

Azerbaijan



Population: 8,303,512 (July 2010 est.)
Population Growth Rate: 0.805% (2010 est.)
Birth Rate: 17.75 births/1,000 population (2010 est.)
Life Expectancy: total population: 67.01 years; male: 62.86 years; female: 71.67 years
Literacy Rate: total population: 98.8%; male: 99.5%; female: 98.2% (1999 census)
Net Migration Rate: -1.42 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2010 est.)
Unemployment Rate: 6% (2009 est.)
Gross Domestic Product per Capita: \$10,400
Religions: Muslim 93.4%, Russian Orthodox 2.5%, Armenian Orthodox 2.3%, other 1.8% (1995 est.)
Languages: Azerbaijani (Azeri) 90.3%, Lezgi 2.2%, Russian 1.8%, Armenian 1.5%, other 3.3%, unspecified 1% (1999 census)
Ethnic Groups: Azeri 90.6%, Dagestani 2.2%, Russian 1.8%, Armenian 1.5%, other 3.3%, unspecified 1% (1999 census)
Capital: Baku (Baki, Baky)¹

Trafficking Routes

Azerbaijan is a source and a transit country for human trafficking.² Victims are trafficked from Azerbaijan to Turkey, Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Russia.³

Factors That Contribute to the Trafficking Infrastructure

The Azerbaijan territory of Nagorno-Karabakh is currently occupied by the Armenian military, which leaves a large stretch of the Azerbaijani southern border unmonitored by the Azerbaijan border patrol.⁴ Trafficking in the country is worsened by economic hardship, military conflict,⁵ and by its porous borders.⁶

¹ CIA, THE WORLD FACTBOOK (2009), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/aj.html>.

² Amnesty International, *Azerbaijan Human Rights*, available at: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/all-countries/azerbaijan/page.do?id=1011109> (last visited Mar. 5, 2010).

³ *Azerbaijanis trafficked to Turkey, Iran, Russia and UAE*, NEWS.AZ, Apr. 28, 2010, available at: <http://www.news.az/articles/14382>

⁴ Republic of Azerbaijan, *Armenian Aggression against Azerbaijan*, http://mfa.gov.az/eng/khojaly_en/index.php.

⁵ The Advocates for Human Rights- Stop Violence Against Women, *Azerbaijan*, <http://www.stopvaw.org/Azerbaijan.html> (last visited Mar. 2, 2010).

⁶ Azerbaijani Women's Support Center Canada, *Azerbaijan Gender Profile*, Apr. 14, 2007, <http://azerwomensc.blogcu.com/GENDER>.

Forms of Trafficking

Women and children are trafficked for sexual exploitation from Azerbaijan to Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.⁷ Individuals are also trafficked for labor exploitation.⁸ Allegations of corruption in the child welfare system have led to concerns about orphans being sold into prostitution, organ trafficking, and slave labor.⁹ There is also a widespread custom of bride kidnapping, where women are abducted and forced into marriage.¹⁰

Government Responses

In 2005, Azerbaijan passed the Law on Fight Against Human Trafficking.¹¹ This law established the legal and organizational grounds of fighting human trafficking, defined the legal status of victims of human trafficking, and regulates issues of protection of victims.¹²

In August 2009, Azerbaijan adopted the Regulations of the National Mechanism of Work With Victims of Human Trafficking. An interdepartmental commission is to be formed and meet once a year. Expected measures include free medical services to victims of human trafficking, psychological assistance, and compensation to the victims, regardless of their cooperation with law enforcement agencies.¹³

Article 106 of the Azerbaijan Criminal Code prohibits slavery.¹⁴ The penalty for slavery is incarceration from five to ten years. If the victim of slavery is a child, the penalty is a minimum of seven years.¹⁵ Other criminal code provisions include the following: Article 150 prohibits violence of a sexual nature.¹⁶ Article 108 prohibits sexual abuse and includes forced prostitution under the provision.¹⁷ Article 151 prohibits forced sexual action.¹⁸ Article 152 prohibits intercourse with a minor under 16 years of age.¹⁹ Article 244 regulates the maintenance

⁷ Amnesty International *supra* at 2.

⁸ Radu Benea & Kahdija Ismayilova, *Weak Laws, Energy Wealth Fuel Rise in Sex Trade*, RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY (RFE/RL), July 7, 2008, *available at*: http://www.rferl.org/content/Weak_Laws_Energy_Wealth_Contributing_Rise_Sex_Trade/1182172.html (last visited Mar. 5, 2010).

⁹ *Abuse Allegations Highlight Child Protective Strains In Azerbaijan*, RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY (RFE/RL), June 1, 2009, *available at*:

http://www.rferl.org/content/Abuse_Allegations_Highlight_Child_Protective_Strains_In_Azerbaijan/1744367.html

¹⁰ Sabina Kiryashova, *Azeri Bride Kidnappers Risk Heavy Sentences*, INSTITUTE FOR WAR AND PEACE REPORTING (IWPR), Nov. 17, 2005, *available at*: http://www.iwpr.net/?p=wpr&s=f&o=258105&apc_state=henpwpr.

¹¹ Law on Fight against Human Trafficking (2005), (Azerbaijan), *available at*: <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/id/6437>.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Azerbaijan government approves national mechanism of work with human trafficking victims*, TREND NEWS, Aug. 14, 2009, *available at*: <http://en.trend.az/news/society/rights/1521882.html>.

¹⁴ Criminal Code of the Azerbaijan Republic, art. 106, *available at*:

<http://www.legislationline.org/download/action/download/id/1658/file/4b3ff87c005675cfd74058077132.htm/previ>

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¹⁵ *Id.* at 14, art. 106.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 14, art. 150.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 14, art. 108.

¹⁸ *Id.* at 14, art. 151.

¹⁹ *Id.* at 14, art. 152.

of brothels.²⁰ Article 243 prohibits involvement in prostitution.²¹ Trade in minors is illegal under article 173.²² In addition, involvement of minors in prostitution is illegal under article 171.²³

Nongovernmental and International Organization Responses

In July 2010, representatives from over 15 NGOs met with government officials to discuss a short term plan of action to fight trafficking in Azerbaijan. The plan of actions will be prepared by September of this year and will last until December.²⁴

In 2007, Nazir Guliyev, head of the Juridical Assistance Fund of 'World of Peace', announced the establishment of a network of lawyers to help combat human trafficking in Azerbaijan. The network seeks to spread awareness of this problem to the general public and provide assistance to victims of trafficking.²⁵

The Network Against Human Trafficking in Azerbaijan was founded in January 2009. It provides free legal services to victims of trafficking; organizes training, workshops, and other events to help develop joint projects among nongovernmental organizations in Azerbaijan; and monitors and evaluates the progress being made in the struggle against trafficking.²⁶

Multilateral Initiatives

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe office in Baku has aided the spread of awareness on this issue by financially supporting a six-program broadcast depicting human trafficking from real-life experiences.²⁷ The International Organization for Migration has designed and developed an educational module on trafficking for secondary school teachers, parents, and students aged 15 to 17 in Azerbaijan and neighboring countries.²⁸

²⁰ *Id.* at 14, art. 244.

²¹ *Id.* at 14, art. 243.

²² *Id.* at 14, art. 173.

²³ *Id.* at 14, art. 171.

²⁴ *Azerbaijani Ministry, NGO preparing plan of actions to fight trafficking*, NEWS.AZ, July 20, 2010, available at: <http://www.news.az/articles/19479>

²⁵ S. Ilhamgizi, *Network of lawyers established to combat Human Trafficking in Azerbaijan*, TREND NEWS, Aug. 29, 2007, available at: <http://en.trend.az/news/society/rights/985891.html>.

²⁶ Network Against Human Trafficking in Azerbaijan (NAHTAZ), *About Network*, <http://www.nahtaz.org/> (last visited Mar. 5, 2010).

²⁷ *OSCE representative proposes creating a self reporting function as the National Reporter on combating trafficking in Azerbaijan*, AZERI PRESS AGENCY (APA), Apr. 7, 2008, available at: <http://en.apa.az/news.php?id=46606>.

²⁸ International Organization on Migration (IOM), *Azerbaijan-Facts and Figures*, <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/azerbaijan> (last visited Mar. 23, 2010).