

## Refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP) of Azerbaijan Fact sheet prepared by the U.S. Azeris Network (USAN)

"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." (International Organization for Migration, 1999, Migration in the CIS 1997-1998, 1999 Edition, p. 40)

"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)." (U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR), 31 December 2000, World Refugee Survey 2000, Washington D.C.: Country Report Azerbaijan)

"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, Thomas, 1998, The Forsaken People, "Internal Displacement in the North Caucasus, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia" (Washington D.C: The Brookings Institution, 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." (United Nations Commission on Human Rights (CHR), 25 January 1999, Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Francis M. Deng, Profiles in displacement: Azerbaijan (E/CN.4/1999/79/Add.1), para. 31)

"Now the longest-running conflict in the former Soviet Union, the battle for Nagorno-Karabakh has rapidly expanded and intensified since it began in 1988, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 25,000 soldiers and civilians and the displacement of one million others. What began with demonstrations calling for the unification of the Republic of Armenia with Nagorno-Karabakh, a largely Armenian [populated] region of Azerbaijan, became a full-scale war in 1992. In 1993, the war spilled into other parts of Azerbaijan as Karabakh Armenian forces, often with the support of the Republic of Armenia, conducted massive offensive military operations into the Azeri-populated provinces surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh." (Source: Human Rights Watch / Helsinki (HRW). Seven Years of Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, December 1994)

In the event of a peaceful resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh and subsequent repeal of Section 907, U.S. economic assistance will likely shift from humanitarian provision of food and medicines to more developmentally-oriented assistance. Technical assistance could be provided to help Azerbaijan initiate economic reform and restructuring activities to promote the growth of the private sector through the newly established Trans-Caucasus Enterprise Fund. **However, until full peace is negotiated, and full scale extensive well-targeted activities are implemented, Azerbaijan probably will not be able to engage in a comprehensive transition to a democratic market-based society.** (Source: USAID, Congressional Presentation on Azerbaijan, 1997, <http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/cp97/countries/az.htm>)

The civil war in the Nagorno-Karabakh region is undermining social reforms, economic stability, and creating a heavy burden on Azerbaijan's health care delivery system. Without a healthy populace, economic stability is tentative at best. Furthermore, unless the war over the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast ends soon, Azerbaijan will not have a medical system to treat its indigenous population. (Source: Lieutenant George S. Wolowicz, MSC, USN, Medical Intelligence, A Case Study of Azerbaijan, <http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/army/mipb/1996-1/wolowicz.htm>)