

# Azerbaijan



## Quick facts

Number of IDPs	Up to 593,000
Percentage of total population	Up to 6.6%
Start of current displacement situation	1988
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	600,000 (1990)
New displacement	0
Causes of displacement	Armed conflict, deliberate policy or practice of arbitrary displacement, generalised violence, human rights violations
Human development index	65



Internal displacement in Azerbaijan followed armed conflict with Armenia over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh between 1988 and 1994, and related generalised violence and human rights violations. In 2010 the conflict had still not been resolved, and most of Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territory remained under the effective control of Armenia. While border skirmishes continued into 2010, there was no new displacement due to the conflict during the year.

Over 590,000 people remained internally displaced at the end of 2010. About 50 per cent of IDPs were female and ten per cent were older people. The figure included around 197,000 children born since their parents had fled their homes. The government is the only collector of comprehensive figures of IDPs and no profiling exercise has been carried out.

IDPs were in 2010 living in rural and urban areas throughout the country. Many were still living in dilapidated and overcrowded collective centres and makeshift accommodation, while the remainder were living in housing which they, the government, or international organisations had built, with relatives, or in vacant accommodation they had occupied. Overall, IDPs reportedly lived in housing that was more crowded and with more limited access to electricity and sewerage than the non-displaced population.

IDPs' security of tenure became more precarious in 2010, particularly in the main cities of Baku and Sum-gait. This was due to the continuing privatisation of property, increased public construction, and European Court of Human Rights decisions giving precedence to the rights of owners of property where IDPs were living.

By late 2010, the government had resettled some 90,000 IDPs into 67 purpose-built settlements. While these offered better housing conditions, they were often far from neighbouring towns and offered limited access to services, jobs or livelihoods. The government has stated that this resettlement is a temporary measure pending the return of IDPs to their original place of residence.

IDPs were more often unemployed than their non-displaced neighbours, and the majority continued to depend on government benefits as their main source of income. The government paid a monthly food allowance of \$18 to over 540,000 IDPs

in 2010; however more extensive measures are required to improve their self-reliance.

People who have moved to find jobs in Baku, including IDPs, have struggled to register their new residence. This limits their access to employment, housing, health care, education and pensions, and they are unable to vote or stand for election. IDPs also cannot receive government assistance they are entitled to. Regulations and practices that prevent IDPs from registering their current residence should be amended.

Some IDPs have not been able to afford health care, and some internally displaced children have had to work in order to supplement family income or else they have married early; their school attendance has often suffered as a result. The quality of education remains an issue as premises are in need of repair, and there is a lack of supplies, furniture and teachers. Some internally displaced children continue to be educated separately.

IDPs continued to suffer mental health problems related to their displacement and experiences during the conflict. Despite measures to improve the health care system, in 2010 there was still little appropriate and affordable support for people with mental health conditions.

As the government's capacity to protect IDPs has increased and negotiation on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh has become deadlocked, donor support has waned. However, organisations including UNHCR, ICRC, Oxfam and World Vision have continued to assist IDPs. The European Union, the OSCE Minsk Group and the RSG on IDPs visited the country during the year and called for the resolution of the conflict as well as improved support for IDPs.

Durable solutions are stalled for IDPs in Azerbaijan since IDPs do not have a meaningful choice between return, local integration and settlement elsewhere. IDPs will not be able to achieve durable solutions until return is possible, which depends on a resolution to the conflict. The government should muster the will to resolve the conflict and work to ensure that IDPs can enjoy their rights at their current residence.