

# REPORT ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION OF IDPS IN AZERBAIJAN DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



LAW SOCIETY  
OF AZERBAIJAN



EASTERN PARTNERSHIP  
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## **Report on the socio-economic situation of IDPs in Azerbaijan during the COVID-19 pandemic**

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The cover image of the report belongs to the European Commission.

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## **The table of contents**

<b>Summary</b>	<b>1-3</b>
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### **Chapter I. General description of the social situation of IDPs in the country**

<b>a. Population</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>b. Health</b>	<b>5-7</b>
<b>c. Social policy</b>	<b>7-10</b>
<b>d. Education</b>	<b>10-12</b>

### **Capter II. Social infrastructure for IDPs in Fizuli district**

<b>e. Health</b>	<b>13-14</b>
<b>f. Coronavirus</b>	<b>15-16</b>
<b>g. Other diseases</b>	<b>16-18</b>
<b>h. Education</b>	<b>18-19</b>
<b>i. Social policy</b>	<b>19-20</b>
<b>j. Conditions of IDPs living in Beylagan and Barda districts</b>	<b>21</b>

<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<b>22-23</b>
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## Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected different groups in almost every country in the world. The pandemic is not limited to the threat to human life, but measures to combat it have negatively affected almost the entire economy, business, social situation, living conditions, and various vulnerable groups.

This research is the study of the social situation of IDPs living in Azerbaijan, especially in Fizuli district. The first chapter of the study analyzes information on the situation of IDPs in Azerbaijan in terms of health, social policy, and education. When assessing the existing health infrastructure and official data on registered diseases, we found that the official data was insufficient to provide an accurate picture. Unlike health indicators, social policy indicators are accurate enough to describe the situation of IDPs fully.

We should note that this study does not assess the comprehensive socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on IDPs in Azerbaijan. For such an assessment, it is necessary to research sensitive groups and in various areas that are most affected, in close cooperation with the government and civil society organizations.

The study's primary purpose is to analyze the current social and health situation in the areas inhabited by IDPs in Azerbaijan during COVID-10, especially in Fizuli district, where more compact IDP settlements are located, and to identify vulnerable groups and their situation in quarantine and pandemic period. It also analyzes the situation of IDPs' access to social infrastructure.

The study found that in the quarantine and pandemic period, IDPs living in the relevant districts, along with the existing social problems, also had additional problems.

Before we begin to assess IDPs' social situation in specific areas, we must characterize the overall situation. Information on IDPs is not provided systematically. However, the State Statistics Committee reflected several social indicators for the relevant district. Based on this information, the study provides a general description of the social situation.

We should note that when describing the general situation, the information on the following areas, which will be given in the following districts, - we will name the area where the districts are located a "region" in the subsequent study - is taken into account:

- Jabrayil district
- Fizuli district
- Aghdam district
- Khojaly district
- Shusha city
- Khojavend district
- Kalbajar district
- Lachin district
- Gubadli district
- Zangilan district

Here are a few points to note. Thus, until 2020, 14 villages of the Tartar district and seven villages of Gazakh district remained under occupation. Respectively, there were IDPs too (according to official data, only 6,907 people from both districts<sup>1</sup>). It would not be appropriate to cover the entire district simply because there is no accurate information on their settlement (for example, IDPs in Tartar district makeup 2.9% of the total population of the district, and in Gazakh district 3.9%<sup>2</sup>). At the same time, part of Fizuli and Aghdam districts was not under occupation, and those living in the relevant areas are not considered IDPs (8.7% in Fizuli district, 28.3% in Aghdam district). However, in the statistics of the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, there is an indicator entitled "population who have left their permanent residence in the border settlements"<sup>3</sup>). As a result, statistics for these districts usually differ.

According to the number of IDPs, Fizuli is the second most populated district after Aghdam. 122,194 IDPs are officially registered in the district. As a result of the study, it is determined that the health infrastructure in Fizuli does not differ significantly from the country's indicators. However, research has identified a limited number of doctors as one of the main problems here. Thus, according to the number of doctors per 10,000 people in the country, Fizuli district is three times lower than the national average.

Although the disease rates are relatively realistic, patients with specific groups of diseases (neoplasms) can only go to Baku for examination and treatment. That is where the oncology hospital is located. The same issue is associated with severe fire and lung disease. In terms of respiratory diseases, Fizuli district is twice the national average. In regular times, going to Baku was just a matter of transport, but during the strict quarantine period, these services became more complicated and caused additional difficulties for such patients.

As for education statistics, according to the 2009 census, the number of uneducated people per 1,000 people aged 15 and over in Fizuli district is 17. The average rate for Azerbaijan is 12.9. In other words, the corresponding indicator for the district is high. At the same time, the corresponding figure is 25 for women and 9 for men. If we look at the same census indicators related to higher education, we can see that for every 1,000 people in the district there are 79 people with higher education. The corresponding figure is 96 for men and 63 for women. By the way, this figure is 134 in the country.

The analysis of social policy in the district shows that the number of IDPs over 60 is 15,623. Of these people, 9,987 receive various pensions (5,553 for old age, 3,772 for disability, and 662 for the loss of the family's head). At the same time, 459 people receive old-age benefits due to insufficient length of service.

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<sup>1</sup> Here and hereafter, the exact figures on the number of IDPs in the districts are given based on this source: Efendiev R. Ethno-demographic evolution of the population of Karabakh: stages of development. Baku. 2021. C. 29. URL: <https://aircenter.az/uploads/files/Demoqrafiya%20for%20web%20final.pdf>. (In Russian)

<sup>2</sup> Here and hereafter, the figures of the State Statistics Committee on the population are given on the basis of the following source: the territory, cities, and population density of cities and districts of the Republic of Azerbaijan. URL: [https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/az/001\\_15.xls](https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/az/001_15.xls)

<sup>3</sup> Reference to the section: Social aspects of internal migration and urbanization in Azerbaijan. Analytical report. Center for Social Research. "Azerbaijan barometer", №2 (6). S. 12, graphic 1. URL: <https://stm.az/uploads/25d09-hesabat-miqrasiya-6.pdf>

However, there is no information about what kind of benefit does 5,177 people over 60 age receive. The study concludes that at least 2,000 people in the district are of retirement age but do not receive any additional payments.

Simultaneously, the average pension in the district is 213.42 AZN, which is lower than the corresponding figure for the country (263.59 AZN). The amount of social benefits for age is the same in the country - 130 AZN. We should note that this figure does not coincide with the consumer basket of people of retirement age. At the beginning of 2020, the living wage for pensioners amounted to 157 AZN.

According to official data, the number of IDPs aged 18-60 in Fizuli is 76,274. According to official data, the economically active population is 64.4 thousand people. As a result of official data analysis, it is impossible to determine what 42.8 thousand people in the district are doing. Most of them work in agriculture and temporary jobs. Nevertheless, there is no exact information about it.

## Chapter I: Social status of IDPs in the country

### *Population*

Information on IDPs' health infrastructure is presented in Table 1 below, with reference to the "Health" statistical review of the State Statistics Committee. As can be seen from this table, as of January 1, 2020, the districts<sup>4</sup> total population, including Khankendi, is 842,544 people.<sup>5</sup>

According to the results of the 2009 census of the State Statistics Committee (SSC), there are 97,035 Armenians in the district<sup>6</sup>. This number was not taken into account when calculating the number of IDPs in accordance with the purpose of the study. Thus, according to the SSC, the total number of Azerbaijanis in these districts is 745,509. However, there is no exact figure on the number of IDPs. According to the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in January 2012, 599,417 IDPs were registered in the country.<sup>7</sup>

Given the growth over eight years, this figure should have increased slightly.<sup>8</sup> By the beginning of 2020, the Center for International Relations Analysis<sup>9</sup> reports 617,510 IDPs in the country. 610,603 of them fall to the share of the districts mentioned above.<sup>10</sup> The number of deaths in the district in 2019 was 4,050. Accordingly, the natural increase was 7146. In 2020, the situation changed somewhat. According to official data, the number of deaths in the first nine months of 2020 was 3,521.<sup>11</sup> In the same period of 2019, the corresponding figure was 2968 people.<sup>12</sup> In other words, the number of deaths increased by 18.6%. The main reason for the significant increase is the coronavirus pandemic.

Thus, the share of IDPs in the population of Azerbaijan is 7-8%. That should be taken into account when analyzing other indicators. Agdam (204,000) and Fizuli (133,800) districts have the largest population. Khojaly (28.8 thousand) and Shusha (34.7 thousand) districts are the smallest in population.

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<sup>4</sup> By districts, we mean Jabrayil, Fizuli, Agdam, Khojaly, Shusha, Khojavend, Kalbajar, Lachin, Gubadli, and Zangilan districts.

<sup>5</sup> Website of the State Statistics Committee - [https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/az/001\\_15.xls](https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/az/001_15.xls)

<sup>6</sup> Districts of Azerbaijan. Website of the State Statistics Committee - <https://www.stat.gov.az/source/districts/>

<sup>7</sup> Center for Social Research, Azerbaijan Barometer, Sixth Edition, February 2020. URL: <https://stm.az/uploads/25d09-hesabat-miqrasiya-6.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> The 2019 report of the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons states that information on 592,929 IDPs was registered to the database. It was noted that the work continues. Read more: <http://idp.gov.az/az/law/126/parent/15>

<sup>9</sup> The Center refers to the responses of the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons. At the same time, it should be noted that the Center for Analysis of International Relations is a public legal entity established by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 6, 2019, No. 515. The primary purpose of the Center is to analyze critical international processes in Azerbaijan and the world, to prepare high-quality research materials and reports on international issues, to expand research on Azerbaijan, to study the processes and security issues in the South Caucasus, and to participate in conveying the position of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the international public, political and academic circles. Read more: <https://aircenter.az/az/mission>

<sup>10</sup> Рухат Эфендиев. URL: <https://aircenter.az/uploads/files/Demografiya%20for%20web%20final.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> State Statistics Committee, macroeconomic indicators of economic and social development of the country in January-October 2020 - [https://www.stat.gov.az/news/source/2020\\_10ay.zip](https://www.stat.gov.az/news/source/2020_10ay.zip)

<sup>12</sup> State Statistics Committee, macroeconomic indicators of economic and social development of the country in January-October 2019 - [https://www.stat.gov.az/news/source/2019\\_10ay.zip](https://www.stat.gov.az/news/source/2019_10ay.zip)



## Health

The analysis of the state of medical infrastructure in IDP settlements reveals many problems. As shown in Table 1, even though there were 31.8 thousand doctors in Azerbaijan at the beginning of 2020, only 1.51% of them fall to the relevant districts. According to the number of doctors per 10,000 people, the districts are five times less than the national average. Interestingly, the highest rate was recorded in Khojavend district (13.1) and the lowest in the Jabrayil district (1.7).<sup>13</sup>

**Table 1. Health infrastructure indicators for relevant districts**

Indicators for 2019	TOTAL	On Azerbaijan	Share
Population, thousand people	842,54	10067,10	8,36%
Number of births	11196	141179	7,89%
Number of dead	4050	55916	7,21%
Natural increase	7146	85263	8,33%
Number of doctors	482	31829	1,51%
Number of doctors per 10,000 population	6,13	32	19,15%
Average number of medical staff	1966	55650	3,53%
The average number of health workers per 10,000 people	24,99	55,9	44,71%
Number of hospitals	89	570	15,61%
Number of hospital beds	5331	44278	12,04%
Number of hospital beds per 10,000 population	67,77	44,5	152,30%
Number of outpatient polyclinic providing care to the population	226	1726	13,09%
Capacity of outpatient polyclinic	7819	106476	7,34%
Capacity of outpatient polyclinic per 10,000 population	99,40	107	92,90%

*The table is based on information provided by the State Statistics Committee.*

The situation is somewhat better in terms of the number of paramedics. It is 24.99 per 10,000 population. The national average is 55.9. Accordingly, the highest rate still belongs to Khojavend district - 73.1 (besides, it should be noted that if we subtract the number of Armenians, this figure

<sup>13</sup> The occupied territories' health infrastructure means the health and statistics institutions that operated in the relevant districts from 1991 to 1993 but were later relocated to other areas. For example, 18 hospitals and ambulance stations in Lachin district are located in the Aghdam-Agjabadi medical territorial unit, and four hospitals in Gubadli district are located in the Sumgayit city medical territorial unit. To get more detailed information on Medical Area sections, look at this link: <https://its.gov.az/page/tibbi-erazi-bolmeleri>. Accordingly, the health statistics for the districts also cover these health facilities. In other words, the health statistics for Lachin district envisages the registration of health facilities belonging to Lachin district located in the Aghdam-Agjabadi Medical Territorial Unit. It does not reflect the situation of people from Lachin district but living in other areas.

will be even higher). It is even higher than the national average. Zangilan (9.7) and Jabrayil (9.1) districts have the lowest rates. It is between 20-50 in other districts, except in Kalbajar and Gubadli districts<sup>14</sup>.

The district differs significantly in the number of hospitals and hospital beds. According to the SSC, these ten districts have 89 hospitals. There are 5331 beds in the relevant hospitals. That is equal to 15.6 and 12% of the indicators for Azerbaijan, respectively. Most hospitals are in Agdam (20), Lachin (18), and Fizuli (17) districts. Such a situation in Agdam and Fizuli districts is understandable; however, the significant difference in Lachin is directly related to the situation of IDPs. It is related to the hospitals located in the areas inhabited by IDPs (18 hospitals are located in Agjabadi and Beylagan districts). Accordingly, Lachin district is a leader among the districts in terms of the number of beds per 10,000 people - 94.1 beds. In Fizuli district, this figure is 91.6. Khojaly district has the lowest rate with one hospital - 15.7.

The district's share in the number of outpatient polyclinic does not differ significantly from the number of hospitals - 13%. However, in terms of power, it is equal to the share of the district's population - 7.3%. On the other hand, the respective districts differ significantly from each other. Thus, the capacity of outpatient polyclinic per 10,000 people is 484.2 in Shusha city, while the corresponding figure for Kalbajar district is 9.1.

**Table 2. Number of diseases registered in the relevant district**

Diseases	Number in the region	Number in Azerbaijan	The share of the region
Some infectious and parasitic diseases	2268	120031	1,89%
Neonatal diseases	214	13079	1,64%
Certain disorders associated with blood, hematopoietic, organ diseases and the involvement of the immune mechanism in the process	3969	69925	5,68%
Endocrine Diseases, Metabolism, and nutritional problems	1439	49126	2,93%
Diseases of the nervous system and sensory organs	4592	198291	2,32%
Diseases of the circulatory system	8211	149330	5,50%
Respiratory diseases	31366	771571	4,07%
Diseases of the digestive system	7389	169225	4,37%
Diseases of the skin and subcutaneous tissue	912	43940	2,08%
Diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue	679	29330	2,32%
All registered diseases	70137	1936715	3,62%

*The table is based on information provided by the State Statistics Committee.*

<sup>14</sup> Medical statistics for the districts are obtained here: Districts of Azerbaijan. Website of the State Statistics Committee - <https://www.stat.gov.az/source/districts/>

As for the registration of diseases in the region, it is determined that the relevant indicators do not correspond to the population's share. For example, a total of 1.9 million cases of the disease were registered in the country (the corresponding figure considers medical institutions under the Ministry of Health). However, the total share of the relevant districts is 3.6%. Besides, there is no information at all about many diseases in some areas. Therefore, the relevant statistics may be considered inaccurate. Relevant information does not provide a complete picture of this issue. Thus, IDPs can also apply to medical institutions in their area. Because in many cases, the medical facilities where IDPs are registered are located in different areas. For example, medical facilities in Shusha city are located at the following addresses<sup>15</sup>:

- The polyclinic part of Shusha Central District Hospital is located in Malibeyli village, Shusha city, in Ramana settlement, Baku.
- Gushchular village, Shusha city, the medical center is located in Gilavar sanatorium in Pirshagi settlement of Baku city.
- Khanalilar village doctor's medical center of Shusha city - Mirzaler is located in winter fields in the territory of Aghdam district.
- Shusha city Allahgullar village medical center - Mirzaler is located in winter fields in Aghdam district.
- Shusha Central District Hospital is located at 26 A.Ahmadov Street, Baku.

Apparently, three are located in Baku, and two in Aghdam district. However, IDPs from Shusha city settled in 58 districts of the country.<sup>16</sup> For example, according to an interview with ARB Sheki, an Allahgullar village resident, Elbrus Ibrahimov, settled in Balakan city.<sup>17</sup> However, the relevant polyclinic is located in Aghdam district. Thus, IDPs are not able to apply to medical facilities in the relevant districts. Therefore, the disease statistics do not give a complete picture.

### ***Social policy***

Unlike health indicators, social policy is implemented through specific tools. To implement the relevant tools, statistics need to be accurately broken down by districts, with registration as the key. As a result, social policy indicators are more accurate and can fully describe the situation of IDPs. When studying social policy, we must note that there are several essential tools of this policy in Azerbaijan. We can point to the following as appropriate tools: pensions, social benefits, the pension of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and Targeted State Social Assistance. Each tool reflects the direction of the relevant policy. The first includes measures taken against adults, the second includes people with disabilities or other disabilities, the third is support and assistance to particular groups, and the last is the fight against poverty.

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<sup>15</sup> Health. Official website of Shusha City Executive Power: <http://www.shusha-ih.gov.az/page/17.html>

<sup>16</sup> The State Committee held a commemorative event on the 27th anniversary of the occupation of Shusha. State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons of the Republic of Azerbaijan. URL: <http://idp.gov.az/az/news/840>

<sup>17</sup> Shusha resident: "My dreams came true." ARB Shaki, November 20, 2020. URL: [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=108013222585394&story\\_fbid=3323478454372172](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=108013222585394&story_fbid=3323478454372172)

As shown in Table 3, the relevant districts account for 5.11% of pensioners in the country. That is 64.9 thousand. Almost half of the pensioners fall to the share of three districts: Agdam (13.9 thousand), Kalbajar (10.9 thousand), and Fizuli (9.9 thousand). Kalbajar district is in third place in terms of population and second place in pensioners' number. We should note that there are three types of pensions in Azerbaijan: for old age (as required by law), for disability (lifelong disability benefits, or for other reasons. This type of pension allows you to retire five years earlier) and due to the loss of the head of the family (if one of the family members dies before reaching retirement age, then the other family member has the opportunity to receive his pension). Half of the pensioners in Kalbajar district (51%) received disability pensions. According to this indicator, Kalbajar district has an enormous share - 7,128 (for comparison, the corresponding figure for Aghdam district is 5,695).

**Table 3. Some indicators of social policy.**

Category of population receiving social support	Number by area (region)	Number in Azerbaijan	Share of the (area) region, %
Number of retirees	64 909	1 270 559	5,11%
Including:			
According to age	28 420	742 034	3,83%
Due to disability	33 112	383 993	8,62%
For the loss of the family head	3 377	144 532	2,34%
Average monthly pension, AZN	227,88	263,59	86,45%
Number of social benefits	20 557	401 249	5,12%
Average monthly amount per person, AZN	119,47	118,4	100,90%
The Presidential pensions of the Republic of Azerbaijan	21 890	293 789	7,45%
Average monthly amount per person, AZN	96,26	93,68	102,75%
Number of families receiving targeted social assistance	8 101	72 170	11,22%
Number of family members receiving targeted social assistance	32 756	298 881	10,96%
Average monthly amount per person, AZN	47,73	50,03	95,41%

*The table is based on information provided by the State Statistics Committee.*

As for the average monthly pension, the figure for the region is 227.88 AZN. For comparison, the corresponding figure for Azerbaijan is 263.59 AZN. On the other hand, the distribution is also different. For example, the average amount in Zangilan is 249.98 AZN. The lowest rate was recorded in Fizuli district - 213.42 AZN<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> The information on the regions here and then is obtained from the statistical collection of the State Statistics Committee "Azerbaijan districts": <https://www.stat.gov.az/source/districts/> or [https://www.stat.gov.az/menu/6/statistical\\_yearbooks/source/districts\\_2020.zip](https://www.stat.gov.az/menu/6/statistical_yearbooks/source/districts_2020.zip)

Aghdam district is selected according to the number of social benefits - 5416 people are paid social benefits. The average amount of social benefits in the district is 116.57 AZN. The highest rate for social benefits is in the Jabrayil district - 134.88 AZN. The lowest rate is in Zangilan district - 107.63 AZN.

The central part of social benefits is related to disability. 9307 people in the region (area) receive direct disability benefits. The average amount is 125.51 AZN. 6,124 children under the age of 18 and with disabilities are registered in the region. That is equal to 9.7% of the national average. In other words, 15,431 disability benefits are provided in the region. That is 6.3% of the country. At the same time, in 2019, 2,900 people received disability status for the first time. That means 9-11% in the country. Thus, the region has a high rate of disability for persons under the age of 18 (while the population ratio is between 7-8%, it is 9-13%).

There are two other vital instruments of the social policy applied in Azerbaijan: the Presidential pensions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Targeted State Social Assistance to Low-Income Families (from now on referred to as "TSSA"). The first usually acts as an additional payment for various reasons. After the social policy reforms, the number of people receiving pensions in Azerbaijan has increased several times and reached 293,000. As a result, 7.45% of it belongs to these districts. Simultaneously, the country's average amount is 93.68 AZN, while in the relevant districts, it is 96.26 AZN. The lowest rate was recorded in the Jabrayil district (AZN 74.62) and the highest in Khojaly district (AZN 122.39).

The only tool that directly supports the poor and needy is the TSSA. According to the results of 2019, 8101 families and 32,756 family members received assistance in these 10 districts. Nationwide, this means 10-11%. As a result of the reforms carried out in 2020, the number of people receiving appropriate support in the country has increased. However, in the relevant region, on the contrary, it decreased and as of October 1, 2020 amounted to 29,540 people. The average amount of TSSA in the region is 47.73 AZN.

Also, IDPs receive special benefits from the state. According to the Committee on IDPs, in 2019, the average annual amount of a single monthly social allowance was 956 AZN per person. It also offset some costs to some extent. At the same time, the Committee itself identifies poverty among IDPs. According to it, the poverty rate is 8% (the number of people receiving TSSA is 4-6%. However, the Committee, in cooperation with relevant UN programs,<sup>19</sup> determines this figure. Therefore, this figure can be considered relatively realistic).

**Table 4. Official information provided by the State Committee on Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons:**

Period	The amount of money spent	Poverty line
In 2003	226 AZN	75%
In 2015	840 AZN	14%

<sup>19</sup> For example, the World Bank and the Social Development Fund for Internally Displaced Persons (the State Oil Fund and other sources for improving IDPs' living conditions) jointly implemented the IDP Living Standards and Livelihoods Project in 2012-2020.

In 2016	750 AZN	13%
In 2017	785 AZN	12%
In 2018	937 AZN	12%
In 2019	956 AZN	8%

*The table is taken from the information on the work done by the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in 2019. Read more: <http://idp.gov.az/az/law/126/parent/15>*

Another aspect of social policy is the labor market. According to official data, at the beginning of 2019, the number of able-bodied IDPs was 366.9 thousand. Of them, 200,000 people were provided with permanent jobs in budget organizations and other areas, and 134,000 people were provided with seasonal jobs. In 2019, the Main Employment Office of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan provided a total of 1,615 IDPs with jobs, 155 people received unemployment status, 126 people were sent to vocational training courses, and 143 people received unemployment benefits. In addition, 156 IDPs were involved in public works.<sup>20</sup>

In terms of living conditions, a total of 3.9 million square meters were allocated for refugees and IDPs in more than 30 cities and regions of the country during 1993-2019 at the expense of funds allocated from the State Oil Fund and other sources. 110 modern settlements and residential complexes with all social and technical infrastructure, individual houses with yard area, and multi-apartment buildings have been built. 62,498 families live in the relevant settlements and residential complexes. That is an average of 12.5 square meters per capita (the national average is around 11-12).

### **Education**

The study could not obtain detailed information to analyze the situation with the education infrastructure comprehensively. We should also note that taken into account that in 2020, due to the pandemic, classes were held remotely, and in this regard, there were severe problems in Azerbaijan. According to the Ministry of Education, as of December 19, 1,380,000 students and 127,000 teachers have registered on the Microsoft Teams platform, which provides virtual lessons.<sup>21</sup> That means that 89 percent of students and about 85 percent of teachers have an e-cabinet. The ministry said there were 1,039,000 active users. If we consider that 90 percent of the total users are students, we can say that about 935 thousand students are active users. Thus, it turns out that about 600,000 students in the country (about 40 percent of all students) are excluded from active participation in virtual lessons.

<sup>20</sup> The information mentioned in this section is taken from the "Information on the work done by the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in 2019." Read more: <http://idp.gov.az/az/law/126/parent/15>

<sup>21</sup> 6,145,653 lessons in the Virtual School. Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan. 21.12.2020. URL: <https://edu.gov.az/az/news-and-updates/19600>

Simultaneously, according to the State Statistics Committee, only 63% of households in the country have access to the Internet.<sup>22</sup> The corresponding figure is 73.3% in cities and 50.2% in rural areas. However, 70.7% of households own a tablet or smartphone, 18.7% own a personal computer, and 26.2% own laptops.<sup>23</sup> In other words, the situation with the devices used to access the Internet is unsatisfactory.

On the other hand, we do not know the exact situation with IDPs. However, in 2015, the State Statistics Committee published a statistical bulletin entitled “Results of the IDP Household Survey.”<sup>24</sup> According to this collection, only 22.3% of IDP households had access to the Internet. The corresponding figure was 33.1% in urban areas and 7.8% in rural areas. Nevertheless, here we must take into account a few points. After 2015, 14,000 IDP families moved to 16 new settlements. Some of them are located in Fizuli and other districts. Simultaneously, according to the results of 2015, the share of households with Internet access in the country was 51.6% (an increase of 11.4% over four years).<sup>25</sup> Therefore, it is not easy to refer directly to these indicators (considering that at least five years have passed). On the other hand, when distributed by regions, there is no information on Internet access facilities for IDPs in the Upper Karabakh economic region. Given that most IDPs are located in the area, this is at least a reason to be skeptical of the survey results.<sup>26</sup>

**Table 4. Some indicators of education**

Indicator	Total by region	On Azerbaijan	The share of the region
Number of preschool educational institutions	105	1684	6,24%
The number of children they have	5989	122398	4,89%
Number of children per 100 places in preschool education institutions	81,00	89	91,01%
Specific number of children brought up in preschool institutions and involved in school preparation in general education schools in the total number of children aged 1-5, as a percentage	8,27	30,5	27,12%
Number of full-time general education institutions	583	4400	13,25%
The number of students in them	102084	1600790	6,38%
Special number of students in the second and third shifts	18,24	17	107,29%

<sup>22</sup> The results of the household survey in 2019. The State Statistics Committee. Baku. 2020. URL: [https://www.stat.gov.az/source/budget\\_households/az/bul/bul\\_2019.pdf](https://www.stat.gov.az/source/budget_households/az/bul/bul_2019.pdf) S. 110.

<sup>23</sup> The results of the household survey in 2019. The State Statistics Committee. Baku. 2020. URL: [https://www.stat.gov.az/source/budget\\_households/az/bul/bul\\_2019.pdf](https://www.stat.gov.az/source/budget_households/az/bul/bul_2019.pdf) S. 110

<sup>24</sup> The results of the 2015 IDP household survey. The State Statistics Committee. Baku. 2016. URL: [https://www.stat.gov.az/source/budget\\_households/az/bul/b\\_kochkun\\_2015.pdf](https://www.stat.gov.az/source/budget_households/az/bul/b_kochkun_2015.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> The results of the 2015 IDP household survey. The State Statistics Committee. Baku. 2016. URL: [https://www.stat.gov.az/source/budget\\_households/az/bul/bul\\_2015.pdf](https://www.stat.gov.az/source/budget_households/az/bul/bul_2015.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> The State Statistics Committee - [https://www.stat.gov.az/source/budget\\_households/az/bul/b\\_kochkun\\_2015.pdf](https://www.stat.gov.az/source/budget_households/az/bul/b_kochkun_2015.pdf) - s. 86



According to the 2009 census, the number of uneducated people aged 15 and over	13380	85804	15,59%
According to the 2009 census, the uneducated per 1,000 population aged 15 and over	15,89	12,56	126,51%

*The table is based on information provided by the State Statistics Committee.*

Accordingly, this situation should have seriously affected IDP families. Although it is impossible to obtain accurate and detailed information in this regard, it is possible to give a general description of the current situation concerning official data. Thus, according to official data, the region accounts for 105 preschools and 583 full-time general education institutions. The average rate of pre-school education does not differ significantly from the national average: an average of 81 children per 100 places. There are pre-school educational institutions in other districts than Shusha. Only in Lachin district, there are 46 children per 100 places; in others, it is between 80-100<sup>27</sup>.

There is a severe problem with the involvement of children in relevant institutions. The share of children brought up in preschool institutions and school preparation in secondary schools in the total number of children aged 1-5 is 30.5%. However, the average rate in these districts is 8.27%. In Fizuli district, the corresponding figure is 17.5%, while in Gubadli and Lachin districts, it is 4.6 and 2.7%.

The situation with full-time general education does not differ significantly from that in the country. 102,000 students study in 583 full-time educational institutions. Among them, students' share in the second and third shifts differs slightly from the national average (17% vs. 18.2%). In general, there are no significant differences in this regard. However, according to the 2009 census, there are 13,400 uneducated people aged 15 and over in the region. That is 15.6% of the uneducated in the country. At the same time, the number of uneducated people per 1,000 people exceeds the national average. In some districts, this figure is higher - 63 in Khojavend, 50 in Khojaly, and in Kalbajar 36<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> The State Statistics Committee - [https://www.stat.gov.az/menu/6/statistical\\_yearbooks/source/districts\\_2020.zip](https://www.stat.gov.az/menu/6/statistical_yearbooks/source/districts_2020.zip)

<sup>28</sup> All information on education in the district is available here:

[https://www.stat.gov.az/menu/6/statistical\\_yearbooks/source/districts\\_2020.zip](https://www.stat.gov.az/menu/6/statistical_yearbooks/source/districts_2020.zip)



## Chapter II: Social infrastructure for IDPs in Fuzuli district

After Aghdam district, the Fuzuli district is the most populated area of IDPs in Azerbaijan. Officially, the population of the district is 133.8 thousand people. According to the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, at the beginning of 2020, 122,194 IDPs were registered in Fizuli district<sup>29</sup>. In other words, 11,606 people do not have IDP status (but, as noted, they had another status). Most of the IDPs are located in the liberated part of the district before 2020. Eighteen settlements have been built for them here. 16 of these settlements are included in the administrative-territorial division of Azerbaijan:

1. First Zobujug settlement - 2008
2. Second Zobujug settlement - 2008
3. Third Zobujug settlement - 2008
4. Fourth Zobujug settlement - 2008
5. Fifth Zobujug settlement - 2008
6. Gayidish settlement No. 1 - 2004
7. Gayidish settlement No. 2 - 2004
8. Gayidish settlement No. 3 - 2004
9. Gayidish settlement No. 4 - 2004
10. Gayidish settlement No. 5 - 2004
11. Gayidish settlement No. 6 - 2004
12. Gayidish settlement number 7 - 2004
13. Gayidish settlement No. 8 - 2004
14. Gayidish settlement number 9 - 2004
15. Gayidish settlement number 10 - 2004
16. Gayidish settlement number 11 – 2004

Also, another settlement for 400 families was commissioned in 2016, and the construction of a settlement for 95 families was completed in 2020<sup>30</sup>. According to the District Executive Power, up to 50% of the population lives in 1 liberated city, 17 settlements, and 21 villages.<sup>31</sup> More than 68.2 thousand people were examined in hospitals and medical centers located in the relevant settlements.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, we can estimate that by the beginning of 2020, 70,000 of the district's population live in Fizuli. Therefore, the information on the health of the district covers precisely 70,000 people.

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<sup>29</sup> Exact figures on the number of IDPs: <https://aircenter.az/uploads/files/Demografiya%20for%20web%20final.pdf>, population figures: [https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/az/001\\_15.xls](https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/az/001_15.xls)

<sup>30</sup> Information on the work done by the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in 2019 - <http://idp.gov.az/az/law/126/parent/15>

<sup>31</sup> The website of Fuzuli district executive power. Population information: <http://www.fuzuli-ih.gov.az/page/12.html>

<sup>32</sup> Health. Website of Fuzuli district executive power: <http://www.fuzuli-ih.gov.az/page/17.html>

## Health

In terms of health infrastructure, Fizuli differs from other districts. As we have noted, only 133,800 people live in the district. Only a little more than half of them (70 thousand) live directly in Fizuli district. In this regard, the security is relatively high. Along with medical centers, there are Fuzuli Diagnostic Medical Center, Horadiz city hospital, Zobujug settlement hospital, and Gaidish settlement hospital in the settlements. Also, a new hospital was opened near the village of Bala Bahmanli. Relevant medical infrastructure is also used for other districts (Fizuli Diagnostic Center also serves residents of Beylagan, Khojavend, Jabrayil districts).

**Table 5. Health infrastructure in Fizuli district**

Indicators for 2019	Fizuli district	On Azerbaijan	Share across the country
Number of doctors	131	31829	0,41%
Number of doctors per 10,000 population	9,8	32	31,00%
Average number of health workers	466	55650	0,83%
The average number of health workers per 10,000 people	34,8	55,9	0,62%
Number of hospitals	17	570	2,98%
Number of hospital beds	1226	44278	2,76%
Number of hospital beds per 10,000 population	91,6	44,5	206,00%
Number of outpatient polyclinic providing care to the population	44	1726	2,54%
Capacity of outpatient polyclinic	2009	106476	1,88%
Capacity of outpatient polyclinic per 10,000 population	150,1	107	140,28%
All registered diseases	14123	1936715	0,72%
All registered diseases per 10,000 population	1061	1955,4	54,25%

As shown in Table 5, the health infrastructure in Fizuli does not differ significantly from the country's indicators. At the same time, we should consider that this infrastructure serves fewer people in reality.

As a result, the only problem here is the number of doctors. It is several times lower than the national average (while it makes up 1.3% of the population, the number of doctors is 0.41%. At the same time, the number of doctors per 10,000 is three times lower than the national average - Table 1). The situation is better in terms of health workers and the number of beds. When referring to disease indicators, we can see that, unlike other IDP districts, the indicators are relatively realistic.

## Coronavirus

It is known that the health infrastructure will face severe problems in 2020. This has been observed both around the world and in Azerbaijan. There is no accurate information on coronavirus infections in Fizuli district. The Medical Territorial Units Management Association (DMAA), responsible for fighting the coronavirus, has provided information on its official website only for economic zones. The information on the Upper Karabakh economic zone covered Fizuli, Agdam, and Tartar districts. Cases of coronavirus infection were recorded in the relevant region. Considering the statistics for the regions periodically presented by the TABIB, we have compiled a graph (Figure 1). As can be seen, the highest number of infections in the region was registered in December.<sup>33</sup>

As for the medical infrastructure to fight the coronavirus, a new 80-bed hospital was built near the village of Bala Bahmanli in Fizuli district to fight COVID-19. We should note that that region is included in the Agdam-Agjabadi Medical Territorial Unit. At the beginning of the quarantine measures (mid-April), it was reported that there were 215 beds in the hospitals. Moreover, at that time, 200 places were occupied (patients from other regions were brought to Fizuli district). As of April 15, the Medical Territorial Unit had one ventilator, and the relevant laboratories had a daily test capacity of 200.<sup>34</sup> After that, the relevant forces increased (the daily test capacity at the time of data submission was 5-6 thousand. In December, the figure reached 20 thousand. Besides, private clinics, the Ministry of Health, and other entities were taking the test), but the region provided no information.

The information provided by the TABIB is not sufficient to assess the current situation. Even TABIB has officially reported that about 1 million people across the country have been infected with the coronavirus.<sup>35</sup> However, the official figures of the infected people are 229,000.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, it is doubtful to what extent the relevant figures reflect the reality. Therefore, we can refer to the death statistics for the region.

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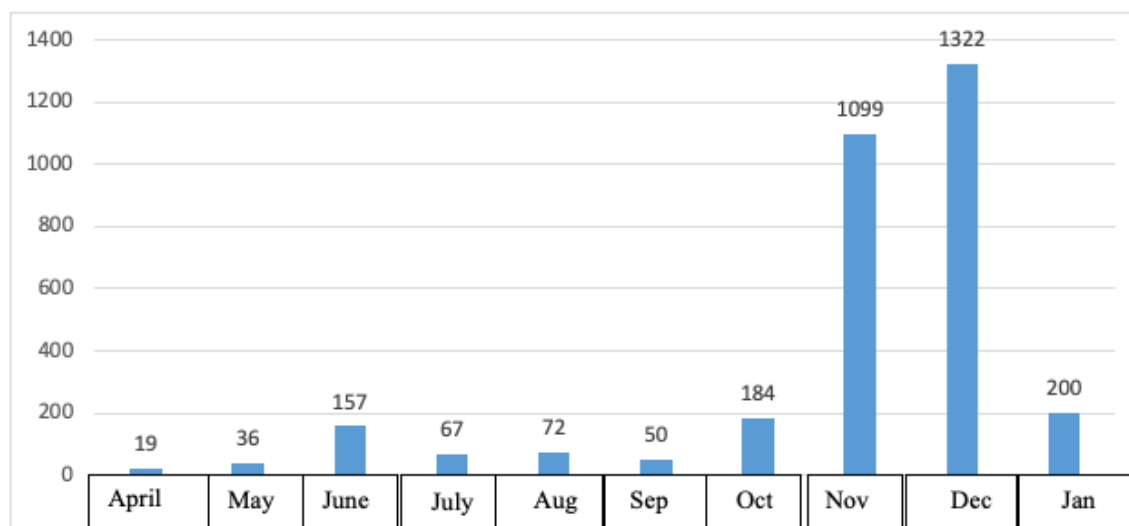
<sup>33</sup> Relevant statistics are shared weekly (sometimes once a month) at this link: <https://koronavirusinfo.az/az/page/statistika/azerbaycanda-cari-veziyyet>. Just because not all materials are on the site (the new file is placed in the old file), the relevant graphic was compiled based on materials collected from April 2020 to January 2021.

<sup>34</sup> Relevant information was presented by the TABIB at the press conference held on April 15. Read more: <https://youtu.be/bf1-oNS24LU> (12.16-13.20 minutes).

<sup>35</sup> APA. TABIB: 8-9 million people in Azerbaijan have not yet been infected with the coronavirus, so vaccination is important. 16 January 2021: [https://apa.az/az/sosial\\_xeberler/TBIB-Azrbaycanda-8-9-milyon-insan-hl-koronavirusa-yoluxmayib-ona-gor-d-yaksinasiya-vacibdir-624675](https://apa.az/az/sosial_xeberler/TBIB-Azrbaycanda-8-9-milyon-insan-hl-koronavirusa-yoluxmayib-ona-gor-d-yaksinasiya-vacibdir-624675)

<sup>36</sup> Information of the Operational Headquarter under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan. January 26, 2021: <https://nk.gov.az/az/article/1363/>

**Graph 1. Cases of coronavirus infection in the Upper Karabakh zone (April 2020-January 2021).**



The State Statistics Committee does not provide monthly figures but publishes quarterly demographic statistics since 2017. Looking at the statistics, the average number of deaths in the first three quarters of 2017-2019 in Fizuli district was 577. Nevertheless, in 2020, the corresponding figure was 711 people. The highest increase is in the second quarter. The figures for the fourth quarter have not yet been published, and we could not accurately measure the impact of the coronavirus because of the war factor. Not all deaths may indeed be directly related to coronavirus. Coronavirus accounts for 80% of all deaths worldwide.<sup>37</sup> The remaining 20% are related to medical infrastructure problems (untimely delivery, lack of doctors, etc.). Thus, we can estimate that more than 100 people died due to the coronavirus in Fizuli district. Simultaneously, the total number of infected people in the district officially exceeded 3.2 thousand (indirectly 12 thousand).<sup>38</sup>

**Table 6. Mortality rate for Fizuli district**

Year	I quarter	II quarter	III quarter	Total
Average quarterly mortality rate for 2017-2019	214	186	177	577
Relevant indicator for 2020	232	256	223	711
The difference	18	70	46	134

### ***Other diseases***

When it comes to other diseases, the situation is not so heartwarming. In many areas, the local population has to apply directly to Baku. This means a considerable distance, and given the quarantine regime across the country, this is due to many restrictions.

<sup>37</sup> Aleksey Raksha. URL: <https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/491270>

<sup>38</sup> The latest information is for 24.01.2021. Source: <https://koronavirusinfo.az/az/page/statistika/azerbaycanda-cari-veziyyet>

**Table 7. Indicators of other diseases in Fizuli district**

Diseases	Number for Fizuli district	On the population living in the area	By country
Some infectious and parasitic diseases per 10,000 population	62,3	119,1	121,2
Neoplasms per 10,000 population neoplasms	2,6	5,0	13,2
Blood, hematopoietic, diseases of the organs, and various disorders associated with the involvement of the immune mechanism in the process per 10,000 population	40,1	76,6	70,6
Diseases of the endocrine system, metabolic and nutritional disorders per 10,000 population	15,2	29,1	49,6
Diseases of the nervous system and sensory organs per 10,000 population	61,8	118,1	200,3
Diseases of the circulatory system per 10,000 population	209,3	400,1	150,8
Respiratory diseases per 10,000 population	422	806,6	779
Diseases of the digestive system per 10,000 people	95,5	182,5	170,9
Diseases of the skin and subcutaneous tissue per 10,000 population	13,1	25,0	44,4
Diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue per 10,000 population	3,7	7,1	29,6

Table 7 attempts to analyze the real situation. First of all, the health statistics cover the district's population, so if we take their number as 70,000, the indicators for the district will change completely. For example, according to official statistics, the rate of blood, hematopoietic, organ diseases, and disorders involving the immune system per 10,000 people is 40.1. Nevertheless, if we consider the calculations specifically for Fizuli district, it is already 76.6. That is slightly higher than the national average. For four types of diseases, the district shows higher results than the national average:

- Certain disorders associated with blood, hematopoietic, organ diseases and the involvement of the immune mechanism in the process
- Diseases of the circulatory system
- Diseases of the respiratory system
- Diseases of the digestive system.

On the other hand, for example, the district's indicators of neoplasms are not very high. In 2019, 34 people were identified in the district. However, patients with the relevant group of diseases can apply only to Baku. This is where the oncology hospital is located. The same issue is associated with severe fire and lung disease. In terms of respiratory diseases, Fizuli district is twice the national average. Usually, applying to Baku was just a matter of transport, but during the strict quarantine period, it faced several other problems:

- *non-functioning of public transport (public transport between the districts has not been working since April). Accordingly, there was a question of reaching Baku. They were forced to use more expensive transport;*
- *Obtaining additional permits to enter Baku - bureaucratic obstacles;*
- *The transition of hospitals to a special regime during this period (queuing system, preoperative testing, etc.)*

This problem was raised several times during the quarantine period. No solution was put forward. We do not have official information about any of the complications of this inaction.

## **Education**

Unlike health facilities, educational institutions must be based on population numbers. Accordingly, educational institutions also cover the areas inhabited by IDPs. According to the Executive Power of Fuzuli District, 79 secondary schools, 1 Boarding school-type gymnasium, 2 out-of-school educational institutions function under the Fuzuli District Education Department. 15 of these schools operate in Baku city, 5 in Sumgayit city, 1 in Shirvan city, 2 in Sabirabad district, 5 in Imishli district, 7 in Beylagan district, and 44 in other districts

As for education statistics, the number of students studying in secondary schools in the 2019-2020 academic year was 13,929, and the number of pedagogical staff was 2,159. 1193 students were admitted to the first grade and 911 to the school preparation group. According to the 2019-2020 academic year results, 1,160 students graduated from the 9th grade and 1,105 from the 11th grade. Eleven students of the 9th grade and 11 students of the 11th grade were awarded certificates of distinction. In the 2019-2020 academic year, 238 people applied for special secondary schools in the 9th grade and 680 people in the 11th grade for universities.<sup>39</sup>

According to official statistics, by the beginning of 2020, there were 1,879 children in preschool education. According to the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, there are 5,175 children aged 1-5 in the district. In other words, the share of children attending preschool education is 36.3%. At the same time, we should note that preschools are located in Fizuli district. In other words, where there is a preschool, children go through this level of education. According to official data, 99% of places in the relevant enterprises are filled.<sup>40</sup>

There are 25,122 IDPs in the district in the age group (6-17) eligible to study in schools. However, as we have seen, 14.3 thousand people study in the schools belonging to the district education department. There is no information about the rest. It can be assumed that they studied in Baku, Sumgayit, Shirvan, Sabirabad, Imishli, and Beylagan district schools.

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<sup>39</sup> Education. Official website of Fuzuli District Executive Power. URL: <http://www.fuzuli-ih.gov.az/page/15.html>

<sup>40</sup> The State Statistics Committee: [https://www.stat.gov.az/menu/6/statistical\\_yearbooks/source/districts\\_2020.zip](https://www.stat.gov.az/menu/6/statistical_yearbooks/source/districts_2020.zip)

At the same time, according to the 2009 census, the number of uneducated people per 1,000 people aged 15 is over 17. The average rate for Azerbaijan is 12.9. In other words, the corresponding indicator for the district is high.<sup>41</sup> At the same time, the corresponding figure is 25 for women and 9 for men. There is no information on the results of the 2019 census.

If we look at the indicators of the same census related to higher education, we can see that for every 1,000 people in the district, there are 79 with higher education. The corresponding figure is 96 for men and 63 for women. By the way, this figure is 134 in the country. According to other education indicators, it does not differ from the national average.

**Table 8. Some educational indicators for Fizuli district**

Indicator	Indicators for Fizuli district	By country
Number of preschool educational institutions	33	1684
The number of children they have	1879	122398
Number of children per 100 places in preschool education institutions	99	89
The specific number of children in pre-school educational institutions and involved in school preparation in general education schools in the total number of children aged 1-5, as a percentage	36,30%	31%
Number of full-time general education institutions	80	4400
The number of students in them	14298	1600790
The share of students in the second and third shifts	4,8	17
According to the 2009 census, the number of uneducated in the population aged 15 and over	1509	85804
According to the 2009 census, the uneducated per 1,000 population aged 15 and over	17	12,56

### ***Social policy***

We have considered two directions of social policy in the district. According to official data, the number of IDPs over the age of 60 is 15,623 (which is in line with the district's general figures). Of these people, 9,987 receive various pensions (5,553 for old age, 3,772 for disability, and 662 for the loss of the family's head). At the same time, 459 people receive old-age benefits due to insufficient length of service. As a result, 5,177 people over the age of 60 were not reported to have received any benefits. This is mainly due to the retirement age.

The retirement age in Azerbaijan is gradually increasing, and in 2020 the retirement age for women was 61.5 years, while for men, it was 64.5 years. With this in mind, now at least 70% of women between the ages of 60 and 65 should receive a pension or old-age social benefits. This is a total of 10,964 people (including men and women over 65). If we consider this figure and the

<sup>41</sup> The State Statistics Committee: [https://www.stat.gov.az/menu/6/statistical\\_yearbooks/source/districts\\_2020.zip](https://www.stat.gov.az/menu/6/statistical_yearbooks/source/districts_2020.zip)

number of recipients of pensions and benefits in the region, 518 people are left out. Also, we should consider that it is possible to retire five years earlier due to disability. As a result, at least 2,000 people are of retirement age but do not receive any additional payments.

At the same time, according to the results of 2019, the average pension in the region was 213.42 AZN. The corresponding figure for the country was 263.59 AZN. The amount of social benefits for age was the same in the country - 130 AZN.<sup>42</sup> By the way, this figure does not coincide with the consumer basket of people of retirement age. At the beginning of 2020, the living wage for pensioners amounted to 157 AZN.

The second direction is related to unemployment. According to official data, the number of IDPs aged 18-60 is 76,274. According to the State Statistics Committee, 78,822 people belong to this age group (in other words, 2,548 people do not have IDP status). Of course, in addition to the labor force, some retirees have graduated from secondary special education institutions and are working (945 retirees are still working in the district) belong to this group. According to the State Statistics Committee, the number of the economically active population is 64.4 thousand people. Thus, 14,000 people are left out of the labor market (i.e., they are neither considered employed nor unemployed).

According to official data, as of July 1, 2020, there are 9,620 hired employees in the district.<sup>43</sup> Compared to the corresponding figure in 2019, it is 1019 less. The majority of hired employees work in the public sector - 8943 (in 2019, it was 9995). Only 677 people work in the private sector (644 in the corresponding period of 2019).<sup>44</sup> At the same time, the average salary in the region is 438.7 AZN. In the public sector, it is 442.4 AZN, and in the private sector, 433.1 AZN.

Also, if we collect other information, we will get the following figures:

- *Hired employment – 9620*
- *Individual entrepreneurship – 6107*
- *Recipients of targeted state social assistance (income, but not less than the monthly need of 160 AZN per person) - 1255 families or 2510 people*
- *Number of registered unemployed - 390 people*
- *According to the State Statistical Committee, the unemployed are 2910 people*
- *The rest - 42 863 people*

In other words, there is no information on what 42,800 people in the district are doing. Most of them work in agriculture and temporary jobs. However, there is no exact information about it. In 2020, 9.1% of the economically active population received a lump sum payment of 190 AZN from the state for quarantine measures. If the proportions are the same in Fizuli, it is about 5.9 thousand people. That means many people worked informally. However, the rest of the information is not available. It can be assumed that they were either unemployed or working in agriculture.

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<sup>42</sup> The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection: <http://sosial.gov.az/m%C3%BCavin%C9%99tl%C9%99r>

<sup>43</sup> Number of employees and average monthly salary. January-June 2020. The State Statistics Committee. Baku, 2020. URL: [https://www.stat.gov.az/source/labour/az/bul/muzdlu\\_ish\\_Iirub\\_2020.zip](https://www.stat.gov.az/source/labour/az/bul/muzdlu_ish_Iirub_2020.zip)

<sup>44</sup> Number of employees and average monthly salary. 2019. The State Statistics Committee. Baku, 2020. URL: [https://www.stat.gov.az/source/labour/az/bul/muzdlu\\_ish\\_2019.zip](https://www.stat.gov.az/source/labour/az/bul/muzdlu_ish_2019.zip)



### Conditions of IDPs living in Beylagan and Barda districts:

As of 2012, 33,410 IDPs settled in Barda district<sup>45</sup> and 27,369 IDPs in Beylagan district.<sup>46</sup> Unlike Fizuli district, the settlements and residential areas inhabited by them are not included in the administrative division. We can determine that there are at least seven settlements in the Beylagan district:

1. 500 family type settlement
2. 320 family type settlement
3. 146 family type settlements
4. New Khojavend settlement
5. Yeni Tug settlement
6. Khojavend settlement
7. Garadaghli residential area

Also, IDPs are accommodated in a number of other places. IDPs from several regions have been resettled in Beylagan district. The main settlements are Khojavend (1219 families or 4887 people), IDPs from Fizuli, and several other districts.

Speaking about the settlements in Barda district, we can mention 866 family neighborhoods<sup>47</sup> and 588 family settlements<sup>48</sup>. A large number of IDPs from Lachin and Kalbajar (at least 7,000 people) are located in Barda district.

It is not easy to provide any accurate information on the social infrastructure of IDPs. We have provided information about some of the above (about IDPs in Fizuli district). It should be noted that there are schools, medical centers, and a number of other social infrastructure facilities in the newly established settlements in Beylagan and Barda districts. For example, a new 320-family settlement built in the Beylagan region is 380 hectares. A 360-seat school building, a 50-seat kindergarten, a music school, an administrative building, a doctor's office, and a post office have been built in the settlement.

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<sup>45</sup> Website of Barda District Executive Power. Information about the population: <http://berde-ih.gov.az/page/12.html>

<sup>46</sup> <https://stm.az/uploads/25d09-hesabat-miqrasiya-6.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons. Information on commissioning of a new residential complex for 866 IDP families in Barda district: <http://idp.gov.az/az/news/252>

<sup>48</sup> State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons. Information on the conditions created in the residential complex built for 588 IDP families in Barda: <http://idp.gov.az/az/news/371>

## Chapter III: Conclusions and Recommendations

- 1. *Job creation should be stimulated to eliminate unemployment*** : As we can see, one of the biggest problems in the region is unemployment. Most people are outside the labor market. More than 90% of government employees work in government agencies. In other words, even in the example of Fizuli district, we can see that many people are generally outside the labor market. Quarantine measures have seriously affected these people. The same situation is observed in other districts. In other words, IDPs are even forced to leave their settlements in search of work. At best, it is possible to work in government agencies in appropriate settlements. Taking this into account, the state can stimulate job creation, at least in the Fizuli district. In many cases, the state itself creates jobs directly. By stopping this practice (by merely increasing the state budget's obligations does not change the real situation), it is possible to take specific stimulus steps. It is also necessary to continue a number of social measures applied during the quarantine period in the districts.
- 2. *The social benefits and pension system needs to be re-evaluated and old-age benefits increased***: At the same time, the study notes that a reasonably older adult (about 2,000) is deprived of any state payments. Despite reaching old age, they do not receive a pension or old-age benefits. This is a serious social problem. In general, the pension and benefits system should be evaluated. On the other hand, the old-age social benefit in Azerbaijan is 130 AZN. Lastly, in 2019, this benefit was increased from 73 to 130 AZN. However, it should be taken into account that the living wage for pensioners in 2021 is 162 AZN.<sup>49</sup> By pensioners, we mean people of retirement age (not just retirees). Thus, those who receive old-age benefits receive less than the subsistence level.

The situation with Targeted State Social Assistance (TSSA) is also ambiguous. Officially, 8% of IDPs are poor. However, in reality, this figure may be slightly higher. The problem is that while IDPs make up 7-8% of the population, they make up 10-11% of those who receive TSSA. In other words, the problem of poverty among IDPs has become more acute. It should be borne in mind that the recipients of TSSA are people with incomes below the family's per capita need. The need criterion for 2021 is 170 AZN.<sup>50</sup> The living wage in the country is 196 AZN, and for non-disabled people - 207 AZN. In other words, there is a group that does not fall into the TSSA but lives below the subsistence level in the country.
- 3. *Social policy needs to be reconsidered***: All payments must be equal to certain minimums. Both age benefits should be equal to the subsistence level in this area, and the need criterion should be equal to the subsistence minimum. This applies not only to IDPs, but also to the country (but, as we have seen, the situation among IDPs is not good).

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<sup>49</sup>Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the subsistence minimum in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2021: <https://president.az/articles/49786>

<sup>50</sup> Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the limits of the need criterion for 2021 in the Republic of Azerbaijan: <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/46598>

- 4. *There is a need to improve access to technology in education, especially the Internet:*** In the field of education, quarantine revealed another problem - access to technology. Unfortunately, there are no new figures in this area. However, as we have seen, in 2015, there were severe problems with access to the Internet. It is true that IDPs do not differ from other groups in terms of the number of mobile phones. However, during the quarantine period, classes were conducted not on mobile phones but other devices with Internet access (computers, laptops, tablets, etc.). Even if the situation improves compared to 2015, at least half of households do not have adequate facilities, which reduced educational opportunities during the quarantine period. Given that most of the year was under a quarantine period, quite a few children were out of school.
- 5. *Many steps need to be taken in the field of transparency and accounting:*** As the study shows, the statistics for many districts of the region do not fully cover the real situation. In many cases, these are the statistics of health facilities that once operated in the relevant districts and are now relocated to other areas.

Institutions in both the education and health sectors do not provide relevant information openly. At best, it is possible to periodically see the situation in the district in an interview or random news (for example, a full population survey is conducted in Fizuli every year. However, the relevant Executive Power website has provided information for only one year but has not been updated it since then).

The annual report submitted by the State Statistics Committee on the basis of relevant data is published too late (information on 2019 is published at best in June-September 2020). As a result, we do not have specific information on any district.

The newly established TABIB's policy not transparent. It is not possible to determine the exact status of the coronavirus pandemic in any region. Only the total number of infected people in each region is presented. There is no information about those who were healed or died. At the same time, the presented statistics cover economic regions, not even Medical Territorial Units. Given that the Kalbajar-Lachin economic region is under full occupation until November 2020, does this mean there was no coronavirus in the region? It is generally not possible to obtain information on IDPs from the relevant districts that are densely populated.

In this regard, TABIB should at least share information on coronavirus cases among IDPs (generally about each district) and provide information on the condition of relevant infrastructure.

Simultaneously, since the State Statistics Committee considers IDPs as the particularly vulnerable group, it is recommended to survey them about their living standards regularly. The last survey of relevant households was conducted in 2015. No additional information was provided after that. Considering the restoration of liberated lands and other measures, the study of IDP households' situation is becoming increasingly important. Because rehabilitation measures will be implemented according to the educational, health, and other infrastructure needs of the relevant families, periodic household surveys should be conducted to determine this.