

1. Has your country been affected by forced displacement? If so, how? Please provide figures, the underlying reasons for forced displacement, the nationalities of those forcibly displaced and the approximate length of displacement. Please explain how your Government's national strategy and/or reception policy on water and sanitation take account of the needs of forcibly displaced persons.

As a result of military aggression of the Armenian armed forces, 20% of Azerbaijan lands, territory of the Upper Garabagh and neighboring 7 areas, have become occupied since 1988. The last ethnic cleansing policy, conducted with deliberate order by Armenia during 1988-1992, resulted in total eviction from home of 250 thousand Azerbaijanis residing on its territory and finding refuge in Azerbaijan. Since 1988 the plan of forced expel of Azerbaijanis, inhabiting in 126 settlements of the Upper Garabagh, which is Azerbaijan's integral part, is under realization. Namely, at that period the most tragic event of the XX<sup>th</sup> century took place- the Armenian armed forces supported by the Soviet army destroyed for one night the city Khojaly of Upper Garabagh, old men, women and children were killed, captured and subjected to outrageous cruelty and tortures.

The Deputy-prime minister, the Chairman of the State Committee of the Azerbaijan Republic on affairs for refugees and internally displaced persons Ali Hasanov stated, that figure 1 million was statistics of 1992-1993. Thus, for 25 years period the natural increase of the country's population was 100 to 1, and this means, the number of refugees and internally displaced persons increased too: «Taking into account increase by 10 thousand persons per year this number reached to 1 million 200 thousand. Therefore, 1 million 200 thousand persons from population of 9 million are refugees and internally displaced persons. This means, if 1 person from 135 persons is a refugee all over the world, then each 8<sup>th</sup> person is a refugee in Azerbaijan. We have very serious problem». At the same time about 50 thousand Meskhetian Turks, refugees from the Central Asia, forced to wander, found shelter in Azerbaijan in 1990. Additionally, there are about 11 thousand persons, intending to receive the status of "refugees" in Azerbaijan. Their prevailing part is Russian citizens of the Chechen origin, Afghans, Iranians, Iraqis, and Palestinians.

The Upper Garabakh conflict, that Azerbaijan has encountered with, is distinguished from other conflicts of the world: «Two or three conflicts have similar features with our conflict. Other conflicts reflect problems within the countries. The Upper Garabagh conflict started from aggression of one state -Armenia against another state Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani citizens have turned into refugees and internally displaced persons in their land». The State program on solution of problems of refugees and internally displaced persons and two attachments was adopted. As a whole, from 2003 to 2017 year the President signed 66 Decrees and Orders, the Cabinet of Ministers signed 213 Decrees and Orders, and the National Parliament adopted 11 laws.

By the decree of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic "The Government program on solution of problems of refugees and internally displaced persons" was approved in 1998. For the first time in the world practice the Social Protection Fund of internally displaced persons was established in Azerbaijan by the decree of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic 1999. By the decree № 298 dated 1 July, 2004 of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic "The State program on improvement of living conditions and increasing of employment of refugees and internally displaced persons" was approved. This program became evident proof of the constant concern of the state on refugees and internally displaced persons in the country.

The source: the State committee on affairs of refugees and internally displaced persons.

[http://www.azerbaijan.az/portal/Karabakh/Tragedy/humanitarianTragedy\\_r.html](http://www.azerbaijan.az/portal/Karabakh/Tragedy/humanitarianTragedy_r.html)

2. Which preventive steps has your Government taken to ensure preparedness, resilience and adaptability of the existing water and sanitation services to the impact of future emergencies, including contingency plans and special budget?

By growth of economic and politic power of the state, the Azerbaijan Republic began solving, formerly considered the most crucial issue at the higher level, such as the problem of refugees and

internally displaced persons. Creation of proper living conditions, establishment of appropriate sanitary conditions, including water and sanitary supply for refugees, internally displaced persons is realized within frames of the International Covenant on economic, social and cultural rights of 1966, and also within frames of requirements, envisaged by the legislation and regulatory legal acts of Azerbaijan. From 12 tent camps existing in Azerbaijan, 5 camps, functioning at the territory of Bilasuvar region, were liquidated in 2003 and 4 camps realizing at the territory of Barda and Agdjabedy regions were liquidated in 2006. The corresponding work on liquidation of balance 3 camps at the territory of Saatly and Sabirabad regions was conducted. 77 modern settlements were founded and household conditions of several hundred thousand internally displaced persons were improved.

In emergency situations, the primary concern for central and local authorities is to provide the population with clean drinking water. For the purification of drinking water in emergency situations, the Ministry of Emergency Situations purchased mobile water treatment plants, some of which will purify seawater to the indicators of drinking water, others - to reduce turbidity; In addition, 11 mobile biotoilets plants were purchased.

In Azerbaijan, a joint plan of operational measures between the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES), the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) was developed and approved.

3. What concrete measures has your Government taken to ensure that, during emergency situations, forcibly displaced persons have access to sufficient, safe, accessible, and acceptable water and sanitation services in a non-discriminatory way? How do these measures take into account the special needs of children (often separated and unaccompanied), pregnant women, girls, persons with disabilities, chronically ill persons, and older persons? How does your Government ensure that local and regional authorities provide emergency access to water and sanitation to forcibly displaced persons in line with international human rights law?

During 2001-2017 at the expenses of the State Oil Fund and other financial sources 97 modern settlements of 3.3 mln m<sup>2</sup> with multi-storied buildings and full set of modern infrastructures were constructed for this category of the population at the territory of 30 cities and regional centers of the Republic. 985 km of water pipe 93 km of sewage lines, 163 km of drainage systems were laid in new residential blocks. 5 new residential complexes (for 588 families in c. Barda, for 234 and 206 families in c. Sabirabad, for 304 families in Gazakh region, for 135 families in Zagataly region) were constructed for refugees and internally displaced persons just in 2015. Despite the undertaken measures certain part of refugees and internally displaced persons live in adverse conditions for residence. The state guarantees protection of the rights in sphere of potable water and drinking water supply, by providing of each person with potable water of normative quality within scientifically substantiated norms of drinking water supply. Corresponding political measures in the field of social integration, social protection and housing policy and also at all facilities education, public health services, detention facilities, where state obligations at provision of water access and sanitary for vulnerable and marginal groups are defined by national norms in Azerbaijan. The basis for accepting of these obligations is corresponding articles of the Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic (Article 15.I, Article 38.III), of the Law of the Azerbaijan Republic № 275-IVQ dated 30.12.2011 «About social service». Provisions of these articles are realized within frames of the State program of «The socio-economic development of regions of the Republic Azerbaijan for 2014-2018». Annually, allocation of financial assets for satisfaction of needs of vulnerable groups in the sphere of water and sanitary is envisaged in the state budget.

4. Please identify and share examples of challenges your Government has faced in ensuring the human rights to water and sanitation by forcibly displaced persons during emergency situations.

One of serious problems for the Azerbaijan government is the water blockade around the Sarsang reservoir. The Sarsang reservoir was built by Azerbaijan on the Terter River back in 1976, during Soviet times. Before the beginning of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, this reservoir was one of the main water sources in the Upper Garabagh. After the occupation of the Upper Garabagh, Sarsang got under the control of Armenian military formations, which cut off the reservoir contrary to the international conventions, thus deprived the population of 400,000 persons and agricultural lands in the front line regions of Azerbaijan.

During the springfloods, the Sarsang water is dammed off, which leads to the flooding of the adjacent land, but during the hot summer, in contrary, tailgate goes down, blocking water flow to the Azerbaijani villages. For more than 20 years, this reservoir turned into a flash point of ecological catastrophe which should be prevented with assistance of the international community.

Prior to the occupation of territories in 1992, the Sarsang reservoir provided irrigation waters up to 100,000 hectares of land lots in 6 Azerbaijan regions (Terter, Barda, Agdam, Goranboy, Yevlakh and Agdjabadi). As a result of the water blockade, not only the violation of the water use rights is the case, however considerable losses are inflicted to the agriculture and the household becomes rather intolerable.

The life of more than 400 thousand people and additionally for refugees residing in the catchment basin of the Terter river might be under death threat. The whole infrastructure is under threat of complete deterioration. This accident will lead to a humanitarian and environmental disaster all over the region.

Since 1988, neither routine, nor overhaul repair has been conducted on the facility. The condition of the dam is steadily worsening, under colossal water pressure dangerous cracks appear in the concrete.

Taking into account the height of Sarsang dam, at present stage it is the highest reservoir in Azerbaijan, which increases scales of a possible technogenic disaster. According to the physics laws, the higher the water source is, the higher speed of its fall is. Thus, majority of the villages of the Terter region (Chayly, Seydimli, Hajigarvand, Zolkeran, Duyarly, Sarydjaly, Aleskerli, Bayandur, Burudj, Irvanly, Gyulyabatly, Gadzhalli, Yenidashkend, Gapanly, Shatyryly, Hasanbeyli, Zyumrukchach, Imamgulubeyli, Dilyanchilar, Muganli) may be completely drowned and some (Shyklarh, Madagiz, Hasangaya, Sekhlebad, Kerpusyndyran, Gazakhlar, Soyulan, Dargalar, Nazirli settlement) may be partially drowned.

5. In situations of forced displacement across borders, what are the water and sanitation service standards that your Government applies to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in a vulnerable situation while en route, at borders and at reception? If they are subject to different treatment from the citizens or between themselves, please provide details of the national legal and policy frameworks that sustain your Government's position.

Annually finances are allocated for realization of measures of State programs, relating to social and economic position of refugees and internally displaced persons from the State budget and the budget of the State Oil Fund. Migrants who need asylum, settle in various cities and regions of Azerbaijan. For example, the Meskhetian Turks are compactly settled in the Khachmaz and Saatli districts. These areas are provided with high-quality and safe water, as well as a sewage system. Migrants and refugees use these infrastructures along with the local population. In this case, there are increased loads on these systems, as the number of users exceeds the project.

6. In situations of internal displacement, what are the water and sanitation service standards that your Government applies to internally displaced persons? If they are subject to different treatment from the host communities, please provide details of the national legal and policy frameworks that sustain your Government's position.

Refugees and internally displaced persons is the group of population, which left permanent residence places, as a result of military aggression of the Armenian armed forces.

7. How has the arrival of forcibly displaced persons affected the current provision of water and sanitation services to local communities/host communities (as applicable)?

The pressure on the water supply and sewerage system to fully support the population living in cities and rural settlements has increased. In 2014, in 25 cities of the republic, work was completed on the introduction of centralized water supply, in 27 cities and administrative district centers work continues. Thus, 480 thousand people are provided with drinking water, including 175 thousand people for the first time received water from centralized water supply systems. To date, the access to drinking water in the capital of the Republic has increased from 55% to 80%. So, if in 2005 the centralized water supply system provided 1.56 million people, now it covers 2,366 million people. Significant progress was made in the field of laying new water-supply networks.

Within the framework of the National Water Supply and Sanitation Project, work was carried out in 17 cities and district centers on sustainable provision of water supply and sanitation to the population. Work is underway to build 5 reservoirs with a volume of 40,500 m<sup>3</sup> in various regions of the country. In accordance with the National Programs, it is planned to achieve round-the-clock provision of the population of the country, both urban and rural, in general, by 2020. So, in accordance with the "Program of social and economic development of regions of the republic" 2014-2018. for quality uninterrupted water supply in 5 regional centers (Neftchala, Bilasuvar, Salyan, Shirvan, Hajigabul) with the inclusion of 121 villages, the construction of the Mugan-Shirvan group water pipeline was completed. A similar situation exists in the cities of Sabirabad, Saatli. A group water pipeline was built and used for the city of Sabirabad and its 28 nearby rural settlements, Saatli district and 12 rural settlements of Hajigabul region and 4 nearby villages. 44 villages are connected to this water pipe. According to the water company OJSC Azersu, water supply facilities of 46 regional centers of the country are subject to rehabilitation.

Significant progress was made in providing the population of rural areas with modular water supply systems in accordance with the decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan of 20.07.2007 "On some measures to improve access people to clean water ". So, for the past period, for the population of the country living in the valley of the channel of the Kura and Araz Rivers, 320 water treatment facilities of modular type have been installed in rural settlements of the republic, covering more than 530 thousand people. The number of generated distribution sources is 3102, with daily water supply of 20-60 liters per day for each resident.

8. In situations of protracted displacement in camps, host communities or urban settings, what concrete measures has your Government taken to ensure a transition from water and sanitation emergency assistance to a more sustainable and development-based approach to water and sanitation services? How have those forcibly displaced participated in the planning, design and management of more durable water and sanitation solutions?

12 tent camps have been liquidated and the population has moved for residence to 62 cities and regions of the Republic since 2003. It is necessary to mention, that 3860 residential buildings with total area of 190632 m<sup>2</sup>, and 15 school buildings, 5 kindergartens, 1 hospital, 9 first aid stations, 8 club and social centers, 7 post and communication offices, 11 bath-houses, 10 administrative buildings and 1 station of fire service were constructed, besides 113,8 km of roads, 139,2 km of water pipe lines, 43,2 km of closed irrigational systems, 211,9 km of overhead lines were laid, 124 artesian wells were drilled in settlements, established at the territory of Agdam and Agjabedy regions. More than 20,000 persons from 30 cities and the Republic regions were involved for local civil works. These works proceeded in other cities and regions of the state just as well.

9. What are the main challenges that your Government faces when moving towards water and sanitation solutions that are more sustainable and adequate for situations of protracted displacement? How does your Government cooperate with international governmental organizations and NGOs in this respect?

The Deputy prime Minister of the country stated, that presently the Azerbaijan state is capable providing refugees and internally displaced persons completely: «Nevertheless, some international humanitarian organizations continue cooperating with us. Some organizations among them are new ones. **The main problem is to resolve the political conflict**».

10. In the context of rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts after disasters and conflicts (as applicable), how does your Government plan for and implement sustainable solutions for the human rights to water and sanitation that enable the return of forcibly displaced persons (as applicable)? What kind of cooperation does your Government establish with development actors to that effect?

Only by resolving political conflict.