

OFFICIAL NAME: Azerbaijani Republic

CAPITAL: Baku

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Federal Multiparty Republic

AREA: 86,600 Sq Km (33,400 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION 8,347,200



LOCATION AND

GEOGRAPHY: Azerbaijan is a former republic of the USSR. It is bound by Iran to

the south, Armenia to the west, Georgia to the northwest, Russia to the north and the Caspian Sea to the east. The territory also includes the Nakhichevan Oblast which lies between Iran, Turkey and Armenia. Around 50% of the land area is mountainous and the country can be divided into three topographical regions. (1.) The Greater Caucasus in the north which is represented by the Main or Dividing Range and is characterized by glacial structures while to the east the Greater Caucasus descends rapidly to form broad low hills with an arid terrain. (2.) The Lesser Caucasus in the south, which consists of the Shakhdag, Karabakh and Murordg Mountain Ranges also contain vast lava plateaux as well as extinct volcanoes. (3.) The Kura Depression, part of which lies between the Greater and Lesser Caucasuses. In the northern and western areas of the Kura Depression, low hills, ridges and valleys are found while the central and eastern parts consist of alluvial flatlands as well as low delta areas along the coast. The Nakhichevan Oblast is characterized by sloping plains of the Araks Valley, plateaux and broken mountain range slopes. The country's principal rivers are the Kura and Araks. Major Cities (pop. est.); Baku 1,080,500, Gyandzha (Kirovabad) 282,200, Sumgait 236,200, Mingechaur 91,000, Nakhickevan 62,000 (1991). Land Use; forested 22%, pastures 25%, agricultural-cultivated 11%, other 42% (1993).

CLIMATE: Azerbaijan's climate varies from an arid subtropical and humid subtropical to a mountainous tundra climate. Average annual precipitation is between 200 to 300 mm (8 to 12 inches) in the lowlands and 300 to 900 mm (12 to 35.5 inches) in the highlands, although

precipitation is distributed unevenly throughout the year. On the southern slopes of the Greater Caucasus average annual precipitation ranges from 1,000 to 1,300 mm (39 to 51 inches). Average temperature ranges on the lowlands are from 25 to 27 degrees Celsius (77 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit) in July to 0 to 3 degrees Celsius (32 to 37 degrees Fahrenheit) in January and between -3 to -6 degrees Celsius (27 to 21 degrees Fahrenheit) in January on the highlands.

PEOPLE: The principal ethnic majority are Azerbaijanis who account for 83% of the population while 6% are Russians and another 6% are Armenians. Other ethnic minorities include Ukrainians, Georgians, Tartars, Jews and others.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 85 persons per sq km (220 persons per sq mi) (1993). Urban-Rural; 53.7% urban, 46.3% rural (1991). Sex Distribution; 49.3% male, 50.7% female (1992). Life Expectancy at Birth; 66.9 years male, 74.8 years female (1990). Age Breakdown; 33% under 15, 30% 15 to 29, 17% 30 to 44, 13% 45 to 59, 5% 60 to 74, 2% 75 and over (1989). Birth Rate; 27.0 per 1,000 (1992). Death Rate; 6.3 per 1,000 (1992). Increase Rate; 20.7 per 1,000 (1992). Infant Mortality Rate; 25.3 per 1,000 live births (1992).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Shiite Muslims, although there is also a Roman Catholic minority.

LANGUAGES: The official language is Azerbaijani while Russian is also widely spoken and each ethnic minority also has its own language.

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: primary or no formal schooling 12.2%, incomplete secondary 19.2%, complete secondary 58.1%, higher 10.5% (1989). Literacy; N/A.

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: On Aug. 30, 1991 Azerbaijan declared its independence, although prior to independence its history was closely tied with that of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In Mar. 1953 Yosef Stalin died and was succeeded by Georgy Malenkov who was in turn forced to relinquish the party leadership to Nikita Khrushchev after a little over one week in power. In 1955 the Warsaw pact, militarily aligned the Soviet Union with other communist countries and in Nov. 1956 the Soviet Red Army invaded Hungary to quell uprisings. In 1957 three communist ministers unsuccessfully attempted to depose Khrushchev which resulted in their expulsion from the central committee. In 1962 under Khrushchev's rule the USSR was involved in the Cuban Missile crisis and in the same year relations with China were broken off as a result of ideological differences. In Oct. 1964 Khrushchev was forced to retire and was succeeded by Leonid Brezhnev. In Aug. 1968 the Warsaw Pact forces led by the Red Army invaded Czechoslovakia to halt their Prague Spring reforms. In 1977 Breshnev was elected President. In Nov. 1982 Brezhnev died and was succeeded by Yuri Andropov, the former head of the KGB. Andropov introduced limited economic reforms and established an anti-corruption program. In Feb 1984 Andropov died and was succeeded by Konstantin Chernenko who in turn died on Mar. 10, 1985. On Mar. 11, 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev was elected as Chernenko's successor and Gorbachev embarked on a program which restructured the USSR's relations with the West. Gorbachev also established Glasnost (openness) as well as Perestroika (restructuring and reform). In Apr. 1986 a meltdown in the reactor of the Chernobyl nuclear power station in Ukraine sent radioactive fallout across northern Europe. In Dec. 1987 the USSR and USA signed the Treaty on Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF). In Feb. 1988 a dispute erupted between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno Karabakh which resulted in mass demonstrations and strikes in the two republics. In Dec. 1988 an earthquake in Armenia killed some 50,000 people. In Apr. 1989 troops violently repressed demonstrations in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. In Dec. 1989 the Lithuanian Parliament adopted multiparty politics. In Jan. 1990 Gorbachev visited Lithuania and was met by some 250,000 pro-independence demonstrators. In Feb. 1990 some 18 people were killed in riots over housing discrimination in Tajikistan. In

May 1990 Boris Yeltsin was elected President of the Russian Federation and on Nov. 1, 1990 launched a 500 day plan to give the Russian Republic a free market economy. In June 1990 Nakhichevan an Azerbaijani enclave bordering Iran declared its intention for a unification with Iran while a civil war was escalating between Azerbaijan and Armenia. In the same month around 150 people were killed during ethnic clashes in Kyrgyzstan. In Jan 1991 another 15 people were killed as the Red Army seized a television station in Lithuania while in Latvia the Soviet Black Berets killed 5 people in an attack on the ministry building. In the same month troops were being deployed in Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Moldova. In Mar. 1991 pro-Yeltsin demonstrators held a mass rally. On Aug. 18, 1991 as Gorbachev was vacationing in the Crimea, the Politburo hard liners attempted a coup to remove Gorbachev from power through the declaration of a State of Emergency under the control of a State Committee. Almost immediately republic leaders declared the emergency committee illegal as well as unconstitutional and began to barricade their parliaments as troops and tanks were deployed throughout the republics. By Aug. 20 senior officers had refused to order their troops to use force against the civilians and on Aug. 21, 1991 the coup collapsed as troops were ordered to return to their barracks. Immediately following the unsuccessful coup many republics suspended or purged the communist party and on Sept. 5, 1991 after 3 days of debate the 74 years of centralized communist control came to an end. In Jan. 1992 Azerbaijan became a founding member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Since the break-up of the USSR, fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan has escalated over the disputed enclave, Nagorno-Karabakh, that has been territory of Azerbaijan since 1923 although the population is predominately Armenian. In March 1992 after the fall of the town of Khojali in Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenian forces angry demonstrations eventually forced the resignation of Ayaz Mutalibov, the former Communist Party leader. Yabub Mamedov another ex-communist succeeded Mutalibov until May 1992, when Mutalibov was briefly returned to power after Shusha the center of Azerbaijani culture in Nagorno-Karabakh fell to Armenian forces. The Azerbaijani Popular Front (APF) headed by Abulfaz Elchibey organized mass demonstration that resulted in the interim replacement of Mutalibov by Isa Gambarov until presidential elections could be held. On June 7, 1992

presidential elections resulted in Elchibey being elected while the old parliament elected in 1990 and dominated by Communists remained the same. Both Pres. Elchibey and his Armenian counterpart sought to reach a diplomatic solution over the disputed enclave, although the Dashnaktstun Party which dominates the Nagorno-Karabakh parliament would settle for nothing less than complete independence. As a result Nagorno-Karabakh declared its independence, proclaimed the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh and sought international recognition. During 1992 Azerbaijan's parliament formally voted to leave the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and introduced its own currency to underline its economic independence. Also during the year several international agreements for gas and oil exploration were entered into. In Feb. 1993 amid rumors of an planned coup attempt a leading army commander, Suret Guseynov, was dismissed while the continuing lack of military gains over Nagorno-Karabakh, the oppression of political opposition and a worsening economic situation combined to erode the popularity of the pro-Turkish Pres. Elchibey. In June 1993, Guseynov's forces repelled an attack on their headquarters by government forces and occupied Gyandzha. Gusynov's forces then marched to Baku unchallenged, precipitating Elchibey's internal exile and the appointment of the former Nakhichevan parliament chairman, Geidar Aliev, as acting president. In Sept. 1993 Aliev visited Moscow for talks with Boris Yeltsin and other leading officials on political and economic cooperation while later that month the National Assembly voted to rejoin the CIS. In Oct. 1993 Aliev was elected President with some 99% of the vote and signed an end to Turkey's privileged relationship with Azerbaijan. Also in October a visit from the Iranian Pres. Ali Akbar Rafsanjani also focused on stronger economic cooperation. During 1993 the CSCE and Russia attempted to negotiate a political solution to the continuing conflict which resulted in a cease-fire agreement in late July, although a fresh offensive by Karabakh forces into southern Azerbaijan took place in August.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Manat (M) divided into 100 Gopik.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$5,428,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; N/A. Imports; R 117,427,000,000 (1993). Exports; R 113,589,000,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; N/A. Balance of Trade; R 3,838,000,000 (1993). Economically Active Population; 2,869,000 or 39.7% of total population (1992). Unemployed; 3.7% (1991).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are the CIS and Iran.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Alumina, Clay, Copper, Cotton, Fruits, Grapes, Iron Ore, Limestone, Livestock, Maize, Natural Gas, Oil, Potatoes, Pyrite, Rice, Salt, Tea, Tobacco, Vegetables, Wheat.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Electric Power Construction, Electrical Equipment, Fishing, Food Processing, Glass, Livestock Processing, Machinery, Mineral Fertilizers, Oil Refining, Petroleum and Chemical Refining, Petroleum Equipment, Silk Milling, Steel, Synthetic Alcohol, Wine Making.

MAIN EXPORTS: Chemical Products, Electrical Equipment, Fertilizers, Food Products, Glass, Machinery, Minerals, Natural Gas, Petroleum Products, Tea, Wine.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 2,090 km (1,299 mi) (1991), passenger-km N/A., cargo ton-km N/A. Roads; length 36,700 km (22,804 mi) (1991). Vehicles; cars 235,600 (1988). Merchant Marine; N/A. Air Transport; N/A.

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 6 with a total circulation of 427,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 1,174,000 (1992). Television; receivers 1,522,000 (1992). Telephones; units 647,000 (1993).

MILITARY: 86,700 (1995) total active duty personnel with 84.5% army, 2.6% navy and 12.9% air force while military expenditure accounts for est. 5.6% (1991) of the Gross National Product (GNP).