/fish are an important part of the diet in Azerbaijan, more than 47 percent of the IDPs cannot afford them. For those HHs who can afford to eat meat/poultry/fish, they buy about 1.6 kg per month, which is much less than the normal Azeri family would eat in one week.

As coping mechanisms, around 40 percent of the HHs sold belongings that they bought from their place of origin, and more than 90 percent sold their privatization vouchers.

Although 20 percent of the HHs have a kitchen garden, just over one percent manage to utilize it for their own consumption. The main reasons include:

- lack of water due to two consecutive years of drought;
- water that used to be subsidized by the government is no longer free; and
- increases in the prices of seeds and fertilizers.

Although 58 percent of the HHs reported that they have poultry and/or some livestock, only 11 percent earn an additional income from selling them (average of US\$ 7 per month)." (WFP November 2001, executive summary)

"In general, this survey proves that the living conditions of the IDPs have deteriorated over the last three years. Having been away from their home for such a long time without any means to sustain themselves, the IDPs have exhausted the few assets that they used to possess. In addition, they are rapidly running out of coping mechanisms, as shown by the following signs: less utilization of the kitchen gardens, decrease in livestock sales, depletion of saleable belongings/vouchers, and others.

The majority of the IDPs still live in makeshift shelters (for example, camps, unfinished buildings, schools, rail wagons, dugouts, etc.) and still have non access to land. Their employment opportunities are extremely limited, particularly when local communities hosting the IDPs are themselves faced with the deteriorating economy, and they are more vulnerable to any negatives changes. The average monthly income remains nearly the same as three years ago at about US\$ 46 (it was US\$ 43 in 1998-99), hence the importance of WFP food aid has become increasingly critical in preventing the IDPs from malnutrition." (WFP November 2001, p. 5)

"The Government was slow in allocating IDPs land that was potentially profitable in the context of nationwide privatization. Agricultural production has risen in recent years, but land provision to IDPs, even in the rare cases where land is fully utilized, is insufficient to address to chronic unemployment caused by the post-Soviet collapse of industry. Sustained investment in new industries is the only way in which the majority of IDPs will be relieved of aid dependency.

The Government is optimistic that oil revenues in the next four to five years will grow sufficiently to allow an economic improvement that will benefit the entire population. Capacity to absorb new revenues may be initially low, but support to the social sector should rise, allowing international agencies to withdraw as the Government takes on increasing responsibility for social support. Azerbaijan will continue to be a net food importer, but support for IDPs should increase, whatever the political resolution of their predicament." (WFP 3 April 2002, paras. 61-62)

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 than 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 district. 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 microcredit 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)

IDPs' sources of income are insufficient to cover basic needs (1998-2000)

- 69 percent of the IDPs are unemployed, according to 2000 survey
- Other sources of income include government allowances, humanitarian aid, small trade and temporary work
- 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
- Internally displaced men have often migrated temporarily to the capital or further afield to Russia in search of income to support their families

"Employment opportunities are limited and so a majority of refugees and IDPs have no jobs and stable earnings. Sociological surveys, conducted during 1998-2000 by the Sigma Research Centre for Development and International Cooperation reveal that unemployed IDPs constitute nearly 69 percent of the able-bodied IDP population. Out of this, 32 percent are women. Those with permanent jobs and relatively stable salaries, make up only 31 percent of the total population.

Unemployment is highest among IDP and refugee women. About 70.1 percent of women are unemployed in Beylaga, 55.2 percent in Fizuly, 78.9 percent in Kackmaz and 79.3 percent in Khizy. In Baku 36.9 percent of women do not have jobs.

In close to 7 percent of IDP families, heads of families or other members live separately from their families in order to earn a living. Very often IDPs and refugees, who work as migrant labour, register themselves as residents in temporary shelters so that they can get allowances and grants from the government. These people earn an occasional income from the construction sector, informal trade and services sector, mainly in Baku and other industrial centres. They have an agrarian background and lack specific professional skills. This makes them unfit for jobs in urban conditions. Therefore their earnings remain low and unstable.

A sizable number of IDPs are not involved in any kind of labor activity. Their chief means of survival are allowances from the government and humanitarian aid. The other main sources of income for sizable number of unemployed refugees and IDPs at present are:

- Growing minor quantities of vegetables, fruits and herbs on small plots of land. Households themselves consume most of this produce.
- Breeding a few cattle, sheep, goats and poultry. These animal products are partially consumed by households. Some of it is sold.
- "charter" trade.
- Street trade
- Temporary work, mainly in Baku, Sumgait and adjoining areas, either in the construction or agrarian sector, mostly as unskilled labor.

None of these activities provides a stable income. Survey show that the number of people involved in these activities constitutes approximately 24 percent of the total amount of unemployed refugees and IDPs.

The average monthly per capita income of the IDP population is about 39,000 manats (around US\$9). This is almost four times below the national per capita income. The daily monetary income of 76 percent of IDPs makes up only 940 manats or barely 22 cents. This just about covers the cost of a kilogram of bread. Only 49 percent of average monthly per capita income of employed IDPs is derived from wages. Social allowances, pensions and occasional earnings constitute a balance. A majority of IDPs lives in extreme poverty-

Practically all refugees and IDPs live below the poverty line determined as a maximum level of the ratio of real incomes to the consumer basket amount. In 1999, this amount was estimated to be 394,000 manats or 91 US\$. For about 70 percent of IDPs and refugees their incomes make up only 16 percent of the consumer basket amount." (UNDP 2000, pp. 58-59)

"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).

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

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]

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 Aliev, 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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DOCUMENTATION NEEDS AND CITIZENSHIP

General

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

The experience of displacement has affected gender roles within the family structure (1998-2001)

- 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
- Children have also been exposed to considerable stress because of displacement

"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)

"According to the UNICEF report on Street Children, 'The Tragedy of [the] situation is that refugee and displaced children are doubly stressed. Firstly, many of them have been psychologically traumatized. One in ten refugee children from Armenia and one in seven displaced children have parents who died or are missing as a result of the war.

Secondly, these children have experienced extreme stress during deportation and evacuation. Many of them have left their homes quickly and in a panic. On arrival... they have faced additional difficulties: poor financial and inadequate living conditions, an absence of conveniences...' [UNICEF, "Street Children", 1995, Part III]

The thousands of children born and raised in refugee camps lack basic conditions for development, putting the very future of these children in danger. There is a big risk that these children will become a part of a heritage of war, part of a 'lost generation'" (ISAR Azerbaijan, January 2002, p. 7)

"Children, under the age of seventeen, constitute 40 percent of the IDP population. Among IDPs, there are more than 5,300 children who are orphans. they constitute 3 percent of the total number of IDP children. Children from IDP families, particularly girls, face severe social pressure. They are particularly vulnerable to the consequences of war. Psychological stress, poor nutrition, limited access to medical services have dire effects on their health. A majority of them suffer from dystrophy and the morbidity is high. Their access to education, information and recreation is limited." (UNDP 2000, pp. 55-56)

See also "[Gender and age breakdown: women and children make up 70% of the displaced population \(2001-2002\)](#)" [Internal link]

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).

PROPERTY ISSUES

General

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

A third of the IDP population has been resettled or have returned as of mid 2002

- As of mid 2002, around 35 percent of IDPs have been resettled to new houses or repatriated
- However, these displaced persons have kept their national IDP status
- Return has been mostly to the Fizuli and Agdam regions

"Between 1992 and 1994, Azerbaijan lost control over nearly 20 per cent of its territory to Armenia and consequently 800,000 people became internally displaced. Today 135,000 internally displaced still live in tented camps, uncompleted buildings and railway wagons. The rest have found accommodation with friends or relatives or live in public buildings, such as schools or tourist and health facilities, with generally no more than one room per household (UNDP 2000). In the middle of 2002, approximately 33-35 per cent of internally displaced persons (IDPs) were resettled as new houses were built or repatriated to their own villages (UNDP 2002)." (IFRC 1 January 2003, p. 3)

The displaced families who have been granted new houses still retain their IDP status, which continues to entitle them to various privileges, such as subsidized public utilities and lower taxation (NRC 15 April 2003)

"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 and resettlement programmes

Government's resettlement scheme: beneficiaries include more than 3,000 families in camps (2001-2002)

- Two decrees in 2001 allocated resources from the State Oil Fund to the resettlement of some 3,000 displaced families
- Each family will be allocated a house of 5m² per family member, with a land plot and various inputs for agricultural activities

- Various infrastructures, such as roads, schools, health and community centres will also be built in the new villages
- The government has still not decided which assistance will be provided to displaced who can return to their villages of origin
- The government acknowledges that the new villages are permanent, although return remains an option for the future
- Government's attention focuses mainly on IDPs in rural areas and tend to overlook urban IDPs

"[...] 3485 families from the Belasovar camps, 4 of the 7 camps, and more than half of the Southern camps population will be resettled into two new villages that are now under construction and funded from the Azerbaijan State of Oil fund. Each family will be allocated a house of 5m² pr family member. Each family will also receive 1 cow or goat, 1 ha land for agriculture, 1 ha land for pasture, a grant of USD300 and a possibility of a loan of USD500.-

Under construction in each village are schools, health facilities, community centres, infrastructure such as post office and municipality office. Roads will be paved and water tap access less than 25m from each house. All houses have a small garden surrounded with one meter iron fence. Out door toilet facilities are with each house and sewage channels. Each family will have ownership of these houses.

These new settlements are allocated to families that previously came from Jabrail and Harama. Families living today in the camps that will be closed, and originating from other villages located in an area that has been liberated will not be granted the above as they are expected to return to their village of origin (22 villages in all). Authorities have no yet decided if any assistance will be given to these families but for many the homes are still in ruins and basic infrastructure such as water and irrigation has not been restored.

Similar resettlement community as Harama and Jabrial has already been opened last autumn near Ganza where camps were closed and IDPs resettled." (IFRC 9 April 2003)

"The IDP settlements the GoA is constructing draw from the settlement model of UNHCR. In some cases such as in Harami (Fizuli), they are actually an extension of UNHCR-financed settlement. However, whereas UNHCR's settlements had to still carry a nominal stamp of 'temporariness', the Government officials state quite openly that the settlements now being built are permanent. However, according to the authorities, when the peace comes and the return of IDPs becomes possible, 'the families will return, although some family members, such eldest son with his family, will stay in these IDP settlements'." (UNHCR 28 February 2003)

"In mid-2001, the President of Azerbaijan issued two decrees aiming at improving living conditions of the IDPs and 'refugees' [As the ethnic Azeri persons who fled Armenia early in the conflict over Nagorno Karabakh are automatically granted Azerbaijani citizenship law, these persons are not considered refugees in UNHCR terms.] from Armenia by allocating a total of some US\$ 35 mio for construction of IDP and 'refugee' settlements. The funds were allocated from the State Oil Fund (SOF). In practical terms, this would mean construction of settlements for some 1,700 ethnic Azeri 'refugee' families in Geranboy region of Azerbaijan. In addition, 1,300 family-houses will be built in Aghdam and Fizuli regions for the IDPs originating from the parts of these regions still under occupation. The construction started in December 2001 and is to be completed in the course of 2002. These presidential decrees mark an important change in the medium term policy of the Government of Azerbaijan (GoA) towards the IDPs in particular. UNHCR has for several years advocated for, through showing an example, local medium-term integration of the IDPs, who still almost a decade after their displacement languish in make-shift conditions that offer no prospects for normal life and self-sustenance. The decrees are a clear sign that the GoA recognizes UNHCR's concerns and makes an effort to put in wider practice the concepts advocated by UNHCR. In 2002 therefore there is no reason for UNHCR any longer to allocate its resources for setting up integrated *rural* settlements for IDPs.

However, in the urban context of Baku and Sumgait in particular, situation is very different. An estimated of 100,000 IDPs live in sub-human conditions in dilapidated or half completed public buildings, such as former school and factory dormitories, sanatoriums, etc. The GoA has requested UNHCR to concentrate its resources in the coming years to improving conditions of the IDPs residing in the urban areas." (UNHCR 17 September 2002)

IFRC Fizuli Repatriation Project supported the return of 160 families (2001-2002)

- Beside the reconstruction of houses, the project also included support to income-generation activities and community mobilization
- IFRC plans to facilitate the return of 140 families to a second village in the Fizuli area during 2002
- Insufficient demining effort may compromise the implementation of this second phase (January 2002)

"November 2001 marked the end of a Pilot Fizuli Rehabilitation and Repatriation Project started in March 1999 with funding support from TACIS, ECHO, the Japanese Red Cross, the Norwegian Government and Red Cross, and the Swiss Government through the Swiss Red Cross Society. The project facilitated the return of about 170 IDP families settled in the southern camps to their places of origin in the liberated Shukurbeyli village of Fizuli district. By the end of the reporting period, a total of 167 houses had been reconstructed, and some 160 families repatriated to Shukurbeyli. Within the Income Generation component of the programme, loans and credits were provided to offer some sustainability to the returnees. To date, a total of 112 loans were issued to support mainly agricultural activities, animal husbandry and other small-scale business activities. The average amount for loans granted was about \$1000. The German government through the German Red Cross secured funding for the reconstruction activities within the final phase of the Fizuli repatriation and rehabilitation programme. The Swedish government through the Swedish Red Cross funded the community development component of the programme (final phase) aimed at rehabilitation of community infrastructure in the village. Particular emphasis was put on meals on wheels, women committees and children support activities, which brought in a sense of community spirit amongst the returnees.

As of October 2001, a similar rehabilitation/repatriation project funded by the Norwegian government through the Norwegian Red Cross, SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) and the Swedish Red Cross was launched in another 'liberated' village of Fizuli district. The new project is designed to facilitate the return of some 140 IDP families originating from the village of Alkhanli, who currently live in the southern camps." (IFRC May 2002, p. 7)

"The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has been implementing the initial phase of the Alkhanli Repatriation and Rehabilitation Project. The Project started in October 2001 with funding support from Norwegian Government through the Norwegian Red Cross and the Swiss Government through SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) and the Swedish Government through the Swedish Red Cross. Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society (AzRC) has been closely involved in design and implementation of the programme.

All activities within the Project pre-implementation phase have been co-ordinated with ANAMA (Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Actions). To-date, preparations are being completed to start up the reconstruction of the first batch of houses (40 houses out of 140) scheduled to March 2002. Reconstruction of the houses will make possible the return of 40 internally displaced families currently settled in the Southern Camps (seven camps in Sabirabad, Saatly and Bilasuvar) to their places of origin in Alkhanli village.

Regretfully, according to a notice sent by ANAMA on 21 January 2002 all mine clearance activities in Alkhanli have been brought to a halt due to the lack of funding. Taking into consideration the above, the International Federation will be most likely forced to close down the Project originally designed to facilitate the return of 140 IDP families as soon as the reconstruction of the first 40 houses is completed." (IFRC 31 January 2002)

See also "IFRC: Assistance to IDPs in camps and support to return villages (2002)" [Internal link]

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 Abassov 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 to ARRA statistics, over 74 per cent of the loans in the Horadiz region went for purchasing livestock (particularly cattle and sheep). Fourteen per cent of the credits were employed for trading purposes, while 7 loans - 2 per cent - 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]

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](#)]

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).

Obstacles to return and resettlement

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)

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)

"Needs can be as great during initial resettlement as in the emergency phase: people return to fallow land and poorly maintained infrastructure and are faced with the costs of rebuilding their houses." (WFP 3 April 2002, para. 21)

"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)

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

General

NGOs complain about new legal regime regarding grants and social contributions (2002-2003)

- New "Law on Grants", in effect from January 2003, requires humanitarian organizations to pay 27 percent of employee wages to social funds
- It also requires organizations to notify authorities of grants they receive
- Despite some concessions made by the government, many believe that these new provisions will have an impact on projects on the ground

"Non-governmental organizations in Azerbaijan are attempting to force revisions in new legislation that they contend hampers their ability to function, and possibly may lead to lay-offs. Some NGO representatives believe the current organizing effort may strengthen the non-governmental sector over the longer term, even if the legislation produces short-term hardship.

The new Law on Grants, adopted by parliament in December, requires organizations to pay 27 percent of their employee wages into a fund for social insurance and pension contributions. It also requires all groups that give or receive grants to notify authorities of these grants. Advocates worry that this measure could crimp NGOs' work and enable the government to monitor and harass particular groups. The legislation came as a stinging blow to organized activists, who believed they had won a battle against registration requirements in the summer of 2002.

[...]

NGO employees picketed in central Baku protesting against the new measures on January 22. They have already won an assurance that the payroll tax will only affect agreements and grants that are signed after the law came into effect in January. This means that, in theory, organizations can budget for the additional contributions – if they can find donors to support the social-insurance cost. The government has also agreed to exempt projects supported under a bilateral agreement with the United States. Although this will benefit many projects, it will also mean administrative hassles for organizations that receive support from the United States and from other entities. Such organizations will have to pay contributions on some, but not all, of their funding.

[...]

Some NGO advocates express concern about the social insurance fund payments. While the government says the social insurance fund will serve the same altruistic goals that the organizations embrace, many fear the new provisions will compel organizations to lay off workers. Qasimov points out that the obligation can impose severe costs on organizations. Either employees' salaries will have to shrink, or donors will have to make bigger grants to NGOs. He adds that any reduction in salaries will mean that some of the best-qualified people may start looking for other jobs. Roughly 1,000 people work for NGOs in Azerbaijan.

[...]

The notification requirement is also a source of concern among many NGO representatives. Authorities have sought to quell such concerns, saying the existing requirement differs from the measure contemplated in 2002 by not mandating governmental registration of all grants. [...]. The new law, government officials say, will increase transparency by publicizing NGOs' funding sources. "It's just notification, not registration," says Nazim Isayev, deputy head of the social-political department in the presidential administration, who has worked on government-NGO relations for several years." (Eurasianet 24 February 2003)

See also "Azerbaijan: Taxing time for NGOs", Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 17 April 2003 [Internet]

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)

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

Legal framework and national policy

Legal framework protects IDPs and defines social benefits (1992-2001)

- Azerbaijan was the first of the former Soviet States to adopt a national law on internally displaced persons in 1992
- 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
- In practice, refugees and displaced persons reported having to pay for services that were supposed to be free to them under the law
- IDPs also complained about 'processing fees' perceived by local officials on their allowances
- Overall, 4.1 percent of the state budget for 2000 was allocated to refugees and IDPs, three times the 1998 amount
- 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).

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](#)]

Social protection:

"[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)

"Privileges for IDPs

- In accordance with the Special State Programme, IDPs are given plots for cultivation and pastures in rural areas. These lands are paid through state and municipal funds.
- Loans are given at lower interest rates.
- The government facilitates independent employment and encourages commercial and entrepreneurial activities.
- IDPs are not required to produce any previous employment record when they apply for jobs. During staff reduction programmes, they are given certain privileges.
- If they want to set up an independent business or engage in any entrepreneurial activity, they can get bank loans on favourable terms and conditions.
- If they are unable to work the state pays them social allowances which are equal in amount to the salary they would have received, irrespective of their years of service.
- IDPs are also assured certain privileges if the state privatizes machinery, institutions or enterprises in the occupied territories.
- In their areas of residence they are provided with free health services by medical establishments.
- They are exempt from paying tuition fees to the state's higher and secondary specialized schools and in secondary professional and technical educational establishments
- The costs of shifting from one residence to another is paid for by the state.
- IDPs are exempt from paying for the use of public utilities like water supply, gas, electricity and telephones.
- They are exempt from paying tax and state duties for driving licenses, technical passports, plate numbers or technical reviews of cars purchased before the 1st of July 1994.
- The average wages of IDPs, who worked in budget organizations which are not functional because of unavoidable reasons, are still paid for by the state
- IDP children are provided with free textbooks and teaching aid in all secondary schools." (UNDP 2000, p. 60)

"In May 1999, the government passed a law on the 'social protection of forcibly displaced persons and persons equated to them' which – on paper – grants refugees, internally displaced persons, and formerly deported Meskhetian Turks the same access to health care, primary and secondary education, and social services as citizens. However, in practice, refugees and displaced persons reported having to pay for the services – including schooling and medical care – that were supposed to be free to them under the law." (USCR 2002, Azerbaijan)

"The Government depends on international assistance to care for refugees and IDP's. The Government provided a minimal allowance to IDP's in the form of a bread allowance of \$4 (18,000 manats) per month per family as well as an additional \$2(9,000 manats) per month for each child. Many IDP's complained of 10 percent 'processing fees' by local officials, further reducing their already meager resources." (U.S. DOS 4 March 2002, sect. 2d)

"The Government of Azerbaijan considers the IDP question a top priority, for humanitarian and national security reasons. The September 1998 Presidential Decree, which focused on the displaced population, led to new levels of trust and cooperation between the Government and international organizations. The Government does what it can to provide a generous package of services to IDPs, including exemption from payment of utilities bills, a monthly cash subsidy and child allowance. The bread subsidy was tripled in 2001. Overall, 4.1 percent of the state budget for 2000 was allocated to refugees and IDPs, three times the 1998 amount." (WFP 3 April 2002, para. 16)

"By the end of 2001, another presidential decree had also been adopted, this time for abolishment of special social privileges (tax exemptions and free public utilities) of the IDPs and Azeri 'refugees'. The same decree also established minimum social benefit amounts to be paid to IDPs, Azeri 'refugees' and certain other special groups that were affected by the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. These decrees seem to have been aimed in normalizing the status of IDPs by bringing them closer to the rest of the population in terms of social benefits while at the same time reconfirming their special situation. They also abide to the orientations promoted by the IMF concerning subsidized utilities and tax collection." (UNHCR 17 September 2002)

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]

Other provisions:

"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).

Governmental institutions dealing with IDPs (1998-2002)

- 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).

See also [Brief information about the number of IDPs and refugees in the Republic of Azerbaijan and the government structures involved in the solution of their problems, Government of Azerbaijan, 14 November 2002 \[Internet\]](#)

IDPs integrated into the national poverty reduction strategy (2003)

- Poverty Alleviation Programme (Government of Azerbaijan with the support of the World Bank) foresees series of reform to tackle poverty among IDPs
- A new repatriation programme will be created, including the construction of new settlements for 5,000 displaced families
- It remains unsure that the plan will get sufficient support from donors

"Since September 1999, the World Bank Group (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have made nationally-owned participatory poverty reduction strategies (PRS) the basis of all their concessional lending. Worldwide, about 60 countries are currently engaged in developing or strengthening poverty reduction strategies to enhance the poverty effect of their policies. Azerbaijan is one of these countries.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) describe a country's macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programs to promote growth and reduce poverty, as well as associated external financing needs. PRSPs are prepared by governments through a participatory process involving civil society and

development partners, including the WB, the IMF, UN organizations, the European Union (EU), and the embassies and bilateral donor organizations of several individual countries.

There is no blueprint for a PRSP, and each country is required to work out its own approach and policy actions. However, there are certain key steps which are recommended. These are:

- Understanding the features of poverty and the factors that determine it;
- Choosing policy actions which have the greatest impact on poverty;
- Identifying indicators of progress and monitoring them in a participatory manner.

The Government of Azerbaijan prepared an **Interim PRSP**, which was approved by the WB and IMF in July 2001. Work on Azerbaijan's final State Programme on Poverty Reduction and Economic Development (SPPRED) was coordinated by the SPPRED Secretariat, based in the Ministry of Economic Development.

A workshop was held in Baku from 10-12 July to discuss the first draft of the policy matrix, which summarised the main policy actions envisaged in the SPPRED. Comments received during the workshop were used to make improvements to the policy matrix, and the draft SPPRED document. These were then reviewed by the 15 Sector Working Groups (SWGs) and all the government bodies which contributed to the document. Once the review was completed, and full government ownership ensured, the final document was circulated more widely in both Azeri and English languages.

Presentation of the final document took place on 25th October 2002, at the National Conference for the Presentation of the Poverty Reduction and Economic Development Programme, chaired by His Excellency Heydar Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and attended by over 560 participants from government and non government organisations, as well as representatives of international organisations and diplomatic representations.

The **SPPRED** was approved by the **Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan** His Excellency Heydar Aliyev on 20 February 2003." (Government of Azerbaijan 2003)

"The SPPRED that covers a period of 3 years (2003-2005) and it will be revised annually in line with monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of the envisaged policy measures.

The Programme provides estimates of existing poverty and an examination of the causes of poverty; defines main directions of institutional reforms aimed at reducing poverty in economic and social spheres; and emphasizes the need to tackle the problems faced by the most vulnerable groups of the population, including refugees and IDPs.

Implementation of these measures outlined in the State Programme on Poverty Reduction and Economic Development will lead to increased income-generation opportunities, improvements in the system of social protection, the introduction of targeted social benefits to the most needy strata of the population, increased quality of education and health care services, and improved living standards for refugees and IDPs. (Government of Azerbaijan 2003, pp. 7-8)

"In the refugees and IDPs activity plan it is anticipated that a new repatriation program will be created. The rehabilitation of the liberated areas, housing for 1.722 families in Goranboy and Nachivan, construction of new resettlements for 5.019 families currently housed in tent camps and railway cars. Upgrading infrastructure in IDP camps, addressing the employment problems of IDPs, education and health care.

Although World Bank, International Monetary Fund and Asian Development Bank have committed to providing funding for the PRSP and goals expected to be reached by end of the year 2005 there is still a funding gap to be covered.

US government is supporting through USAIDS with considerable funding. This funding is earmarked for sustainable development activities and are aimed at general population and not specifically IDPs." (IFRC April 2003)

More information on the [State Programme on Poverty Reduction](#) can be found on the website of the Ministry of Economic Development [Internet]

Details on measures and actions planned on behalf of refugees and IDPs, see also [Appendix 1 to the State Programme](#), p. 33 [Internet]

State devotes increasing resources to improve social-economic conditions of IDPs (2002)

- Decrees in 2001 and 2002 demonstrate new government strategy of normalizing the situation of IDPs
- In 2002, some US\$ 40 million have been allocated for the building of IDP settlements and US\$ 6 million for food assistance, besides other social payments
- Despite these efforts, approximately 60-70,000 IDPs continued to live in camps at below-subsistence levels

"The GoA gave further signals on pursuing a new strategy of 'normalizing' the situation of the IDPs through several important Presidential Decrees in the course of the year. Changes were made to the special privileges that the IDPs and the refugees from Armenia (ARM) had, such as replacing the exemptions from utility fees with financial support for such fees (Dec 2001 / Jan 2002). An additional (to those issued in 2001) decree was also issued to allocate funds from the State Oil Fund for the construction of settlements in Bilasuvar and Fizuli for 1,300 IDP families currently living in camps in Bilasuvar region. These measures can be interpreted as a de-facto local integration of the displaced populations, in the absence of peace settlement in the NK conflict and return of the IDPs." (UNHCR February 2003)

"Since 2000, the State budget provided for a yearly average of \$40 million assistance to IDP, which is channeled through the State Committee for Refugee and IDP (SCR). Following Presidential decrees adopted in the last semester of 2001 and in 2002, resources amounting to some \$70 million, drawn from the State Oil Fund (funded from tax and oil exports) are allocated, through the SCR, to IDP assistance in 2002 and 2003 in particular to the construction of large permanent settlements meant to accommodate over 3000 IDP families still living in the large IDP camps which were until recently assisted by international NGOs." (UNHCR February 2003)

"The Presidential Decrees concerning 'normalizing' the situation of the IDPs referred to above [...] amount de facto to local integration of IDPs. The resources the GoA has mobilized for this purpose are considerable (some US\$ 40 million for construction and of IDP settlements and US\$ 6 million for food assistance in 2002 alone, besides continuing various social payments to the IDPs). These resources are especially significant in view of the opposite trend of the volume of humanitarian aid provided by the international community, including UNHCR." (UNHCR February 2003)

"Currently about 357,000 IDPs are provided with food assistance. About 143,000 of them are provided with assistance by UNWFP (the programme was prolonged to the end of 2005), and 214,000 by the state (until the end of this year). UNHCR is financing local and international organisations and coordinating their activities to improve housing, water supply and sanitation, income generation, health status of IDPs etc. Despite budget limits, each IDP and permanently settled refugee is paid 25,000 AZM (5.2 USD) a month as a food subsidy.

As a result of substitution of privileges for subsidies for permanently settled refugees and IDPs since early 2002, 15,000 AZM (3.1 USD) monthly subsidy per person is directly transferred to the utility companies from the state budget." (Government of Azerbaijan 2003, p. 106)

"The Government depends on international assistance to care for refugees and IDPs. The Government transferred \$39 million (188.8 billion manats) from the country's oil fund to the country's IDP and Refugees Committee to improve the social and economic conditions of refugees and IDPs. Of that total, \$550,000 (2.7 billion manats) was provided monthly to IDPs for food. The Government provided individual IDPs \$5 (25,000 manat) per family member per month for food and 6 liters of fuel per family per month. The Government also provided sugar, rice, sunflower oil, and oil to each IDP in camps in the regions where international NGOs no longer provided assistance. International assistance to the refugee and IDP population continued to decline. Approximately 60-70,000 IDPs continued to live in camps at below-subsistence levels, without adequate food, housing, education, sanitation, or medical care." (U.S. DOS 31 March 2003, sect. 2d)

See also Refugees International, "Political pawns: continued hardship for Azerbaijan's IDPs", 5 November 2002

Government uses oil money to fund humanitarian assistance to the displaced (2001-2002)

- President of Azerbaijan ordered State Oil Company to contribute to the budget of the State Committee for Refugees in 2001 and 2002
- Money is planned to be spent on food assistance
- Decrees were also adopted to use money from Azerbaijan's Oil Fund to support resettlement programmes for IDPs

"President Heidar Aliiev 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]

"In May 2002 the President of Azerbaijan issued two decrees to improve socio-economic and shelter conditions of IDPs. These steps were taken within the state program to improve socio-economic circumstances of IDPs. The first decree aims to provide food to 157,258 IDPs. Within this decree the State Oil Company will grant \$550,000 on a monthly basis to the State Committee for Refugees (SCR).

The second decree is designed to resettle 3719 IDP families (15,500 IDPs) from five refugee camps in Bilesuvar and provide them with shelter and economic assistance. In the frame of this decree the president has allotted \$39,500,000 from the Oil Fund of Azerbaijan to the State Committee for Refugees. It its turn the SCR will establish six settlements in Haramli region of Fizuli and thirteen settlements in Bilesovar district in the area between state border with Iran and the Azizbayov channel. Each settlement is designed for 200 families. New settlements are planned to be ready by the end of 2003. The government plans to cover all transportation costs of resettled IDPs and provide them with financial, land and other means in support of agricultural activities in the new settlements." (Mercy Corps June 2002)

See also:

"[Presidential decree made public](#)", 13 May 2002 [Internet], and "[Presidential decree issued](#)", 14 May 2002 [Internet], Azertag

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, "[Azerbaijan's state oil fund to finance housing for displaced persons](#)", 14 June 2002 [Internet]

"Apart from United Nations and non-governmental organization (NGO) investments, the Government has attracted funding from the private sector, notably an AGIP Azerbaijan donation of US\$2.2 million in 2000 to improve the living conditions of IDPs and refugees." (WFP 3 April 2002, para. 17)

The Social Fund for Development of IDPs (2000-2002)

- 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 provides loans to IDP entrepreneurs

"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 response 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)

"In June 2002 the Social Fund for Development of IDPs (SFDI) has selected the last organizations to provide financial services to IDP entrepreneurs. They will credit IDPs in Baku, Sumgait, Absheron, Khizi, Siyazan, Devechi, Guba, Gusar and Khachmaz. These organizations include two credit unions, Nicat and Komek and international humanitarian organization, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

SFDI selected organizations to offer credit to IDPs in southern regions in March 2002. They were Finca, Relief International, World Vision, and credit unions including Agro-invest. Alinazarli and Amin.

SFDI's financial services project plans to increase Employment Opportunities for IDPs and will use \$2.1 million out of Fund's \$10 million for providing loans to IDPs. These projects will continue until March 2003. The loan amount within these projects is expected to range between \$500 and \$2000." (Mercy Corps July 2002)

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](#)]

Government provides some support to the displaced farmers (2001-2002)

- Land allocated to IDPs and refugees has been in marginal, drought-stricken areas
- Government also plans to grant loans to the displaced farmers (October 2001)

"To date, over 47,000 ha of land have been allocated to collective and individual farms in order to develop agricultural programmes for IDPs and refugees. But because this land has often been in marginal, drought-stricken areas, production has been minimal." (WFP 3 April 2002, para. 17)

"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)

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](#)]

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)

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]

International response

UNHCR redirects its financial resources from IDPs to refugees (2002-2003)

- UNHCR has concentrated its efforts on the needs of IDPs in urban areas
- In 2002, UNHCR planned to improve living conditions for some 4,000 urban IDPs living in public buildings
- Financial constraints obliged UNHCR to reduce the targeted beneficiaries to 2,500 IDPs
- Community mobilization programmes have also been implemented in 16 IDP schools in Baku and Sumgait
- Distribution of non-food items to IDPs in various regions of Azerbaijan has also been organized
- By the end of June 2003, 10 "Quick Implementation Programmes" with average value of US\$10,000 are to be completed
- Danish Refugee Council oversees micro-credit programmes
- 2002 has seen a significant shift of UNHCR attention from IDPs to asylum seekers and refugees
- In 2003, UNHCR will continue to promote durable solutions for IDPs and provide technical expertise to relevant state authorities

2002 activities:

"The draft conclusions of the WB poverty assessment survey carried out in 2002 [...] confirm that UNHCR's decision to target the urban IDPs in 2002 was well-based. Indeed, the integrated Public Building Rehabilitation (PBR) and the community-based primary education programme are addressing directly some of the key needs among urban IDPs that the survey shows have been left without sufficient attention in the previous efforts of the Government and the international community. Since the last survey in 1995-6, the poverty has 'migrated' to the cities but the humanitarian assistance programs (with a few exceptions) have not.

The integrated PBR project of 2002 aimed at improving in a sustainable and participatory way the living conditions of 4,000 IDPs living in 15 derelict large public buildings originally not meant for residential use in Sumgait (a twin-city of Baku). However, during the autumn, this target had to be reduced to 2,500 IDPs / 10 buildings, due to the financial problems of UNHCR. The basic concept of the project was to mobilize the communities in the target buildings to address their problems and to rehabilitate the buildings to an acceptable local standard with the communities direct participation. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) organized the winterization (doors, windows, roof repair) and health- and safety-related works (building of missing communal sanitation and water facilities, cooking areas, fire-escapes, etc.). With its local NGO partner 'Buta', NRC helped the community to set up basic management structure for the maintenance of the buildings, as well as to set up children's, youth and women's action groups that can improve the wellbeing of the community on a long term. UNHCR's local NGO partner 'Umid' provided an opportunity for 49 young IDPs and other disadvantaged young people living in the area to learn a trade through an apprenticeship programme in local enterprises.

Under the 2nd main activity in 2002 targeting IDPs, UNHCR's two long-term local IPs 'Hayat International' and 'Umid' mobilized the communities around 16 IDP schools in Baku and in Sumgait to address the rehabilitation and other needs of the school community. This was done by setting up or strengthening the Teacher/Parent Associations (TPAs) and with them, identifying and addressing priority rehabilitation needs of the schools. The rehabilitation requires creative thinking because often, the IDP schools are located in whatever building was vacant at the time of the displacement, such as administrative buildings or yard buildings of local schools. In most schools, the TPA also organized a small library for the students. This programme was selected by Statoil as the target for their donation to UNHCR (US\$ 50,000) in 2002.

As in previous years, UNHCR provided humanitarian assistance items to IDPs in various regions of Azerbaijan, through a logistics operation managed by the local NGO partner Umid. The items were donated by two INGOs: US-based Lutheran World Relief and UK-based Samaritan's Purse. All together, some 77,000 (62% of whom children) IDPs and other poor persons received one or more of the following items: quilts/blankets, (2nd hand) clothes, shoes, baby kits, hygiene kits, student kits, sewing kits and children's New Year gifts. In addition, in June the Government appealed to UNHCR to provide emergency shelter assistance to house IDPs living in Bilasuvar camps no. 4 and 5 which had been badly damaged by the unusually heavy rains making the mud-brick houses collapse. UNHCR provided its whole stock of 382 tents and 120 plastic sheets from the Baku warehouse for distribution in the affected camps by the local ExCom and the Police Department. A new donation was received from the Lutheran World Relief in September and from the Samaritan's Purse in December, which will allow non-food distributions of basic items to continue in 2003.

The negotiations between IRC and UNHCR at country level on how to use the funds from the dismantled micro-credit fund were finally completed. IRC started the community mobilization and trainings preceding the QIPs implementation in IDP communities in Agjabedi, Barda, etc. selected jointly by UNHCR and IRC through competitive process. By the end of June 2003, all 10 QIPs with average value of US\$10,000 (including 25% by the community as their contribution in labour, cash or materials) are to be completed. The communities have also gained important experience from proposing and managing social investment projects and will be able to apply for funding from the two social investment funds (WB/GoA and USAID) operating in Azerbaijan.

DRC was among the first NGOs to complete the registration of a non-banking credit organization according to the newly set up procedure. By the end of 2002, the final step in establishing an independent micro-credit organization, i.e. obtaining the banking licence from the National Bank of Azerbaijan, had not yet been completed. The new micro-credit organization will manage the consolidated portfolio of UNHCR and DANIDA of some US\$ 540,000, under the oversight of DRC.

The Field staff of UNHCR had to spend considerable part of their time in 2002 to help the implementer (SCR) to complete the Lachin Wintergrounds drinking water project that was supposed to be finalized as part of the ENI Group / Agip-funded project in 2000-2001. The delays in the project were due to lack of both technical and contracts management capacities of the IP. In Nov 2002, the water scheme was finally completed and inaugurated. Some 5,500 IDPs from the occupied area of Lachin now living in their traditional winter pasture area in Agjabedi region have access to safe drinking water, thanks to this project." (UNHCR February 2003)

"In 2002, UNHCR Branch Office in Baku undertook a deep shift of activities from IDP oriented assistance to asylum seekers/refugee protection and assistance. This shift resulted from four main factors: a) a sizeable increase, in the course of 2001, of asylum seekers in Azerbaijan coming essentially from North Caucasus b) reinforced cooperation with the Government of Azerbaijan (GoA) on refugee protection matters c) significant increase in the Government financial involvement in improving IDP living conditions d) significant shortage of funds which led UNHCR Branch Office to prioritize refugee/asylum seeker assistance as opposed to IDP assistance through reallocation of resources between the two sectors. This shift of focus occurred on a background situation marked, at the regional level, by a wide operation of

repatriation of Afghan refugees from various asylum countries, very negative developments in Russia concerning the Chechnya issue, which culminated with the hostage taking in Moscow and the closure of IDP camps in Ingushetia, a significant decline of international attention towards the negotiations over the Nagorno Karabakh conflict as it became obvious that no progress could be envisaged before the end of 2003 when presidential elections in Armenia (February) and Azerbaijan (October) will have been carried out." (UNHCR February 2003)

Plans for 2003:

"Given the uncertainties surrounding the outcome of the negotiation process over the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, and in view of the as yet limited impact of the 2001 presidential decrees allocating substantial governmental resources to improve the life of IDPs and refugees, UNHCR continues to promote long-term measures aimed at raising IDP living conditions to match those of the rest of the population. In parallel, UNHCR is maintaining its part of an inter-agency contingency plan, drawn up to cover the eventuality that IDPs return to their regions of origin. Lastly, UNHCR, together with the World Bank and UNDP as well as relevant governmental bodies, is providing technical advice to ensure that the specific needs of IDPs are included in the Poverty Reduction Strategy promoted by the IMF and the World Bank." (UNHCR December 2002, p. 230)

WFP has provided assistance to the displaced population since 1994 (2002)

- WFP is mainly responsible for over half the rural caseload
- A substantial decrease in the relief caseload was foreseen but expectations were optimistic
- WFP continues to assist some 165,000 IDPs in rural areas in 2003

"Since WFP started its operation in 1994, the IDP population has remained 600,000. Of these, at least half have migrated to cities, where their survival chances are better because they have greater access to services and employment opportunities. The remainder live in rural areas and small towns. Many live in makeshift shelter such as dugouts and railway wagons.

Areas of responsibility are divided among humanitarian agencies, with WFP responsible for over half the rural caseload. Between 1994 and 1999, WFP provided 52,000 tons of food aid to 215,000 beneficiaries through emergency operation (EMOP) 5302. In line with the recommendations of the 1999 assessment mission, EMOP 5302 was superseded by protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) 6121.00 in July 1999, which had duration of three years.

Under that PRRO, a substantial decrease in the relief caseload was foreseen as recovery activities started. Expectations were optimistic, however. Although pilot food-for-work (FFW) activities were attempted, the economic prospects for self-sufficiency were poor, implementation capacity was insufficient and non-food inputs were not forthcoming." (WFP 3 April 2002, paras. 11-13)

"WFP assisted some 140,000 beneficiaries in 2001. Between January-February 2002, WFP provided a total of 2,173 tons of food assistance to 134,411 beneficiaries, which includes 133,597 IDPs and 814 other vulnerable people.

Problems

Due to pipeline breaks, in March the ration of pulses and sugar was reduced by half, and no oil was distributed. In addition, sugar was excluded from the food basket in April. Despite the recent confirmation of additional contributions, the resourcing situation of the PRRO for Azerbaijan remains critical. Should a shipment of wheat flour be delayed, in June WFP would face another break in the cereal pipeline. As of 30 April, over 88 percent of total PRRO requirements had been pledged, leaving a shortfall of 5,538 tons of food." (WFP 10 May 2002)

PRRO 6121.00 (1 July 1999 to 30 June 2002)

First year: beneficiaries and food requirements (in tons)

Beneficiary type	No of beneficiaries	food requirements (total)
IDPs	200 000	19 710
Vulnerable groups	5 000	493
Returnees	5 000	493
FFW and FFT	5 000	1 125
Total	215 000	21 450

Second year: beneficiaries and food requirements (in tons)

Beneficiary type	No of beneficiaries	food requirements (in tons)
IDPs	120 000	11 826
Vulnerable groups	5 000	493
Returnees	15 000	365
FFW and FFT	10 000	2 250
Total	150 000	14 934

Third year: beneficiaries and food requirements (in tons)

Beneficiary type	No of beneficiaries	food requirements (in tons)
IDPs	70 000	6 899
Vulnerable groups	5 000	493
Returnees	30 000	729
FFW and FFT	15 000	3 375
Total	120 000	11 496

(WFP 28 April 1999, para. 38)

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) 1 January 2003-31 December 2005

"In the first year of the programme, WFP will support 165,000 of the 300,000 IDPs and other vulnerable people in rural areas, with a gradual reduction to 122,000 in the third year. Self-sufficiency for most IDPs is unrealistic in the current context of poor employment prospects and limited government social funds. WFP will provide each person with 50 percent of minimum nutritional requirements and explore employment-generation and training schemes suitable for this relatively well educated population. Primary school feeding will be introduced and preschool caregivers will receive incentives and training. Income-generation schemes will be supported where marketing opportunities exist.

WFP's efficient distribution system has entailed minimum loss or misuse of commodities and will continue to serve a target population in 23 of Azerbaijan's 58 districts. The programme objectives are to contribute to maintaining acceptable nutritional status among IDPs and other vulnerable groups, provide an incentive for school attendance and prevent primary schoolchildren, especially girls, from dropping out, contribute to improving IDPs' living conditions, strengthen their coping capacities and create assets through training and income generation.[...] An optimistic medium-term economic outlook suggests that WFP may be able significantly to reduce free distribution after the three-year period." (WFP 3 April 2002, p. 3)

"PRRO 10168 ["Targeted Food Assistance for Relief and Recovery of Displaced Persons and Vulnerable Groups in Azerbaijan"] commenced on 1 January. The PRRO will promote food security among vulnerable groups, particularly in rural areas with high concentrations of IDPs, through primary school feeding and employment-generating schemes. In January and February [2003], WFP provided 1,780 tons of food

assistance to 132,270 beneficiaries, including 131,540 IDPs and 730 other vulnerable individuals. A total of 53 percent of beneficiaries were women." (WFP 14 March 2003)

**TABLE 1: BENEFICIARIES AND RELATED TONNAGES
(1 January 2003 to 31 December 2005)**

Programme component ¹	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Total (3 years)
	No. of beneficiaries	Tonnage	No. of beneficiaries	Tonnage	No. of beneficiaries	Tonnage	Tonnage
Protracted relief	162 200	15 883	138 800	13 591	114 700	11 231	40 705
Primary school feeding	1 500	204	2 000	273	2 500	341	818
Recovery (EGS, preschool caregivers, income generation, FFT) ²	1300	243	2 700	479	4 800	842	1 564
Total	165 000	16 330	143 500	14 343	122 000	12 414	43 087

¹ WFP's target is to reach at least 60 percent female beneficiaries under relief, 65 percent under all sub-components of the recovery, and 50 percent under income generation.

² The ration for income generation is based on five persons per family.

(WFP 3 April 2002, para. 39)

Asian Development Bank funds resettlement programme for IDPs (2002)

- 2.5 million US\$ has been granted by the Government of Japan to relocate 400 displaced households in Mingechevir
- To implement the project, the Government is providing the equivalent of about US\$100,000 for the provision of infrastructure for the settlement
- The NGO World Vision is in charge of the project

"The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed an agreement to help internally displaced persons (IDPs) integrate into the social mainstream in Mingechevir, one of the poorest regions in Azerbaijan. A grant of US\$2.5 million will be provided for the project from ADB's Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR), financed by the Government of Japan.

The project (Integration of Internally Displaced Persons in Mingechevir) will address one of the main objectives of ADB operations in the country: providing assistance to IDPs, who are among the poorest and most vulnerable of Azerbaijan's population.

The project will support a pilot project to relocate about 400 IDP households, currently crowded into a number of schools and public buildings, to a new settlement area, using community-based approaches. In addition to the settlement construction, schools vacated by the IDPs will be rehabilitated. The relocated families will be provided with income-generating opportunities to improve their livelihood after the relocation.

Poverty in Azerbaijan rose to 50 percent of the population during the last decade, with very high levels among IDPs, who are especially vulnerable because many come from rural areas and have few of the skills needed for urban living.

To implement the project, the Government is providing the equivalent of about US\$100,000 for the provision of off-site infrastructure for the settlement. The State Committee for Refugees and IDPs will oversee the implementation of the project. The project will be implemented by an international NGO, World Vision Azerbaijan." (Asian Development Bank 14 November 2002)

See the project document "Proposed Grant Assistance to the Republic of Azerbaijan for the Integration of Internally Displaced Persons in Minegechevir Rayon Project", December 2001 [Internet]

See also Urban Water Supply and Sanitation, a project of the Asian Development Bank to improve access to water supply and sanitation in secondary towns with IDP population [Internet]

The Council of Europe monitors the situation of the displaced population (2002-2003)

- Parliamentary Assembly and Human Rights Commissioner recommend the implementation of durable solutions for IDPs

"The PACE's Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography's June [2002] report on the situation of refugees and displaced persons in the South Caucasus, and the comments of Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Alvaro Gil-Robles during his September [2002] visit to Azerbaijan conveyed to the government that it had responsibility to elaborate and implement durable solutions including integration for its internally displaced without further delay, and to refrain from using them as an argument for political aims." (HRW 2002, Azerbaijan)

See also:

"Situation of refugees and displaced persons in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia", report by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, 4 June 2002 [Internet]

Recommendation 1570 (2002) adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 27 June 2002 [Internet]

Reply to the Parliamentary Assembly by the Committee of Ministers, 14 February 2003 [Internet]

Donor involvement likely to decrease further (2000-2002)

- Level of donor involvement is unlikely to increase significantly unless either a peace agreement is signed with Armenia 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)

"International humanitarian funding for Azerbaijan has been decreasing for several years. UNHCR's annual appeal for Azerbaijan decreased 61 percent from \$12 million for 1999 to \$4.7 million for 2000; its actual budget in 2000 was \$4 million. In 2001 the budget slipped to \$3.9 million. The World Food Program continued to provide food aid, but to a reduced number of beneficiaries." (USCR 2002, Azerbaijan)

Planned budget for UNHCR in 2002 is US\$ 2.7, according to the appeal for 2002 (UNHCR November 2001, p. 179)

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]

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 Millennium 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 IDPs 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, 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 de-mining 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 demining 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)

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]

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).

Selected activities of the Red Cross movement

IFRC: Assistance to IDPs in camps and support to return villages (2002)

- IFRC has been managing 7 IDP camps in southern Azerbaijan since 1994
- It has developed psychosocial rehabilitation projects for children in camps and return areas
- The role of women committees in camps and return villages and camps has also been strengthened
- 167 houses have been rehabilitated in 2001 in the village of Shurkurbeyli (Fizuli district) for displaced living in camps
- Another programme of village rehabilitation for 140 IDP families returning to was launched in October 2001
- Sustainability of the rehabilitated villages is enhanced through community mobilization, micro-credit schemes, and support to agricultural activities
- Efforts are made to develop a capacity within the Azeri Red Crescent Society to implement projects of assistance and social or legal counseling to IDPs

The largest camps were in Baku/Sumgait, Barda as well as the so called Southern Camps (Belasovar, Satli and Sabirabad) which were set up in 1992 with the assistance of the Iranian Red Crescent. The management of these southern camps was taken over by the International Red Cross Federation in 1994. These camps consist of 7 camps with a total population of over 32,000 persons. (IFRC April 2003)

"Under the Swedish Red Cross funded Community Development (CD) Programme in the Southern Camps, the Federation continued to provide support to the Sabirabad RC Center staff and volunteers in their regular activities within the six small projects, namely 'Meals on Wheels', 'Children Support Project' (CSP), 'Women Committees' (WC), 'Skills Training Centres' (STC), 'Special Assistance Project' (SAP) and 'Training for the National Society'.

Within the Children Support component, further efforts were made to ensure efficiency of the project implementation through developing capacities and skills of the CSP volunteers. Experts from BUTA (local NGO) were invited to deliver training on psycho-social rehabilitation of children to the CSP volunteers involved in organizing the IDP children's out-of-school activities in the four circles (fine arts, drama, sports and folklore) in all seven camps and Shukurbeyli village of Fizuli district. During the reporting months, the

project volunteers assisted the National Society in arranging various community activities in the camps. A number of concerts linked to national holidays and celebrations were organized in all seven camps, where the CSP circles' attendants performed role-play shows, dances and songs.

Contributions made by Exxon Azerbaijan and the Norwegian Embassy made it possible to continue with a monthly distribution of a total of 1,000 copies of the "Shakar Villasi" children newspaper to the IDP children in 18 schools and six CSP centers in the Southern Camps as well as to those in the Shukurbeyli village school (Fizuli district). One of the topics covered by the newspaper over the reported period was a Countrywide Championship linked to the Peace Education Programme, where the Children Boxing team from camp C3 won two medals.

The Federation's and national society Community Development staff continued to provide training to the Women Committees aimed at strengthening their role as the leaders for self-help activities within the community. Particular emphasis was put on training for the Women Committee in the newly rehabilitated village of Shukurbeyli of the Fizuli district, where the Committee is relatively new compared to those in the camps. The national society Sabirabad Regional Center CD staff organized a series of workshops on community mobilization, effective meetings and self-reliance, as well as on the Red Cross/Red Crescent fundamental principles and humanitarian values for the Women Committees both in Shukurbeyli and in the camps. During April 2002, Women Committees in all seven camps and in Shukurbeyli were closely involved in identification of beneficiaries for the Swedish RC donated used clothes distribution, which was completed by the end of May 2002 and covered a total of 3,040 most vulnerable IDPs. Within the final phase of the Special Assistance Project, Women Committees in two camps mobilized communities for the construction of latrines for the three most vulnerable project beneficiaries. During the concerned period, the Women Committees in the camps initiated the First Community Groups Meeting, which marked starting of what is planned to be a regular coordination meeting aimed to bring together various community groups to share problems, plans and lessons learned. Skills Training Centers Project continues to train young people in the camps on various skills through the courses such as 'sewing', 'knitting', 'hairdressing', 'shoe making' and 'mechanics', which are at the moment operated by 10 instructors and have capacity to train 19 students during a time period. Over the reporting months, a total of 38 young people in two camps (C1 and C6) graduated from different courses operating within the project. In March 2002, the project trainees displayed their handmade works such as carpets, saddlebags, socks, cushions, etc. on a Sales Exhibition organized in Imishli by CHF staff. Some of the displayed items were purchased by the visitors.

[...]

With the rehabilitation of 167 houses (against 160 originally planned), construction works within the two-year Shukurbeyli Rehabilitation and Repatriation Project successfully came to an end by the beginning of the year 2002. New Rehabilitation and Repatriation (RR) Project designed to facilitate return of some 140 IDP families from the Southern Camps to their homes of origin in the village of Alkhanli of Fizuli district was launched in October 2001. To reporting date, the construction of the first batch of 14 houses has been completed, while preparations for the construction of the second batch of 14 houses is ongoing with the cooperation and input of the returnees responsible for the actual construction work. A so-called Construction Council aimed at facilitating the implementation of the project was set up to ensure cooperation and coordination among all parties involved. A total of five members of the Construction Council represent the IDPs settled both in the Southern Camps and in Alkhanli, as well as the local authorities (Administration of the village), the National Society (chairman of the RC local branch) and the Federation (Field Delegate). Implementation of the project is being closely coordinated with the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Actions (ANAMA), which had finished mine clearance of the areas for the construction of the first 40 houses by mid February 2002. Mapping of the area earmarked for construction of the next 100 houses was completed by the project staff and forwarded to ANAMA for further actions.

The Community Mobilization initiative within the framework of the Federation's operation in Fizuli continued to focus on developing a sense of community spirit and implementing a number of community based activities among the returnees in the rehabilitated village of Shukurbeyli. Regular community meetings have been held to identify main concerns in the village. The Income Generation component of the Fizuli programme continued to regularly monitor the repayment of 112 loans given to the IDPs repatriated

to Shukurbeyli. While the issue of final installment of funds by ECHO for continuation of the loan/credit scheme for repatriates is still pending, the Federation has been receiving a huge number of new applications for loans from the returnees.

With the financial assistance of the Exxon Azerbaijan Operating Company LLC (Exxon Azerbaijan), the Southern Camps Agriculture Project continues to support some 282 small holders (1,338 family members) organized through a total of seven Small Holders Committees. By the end of February 2002, the irrigation of winter wheat that was sown in the autumn and the first application of nitrogen were completed. The distribution of oil and diesel for irrigation purposes was carried out in those camps that rely upon the six water pumps, purchased last year. In June 2002, the winter wheat was harvested, with yields surpassing expected results (3.6 - 4.3 ton/ha). Over the reported period, a considerable amount of machinery, equipment and mobile buildings were purchased within the framework of the Exxon Azerbaijan funded Food Processing Project. These purchases will allow for the packing, grading, storage and distribution of fresh fruit and vegetables to the local market, and possibly direct contracts with the major catering companies that operate in Azerbaijan. Further efforts were made to ensure the project's sustainability in the long term, with the focus placed on training of the beneficiaries. "Farmer to Farmer" technical assistance provided to the Agriculture Project in the beginning of March by a ACDI/VOCA research agronomist, marked the first round of the scheduled regular training for the Small Holders Committees. Further training was delivered by CHF to the small holders in C4, Gravel Factory and Bahramtapa.

[...]

The Population Movement (PM) programme continues to develop a capacity within the AzRC to implement projects aimed at providing assistance and social or legal counseling to the displaced. Within the Skills Development component of the programme, the six-month English language and computer skills training courses were launched as of January 2002 at the AzRC HQ. Six persons were contracted to work in the capacity of instructors for the so-called vocational courses targeting a total of 30 young IDPs and refugees aged between 16-25, as well as a group of the AzRC volunteers. Also, paid courses were initiated for general public to ensure self-sustainability of the project in future. Income generated through the paid courses made it possible to partly cover the salaries of instructors.

Over the reported period, further efforts were made to expand activities within the Population Movement programme to the regions through the AzRC regional centers and local branches. Seminars were held in Ganja, Mingachevir, Agjabedi and Barda for the staff and volunteers of the regional centres and their local branches to train them on the tools of conducting a survey amongst the IDPs to assess their living conditions and needs. Red Crescent instructors were provided with six questionnaires to be filled in by their target groups. Joint activities of the AzRC PM and Relief departments and the national society Sabirabad Regional Center's staff and volunteers made it possible to organize the two-day New Year festivities and arrange for distribution of the New Year Food parcels to some 1,200 IDP children in the Southern Camps.

With financial assistance from the US State Department Bureau for Population and Refugee Movement (BPRM), Psycho-Social Rehabilitation of IDPs project continued to support the development of various community activities such as knitting, sewing, carpet weaving and art exhibitions, covering a total of nine IDP settlements in six districts of Baku area (Binagadi, Azizbekov, Yasamal, Nasimi, Absheron and Surakhani). The community centres involved in the project have been regularly provided with required supplies for their activities. Currently, the project targets some 231 predominantly female beneficiaries (192 children and 39 adults). Efforts are being made to keep a balanced approach through involving the IDP boys into activities, such as making some simple tools and equipment for knitting/sewing, etc. This, it is believed, will contribute to a psycho-social rehabilitation process of the children. IDP communities have been encouraged to organise cultural and other communal activities in conformity with the specific conditions of their areas. A sales exhibition of handicrafts made by the IDPs settled in Mingachevir, Barda, Agjabedi and Ganja was organized at the end of May in Baku. Though no considerable money was made through the sales of IDPs' handmade items, the exhibition however served to increase the self-reliance among IDPs and public awareness of IDP issues." (IFRC 21 August 2002)

See also:

- [IFRC Appeal 2003-2004 for Azerbaijan \[Internet\]](#)
- [IFRC, "Azerbaijan's displaced children", 13 August 2002 \[Internet\]](#)
- [IFRC, Programme Update, Caucasus: Armenia and Azerbaijan, 9 January 2003 \[Internet\]](#)

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): one the few non-indigenous organizations working in Nagorno-Karabakh (2002-2003)

- ICRC focuses on missing persons and detainees in connection to the conflict
- Mine awareness and dissemination of humanitarian law programmes are also implemented
- In Nagorno-Karabakh, main efforts are done in the health sector

"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).

"In Armenia and Azerbaijan, the ICRC focuses on addressing the consequences of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, including the missing persons issue and the problems of detainees who are held in connection with the conflict or otherwise vulnerable. Other priorities are to control the spread of tuberculosis (TB) in prisons and build up local capacities in the areas of health care and physical rehabilitation. The ICRC is also carrying out mine awareness work and promoting the incorporation of international humanitarian law (IHL) into national legislation, military training and school and university curricula." (ICRC 30 June 2002, p. 268)

ICRC plans in Nagorno Karabakh for 2003

"In Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC will maintain part of its primary health care programme throughout 2003, by delivering medicines and dressing materials to selected health facilities in the Mardakert/Agdara, Martuni/Khocavend and Hadrut districts. Training in war surgery for leading surgeons will once again be offered, coupled with an impact assessment of such training. The IRRC handed the community-based mine awareness programme over to the local partner in 2002. Its involvement is low limited to monitoring and providing technical advice until the end of 2002. In 2003, it will start a project to build safe playgrounds for children in mine-affected areas. In addition, the ICRC will continue, on an ad hoc basis, to distribute small-scale food and other assistance to vulnerable people without any source of income." (ICRC December 2002, p. 222)

See also "Back Home in Azerbaijan", 10 February 2003 [Internet]

Selected NGO activities

Mercy Corps: Assistance Humanitarian Assistance Program (AHAP) (2001-2002)

- 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)

See also "Mercy Corps program providing opportunity for Azerbaijan IDPs", 10 January 2002 [Internet]

Azerbaijan Humanitarian Assistance Program Bulletin, December 2002 [Internet]

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

NGOs in Azerbaijan: shift from emergency assistance to development activities (1998-2003)

"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 operates 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)

See for instance:

Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), 27 August 2002 [Internet]

Norwegian Refugee Council, 16 January 2003 [Internet]

InterAction Member Activity Report, South Caucasus, December 2002 [Internet]

More information on humanitarian activities by sector can be found on [Azerweb](#), the website of the humanitarian community in Azerbaijan [Internet]

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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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