



RIJ
国際難民支援会

Building a
Future for
Refugees

Azerbaijan



Reasons for Displacement:

Much like other parts of Eastern Europe, the collapse of the former Soviet Union led to regional

instability and eventual conflict between the former satellites of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In 1988, a long-standing dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region escalated, leading to a brutal war that claimed over 20,000 lives and the displacement of 700,000 people from former Azerbaijan territory. Whilst the Nagorno-Karabakh war came to a ceasefire in 1994, sporadic conflict and hostilities continue, ensuring their continual displacement within the state of Azerbaijan. According to UN agencies, 1 out of every 8 is either considered an IDP or a refugee in Azerbaijan.

IDP Communities:

The IDP and refugee communities, which are scattered throughout the state of Azerbaijan, live mostly in sub-standard conditions. Many reside in former public buildings, and makeshift shelters and huts made from mud and reed. These communities are often located far from major towns or cities, making it hard to access basic services or obtain work. As a result, they lack proper health care and education and face a difficult future. This is worsened by the fact that children are only able to acquire the IDP status of their fathers, preventing many children from receiving benefits such as monthly food allowances.

Despite such issues, the government of Azerbaijan has made considerable progress in the living standards of refugees and IDPs thanks to government initiatives including the provision of government housing.

Assistance:

- In 2005, RIJ funded a project to build a school for IDP children
- Since 1994, Relief International has implemented programs to respond to the need for shelter, primary health care, education, agricultural development, and income generation. They also provided a program for teachers and students to travel to the U.S. to learn about freedom of speech, religion, and the press

Number of refugees:

1,314 residing in Azerbaijan;
10,914 originating from Azerbaijan
[source: UNHCR]

Number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):

568,892
[source: IDMC]

History:

1922— Azerbaijan becomes a part of the Soviet Union

1991— Azerbaijan declares independence from the Soviet Union and Ayaz Mutalibov is elected as the first president. Fighting erupts in Nagorno-Karabakh between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis

1992— Declaration of independence by Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh; independence not recognized by the international community

1994— Ceasefire agreement brings end to Nagorno-Karabakh war

2003— Aliyev dies and is succeeded by son Ilham, sparking a series of violent protests.

2006— Nagorno-Karabakh passes referendum approving new constitution

2008— Ilham signs agreement with Armenian president Serzh Sarkisyan to intensify the countries' efforts in settling the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

2009— Constitutional amendments remove the two-term limit allowing Ilham to run for a third term and create new restrictions on the media

2010— Violations of the 1994 ceasefire result in fatal exchanges of fire

2011— The Public Chamber organizes demonstrations demanding democratic reforms; many participants are arrested

2015— Azerbaijan's first lady visits the opening of a building for IDP families in Khirdalan