

RESILIENT RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION OF KARABAKH AND ITS SEVEN SURROUNDING REGIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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Under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Supreme Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan has carried out successful counter-offensive operation and liberated Karabakh and surrounding regions after 30 years of Armenian occupation. These territories have become the subject of relentless threats, contrary to the norms and principles of international law and universal values. The author states that the historical and cultural heritage of Azerbaijan in the occupied territories has been completely destroyed. The region's forest cover has been purposefully destroyed, fertile soils and water resources have been subjected to environmental and radioactive contamination. The region's natural landscape has been severely deformed, and natural resources have been illegally exploited and misappropriated. Thus, the main goal of the national strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan will be taking comprehensive measures as soon as possible to revive life in the liberated territories, build the most modern socio-cultural infrastructure and restore communication and transport lines in all the destroyed villages and cities. Therefore, this article analyzes the sustainable reconstruction and recovery approaches of cultural heritage of Azerbaijan. In this regard, the analysis includes elements and goals from 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction to be integrated into recovery and reconstruction policies in Karabakh and surrounding seven regions (UNDRR, 2015).

Keywords: *Karabakh, Risk Reduction, Resilience, Recovery*

Introduction

Karabakh region is one of the most important regions not only of the Republic Azerbaijan, but also of the South Caucasus region with its ancient history, unique cultural heritage, unique flora and fauna, rich underground and surface resources. However, 30 years of Armenian occupation of Karabakh region and territories surrounding it – Kalbajar, Lachin, Qubadli, Zangilan,

Jabrayil, Fuzuli and Agdam caused enormous damage not only to Azerbaijan but also to the entire Caucasus region (see the Figure.1). However, under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Supreme Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan carried out successful counter-offensive operation and liberated Karabakh and surrounding regions (Statement, 10 November, 2020). These territories, which had been under the Armenian occupation for almost thirty years, became subject to relentless threats, contrary to the norms and principles of international law and universal values – the historical and cultural heritage of Azerbaijan in the occupied territories has been completely destroyed. The region's forest cover has been purposefully destroyed, fertile soils and water resources have been subjected to environmental and radioactive contamination. The region's natural landscape has been severely deformed, and natural resources have been illegally exploited and misappropriated. Thus, the main goal of the national strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan will be taking comprehensive measures as soon as possible to revive life in the liberated territories, build the most modern socio-cultural infrastructure and restore communication and transport lines in all the destroyed villages and cities (Azertag, 2021a).



Figure 1. Department of Field Support - Cartographic Section No. 3761 Rev.9 - United Nations

Thus, more than 600 industrial and agricultural enterprises in Karabakh have been completely destroyed, as well as the region's rich natural resources have been exploited inefficiently. The government of Azerbaijan started preparing a special concept for the restoration of Karabakh and surrounding seven districts. The document will reflect the gradual restoration of the liberated territories through specialization and a unified approach (Azertag, 2021b). Creation of agro-industrial complexes allowing the development of agriculture and industry, construction of tourism facilities, involvement of natural resources in economic turnover will begin. Initial plan for the restoration and reconstruction of cities and villages to ensure a large return in the liberated territories, the development of modern infrastructure in the territories to allocate 2.2 billion Azerbaijani Manat (1.3 billion US dollars – currency rate of January, 2021) from the 2021 state budget (Azertag, 2021b). The initial plan includes restoration and reconstruction of electricity power stations, natural gas and water pipelines, communication lines, roads and railways, educational, healthcare and cultural centers, housing and other necessary infrastructure including cultural and historical monuments.

Building Urban Resilience, Post-conflict Reconstruction

According to many reports, resilient recovery and reconstruction of Karabakh and the seven surrounding districts of the Republic of Azerbaijan will be a process that will take time and massive financial resources. “Everything is devastated – the infrastructure is destroyed residential and administrative buildings are demolished” stated President Ilham Aliyev referring to liberated territories from the Armenian occupation (Azertag, 2021a). These territories which once were home to more than 700,000 Azerbaijanis before Armenian occupation (1988-1994), more than 700 historic and cultural monuments damaged or destroyed. To look at the official statistics, 927 libraries 808 cultural centers, music and art schools, museums with over 100,000 artefacts were destroyed (Azertag, 2021a). However, the Republic of Azerbaijan is very determined that the everything will be restored and the region will become one of the most prosperous parts of Azerbaijan. Successful implementation of the methods and objectives of the “State Program on The Social and Economic Development of Regions – 2019-2023” could be also integrated to Karabakh and seven surrounding districts in the long-term development goals (Ministry of Economy, 2019). Although each region of Azerbaijan enjoys unique characteristics, it is very important to share common ethics and cultural heritage attitudes on the concept action plan in the liberated lands.

Table 1. Current Management and Development Works

№	Current activities in Karabakh and seven surrounding districts:
1	State Agency of Azerbaijan Automobile Roads has started the reconstruction of the highway leading to Sugovushan and Talysh villages of Tartar region. The total length of the road is 29 kilometers. The width of the carriageway will be 6 meters, and the width of the shoulders will be 10 meters, with a width of 2 meters in each direction.
2	Beylagan Subartesian Wells Operation Department of Azerbaijan Melioration and Water Management OJSC repaired artesian well in Dashkesan village of Jabrayil region. During the restoration work, cable, pump, pipe, electric and protective shield were installed in the artesian well. The security fence has been painted. The artesian well provides water to buildings located on an area of about 3-4 hectares.
3	“Azerishig” OJSC is taking urgent measures within the “Azerishig in Karabakh” project to provide electricity to strategic facilities of special importance in the liberated territories. Establishment of new power centers in the liberated areas, creation of 110, 35 and 0.4 kilovolt networks using the latest technologies, electronic relay protection and automation systems, remote control system, construction of 35 and 0.4 kilovolt power lines using MIN wires. Projects have been prepared for the construction of these facilities, and it is planned to implement these projects in stages.
4	Azercell Telecom LLC has announced that it has begun construction of the first mobile infrastructure in the liberated areas and is installing fourth-generation LTE radio base stations. Nar Telecom announced that it has completed the interior design work. Bakcell Telecom uses frontline mobile stations and plans to build one in the near future.
5	Construction of the highway from Ahmadbeyli village of Fizuli region to Shusha has begun - the 101.5-kilometer road has been designed and construction works are started.
6	President Ilham Aliyev has signed a Decree on the establishment of the “Karabakh Revival Fund” public legal entity. This fund will provide financial support and attract investment to the works on restoration and reconstruction of the liberated territories.

The development of agriculture in these areas will, first of all, contribute to the country's food security, employment, attract new investment and use water resources (Huseynov, 2019). This process will lead to an increase in exports of non-oil products, increase crop turnover, and improve the supply of irrigation

water to arable land. It is also important to use international experience in the development of liberated territories. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UN FAO) has experience in implementing large-scale agricultural projects in many countries that went through the post-war period (SDGs, 2015). It is possible to assess the possibility of using in our country the experience gained from projects such as ensuring sustainability and recovery in agriculture, rehabilitation of degraded lands and more efficient use of water resources, ensuring sustainable productivity of small farms. Establishment of special development agencies in the liberated territories, wide application of intensive agriculture experience in different regions, preparation of risk maps for areas close to the post conflict zone with high landmine contamination, introduction of agricultural insurance, establishment of special development funds for action plans to attract investment in the territories, adaptation of projects to be implemented by international donors to the state strategies, implementation of inclusive projects for vulnerable groups and families, encouragement of investment by businessmen and their activities with special benefits, the implementation of irrigation projects, the support of organic agriculture can also be taken into account during the restoration of the liberated territories (Ministry of Economy, 2019). The development of lands with significant agricultural potential will play a major role in further strengthening Azerbaijan's economic position in the region and ensuring economic security.

Despite these initial current activities in short term, further projects and works will require disaster risk reduction strategies and resilient city planning in the long term (Alakbarov, U.K., Lawrence, J.E.S. 2017). This is because like in any other part of Azerbaijan, natural or man-made disasters could have devastating effects in the Karabakh region as well. Disasters and risks due to complex mechanisms, especially in mountainous Karabakh region, are enormously high and cannot be fully predicted. This situation has given importance to resilience in planning areas before disaster mitigation measures. Therefore, when considering resilience for cities, it is important for Azerbaijan to consider how the cities can be used to assess resilience and increase resilience.

Conclusion

Azerbaijan with its geographical location, surrounded with high mountains ranges. The Greater Caucasus stretches north and northwest towards the Caspian Sea, while the Lesser Caucasus covers the southwestern border of the country, including Karabakh and surrounding seven regions. Sudden floods, mudflows, landslides, avalanches and earthquakes are typical threats in the mountains, while river floods in the lowlands up to the shores of the Caspian Sea pose a threat. Climate change, which is accompanied by an increase in

temperature, has a negative impact by causing irregular rainfall, more landslides, mudflows and sudden floods by constantly melting the frozen ice layer at high altitudes (Kinley, 2017). Therefore, action plan in Karabakh surrounding regions must consider disaster risk reduction strategies. For this purpose, goals and elements from 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction programs needs to be integrated into initial concept plan of Azerbaijan for recovering and reconstructing Karabakh and surrounding seven districts.

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XÜLASƏ

QARABAĞ VƏ ƏTRAF 7 RAYONUN DAYANIQLI BƏRPASI VƏ YENİDƏN QURULMASI

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Azərbaycan Respublikasının Prezidenti, Ali Baş Komandan İlham Əliyevin rəhbərliyi ilə Azərbaycan uğurlu əks-hücum əməliyyatı keçirdi və 30 illik erməni işğalından sonra Qarabağ və ətraf bölgələri işğaldan azad etdi. Otuz ilə yaxın erməni işğalı altında olan bu ərazilər beynəlxalq hüququn norma və prinsiplərinə və ümumbəşəri dəyərlərə zidd olaraq amansız təhdidlərə məruz qalmış - işğal olunmuş ərazilərdə Azərbaycanın tarixi və mədəni irsi tamamilə məhv edilmişdir. Bölgənin meşə örtüyü məqsədyönlü şəkildə dağıdılmış, münbit torpaqlar, su ehtiyatları və ətraf mühit radioaktiv çirklənmələrə məruz qalmışdır. Bölgənin təbii mənzərəsi ciddi şəkildə deformasiyaya uğramış, təbii sərvətlər qanunsuz şəkildə istismar edilmiş və mənimsənilmişdir. Yuxarıda qeyd olunanları nəzərə alaraq, Azərbaycan Respublikasının milli strategiyasının əsas məqsədi azad edilmiş ərazilərdə həyatı canlandırmaq, ən müasir və dayanıqlı sosial-mədəni infrastrukturunu qurmaq və dağıdılmış kənd, qəsəbə və şəhərlərdə rabitə və nəqliyyat xətlərini bərpa etmək olacaqdır. Məhz bu baxımdan, bu məqalə, məqalə, Azərbaycanın mədəni irsi daxil olmaqla dayanıqlı yenidənqurma və bərpa işlərini təhlil etmiş, təhlildə Davamlı İnkişaf Məqsədlərinin 2030 Gündəliyi və BMT-nin Fəlakət Risklərinin Azaldılması üzrə Sendai Çərçivəsi Qarabağ və ətraf yeddi rayonun bərpa və yenidənqurma siyasətlərində inteqrasiyası və hədəfləri daxil edilmişdir.

Açar sözlər: *Qarabağ, Risklərin Azaldılması, Dayanıqlılıq, Bərpa*

РЕЗЮМЕ

УСТОЙЧИВОЕ ВОССТАНОВЛЕНИЕ И РЕКОНСТРУКЦИЯ КАРАБАХА И ПРИЛЕГАЮЩИХ 7 РЕГИОНОВ

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Под руководством Президента Азербайджанской Республики, Верховного главнокомандующего Ильхама Алиева Азербайджан провел успешное контрнаступление и освободил Карабах и прилегающие районы после 30 лет армянской оккупации. Эти территории, находящиеся под армянской оккупацией почти тридцать лет, подвергаются непрекращающейся угрозе в нарушение норм и принципов международного права и общечеловеческих ценностей – историческое и культурное наследие Азербайджана полностью уничтожено на оккупированных территориях. Лесной покров региона был целенаправленно уничтожен, плодородные почвы, водные ресурсы и окружающая среда подверглись радиоактивному загрязнению. Природный ландшафт региона сильно деформирован, а природные ресурсы незаконно эксплуатируются и присваиваются. Принимая во внимание вышеизложенное, основной целью национальной стратегии Азербайджанской Республики будет возрождение жизни на освобожденных территориях, построение самой современной и устойчивой социально-культурной инфраструктуры и восстановление коммуникационных и транспортных линий в разрушенных селах, поселках и городах. В связи с этим в данной статье анализируется устойчивое восстановление и восстановление Азербайджана, включая его культурное наследие, Повестку дня в области устойчивого развития на период до 2030 года и Сендайскую рамочную программу ООН по снижению риска бедствий.

Ключевые слова: *Карабах, снижение рисков, устойчивость, восстановление*