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Azerbaijan

2006 - LIVING CONDITIONS IN THE AZERBAIJAN REPUBLIC

The Office of the Resident Representative will be glad to answer any enquiries, which international personnel may wish to make on living conditions in Azerbaijan.



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I. INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNTRY

With a total land area of 86,600 sq. km, Azerbaijan is the largest of the three Transcaucasian republics of the former Soviet Union. It is located on the Caspian Sea and is bordered by the Russian Federation (specifically Dagestan) to the north, Georgia to the north-west, Armenia to the west and Iran to the south. The enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh (populated mainly by Armenians) is situated within the borders of Azerbaijan. The Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan, located between Iran and Armenia, also belongs to Azerbaijan. Total length of the Azerbaijan frontier is 2,013 km.

Azerbaijan is a country of mountain ranges and river valleys. The majority of the country is dominated by lowlands around two rivers; the Kura flows from the north-west into the Caspian Sea, while its tributary, the Araz, forms the border with Iran. North of the Kura lies the main axis of the Greater Caucasus Mountain range.

The largest city in Azerbaijan is Baku, the capital, with a population of 1,855,300 (estimated as of January 2005). Baku is situated on the Absheron Peninsula, which juts about 40 miles out into the Caspian Sea. It is a large port. Other large towns in the republic include Ganja, Sumgayit, Mingacevir and Nakhchivan.

Climate

Azerbaijan is characterized by a range of climates: from cold weather in the Great Caucasus mountain range in northern Azerbaijan; to temperate in the Kura plain; to subtropical in the Lenkoran lowlands, in the south-east on the Caspian coast. The average temperature in July is +27 C; in January, the average temperature is +1 C. Baku has a moderately warm and dry subtropical climate, with a hot summer and short mild winter. Frosts occur once in 10 years. On the same latitude as Greece and Italy, the Absheron Peninsula is warmer and drier. Although the city of Baku is susceptible to strong winds year-round, it has the greatest average number (284) of fine days in the year of all places in the Caucasus, and the least rainfall.

Human Geography

According to the 2006 Statistical Yearbook of Azerbaijan (produced by the Azerbaijan State Committee on Statistics), Azerbaijan has a population of 8,436,400 as of January 2006, of which men make up 49,2% and women - 50,8%. Age and sex group of the population is characterized as following: share of persons of age 0-14 years from total number of population makes 24,4%, that of 15-39 years age group – 43,7%, that of 40-59 years age group – 23,1%, that of 65 and over- 8,7%. Urban population makes up 51,6%, while the rural one – 48,4%.

National structure of country population in accordance with the results of last census (1999) is characterized by the following data: Azerbaijanians – 90,6%, Lezghins –2,2%, Russians-1,8%,

Armenians – 1,5%, Talish – 1,0%, Avars – 0,6%, Turkish – 0,5%, Tatarian – 0,4%, Ukrainians – 0,4%, Sakhur – 0,2%, Georgians – 0,2%, Kurds – 0,2%, Tats – 0,13%, Jews – 0,1%, Udins – 0,05% and other nationalities – 0,12%. Since the census, almost all of the entire Armenian population outside Nagorno-Karabakh has left as a result of the military conflict over that region; correspondingly, Azerbaijan has received a huge influx of Azeris from Armenia.

The conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region has created more than 1,000,000 refugees and IDPs in the country (SPPRED, 2004). Currently, internally displaced persons account approximately for 12% of the total population.

The Azerbaijani language is a member of the south Turkic group of languages, originally written in Arabic script. The Latin alphabet was introduced in 1929; ten years later the use of Cyrillic script was made compulsory. Following independence the Government began to phase out the use of Russian, and the Latin alphabet was reintroduced in the spring of 1992. Russian is often spoken in urban areas (especially Baku and Sumgayit), and understood throughout most of Azerbaijan. Practically all adults are literate.

Religion

About eighty per cent of the population is Muslim (mainly Shiite). Other religions include Russian Orthodox, Catholicism, Baptist and Judaism. In Baku, religious services are regularly conducted in two principal mosques, two Russian Orthodox churches, the New Apostle Church (German Lutheran Church), the Sephardic Synagogue, the Ashkenazi Synagogue, and the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

History, Politics and Administration

Azerbaijan is a country of ancient history and culture. Several states existed on the territory of present-day Azerbaijan in ancient times. In the 3rd century B.C. the territory of historic Azerbaijan was under the dominion of the Sassanid dynasty of the Persian Empire. The Arab conquest in the seventh century brought Islam to the region. The Seljuk Turks conquered the region in the 11th century. By the mid-18th century a number of khanates such as Nakhchivan, Karabakh, Shirvan, Sheki, Irevan, Ganja, Guba existed as semi-independent state entities in the territory of the current Republic of Azerbaijan. Several attempts were made to unite them; the most successful by Shah Ismayil (early 16th century), founder of the Safevid dynasty.

Russia began to extend its influence over the region in the early 18th century. Russian troops first came to the Caucasus in 1770 under Catherine the Second. In 1805 under the pressure of Russian empire the Karabakh khanate was forced to accept the Russian citizenship. During 1806-1813 as a result of bitter fightings (campaigns of Tsitsianov, Gudovich, General Kotlarovski) other khanates of Azerbaijan including Talysh, Baku, Guba, Ganja, Derbent were occupied. In 1826 Irevan and Nakhchivan khanates of Azerbaijan were also conquered and joined to Russia. In 1828 the Turkmanchai and Adrianopol agreements were signed between

Russia and Persia (Iran) envisaging, among other things, the settlement of Armenians from Persia and Ottoman Empire on Azerbaijani lands, which paved the way for a launch of Armenian territorial claims to Azerbaijan at a later stage. In the same year (1828) the Treaty of Turkmanchai between Russia and Iran established the present border with Iran, placing the area of today's independent Republic of Azerbaijan within imperial Russia but leaving most Azeri-speaking population in Iran. Two-thirds of historic Azerbaijan lies in present-day Iran, which, therefore, has a significant ethnic Azeri population in its northern provinces (estimated to number at least 20 million people).

Following the First World War, in 1918 the three South Caucasian republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia briefly attained independence. On 28 May 1918 the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was proclaimed. It was the first democratic state in the Moslem Orient. The Red Army invaded Azerbaijan in April 1920 and a Soviet Republic was declared. From 1922 to 1936 Azerbaijan was part of the Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Republic. Beginning in 1936, it became a full constituent republic of the USSR. The 1980s crisis in the totalitarian system of the USSR promoted the growth of the national independence movement in Azerbaijan. In 1987-88 as a result of separatist moods of Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, ethnic violence broke out in the autonomy. Alongside, about 200,000 ethnic Azerbaijanis were ousted from Armenia and became refugees between 1987 and 1990. Meanwhile, on 1 December 1989 the Supreme Soviet (Parliament) of Armenia adopted a decree on the unification Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan with Armenia. Violence, organized and provoked on purpose by the leadership of the former USSR was also directed against Armenians in Sumgayit in 1988 and in Baku in 1990. In the early 1990s Azerbaijan became increasingly involved in a bitter military conflict with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh.

In 1989, the opposition Popular Front was founded in Azerbaijan which soon developed into an independence movement, adopting an anti-Soviet political outlook. In January 1990 the contradictions between the Popular Front and the communist authorities of Azerbaijan reached a critical stage when Azerbaijanis proclaimed the overthrow of Soviet power in various cities throughout Azerbaijan. On 20 January 1990 Soviet troops moved into Baku to suppress the revolt. At least 150 innocent Azerbaijanis were killed in this operation. Ayaz Mutalibov was brought by Moscow as the new leader of Azerbaijan. While the leaders of the Popular Front were imprisoned, the Communist Party won the flawed elections to the Supreme Soviet in September 1990. The opposition won a symbolically important 9% of the seats. The gradual collapse of the Soviet Union weakened Mutalibov. In 1991 he was forced to agree to the Popular Front demand for the creation of a new 50-member legislative body, the Milli Majlis (National Assembly), half of whose members were drawn from the Supreme Soviet and half from the Popular Front. Following the failed coup in Moscow in August 1991 Azerbaijan declared its independence on 18 October 1991.

In the last fifteen years, the domestic political situation in Azerbaijan has been dominated by the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. President Mutalibov resigned in March

1992 following the occupation of Azerbaijani territories in Nagorno-Karabakh and the Khojaly massacre by Armenian armed formations. The Popular Front took full control of the Government in June 1992 when its leader Abulfaz Elchibey was elected President. Elchibey remained in power for little more than a year. As the military crisis worsened, his democratic credentials looked increasingly thin. Although accusations of incompetence began to have an effect, the continuing occupation of Azerbaijani territories in Nagorno-Karabakh by Armenia were the primary reason for the rapid demise of the Popular Front. Taking advantage of the political chaos, Armenian military formations occupied Lachin in May 1992. This was the first Azeri district to be occupied outside the Nagorno-Karabakh region followed by six others: Agdam, Fizuli, Gubatli, Jabrayil, Kelbajar and Zangelan.

In June 1993, rebel forces under the leadership of Surat Husseinov, a former commander in the Azerbaijani army in Nagorny Karabakh, took control of Ganja, the second-largest city in Azerbaijan. Armed with weapons that the Russians had left behind, Mr Huseynov started to move troops towards Baku. President Elchibey turned for help to Mr Aliyev, the communist-era leader of Azerbaijan, who was at that moment President of Nakhichevan, an Autonomous Republic within Azerbaijan separated from the rest of the country by a strip of Armenian territory. A few days after the rebellion had broken out Heydar Aliyev came to Baku and was elected Speaker of Parliament. With Mr Huseynov's troops closing on Baku, Mr Elchibey fled to Nakhichevan and thus Mr Aliyev convinced Parliament to transfer presidential powers to him on June 18th 1993. On 28 August 1993, a referendum was held which endorsed the removal of Elchibey from power. On 3 October 1993, Aliyev was elected President of Azerbaijan. Though more Azerbaijani territory was captured by Armenian forces in late 1993, a Russian-mediated cease-fire accord was achieved in May 1994.

The UN Security Council adopted four resolutions (822, 853, 874, 884) in 1993 demanding the withdrawal of Armenian occupying forces from Azerbaijani territories and reiterating the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan with Nagorno - Karabakh as an integral part. These resolutions remain unimplemented.

In 1992 with the agreement of the parties to the conflict, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was given the main mandate for mediating the dispute. The 1994 OSCE Budapest Summit adopted a decision on establishing the institute of co-chairmanship of the Minsk Group.

The OSCE Minsk Group - now co-chaired by the United States, Russia and France - was close to achieving a peace agreement in late 1997. The then president of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosian, suggested that the Karabakh Armenians must compromise with Azerbaijan sooner rather than later. In particular, he proposed to accept a stage-by-stage settlement, with the first stage envisaging the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied territories and repatriation of refugees and IDPs. The status of Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijan was to be determined at a later stage at the OSCE Minsk Conference. Ter-Petrosian was forced to resign from office in February 1998 as his successor, Robert Kocharian, previously leader of Nagorny Karabakh was supported by Armenia's power ministries. Under Kocharian's leadership, the

Armenian position on Nagorno-Karabakh has toughened to insist upon a package settlement and direct negotiations between Baku and Xankendi (former Stepanakert), capital town of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Mr Kocharian and Mr Aliyev have held a series of meetings under the auspices of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Little progress was made at the talks.

The Presidential elections of 12 October 1998 resulted in the victory, with almost 80% support, of Heydar Aliyev. Although the OSCE report on the elections included some major criticism, by and large the elections were considered to be an improvement as compared with the previous one.

In November 1998, the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen presented a new plan for the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, proposing the idea of a "common state" to the parties to the conflict. This plan proposed basically that NK would exist as an independent state in partnership with Azerbaijan. While Armenia accepted the common state plan and called it "optimistic", Azerbaijan rejected it as violating its sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh and its territorial integrity.

Beginning in July 1999, the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia held a series of meetings in hopes of finding a peaceful settlement to the conflict. Both sides stated that they must meet half-way and stressed that similar meetings would need to be held in future. The heads of the two states emphasized that both parties would continue adhering to the principles of finding a peaceful settlement to the conflict, and maintaining the cease-fire agreement until a peace accord is reached. The Defence Ministers of the two states were respectively tasked, and several UN agencies and other donors to Azerbaijan began to collaborate on contingency planning for the potential mass repatriation of Azerbaijani refugees and displaced persons to their homelands. However, progress in negotiations was halted with the October 1999 parliamentary shootings in Armenia.

Expectations were quite high for advances in the peace process in the year 2001, but this process stalled after the meetings between the President Mr. H. Aliyev and his Armenian counterpart Mr. R. Kocharyan in Paris (March) and Florida (May) which brought no major result either.

The collapse of the elder Mr Aliyev during a live televised address to military cadets in April and his subsequent admission to a hospital in Turkey in 2003 raised concerns about his health. This pushed him to make a decision in late July to nominate Ilham Aliyev for the presidency, shortly after which he was appointed by parliament to the post of prime minister. Ilham Aliyev succeeded his father in the October 2003 presidential election. Independent observers reported that irregularities during the elections. Heydar Aliyev died in December 2003.

Since Ilham Aliyev succeeded to the presidency in October 2003, he has met Mr Kocharian on numerous occasions. In the last three years, most of the peace talks have

been taking place between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan within so called “Prague Process.” This process envisioned the step-by-step solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, with Armenian forces liberating the occupied territories outside of Nagorno-Karabakh, IDPs going back to their homes and an eventual referendum taking place on the status of the disputed area. The two sides have been visibly getting closer towards narrowing their differences over the ways to resolve the conflict and finally reaching an agreement. Yet, this generally positive trend has run into a deadlock again in 2006 when the conflicting sides failed to achieve a final agreement.

Sporadic clashes along the ceasefire line were registered in 2005 and early 2006. Besides, since May 2006 fires on the occupied territories became a daily reality, with Azerbaijani side blaming Armenians for causing them and seeking international support to prevent it. On September 7, 2006, the UN General Assembly adopted without a vote the resolution entitled “The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan”. It stressed the necessity to urgently conduct environmental operation to suppress the fires in the affected territories and overcome their detrimental consequence and called for the organizations of the UN System, in cooperation with OSCE, to provide all necessary assistance and expertise.

In general, since the ceasefire declared in 1994, very little progress has been made in the negotiations. Azerbaijan refuses to talk directly to the Nagorny Karabakh leadership and so grant it legitimacy.

Azerbaijan has indicated that it will grant Karabakh autonomy as long as its formal sovereignty over the territory is recognized. Karabakh’s Armenians want their independence to be recognised, and are prepared to give up only the lands that they have conquered outside Karabakh proper—and then only when a binding peace deal is on the table. Given the major gap between these two positions, a compromise is not likely in the near future. Despite growing international pressure for talks at the presidential level to reconvene, there is little hope of a solution.

Another issue dominating Azerbaijani foreign policy apart from the conflict is keeping good relations with Russia and the US on an even footing. Azerbaijan assists Russia in counter-terrorism investigations and exercise greater control over its border with Russia, in order to prevent infiltration by potential terrorist sympathizers. At the same time, to keep Russian influence contained, the government contributes to the US-led “war on terror”. Azerbaijan is providing logistical assistance to the US and has sent small but politically useful contingents of troops to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Azerbaijan has been recognized by the world community as an independent state. In 1992 Azerbaijan joined the United Nations Organization and the OSCE. Azerbaijan was one of the first former Soviet republics to join the NATO “Partnership for Peace” programme. In January 2001, Azerbaijan was admitted to the Council of Europe.

Power in Azerbaijan includes three branches: legislative, executive and judicial. The

President is elected for a five-year period and is the head of the executive power. According to existing legislation, the President is Head of State and Supreme Commander-in-Chief; he appoints the Prime Minister and forms the Government. The parliament approves his appointments. The President also appoints the heads of executive power in towns and 65 administrative rayons (districts) of the Republic. The Constitutional Court is the highest judicial power in Azerbaijan.

In November 1995, Azerbaijan adopted its new constitution.

In the latest parliamentary election in November 2005, the ruling Yeni (New) Azerbaijan Party (YAP) once again received a majority of the vote. International observers said that there was manipulation of the results and the level of transparency was low. However, international observers agreed that the polls represented an improvement compared with the previous election in 2000, especially in the areas of registration of candidates, access to media and public debates and transparency of the voter's lists.

The elections produced a unicameral, 125-member parliament, the Milli Majlis. One hundred seats were elected from single-mandate districts; twenty-five were allocated on a national basis from political party lists. Parliamentarians serve terms of five years.

There are more than 30 registered political parties, with the largest one, claiming 400,000 members, being the Yeni (New) Azerbaijan Party (YAP), established in December 1992 in Nakhchivan. Other pro-governmental parties, smaller in size, are the Alliance in the Name of Azerbaijan, Ana Veten (Motherland), the Party of National Statehood, the Party of Democratic Independence, and Independent Azerbaijan. The opposition unites several parties, with three - Musavat (Equality), the Azerbaijan People's Front Party (APFP, now split into classical and reformist wings) and the Democratic Party of Azerbaijan - playing leading roles. Other opposition parties include Vahdat (Unity), the Azerbaijan National Independence Party, the Social Democratic Party of Azerbaijan, the Liberal Party, and several parties of communist orientation.

Economic and Social Conditions

Azerbaijan has enormous economic potential. In addition to its well-known oil and gas reserves, Azerbaijan is also a producer of cotton, tobacco, fruits and vegetables. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union and respectively, the loss of the Soviet markets in many industrial sectors such as plastics, chemicals, manufacturing and capital goods for the oil industry, the occupation of 20% of Azerbaijan's territory and the presence of around one million refugees and internally displaced persons have significantly affected Azerbaijan's economic performance. There has been a long-term decline in the agricultural sector, which by 2003 generated less than 15% of GDP, down from about 30% of GDP in 1991.

Reforms

The Government of Azerbaijan has pursued an economic reform program since the mid-nineties with the aim of establishing a market-oriented economy with a leading role for

the private sector. As a result, the Government has achieved macro-economic stability. Despite this achievement, over 40% of Azerbaijan's population is still living in poverty because the vast majority of economic growth is concentrated in the oil sector which is a capital-intensive industry that provides employment for less than 1% of the workforce.

The challenge facing Azerbaijan is to build on its macro-economic stability to create jobs in the non-oil sector. The President has already made an ambitious promise to create 600,000 jobs in his current five year term of office. For this to occur, an enabling environment needs to be created for both foreign investment and domestic business. The major impediments to private sector development in Azerbaijan are access to finance, monopoly power, bureaucratic red tape, corruption and lack of modern infrastructure, particularly outside of Baku. Although SME privatisation is almost complete, there has been only limited progress in the sale of large-scale enterprises. The Ministry of Economic Development is the Government's lead agency for supporting private sector development and has been instrumental in developing and implementing the State Programme on Socio-Economic Development of the Regions and designing the National Employment Strategy.

To date the Milli Mejlis (Parliament) has adopted a large number of new laws aimed at reforming a wide range of activities. The strategy of the reforms mainly consists of three components: economic liberalization through removal of controls over prices and production; macroeconomic stabilization through regulation of the monetary mass and balancing of the state budget; and privatisation of enterprises. Although progress in structural reforms has been mixed - especially in the area of bank restructuring - there has been a gradual shift in the structure of the economy, from predominantly state-controlled to market controlled.

Oil and gas

The economy started to record positive growth rates since 1996 with massive foreign direct investment (FDI) into the oil and gas sector and economic reforms with support of the IMF and the World Bank. The oil and gas sector provides Azerbaijan's main hope for economic recovery. Expansion of oil extraction, refining and transportation as well as bridging technological gap became possible due to the consolidation of international cooperation in development of new oil fields and modernization of existing ones. In the hope that development of the oil industry might boost economic growth in other fields, the Azerbaijani Government signed, on 20 September 1994, the "Contract of the Century": an agreement with international oil companies on joint development of the offshore oil fields "Azeri", "Chirag" and "Guneshli". Estimated capital investments provided for in this contract total USD \$7.4 billion. Expected oil reserves are more than 500 million tons. During the contract period oil revenues of Azerbaijan are expected to increase and eventually comprise approximately 80% of the Azerbaijani government's total revenues (about USD \$200 billion) through three sources: taxes, royalties and the share of the State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) in the profit. Azerbaijan has since signed more than 20 additional contracts with international oil companies representing 15 countries around the world. The result has been rapid real GDP growth. At the end of 2005 and 2006, Azerbaijan was the fastest growing economy in the world. However, with petroleum industry remaining the

main economic sector, Dutch Disease poses a threat to economic development. The steady increase of oil as a share of the country's total exports serves as an illustration: 1998 - 65%, 2000 - 84%, and 2001 - more than 90%. The hydrocarbons sector accounted for over 98% of total FDI in 2003. Fixed investment tends to move in cycles related to the oil sector. Meanwhile, the full benefits of petroleum revenues will not be realized by the great majority of the population for 5 to 8 years to come. On the other hand, there is an inefficient non-oil sector that suffers from chronic underinvestment. The non-oil economy accounts for most employment, generates few exports, pays little tax and is unable to compete with many imports.

The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline

In August 2002, green light was given to the construction of the long-planned Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline. The 1,750-km pipeline, which will cost US\$3bn to build, will run west from the Caspian shore near Baku, the Azerbaijani capital, across Azerbaijan and into Georgia before turning south and heading into Turkey, where it will run from the north-east of the country down to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan and on to world markets. In May 2006, Caspian oil reached the Ceyhan sea port. The official opening and launch of the pipeline took place in July 2006, thus finally making one of the largest and most controversial regional energy projects a reality.

The pipeline has begun shipping oil to the European markets and is expected to attract more interest from other countries, such as Russia and Israel. Moreover, the parallel gas pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum, which is also about to be completed will bring more energy independence to Azerbaijan in the nearest future.

For Azerbaijan, BTC offers several advantages. Although at present it has two oil pipelines—Baku-Supsa and Baku-Novorossisk, which pump oil via Georgia and Novorossisk in Russia, respectively, to the Black Sea—their joint capacity is only sufficient for current oil production. There is, therefore, a need for a large increase in export capacity to meet the planned rise in Azerbaijani oil output.

Moreover, the BTC route allows Azerbaijan to break its dependence on Russia for major export routes. In addition, the BTC route allows Azerbaijan to bypass the major bottleneck that affects all Caspian exports at present—the limitation on the size of tankers exiting the Black Sea through the Bosphorus Straits.

Poverty reduction

The Government has made poverty reduction their priority in their quest for economic development. Public sector reforms and the establishment of the Ministry of Economic Development are measures that have been taken. In October 2002, the Government launched its PRSP called the State Programme on Poverty Reduction and Economic Development (SPPRED) for 2003-2005. In May 2004, the Government's first integrated SPPRED implementation and MDG report was produced which demonstrated a commitment to PRSP and MDG alignment

in Azerbaijan. While a set of proposed MDG indicators and targets was included in this report, the Government has yet to officially approve MDG indicators and targets. The Government is designing a new poverty reduction strategy for the period 2006-2015 which is the end year for achieving MDGs.

Despite continuing problems in governance-including barriers to economic activity and weak institutional capacity in many areas, the Government's commitments to developing capacity and implementing policies for poverty reduction and MDG achievement create an atmosphere of hope for 2007.

National Currency

Azerbaijani Manat was introduced as legal tender in 1993 to replace the rouble. New Azerbaijani Manat (AZN) has been placed into circulation as of January 2006 to replace the old Manat. 1 AZN = 5000 old Manat. The exchange rate as of January 2007 is: 1 USD = 0.8714 AZN. The exchange rate has remained relatively stable over the past couple of years. However, the Manat began to appreciate in real terms in 2005, owing to a surge in domestic consumer price inflation. This process continued in 2006.

Development prospects

This will be the year when oil begins to flow through the newly constructed Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, creating a growth rate of about 40 percent in the oil sector, which now comprises one-third of the economy. Construction of the South Caucasus gas pipeline has continued, with the expectation that it will stimulate another boost in the energy sector.

Background Reading

1. UNDP Azerbaijan, annual Azerbaijan Human Development Reports, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003.
2. UN Azerbaijan Resident Coordinator Report 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005
3. EIU Country Profile, Azerbaijan 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005.
4. Azerbaijan International Magazine, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 (published quarterly).
5. Statistical Yearbook of Azerbaijan 2006.

International Organizations and Bilateral Missions

Since Azerbaijan gained its independence, a growing number of embassies and resident missions of international organizations have been established, primarily in the capital city of Baku. At present the diplomatic corps accredited in Azerbaijan is composed of 29 countries: Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Libya, Kazakhstan, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Swiss Cooperation Office, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uzbekistan.

The Office of the United Nations Development Programme in Azerbaijan was established in November 1992. It is headed by a Resident Representative who also serves as the United Nations Resident Coordinator. The United Nations System is also represented by UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNFPA, UNDP, UNIFEM, ILO and WHO. An increasing number of agencies of the United Nations system conduct regular missions to Azerbaijan.

Other major international organizations represented in Azerbaijan are the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, International Organization for Migration, OSCE, Council of Europe, and the Coordination Unit on Technical Assistance of the European Union (TACIS). Approximately 50 international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) deliver humanitarian aid and development assistance to refugees, IDPs and other vulnerable people of Azerbaijan. The major actors among them are the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), MCI, CHF, Save the Children, World Vision, etc. UNDP CO facilitates co-ordination of relief and development oriented activities carried out by international NGOs operating in the country.

II. TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATIONS

Travel to Azerbaijan

Travel by road

Many of the roads outside of Baku are in need of repair. Two lane highways connect Azerbaijan with Georgia, Iran and the Russian Federation. A road link also connects the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and Turkey. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has disrupted transport and communications between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Specific visa requirements exist for those entering and leaving Azerbaijan (as well as Iran and Turkey) by road. Anyone considering such a journey should ensure that they are thoroughly familiar with all such regulations. An international driver's license is valid in Azerbaijan.

Travel by railway

Rail connections link Baku with Tbilisi (Georgia) and Moscow (through Dagestan - *not recommended*). The rail route to Yerevan (Armenia) remains blockaded.

Travel by sea

There are ferry connections between Baku and Turkmenbashi (former Krassnovodsk) in Turkmenistan, and with Iran.

The shipping company CASPAR (Caspian Shipping Co.) has a cargo/passenger ferry going to Turkmenbashi. Departure depends on availability of cargo and passengers. Fares for foreigners on ferries are as follows:

Car:

Up to 3.5 m. long: **180 USD**

Passengers:

One person **45-100USD** (depends on the seat)

Travel by air

Baku has an international airport, located approximately 40 minutes from the city center. Various airlines operate regular flights between Baku and destinations in Russia, Iran, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Israel, Netherlands, United Arab Emirates, Switzerland, Syria, China, Ukraine, etc.

Visa Requirements

Nationals of CIS countries do not need a visa for Azerbaijan (except citizens of Turkmenistan). All other foreign citizens should have obtained their Azerbaijani visas before arrival, issued from Consulates or Embassies of Azerbaijan.

Visas may also be obtained free of charge upon arrival at Baku airport by invitation or

appropriate Note Verbale submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Baku. For issuance of visa upon arrival at the airport, the UNDP Office in Azerbaijan should receive an official request five days in advance with passport details and dates of arrival/departure.

Citizens from EU countries may obtain visas for up to 1 week for USD \$40 at the Baku Airport. For citizens from the third country, obtaining visa would require an official invitation requested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Republic. There is no fee for foreigners visiting if they are members of government delegations; representatives of international humanitarian organizations; students or teachers on official exchange programs; guests of the Ministry of Defence, or if they are in possession of an official note from a diplomatic representation. Once in the country, visitors requiring an Azerbaijani visa extension from the Foreign Ministry may be assisted by UNDP.

Visitors should check the expiry date of their visa and be sure to request an extension no less than five working days prior to its expiration.

Travel Within the Country

Roads in Baku are mostly in good condition and well maintained. Roads in the regions are often poorly maintained and require improvement.

Those having access to a vehicle will likely find travel by road to be the most convenient for distances of up to a few hundred kilometres. Purchasing fuel is not a problem nowadays since petrol station is abundant in the capital and major cities. The principal dish in every country canteen is barbecue.

The most widely used means of transport by Azerbaijanis are buses and minibuses, which connect Baku with most regions of the country. Many regions are also served by rail.

Ganja and Nakhchivan have airports mainly used for internal flights. They also offer limited number of international flights including destinations in Russia and Turkey.

Travellers are restricted from entering certain areas of the country. Travel to Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding occupied regions and border areas is not possible.

Local Transport

Local transport in Baku is well developed, inexpensive and fairly reliable. An **underground metro** (5 qapik or 0,05 AZN) serves the city and suburbs. Virtually all parts of the city can also be reached by **bus or minibus**. The public vehicles are often uncomfortably crowded. The intervals between arrivals to bus stops sometimes reach half an hour. The cost of travel by bus and that of minibus is 20 qapiks (0,20 AZN).

Taxis are numerous and easily available in Baku. There are no official taxi stops; they can be hired on any street. Usually they are waiting for passengers near big hotels, metro stations, on main avenues, etc. Meters are not used; thus fares, normally in manats, should be negotiated in advance. Taxis remain fairly inexpensive. The rates range between 50-70 qapiks (0,50 – 0,70 AZN)

per kilometre (depends from daytime). Drivers tend to take advantage of foreigners. The current rate from the airport to the centre of Baku is between USD \$20 and \$30. However, foreigners may be asked to pay up to USD \$50. It is, however, possible to hire a car and driver for approximately USD \$50-70 (including fuel) per working day (9 a.m. to 6 p.m.), excluding covering distances 15-20 km away from the centre of the city. To hire a personal driver with a car by paying monthly is much cheaper.

Private Automobiles. Any types of cars are driven and are available in Baku. Used cars are also available. Vehicles in Azerbaijan are driven on the right side of the road. Basic traffic rules are self-explanatory by the road signs. Foreigners should beware of local drivers, who sometimes disregard traffic rules. The speed limit is 60 km/h within Baku, and 80 km/h for country roads. Fuel is sold at 55-60 qapiks (0,55-0,60 AZN) per litre. Purchasing fuel is not a problem nowadays since petrol station is abundant in the capital and major cities. Parking per day normally costs 40-60 qapiks (0,40,-0,60 AZN).

Insurance

In theory, there are about 40 types of insurance facilities provided by Azerbaijani State and private insurance agencies. But few of them are capable of handling significant risk. The State Insurance Company is Azersigorta. Those on assignment or visiting Azerbaijan are advised to obtain coverage under global policies offered by international insurance companies.

Postal and Electronic Communications

Even though many governmental restrictions have been lifted, international communication is still one of Azerbaijan's most pressing problems. **Mail service** is fairly reliable but slow for personal letters; parcels sometimes reach their destination with items missing. Personnel may receive official mail through the UNDP/New York pouch. UNDP also uses the services of the **express mail companies** DHL and TNT. The minimum prices of courier packs between the US and Baku is \$32. Delivery requires 3 days.

TNT has several offices in Baku. The address of the most frequently used office is: 18 Hagani str, Baku; Tel: +99412 498 64 48.

The address of the **DHL Worldwide Express** office in Baku is: 225 Bashir Safaroglu; Tel: +99412 493 47 14; Fax: +99412 493 47 28.

Azerbaijan has **e-mail access** through the Internet Communications system. Many service providers offer connection services.

Telephone Services

The telephone system is in the process of switching from pulse-based to touch-tone phone service. In general, the phone system in Azerbaijan is pulse-based. Currently, touch-tone services

are provided by Telephone Stations with phone numbers starting with 498, 493, 492, 497, 499, 490, 422, 433, 440/441, 430/431, 403, 445, 446, 450, 453, 454, 455, 470, 479, 491, and 457.

International telephone calls can be made through the operator of the long distance telephone service (Tel. 107), which may take from 20 minutes to 3 hours to be connected and also by direct dialling (00) and then the country code and number. International phone calls cost \$0,5 - \$1 per minute depending on the region. The following are the current rates per minute for selected world regions:

Africa	1,44 AZN/min
Asia	1,44 AZN/min
Middle East	1,44 AZN/min
North America	1,44 AZN/min
Western Europe	1,08 AZN/min
CIS	0,45 AZN/min
Iran, Turkey	0,90 AZN/min

Most urban dwellings have telephones. The commercial cost of installing a telephone line is between USD \$80-150.

According to the new rules, there are two (2) tariffs for city line subscribers and only 4 regions: first one is 1,5 AZN and the second one is 0,66 AZN.

Regions	1,5 AZN (monthly payment)	0,66 AZN (monthly payment)	
CIS	0,36 AZN/min (Without VAT)	0,45 AZN/min (Without VAT)	
Iran, Turkey	0,45 AZN/min (Without VAT)	0,54 AZN/min (Without VAT)	
Europe and America	0,54 AZN/min (Without VAT)	Europe	0,72AZN/min (Without VAT)
		America and other countries	0,9 AZN/min (Without VAT)

Cellular phones can be purchased in various shops in Baku and major cities. But there are just two cellular lines provided by **AZERCELL** and **BAKCELL** companies; local calls cost 10 - 30 cents per minute. And also two new companies (CATEL and AZERPHONE) will be added to this list.

III. CURRENCY, CONTROLS, WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Currency

Azerbaijani manat was introduced as legal tender in 1993 to replace the rouble. New Azerbaijani manat (AZN) has been placed into circulation as of January 2006 to replace the old manat. 1 AZN = 5000 old manat AZM. The exchange rate as of January 2006 is: 1 USD = 0.8714 AZN.

The new manats come in banknote denominations of **1, 5, 10, 20, 50** and **100** and “qapik” coins of **1, 3, 5, 10, 20** and **50**.

Please refer to the most recent United Nations rates of exchange on the UNDP Azerbaijan website www.un-az.org

Exchange Control and Banking Facilities

There is no limit to the amount of cash foreign currency that can be brought to Azerbaijan. For the amount which exceeds USD 1,000 traveller should have a bank document. **All foreign currency has to be declared upon arrival to the country.** The small slip of paper which one receives when passing through customs must be presented when leaving the country; otherwise, a fine may result.

There is a limit (maximum USD \$10,000) to the amount that can be taken out of the country. Special permission to depart with larger amounts must be obtained from the Ministry of Finance.

Judging by the criterion of amount of hard currency transactions, the International Bank of Azerbaijan is the leading bank in the country. In addition, there are many commercial banks in Azerbaijan; they account for about 15 percent of hard currency transactions. Among them are Azerdemiryolbank, Rabitabank, Azerigazbank, Capital Bank, Unibank and Bank Standard.

There are numerous private **currency exchange booths**. Individuals exchanging money are urged to use caution around exchange facilities, and not to exchange money with people standing on the street outside these facilities, even though better exchange rates might be offered. On some occasions, bank tellers can reject bills that would be perfectly acceptable elsewhere. Bills having folds, stains, etc. are acceptable in central big exchange booths.

Traveller's checks and credit cards are currently accepted in Azerbaijan by most of the banks. In Baku, cash can be also obtained from “**automated tellers**” (**bank machines**). Several are located in the city center (Fountain Square) area and in other parts of the city.

Bank accounts can be opened by foreigners in Azerbaijan. Caution should be taken as banks may charge interest fees, and may not be able to provide immediate access to savings.

Customs Regulations

Customs regulations within the country are frequently subject to change. The latest regulations allow for travellers to bring into the country currency assets in cash having them declared at customs, without limitation as to the amount. Apart from contractual stipulations (e.g. regarding weight), there are no limitations on UN officials who bring their personal effects to the country. Currently, the only materials prohibited in personal shipments are illegal drugs,

ammunition and firearms.

Domestic pets can be imported. Veterinary certificates or short documentation (anti-rabies certificate) must be presented upon arrival in the country.

Packing and Shipping of Goods

Personal effects should be shipped through reliable international companies. If possible (though it is the most expensive method), the safest and fastest way is to import personal possessions by air. Goods transported by ship/road should be in sealed containers. All shipments should be covered by sufficient insurance. Documentation listing the contents of boxes should be kept.

The major shipping companies in the country are:

Murphy International	Tel: +99412 498 01 51
ACE Forwarding	Tel: +99412 498 09 49 / 493 53 18
Bertling Caspian Shipping	Tel: +99412 498 40 61/ 498 58 65
Globalink	Tel: +99412 447 31 11
Interdean	Tel: +99412 498 63 18

Local Weights and Measures

Azerbaijan uses the metric system of weights and measures.

IV. HOUSING

Hotels and Lodging

Baku has several hotels which are of international standards, including Hyatt Regency, Europe Hotel, Park Inn, Excelsior and others.

Special UN hotel rates (single room) and related expenses in Baku and outside are as follows:

Hotel name/address/tel. No	Price in USD	Double/Single
ABSHERON, 674 Azadlyg Square, Baku AZ1010 Tel.: (99412) 493 22 96 / 493 20 13	Single: \$ 100	Total number of rooms:28
ALTSTADT, 3/2A Mammadyarov str., Icheri Sheher, Baku. Tel.: (99412) 492 64 02	Single: \$100	Total number of rooms:20
AZCOT, 7 Husi Hajiyev st., 4 th floor Tel.: (99412) 497 25 07, 492 93 40, 492 03 88	Single: \$ 100	Total number of rooms: 100
AMBIANCE, 52, Salamzade str., Baku, AZ 1001 Tel.: (99412) 436 49 80	Single: \$ 90	Total number of rooms: 35
CRESCENT BEACH HOTEL, Shihovo, Salyan Highway (20 minute drive from city center) Tel.: (99412) 497 47 77 /497 47 83	Single: \$ 110	Total number of rooms: 250
EUROPE HOTEL, Tbilisi Av., 25 Tel.: (99412) 490 70 90,490 70 86	Single: \$ 155	Total number of rooms: 110
EXCELSIOR, 42A Heydar Aliyev av., AZ 1154 Tel.: (99412) 496 80 00	Single: \$ 215	Total number of rooms: 50
HORIZON, Magamayev donqesi, Ichari Shahar Tel.: (99412) 4926786, 492 48 27	Single: \$120	Total number of rooms: 22
HYATT REGENCY, Bakikhanov str. 1, Baku AZ 1022 Tel.: (99412) 498 12 34	Single: 155 AZN	Total number of rooms: 120
HYATT PARK, 1033 Izmir St. Tel.: (99412) 490 12 34	Single: 185 AZN	Total number of rooms: 150
MERIDIAN, 39 Asaf Zeynally St., Ichari Shahar	Single: 150 AZN	Total number of rooms: 42
METROPOL, 33/35 U. Hajibeyov - F. Amirov St. Tel.: (99412) 499 99 10	Single: 100 AZN	Total number of rooms: 31
OLD CITY INN, 10/16 Kichik Gala St., Ichari Shahar. Tel.: (99412) 497 43 69	Single: \$ 90 Suite: \$120	Total number of rooms: 22
PARK INN, 1, Azadliq str., Baku, AZ 1000 Tel.: (99412) 490 60 00	Single: 130 AZN	Total number of rooms: 80

For visitors staying longer than several days it is possible to make arrangements for lodging in private houses or apartments (See Section on Houses and Apartments).

Security

The immediate situation in Azerbaijan poses no specific security threat to either the international community in general or the UN community in particular. Crimes against foreigners are mainly limited to petty theft. Dangerous situations can be avoided by taking usual precautions. (Walking alone late at night and leaving pubs alone should be avoided.) The United Nations Office can lock up valuables for visitors for limited periods of time.

Safety Tips for Baku

- Carry a *copy* of your passport with you. Keep your valuables and original documents (passport, driver's license, bank cards, etc.) in a secure place.
- Do not open your hotel room or apartment door to strangers, including those in military uniforms.
- If you find yourself in trouble, immediately call the United Nations Office in Baku or Mr. Fuad Jafarov (Head, UN Security) and contact police.
- Be especially alert at vehicle checkpoints and roadblocks.
- Avoid carrying unnecessary cash, cheques or credit cards. Don't display large amounts of cash.
- Avoid crowds and demonstrations if possible.
- Please report all crimes, unusual incidents, harassment, etc. to the United Nations Office.

Houses and Apartments

Houses and apartments are available for rent in Baku, both in the center and on the outskirts of the city. The majority of foreigners reside near the center of town. Renovated apartments correspond, more or less, to Western standards. Usually it is possible to locate a suitable apartment within a week of arrival. Upon request, UNDP will assist in this process. Rental prices for 3-room flats vary from USD \$1000 per month to \$3000 depending on location and quality. Most landlords prefer payment for 3-6 months in advance (this is often negotiable). Both furnished and unfurnished apartments are available.

Domestic services (housekeepers) are readily available. Hiring is usually done through personal recommendation. Wages paid by expatriates range from USD \$100 to \$250 per month depending on the amount of work requested. Normally, housekeepers visit the home on a set schedule, but do not live in. They may do laundry, house cleaning, cooking, shopping, etc.

Furniture and Equipment

Most apartments are rented fully furnished. Basic appliances, kitchen utensils, gas stoves and refrigerators are usually provided; washers, dryers, dishwashers, and microwave ovens are usually not. Washing machines, air-conditioners and electric heaters, if not provided by the landlord, can be purchased locally. As apartment heating is not sufficient in winter, electric heaters are recommended. There are a number of shops selling electronics & home appliances in Baku - transformers, surge protectors, batteries, music systems, video equipment, etc. are all available. The prevailing cassette format is VHS. Western movies can be rented. DVDs and CDs can also be purchased at low cost (USD \$5-10 and \$2-3 respectively).

Utilities

Electrical power is AC 220V, 50 Hz. The cost of electricity (officially 6 qapik or 0,06 AZN/kW) may or may not be included in the rent. Inconsistencies in the current or power outages (depending on the area of the city in which the apartment is located) are not unusual; power surges are visible through fluctuations in household lights. **Surge protectors should be used to protect sensitive electronic equipment.** Continental European plugs with two rounded pins are required.

Shortages in **water supply** to apartments are not exception to the rule. Running water is delivered for only 2-3 hours twice a day or in some places, inking the newly-built apartment blocks, full day. Given the unreliability of the filtration system, tap water must be boiled before drinking. It is recommended that individuals purchase bottled water (widely available, from 1.5L bottles to 20L refillable jugs with dispensers) or install a water filtration system (sold by several companies in Baku).

Natural gas is used to power gas stoves, which normally do not have pilot lights, and need to be lit with a match.

Sanitation facilities work relatively well. Nevertheless, street drainage systems occasionally fail due to the fact that the drainage system has not been renovated since the beginning of the century. Many apartments have common garbage bins. Garbage trucks come on the week-days to collect trash. The municipality of Baku is struggling to keep the city clean; its central areas are generally characterized by a level of cleanliness comparable to that found in many Western urban areas.

V. HEALTH

Immunization Requirements and Health Conditions

According to WHO's "International Travel and Health Report 2005", there is no vaccination requirements for any international traveller visiting Azerbaijan.

Malaria risk – exclusively due to P.vivax – exists from June through October in lowland areas, mainly in the area between the Kura and Araz rivers. Recommended prevention is mosquito bite prevention only. In Baku city (capital) there is no transmission of malaria.

Outbreak of Avian Influenza occurred in Azerbaijan in February-March 2006. Total number of officially registered Avian Influenza cases in humans was 8, including 5 fatal cases. As a result of appropriate actions taken and due to strong support from WHO team, the Ministry of Health has introduced a system of patient notification, transportation, treatment in isolation, and tracing and management of contacts. Since March 10, when the last case was registered no new and suspected cases been registered.

The following recommendations are directed to UN staff and their recognized dependents traveling to/through or living in areas where avian influenza A (H5N1) outbreaks among poultry or human H5N1 cases have been reported:

1. To minimize the possibility of infection, observe precautions to safeguard your health. Specifically, travelers should avoid touching live or dead poultry or any wild birds or their feces.
2. Do not eat uncooked or undercooked poultry or poultry products.
3. As with other infectious illnesses, one of the most important preventive practices is careful and frequent hand washing.

Do not travel while sick, and limit contact with others as much as possible to help prevent the spread of any infectious illness.

United Nations consulting physician - Dr. Kerimova Gulnara - has been selected as UN Examining physician and can be contacted directly by the UN employee. She can prescribe treatment and refer patients to clinics catering to diplomatic and other foreign staff in Baku.

Medical Facilities

Health facilities that meet international standards are available in the private sector. There are many pharmacies in Baku selling imported medicines, antibiotics, etc. Nevertheless, **it is advisable that visitors and those on assignment bring with them some basic medical supplies and keep them in stock.**

HIV testing and counselling is available at the Republican AIDS Centre. Address: 1/8, Mir-Qasimov str., Baku, Tel.: 494 9924.

MEDICLUB, a private medical centre, provides foreigners with medical service (tel. 497 09 11). The center has its own first aid station as well.

AMERICAN DENTAL IMPLANT CENTER,
54, R.Behbutov Ave. Tel: 441 56 55, 441 53 48

CENTRAL CLINICAL HOSPITAL
76, Parliament Ave. Tel: 492 10 92, 439 14 30, 439 24 30

FUNDA

45a, Gidayatzadeh St. Tel.: 467 55 82

SOS INTERNATIONAL (Emergency Assistance)

30, R. Beybutov St. Tel.: 493 73 54, 493 40 89

TURKISH-AMERICAN MEDICAL CENTER

41/47, Mardanov Gardashlari St. Tel.: 497 37 84, 497 03 64

LEYLA SHIHLINSKAYA'S CLINIC

19, Yusif Safarov St. Tel.: 490 18 58, 490 21 31

Med Servis

3, J. Mammadguluzada str., Tel.: 418 99 44; 418 9948

First Aid Station Service: Tel. 103

VI. FOOD AND CLOTHING

Food

An abundance of meat and dairy products (both imported and local) and a selection of fruits and vegetables are available in the bazaars and supermarkets of Azerbaijan year-round. In summer the selection of fruits and vegetables expands considerably. Locally produced juice, sparkling wines and table wines are of good quality.

It is important to check expiration dates on imported foodstuffs, particularly those on sale in small commercial shops. Some are bought close to or past their expiration date and shipped for resale in Azerbaijan. Though the prices are higher in supermarkets, the quality of products is more reliable.

Major food markets are listed below:

Avropa Supermarket

4 Teymur Elchin Str., tel: 497 17 77/497 10 63

Continental Supermarket

68 Nizami Str., tel: 4937541

Continental Supermarket

51 Academic Hasan Aliyev Str., tel: 4656264

“Elite” Trade and Entertainment Center

Darnagul Highway, Neft Ave., Block 3068, AZ 1008, tel: 413 51 40

New World Center

31 Inshaatchilar Ave., AZ 1000, tel: 438 45 23

Ramstore Chain

Ramstore-1: Block 1129, Babek Ave., AZ 1025, tel: 490 32 00/02

Ramstore-2: 2 Fatali Khan Khoyski Ave., AZ 1000, tel: 465 63 88

Ramstore-3: Hussein Javid Ave., Block 528, AZ 1073, tel: 497 52 56

Major Quisines

The Azerbaijani cuisine appeals to all tastes. While having much in common with the cooking of the other Caucasian nations and Iran, Azerbaijan food also has its own unique characteristics. Generally, Azerbaijani meals are very good but rich in fat. The dishes are exquisite and take time and skill to make. There are about a hundred varieties of *pilaff*: a dish made of rice with various seasonings (meat, fish, fruit, etc.). Also recommend are the following dishes: *piti* (soup made of mutton and peas, and served in earthenware pots); *dovga* (yoghurt soup served with meat balls and herbs); *liula-kebab* (meat grilled over an open fire); *dooshbere* (soup served with a local *ravoli*); *kutabi* (pastries with various stuffings); and the Azerbaijani sweets *sheker-bura* and *pakhlava*, accompanied by sherbet or tea. Tea (*chi*), served in small glasses, starts off and ends a meal. Black tea (Azerbaijanis do not drink green tea) is served with everyday meals; wine is only

served on special occasions.

There are many good restaurants and cafes in Baku offering Azeri, Turkish, Asian, Indian, American and European cuisine (See Annex 2). Azeri dishes, pizza, sandwiches, Indian food and fast foods are available by pick-up or delivery.

Clothing

Visitors are advised to bring most of their clothes with them, since local choice is rather erratic. The style of dress for men and women in the cities in Azerbaijan is Western (for example, few women are seen wearing the Muslim *chadra*). Women more frequently wear skirts than pants, but pants are also acceptable, and jeans are very popular for casual wear. Both full-length and mini-skirts are worn. Men's professional wear generally consists of suits and ties. Unless playing sports, Azerbaijani men do not wear shorts in public. Travellers should pack clothes in the expectation of experiencing a very hot summer and relatively mild (but very windy) winter.

Miscellaneous

Laundry services can be found at most hotels. Local women also offer laundering services for approximately 20 AZN for a week's laundry. Many dry cleaning facilities are found in various parts of Baku; they provide quality service.

Barber and hairdressing facilities are also widely available. The price for a haircut is around 10 AZN.

VII. EDUCATION AND SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

Education System

The general level of education in Azerbaijan is very high. Education was given such high priority in the Soviet Union that - regardless of how it was used for propaganda purposes - millions received very high training in sciences, math and the arts. Evidence of this legacy is everywhere.

Meanwhile, the quality of education requires major improvement. One of the challenges is the need to improve and update the curriculum for all levels of education. Another challenge is the need to improve the legal regulatory framework for the education system. The development of the vocational education is one of the important challenges in order to provide the economy with a qualified workforce.

The state-sponsored schooling cycle consists of eleven years (ages of 6-17), nine of which are mandatory. Azerbaijani and Russian are the languages of instruction. The average number of students in classes at primary schools is 30. School children are introduced to a variety of subjects, including two foreign languages, science, history, etc. The system has two terminal examinations - a certificate is received following completion of the primary level, and a certificate of secondary education at the end of the 11th year. Entrance into university is based upon completion of the secondary school examinations. Some private universities, including *Western University* and *Khazar University* conduct courses in English.

However, the urgent concern at present is that the universal access to free and non-segregated basic education in Azerbaijan is faced with serious challenges. Economic difficulties during the period of transition have resulted in meager investment in education and scientific research.

The education budget was increased by 28.7% in 2005 compared with 2004, and the education expenditure represented 17.2% of state expenditure in 2005. State expenditure on education as a share of GDP remained almost unchanged in recent years (3.2%), and this figure is relatively small, especially compared with 7.5% level for 1990. However, the problem is not just to increase expenditure, but to rationalize existing expenditure.

At the same time, many of the costs associated with providing education have increased. Wages paid to educators remain extraordinarily low. The average monthly salary in the education system was 64.8 AZN in 2005. This represents 55% of the average monthly salary in Azerbaijan. The low wages encourage teachers to ask for payment for individual tutoring.

There has been a drain of qualified teachers from the system. Finally, urgent challenges are related to the increasing number of refugees and IDPs. As a consequence of the occupation of close to 20% of Azerbaijani territory by Armenian forces, hundreds of educational institutions, speciality schools and pre-school establishments have been lost. Moreover, 600 schools are presently used as accommodation for refugees; this results in two or even three shifts a day, and a shortened school period for the remaining school facilities.

Baku has 32 music schools for children alone. Officially, 36,000 children are currently taking music lessons. There are options for studying music throughout Baku - in elementary schools,

high schools, clubs, after school classes, in colleges and at the Academy.

Azerbaijan has an Academy of Sciences consisting of 45 research centres where around 7,000 scientists are employed.

Educational Facilities for Foreign Residents

Two private schools have been established for foreign residents: the Turkish International School (instruction in Turkish) and the Baku International School (instruction in English).

Baku International School, founded in order to provide quality education in the English language, is a non-profit organization. It offers high quality education for both Azerbaijani and foreign students. At School, Preschool students are studying from three years through five years of age and elementary students from five and up. The school year starts on August 24. The primary purpose of the school is to educate children in a manner, which will enable them to continue their education in their home countries with a minimum of adjustment problems. Preschool fees are USD \$4,000 and school fees are USD 13,800 per year. Textbooks are lent to students free of charge. Every year this school seeks qualified educators and teachers. All applicants must present proof of certification and previous teaching experience.

Tel. 440 66 16.

Employment for Spouses

Job opportunities, even for temporary employment, are limited except for voluntary work. Knowledge of Azerbaijani or Russian is clearly an advantage. Job opportunities for spouses might include teaching English, German or French to individual students (or groups of students) at about USD \$10-15 per hour/per person, or teaching at a local school or private university for a monthly salary of about USD \$50-100. Native English speakers with journalistic background may also be employed by local English newspapers and magazines like Baku Sun, Caspian Business News, AZERNEWS and Azerbaijan Today.

VIII. OFFICE ACCOMMODATION AND SERVICES

Office Accommodation

The United Nations has been provided by the Government of Azerbaijan with a three-storey building in a centrally located compound in Baku. The Office has a conference hall, library, an inner yard for parking cars and several garages. This facility is capable of catering to the needs of United Nations personnel on short-term assignments.

Services

The UNDP Office can meet visitors at the airport, arrange hotel reservations and prepare meeting schedules. Visitors can use telephone lines for international calls but bills should be paid before departure. The UNDP Office can also provide assistance with other administrative needs.

In addition to the main building, UNDP has recently rented an additional office in the neighboring building. The new office hosts rooms for UNDP program staff, a UN Cafeteria, a conference room (also available for rent) for 50 persons fully furnished for group meetings, seminars etc with simultaneous translation equipment and multimedia projector.

IX. SOCIAL LIFE AND RECREATION

National and Public Holidays

- New Year – 1-2 January
- Mourning Day – 20 January (commemorating the 1990 invasion of Soviet troops in Baku)
- Women's Day – 8 March
- Novruz Bayram – 20-21 March
- The Victory Day – 9 May
- The Republic Day – 28 May
- National Salvation Day – 15 June
- Armed Forces Day – 26 June
- State Independence Day – 18 October
- Azerbaijan Constitution Day – 12 November
- National Revival Day – 17 November
- International Day of Solidarity of Azerbaijani People – 31 December

In addition, Azerbaijan commemorates Gurban, Ramadan holidays and the Shia Muslim observance of Ashura (in memory of the death of Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammed. Dates for all the three days vary.

Social Life

Azerbaijan is a newly independent state, and its foreign community is also fairly new. Bakuvis are very hospitable people. Personal relations are highly nurtured.

The absence of neutrality in public life is reflected in the civic sphere where, as a rule, women's associations, human rights committees, lawyers' society and youth groups manifest political tendencies; non-partisan associations or advocacy groups organised around agendas of systematic reform are newly emerging.

An International Women's Club is operational in Baku. It is involved in charity and cultural activities.

Entertainment

Virtually every Azeri home has a TV. VCRs are quite numerous; there are many video shops, some of which rent English language movies. DVD is beginning its development in the country, although there are very few shops in the capital. Baku, where it is possible to buy or to rent DVD movies. Increasingly one can see satellite dishes installed on narrow balconies and rooftops.

Baku has a variety of TV channels, including three Azeri State TV channels; the private Azeri channels ANS TV, Lider TV, Space TV and ATV (Azerbaijan Independent TV), which broadcast mostly musical and entertainment programs (ANS and SPACE also have several newscasts during the day); three Russian channels (ORT, RTR and NTV, all broadcast from Moscow); and four Turkish channels (TRT1, NTV, STV and TGRT, all broadcast from Turkey).

Satellite television in Baku is available through many companies involved in the sale and installation of dishes and tuners. The price of satellite dishes including installation ranges

between USD \$200-400. There is also a cable TV, which is quite popular among foreigners and local population. There are different cable TVs.

The most popular radio wave is FM. There a lot of radio channels, such as ANS Ch.M. (102fm), Space (104fm), Lider (107fm), Europe plus (107.7fm), and many others, mostly broadcasting in Azeri and Russian, but playing music from all over the world.

Most foreign films shown on Azeri State Television and Russian Television are dubbed or "voiced-over" rather than subtitled. PAL and SECAM are the local video systems. Local TV broadcasts have recently shifted from SECAM to PAL; cassettes obtained through video rental shops are also in PAL. Video rental shops are quite common; videos are usually dubbed in Russian. English language movies can also be rented from several rental stores.

Since 1999, the renovated and reconstructed Cinema Azerbaijan - with Russian, Azeri and English language halls and comfortable chairs - has been screening the latest international films. The cinema is located a short walk from Fountain Square.

With over 180 libraries, 30 museums, 6 theatres, a number of art galleries and a circus, Baku has a rich and varied cultural life. Among the best facilities are: the Philharmonia (currently closed for renovations), Opera and Ballet Theatre, Theatre of Russian Drama, Theatre of Musical Comedy, Kirxa Chamber Musical Hall and the Theatre of Song. Tickets for operas, ballets and symphony orchestra performances are quite affordable.

Baku residents love to take it easy, strolling along the seaside boulevard in the late afternoon or early evening with family members and friends. A night out on the town on a hot summer night might include a ride on the Ferris wheel - it provides a spectacular view of both the city and the Caspian Sea.

Books, Periodicals and Newspapers

Foreign newspapers are sold primarily in hotels and supermarkets. The cost of an International Herald Tribune (in English) is 3-4 AZN. It is also possible to order or subscribe to them (as well as some foreign magazines such as Newsweek and The Economist) through the local distributor Press Limited (Tel. 494 12 22) and other local distributors. In most of cases, local distributors bring in foreign papers with at least a one-day delay.

The fall of government restrictions and the abolishing of press censorship resulted in the appearance of a great number of Azeri dailies and weeklies. There are around 400 newspapers and magazines registered in Azerbaijan. Many are published sporadically because of the high cost of paper and printing. The number of stable national newspapers is around 60, including official newspapers, party-sponsored newspapers and independent newspapers. All of these newspapers are published either in Azerbaijani or Russian.

Several local independent weeklies are published in English including Caspian Business News, Azernews, the Baku Sun and the Azeri Times. There are also several independent news agencies publishing daily news bulletins and periodic political and economic analytical reports. They include Turan, APA, Assa-Irada, Azerpress, Azadinform, Sharg and others.

In addition to numerous small libraries, there are two principal libraries in Baku: the Akhundov State Library (which is also the UN Depository Library) and the Library of Technical and Science Literature. Both have sections of foreign literature. To borrow books, one need only fill out a borrower's card, which includes passport details and photo, and pay a membership fee.

Outdoor Pastimes

There are several stadiums, swimming pools and outdoor tennis courts in Baku which are available for public use. Horse races take place at the Baku hippodrome; horses can also be rented there.

Club Olympus has been established in the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Membership entitles a client to use the following facilities:

Gymnasium with modern equipment, including progressive resistance equipment, computerised treadmills, cycles and steppers.

Spa Areas for muscle and mental relaxation. Spas include:

- Sauna
- Steam room
- Massage (not covered by Annual Membership Fee)
- Personal Amenities, and Outdoor Swimming Pool.

Similar facilities and services are available at other hotels like Europe and the Crescent Beach. In the summer time there is a number of beaches where one can have a good rest by sunbathing, bathing in the sea and even jet-skiing and so on.

Historic Sites

In Baku the traditions of East and West come together. The most prominent characteristic of the city is its architecture. No place in the world replicates the architectural style of Baku, which is a unique synthesis of East and West. In general, the city's architecture can be categorized by 3 major periods: Medieval, Oil Boom and Soviet. Geographically, the architectural styles form three concentric circles: the Medieval period makes up the inner core within the massive citadel walls of the "Old City" (Ichari Shahar); stately late 19th century Oil Boom buildings characterise the surrounding, middle orbit; and, finally, Soviet architecture, characterised primarily by concrete apartment blocks, extends outward for many kilometres to the edge of the city. It is the Oil Boom period that provides the most vivid illustration of the dynamic synthesis that has taken place between East and West. During this time, oil industrialists had both opportunities to travel abroad (especially to Europe) and see some of the world's most magnificent buildings for themselves and the financial resources to convert their dreams into realities. As a result of the oil boom Baku began to take on an aura of an international and multicultural community. The eastern section of the city (where much of the oil was being drilled) was transformed into an industrial landscape, which became popularly known as the "Black City": a landscape of oil rigs, metal storage tanks, refineries and housing for workers. On the opposite side of the downtown, in the area extending outwards from the walls of the Medieval "Old City" and the Maiden's Tower, was the "White City". There, schools, hospitals, hotels, banks, railway stations, theatres, private residences and villas were built. Many of these structures remain in place.

Baku features hundreds of important historical and cultural places to visit. The most famous architectural curiosity and the symbol of the town is *Gyz Galasi* (the Maiden's Tower), a structure

unparalleled for its design, whether in East or West. Rising to a height of 90 ft, it stands much as it did a thousand years ago. A source of endless legends, the tower's name, age and purpose remain a mystery.

Other places to visit within Baku include the Shirvanshakh's Palace, Taghiyev History Museum, the Azerbaijani Carpet Museum, and the Azeri National Costume Museum (Doll Museum).

Vacation Trips

Improtex Group offers travel tours to various districts. A comprehensive program of half and full day tours can be tailored to meet individual needs. Improtex also offers package tours to Dubai, Syria and other locations.

Going out of the country area of Azerbaijan is also very common among the local population areas and guests. The best places for picnic or camping are Kuba, Sheki (Marxal, Mustafabey), Lenkoran, Shemakha, Pirkuli, Nabran.

For more information please visit: www.improtex.baku-az.com or call 498 02 27/28.

Photography

Quality colour photo processing facilities and colour (occasionally black and white) film are available. The cost of developing a film is 60 qapiks/0,60 AZN. The number of laboratories providing digital printing are also increasing. An average cost of printing is 20-30 qapiks/0,20-0,30 AZN per picture.

X. CULTURAL SENSITIVITY GUIDELINES

Religion

- Praying is normally performed in private
- However, if you happen to be close to the prayer, avoid walking on prayer mats, or crossing in front of someone who is praying
- It is very important to take off your shoes when entering a mosque.

Social conduct

- In rural areas public displays of affection, such as holding hands, hugging, and kissing are inappropriate
- Crossing your legs in the presence of older people openly could be perceived as a sign of disrespect
- Blowing your nose in public is considered impolite
- Smoking in public for females is frowned upon by traditional society
- If you have been invited for a wedding party a wedding present is expected from you. A certain amount (starting from 100 USD and up) enclosed in the envelope with your name and wishes on it and put in a special "treasure" box that is usually located by the entrance to the wedding ceremony hall, is perceived as a very common gift. Very close friends may also propose different kinds of a valuable presents.
- When going to a dinner at host's place a "sign of attention" to the hosts would be considered as a good form. It could be a box of chocolates, bottle of wine or flowers to the hostess.

Dress Code

- Shorts for men and short dress and low necks for women are not considered appropriate in rural areas
- There is a formal dress code both for men and women in public institutions and government offices
- When going to the meetings with (high) governmental officials a suit and tie should be worn for men and a formal dress code should be followed by women;
- Too much casual dress is not considered appropriate in Opera, classical music concerts and theatres, wedding and engagement parties

Greeting

- Azerbaijani people greet each other with "Salam", which means "hello"
- Men usually shake hands and say hello to every member of the group when meeting other men, even if they are strangers
- Greetings between men and women usually do not involve physical contact
- Men and women do not kiss each other while greeting, except relatives and -usually among the young urban generation -very close friends
- Women may kiss or hug each other and so can men between themselves
- Handshaking between men and women separately is widespread. It is less common

between a woman and a man, and the initiative on handshaking should only come from a woman.

Use of names

- Usually people call each other by their first names
- To show respect, you may add “muellim” or “bey” (Mr.) to a man’s name, or “hanum (Ms/Madam)” to a woman’s name (after the name)
- Examples:
- Rufat muellim or Rufat bey
- Sona hanum.

Photography

- Get permission beforehand, especially for taking pictures of females

Gender

Although religious practice in Azerbaijan is less restrictive of women’s activities than in most other Muslim countries, vestiges of the orthodox female role remain. Particularly in rural communities, women who appear in public unaccompanied, smoke in public or visit certain restaurants are subject to disapproval.

The majority of Azerbaijani women have jobs outside the home, and quite a few have attained leadership positions.

Food

- There are no official restrictions on any particular type of food or drink in the country
- Drinking alcohol is not prohibited by law and local customs; proposing alcohol to the religious people is inappropriate though because it contravenes the religion and may be considered offensive
- Same as with alcohol offering pork to Muslims in the public would be culturally insensitive

Azerbaijani people enjoy a variety and abundance of its cuisine. There is a variety of vegetarian and non-vegetarian food, as well as an availability of oriental and western type of food in restaurants and cafes. The traditional Azeri dish is **pilaf**. There are over hundred varieties of it. In the north-western part, **khingal** is a favorite dish - a flour dish with meat, fried onion and kurut (a dried cottage cheese). **Dolma** is a widespread dish: ground lamb meat with rice and different spices is wrapped into grape leaves (or occasionally in cabbage), another type of **dolma** is eggplants, potatoes, pepper, apples stuffed with lamb meat.

Music

The country’s musical traditions are preserved by the following styles:

- Ashigs, or poet-singers, who often strum the saz (a stringed instrument) while singing of the deeds of ancient heroes. Their professional style could be compared to that of bards

- Folk songs and dances, which are very popular among all citizen, including young generation
- Classical oriental music in the form of mugam, which is performed by professional singers with improvisation or played by musicians on traditional instruments and is often compared to jazz
- European professional classical music is performed in the majority of concert halls in Baku and other major cities of the country. Here are the names of some Azeri composers, famous in former Soviet Union and among musical professionals around the world: Uzeir Hacibeyov, Fikret Amirov, Kara Karayev.
- Jazz music is particularly popular in Azerbaijan. Each year a jazz festival is organized in Baku. Some of the famous jazz composers and performers of Azerbaijan are listed below: Vagif Mustafazade and Rafiq Babayev (both deceased), and Vagif Sadoxov, Aziza Mustafazade.

Theatre and literature

For theater, ballet and opera lovers, 13 theaters perform in Baku. State Theater of Opera & Ballet, State Philharmonic, Azerbaijan National Drama Theater, State Russian Drama Theater and Theater of Musical Comedy are the most famous and popular among them. Azerbaijan has a huge literary heritage, much of which derives from an oral tradition of poems and ancient epics. In official and private meetings it is customary to refer to versus of the great poets of the past, especially Nizami Gancevi (12 century), Fuzulu (15), Nesimi, Molla Panah Vagif, Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzade, etc.

How to settle in

- Try to avoid things or actions, which make you conspicuous.
- Learn a few sentences of the local language. It always pleases local people.
- Make a conscious and obvious effort to learn more about the local people and culture. It's the best compliment you can give.
- Do, and be seen, to respect local customs.

Some useful phrases to learn

Besides the ones already mentioned:

- Sagol---Thank you
- Nejesiniz---How are you?
- Sagol / Khudahafiz---Goodbye
- Yaxshi/ tamam —Ok; good
- Bagishlayin---Pardon me/forgive me
- Insha Allah---Hopefully/God willing

For further assistance, please contact:
Ms. Mayya Babayeva, Peer Helper – UN Azerbaijan.
Tel: +99412 498 98 88;
Email: mayya.babayeva@undp.org

ANNEX 1 – FLIGHT SCHEDULES

Please note that the following information is subject to change without any notes.

European Airlines

Austrian Airlines

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - Vienna	1 2 . 4 . 6 7	04:35	06:00	OS 882
Vienna - Baku	1 . 3 . 5 . 6 7	20:20	03:30	OS 881

British Airways

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - London	....6.	07:45	09:50	BA 6614
	.....7	07:50	09:55	BA 6614
	1...5..	07:55	10:00	BA 6614
	.23....	11:55	14:00	BA 6614
	....4..	12:10	14:15	BA 6614
	1.....	13:30	23:00	BA 6613
	....5..	14:00	23:30	BA 6613
London - Baku	..3....	14:30	00:01	BA 6613
	.....6.	15:15	00:45	BA 6613
	.....7	21:00#06:30		BA 6613
	..2.4...	21:05#06:35		BA 6613

Baltic Airlines (FROM 04 May 2006)

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - Riga	1..4...	04:45	06:40	BT 733
Riga - Baku	..3...7	22:15#04:05		BT 732

Lufthansa

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - Ashgabat	.2.4..7	21:50	23:10	LH 612
		01:35	03:00	LH 613
Ashgabat - Baku	1.3.5..	01:45	03:10	LH 613
		04:20	06:05	LH 613
		04:20	06:05	LH 613
Baku - Frankfurt	.2.4..7	13:40	21:00	LH 612
		01:35	03:00	LH 613
Frankfurt - Baku	.2.4..7	01:45	03:10	LH 613
		04:20	06:05	LH 613
Ashgabat - Baku	1.3.5..	04:20	06:05	LH 613
Baku - Frankfurt	1.3.5..	04:20	06:05	LH 613

Turkish Airlines

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
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	1 2 . 4 . .	05:25	06:40	TK 1339
Baku - Istanbul	. . 3 . 5 6 7	07:30	08:45	TK 1341
Istanbul - Baku	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	18:50	20:05	TK 1335
	(from 12 June 2006)	23:10	#03:55	TK 1338
	1 2 . . 5 . .	13:15	17:50	TK 1334
Baku - Istanbul	(from 12 June 2006)	05:25	06:40	TK 1339
	. . 3 . 5 6 7	07:30	08:45	TK 1341
	1 . . 5 . .	18:50	20:05	TK 1335
	(from 12 June 2006)			

CIS Airlines

Aeroflot

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - Moscow Sheremetevo 1	Daily	16:50	19:00	SU 148
Moscow Sheremetevo 1- Baku	1 . 3 4 5 . .	06:00	08:05	SU 146
	Daily	11:00	15:00	SU 147
Baku - Moscow Sheremetevo 1	2 3 4 . . 7	22:55	#03:00	SU 145
	Daily	16:50	19:00	SU 148
Moscow Sheremetevo 1- Baku	1 . 3 4 5 . .	06:00	08:05	SU 146
	Daily	11:00	15:00	SU 147
	. 2 3 4 . . 7	22:55	#03:00	SU 145

Azerbaijan Airlines

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - Aktau	1 2 . 4 5 . 7	22:40	23:50	J2 217
Aktau - Baku	1 2 3 . 5 6 .	00:50	02:10	J2 218
Baku - Moscow Domodedovo	Daily	10:40	12:40	J2 852
	Daily	08:40	10:40	J2 856
	Daily	14:40	18:20	J2 851
Moscow Domodedovo- Baku	Daily	12:10	16:00	J2 855
Baku - Moscow Vnukovo	Daily	20:40	22:40	J2 860
Moscow Vnukovo - Baku	Daily	23:40	#03:30	J2 859
Baku - Ankara	. 2 . . 5 . .	10:10	10:30	J2 003
Ankara - Baku	. 2 . . 5 . .	12:00	16:20	J2 004
	1 . . 3 4 . 6 .	22:00	23:50	J2 015
	. . . . . 7	11:00	12:50	J2 011
Baku - Dubai	. 2 . 4 5 . 7	11:00	12:50	J2 011
Dubai - Baku	. . . . . 7	01:10	05:05	J2 016
Baku - Istanbul	. 2	14:10	18:05	J2 012
	1 . 3 . 5 6 .	14:10	18:05	J2 012
	. 2	09:50	10:55	J2 075
	. 2	20:30	21:30	J2 075
Istanbul - Baku	1 . 3 . 5 6 .	12:20	17:00	J2 076
	. 2	22:40	#03:20	J2 076
Baku - Antalya	1 . . 5 . .	09:50	10:50	J2 025
Antalya - Baku	1 . . 5 . .	12:10	17:00	J2 026
Baku - Kiev	1 . . 4 . . .	09:35	10:50	J2 6683
	1 . . 4 . . .	12:40	17:45	J2 6684
Kiev - Baku	. . 3	07:30	09:30	J2 107
Baku - London	. . . . . 7	10:00	12:00	J2 107
	. . 3	10:45	20:05	J2 108
London - Baku	. . . . . 7	13:30	22:50	J2 108
Baku - Paris	. 2 . . . 6 .	07:10	10:00	J2 073
Paris - Baku	. 2 . . . 6 .	12:00	20:10	J2 083
	. 2 . . . 7	07:40	07:40	J2 223
	. . . 4 5 . .	08:20	08:20	J2 223
Baku - Tbilisi	1 . 3 . . 6 .	16:10	16:10	J2 223
Tbilisi - Baku	. 2 7	08:40	10:40	J2 224
Baku - Tehran	. . . . 5 . .	09:40	11:40	J2 224
	. . . 4 . . .	16:00	18:00	J2 224
	1 . 3 . 6 .	17:30	19:30	J2 224
	1 . 3 4 . 6 .	22:00	22:50	J2 005
Tehran - Baku	. 2 . 4 5 . 7	03:10	05:10	J2 006
Baku - Tel-Aviv	. . . . . 7	09:35	11:00	J2 021

Tel-Aviv - Baku	..... 7	12:40	17:50	J2 022
Baku - Urumqi	. 2	05:25	13:30	J2 071
Urumqi - Baku	. 2	14:20	16:15	J2 072
Baku-Mineralnie Vodi	..... 6 .	14:15	15:00	J2 6717
Mineralnie Vodi - Baku	..... 6 .	17:00	19:45	J2 6718
Baku - Karahci				TERMINATED
Karachi - Baku				TERMINATED
Baku-Delhi				TERMINATED
Delhi-Baku				TERMINATED
Baku - Aleppo				TERMINATED
Aleppo - Baku				TERMINATED
Baku -Milan(Malpensa)	1 . . . 5 . .	07:00	09:40	J2 035
Milan (Malpensa) -Baku	1 . . . 5 . .	11:50	19:30	J2 036
Baku - Nijniy Novgorod	..... 7	08:30	10:30	J2 221
Nijniy Novgorod- Baku	..... 7	12:00	15:50	J2 222

Domestic flights

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
		08:00	09:00	J2 251
		13:20	14:20	J2 253
Baku - Nakhichevan	Daily	16:20	17:20	J2 283
		18:40	19:40	J2 255
		20:30	21:30	J2 285
		23:35	00:35	J2 257
		03:20	04:20	J2 258
		11:20	12:20	J2 252
Nakhichevan- Baku	Daily	16:40	17:40	J2 254
		19:40	20:40	J2 284
		22:00	23:00	J2 256
		23:30	00:30	J2 286

Domodedovo Airlines

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - Moscow	1 . . . 5 6 .	17:00	19:20	E3 262
Moscow - Baku	1 . . . 5 6 .	11:20	15:30	E3 261

Imair

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - Tashkent	..... 6 .	11:00	13:05	IK 201
Tashkent - Baku	..... 6 .	19:00	21:25	IK 201
Baku - Almaty	..... 6 .	11:00	16:10	IK 202
Almaty- Baku	..... 6 .	17:45	21:25	IK 202

Donbassaero

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - Donetsk	..... 6 .	04:35	05:05	
Donetsk- Baku	. . . . 5 . .	23:00	03:20	

Pulkovo Airlines

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - St. Petersburg	1 . 3 . 5 . .	14:45	17:30	FV 812
St. Petersburg - Baku	1 . 3 . 5 . .	08:50	13:30	FV 811

Baku - St. Petersburg	1 . 3 . 5 . .	14:45	17:30	FV 812
.
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SI EXPRESS TRAIN

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - Tbilisi	1 . 3 . 5 6 7	20:00	#06:48	
Tbilisi - Baku	1 2 4 . 6 7	20:00	#07:48	

Aerosvit Airlines

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - Kiev	. . . . . 7	09:00	10:35	VV 420
	. . . 3 . . .	20:50	22:25	VV 420
	. . . . . 6 .	13:50	19:20	VV 419
Kiev - Baku	. . . 3 . . .	14:20	19:50	VV 419
Baku - Kiev	. . . . . 7	09:00	10:35	VV 420
	. . . 3 . . .	20:50	22:25	VV 420

SCAT

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - Aktau	. . . 4 . . 7	08:00	09:00	DV 458
Aktau - Baku	. . . 3 . . 6 .	17:30	18:30	DV 457
Baku - Atyrau	. . . . . 5 . .	03:40	05:40	DV 460
Atyrau - Baku	. . . 4 . . .	23:50	01:40	DV 459

Uzbekistan Airways

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - Tashkent	1	10:50	14:35	HY 756
	. . . 4 . . .	16:35	20:20	HY 758
Tashkent - Baku	1	07:00	09:20	HY 755
	. . . 4 . . .	12:45	15:05	HY 757

Siberian Airlines

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - Moscow	. 2 . 4 . . 7	17:00	19:00	S7 356
Moscow - Baku	. 2 . 4 . . 7	11:45	15:30	S7 355

Other Airlines

Iran Air

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - Tehran	1	17:00	18:00	IR 503
Tehran - Baku	1	14:15	16:15	IR 502
Baku-Tabriz	. . . 4 . . .	13:45	14:45	IR 553
Tabriz- Baku	. . . 4 . . .	11:00	13:00	IR 552
Tabriz- Baku	. . . 4 . . .	11:00	13:00	IR 552

China Southern Airlines

Route	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight Number
Baku - Urumqi	. . . . 5 . . .	23:55	#07:20	CZ 6024
Urumqi-Baku	. . . . 5 . . .	20:40	22:30	CZ 6023

ANNEX 2 - RESTAURANTS

Azeri Cuisine

A Club \$\$

6 Y. Mammadaliyev St. 493 61 93

Aqua Park

59 R. Behbutov St., 447-03-03

Absheron

Azadliq Square, 498-73-49

Bah-Bah Club 1 \$\$

20 Shikhaliyev St. 496-1810

Bah-Bah Club 2 \$\$

9 Aliyarbeyov St. (On Fountain Square) 498 87 34

Bahar Cinema Club

34 Neftyanik Ave., 447-10-43

Buta \$\$

164 M. Aliyev St. 499 11 65

Cennet Bagı

82 G. Aliyev St., 449-91-98

Chanak Kala

35 Tebriz St., 496-25-85

Fayton \$\$

17 R. Behbudov St. 498 81 01

Gilavar \$\$\$

Behind Tofik Bahramov Stadium

496 35 35; 496 05 05;

(050)271 00 00, (050) 365 65 89

Izmir

5 Izmir St., 436-95-73, 436-93-73

Kohna Sheher \$\$

24 V. Mamedov St. (Near Azneft) 492 05 55

Qurd Qapisi

1 M. Mushfig St., 238-13-31

Lido

1130/33 F. Bayramov, 490-22-22

Min Bir Gece

8 S.S Akhundov St., 448-00-80

Neolit

9 M. Aliyev St., 422-07-07

Nostalgie

45 Istiglaliyyat St., 492-32-76

Oazis

24 Sh. Mamadova St., 4183797

Old Baku

558 H. Javid St., 439-12-96

Sari Gelin

1 Chobanzade St., 421-10-42, 421-88-66

Serin

76 Babek Ave., 422-39-39, 422-49-49

Turkish Cuisine

Anadolu

5 Pushkin St., 498-16-45

3/5 Rasul Rza St., 498-6-04, 493-20-96

Asya Turk

17 R.Behbutov St., 498-91-32

Boyuk Firat Lakhmachun

14 F. Akgayev St., 439-70-80, 439-06-99

106 Sh. Badalbeyli, 493-14-93

Café Mozart

2 A. Alizade St., 498-19-25

Chalikushu

91 Nizami St., 449-91-98

Mantl Evi \$

12 Mardanov Gardashlari St. 493 0398

Inter Grand \$

6 T. Aliyarbeyov St. 5 A. Alizade St. 493 46 92

Merkez Lahmachun

556/57 S. Dadashov St., 438-85-71

1993 Yusifzade St., 465-82-22

Ocakbashi \$\$

14 U. Hajibeyov St. 498 76 82

Ramix \$

36 H.Hajiyev St. 494 04 68

Padishah

26 Y. Mammadaliyev St. 598-15-52, 598-15-53

Turkish Restaurant

17 U. Hajibeyov St., 493-08-70

Japanese Cuisine

Robata Bar \$\$

1033 Izmir St., Hyatt Hotels
490 12 34

Sushi-Bar

1 Azadliq Ave., 490-60-00

Latin Cuisine

Sam Sabor Latino - \$\$\$

63 Khan Shushinsky St. 441 11 51

Iranian Cuisine

Tebriz

8. Sh. Shamil St., 497-34-97

Mexican Cuisine

Ponchos \$\$

14/16Khagani St. 498 57 00

American Cuisine

Fisherman's Wharf \$\$

(On Molokan Garden) 493 02 23

Sunset Café \$\$

8 A. Aliyev St. (Near Azerbaijan Cinema) 492 22 92

Asian Cuisine

Reysha \$

13 Islam Safarli St.
494 12 93; 322 22 88

Indian Cuisine

Adam's Dinner

A. Alizade St., 498-12-89

Bay of Bengal \$

76 Shamsi Badalbeyli St. 447 11 94; 050 339 24 41

Hind Village \$\$

8 Sh. Shamil St. 497 34 97

Maharaja \$\$

131 A. Guliyev St., 494-63-00

Taj Mahal \$\$

17 U. Hajibeyov St. 493 08 70;
(050) 389 70 22

Taj Palace \$\$

18 Khagani St. 493-0870; (050) 389 70 22

Italian Cuisine

Dolce Vita \$\$

9 A. Aliyev St. 492 75 72

Scalini \$\$

2 Bakikhanov St. 598 28 50

Vasco \$\$

340 Nizami St., ISR Plaza 598 31 67

Georgian Cuisine

Mimino \$\$

2 Academic Alizadeh St.
439 67 55;

Georgi's Style \$\$\$

18 M. Ibrahimov St. 494 43 85

Thai Cuisine

Baan Thai \$\$

340 Nizami St., ISR Plaza 17th Floor 598 31 02

Chinese Cuisine

Terrace \$\$

Crescent Beach Hotel, Salyan Highway 497 47 77

The Wok \$\$

Landmark Building (Entrance on Khagani St.) 498 25 56

Mediterranean Cuisine

Mezzo \$\$

1 Bakikhanov St., Hyatt Regency Hotel 490 12 34

International Cuisine

Avant Garde \$

13 May 28th St. 493 00 66

Churasco Steak House \$\$

14 U. Hajibeyov St. 598-5409

Fountain \$\$

8 Rasulzadeh St. 498 34 46

Dostlar Garden \$\$

1 Islam Safarli St. 492 48 46

Absheron Grand City Club \$\$

Hotel Absheron 16th Floor
498 80 60

Bu Sheherde \$\$

59 M. Huseyn St. 492-4549; (050) 335-0668

Beluga Bar \$\$

Hyatt Regency Hotel 496-1234

Boath House

Crescent Beach Hotel, 497-47-77, 497-47-80

Caviar \$\$

1025/30 Tbilisi Ave., Hotel Europe 490-7090

City View \$\$

39 A, Zeynalli St., Meridian Hotel 497-0809

Jazz Club \$\$

4 A. Aliyev St. 497-1139

Glory

1 Azadliq Ave., 490-60-00

Gurmet

26 U. Hajibeyov St., 498-74-11

Lady Q \$\$

Tbilisi Ave., Natavan Residence 497-0372

Noname

41 Khagani St., 498-89-75

Old Mill

96 Nizami St., 493-61-44

Oscar \$

10 Rashid Beybudov St. 493-5335

Red Lion

7 Y. Mammadaliyev St. 493-0354

Rogen Cagun

14 Azerbaijan Ave., 493-42-48

Rokfor

49 I. Safarli St. 499 11 65

Lido \$\$\$

1031/33
F. Bayramov, Baku
Entertainment Center
490-2222

Sultan

36 Khagani St. 498-88-45

***The Wild West* \$\$**

Crescent Beach Hotel, Salyan Highway 497-4777

Greek Cuisine

***Onassis* \$**

3 Insaatchilar Ave. 439-1 734

French Cuisine

***Haute Cuisine* \$\$\$**

615 B, Mamedov St. 436-9922

Spanish Cuisine

***Buena Vista* \$**

1 G. Gadjiev St. 492-1895

***Picasso* \$**

9 Gogol St. 499-2470 (050) 335-0048

Cafes

Cafe Latte

16/18 Z. Tagiyev St. 493-1530

Cafe Shafa

Moscow Ave., Shafa
Stadium
447-1648

Delight Corner

340 Nizami St.,
ISR Plaza Ground Floor
598-31-02

Hyatt Gourmet Shop

1, Bakikhanov St., Hyatt Regency Hotel 496-1234

Hazz

96 Nizami St., 598-9985; 598-2978

***Paradise Café* \$**

26 U. Hajibeyov St. 498-7411

***Sunset Café* \$\$**

8 A. Aliyev St. (By Azerbaijan Cinema) 492-2292

Seafood

***Oyster Fish House* \$\$\$**

F. Bayramov 1031/33, Baku Entertainment Center 490-2222

Fast Food

McDonald's

340 Nizami St. (Near ISR Plaza) 498-1989

McDonald's 2

340 F. H. Hoyskiy St. (Near Metro Ganjlik) (Instore & Drive-Through) Tel: 448 1989

Portofino

21 Bul-Bul Ave. 493-1545

Pizza

Scalini \$\$

2 Bakikhanov St. 498 2850

Vasco \$\$

340 Nizami St., ISR
Plaza.
598-3167

Pizza Hat

8 R. Beibutov St., 493-01-35

Pizza Inn

Fountain Square, 493-01-35

Watering Holes

Adams Sports Bar

Everyday 6:00p.m.-
8:00p.m. 6 A, Alizade St. 498-1289

Britannia Pub

Everyday 5:00p.m.-
7:00p.m. 1 Bakikhanov St., Hyatt Regency Hotel 496-1234

Black City

22 Usif Safarov St. 490-1890

Caledonia

36 Razul Rza St. 494-2853

Caspian Bar

Everyday 6:00p.m.-
7:00p.m.
Weekends
5:00p.m.-7:00p.m. 1025/30 Tbilisi Ave. 490-7090

Fisherman's Wharf \$\$

Mon-Fri 6:30p.m.-
7:30p.m.
Sat 7:00p.m. till
closing
(On Molokan Garden) 493-0223

Golden Bridges

Everyday 5:00p.m.-

8:00p.m, 5 Mardanov Gardashlari St. 493-1772

Finnegan's

Wed 6:30p.m.-8:30p.m.

Everyday 7:00p.m.-

8:00p.m. 4 A. Aliyev St. 498-9857

Le Chevalier

1025/30 Tbilisi Ave,

490-70-90;