

Azerbaijan

Ethnicity in Azerbaijan

Power relations

The declaration of independence in Azerbaijan was accompanied with severe ethnic conflict in the region of Nagorno-Karabach mostly populated with ethnic Armenians. As a result of this conflict, Azerbaijan lost its control over the region.

The conflict also resulted in the fact that the size of Armenians, which were one of the biggest ethnic minorities in Azerbaijan before the conflict (5.6% in 1989) was reduced to 1.8% ⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

¹⁰⁹ [State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Az

The Armenians are mostly concentrated in secessionist Nagorno-Karabakh and control the area with support of Armenia. They are thus categorized as having separatist autonomy. All Azeris have been expelled from Nagorno-Karabakh ⁽¹¹⁰⁾.

¹¹⁰ [Halbach, 1999]

The Azeris remain dominant, with president Aliyev dominating in practice the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government ⁽¹¹¹⁾.

¹¹¹ [US State Department]

The Lezgins in northern Azerbaijan remain powerless. It is a Sunni Muslim group whose lands are divided by the international border between the Russian republic Dagestan and Azerbaijan. Political organizations like the national movement of Sadwal that wants to unify the Lezgin people and create an independent Lezgistan do not receive much support from the Lezgin people, because the Lezgins are well integrated into the Azeri society ⁽¹¹²⁾. While Sadwal dropped the call for independent Lezginistan in 1996, the potential for Azerbaijan to be destabilized by Lezgins still exist ⁽¹¹³⁾

¹¹² [Halbach, 1999]

¹¹³ [Coene, 2010]

There are more minorities in Azerbaijan, like Talysh and Avars, but they are not politically relevant.

The ethnic power relations have not changed substantially in the period of 2009-2013. There is no evidence of substantial inclusion of any politically relevant ethnic groups in the national political arena, nor that of granting any of those groups with regional autonomy. Sporadic incidents of discrimination have been reported. These mostly include restrictions on the ability to teach in minority languages and harassment by local authorities ⁽¹¹⁴⁾

¹¹⁴ [US State Department]

The latest census took place in 2009. Numbers in the census 2009 differ only slightly from those of 1999.

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Political status of ethnic groups in Azerbaijan

From 1991 until 2013

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Azeri	0.9	DOMINANT
Lezgins	0.032	POWERLESS
Armenians	0.023	SELF-EXCLUSION



Figure 34: Political status of ethnic groups in Azerbaijan during 1991-2013.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Azerbaijan

From 1991 until 2013

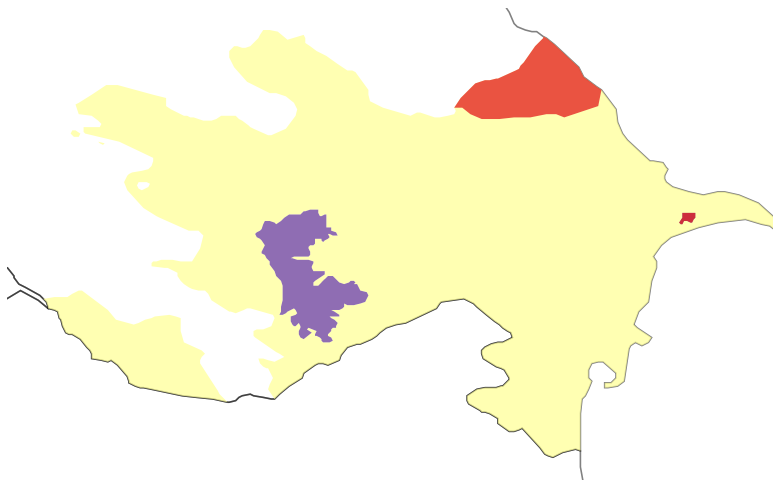


Figure 35: Map of ethnic groups in Azerbaijan during 1991-2013.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
■ Azeri	81 867	Regional & urban
■ Armenians	4057	Regionally based
■ Lezgins	3820	Regional & urban

Table 15: List of ethnic groups in Azerbaijan during 1991-2013.

Conflicts in Azerbaijan

Starting on 1991-12-29

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Azerbaijan	Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh	Armenians	1991-12-29	Explicit	Yes	Yes

Starting on 1993-06-04

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Azerbaijan	Military faction (forces of Suret Husseinov)	Azeri	1993-06-04	No	No	No
Government of Azerbaijan	OPON Forces	Azeri	1995-03-13	No	No	No