

SPCP Southern Caucasus Azerbaijan Update February 2008

Background

In July 2007 UNHCR introduced the Strengthening Protection Capacity Project in the Southern Caucasus (SPCP-SC) to help strengthen protection responses to forced displacement in the region.

In Azerbaijan, it focuses on strengthening state and community capacities to protect refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The SPCP-SC initiative in Azerbaijan is supported by the European Commission. Its goals complement the strategic objectives of cooperation between Azerbaijan and the European Union set out in the 2007 European Neighbourhood Policy, including strengthening migration and asylum systems in a manner that meets international standards.

Methodology

The Strengthening Protection Capacity Project in Azerbaijan focuses on the identification of protection gaps facing refugees and IDPs in order to plan comprehensively to remedy them. It builds on the considerable commitment and work already undertaken by the Government of Azerbaijan to alleviate the plight of displaced persons particularly as part of State Programmes for the improvement of living conditions.

In line with the long standing cooperation between UNHCR and the Government of Azerbaijan, national stakeholder consultations will be held to address identified protection issues facing IDPs and refugees in Azerbaijan and to agree on means to address them. Specific project interventions will then be developed and

incorporated as possible into existing State Programmes and Action Plans.

Activities

Gaps analysis and consultation

An analysis of gaps in IDP protection is being conducted by UNHCR Azerbaijan to identify existing challenges drawing upon participatory interviews with internally displaced men, women, boys and girls of different ages and backgrounds as well as relevant documentary materials.

The IDP Protection Gaps Analysis will form the basis for the national stakeholder consultations.

A parallel analysis is underway of gaps in refugee protection and will also form the basis of collaborative work with the Governmental, national partners and communities to address problems faced by asylum seekers and refugees in accessing rights and solutions.

Expanding self reliance in displaced communities



Despite Azerbaijan's growing economy, national unemployment remains high, impacting on the ability of IDPs and refugees to find employment and to generate sufficient income to live in dignity. Lack of adequate income contributes to poor health, low school retention rates and other protection risks associated with insufficient food and non food items.

Displaced women and youth are the most affected.



SPCP-SC will support a survey of IDP and refugee livelihoods in Azerbaijan in April 2008 to identify challenges and opportunities.

The results of the livelihood survey will help UNHCR and the Government of Azerbaijan to develop strategies to expand IDP and refugee livelihoods and identify avenues as well as suitable partners for their implementation through targeted skills training, micro-credit and other job creation schemes benefiting IDP and refugee communities.

Expanding reception centre capacity for asylum seekers

SPCP-SC will enhance Government capacity to receive refugees, by supporting the establishment of a reception centre for asylum seekers as well delivering training to government officials who will work in the reception centre. Discussions with the Government of Azerbaijan on the identification of a suitable site for the reception centre will be held with the newly formed State Migration Service.

More information on the Strengthening Protection Capacity Project, including the Southern Caucasus initiative can be found at www.unhcr.org/spcp