



Office of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic

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FACT SHEET

REFUGEES & INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDP) IN NAGORNO KARABAKH

About **36,000 Armenian refugees** from Azerbaijan and some **71,000 internally displaced** ethnic Armenians live in the Nagorno Karabakh Republic. These refugees, along with hundreds of thousands of Armenians, were expelled from their homes in 1988-91, prior to the full-scale war in Karabakh and as part of Azerbaijan's policy of ethnic cleansing. Azerbaijan's full-scale military offensives of 1992-4 forced tens of thousands of Armenians out of their homes in Nagorno Karabakh. In Azerbaijan, on the other hand, majority of the internally displaced come from areas east and south of Karabakh. Most of them fled their homes in 1993-4, as a result of Azerbaijan-initiated fighting in those areas.

Background

First ethnic Armenian refugees arrived in Karabakh and Armenia following the pogroms in Sumgait in late February 1988. They were followed in subsequent years by a steady stream of refugees from Baku, Kirovabad (Ganja) and settlements throughout Azerbaijan. In 1988-89, ethnic Armenians in Azerbaijan were summarily fired from their jobs, robbed, intimidated and murdered, without consequences for perpetrators. During January 1990 pogroms in Baku, remaining Armenians were rounded up en masse and transported to Yerevan, from where they settled throughout Armenia and Karabakh. In all some 350,000 Armenians were thus expelled. **Some 36,000 of them came to Nagorno Karabakh.**

Starting in 1990, and growing in intensity in April 1991 during what became known as Operation Ring, Azerbaijan forced out tens of thousands of Armenians from over two dozen settlements in Dashkesan, Khanlar, Shaumian, Hadrut and Shushi Districts. During Azerbaijan's military offensives in 1992-4, most of the population of the Mardakert District in the north of Nagorno Karabakh was similarly forced out. Some of the displaced from Azerbaijan, who resettled in the relative safety of Armenian populated settlements in and near Karabakh, were thus **displaced for the second time in just a few years**. In all some **71,000 Karabakh Armenians were thus internally displaced.**

Conclusion & Requested Action

Azerbaijan's campaign of ethnic cleansing, hatred and full-scale military attack on Nagorno Karabakh resulted in hundreds of thousands of Armenian and Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced people. All refugees and internally displaced deserve compassion and humanitarian support, independent of their physical location. But unlike refugees and IDP in Azerbaijan and Armenia, the refugees and internally displaced persons in Karabakh have not received adequate international assistance. A limited humanitarian aid provided by the ICRC, MSF and the ongoing assistance of the Armenian Diaspora and, since 1998, the U.S. government helped address some of the needs. However, more such assistance is needed to fully address basic humanitarian needs of refugees and IDP in Nagorno Karabakh.

The U.S. leadership is needed for the United Nations and other relevant organizations to find ways to support refugees and IDPs residing in Nagorno Karabakh despite Azerbaijan's continued effort to discriminate against them by opposing such international assistance.

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