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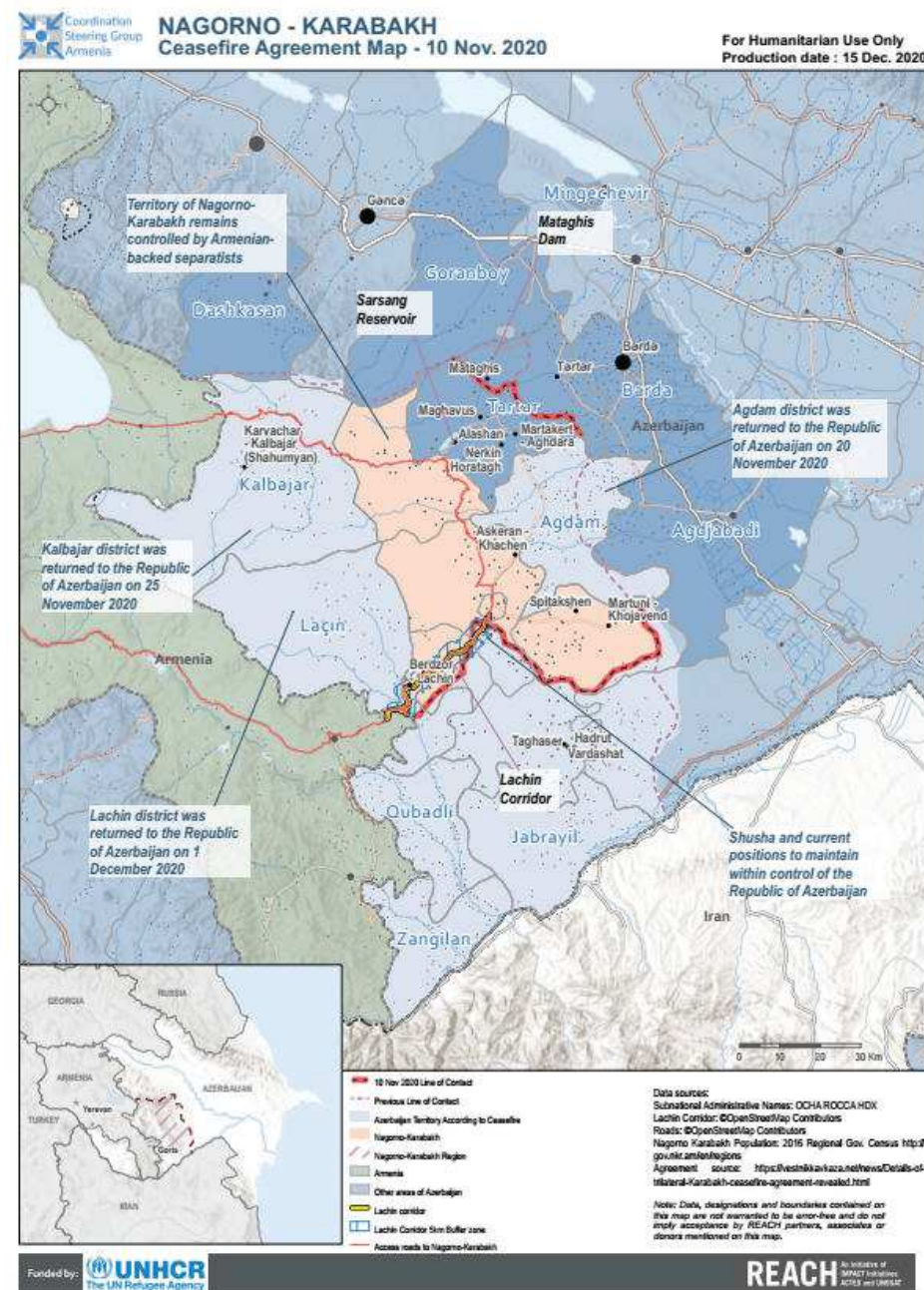
## Pre-existing situation and impact of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

Fighting broke out in Nagorno-Karabakh on 27 September following months of increasing tension. For more than six weeks, fighting and displacement took place in Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding areas, leading to close to 150 casualties, including 50 civilians in Nagorno-Karabakh and 98 civilian deaths in Azerbaijan (ICG 14/10/2020; Human Rights Ombudsman 9/11/2020; Prosecutor General's Office 30/11/2020). Furthermore, 2,317 soldiers on the Armenian side were killed (The Guardian 14/11/2020), along with 2,783 soldiers from Azerbaijan (Azerbaijan Ministry of Defence 03/12/2020). More than 130,000 people were displaced as a result of the conflict, including 90,640 from within Nagorno-Karabakh who arrived in Armenia (IOM 11/12/2020), and approximately 40,000 temporarily displaced in regions close to the line of contact (LoC) on the Azerbaijani side (Republic of Azerbaijan 09/11/2020), the majority of whom had been able to return to their homes by early December (key informant interview 14/12/2020).

A ceasefire agreement was signed between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia on 9 November, which – as at mid-December – is still being upheld. According to this agreement, Azerbaijan will control the parts of Nagorno-Karabakh that it seized during the fighting, and will also be transferred control of seven territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh that had previously been controlled by Armenia (Tom de Waal 09/11/2020; Al Jazeera 09/11/2020; BBC 10/11/2020). Armenian forces are required to leave Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent territories. Ethnic Armenian residents are also vacating the territories that are now under Azerbaijani control (Al Jazeera 15/11/2020; Eurasianet 15/11/2020).

This report presents a comprehensive review of the available primary and secondary data on areas in Azerbaijan affected by the recent Nagorno-Karabakh region as at 15 December. It provides a summary of available information on priority geographic areas and sectors for response, and the main vulnerable groups within the affected population in need of support.

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## KEY PRIORITIES

**Protection:** There are explosive remnants of war in conflict-affected areas and newly transferred areas that could pose a threat to civilians. There is also a need to ensure mental health support to those who have been affected by the conflict, particularly children.

**Health:** Hospitals are facing shortages because they are treating injuries relating to the conflict, and as a result of a rise in COVID-19 cases. There is also a relatively large population of older people in the country, which is at higher risk of severe outcomes of COVID-19. Many of the areas affected by conflict already had health indicators below national averages, including low doctor ratios and hospital bed ratios.

**Shelter and NFIs:** Some displaced people are still sheltering in schools, without any belongings, and are in need of winterisation items including blankets, boots, and winter clothes (especially children). Some have chosen to return to their homes despite the damage, and are living in tents. People who have lost their livelihoods and do not have the capacity to invest in recovery and reconstruction are at particular risk of exposure to cold winter temperatures.

**Education:** Many students lack access to adequate internet connections, particularly along the LoC, which restricts their access to education. This may compromise future growth and wellbeing for them, their families, and their communities.

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## INFORMATION GAPS

### Assessments

There are not many assessments covering conflict affected areas in Azerbaijan, and the ones that have been conducted so far are limited in their sampling.

### Missing information

- There is limited disaggregated data on the transmission of COVID-19 by region.
- There is lack of disaggregated data on the specific whereabouts, living conditions, and specific needs of IDPs from the 1990s.
- There are several information gaps for the transferred territories:
  - population figures are in some instances unclear
  - the scale of damage and destruction
  - the telecommunications environment.
- Because of the lack of access to the areas surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh and the LoC, information about regions surrounding the LoC is scarce.

### Counting issues

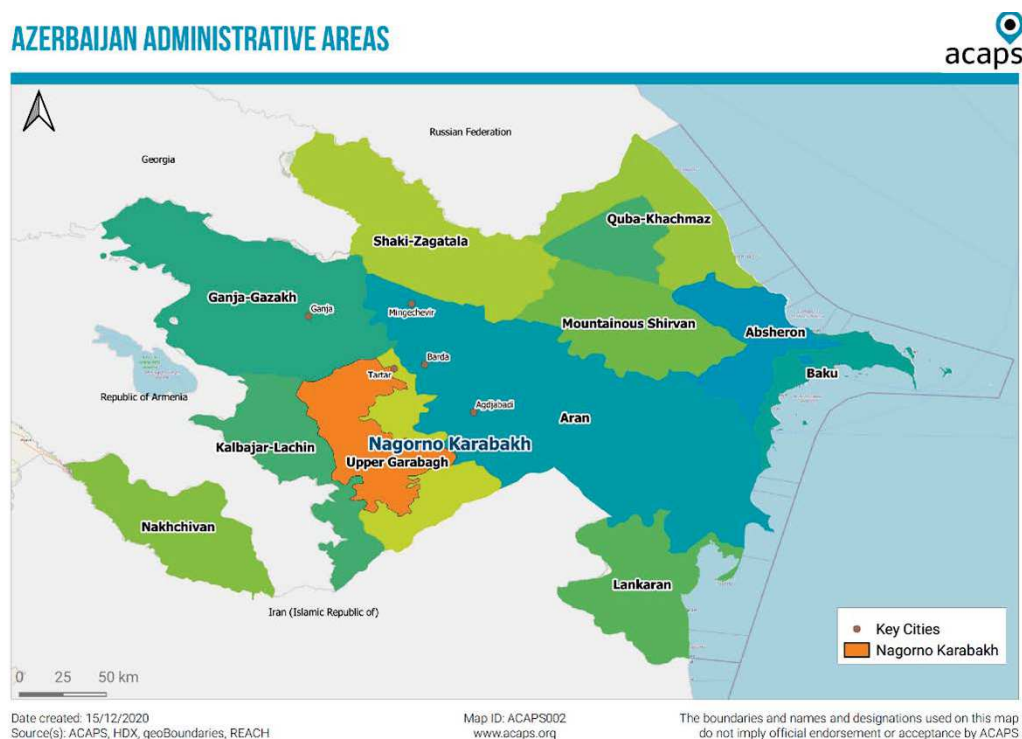
For national figures related to mortality and births, discrepancies exist between data collected by the civil registration system and the Ministry of Health Department of Information and Statistics, and those collected through the Azerbaijan Demographic and Health Survey (WHO 2010). This may be because of a lack of training in classification and coding of cases amongst health providers and health statistics offices, as well as possible pressure to avoid negative reporting of infant and maternal mortality.

COVID-19 case and death figures may be underestimates, as there is a lack of testing facilities across the country and adequate post-mortem diagnosis.

## PRE-EXISTING SITUATION IN AZERBAIJAN

The Republic of Azerbaijan is located in the Caucasus Mountains, in the South Caucasus region of Eurasia, a geographic area between Europe and Asia. The country borders Iran and Turkey in the south, Russia in the north, Georgia in the north west and Armenia in the west. The total area of Azerbaijan is 86,600km<sup>2</sup>. Half of the country is mountainous, with some flatlands. It is divided in two, mainland Azerbaijan and the exclave autonomous republic of Nakhchivan (WHO 2010). Azerbaijan borders Iran and Turkey in the south, Russia in the north, Georgia in the north west and Armenia in the west (AZ Stat last accessed 24/11/2020). It is rich in fuel ore (fossil fuels) and minerals.

### AZERBAIJAN ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS



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## Demography

Azerbaijan is made up of 10 economic regions (İqtisadi Rayonla), 63 regions (rayonlar) (sometimes referred to as districts), 78 towns, 261 settlements (qəsəbələr) (small villages) and 4,248 rural settlements (kənd yaşayış məntəqələri) (AZ Stat last accessed 20/11/2020).

## Population

The population of Azerbaijan at the beginning of 2020 was 10,006,700. The capital of Baku had 2,293,000 people (AZ Stat last accessed 20/11/2020).

### Sex and age disaggregation

The table below shows the disaggregation of the population of Azerbaijan for geography, gender, and age.

#### POPULATION OF AZERBAIJAN

<b>Total population 2020</b>	10,006,700			
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>				
	<b>percentage</b>	<b># people</b>		
<b>Urban</b>	52.8%	5,203,484		
<b>Rural</b>	47.2%	4,803,216		
<b>GENDER</b>				
	<b>percentage</b>	<b># people</b>		
<b>Men</b>	49.9%	5,028,000		
<b>Women</b>	50.1%	5,039,000		
<b>AGE</b>				
0–4	7.4%			
5–9	8.4%			
10–14	6.6%			
15–19	6.3%			
<b>Total aged 0-19</b>	<b>percentage</b>	<b># people</b>	<b>% Men*</b>	<b>% Women*</b>
	28.7%	2,871,923	52%	48%
20–39	33.5%			
40–59	25.6%			
<b>Total aged 20–59</b>	<b>percentage</b>	<b>#people</b>	<b>% Men*</b>	<b>% Women*</b>
	59.1%	5,903,943	49%	51%
60–69	8%			
70+	4.2%			
<b>Total aged 60+</b>	<b>percentage</b>	<b>#people</b>	<b>% Men*</b>	<b>% Women*</b>
	12.2%	1,220,817	43%	57%

\*Percentage based on 2009 census.

Source: AZ Stat last accessed 20/11/2020



As the table above indicates, when looking at the entire population, the gender ratio of the country is quite even. However, based on percentages from the 2009 census, there is a larger proportion of males among the younger population (ages 0–19), and a significantly larger proportion of females among the population aged 60 and over.

### POPULATION INFORMATION FOR CONFLICT-AFFECTED REGIONS

	BARDA	AGDJABADI	GANJA	TARTAR	GORAN-BOY	DASH-KASAN
<b>Economic region</b>	Aran	Aran	Ganja-Ga-zakh	Yukhari Karabakh	Ganja-Ga-zakh	Ganja-Ga-zakh
<b>Total area km2</b>	950	1,760	110	960	1,700	1,050
<b>Population (2019)</b>	157,500	136,800	335,600	104,700	105,029	35,400
<b>Urban</b>	25.5%	36.9%	100%	28.9%	21.3%	43.5%
<b>Rural</b>	74.5%	63.1%	0%	71.1%	71.1%	56.5%
<b>Women</b>	49.1%	47.9%	51.2%	50.3%	49.5%	48.8%
<b>Men</b>	50.9%	52.1%	48.8%	49.7%	50.5%	51.2%
<b>Age distribution</b>						
<b>0–19</b>	29.6%	32.5%	25.8%	22.3%	29.5%	29.3%
<b>20–59</b>	58.8%	57.4%	60.5%	54.7%	58.5%	59.7%
<b>60+</b>	11.6%	10.1%	13.7%	17.5%	11.9%	11%

Source: AZ Stats last accessed 29/11/2020

For further information on the conflict-affected regions, including socio-economic indicators, please see [Table 1: Conflict-affected regions](#)

### Population information on transferred territories

The table below provides information about the areas that were transferred to Azerbaijan as a result of the recent ceasefire agreement that was signed on 9 November.

The population numbers for the territories transferred to Azerbaijan are based on the population of these territories prior to the displacement during the 1988–1994 conflict and their descendants. This population has been hosted across the country until now, with the majority in Baku, Sumgayit, and Mingechevir.

For more information, please see [Table 2: Territories recently transferred to Azerbaijan](#).

These figures comprise the number of IDPs from their respective area of origin displaced from the 1988–1994 conflict and their descendants; it is unclear how many people may relocate following the transfer of these territories from Armenian to Azeri control.

### POPULATION INFORMATION FOR TERRITORIES TRANSFERRED TO AZERBAIJAN

	ECONOMIC REGION	AREA (KM2)	POPULATION (2019)
<b>Aghdam (Ağdam rayonu)</b>	Yukhari Karabakh	1,150km2	204,000
<b>Kalbajar (Kəlbəcər rayonu)</b>	Kalbajar-Lachin	3,050km2	94,100
<b>Gubadly (Qubadlı rayonu)</b>	Kalbajar-Lachin	802km2	38,558
<b>Lachin (Laçın rayonu)</b>	Kalbajar-Lachin	1,835km2	78,600
<b>Jabrail (Cəbrayıl rayonu)</b>	Yukhari Karabakh	1,050km2	81,700
<b>Fuzuli (Füzuli rayonu)</b>	Yukhari Karabakh	1,386km2	134,333
<b>Zangilan (Zəngilan rayonu)</b>	Kalbajar-Lachin	730km2	45,200
<b>Shusha (Şuşa rayonu)</b>	Yukhari Karabakh	310km2	34,700

Source: AZ Stats last accessed 29/11/2020

### People on the move

**IDPs:** According to UNHCR there were 652,300 IDPs in Azerbaijan at the end of 2019 (UNHCR 7/7/2020). The government-reported numbers are slightly lower, at 620,000 IDPs (GoA 2019) – this figure comprises both people who were displaced by the 1988–1994 conflict and their descendants (ICG 20/12/2020). The majority is based in cities including Baku, Sumgayit, and Mingechevir. Government investment in IDP living conditions and their rights has significantly improved over the years as the country saw economic growth during the mid-2000s (UNHCR 2019; UNHCR Recent Migration Trends 2017). Following Azerbaijan’s seizure of formerly Armenian-controlled territory in Jabrail, IDPs returned to these areas in 2017. Results of a UNHCR 2017 return intentions survey show that IDPs settled and employed in rural areas in Azerbaijan were more favourable to returning, whereas those residing in sub-urban areas were more hesitant despite often difficult living conditions, and expressed concern over employment opportunities, economic activities, government support, and sustainability in the newly-gained territories (UNHCR 2017).

According to the State Committee of Affairs of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons of the Republic of Azerbaijan, IDPs are: entitled to free medical examination treatment and medication; priority for job retention in cases of redundancies; free of citizenship charges; free of court charges; free of paying certain taxes; and are free of notary charges when purchasing residential houses or flats. They also have the right not to be evicted from the dwellings they occupied following their displacement (GoA last accessed 05/12/2020).

**Refugees:** The number of refugees and asylum-seekers had increased to almost 1,300 people in 2019 (UNHCR 07/07/2020); most of the 220,000–250,000 ethnic Azeri-Armenian refugees who fled the 1988–1994 conflict have gained citizenship through the Azerbaijan 1998 Citizenship law (GoA 1998; US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants 2001; Human Rights Club 2019). Between 2015 and 2016, the overall new asylum-seeker arrivals in Azerbaijan decreased by 22% (UNHCR 2018), followed by an increase of 73% between 2017 and 2018. The majority of asylum-seekers were from Afghanistan, with the second largest group being ethnic Chechens from Russia. The latter have not been granted access to the governmental asylum procedure for the last few years (UNHCR 2019). The estimated number of stateless people remained close to 3,600 (UNHCR 07/07/2020); these numbers are in effect very low. Stateless people make up a larger portion of naturalised people than migrants with permanent residency permits (UNHCR Recent Migration Trends 2017). The Government of Azerbaijan (GoA) is a party to the 1951 Convention on Refugees (UNHCR last accessed 11/12/2020). It only grants asylum to a small percentage of asylum-seekers; they are dependent on UNHCR for protection and assistance (UNHCR 2019). As at August 2019, the GoA only recognised 6% of refugees registered by UNHCR. Those who are not recognised are generally tolerated and not subject to refoulement. They have access to free primary and secondary education and free healthcare, although they do not have the right to formally work. They are often reliant on UNHCR to meet their basic needs but also engage in informal work (UNHCR 2019). However, with price increases and a restricted informal labour market, asylum-seekers often face difficulty in meeting their needs. Asylum-seekers' rented apartments are usually substandard and of poor quality, which can lead to health issues. UNHCR funding gaps also restrict aid to support other needs, like language learning and vocational education (UNHCR 2018).

**Formal and informal migrant workers in Azerbaijan:** In 2019, 2,000 people arrived in the country to live permanently, while 1,600 left the country to settle elsewhere (AZ Stat last accessed 20/11/2020). The main reason for immigration in Azerbaijan since 2015 is family reunification with a close relative in the country, more than immigration for work (UNHCR Recent Migration Trends 2017). Most migrants work in labour sectors like construction and industry. They are subject to precarity and relatively low salaries. There are high fluctuations in foreign workforces, undermining migrants' contributions to building socioeconomic bonds (UNHCR Recent Migration Trends 2017). Permanent residency permits are rare in Azerbaijan, making up only 0.5% of the population in 2017 (UNHCR Recent Migration Trends 2017).

**Emigration from Azerbaijan:** Many Azerbaijanis also go abroad to work, with the Russian Federation being the most popular destination, followed by Turkey. Germany is the most popular host country in the EU (UNHCR Recent Migration Trends 2017). In 2019, remittances to Azerbaijan were equivalent to 2.7% of GDP (World Bank last accessed 29/11/2020). The majority of flows arrived from Russia, followed by Ukraine (according to 2017 figures) (Pew Research Center 03/04/2019).

In October 2020, Azerbaijan was operating two dedicated immigration detention facilities, one in Baku (the Baku City Detention Centre for Illegal Migrants) and one in Yevlakh (the Yevlakh City Detention Centre for Illegal Migrants) (Global Detention Project 10/2020).

## Minorities

Lezgins (also known as Lezgi or Kyirin) are the largest ethnic minority in Azerbaijan, accounting for 2% of the population (180,300 people recorded in the 2009 census) (Refworld 03/2018; AZ Stat last accessed 20/11/2020).

## Society

### Pre-crisis composition of society

At the time of the 2009 census, Turkic-speaking Azerbaijanis (Azeris) made up 91.6% of the population. The remaining population comprised a small concentration of minorities, including Lezgians (2%), Armenians (1.3%), Russians (1.3%), and Talysh (1.3%) (AZ Stat last accessed 20/11/2020).

According to the same data, over 99.5% of the population recorded as living in Barda, Agdjabadi, Ganja, Goranboy and Dashkasan at the time – areas affected by the recent conflict – were Azerbaijani, with a very small number of minorities including Russians, Turkish and Kurdish. In Tartar however, only 76% of the population was recorded as Azerbaijani, and 23% as Armenian (AZ Stats last accessed 29/11/2020). The larger Armenian population is assumed to be a result of the fact that Tartar was split after the 1988–1994 conflict, and the majority was included in Nagorno-Karabakh (governed as part of the Martakert Province).

### Religion

96% of Azerbaijanis are Muslim. The majority of the remaining 4% are Christian, Jewish, or Zoroastrian (Aljazeera Centre for Studies accessed 20/11/2020).

### Languages

The official language of Azerbaijan is Azeri or Azerbaijani; according to the 1991 census, it is spoken by 90% of the population. Armenian, Khalaj, Kurdish, Lezgian, Talysh, Avar, Georgian, Budukh, Juhuri, Khinalug, Kryts, Jek, Rutul, Tsakhur, Tat, and Udi are spoken by minorities. Russian and English are also used in education and in wider society (Clifton 2013).

## Gender roles

Azerbaijan's 1995 constitution provides that "men and women possess equal rights and liberties" and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; it also establishes that wives and husbands have equal rights (ADB 2019). Legislation passed since then have legally reinforced gender equality (and the dissemination of information on gender equality) across a number of areas, including in property rights, education, state services, the labour market, and in the prosecution of domestic violence. The Council of Europe has noted that Azerbaijan's legal framework provides real and substantive guarantees of gender equality (ADB 2019). Government mainstreaming of gender equality has also been implemented at different levels, although the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament is only 16.8% (ADB accessed 22/11/2020).

Gender inequality persists because of rigid gender stereotypes, cultural norms, and customary practices. Gender inequality is apparent within several sectors, including the political sphere, in employment and pay, access to resources, and education (UNFPA 2018). The country has reached almost universal literacy for both men and women. Both girls and boys have access to free state-run primary schooling, and are almost equally likely to finish their primary education (ADB 2019). However, girls were less represented in secondary school enrolment rates, making up just 46% of all students during the 2016/2017 school year. Enrolment in tertiary education, although low compared to other middle-income countries, was equal across women and men at around 20% in 2017.

Women in Azerbaijan are less active in the formal economy than men because of a gendered division of formal labour. Women often work in sectors with lower or unequal pay, or in part-time work, and are therefore disincentivised to work; 84% of men in Azerbaijan participate in the formal labour force, compared to only 46% of women. On average women undertake three times more domestic labour than men (ADB 2019). Domestic responsibilities are cited by 43% of unemployed women in one study as the main reason for their unemployment (UN Women 2018). Furthermore, women's restricted access to formal work because of domestic burdens reinforces inequality in access to financial resources and in access to public spaces, social networks, opportunities, and decision-making (ADB 2019; UN Women 2018). Women are more likely to earn less than men in Azerbaijan in most sectors where they are over-represented, and 678 occupations are still legally prohibited for women, ranging from mining to certain bakery jobs (ADB 2019). Families where women are not working are often poorer than their counterparts. Men are also subject to rigid gender stereotyping as "breadwinners", restricting decision-making (UNFPA 2018).

Azerbaijan has had in recent years a skewed sex ratio at birth, with 114 boys born for every 100 girls (as at 2017) (UNFPA 2018). Abortion, which is legal in Azerbaijan, is the most widely used birth control method and sex selection technology is available. Alongside misconceptions and customary practices, encouraged by socio-economic values places on

sons rather than daughters, these factors drive skewed sex ratios (UNFPA 2018).

## Education

The level of education among people aged 15–24 increased by 100% between 2000 and 2015. The net enrolment ratio in primary education increased to 99.8% and primary education completion increased from 92.8% to 100% (Chowdhury 02/2018). In 2019, literacy levels were at 99.8%, with 99.9% among men and 99.7% among women (AZ Stats 1/12/2020). Men and women aged 18–64 are equally likely to have at least some secondary, vocational or tertiary education (UN Women 2018).

In 2018, 68.6% of girls and 69.6% of boys participated in official learning (preschool) one year before the official primary school entry. 99.5% of teachers received at least the minimum of official teacher training for primary school, and 99.8% for secondary school (ADB last accessed 22/11/2020).

NATIONAL EDUCATION FACILITIES	FIGURE (2019)
Preschools	1,840
Day education facilities	4,433
Night educational facilities	7
Vocational education schools	110
Specialised secondary institutions	59
Higher education institutions	52

Source: AZ Stat 17/9/2019

During the 2019/20 school year, there were 1,616,105 total students in primary and secondary grades (AZ Stats accessed on 30/11/2020), of these 126,481 (7.8% of all students) were in the six regions (Barda, Agdjabadi, Ganja, Tartar, Goranboy, and Dashkasan) most severely affected by the recent conflict as shown in the table below.

EDUCATION IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED REGIONS				
REGION	FULL TIME EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES	# CHILDREN ATTENDING	PRESCHOOLS	# CHILDREN ATTENDING
Barda	75	25,158	35	1,803
Agdjabadi	52	23,540	36	2,800
Ganja	49	47,209	43	4,369
Tartar	47	10,604	29	1,730
Goranboy	79	16,617	32	1,605
Dashkasan	41	3,353	12	337

Source: AZ Stats last accessed 01/12/2020

## Economy and social protection systems

### Main economic indicators

**Gross domestic product (GDP):** In 2019, Azerbaijan's total GDP was just over USD 48 billion (World Bank last accessed 1/12/2020), and GDP per capita was USD 4,793 (World Bank last accessed 1/12/2020). GDP comprises: industry (41.4%), agriculture and fishing (5.7%), construction (7.3%), transportation and communication (7.8%), net taxes (8.7%), and other sectors (29.1%) (AZ Stats 1/12/2020). The GDP growth rate for Azerbaijan was 1.4% for 2018, 2.2% for 2019, but the forecast for 2020 is -4.3%, with continued contraction despite some initial signs of recovery in non-energy industries (World Bank 09/2020; ADB last accessed 22/11/2020). Since 1990, per capita income nearly doubled, increasing from US 8,741 to US 16,413 in 2015, and poverty rates declined from close to 50% in 2000 to 5% in 2015 (Chowdhury 02/2018).

**Oil:** Azerbaijan's abundance of natural resources and the oil and gas boom between 2000 and 2007 made the country one of the fastest growing economies in the 1990s and early 2000s. Average annual GDP growth was at 17.4% and real GDP increased approximately six times between 1995 and 2015 (Chowdhury 02/2018; European Bank 25/04/2019). The share of GDP produced by the private sector, which stood at 30% in 1995, had risen to nearly 84% in 2016 (UNDP 06/2018). The State Oil Fund of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SOFAZ) was created in 1999 and became an important source of public revenues, permitting the government to expand social protection systems, invest in better infrastructure, and continuously increase monthly minimum wages and pensions (Chowdhury 02/2018). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, crude oil prices started dropping in early 2020. After significant price reductions in March and April, there was a robust recovery in May and June, but prices remained almost one third lower than 2019 prices. The price increase in May was a result of production cuts (World Bank 27/10/2020). It is expected that Azerbaijan's economy will be affected by this, but that reforms undertaken during the last financial crisis in 2014 will help mitigate the impact (Reuters 07/04/2020), and the country's large savings provide some financial flexibility (Fitch Ratings 26/08/2020).

**Lack of economic diversification:** Rapid expansion of the oil and gas sector crowded out other industries and contributed to the economy's low level of diversification. Oil's share of total GDP in 2018 was 39.8% and the resource sector accounted for approximately 91.7% of Azerbaijan's exports (European Bank 25/04/2019). The drop in oil prices from USD 115 per barrel in June 2014 to under USD 35 at the end of February 2016 pushed the country into recession during 2016/2017 with a 3.1% decrease in GDP and demonstrated Azerbaijan's vulnerability to external shocks because of its reliance on resource extraction. It led to a major currency devaluation in 2018 (European Bank 25/04/2019; Chowdhury 02/2018). Oil prices have dropped as a result of the current pandemic from USD 63.65 in January 2020, to as low as USD 18.38 in April, and stabilised just above USD 40 per barrel from June onwards. This resulted in

Azerbaijan revising its 2020 budget, increasing its planned deficit from 2.3% to 12.2% of GDP (Fitch Ratings 26/08/2020). The country's oil reserves will be depleted by 2034 and Azerbaijan urgently needs to diversify its economy. In 2018, the country remained highly oil dependent and there has been very limited non-oil industrial development and diversification (Chowdhury 02/2018). Furthermore, industrial activities are predominantly focused around Baku.

### Stability of the currency

After 20 years of exchange rate stability, Azerbaijan devalued its currency by 50% in 2015. The currency stabilised again in 2017 after stringent monetary conditions and a recovery in oil prices. Inflation fell from 12.9% in 2017 to 2.3% in 2018 as a result of the stabilisation (European Bank 25/04/2019), and the rate for 2019 was 2.6% (Macrotrends last accessed 1/12/2020).

### Banking

**Banking system:** Azerbaijan's banking system is governed by the Central Bank of Azerbaijan, which regulates the activities of 26 banks operating in the country. Two banks have state participation and 24 are private (International Wealth 09/11/2020). Banks hold around 95% of the financial sector's total assets. Non-banking financial activities (like microfinance) are underdeveloped. The devaluation of the manat in 2015 impacted non-banking financial activities, and microfinance organisations are only now recommending lending. 19 banks were closed in 2016 because of devaluations and major banks like the International Bank of Azerbaijan (IBA), which is majority-owned by the Azerbaijani government, completed restructuring in 2018 (Privacy Shield last accessed 29/11/2020).

**Personal bank accounts:** In 2017, 28.6% of the population over 14 years of age had a personal bank account. This is well below the world average of 58.5% the same year (The Global Economy last accessed 12/12/2020), and below neighbouring Armenia (45.3%) (The World Economy last accessed 12/12/2020). In order to open a personal bank account in Azerbaijan, banks require a passport and the document that proves the customer's local registration – this restricts access for groups like migrants, asylum-seekers, stateless people, and IDPs who have resettled and who do not have adequate registration papers (Caspian Legal Center accessed 26/11/2020).

### Cash delivery system

UNICEF has been supporting the GoA in establishing a close integration of cash assistance and social services within the new social service strategy (UN 2018). This strategy was developed to ensure long-term planning and effective budgeting for social services (UNICEF 16/08/2020).



## Corruption

According to Transparency International, Azerbaijan ranked 126/180 on the Corruption Perceptions Index in 2019, with a score of 30/100 (Transparency International accessed on 12/12/2020). According to the World Economic Forum report of 2015–2016, corruption remains the most problematic factor for doing business in Azerbaijan (World Economic Forum 2015-2016). According to a 2016 OECD anti-corruption monitoring report, the country has made progress in terms of corruption, particularly within certain sectors, including public services delivery, public education, and traffic police. However, there is still room for improvement, including clearer regulations around conflict of interests among civil servants.. Furthermore, the public of Azerbaijan continues to widely believe that the judicial system lacks independence and integrity (OECD 2016).

## Social protection mechanisms

**Pension:** Azerbaijan's social protection system is dominated by social insurance programmes, particularly the pension system (UNDP 06/18). In 2020, 1,270,559 people (12.7% of the population) are receiving pensions from the government, of whom 57.3% are women and 42.7% are men. This includes 742,034 people (7.4% of the total population) receiving pension for old age, the majority of whom (62.9%) are women (AZ Stat last accessed on 1/12/2020). 633,469 people (6.3% of the total population) are receiving disability pension (AZ Stats last accessed 1/12/2020). 144,532 people (1.4% of total population) were receiving pension for the loss of family head, the majority of whom were women (69.9%). The average monthly pension for old age is AZN 291.5 (USD 171.5), AZN 229.7 (USD 135.1) for disability, and AZN 210.2 (USD 123,7) for loss of family head (AZ Stat last accessed 1/12/2020; XE AZN-USD exchange rates valid as at 17/12/2020).

### SOCIAL BENEFITS IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED REGIONS

REGION	% RECEIVING SOCIAL BENEFITS	AVERAGE MONTHLY SOCIAL BENEFITS	AVERAGE MONTHLY PENSION
National level	–	–	AZN 291.5
Barda	5.7%	AZN 118.8	AZN 208.7
Agdjabadi	5.1%	AZN 118.1	AZN 212.9
Ganja	3.8%	AZN 120.2	AZN 226.4
Tartar	3.4%	AZN 115.4	AZN 217.5
Goranboy	2.0%	AZN 114.4	AZN 219.9
Dashkasan	6.3%	AZN 119.5	AZN 225.3

Source: AZ Stats last accessed 01/12/2020

The average monthly pension increased steadily from 2007, reaching nearly 40% of the average monthly wage in 2016. This has helped to improve living standards for older people, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups (UNDP 06/18). However, pensioners' purchasing power has been declining since 2016 because of the impacts of the oil-price decline and related recession. Furthermore, since 2010, retirement ages have increased from 57 for women and 62 for men to 65 for both groups, reducing eligibility for this social protection instrument (UNDP 06/2018). In addition, 10% of the eligible population is apparently not taking up pension benefits (UN 2018). Comprehensive social services support that extends beyond financial aid is missing in Azerbaijan's approach to social welfare to date (UNDP 06/2018). In the face of the recession in 2016, numbers of recipients increased to 540,000 – nearly 6% of the total population in the country, and a 25% increase on the number in 2015 (UNDP 06/18).

Social insurance and social assistance have helped to reduce poverty levels in Azerbaijan, particularly among displaced populations. In 2001, the absolute poverty rate for IDPs was at 63%. The government was able to scale up the targeted social assistance programme (UNDP 06/18).

According to ILO's World Social Protection Report 2017–19, Azerbaijan spent 5% of GDP on pensions and other benefits, excluding health, for people above statutory pensionable age (ILO 2017).

**Children:** Targeted social assistance programmes for children have played important roles in the successes of the social protection system. 31% more children were receiving health-related benefits in 2016 than in 2008, and 28% more families were receiving pensions because of the loss of a breadwinner. However, the recession also reduced the purchasing power of families receiving such benefits reducing the effectiveness of these social protection instruments. Social protection instruments have borne a disproportionate share of fiscal adjustments related to the recession (UN 2018). Compared to other countries in the region, Azerbaijan invests less in early childhood development and the social care economy. This has a particularly significant impact on labour force participation rates for women, who are usually the primary caregivers (UNDP 06/2018).

**Other benefits:** According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, other benefits provided by the government to employed people included: a lump sum allowance related to child birth, which was provided to 56,300 people in 2019; an allowance for care of children under the age of 3, which was provided to 40,200 people; and a funeral allowance, which was provided to 39,700 people (AZ Stats last accessed 1/12/2020).

**Conflict-affected regions:** In some border villages affected by insecurity, a special status conferred tax breaks and subsidies for water and electricity (ICG 24/07/2020). It is unclear if this will continue following the ceasefire.

## Politics

### Political situation pre-crisis

**Political parties:** Azerbaijan has over 50 registered political parties but there is a lack of true pluralism. A political opposition to the ruling New Azerbaijan Party exists but seems unable to present a strong challenge. The main opposition parties boycotted the last parliamentary elections in 2015. International bodies have raised doubts about the ability of political parties to campaign freely (European Bank 25/04/2019).

In 2019, Azerbaijan stated that addressing the challenges associated with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through its lasting political settlement would be a significant contribution to the implementation of the SDGs (Republic of Azerbaijan 17/05/2019).

**Media:** There is a range of media outlets in Azerbaijan but access to impartial information and different views is limited and the activity of media outlets is censored, including through blocked websites and arbitrary arrests (European Bank 25/04/2019).

### Political stakeholders

**The president:** According to the constitution, the president is elected for a five-year term and may be re-elected (Republic of Azerbaijan last accessed 4/12/2020). However, as a result of a referendum in 2016, the term was extended to seven years (Reuters 27/09/2016). The current president, Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev, was appointed as prime minister in August 2003, and won the presidential election with 76% of votes a few months later in October 2003. He was re-elected during the 2008, 2013, and 2018 elections (President of Azerbaijan last accessed 23/11/2020). The last election in April 2018 lacked competition according to international observers, as well as appropriate conditions for democratic elections (European Bank 25/04/2019).

**Civil society:** International organisations like the UN and Council of Europe have noted that the overall working conditions of independent civil society organisations has deteriorated. Some CSOs have reportedly been prosecuted and others have been subject to travel bans. Some have had their bank accounts closed and their leaders detained (European Bank 25/04/2019).

### Government

The state is organised according to a separation of powers. The constitution stipulates that executive power belongs to the president, legislative power is exercised by the Milli Majlis (National Assembly), and the judiciary by an independent court (Azerbaijan last accessed 22/11/2020). In practice the political system is highly centralised with the presidency concentrating significant power.

## Civil and political rights

In 2018, the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) reported that civil and political rights are restricted in Azerbaijan, particularly in relation to freedom of speech and assembly. The law requires advance notification of peaceful assembly, but in practice a system of authorisation is applied and there have been cases of public assemblies being banned or dispersed by force and participants being harassed, intimidated, and subject to administrative and excessive criminal penalties (European Bank 25/04/2020). Assembly near government buildings is also subject to restrictions (ICNL 30/09/2020).

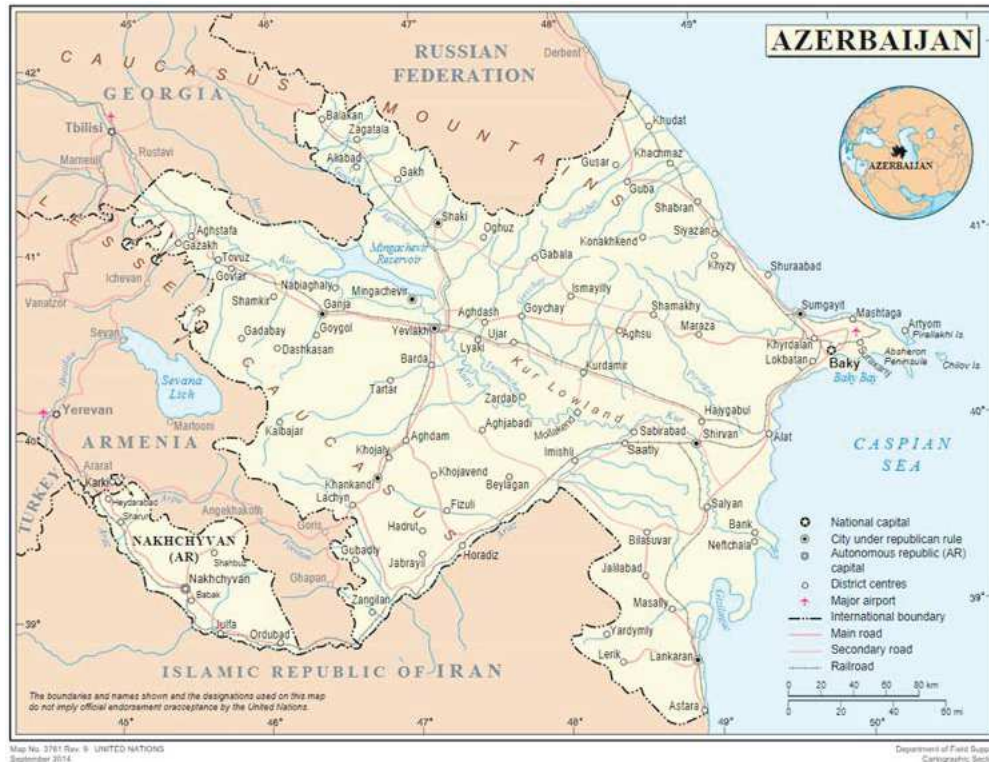
### History of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

Conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh territory is longstanding. Recent dynamics are attributed to decisions made during the Soviet era. In 1918, when Azerbaijan and Armenia both declared their independence, Nagorno-Karabakh became part of Azerbaijan as a result of Armenia not being able to withstand threats from Turkey, which was supporting Azerbaijan. Nagorno-Karabakh's "reference" borders as the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast were drawn at this time (Meduza 01/10/2020). Just after the collapse of the USSR's political and economic systems, deteriorating living standards drove separatist movements in many Soviet republics (UNFPA 2015). Conflicts of interests emerged, particularly in multi-ethnic areas, which resulted in confrontations. Conflict ensued as ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh called for the transfer of the region to Soviet Armenian control, confronting resistance by the USSR and Soviet Azerbaijan. Fighting in 1987/88 resulted in casualties and forced displacement (Britannica last accessed 24/11/2020). In parallel, an independence movement to break away from the USSR emerged in Soviet Azerbaijan, which was violently suppressed in January 1990 by Soviet forces. Azerbaijan's independence was declared on 30 August 1991 by the country's supreme council. Conflict between the newly independent states of Azerbaijan and Armenia, the latter supporting ethnic Armenian forces in Nagorno-Karabakh, resumed into a full-scale conflict from 1991 to 1994 (Britannica last accessed 24/11/2020). A ceasefire was signed in May 1994, although the conflict was not resolved. Azerbaijan lost de facto control of 20%–25% of its territory as a result of this war (HRW 12/1994). It has been estimated that between 20,000–30,000 people were killed during the fighting in the early 1990s (BBC 18/11/2020).

An agreement in March 2008 between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan aimed to intensify efforts towards conflict resolution. However, clashes occurred throughout the 2010s, resulting in regular death (Freizer 2014). A conflict over 2–5 April 2016 led to hundreds of casualties, with Azerbaijan taking control over some areas in Tartar and Jabrail (AFP 24/04/2016; AFP 02/04/2016; Meduza 01/10/2020). Clashes broke out in July 2020, leading to increased military preparations, including drills and exercises with respective allies (Britannica last accessed 24/11/2020). Fighting then broke out on 27 September 2020, amounting

to the worse fighting since the 1988–1994 conflict, with high casualty rates and large-scale damage, including in civilian areas. A Russian-mediated ceasefire on 9 November 2020 ended fighting, and stipulated a number of time-limited provisions, including the transfer of Armenian-controlled territories to Azerbaijan (for more information, see ACAPS' INFORM Severity Index analysis and Short Note series on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict).

### Map of Azerbaijan, with Nakhchivan



Source: UN 09/2014

The Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (Naxçıvan Muxtar Respublikası in Azeri) is an Azeri exclave, having seceded from the USSR in 1990 and joining Azerbaijan in 1991. It became a conflict zone during the 1988–1994 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and has since then become a heavily militarised area (Bellingcat 04/10/2017). Armenia seized control of Karki in May 1992, and the area remains under Armenian control (known as Tigranashen in Armenia) (Defence AZ 18/01/2018).

### Breaches of international humanitarian law and serious human rights violations

Serious violations against civilians and protected personnel were reported during the 1988–1994 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, in which tens of thousands of people died (ICG 20/12/2019). Armenian-backed forces effectively took control of seven Azeri territories forcing Azeri populations to seek refuge in other areas of Azerbaijan (HRW 12/1994). This, alongside other conflict dynamics, drove the mass displacement of approximately 40,000 Azeris from Nagorno-Karabakh itself, more than 400,000 Azeris from adjacent territories now under Armenian control (many of whom were forcibly expelled), as well as around 360,000 ethnic Armenians from Azerbaijan and around 200,000 ethnic Azeris from Armenia (ICG 20/12/2019). For many, ethnic cleansing is believed to have been perpetrated by both sides. Alongside forced and voluntary displacements, there were mass killings of civilians (De Waal 2003). Although the occurrences are contested between Armenia and Azerbaijan, 200 civilians were killed in Khojali village on 26 February 1992 after its seizure by the Nagorno-Karabakh forces; some estimates place the figure higher, at between 500 and 1,000 civilians killed (HRW 12/1994).

Between 1988 and 1994, there were intense offensives affecting Azeri regions adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh. Human Rights Watch estimated in 1994 that the majority of human rights violations during this period were attributable to these offensives in the Armenian-controlled regions (HRW 12/1994). Azeri civilians were expelled from all areas captured by ethnic Armenian forces, many killed by indiscriminate shelling, many taken hostage, and Human Rights Watch reports that prisoners of war were mistreated. Widescale looting and property destruction also followed the capture of these territories, with some actions reportedly planned and organised by the de facto Nagorno-Karabakh authorities themselves, including the looting and pillaging of Aghdam city (formerly populated by 50,000 people) (HRW 12/1994).

Affected populations in Azerbaijan, particularly IDPs and ethnic Azeri Armenian refugees, faced extensive needs, and infrastructure was damaged in Armenian-controlled territories and in Azeri areas not far from the conflict zone (French Parliamentary Assembly 14/02/1995). Most public buildings in Azerbaijan were reportedly renovated to accommodate those displaced by the conflict (French Parliamentary Assembly 14/02/1995). When these options and host communities were saturated, many displaced people lived in tented camps and settlements (French Parliamentary Assembly 14/02/1995).

The LoC demarcated the border between Azerbaijan and Armenian-controlled territories; it also demarcated the buffer zone between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia and Azerbaijan's international border has also been a site of conflict during and since 1994. Three Azeri districts border one Armenian region at the international border. At the time of the 2009 census, 84 Azeri villages were located within 10km of the LoC with a total population of approximately 110,000 people. Residents of this area have been exposed to skirmishes, landmines, and other unexploded ordnance during the years following the ceasefire (ICG



24/07/2020). Between 1994 and 2008, 74 soldiers were killed on both sides during skirmishes (ICG 08/02/2011). Conflict with military casualties continued, and two Azeri and six ethnic Armenian civilians died in 2014 as a result of hostilities (*Armenian Weekly* 22/10/2015). Since 2015, 257 civilians have been killed during fighting, excluding the 2016 clashes (data is unavailable) and the 2020 conflict (ICG last accessed 25/11/2020).

During 2016 hostilities, there was limited damage to Azeri civilian infrastructure, but one Azeri civilian was killed. Adjacent Armenian-controlled areas and areas in Nagorno-Karabakh were exposed to fighting including Hadrut (Hadrou), Agdere (Martakert), Khojavend (Martouni), affecting 14,400 people, although no displacement was reported within Azeri territories (OCHA 03/04/2016). In 2019, 300,000 Azeri civilians were believed to reside within 15km of the LoC (ICG 19/07/2019). A July 2020 escalation near the LoC resulted in two civilian casualties – one Azeri killed and one Armenian civilian wounded (ICG 19/07/2019).

### Landmines and unexploded ordnance:

There is landmine, unexploded remnants of war, and cluster munition remnants (CRM) contamination in Azerbaijan, due in part to conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. It is also partially because of abandoned Soviet-era equipment that was inadequately disposed of prior to the Soviet Army's withdrawal in 1991, leaving many ammunition stores buried in near abandoned bases and strewn over large areas (GICHD 2012). Figures from the end of 2019 estimate that landmine (anti-personnel and others) contamination in Azeri territory covered 10.4km<sup>2</sup>, with the heaviest contamination around border regions, particularly around the LoC, although this is likely to have increased following the fighting in 2020 (*Mine Action Review* 2020). Recent figures on square kilometres contaminated by CRM are unavailable (*Mine Action Review* 2020). In those areas previously controlled by Armenia, contamination is estimated to cover between 350 km<sup>2</sup> and 830km<sup>2</sup> containing between 50,000 and 100,000 landmines (*Mine Action Review* 2020). According to the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA), 535 people have been killed and 2,418 have been injured as a result of mine explosions since 1999 (*Defence AZ* 30/11/2020). Contamination is likely to have worsened following the recent fighting.

## Security

### Criminality

In 2019, a total of 26,672 crimes were reported in Azerbaijan, which is equivalent to 26.6 crimes per 10,000 people (*AZ Stats* 16/6/2020) – this is relatively lower than neighbouring Armenia, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine (*GoA* last accessed 27/11/2020). The majority of reported crimes are non-violent, with murder, violence, and rape comprising 2.8% of total crimes. Organised crime is present in Azerbaijan, active primarily in drug, people, and counterfeit trafficking (*INTERPOL* last accessed 27/11/2020).

### CRIMES PER 10,000 POPULATION PER CONFLICT-AFFECTED REGION (2019)

REGION	TOTAL CRIMES	PER 10,000 POPULATION	COMPARED TO NATIONAL AVERAGE
Azerbaijan	26,672	26.6	N/A
Barda	366	23.3	Below average
Agdjabadi	311	22.8	Below average
Ganja	751	22.4	Below average
Tartar	170	16.3	Significantly below average
Goranboy	184	17.3	Significantly below average
Dashkasan	51	14.5	Significantly below average

Source: AZ Stats last accessed 01/12/2020; GoA last accessed 27/11/2020

In those areas formerly totally or partially controlled by Nagorno-Karabakh, Azeri authorities registered 21 crimes in Jabrail, 154 in Fizuli, 170, 2 in Kalbajar, 14 in Lachin, and 4 in Zangilan (*GoA* last accessed 27/11/2020) Figures for Gubadly and Shusha were unavailable.

### Human trafficking

Azerbaijan is a source, transiting country, and destination for trafficked people. This is driven by its porous borders with Georgia and, to a lesser extent Armenia, which has encouraged the illicit transportation of goods and people (*CIA Factbook* 2020). Most trafficked Azeris are adult women (*UNHCR Recent Migration Trends* 2017). There are also reports of trafficking of children for sexual exploitation both domestically and internationally. Particularly vulnerable groups include street children and children who live in border towns and economically depressed rural communities (*US Bureau of International Labor Affairs* 2019).

### Child marriage

Azerbaijan's family code was amended in 2011 to stipulate that the legal age of marriage for men and women was 18 (*ADB* 2019). However, early marriage remains an issue in Azerbaijan, and in 2016, 1 in every 10 women were married before they were 18 years old (*UNFPA* 12/2018), and 2% were married before their 15th birthday (*Girls Not Brides* last accessed 06/12/2020). Adolescent fertility has also been increasing (from 2007–2017) across Azerbaijan, in contrast to other countries in the region (*ADB* 2019). Child marriage is especially prevalent in IDP communities as this is seen as a way of escaping poverty. According to the government, the number of child marriages went down from 4,392 in 2011 to 2,421 in 2017 as a result of the amendment to the Family Code (*Girls Not Brides* last accessed 06/12/2020).

### Child labour

In 2017, 70,034 children aged 5–14 were working in Azerbaijan, which is equivalent to 5.1% of the total number of children in this age group. Of these children, 91.9% were working in ag-



riculture (including production of cotton, tea, and tobacco), 7.2% in services (including construction and other activities) and 0.8% in industry (including street work, begging, vending, and washing and repairing cars) (Bureau of International Labor Affairs 2019). Children who are not attending school are vulnerable to child labour. The government has established policies dealing with child labour, however, there are policy gaps and there is a lack of mainstreaming of child labour issues into other relevant policies. There is also a lack of worksite inspections at a national level, which may impede the enforcement of child labour laws (Bureau of International Labor Affairs 2019; AZ Stats last accessed 1/12/2020).

## Infrastructure and access to infrastructure/services

### Critical infrastructure and quality

**Housing and other buildings:** More than 80% of residential buildings in Azerbaijan are over 40–50 years old. Because of a lack of technical expertise, capital reserves for expensive retrofitting and renovations, and common consensus or engagement from residents, many residential houses are unmaintained. This creates a risk for the health and safety of local populations, particularly around active seismic zones (World Bank 2018). The regions sharing a border with Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh have been subject to underdevelopment because of the conflict and unexploded ordnance contamination (ICG 24/07/2020).

There is no legislation requiring buildings to be accessible to people with disabilities. Accessibility is therefore very limited (OSAC 05/06/2020).

**Electricity and heating:** Since 2011, the whole population has had access to electricity (UN 2018). However, it is estimated that only 70% of households have access to electricity for the entire day, even though the power network is widespread. While about 91% of urban residents have access to gas supply, the figure is only 42% in rural areas (UNDP 06/2018).

**WASH and irrigation:** Azerbaijan has scarce access to freshwater resources (ENI SEIS II 2019; UNDP 2015), however a majority of its population have access to improved water (which means those which, by nature of their design and construction, have the potential to deliver safe water, are accessible on the premises, available when needed and free from contamination) (JMP last accessed 12/12/2020). By 2015, 89% of the population had access to improved water sources and 94% to improved sanitation sources (which means they are hygienically designed to separate excreta from human contact) (UNDP 06/2018; Bureau of International Labor Affairs 2019). Only approximately 40% of rural households have access to sanitation compared with close to 90% of urban households. In the case of piped water, the figures are around 47% for rural households and 96% for urban households (Chowdhury 02/2018).

Irrigation and drainage infrastructure across the country has deteriorated because of institutional weakness in providing reliable services (UN 2018).

Many villages in regions close to the Armenia-Azerbaijan border have reduced access to water (ICG 24/07/2020). Conflict, minefields, and a lack of expertise and capacity limit the implementation of adequate solutions to water shortages and create dependencies on Armenian sources (ICG 24/07/2020). Farmers in border regions also reported water shortages for irrigation, which restricts livelihoods (ICG 24/07/2020).

**Telecommunications:** Azerbaijan has moderate mobile, mobile-broadband, and fixed broadband penetration compared to closer Asian countries despite old Soviet-era infrastructure (UNDP 2020). In 2019, 81% of the population used internet (AZ Stats last accessed 1/12/2020). Mobile cellular density is notably high at 107 per 100 inhabitants. In conflict-affected regions, the mobile cellular density is as shown in the following table.

### MOBILE CELLULAR (PHONE) DENSITY IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED REGIONS

Region	# phones per 100 inhabitants
Barda	67
Agdjabadi	73
Ganja	114
Tartar	57
Goranboy	69
Dashkasan	49

Source: AZ Stats last accessed 20/11/2020.

Television and radio are widely available, although broadcasting only pro-government news coverage. Typical broadband speed however is low at 10Mbps, which could restrict Azeris now dependant on internet for teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as restricting their access to online government services (UNDP 2020; CIA Factbook 2020). In addition, government services are widely available online (UNDP 2020).

**Medical infrastructure:** Health expenditure as a percentage of the national economy as was 6.7% in 2017 (CIA Factbook 2020). In 2020 there were 570 hospitals in Azerbaijan, 44.5 hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants, and 32 physicians per 10,000 people (AZ Stats last accessed 01/12/2020).

**Transport infrastructure:** Azerbaijan has 2,944km of railroads and 23 airports, the majority with paved tarmac. It also has 24,981km of roadways (as at 2014). Baku is a major seaport on the Caspian Sea and Azerbaijan counts a merchant navy of 305 vessels (CIA Factbook 2020).

### Previous damage resulting from conflict

According to Azeri authorities, much public and private infrastructure was damaged in newly transferred territories as a result of the 1988–1994 conflict (Modern Diplomacy 17/02/2017).

**DAMAGE REPORTED BY GOVERNMENT OF AZERBAIJAN FROM 1988–1994 CONFLICT**

Object	Unit/measurement
Villages and towns	900
Houses	150,000
Social facilities	7,000
Schools and kindergartens	1,543
Medical facilities	695
Libraries	927
Temples and mosques	53
Historic monuments, palaces, museums, exhibits	40,473
Industrial and agricultural enterprises	6,000
Motorways	2,670
Bridges	160
Water supply lines	2,300km
Gas supply lines	2,000km
Power supply lines	15,000km
Forests	280,000ha
Arable lands	1,000,000ha
Irrigation lines	1,200km

Source: ANAMA last accessed 03/12/2020

**Environment****Climate and weather conditions**

**Climate and weather:** Azerbaijan's climate can be characterised as a continental-influenced with warm summers and very cold, dry winters. This climate can be divided into three different climate zones: one north of the mountainous regions, one south of them, and one along the coast of the Caspian Sea (Weatheronline last accessed 22/11/2020; Azerbaijan last accessed on 22/11/2020).

**Environment:** The country is affected by several environmental issues, including soil degradation, pollution, and scarce resources – especially water. The energy and agricultural sectors both contribute heavily to pollution and soil degradation (FAO 2018).

**Climate change:** Azerbaijan is vulnerable to climate change because of land degradation, its scarce freshwater resources, and its location on the Caspian Sea. A large proportion of Azeri are engaged in agricultural and natural resource sectors, which are affected by sea level rises and loss of healthy soil (Chowdhury 02/2018).

**Natural resources**

**Land and agriculture:** Azerbaijan's used agricultural area per capita has decreased over the last 15 years, from 0.58ha in 2011 to 0.49ha in 2015. Of Azerbaijan's 86,600km<sup>2</sup> land, 4,769.7km<sup>2</sup> (0.06%) was being used for agriculture in 2018 (FAO 2018). Of the land sown, 90% can be irrigated, and soil for further development remains available. However, water resource shortages restrict this (FAO 2018). 40% of Azerbaijan is affected by land erosion and 40% of irrigable land is affected by salinisation. This has restricted agricultural potential in a country with a large agriculture workforce (ADB 2018; UNDP 2015). 90% of farms are small holdings occupying 85% of the national land (FAO 2018). These farmers face difficulties accessing markets, and their small size and lack of connection has resulted in challenges managing national value chains, restricting food exports. As cereals are major national staple foods and cover 40% of cultivated land (as at 2018) the GoA subsidises cereal production through direct payments per unit area (FAO 2018). Additional subsidies exist for the use of fuel or chemical fertilisers (FAO 2018). The country's pasture and irrigated lands are poorly maintained, and are subject to degradation or loss (Chowdhury 02/2018).

Transferred territories were also agriculturally significant for Azerbaijan, representing 70% of summer pastures. Because of their loss in hostilities from 1988–1994, agricultural production is estimated to have fallen by 43% (Modern Diplomacy 17/02/2017).

**Water resources:** Among the region's countries, Azerbaijan is the most water-scarce with up to 70% of its water resources coming from outside its territory. Most of the country's water sources come from rivers and lakes (FAO 2018). The country's average evaporation rate is 2.5 times higher than its total rainfall, which restricts the country's water availability (FAO 2018). This situation is projected to worsen in future, as aggregate river flows are projected to reduce in future by 11.9% in 2030, and by 37.8% in 2100, and climate change may impact other surface water sources and evaporation rates (FAO 2018; ICG 24/07/2020). Industry is a major consumer of water, with 11,300m<sup>3</sup> consumed by fossil fuel plants, fisheries, and processing plants as at 2018, followed by agriculture (FAO 2018). Further, water in agriculture is not properly maintained: inadequate irrigation infrastructure and subsequent water losses may account for 90% of irrigation's use of water (FAO 2018).

60% of Nagorno-Karabakh's water is sourced from a river originating in Kalbajar, which was controlled by ethnic Armenian forces. The Sarsang reservoir between Kalbajar and Tartar regions provides 40%–60% of Nagorno-Karabakh's electricity. It has been the subject of dispute between Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenian officials, as it has been long unmaintained with obsolete infrastructure, posing a danger to surrounding populations and settlements (UN ESCAP 2018).

## Hazards

**Floods:** On average, 100,000 people every year are affected by flooding in Azerbaijan, and the annual affected GDP is USD 30 million. Some Azeri provinces are particularly prone to flooding: Zadroh, Ali Bajramly, Sabirabad, and Kurdamir face particular flood risks (World Bank 2017). Gubadly and Zengilan are also considered to be moderately at risk of flooding. Past flooding in 1995 affected 1.5 million people, and another occurrence in 2003 affected 30,000 people. Both led to extensive damage (World Bank 2017).

**Earthquakes:** The Caucasus-Caspian region has regular seismic activity and Azerbaijan has several active faults. In the past, this has resulted in strong earthquakes, most recently during 1990, 2000, 2012, and 2018. On average, 200,000 people per year are affected by earthquakes, and the annual affected GDP is USD 1 billion (World Bank 2017). Azerbaijan may be notably prone to earthquake damage and casualties because of a large urban population and old multistorey residential infrastructure that is not earthquake-adapted (AP 26/11/2000; BNO News 07/05/2012; SivPost 06/06/2018; Guliev et al. 2002; World Bank 2018).

**Landslides:** Azerbaijan has several regions prone to landslides, including the southern and north-eastern slopes of the Great Caucasus, the north-eastern part of the Lesser Caucasus, the lower and middle parts of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, and in large river basins within the Talish Mountains. Four times as much of the country is at risk of landslides compared to 24 years ago (AzerNews 19/10/2017). Over 80% of landslides in Azerbaijan are driven by human activity, including land degradation and construction work alongside excessive rain and seismic activity, which may all increase soil erosion in areas already geographically fragile. More than 300 settlements, critical road infrastructure (including around Baku), and hundreds of economic facilities are exposed to the risk of landslide (AzerNews 29/10/2018).

## Underlying vulnerabilities

### Poverty

From 2006 to 2015, Azerbaijan's poverty rate declined from 29.3% to 4.9%. Per capita income nearly doubled, increasing from USD 8,741 in 1990 to USD 16,413 in 2015 (Chowdhury 02/2018; Republic of Azerbaijan 30/09/2018). In 2018 the poverty rate was 5.1% (ADB last accessed 22/11/2020; AZ Stats last accessed 29/11/2020). Azerbaijan's Human Development Index (HDI) in 2018 was 0.754, putting the country in the high human development category – at 87 out of 189 countries and territories (UNDP 2019).

**Conflict-affected areas:** In the conflict-affected regions of Barda, Agdjabadi, and Dashkasan, the percentage of the population receiving social benefits is above the national average of 4%. This indicates a significant vulnerability towards poverty in the conflict-affected areas.

**Seized territories:** The majority of relocated Azeris in one Jabrayil settlement (Jojug Marjanli), which was seized in January 2017, faced unemployment and dependency on government financial benefits. When relocated, they received no additional relocation grants to facilitate adaptation or self-reliance. Many maintained links to their former places of residence to pursue some form of livelihood (UNHCR 2017). Many faced difficulties covering utility bills. Access to water for irrigation was also cited as an issue, as infrastructure was not adequate, and at that point in time, canals were closed in areas under Armenian control restricting availability in Azeri areas.

### Livelihoods and unemployment

**Economically active population:** In 2019, there were 5,190,100 economically active people in the country, equivalent to 51.9% of the total population. Of these, 51.3% were men and 48.7% were women. Within this group, 4,938,500 were employed and 251,600 registered as unemployed, of which 42.6% were men and 57.4% were women (AZ Stat last accessed 24/11/2020).

**Unemployment rate:** The unemployment rate for 2019 was 4.8%, including 5.7% for women and 4% for men (AZ Stat last accessed 24/11/2020). Youth unemployment was higher than the country's average, at 14% in 2018 (European Bank 25/04/2019; UNDP 06/2018). Between 2006 and 2015, unemployment dropped in Azerbaijan from 7.3% to 5%. Women and young people are more likely to be unemployed than the national average (Republic of Azerbaijan 30/09/2018). With the exception of Agdjabadi and Dashkasan, the conflict-affected regions showed lower employment rates than the national average. There is no clear information about what is driving the significantly high unemployment rate for Dashkasan of 31.2%.

**Main sectors of employment:** The main sectors of employment in Azerbaijan are agriculture (employing 36% of the work force in 2019), followed by trade and education. The oil and gas sector, despite producing a huge part of the country's wealth, only employs a small percentage of the country's workers (AZ Stat last accessed 24/11/2020; UN 2018). At a national level, people face challenges related to livelihoods. Since 2013, real wage growth and employment growth have slowed in Azerbaijan (UN 2018) and the country's labour market is characterised by high youth unemployment, high levels of informal work, and regional labour market disparities (UN 2018). Further, pension allowance average real values have also declined, restricting older people and their families' access to basic goods (UN 2018). Rural populations often have limited alternative income-generating opportunities, driving illegal/informal practices that in turn have driven environmental degradation (UNDP 2015).

**Informal economy:** About 44% of the employed population works in the low-paying informal economy without any social protection and only 30% of wage-earners have a formal contract. Despite a sharp drop in poverty, many Azerbaijanis are affected by economic insecurity and underemployment, likely to be compounded by a growing youth population. There has been limited non-oil industrial development and diversification.

In 2015, the GDP share of mining and quarrying was 29% but employed less than 1% of the workforce. The GDP share of agriculture was 7% but employed 40% of the workforce, implying low productivity and underemployment in the rural economy. Industrial activities are mainly Baku-centric with little or no linkages with Azerbaijan’s rural or regional economies (Chowdhury 02/2018). The 2019–2030 employment strategy aims to reduce unemployment, prevent informal employment, and strengthen the social protection system (Republic of Azerbaijan 30/09/2018).

Refugees have difficulty accessing legal employment, which may delay implementation of the national protection and solutions strategy. Without a right to work and secure legal status, UNHCR has primarily focused on supporting refugees through the provision of assistance and legal interventions. UNHCR can only partially support refugees however, with a cash-based subsistence allowance. Government ministries during the High-Level Segment on Statelessness did however pledge to grant citizenship to all documented stateless people (UNHCR 07/07/2020).

**Average monthly wages:** In 2019, the average monthly wage was AZN 635.1 (equivalent to USD 373.5), with higher average wages in Baku (AZN 868.8 or USDD510.6). The minimum wage for 2019 was AZN 250 (USD 147) (AZ Stat last accessed 24/11/2020).

AVERAGE MONTHLY WAGES IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED REGIONS		
REGION	AVERAGE MONTHLY WAGE	COMPARED TO NATIONAL AVERAGE
Azerbaijan	AZN 635.1	N/A
Barda	AZN 342.7	Just over 50%
Agdjabadi	AZN 341.8	Just over 50%
Ganja	AZN 437.3	Below (close to 70%)
Tartar	AZN 338.4	Just over 50%
Goranboy	AZN 373.2	Just over 50%
Dashkasan	AZN 505.2	Below (close to 80%)

Source: AZ Stats last accessed 01/12/2020

### Food security

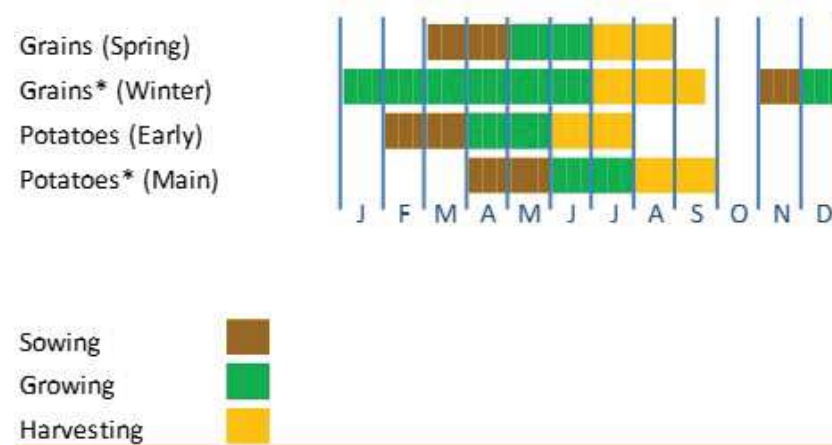
Azerbaijan has a global hunger index of 6, which is a low level of hunger, down from a score of 25 in 2000, which indicated serious hunger levels in the country at that time (Global Hunger Index last accessed on 10/12/2020). Azerbaijan ranked 53 of 113 countries on the food security index at the end of 2019, with a total score of 64.8 (Global Food Security Index accessed 24/11/2020). Food made up 15.2% of total imports to Azerbaijan between January and October 2020, although many kinds of food imports have declined (meat and wheat for example) (APK Inform 23/11/2020). The government has implemented a strategy to reduce food import

dependency, which, amongst other factors, may account for this reduction. Azerbaijan faces other food security challenges, notably because of environmental conditions that restrict full productivity, a lack of government expenditure on agricultural research and development, and low GDP per capita, which may also restrict agricultural workers’ capacity to invest (Global Food Security Index last accessed 27/11/2020). Furthermore, Azerbaijani regions bordering Armenia are particularly stressed and have restricted production, as insecurity and dysfunctional resource systems may reduce outputs (GIEWS Country Brief 05/06/2020).

Cereals are major staple foods in Azerbaijan, making up more than 50% of average daily calorie intake (FAO 2018). 2019 cereal production output was 15% above the five-year average, partially as a result of the expanded use of terrain. Grain import requirements are below average for 2019/2020 (GIEWS Country Brief 05/06/2020). However, 2020 production of wheat decreased compared to last year’s averages, around 15% below the above normal levels of 2019, and slightly below the five-year average. This may have been a result of severely reduced precipitation in early 2020, notably resulting in unfavourable production in the economic regions of Ganja and Aran. In contrast, barley production is estimated to be approximately 6% higher than average because of large planting areas (GIEWS Country Brief 02/11/2020). Consumer demand for potatoes, a staple food in Azerbaijan, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased prices since February 2020, which may continue until at least the end of the year.

### Crop Calendar

(\*major foodcrop)



Source: FAO/GIEWS.



## Nutrition

The national prevalence of under-five stunting is 17.8% and wasting is 3.2%, both ratios under the developing country average (Global Nutrition Report 2020). Obesity rates are notable, with prevalence of 19.9% in adults (2016) (CIA Factbook 2020), and 14.1% in under-five years olds children. 13% of adult women and 11.6% of men have diabetes (Global Nutrition Report 2020). The percentage of child stunting and wasting have both decreased by close to 5% since 2000, thanks to targeted efforts which included government partnerships with UNICEF (Borgen Project 25/09/2019). There is a lack of public knowledge about childhood nutrition, shown through low levels of exclusive breastfeeding (although there are also information gaps about this), poor infant feeding practices, and lack of regular at-home health visits. Iron deficiency (anaemia) is also a problem which drives wasting (Borgen Project 25/09/2019; UN 2018). 38.5% of women of reproductive age and 39.5% of children aged 6–11 have anaemia (Borgen Project 25/09/2019; Global Nutrition Report 2020).

## Health

**Life expectancy and cause of death:** Azerbaijan's average life expectancy is 76.4 years (74 for men and 78.7 for women) (AZ Stat last accessed 20/11/2020). The cause of most deaths in Azerbaijan in 2019 was Ischemic heart disease (18.9%) followed by stroke (AZ Stat last accessed 20/11/2020).

**Child and infant mortality:** Child mortality rates for under-fives was 20.4 per 1,000 live births in 2009 according to UN estimates – a significant decrease from 30.4 in 2013. According to official government data, the under-one infant mortality rate in 2019 was 11 per 1,000 live births, a reduction from 16.4 per 1,000 in 2000, but a slight increase from 2014 rates of 10.2 per 1,000 (UN via World Bank 2019; AZ Stats 2019; UNDP 06/2018). Azerbaijan's early detection of development delays and prevention in infants is weak (UN 2018).

**Maternal mortality:** Maternal mortality reduced from 37.6 (per 100,000) in 2000 to 14.4 in 2015, and showed a slight increase in 2019 to 14.9 (Chowdhury 02/2018; UNDP 06/2018; AZ Stats last accessed 01/12/2020).

### HEALTH INDICATORS IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED REGIONS (2019)

REGION	INFANT MORTALITY BEFORE THE AGE OF ONE PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS	COMPARED TO NATIONAL AVERAGE	MATERNAL MORTALITY	COMPARED TO NATIONAL AVERAGE
Azerbaijan	11	N/A	14.9/100,000	
Barda	16.7	Significantly above	0	Significantly below
Agdjabadi	11.6	Similar	1 total 2019	Significantly below
Ganja	10.1	Below	0	Significantly below
Tartar	7.0	Significantly below	0	Significantly below
Goranboy	8.2	Significantly below	2 total 2019	
Dashkasan	7.7	Significantly below	0	

Source: AZ Stats last accessed 02/12/2020; AZ Stats accessed 30/11/2020

**Mortality:** Mortality rates in Azerbaijan remain higher than OECD DAC member country averages, and are higher than those of other upper middle-income countries (UN 2018). 15.3% of people aged 15 and above are active smokers, smoking an average of 15 cigarettes a day (AZ Stat 2018).

## Health services

### HOSPITALS BEDS AND DOCTORS IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED REGIONS (2019)

REGION	HOSPITAL BEDS PER 10,000	COMPARED TO NATIONAL AVERAGE	DOCTORS PER 10,000	COMPARED TO NATIONAL AVERAGE
Azerbaijan	44.5	N/A	32	N/A
Barda	30.7	Below	21	Below
Agdjabadi	36.9	Below	11.8	Significantly below
Ganja	64.5	Above	32.9	Similar
Tartar	22	Significantly below	12.4	Significantly below
Goranboy	20.5	Significantly below	12.5	Significantly below
Dashkasan	31.1	Below	5.4	Extremely low

Source: AZ Stats last accessed 01/12/2020

**Vaccination:** 96% of the population is believed to be vaccinated against diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), and tetanus (through the DP3 vaccine) (MCV WHO/UNICEF via GAVI 2018). The level of vaccination against measles for one-year olds was over 98% in 2015 (Chowdhury 02/2018; UNDP 06/2018).

**Communicable diseases:** Communicable diseases are an issue in Azerbaijan, particularly tuberculosis (TB). Azerbaijan has a high rate of circulation of drug resistant strains of TB (WHO 2010). Azerbaijan was one of the countries also affected by the H5N1 strain of avian influenza in 2006; although contained, it resulted in eight human cases with five fatalities (WHO 2010). This may have resulted in lessons learned for COVID-19 containment. See “COVID-19” subsection under “Pre-crisis humanitarian concerns”, below.

**Seized territories:** Relocated Azeris in one Jabrail settlement (Jojug Marjanli) seized in January 2017, noted that health service provision was limited to only one nurse in the settlement and a health centre was still under construction. For other health problems, Azeris needed to go to the regional capital in Jabrail, although there was no public transport available (UNHCR 2017).

### Vulnerabilities related to gender and sexual orientation

**Gender:** Women face a number of barriers in Azerbaijan. Cultural barriers such as rigid gender norms, notable stereotypes related to caretaking and appropriate employment opportunities, and patriarchal family structures, all of which restrict women’s access to socio-economic opportunities (UNFPA 12/2018).

**Sexual orientation:** Discrimination and brutality against LGBTQI+ people are major human rights issues in Azerbaijan (US Embassy in Azerbaijan 2018). Many people identifying along this spectrum have been subject to raids, arbitrary detention, police brutality, arbitrary job dismissal, hate speech, online hacking, and have been characterised as “mentally ill” (US Embassy in Azerbaijan 2018). Discriminatory attitudes towards HIV/AIDS-positive individuals are also prevalent (US Embassy in Azerbaijan 2018).

### People with disabilities

In Azerbaijan, the constitution stipulates that people with disabilities have the right to social security. However, a 2011 UNICEF study suggested that people with disabilities’ have inadequate access to special rehabilitation services, treatment, and medical services (UNICEF 2011). Many of those surveyed (including people with disabilities, caretakers, and medical professionals) also reported being unaware of rights and entitlements, indicating a lack of accessible information. A majority of people with disabilities of working age surveyed also reported being unemployed, with many stating that this was because of restricted access to employment, and not because of impairments (UNICEF 2011). In 2019, the government reported having distributed pensions or benefits to 633,469 people with disabilities, which is equivalent to 6.3% of the total population. Included in this were 62,951 children under the age of 18 (AZ Stats last accessed 01/12/2020).

Children with disabilities are often excluded from education because of a pervasive perception of disability as an illness, resulting in separation of children with disabilities from their

communities. This is an ongoing issue (US Embassy in Azerbaijan 2018; UNICEF 2011). In 2011, 39% of children with physical impairments and 60% of children with mental impairments were unable to access some form of education. Barriers to education faced by children with disabilities include the physical infrastructure of schools, lack of specialised teacher training on inclusive education, and a general social stigma against individuals with disabilities (US Bureau of International Labor Affairs 2019). In general, accessible public infrastructure is underdeveloped, although initiatives exist (United States Azerbaijan Embassy 2018).

### Vulnerabilities related to age

**Young population:** Young people are more likely to be unemployed than older people (Republic of Azerbaijan 30/09/2018) and may be especially vulnerable to shocks.

**Older people:** Pensioners’ purchasing power has reduced since 2016, which also places them at risk (see sub-section above, “Social protection mechanisms” under “Economy and social protection systems”).

### Poor infrastructure

Residential housing in Azerbaijan is often 40–50 years old and may lack maintenance, putting residents at risk, particularly in earthquake-prone areas (World Bank 2018). A lack of public housing support and high private rental prices often push lower-income households to live in informal housing, risking exposure to dangerous or unhealthy conditions (World Bank 2015).

## Pre-crisis humanitarian concerns

### IDPs from 1990s

Government practices have long restricted the free movement of IDPs as well as their land ownership, access to employment, and engagement in politics (Caucasus Edition 15/11/2010): Although government investment in providing IDPs with housing, employment opportunities, and ensuring rights have been reinforced over the years, some analysis has pointed out that IDPs have faced institutional restrictions and political attitudes hampering their long-term integration in their host communities (Caucasus Edition 15/11/2010). In 2015, 60% of people in Azerbaijan displaced by the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh were living in “suitable dwellings” (UNDP 06/2018). Further, in 2017, 313,000 IDPs still did not have adequate housing, residing in public facilities, recreational facilities, student dormitories, and makeshift houses. Anecdotal accounts have also illustrated that poor living conditions, including families living within one room or several families living within one apartment, contributed to IDPs’ health issues. These housing issues impede the wellbeing of people with specific needs such as children, the older people, and people with disabilities. IDPs are on average poorer than their host

counterparts, and remain highly dependent on aid and subsidies (Human Rights Club 2019). IDPs' monthly provision of services was converted into a monthly allowance in 2017, which many maintain is inadequate to cover daily expenses. Some IDP communities, notably rural ones, have also reported shortages in the provision of electricity, water, and gas (Human Rights Club 2019). 326 health facilities are available in the regions hosting IDPs, including 700 doctors and 2,300 nurses. However, healthcare provision is of low quality because of a lack of government investment; bribery among medical staff is common because of low wages, and alongside high medication costs this restricts IDPs' access to health services (Human Rights Club 2019).

### People living in the regions near the LoC

People living in the regions near the LoC report being under persistent stress, fearing landmines and stray bullets; many had already faced regular displacement (ICG 24/07/2020).

**Transferred territories:** Relocated Azeris in one Jabrail settlement transferred to Azeri control in January 2017 (Jojug Marjanli) noted that there was a lack of first aid kits in the settlement despite the presence of mines and unexploded ordnance in the area, and at that point the proximity to the active LoC (UNHCR 2017).

### COVID-19

Azerbaijan reported its first case of COVID-19 on 28 February (Reuters 28/02/2020) and the first death was registered on 12 March (Trend 12/03/2020). The borders with Iran were closed on 29 February (Aljazeera 29/02/2020), the border with Georgia was temporarily closed on 14 March (Trend 13/03/2020), and with Turkey on 15 March (Trend 14/03/2020). Extensions of these temporary closures were made initially until 15 May (Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan 29/04/2020), and further to 15 June (Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan 29/05/2020). A nationwide quarantine was put in place on 31 March, initially until 20 April (Trend 30/03/2020). A partial easing of the quarantine rules was provided on 27 April (Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan 24/04/2020) but the quarantine remained in place until 4 May (Azerbaijan Coronavirus Info 18/04/2020). Measures were later reintroduced and extended. Restrictions were reimposed at various moments throughout the 2020 summer and autumn months, nationally and regionally at different intervals (OSAC 06/06/2020; US Embassy in Azerbaijan 14/06/2020).

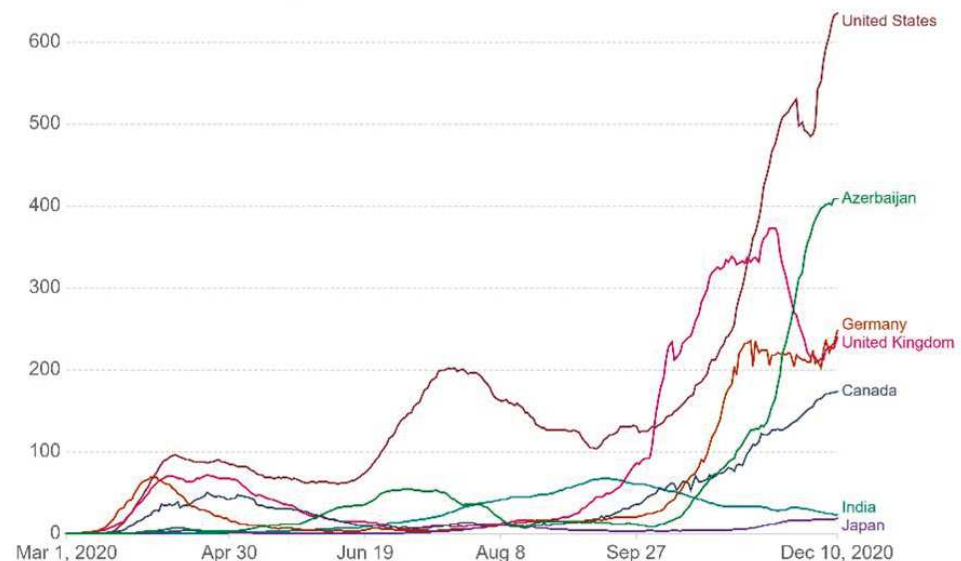
As at 3 June, the Azerbaijani government had allocated AZN 2.5 billion (USD 1.5 billion) to mitigate the pandemic's impact on the economy (GIEWS Country Brief 05/06/2020). AZN 97 million (USD 57 million) was allocated to the State Agency for Compulsory Medical Insurance to supply supplementary medical equipment (GIEWS Country Brief 05/06/2020).

Azerbaijan reached its first peak of 7-day average new cases of 558.7 on 4 July, but then saw

a steady decline to average new caseloads of between 90 and 150 between early August and early October, at which point the caseload started to sharply rise again (Our World in Data last accessed 30/11/2020). Although this also coincides with increasing caseloads across Europe and the US, Azerbaijan's curve is very steep compared to other countries, and it does correlate with the start of Nagorno-Karabakh-related hostilities.

### Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people

Shown is the rolling 7-day average. The number of confirmed cases is lower than the number of actual cases; the main reason for that is limited testing.



Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data – Last updated 11 December, 06:06 (London time)

CC BY

Source: Our World in data last accessed 12/12/2020

In May 2020, a survey undertaken by UNICEF found that 52% of participants could not access health facilities mostly as a result of the pandemic (UNICEF 09/06/2020). 11% of respondents stated that they went to sleep hungry as they had no more food, because of lost livelihoods.

### Humanitarian access

Prior to recent hostilities access to the Azerbaijan-Armenia frontline and Azeri-Nagorno LoC was restricted, and journalists and researchers were required to have special permission from the government, which can take up to "several months" to acquire (ICG 14/09/2019).

There are other access constraints in Azerbaijan for international NGOs as a result of a complex registration process for NGOs, a two-step review process for foreign grants (only grants

from donors with offices in Azerbaijan and that have been accepted by the Ministry of Finance can be considered, anonymous donations are prohibited) that can take a few weeks, and strict reporting requirements to the Government; organisations face harsh penalties if they do not comply with these processes. The registration process and eventual approval of registration is subject to arbitrary state decisions. Foreign NGOs are allowed only one office in the country, which also limits their capacity to work in remote areas. In addition, the Ministry of Justice has broad powers to inspect and punish NGOs in Azerbaijan (ICNL 30/09/2020).

### Information gaps

Because of the lack of access to the areas surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh and the LoC, information about regions surrounding the LoC is scarce.

## CRISIS IMPACT IN AZERBAIJAN

After several months of tensions, fighting broke out in Nagorno-Karabakh on 27 September and resulted in the highest death tolls in the area since the previous conflict ended in 1994. Prior to this recent conflict, Nagorno-Karabakh – also known as the Republic of Artsakh – was recognised as part of Azerbaijan but was de-facto controlled by an ethnic Armenian administration. Conflict over the area between Azerbaijan and Armenia and ethnic Armenian forces based in Nagorno-Karabakh has been ongoing for decades (Al Jazeera 12/10/2020). On 9 November, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia signed a ceasefire agreement to end the fighting, stipulating that Azerbaijan will control the parts of Nagorno-Karabakh that it seized during the fighting, and will also be transferred seven Armenian-controlled territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh (Tom de Waal 09/11/2020; Al Jazeera 09/11/2020; BBC 10/11/2020).

For more than six weeks prior to the signing of this agreement, fighting and displacement took place in Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding areas. This resulted in close to 150 civilian deaths as at 30 November, including 50 civilians killed in Nagorno-Karabakh (Human Rights Ombudsman via Tom de Waal 09/11/2020; ARKA 16/11/2020), and 98 Azeri casualties (Prosecutor General's Office 30/11/2020). By 14 November, the Armenian army had confirmed the deaths of 2,317 soldiers (The Guardian 14/11/2020), and the GoA Ministry of Defence has confirmed that 2,783 Armed Forces servicemen were killed in combat during the recent conflict (Azerbaijan Ministry of Defence 03/12/2020). The fighting also resulted in massive destruction to houses and infrastructure, both in Nagorno-Karabakh itself as well as on the Azerbaijani side of the LoC. Over 130,000 people were also displaced, including 90,640 from within Nagorno-Karabakh and newly transferred territories – who have spontaneously arrived in Armenia – and approximately 40,000 in regions close to the LoC on the Azerbaijani side (Human Rights Ombudsman 09/11/2020; UN OHCHR 02/11/2020; IOM 11/12/2020). The majority of displaced Azerbaijanis had been able to return home as at early December (key informant interview 14/12/2020).

## CRISIS IMPACT IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS OF AZERBAIJAN

### Scope and scale

#### Scope of the conflict

The regions of Barda, Agdjabadi, Ganja, Tartar, Goranboy, and Dashkasan were the areas of Azerbaijan that were the most affected. The cities of Ganja (the second largest city situated 100km from the LoC) and Mingechevir (a large city located approximately 100km from the LoC) were hit by missiles (BBC 14/10/2020; The Guardian 17/10/2020).

#### Number of affected people in these regions

There are an estimated 150,000 people who live within 10km of the LoC (The New Humanitarian 05/11/2020). More than 730,000 people live in the regions that were most severely impacted by rocket attacks and shelling; however only a limited number of these people were directly affected (see Table 1: Conflict-affected regions).

#### Casualties

**Civilian casualties:** According to the GoA, as at 30 November 98 Azeri civilians had been killed since 27 September as a result of the conflict, including 93 killed by rocket fire and five killed by landmines. In the same period, 414 were injured, including 410 by rocket fire and four by mine explosions (Prosecutor General's Office 30/11/2020).

**Combatant casualties:** According to the GoA's Ministry of Defence, 2,783 Armed Forces servicemen were killed in combat, and as at 3 December, 1,245 were being treated in medical facilities. More than 100 combatants are still considered missing (Azerbaijan Ministry of Defence 03/12/2020).

**Prisoners of war:** Azerbaijan and Armenia began to exchange prisoners of war on 14 December. The countries have both agreed to return all prisoners, but the total number of prisoners is unknown. Videos circulated on social media since October show Azerbaijani soldiers physically abusing and humiliating ethnic Armenian soldiers captured during the conflict. Azerbaijan has charged two of its soldiers with mutilating the bodies of Armenian soldiers (HRW 02/12/2020; BBC 14/12/2020; DW 14/12/2020).

#### Displacement

According to Azeri authorities, approximately 40,000 people were displaced as a result of the recent conflict – the majority from areas near the LoC including Barda, Agdjabadi, and



Aghdam (ICG 14/10/2020; UN OHCHR 02/11/2020). A Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) undertaken by the UN Country Team Azerbaijan Assessment Working Group on 15–19 November (from now on referred to as the 15–19 November RNA) in 23 settlements in Barda, Aghdam, and Agdjabadi regions highlighted that displacement resulting from the recent conflict is short term, and there is evidence that the majority of people started returning to their place of origin from 10 November (OCHA 2020). At the beginning of December, approximately 400 people remained displaced. 350–400 people in Aghdam have been unable to return home because of the extent of damage to their houses, and they are sheltering in schools. Approximately 25 people (five families) in Agdjabadi are living in tents on their land to be close to their livestock. Those displaced from Barda and Tartar have all returned (key informant interview 14/12/2020).

#### DISPLACEMENT BY CONFLICT-AFFECTED REGION\*

REGION	TOTAL DISPLACED DURING CONFLICT BETWEEN 27 SEPTEMBER–24 OCTOBER	WOMEN	MEN	REMAIN DISPLACED AS AT 14 DECEMBER
Barda	20,117	9,056	11,061	0
Agdjabadi	12,101	5,808	6,293	20–25
Aghdam	6,949	3,682	3,267	350–400
Tartar	Unknown			
Goranboy	Unknown			
Dashkasan	Unknown			
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,167</b>	<b>18,546</b>	<b>20,621</b>	<b>370–425</b>

\*As at 24 October 2020

Source: Government of Azerbaijan, key informant interview 14/12/2020.

#### Areas affected

Please see [Table 1: Conflict-affected](#) for more details about these regions.

**Barda region:** Barda, which is located 30km from the LoC, was repeatedly hit by artillery, rocket attacks, and shelling between 2–8 October (APA 02/10/2020; Caucasian Knot 06/10/2020; APA 08/10/2020). On 28 October, the city of Barda was hit by rocket attacks, resulting in 21 civilian deaths and 70 people injured (UN OHCHR 02/11/2020). Attacks on the city resulted in at least 25 civilian casualties and 83 injuries.

**Agdjabadi region:** There were at least eight attacks in the region of Agdjabadi. The first was reported as taking place on 5 October, affecting more than 3,000 families, of whom 1,000 have experienced severe loss of livelihoods. At least two civilian casualties have been reported and 19 were injured (OCHA 2020). 360 buildings – including one school, one kindergarten,

one health facility, five water supplies, two power supplies, and three service areas such as stores and pharmacies – and 93 heads of livestock were damaged.

**Aghdam region:** 14 rockets and 9,921 shells hit Azerbaijani areas of Aghdam region over the course of the conflict. Seven civilian casualties and 42 injuries were reported as a result of the hostilities. Three mosques, one water supply, and four stores were damaged. Harvests were also spoiled and cattle were killed (OCHA 2020).

**Tartar region:** Tartar region was split during the 1988–1994 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and most of the region was considered part of Nagorno-Karabakh. Fighting started in Tartar region early in the current conflict, and Azeri forces seized areas of the region as early as 28 September (AA 28/09/2020). In the region's villages and in Tartar city, damage to civilian infrastructure was reported, including homes and livelihood assets (Caucasian Knot 06/10/2020). Tartar city is located 20km from the LoC. The city was hit by multiple artillery strikes resulting in at least 17 deaths and 50 injuries (AzerNews 09/11/2020; UN OHCHR 02/11/2020; Caucasian Knot 06/10/2020).

**Goranboy:** At least three instances of artillery, rocket attacks, or shelling were reported in Goranboy between 5–19 October, resulting in at least one civilian casualty and three injuries (Caucasian Knot 06/10/2020; Caucasian Knot 15/10/2020; RFE/RL 19/10/2020).

**Dashkasan:** Although far from the LoC, Dashkasan region was shelled at least three times between 18 October–5 November (AP 19/10/2020; RIA News 28/10/2020; AA 06/11/2020). There is little information available regarding casualties and damage.

**Ganja city:** Despite being located far from the LoC, Ganja – the second largest city in Azerbaijan – was reported to have been targeted with missile strikes and hit by shelling, with reports of attacks as early as 4 October (BBC 04/10/2020; Caucasian Knot 06/10/2020). Substantial shelling on 9 and 24 October resulted in at least nine and 13 civilian deaths respectively, and combined resulted in more than 74 injuries (BBC 18/10/2020; MFA 11/10/2020).

**Mingechevir city:** Also far from the LoC, Mingechevir – the fourth largest city in Azerbaijan – was hit by shelling and missiles. According to the Prosecutor General, one attack was aimed at the 424-MW hydro plant in the city, one of the largest water reservoirs in Azerbaijan. There were reports of injuries (Reuters 04/10/2020; Hydro Review 10/12/2020; AzerNews 12/10/2020), but it is not known whether there were any casualties during this attack.

## Impact on infrastructure

### Damages to infrastructure

According to the Azerbaijan General Prosecutor, 3,410 houses, 120 apartments, and 512 civilian facilities were damaged in the recent hostilities (Azerbaijan General Prosecutor 16/11/2020). The majority of people displaced within Azerbaijan as a result of the 2020 conflict and shelling have returned to their communities. Those whose homes were destroyed by shelling are either living in temporary housing in their communities built by the government, with family members, or in public buildings (OCHA 2020). The government has promised to rebuild all damaged houses (Terter Authority 16/11/2020).

## Impact on the environment

### Explosive remnants of war

Estimates from the end of 2019 indicate that landmine contamination in Azerbaijan – including anti-personnel and other types of landmines – was spread across 10.4km<sup>2</sup>, with heaviest contamination around border regions. This is likely to have increased following the 2020 conflict and contamination is likely to have reached additional areas further from the LoC. Recent figures on square kilometres contaminated by CRM are unavailable (Mine Action Review 2020).

The presence of explosive remnants of war poses significant protection concerns, especially in settlements along the LoC, where contamination is widespread (OCHA 2020). Contamination disrupts people's ability to live and work and to access markets, land, and basic services in these areas. It could also disrupt travel between parts of Azerbaijan and affect logistics and supply chains. Shelling in these areas was not as extensive as in some of the transferred territories, however, and has not prevented temporarily displaced people from returning to their homes (key informant interview 04/12/2020).

## Impact on systems and services

### Disruptions to essential services

Shelling has damaged and/or disrupted gas lines, internet service provision, education centres, health facilities, water wells, and religious monuments in Ganja, Barda, and Agdjabadi (OCHA 2020; Ganja Authority 07/12/2020). It is likely that other cities that received artillery strikes will also have some damages to essential service infrastructure. The extent of damages is unclear, however.

**Education:** As at 3 November, 50 secondary schools had been seriously damaged as a result of the conflict, and many educational facilities remained in very bad condition (Caucasian Knot 06/10/2020; Defence AZ 03/11/2020). Shelling destroyed one school in Barda and two education centres in a settlement in Agdjabadi. There is no internet in areas along the LoC because of damaged lines, restricting students' access to education and their teachers' capacity to work (OCHA 2020). There are also reports of damages to education centres in Ganja (Ganja Authority 07/12/2020). Some schools were used to accommodate IDPs and cannot be used for education (OCHA 2020).

**COVID-19 impact on education:** As at 15 September, Azerbaijan had started to partially re-open schools; however, after increasing caseloads, all classes returned to distance learning from 2 November. This was initially meant to last for a minimum of one month, but was extended through the end of December 2020 (UNICEF last accessed 11/11/2020; UK Government last accessed 11/11/2020; U.S. Embassy in Azerbaijan last accessed 02/12/2020; Health System Response Monitor).

**Health:** Damages to health facilities because of shelling have been limited, and local authorities have quickly made repairs where necessary (Ganja Authority 07/12/2020; OCHA 2020). Conflict-related injuries and COVID-19 cases have resulted in acute shortages in medical supplies and personnel however, as resources have become overstretched (OCHA 2020).

**WASH:** Almost all schools that were used as shelters require repair work to provide adequate WASH facilities before students can return (OCHA 2020). Sanitary conditions for displaced people in schools in Barda were very poor, with no access to showers and limited toilet facilities. Shelling also damaged 35 water wells (OCHA 2020).

### Disruptions to livelihoods

Assessments of the damages to civilian infrastructure, including houses and farms, are ongoing. It is likely that many civilians have lost assets, affecting their ability to pursue livelihoods. According to the 15–19 November RNA, 1,000 families in Agdjabadi have experienced serious livelihood disruptions (OCHA 2020).

Agriculture and informal work were the main livelihood sources for many people in villages in Barda, Agdjabadi, and Aghdam prior to the conflict. The conflict has resulted in agricultural losses including significant crop and livestock loss and damages to farms and stables (OCHA 2020). This has resulted in major or complete income loss for many households. The presence of unexploded ordnance also prohibits farmers from working on their land (OCHA 2020). In Agdjabadi, there were reports of very productive crop harvesting seasons, however (Agdjabadi Authority 18/11/2020).

## Disruptions to logistics

The 15–19 November RNA stated that roads are not damaged, and all settlements are accessible by car on paved routes (OCHA 2020). Azerbaijan is reporting the reconstruction of several road routes in Agdjabadi region to connect people to markets and regional centres (Agdjabadi Authority 28/11/2020).

A number of transport infrastructure projects, aimed at integrating the transferred territories more closely with Azerbaijan, have been announced (Karabakh Insight 04/12/2020):

- Fuzuli-Shusha highway, 101.5km
- Tartar-Sugovushan highway, 10km
- Barda-Aghdam railway, approximately 50km
- Horadiz-Minjivan-Armenian border highway, approximately 70km
- Repair of high mountain roads across the Murov mountain range into Kalbajar

## Disruptions to access to information

**Level of information available:** Temporarily displaced respondents to the 15–19 November RNA stated that they lacked information about available assistance, although most assistance was distributed by the government (OCHA 2020). These respondents also noted they did not receive information on how to access free government healthcare. Some respondents also said that they were unaware of any available and accessible child-friendly spaces. The 15–19 November RNA found that internet was working in only one locality, which may restrict people's access to information about available assistance. In the areas assessed, mobile networks were functioning normally most of the time (OCHA 2020).

**Channels and sources of information:** Many temporarily displaced people and host communities surveyed did not have access to authoritative and regular news sources, because of a lack of TV channels and poor internet connectivity, resulting in a reliance on potentially inaccurate information from family and friends over the phone. This may have resulted in many people not being able to access information on assistance.

**Impact on telecommunications:** In areas of Barda, Agdjabadi, and Ganja affected by conflict, temporarily displaced respondents to one needs assessment maintained that they currently have working telecommunications services. Some temporarily displaced people in schools did not have internet access, however (OCHA 2020). In all the communities visited during the 15–19 November RNA, all internet lines remained damaged because of shelling. Prior to the 2020 hostilities, internet was already slow, and in villages and settlements near the LoC there is no internet access (OCHA 2020).

## CRISIS IMPACT IN TRANSFERRED TERRITORIES

### Scope and scale

#### Scope of the conflict

Gubadly, Zangilan, Kalbajar, Jabrail, Lachin, Fuzuli, and Aghdam territories were all transferred to Azerbaijan following the conflict and the 9 November trilateral ceasefire agreement. Kalbajar was transferred on 25 November after the extension of its original deadline (15 November), Lachin was transferred on 1 December, and Aghdam and other areas on 20 November (Ragip Soylu 09/11/2020; BBC 10/11/2020). Azerbaijan also seized areas during the fighting, including Hadurt and Shusha and surrounding regions of Nagorno-Karabakh, considered to be within the autonomous region's Soviet-era boundaries (the former autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabakh, known as the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast or NKAO) (EJIL:Talk! 04/12/2020). Most fighting between 27 September–9 November took place in these transferred and seized areas (Karabakh Insight 04/12/2020).

#### Total number of affected people in the transferred territories

It is unclear how many people have been affected by recent hostilities in these areas. Population figures from past years may provide an indication. In 2019, Nagorno-Karabakh authorities estimated that 17,000 people lived in these territories situated between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia (ICG 20/12/2019).

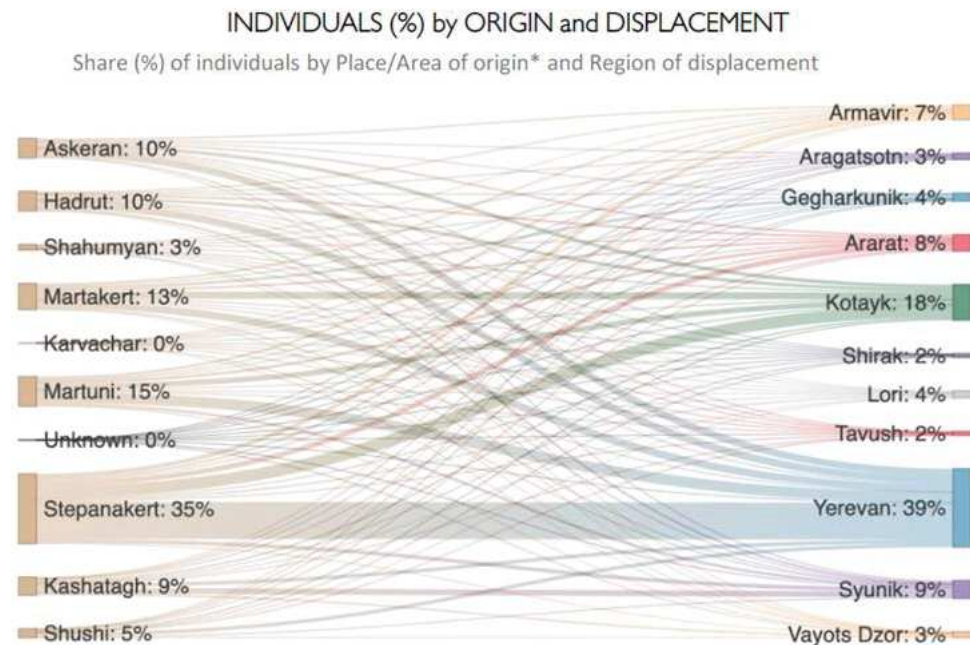
#### ESTIMATED 2015 ARMENIAN POPULATION IN THE TRANSFERRED TERRITORIES AZERBAIJANI REGIONS WITH POPULATION ESTIMATES BY THE GOVERNMENT OF AZERBAIJAN AND NAGORNO-KARABAKH AUTHORITIES

AZERI REGIONS	AZERBAIJAN POPULATION ESTIMATES (2015)	NAGORNO-KARABAKH EQUIVALENT NAMES	NAGORNO-KARABAKH POPULATION ESTIMATES (2015)
Lachin	13,000	Kashatagh	11,400*
Kalbajar	700	Shahumyan, Martakert	3,090
Jabrail	520	Kashatagh	11,400*
Zangilan	280	Kashatagh	11,400*
Fuzuli	N/A	Kashatagh, Martuni	N/A
Aghdam	360	Akna, Martakert	N/A
Gubadly	N/A	Kashatagh	N/A
Tartar	N/A	Martakert	N/A
Shusha	5,142	Shushi	5,400

\* Estimates cover only part of the region.

Sources: GoA 24/11/2020; Nagorno-Karabakh Population Census 2015; ANAMA last accessed 03/12/2020.

As at 9 December, 90,640 spontaneous arrivals had been registered in Armenia from Nagorno-Karabakh and transferred regions, although the situation is currently fluid because of returns to Nagorno-Karabakh and the backlog in Migration Service registration and duplication (IOM 11/12/2020). The proportion of people who come from transferred territories, and their current place of residence in Armenia, is illustrated below:



Source: IOM 11/12/2020

There are also IDPs from transferred territories residing in other areas of Nagorno-Karabakh. Among those that had been residing in areas that have now been transferred to Azerbaijan, return is unlikely as they could be considered 'illegal settlers' and there may also be fear of retaliation by Azeri citizens returning to the areas (Meduza 12/11/2020). 50% of respondents to one REACH assessment stated that they had no intention of returning (REACH accessed 15/12/2020). Newly displaced ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia face extensive humanitarian needs.

**Ethnic Armenians who remain in transferred territories:** It is unclear how many ethnic Armenians have remained in the transferred territories. Although most ethnic Armenians are believed to have left the Lachin region following its transfer to Azerbaijan, there have been media reports that some ethnic Armenians have remained in Lachin city, as well as in the villages of Sus and Aghavno (Eurasianet 02/12/2020).

**Azeri IDPs (potential returnees):** In January 2020, there were more than 652,000 registered IDPs in Azerbaijan (UNHCR 01/09/2020) (this figure includes people who were internally displaced from the 1988–1994 conflict, and their descendants). 90% of these IDPs are from the seven territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh (UNHCR 10/2009; The Moscow Times 16/11/2020), which have now been transferred to Azerbaijan. The 9 November agreement makes provisions for IDPs to return to Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding territories, including for ethnic Azerbaijanis displaced by fighting during the 1988–1994 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (ICG 10/11/2020). Because of a lack of infrastructure and the presence of remnants of war, it is unclear when this resettlement will take place, as well as how willing the IDPs will be to return.

## Casualties

One civilian was killed and seven injured in Aghdam during the hostilities; two were killed and one injured in Terter region; two were killed in Fuzuli region; and two were killed and one injured in Khojavend (EASO 10/11/2020). One resident of Shusha was killed and two injured on 28 October, and several civilians were injured during the battle of Shusha on 31 October (EASO 10/11/2020). Complete, geographically disaggregated figures are unavailable, and the information here may not account for all civilians killed during recent hostilities in the newly transferred territories.

Several people were recently killed because of explosive remnants of war. Five civilians were killed and four injured, including two sappers (military engineers), as a result of three different incidents on 2 November in Mehdili, Jabrail region, on 14 November in Alkhanli, and on 28 November in Ashagy Seyidahmedli, Fuzuli region (APA 02/11/2020; JIA 15/11/2020; TRT World 28/11/2020). At least one of these explosions is believed to have resulted from people seeking to resettle in these areas (key informant interview 08/12/2020).

## Displacement

A large number of people are reported to have left these territories during the hostilities and following the 9 November trilateral ceasefire agreement. Thousands of ethnic Armenians in the territories began a mass exodus in the days leading up to official withdrawal dates between 15 November–1 December.

## Areas affected

Please see [Table 2: Territories recently transferred to Azerbaijan](#) for detailed information about the transferred territories.

Tartar, Aghdam, Lachin, Jabrail, Gubadly, Shusha, Kalbajar, and Fuzuli regions were all affected by conflict with varying degrees of severity. Public and private infrastructure and liveli-



hood assets (crops and cattle) were damaged or destroyed across these areas. Considering the low temperatures in these regions during the late autumn and winter months, remaining civilians (it is unclear how many people have remained) (Eurasianet 02/12/2020) may be exposed to the cold weather if they have lost access to regular utilities, services, and their assets, and if their homes have been damaged or destroyed.

**Aghdam region:** 73% of Aghdam region was formerly controlled by Armenian forces. During the 2020 hostilities, Aghdam region was subject to persistent shelling and fighting, with the first artillery and rocket attacks starting on 6 October and affecting several villages (Caucasian Knot 06/10/2020).

**Lachin region:** Lachin region saw limited fighting during the 2020 conflict. A large part of the region is now under Russian peacekeeping control.

**Jabrail region:** From 27 September, Azeri forces were active in Jabrail region, seizing settlements and strategic mountainous locations during the fighting (TASS 27/09/2020). Areas in the district were also subject to shelling (Reuters 18/10/2020).

**Gubadly region:** Heavy fighting and shelling during the later weeks of the hostilities took place in the region, particularly in Gubadly city (EASO 10/11/2020; RFE/RL 31/10/2020; RFE/RL 28/10/2020).

**Shusha region:** From the start of the conflict, Shusha region – and particularly Shusha city – was repeatedly shelled, and experienced heavy fighting from 4–7 November. Private and public infrastructure across the region was damaged or destroyed (RFE/RL 31/10/2020; BBC 25/10/2020).

**Kalbajar region:** There was limited fighting and shelling during the recent hostilities. As civilians left the region prior to its transfer to Azerbaijan, many residents stripped buildings (including restaurants and gas stations), cut trees usually used for firewood, burned their homes down, and cut power lines, reportedly so that Azerbaijani settlers could not use them (The New York Times 15/11/2020; Al Jazeera 15/11/2020; Eurasianet 15/11/2020). Azeri authorities have stated that 13,000 private homes and 37,852 hectares of forest were ‘looted’ before civilians left the region (GoA 27/11/2020).

**Fuzuli region:** Azeri forces were active from 27 September in Fuzuli region, seizing settlements, and there were also reports of shelling (TASS 27/09/2020; Caucasian Knot 06/10/2020). The GoA reported that there was widespread destruction of private and public infrastructure in Fuzuli region, with very few ‘safe’ buildings remaining (GoA 20/11/2020).

## Impact on infrastructure

### Damaged and destroyed infrastructure

Many settlements within the transferred territories, including Gargyshlag in Lachin region, Jabrail city in Jabrail region, Aghdam city in Aghdam region, villages in the region of Tartar, and Gubadly city in Gubadly region, were partially or completely destroyed during former or more recent hostilities (Caucasian Knot 06/10/2020; Global News 22/11/2020; AzerNews 02/12/2020). Settlements in Lachin, Kalbajar, Gubadly, and Zangilan had been particularly well-developed, with roads and utility infrastructure as well as livelihood infrastructure like mines (Azercosmos 02/2019); these areas are expected to have been subject to notable destruction because of the conflict.

Azeri authorities have estimated that formerly Armenian-controlled territories have incurred USD 100 billion in damages since the 1988–1994 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and authorities are preparing compensation lawsuits against Armenia (France 24 28/11/2020). An economist noted that there is no infrastructure left in Jabrail, Fuzuli, Zangilan, and Gubadly regions, and reconstruction would require close to USD 15 billion, which is Azerbaijan’s total state budget (Eurasianet 19/11/2020). Azeri authorities have also stated that ethnic Armenian authorities undertook extensive illegal activities while the territories were under their control, by encouraging illegal settlements and resource exploitation. Authorities claim that this has resulted in environmental damage, including soil degradation and pollution (Azercosmos 02/2019). As ethnic Armenians left the transferred territories, there were reports of widespread destruction of homes, forests, and public infrastructure in the regions of Aghdam, Kalbajar, and Lachin (Anews TV 19/11/2020; BBC News 12/11/2020; AFP 30/11/2020).

## Impact on the environment

### Explosive remnants of war

In the transferred territories, contamination from recent and past conflicts is estimated to cover an area of between 350km<sup>2</sup> and 830km<sup>2</sup>, containing between 50,000–100,000 landmines (Mine Action Review 2020). In areas within Nagorno-Karabakh, contamination was estimated at a total of 7.75km<sup>2</sup> in 2019 (Mine Action Review 2020). Contamination is also likely to have worsened after the 2020 conflict.

Demining activities are reported to have started in the regions of Agdjabadi, Aghdam, Jabrail, Fuzuli, Khocavand, and Tartar (ANAMA 23/11/2020; Mine Action Review 2020), although prior to the 2020 conflict Azeri national demining services could not work within 2km of the Azeri-Armenian border (ICG 24/07/2020).

Since 27 September, the Azeri National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) has found and destroyed at least 750 unexploded missiles and rockets, 4,500 anti-personnel mines, and 2,000 anti-tank mines (AA 29/11/2020). Having cleared an area of 50,000 hectares, the agency reported finding 800,000 pieces of explosive material (key informant interview 08/12/2020).

Because of landmine contamination in many areas in the transferred territories, displaced populations may have to wait before returning. The Azeri demining authorities estimate that it may take three to five years to clear Aghdam city before it will be safe for civilians, and upwards of ten to 15 years to fully clear the entire seven transferred territories (key informant interview 04/12/2020; France 24 28/11/2020). Former settlements are being prioritised for clearing however, and will likely be opened to resettlement in the near future despite surrounding areas being potentially highly contaminated and off limits (key informant interview 04/12/2020).

## Forest fires

According to analysis by the Conflict and Environment Observatory, 889 fires (predominantly forest fires) were recorded between 22 October–3 November in the areas in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. This is an extreme abnormality compared to the maximum of 90 in previous years. It is assumed that white phosphorus is likely one of several drivers of this increase (CEOBS 03/11/2020).



Source: CEOBS 03/11/2020

As the map above depicts, many of the recently transferred areas were impacted by forest fires in early November, including southwestern Zangilan, western Gubadly, northern Kalbajar, southern Lachin, and parts of Shusha.

## Impact on systems and services

### Disruptions to markets and economy

Cities and towns in transferred regions are likely to have had their markets disrupted as a result of hostilities. With the Lachin corridor open as at 17 November (Ruptly 17/11/2020), this is expected to improve. Azeri authorities have assured that they will not disrupt the movement of people and goods along the corridor from Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh and vice-versa (Medusa 12/11/2020). It is unclear if movement of goods to other regions will be ensured.

### Disruptions to infrastructure

During the fighting, private homes and a school in villages in Fuzuli, Tartar, and Jabrail were damaged (Caucasian Knot 06/10/2020). During the 15–19 November RNA, temporarily displaced people in conflict-affected regions reported reduced access to health services. Roads were in adequate condition, although there was a lack of public transport between smaller towns and villages and regional capitals, which restricted affected people's access to services (OCHA 2020).

**Transferred territories:** Local branches of government ministries are being set up in transferred territories (GoA 07/12/2020). Because of damaged infrastructure in many areas, service provision is likely to be restricted to remaining civilians or to immediate returnees, however. Remaining ethnic Armenians may also face barriers to accessing services, including language barriers as well as difficulties related to their legal status in the transferred territories.

### Disruptions to logistics

The Lachin corridor reopened as at 17 November under Russian peacekeeper supervision. This has allowed the safe transit of goods and people between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh (Ruptly 17/11/2020; AFP 17/11/2020). It is unclear if goods will also be allowed into transferred territories. Heavy fighting and shelling in several districts, including Fuzuli, Tartar, Aghdam, Jabrail, Gubadly, around the Shusha city area, Martakert city, and the Khojavend city area, are likely to have resulted in damage to roads, although the extent and severity of the damage is unclear. The transferred territories, now under Azeri control, are subject to a new access regime that may render pre-existing trade logistics processes redundant.

## Disruptions to agriculture

Transferred territories, particularly the regions of Zangilan, Gubadly, Jabrail, Fuzuli, and Aghdam, had extensive agricultural production prior to the 2020 conflict (Azercosmos 02/2019; ICG 20/12/2019), with Lachin, Gubadly, and Zangilan accounting for one-quarter of Nagorno-Karabakh's and formerly adjacent territories' output (ICG 20/12/2019). Farms and pastures are likely to have been damaged during fighting, which may hamper overall recovery. Farmers were prevented from working their fields and cattle were also killed (Caucasian Knot 06/10/2020). Fields and pastures were also likely damaged in the hostilities, although there is little information on the scale of damages. The presence of explosive remnants of war also indirectly limits livelihood activity, as fertile land might be contaminated and livestock might graze on these lands.

## Land tenure and property

Tension is likely to remain between Armenian communities residing in transferred territories and Azeri returnees. Damages and contesting property claims may also deepen tensions.

## HUMANITARIAN PROFILE AND NEEDS

### Affected population

#### IDPs: Newly displaced and former IDPs

**Newly displaced:** Close to 40,000 people were newly displaced in Azerbaijan because of the conflict between 27 September–9 November. Official government reports of displacement are from Barda, Aghdam, and Agdjabadi. Most newly displaced people were temporarily relocated to Barda (Republic of Azerbaijan 09/11/2020). After the ceasefire, some of these people have started returning home, and there are reports that the government is assisting in rebuilding damaged infrastructure. As at 15 December, the majority of these people have returned home. Approximately 350–400 people (80 families) remain in Aghdam, living in schools as they cannot return to their homes because of damage. Four to five families in Agdjabadi (20–25 people) chose to return to their land despite significant damage to their homes in order to be close to their livestock, and are living in tents (key informant interview 14/12/2020).

**Pre-conflict IDPs:** Those residing in Aghdam, Tartar, Goranboy, Fuzuli, Barda, and Jabrail districts were evacuated as many areas were subject to shelling (MENA FN 17/11/2020). There are also over 650,000 registered IDPs (the figure includes their descendants) who were displaced during the 1988–1994 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and who may now be asked

by the government to relocate to the newly transferred territories (UNHCR 07/07/2020; ICG 20/12/2019).

Ethnic Armenians who were living in areas that were seized during the recent conflict or areas that were recently transferred to Azerbaijan are likely to have relocated primarily to Armenia or ethnic Armenian-controlled Nagorno-Karabakh. They now face extensive needs as a result of loss of basic goods, shelter (and long-term accommodation), and livelihoods.

### Sectoral needs

#### Health

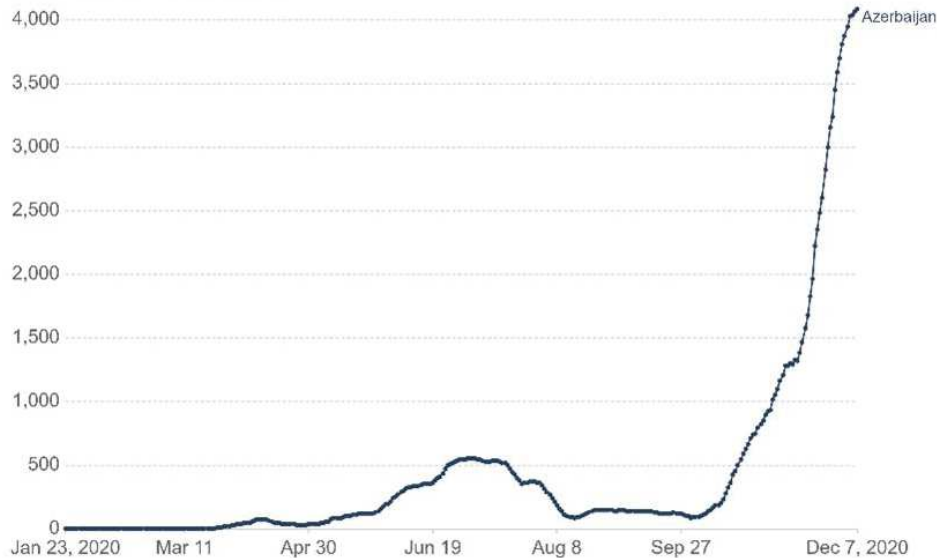
**Casualties and injuries:** Casualties and injuries were reported from the very first day of the hostilities (TASS 27/09/2020). More than 400 civilians were injured by shelling or landmines and more than 1,250 combatants were injured by fighting, and it is expected that they will continue to require medical treatment. The hospital in Barda is facing shortages in trauma kits to treat everyone with conflict-related injuries, and settlements along the LoC have a severe shortage of doctors (OCHA 2020).

**COVID-19:** As at 17 December, Azerbaijan had registered a total of 191,460 cases of COVID-19 and 2,088 deaths. 127,064 have been reported as having recovered from the illness (Worldometer last accessed 17/12/2020). In early November, there were reports that the pandemic had been 'deprioritised' as a result of the conflict, which may indicate a lack of resources towards treating COVID-19 (The New Humanitarian 05/11/2020). Looking at the data available, there is a clear indication that the situation worsened significantly after the start of the conflict on 27 September. As indicated by the steep curve in the graph below, which shows the total number of new daily cases, the number of daily cases has dramatically increased and continues to rise each day: from a consistent reporting of between 90–150 new cases per day from early August to late September, to more than 1,000 cases reported daily in early November. Since 27 November, daily reported cases have been above 3,000, with a record-breaking 4,084 new cases on 6 December (Our World in Data last accessed 08/12/2020).

## Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases

Shown is the rolling 7-day average. The number of confirmed cases is lower than the number of actual cases; the main reason for that is limited testing.

Our World  
in Data



Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data – Last updated 8 December, 15:06 (London time)

CC BY

Source: Our World in Data last accessed 08/12/2020

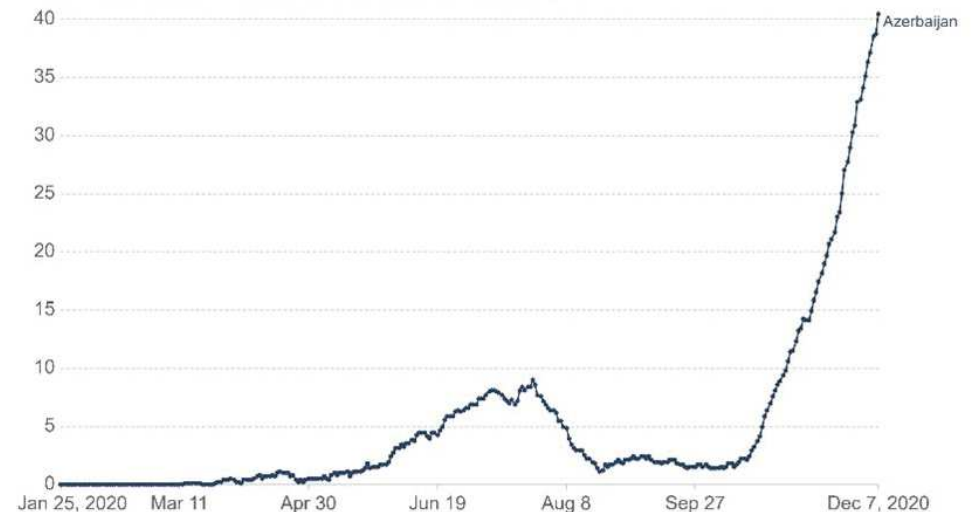
The graph below shows an increase in deaths from COVID-19. There were 1–2 daily deaths between mid-August and mid-October, at which point the curve started to rise rapidly, with increasing numbers of deaths reported daily. On 7 November, the country reported 40 new deaths – the highest number since the outbreak began (Worldometer last accessed 12/12/2020; Our World in Data last accessed 08/12/2020).

With combatant funerals and victory celebrations taking place throughout the country in November and December following the end of the conflict and the transfer of territories to Azerbaijan, it is likely that this increase in case numbers and deaths will continue.

## Daily confirmed COVID-19 deaths, rolling 7-day average

Limited testing and challenges in the attribution of the cause of death means that the number of confirmed deaths may not be an accurate count of the true number of deaths from COVID-19.

Our World  
in Data



Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data – Last updated 8 December, 15:06 (London time)

Note: The rolling average is the average across seven days – the confirmed deaths on the particular date, and the previous six days. For example, the value for 27th March is the average over the 21st to 27th March.  
OurWorldInData.org/coronavirus • CC BY

Source: Our World in Data last accessed 08/12/2020

Displaced people in collective shelters are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 transmission (ECHO 28/10/2020).

Given the large proportion of older people, particularly in Tartar (17.5% of the population) – combined with poor health indicators including a low ratio of doctors and hospital beds, and an already overstretched medical system treating conflict injuries – it is expected that COVID-19 may impact older people greatly.

**COVID-19 testing:** Approximately 50 laboratories have been designated to test for COVID-19 across the country, including three private sector laboratories and one Food Safety Agency laboratory. The majority of facilities are in Baku, but laboratories have started operating in Ganja and Nakhchivan, while additional laboratories have been opened in Shaki and Sumgait. The principal method of testing is through a PCR test. As at 1 December, over 1.7 million tests had been conducted and the country has a daily testing capacity of 5,000–10,000 (COVID-19 Health System Response Monitor last accessed 07/12/2020).

**Access to healthcare:** Displaced people have also reported difficulties in accessing health-care services, including medications (key informant interview 16/11/2020; OCHA 2020). The 15–19 November RNA highlighted that respondents lack provision of and information on



psycho-social support (PSS) (OCHA 2020), despite PSS needs being prevalent among the conflict-affected populations surveyed. In areas near the LoC there is also an acute shortage of doctors, with only nurses available. Ambulances are also scarce, as drivers are apparently fearful of COVID-19 (OCHA 2020).

**Transferred territories:** Prior to recent hostilities, many settlements in transferred territories reported being far from public hospitals, and only connected through often inadequate roads. Roads may also have been damaged by recent hostilities. People remaining in these areas, as well as future returnees, are likely to require healthcare support (ICG 20/12/2019).

### Shelter and non-food items

Because of shelling in several Azeri cities, 16,000 of the 40,000 displaced people in Azerbaijan were staying in temporary shelters; the rest stayed with family members or other hosts, and to a lesser extent in rented houses (Republic of Azerbaijan 09/11/2020; OCHA 2020). The living conditions in temporary shelters were very poor, with a severe lack of WASH facilities. As a result, most people preferred to stay with neighbours or in their partially damaged homes (OCHA 2020). Since the ceasefire, most displaced people have returned home.

The 15–19 November RNA highlighted that displaced people needed shelter and construction support as their homes had been damaged in shelling, and that there is a lack of existing local construction bodies (OCHA 2020). Respondents requested tents and other shelter materials to stay near their damaged homes, and also acutely needed warm clothing for children, mattresses, blankets, and bedding for the cold season. More than 300 temporary settlements for IDPs were partially or completely destroyed in the shelling according to Azeri authorities (MENA FN 17/11/2020). The assessment noted that hundreds of homes along the LoC had visible marks of damage. Gas was also cut off to conflict-affected areas, which may have exposed people to cold temperatures (Azer Tag 25/11/2020). Approximately 350–400 people remain in Aghdam, as their homes are too destroyed to return to. These people are sheltering in schools. In Agdjabadi, a handful of families requested tents to enable them to return to their land to be with their livestock (key informant interview 14/12/2020).

**Transferred territories:** Reconstruction in transferred territories is projected to take 3–5 years, with the aim of ensuring safe returns for Azeri IDPs. The development of Aghdam, Fuzuli, and Jabrail districts are prioritised, followed by development in Gubadly and Zangilan (Karabakh Insight 04/12/2020). Development of Shusha, Lachin, and Kalbajar is then projected to take place in a second phase. This may pose challenges because of the mountainous geography, as well as their relative detachment from mainland Azerbaijan. A Fuzuli-Shusha road is under construction and projected to finish in 1.5 years, which would enable the return of civilians (Karabakh Insight 04/12/2020). Power substations are being installed in transferred territories (GoA 07/12/2020). Lessons learnt from residents who were relocated after Azerbaijan seized one settlement (Jojug Marjanli) in January 2017 show that residents

benefitted from government-constructed homes, but that there were constraints in terms of WASH facilities and electricity and gas supplies (UNHCR 2017).

### Livelihoods and cash requirements

Affected populations are likely to have lost their livelihoods, particularly people who are dependent on agriculture which has been disrupted. Labour and business opportunities have also decreased (Caucasian Knot 06/10/2020; OCHA 2020). The 15–19 November RNA highlighted that 52.3% of respondents' main or only source of income was social assistance government support, and that many residents – both host and displaced people – in conflict-affected areas were already financial vulnerable prior to the hostilities because of structural poverty and the recent impact of COVID-19 (OCHA 2020). Their long-term recovery capacity is likely challenged by damage and destruction caused by recent hostilities.

**Transferred territories:** Before the 2020 conflict, many settlements in these territories faced severe under-provision of public investment and services, including in housing, healthcare, public transport, and road repairs (ICG 20/12/2019). Many were also far from and not well-connected to big cities (ICG 20/12/2019). The GoA has claimed that it will provide financial support to IDPs returning to transferred territories (GoA 20/11/2020).

**Agricultural production:** Azerbaijan's border regions of Gazakh, Tovuz, Gadabay, and Aghstafa accounted for 7% of the country's agricultural production in 2019, including 35% of its potato crop, 13% of grape production, 12% of sugar beet production, and 5% of grain and cereal production (ICG 24/07/2020). The 2020 fighting may have restricted production. Prior to the conflict, farmers living along the LoC with Armenia required daily permission from border guards to work their fields. Recently, because of COVID-19 containment restrictions, the delivery of permissions was delayed, resulting in wasted produce and lost livelihoods. It is likely that this approach may have had an impact on income sources and purchasing power (ICG 24/07/2020).

### Food security and nutrition

The 15–19 November RNA indicated that most respondents have a stable food security situation as crops are accessible, as is government assistance (OCHA 2020).

In areas affected by the conflict, the planting of winter cereals has been seriously impacted, as well as the harvesting of cotton, sugar beet, tobacco, and vegetables (GIEWS 02/11/2020).

**Transferred territories:** Remote areas like rural Lachin, Shusha, and Kalbajar face food insecurity because of challenges related to ensuring supply. If borders between Armenia and these newly transferred territories do not open up to allow for easier transportation, this could worsen food insecurity in the near future (Karabakh Insight 04/12/2020). Further information about nutritional status in the transferred territories is unavailable.

## WASH

Displaced people in communal shelters, alongside host communities, have reported a lack of access to WASH facilities including showers and hot water (key informant interview 16/11/2020). This increases the risk of COVID-19 transmission as well as the transmission of other infectious diseases. The 15–19 November RNA stated that the majority of surveyed settlements had regular piped water, although during some periods it was undrinkable. There is also a lack of waste collection (OCHA 2020). In many areas, affected people have issues accessing or affording hygiene items. There is a need for hygiene kits and cash assistance because of the increased risk of COVID-19 transmission in overcrowded, shared living spaces (ECHO 30/10/2020).

**Transferred territories:** There is very little information on WASH conditions in transferred territories; however the GoA did note that the water line in Shusha city was destroyed, and there was no available water in the city (GoA 25/11/2020).

## Protection

**Trauma and mental health/PSS needs:** Populations in cities subjected to shelling face protection concerns (UN OHCHR 02/11/2020). These people have been exposed to high levels of trauma and many require PSS, particularly children (OCHA 2020; key informant interview 16/11/2020). Although there were no reports of domestic violence, in areas assessed during the 15–19 November RNA, services supporting victims were scarce and there was a general reluctance to speak about issues related to gender-based violence (OCHA 2020). Extreme behaviour changes in children were also noted, indicating further PSS needs (OCHA 2020).

Protection needs resulting from explosive remnants of war: Unexploded ordnance, mines, and rocket and missile components resulting from former and recent hostilities also pose protection risks to those living in and returning to conflict-affected areas (The New Humanitarian 05/11/2020). In areas assessed during the 15–19 November RNA, parents noted that they did not know where child-safe spaces were, which could expose children to unexploded ordnance hazards in open areas (OCHA 2020). Mine risk education pamphlets are being distributed, but there is a need for more expanded education.

Land mines, unexploded ordnance, and remnants of war expose people to grave protection risks both in transferred territories and in other conflict-affected areas of Azerbaijan. During the 15–19 November RNA, respondents highlighted that contamination is a major concern for them. Adapted child protection services are likely to be required to ensure adequate mine risk/unexploded ordnance education (OCHA 2020). ANAMA is currently undertaking mine risk education outreach; however the 15–19 November RNA noted that needs are far greater than what is currently being done (OCHA 2020).

## Education

**Student casualties and injuries:** According to the Ministry of Education, as at 7 November ten students had been killed and more than 17 injured. Among the ten students killed, six were from Ganja, two from Barda, one from Agdjabadi, and one from Tartar (MoE 22/10/2020; MoE 07/11/2020; MoE 30/10/2020).

**Displaced school children:** More than 9,500 of the 40,000 displaced people were children under the age of 15, which is equivalent to nearly 25% of the total number of displaced people. Among these, 6,330 were school-aged children between ages 6–15 (Republic of Azerbaijan 09/11/2020). Schools used as shelters require repairs, particularly for their water and sanitation systems (OCHA 2020).

**Priority educational needs:** A need for educational support has been identified among children in emergency shelters, since remote learning has been difficult to provide (The New Humanitarian 05/11/2020). Returned children may also require extra support because of disruptions related to COVID-19 restrictions, conflict and displacement, and recovery. The 15–19 November RNA also highlighted the difficulty in ensuring distance learning in many of the assessed locations because of a lack of internet access. There is also no internet connection in the settlements and villages along the LoC. As a result, many children do not have access to online classes during COVID-19-related school closures (OCHA 2020).

## CAPACITY AND RESPONSE TO ADDRESS NEEDS

### Humanitarian access

#### Access for relief actors to affected populations

Access has now returned to pre-conflict levels, although it is restricted by COVID-19 containment measures. COVID-19-related travel restrictions in and out of Azerbaijan by air or land are in force until 31 January 2021, with the exception of cargo and charter flights and a limited number of commercial flights. Land borders with Georgia and Iran are closed until 28 December. A reduced flight schedule is still operating with flights to Turkey, England, Belarus, Germany, the United Arab Emirates, Russia, and Ukraine. People entering Azerbaijan must present a negative COVID-19 test and are screened for COVID-19 symptoms on arrival. All arrivals must complete a 14-day self-quarantine in their own accommodation. In cases of suspected infection, passengers are subject to a 14-day quarantine in a specially designated facility (Azerbaijan Travel last accessed 12/12/2020; Republic of Azerbaijan 11/06/2020).

The Azeri government has publicly stated that any visitors to Azeri territory, including transferred territories and Nagorno-Karabakh, without official permission will be subject to sanctions and their rights to visit Azerbaijan in the future will be suspended (AzerNews 02/12/2020). As Nagorno-Karabakh no longer shares a border with Armenia, this may make it difficult for international observers to access these areas, which may also worsen tensions.

**Conflict-affected areas:** Humanitarian presence in affected areas in Azerbaijan is limited and civil society organisations operate in a restricted space, although some have been able to distribute aid in areas near the LoC (key informant interview 07/10/2020; The New Humanitarian 05/11/2020). Extensive needs were reported in an inter-agency RNA – more than the few agencies in the country can address (OCHA 2020). The government has led aid operations with support from the Azerbaijani and Turkish Red Crescent and the ICRC (The New Humanitarian 05/11/2020). There are strong administrative constraints because of a complex registration process for NGOs and a review process for foreign grants (ICNL 30/09/2020). A volunteer from the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society was killed during the shelling in Barda on 28 October (ICRC 28/10/2020). Although fighting has ceased, aid workers may face protection risks because of remnants of war.

**Transferred territories:** Prior to the recent conflict, humanitarian organisations did not operate in the transferred territories – apart from limited operations by ICRC in Nagorno-Karabakh (ICG 14/10/2020). Access to transferred territories and Nagorno-Karabakh itself is restricted as the region no longer shares borders with Armenia and, as at 3 December, the Agdere-Vardenis highway is closed. Any organisation operating informally or formally in Nagorno-Karabakh will now need to request permission from Azerbaijan to enter, and will rely on the Lachin corridor for access (Karabakh Insight 04/12/2020; AzerNews 02/12/2020). Logistically, many roads are likely to have been damaged across transferred territories; however, a new Shusha-Fuzuli road and railroads lines are under construction (GoA 25/11/2020). It is unclear whether relief and recovery aid operations will be subject to special provisions in transferred territories. These areas are likely to be under heavy Azeri military presence, which may require civil-military coordination mechanisms for international actors (Karabakh Insight 04/12/2020).

## Access to relief for affected populations

### Safety and security-related obstacles

The 15–19 November RNA found that most of the 23 assessed settlements in Barda, Aghdam, and Agdjabadi are accessible by car. In most instances, there were no military-imposed movement restrictions (OCHA 2020). Roads were damaged during the hostilities; this may continue to be an access constraint (Caucasian Knot 06/10/2020).

## International

Aid operations within Azerbaijan have largely been led by the government, with support from the Azerbaijani and Turkish Red Crescent, and from the ICRC (The New Humanitarian 05/11/2020). During October, the Turkish Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid materials including shelters, blankets, clothing, kitchen items, and hygiene kits (TRC 22/10/2020). The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency provided food assistance to 2,000 families in Tartar, Aghdam, and Barda (Govt Turkey 22/10/2020).

IOM and UNHCR are both active in Azerbaijan in supporting IDPs' basic needs and livelihoods; they have also been active in assessing needs resulting from the recent hostilities.

## National

The government is providing assistance to displaced people. Civil society groups have also been active in providing aid (Karabakh Insight 04/12/2020).

**Transferred territories:** Special temporary administrations have been set up in transferred territories which will coordinate emergency governance and service provision, and manage reconstruction efforts (Trend News Agency 12/11/2020; Eurasianet 19/11/2020). Azeri authorities have promised reconstruction plans for each transferred city (Trend News Agency 17/11/2020). Installations for power plants, a bakery in Shusha, and local branches of ministries in transferred territories have been put in place (GoA 12/07/2020).

## Community mobilisation

Civil society also provided assistance, with citizens and businesses spontaneously donating food, winter clothing, and hygiene items. Volunteers with local NGOs then distributed the donations in border areas and in the cities of Tartar and Barda (The New Humanitarian 05/11/2020).

## Coordination

### Coordination of assessments

The government has tasked assessment working groups at the district level to assess needs and repair damages. Assessment working groups only started working in mid-November however, and were scheduled to complete assessments by 10 December. This extends the waiting time for aid delivery to people in need into colder winter months.

**Transferred territories:** The Azerbaijan Government has stated that damage appraisals will be starting soon in transferred territories (Karabakh Insight 04/12/2020); initial estimates

place damage costs as ranging from USD 100 billion–1.3 trillion (France 24 28/11/2020; Trend News Agency 18/11/2020).

## Coordination of aid delivery

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Government ministries are in contact with humanitarian and development partners to coordinate aid delivery, following assessments. These partners include the Azerbaijan and Turkish Red Crescent Societies, ICRC, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, and WHO (key informant interview 09/11/2020).

## KEY OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS

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**Returns to transferred areas:** The timing of returns and the number of IDPs who will start returning to the transferred areas remain unclear. It is also unknown how land tenure and property issues will be settled. In a UNHCR ‘return intention’ survey following the Azerbaijani seizure of a formerly Armenian-controlled territory in Jabrail in January 2017, IDPs settled and employed in rural areas in Azerbaijan stated that they were more favourable to returning, whereas those residing in sub-urban areas were more hesitant, despite often poor living conditions. They expressed concerns over employment opportunities, economic activities, government support, and sustainability in the newly gained territories (UNHCR 2017). Relocated IDPs in transferred territories may be similarly hesitant if there is a lack of investment and opportunity in these areas.

**Status of ethnic Armenians in transferred territories:** It is unclear how many ethnic Armenians have remained in the transferred territories. Ethnic Armenians who have chosen to remain are likely to face difficulties because of potential discrimination or to have legal concerns about their status under Azeri law (potentially as ‘illegal settlers’). It is unclear if ethnic Armenians who have left transferred territories to go to Armenia or Nagorno-Karabakh will return to their previous homes in these areas.

**Humanitarian access to transferred areas and restrictions to programming:** It remains uncertain how accessible the newly transferred areas will be for humanitarian and development organisations. It is expected that humanitarian and development aid agencies and organisations will be forced to navigate a highly politicised environment both in transferred territories and in Nagorno-Karabakh. This places restrictions on needs-based programmes (Karabakh Insight 04/12/2020).

**How the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh will develop:** It is unclear what the status of Nagorno-Karabakh will be, how the implementation of the ceasefire agreement will work, and what role the peacekeepers will have.



Table 1: Conflict-affected regions

INDICATOR	AZERBAIJAN NATIONAL FIGURES	BARDA BƏRDƏ RAYONU	AGDJABADI AĞCABƏDİ RAYONU	GANJA GƏNCƏ ŞƏHƏRİ	TARTAR TƏRTƏR RAYONU	GORANBOY GORANBOY RAYONU	DASHKASAN DAŞKƏSƏN RAYONU
<b>ECONOMIC REGION</b>		<b>ARAN</b>	<b>ARAN</b>	<b>GANJA-GAZAKH</b>	<b>YUKHARI KARABAKH</b>	<b>GANJA-GAZAKH</b>	<b>GANJA-GAZAKH</b>
<b>Total area</b>	86,600km <sup>2</sup>	950km <sup>2</sup>	1,760km <sup>2</sup>	110km <sup>2</sup>	960km <sup>2</sup>	1,700km <sup>2</sup>	1,050km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Cities etc.</b>	10 economic regions 63 regions 78 towns 261 settlements 4,248 rural settlements	1 town 110 rural settlements	1 town 1 settlement 44 rural settlements	1 town 7 settlements	2 towns 1 settlement 74 rural settlements	2 towns 6 settlements 79 rural settlements	1 town 5 settlements 43 rural settlements
<b>POPULATION</b>							
<b>2019 population</b>	10,006,700***	157,500	136,800	335,600	104,700	105,029	35,400
<b>Urban population</b>	52.8%	25.5%	36.9%	100%	28.9%	21.3%	43.5%
<b>Rural population</b>	47.2%	74.5%	63.1%	0%	71.1%	78.7%	56.5%
<b>Women</b>	50.1%	49.1%	47.9%	51.2%	50.3%	49.5%	48.8%
<b>Men</b>	49.9%	50.9%	52.1%	48.8%	49.7%	50.5%	51.2%
<b>Age distribution</b>	0–19: 28.7% 20–59: 59.1% 60 and up: 12.2%	0–19: 29.6% 20–59: 58.8% 60 and up: 11.6%	0–19: 32.5% 20–59: 57.4% 60 and up: 10.1%	0–19: 25.8% 20–59: 60.5% 60 and up: 13.7%	0–19: 27.8% 20–59: 54.7% 60 and up: 17.5%	0–19: 29.5% 20–59: 58.6% 60 and up: 11.9%	0–19: 29.3% 20–59: 59.7% 60 and up: 11%
<b>Population ethnicity*</b>	91.60% Azerbaijani 2.00% Lezgin 1.30% Armenian 1.30% Russian 1.30% Talysh 0.60% Avar 0.40% Turkish 0.30% Tatar 1.20% other nations	99.90% Azerbaijani 0.07% Turkish 0.03% Russian	99.90% Azerbaijani 0.03% Russian 0.01% Kurdish 0.06% other nations	99.54% Azerbaijani 0.29% Russian 0.07% Turkish 0.02% Tatar 0.02% Lezgin 0.04% Ukrainian, Kurdi- sh, Jewish, Georgian 0.02% other nations	76.21% Azerbaijani 23.70% Armenian 0.05% Russian 0.03% Kurdish 0.01% other nations	99.37% Azerbaijani 0.35% Turkish 0.11% Russian 0.11% Kurdish 0.03% Ukrainian, Tatar, Lezgin 0.03% other nations	99.85% Azerbaijani 0.08% Russian 0.02% Kurdish 0.03% Armenian 0.01% Tatar 0.01% other nations
<b>Population density</b>	116/km <sup>2</sup>	166/km <sup>2</sup>	177/km <sup>2</sup>	3,051/km <sup>2</sup>	109/km <sup>2</sup>	62/km <sup>2</sup>	34/km <sup>2</sup>
<b>EMPLOYMENT SITUATION</b>							
<b>Economically active population 2019</b>	5,190,000 (51.9% of total popula- tion)	79,900 (50.7% of total popula- tion)	65,800 (48.1% of total popula- tion)	181,300 (54% of total population)	52,700 (50.3% of total popula- tion)	54,800 (52.2% of total popula- tion)	28,800 (81.4% of the total population)
<b>Employed population</b>	4,938,500	76,300	63,200	170,300	50,300	52,500	19,800
<b>Regional unemploy- ment</b>	N/A	4.5%	3.9%	5.5%	4.5%	4.2%	31.2%
<b>Population registered as unemployed</b>	251,600	1,410	64	1,509	1,093	706	854



INDICATOR	AZERBAIJAN NATIONAL FIGURES	BARDA BƏRDƏ RAYONU	AGDJABADI AĞCABƏDİ RAYONU	GANJA GƏNCƏ ŞƏHƏRİ	TARTAR TƏRTƏR RAYONU	GORANBOY GORANBOY RAYONU	DASHKASAN DAŞKƏSƏN RAYONU
People receiving compensation for unemployment	540	3	2	27	5	1	0
Average salary (monthly)	AZN 635.1	AZN 342.7 (53.9% of national average)	AZN 341.8 (53.8% of national average)	AZN 437.3 (68.5% of national average)	AZN 338.4 (53.2% of national average)	AZN 373.2 (58.8% of national average)	AZN 505.2 (79.5% of national average)
Number of retirees		19,361	17,847	43,488	9,549	11,956	5,444
Average pension (monthly)	AZN 291.5	AZN 208.7	AZN 212.9	AZN 226.4	AZN 217.5	AZN 219.9	AZN 225.3
People on social benefits	401,249 (4% of the total population)	8,945 (5.7% of total regional population)	6,913 (5.1% of total regional population)	12,634 (3.8% of total regional population)	3,577 (3.4% of total regional population)	4,117 (2.0% of the total regional population)	2,242 (6.3% of total regional population)
Average social benefits (monthly)	AZN 118.4	AZN 118.8	AZN 118.1	AZN 120.2	AZN 115.4	AZN 114.4	AZN 119.5
<b>HEALTH</b>							
Infant mortality per 1,000 live births	11	16.7	11.6	10.1	7	8.2	7.7
Maternal mortality	14.9 / 100,000	0	1 total	0	0	2 total	0
Doctors per 10,000 people	32	21	11.8	32.9	12.4	12.5	5.4
Hospital beds per 10,000 people	44.5	30.7	36.9	64.5	22	20.5	31.1
<b>EDUCATION</b>							
Full-time general education institutions	4,433	75	52	49	47	79	41
Students in general education	1,616,105	25,158	23,540	47,209	10,604	16,617	3,353
Total preschools	1,840 (128,826 students)	35 (1,803 students)	36 (2,800 students)	43 (4,369 students)	29 (1,730 students)	32 (1,605 students)	12 (337 students)
<b>OTHER INFORMATION</b>							
Climate – average temperature		Jan: -1°C to 8°C August: 20°C to 34°C	Jan: 1.2°C to 1.7°C August: 25°C to 30°C	Jan: -1.1°C to 6.1°C August: 19°C to 31°C	Jan: -1.1°C to 6.1°C August: 21°C to 32°C	Jan: 1°C to 8°C August: 21°C to 33°C	Jan: -10°C to -2°C August: 11°C to 22°C
Crime 2019	26,672 26.6/10,000	366 total crimes 23.3/10,000 28 serious crimes	311 total crimes 22.8/10,000 30 serious crimes	751 total crimes 22.4/10,000 75 serious crimes	170 total crimes 16.3/10,000 13 serious crimes	184 total crimes 17.3/10,000 11 serious crimes	51 total crimes 14.5/10,000 7 serious crimes
Tourism – total hotel rooms	642	51	56	688	15	4	1

INDICATOR	AZERBAIJAN NATIONAL FIGURES	BARDA BƏRDƏ RAYONU	AGDJABADI AĞCABƏDİ RAYONU	GANJA GƏNCƏ ŞƏHƏRİ	TARTAR TƏRTƏR RAYONU	GORANBOY GORANBOY RAYONU	DASHKASAN DAŞKƏSƏN RAYONU
Number of mobile phone subscribers (% of population)	107 per 100 inhabitants	106,100 (67.3% of total population)	100,200 (73.2% of total population)	382,700 (more than 1 phone per inhabitant)	60,300 (57.6% of total population)	73,400 (69.9% of total population)	16,600 (46.9% of total population)
Gov website**		<a href="http://berde-ih.gov.az/">http://berde-ih.gov.az/</a>	<a href="http://www.agcabedi-ih.gov.az/">http://www.agcabedi-ih.gov.az/</a>	<a href="http://www.ganja-ih.gov.az/">http://www.ganja-ih.gov.az/</a>	<a href="http://terter-ih.gov.az/">http://terter-ih.gov.az/</a>	<a href="http://www.goranboy-ih.gov.az/">http://www.goranboy-ih.gov.az/</a>	<a href="http://dashkesen-ih.gov.az/">http://dashkesen-ih.gov.az/</a>

\*According to the 2009 Census. \*\* Government websites also used as sources of information. \*\*\*Population figures for country as a whole is for 2020.

Sources: AZ Stats last accessed 30/11/2020; Weatherspark last accessed 29/11/2020; AVCIYA last accessed 29/11/2020; AZ Stats last accessed 24/11/2020; AZ Stats last accessed 04/12/2020; AZ Stats last accessed 05/12/2020

**Table 2: Territories recently seized or transferred to Azerbaijan**

INDICATOR	AGHDAM AĞDAM RAYONU	KALBAJAR KƏLBƏCƏR RAYONU	GUBADLY QUBADLI RAYONU	LACHIN LAÇIN RAYONU	JABRAİL CƏBRAYIL RAYONU	FUZULİ FÜZULİ RAYONU	ZANGILAN ZƏNGILAN RAYONU	SHUSHA ŞUŞA RAYONU
ECONOMIC REGION	YUKHARI KARABAKH	KALBAJAR-LACHIN	KALBAJAR-LACHIN	KALBAJAR-LACHIN	YUKHARI KARABAKH	YUKHARI KARABAKH	KALBAJAR-LACHIN	YUKHARI KARABAKH
Total area	1,150km <sup>2</sup>	3,050km <sup>2</sup>	802km <sup>2</sup>	1,835km <sup>2</sup>	1,050km <sup>2</sup>	1,386km <sup>2</sup>	730km <sup>2</sup>	310km <sup>2</sup>
Date controlled by Armenia	23/07/1993	02/04/1993	31/08/1993	18/05/1992	23/08/1993	23/08/1993	29/10/1993	08/05/1992
Date seized/transferred to Azerbaijan	20/11/2020 (transferred)	15/11/2020 (transferred)	20/11/2020 (transferred)	01/12/2020 (transferred)	20/11/2020 (transferred)	20/11/2020 (transferred)	20/11/2020 (transferred)	08/11/2020 (seized)
Total registered Azeri population 2019*	204,000	94,100	38,558	78,600	81,700	134,333	45,200	34,700
Women (%)	51.2%	50.1%	Not known	49.3%	Not known	Not known	Not known	Not known
Men (%)	48.8%	49.9%	Not known	50.7%	Not known	Not known	Not known	Not known
Current location of regional population	Out of the total population, 146,931 IDPs have temporarily settled in 62 cities and regions of the country. The remaining population remains in Aghdam.	The majority of the population is located in other areas of the country: 13.6% in Baku, 21.7% in Ganja, 5% in Yevlakh, 5.4% in Absheron, 9.1% in Barda and Goranboy, 12% in Goygol, 7.7% in Tartar, and 5.4% in 46 other cities and in other regions. The remaining 20.1% is located in Kalbajar.	The population of the region is temporarily settled in 41 cities and regions. 64% are in Sumgayit and Baku and also in the Abshe-ron region.	The entire population is temporarily settled in 57 cities and regions of the country.	The population is located in other areas of the country: 48.2% in Baku city and Baku suburbs, 6% in Absheron region, 8.5% in Sumgayit city, 27.6% in Bilasuvar region, and 9.7% in other cities and regions.	50% of the population live in Fuzuli and the remainder have resettled to Baku, Sumgayit, Ganja and other cities, and Beylagan, Imishli, Saatli, Sabirabad and other regions.	The population is located in other areas of the country. A full breakdown of locations is unavailable. 10,000 people were resettled to Fuzuli after spending 14 years in IDP camps in Sabirabad (UNHCR 07/02/2008).	The population is located in other areas of the country. A full breakdown of locations is unavailable. Many have settled in Baku.

<b>Full-time general education institutions (2019/2020)</b>	135	109	32	104	41	80	33	21
<b>Students in full-time general education (2019/2020)</b>	23,589 students	15,735 students	10,767 students	13,361 students	9,678 students	14,298 students	5,588 students	5,167 students
<b>Total preschools (2020)</b>	40 (2,320 students)	5 (370 students)	1 (149 students)	5 (180 students)	13 (520 students)	33 (1,879 students)	2 (305 students)	Not known
<b>Crime (registered incidents in 2019)</b>	187	2	Not known	14	21	154	4	Not known
<b>Climate</b>	Jan: -0.2°C to 1.8° C July: 23°C to 26°C	Jan: 1.2°C to 1.7°C August: 25°C to 30°C	Jan: 1.2°C to 1.7° C August: 25°C to 30°C	Jan: 1.2°C to 1.7°C August: 25°C to 30°C	Jan: 1.2°C to 1.7° C August: 25°C to 30°C	Jan: -2.7°C to 6°C July: 20°C to 33°C	Jan: 1°C July: 25°C	Jan: -4°C to -1°C July: 16°C to 19°C
<b>Gov website**</b>	<a href="http://www.agdam-ih.gov.az/">http://www.agdam-ih.gov.az/</a>	<a href="http://kelbecer-ih.gov.az/">http://kelbecer-ih.gov.az/</a>	<a href="http://www.qubadli-ih.gov.az/">http://www.qubadli-ih.gov.az/</a>	<a href="http://www.lachin-ih.gov.az/">http://www.lachin-ih.gov.az/</a>	<a href="http://www.cabrail-ih.gov.az/">http://www.cabrail-ih.gov.az/</a>	<a href="http://www.fuzuli-ih.gov.az/">http://www.fuzuli-ih.gov.az/</a>	<a href="http://zengilan-ih.gov.az/">http://zengilan-ih.gov.az/</a>	<a href="http://www.shusha-ih.gov.az/">http://www.shusha-ih.gov.az/</a>

\* Please note that the Azeri population registered in the territories that were controlled by Armenia includes the pre-1988–1994 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict population numbers and their descendants. The majority of these people live in other areas of the country but are still counted as residents of their region of origin.

\*\* Government websites also used as sources of information.

Sources: AZ Stats last accessed 20/11/2020; AZ Stats last accessed 24/11/2020; AZ Stats last accessed 24/11/2020



## ANNEX 1: NAMES AND STATUSES OF PLACES IN AZERBAIJAN AND ARTSAKH, AS AT DECEMBER 2020

GOVERNMENT OF AZERBAIJAN ADMINISTRATIVE AREA*	EQUIVALENT ARTSAKH ADMINISTRATIVE AREA	COUNTRY/REGION
Aghdam (Agdam) region	Akna, Martakert	Transferred/seized
Jabrail (Jebrazil) region	Hadrut	Transferred/seized
Fuzuli region	Kashatagh, Martuni	Transferred/seized
Kalbajar (Kelbajar) region	Shahumyan, Martakert	Transferred/seized
Lachin region	Kashatagh region	Transferred/seized
Gubadly (Qubadli, Kubatli) region	Kashatagh	Transferred/seized
Zangilan (Zangelan) region	Kashatagh	Transferred/seized
Khojavend city	Martuni city	Nagorno-Karabakh (NK)
Agdere city (Tartar district)	Martakert city (Martakert province)	NK
Khankendi (Khankendi district)	Stepanakert (Stepanakert province)	NK
Shusha city and district (Shusha district)	Shushi (Shushi province)	Transferred/seized
Two villages near Khojali (Khojaly district)	Two villages near Ivanyan (Askeran province)	NK
Hadrut city (Khojavend region)	Hadrut (part of Hadrut region)	Transferred/seized
Askeran city (Khojaly district)	Askeran (Askeran province)	NK
	Berdzor (Kashatagh province)	Transferred/seized, monitored by peacekeepers
Lachin city (Lachin district)		
Taghaser (Khojavend)	Taghaser (Hadrut province)	Transferred/seized
	Vardashat	
Ağkənd (Khojavend)	Spitakshen (Martuni province)	Transferred/seized
Çardaqlı (Tartar district)	Maghavirus (Martakert province)	NK
Aşağı Yemişçan (Khojaly district)	Nerkin Sznek (Askeran province)	NK
Aşağı Oratağ (Tartar district)	Nerkin Horatagh (Martakert province)	NK
Alashan		
Sugovushan (Tartar district)	Mataghis (Martakert province)	Transferred/seized