

# Strengthening Protection Capacity Project – Azerbaijan

## Implementation Update

December 2009

UNHCR's SPCP methodology, now mainstreamed in its annual planning cycle, proceeds from an initial identification of gaps in protection to the design of specific interventions to remedy those gaps. A central feature is collaboration, as the gaps and the measures to address them are collectively agreed by concerned stakeholders including key government authorities, the EU, donor Governments, other UN agencies, international and national partners, civil society and displaced persons.

In Azerbaijan the project focuses on strengthening state and community capacities to protect refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs). To date, the SPCP-SC initiative in Azerbaijan has been funded 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. In implementing the project, UNHCR collaborates with the State Committee on Refugees and IDP Issues and State Migration Service.

### **IDP Gap analysis and consultations**

UNHCR produced a report that analyses the protection situation of IDPs in Azerbaijan. The IDP Gap Analysis focuses on existing challenges drawing upon participatory interviews with internally displaced men, women, boys and girls of different ages and backgrounds. All relevant authorities in Azerbaijan have been consulted throughout the process of developing of the document, and the analysis was presented for the first time during the Bilateral meeting with UNHCR and Government entities on 14 December 2009.



PHOTO: UNHCR

Azerbaijan's IDP Action Plan of May 2008, which is designed to implement the 2007 State Programme on the Improvement of Living Conditions of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, addresses many of the issues identified in the document, specifically concerning housing and income generating opportunities for IDPs. The dialogue on its implementation in line with UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement is ongoing.

## Strengthening asylum capacity



UNHCR, in cooperation with the State Migration Service and International Organization for Migration (IOM), provided training to the government officials. The training topics included Azerbaijani legal framework governing migration; refugee protection and access to asylum procedures, durable solutions for refugees, the role of Azerbaijan as a transit country in migration flow from East to West, citizenship and statelessness issues; reception standards and re-admission agreements.



A study tour was organised in October 2009 for SMS staff members to the Czech Republic to familiarise Azerbaijani officials with the asylum system there. Azerbaijan and Czech delegations discussed national asylum law issues and reception standards. Azerbaijan delegation also toured the reception facilities in the Czech Republic at a time when Azerbaijan builds its reception capacity.

## Procurement for the Reception Centre

Azerbaijan's State Migration Service is constructing new reception centres for migrants and asylum seekers in Baku and Yevlakh. The SPCP supports this initiative by donating equipment and furniture for the use of asylum seekers. UNHCR also provided training to the reception centre staff on reception management to align national implementation with international standards.

## Bi-lateral Meeting with UNHCR and Government entities

A roundtable was organised on the protection of IDPs in Azerbaijan and Georgia in Tbilisi on 14 December. The Government of Azerbaijan was represented by the Cabinet of Ministers and the State Committee on Refugees and IDP Issues, and the Government of Georgia was represented by the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation. UNHCR partners Danish Refugee Council, Norwegian Refugee Council, Save the Children and World Vision International, who work in both countries, also participated in the roundtable. Following the discussions of the lessons learnt from their experiences, representatives of Azerbaijan and Georgia also commented that there was need for both countries to cooperate and share their experiences and best practices on behalf of their displaced populations. The delegations requested UNHCR to continue its efforts in supporting both countries' capacities to respond to the challenges of displacement, including through joint events such as study tours.