



Assistance to Border Services in the Southern Caucasus

Project Report 2001

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The views expressed in this report do not necessarily represent the official views of the
Government of the United States of America.*

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Special thanks go to Lieutenant-Colonel Janusz Mazurek for his successful assessment trip to the Border Guards Training Centre in Baku, Azerbaijan. Mr. Mazurek's experience, professionalism and excellent work were highly appreciated by all parties involved in the project.

Finally, we also congratulate Colonel Józef Klimowicz on his appointment as Chief Commandant of the Border Service of Poland and wish him every success in taking up this new challenge. We hope that our excellent co-operation will continue in future years.

Executive Summary

In 2001 the ODIHR, in co-operation with International Organization for Migration (IOM), launched its programme on Assistance to Border Services in the Southern Caucasus. Two training visits for delegations of border officials from Azerbaijan and Georgia were organised in co-operation with the Office of the Commandant-in-Chief of the Polish Border Service.

Among those who came to familiarise themselves with Polish policies and practices of border control and training methods were representatives of the newly established Border Inspection Training Centre in Baku and future instructors of the Training Centre for Border Guards soon to be opened in Tbilisi. Both visits followed a similar programme: meetings at the Training and Personnel Department of the Border Guard Headquarters in Warsaw, visit to Warsaw airport and to one of the checkpoints at the border with Kaliningrad, as well as training courses at the Polish Border Guard Centre in Kętrzyn.

In addition, an expert on curriculum development from the Polish Border Guard Training Centre in Koszalin went to Baku for a one-month assessment mission to assist in the elaboration of training programmes for the Border Inspection Training Centre. The expert's report, containing recommendations for training programmes and methodology, has been presented to the Azerbaijani authorities.

Phase I: Training Visits to Poland

- **Delegation of Border Guard Officials from Azerbaijan (18-22 June 2001)**
- **Delegation of Border Guard Officials from Georgia (12-16 November 2001)**

Background

The project in the Southern Caucasus is part of the OSCE/ODIHR programme of assistance to institution-building and development of training systems for Border Services in the Newly Independent States. Similar projects were implemented in Uzbekistan in 1997-98, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan in 2000. As in Kyrgyzstan, the project in the Southern Caucasus was financed by the Population, Refugees and Migration Bureau of the US State Department. The training was implemented in co-operation with IOM Offices in Baku and Tbilisi and based, as in previous ODIHR programmes, on Polish experience.

Poland was chosen to illustrate how the transition from an authoritarian political system to democracy and respect for human rights requires institutional reform of law-enforcement agencies and their training capacities. Over the last ten years, the Polish Border Service has undergone transformation from a military structure under the Ministry of Defence to "border police" under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration. In addition, human rights issues have been incorporated into training programmes for border officials.

Azerbaijan

In March 2001, the Border Inspection Training Centre was inaugurated in Baku, Azerbaijan. This centre is to train 96 border guards a year with skills and knowledge to control cross border population movements. Further to the ODIHR assessment mission to Azerbaijan in March 2001, ODIHR and the IOM Office in Baku agreed to organise a visit of a group of Azerbaijani border officials to Poland with the purpose of familiarising them with the policies and practices of border protection and control in Poland, as well as with training methods. The visit took place on 18-23 June 2001.

The delegation of Azerbaijani border officials consisted of the following persons:

1. Mr. Fuad E. Iskenderov, Head of Department, Ministry for National Security of the Republic of Azerbaijan
2. Mr. Shanin Rzayev, Ministry for National Security of the Republic of Azerbaijan
3. Mr. Aziz Nuriyev, Border Guards Headquarters
4. Mr. Shanin Ibrahimov, Airport Border Guards Unit
5. Mr. Ahmad Shirinov, Programme Officer, IOM Baku

Georgia

The State Department of the Border Guards Service of Georgia intends to open, with the assistance of the IOM, a Training Centre for border guards. The Centre's main objectives will be similar to those of the Border Inspection Centre in Azerbaijan, in particular to prepare qualified personnel to work at border checkpoints and "green borders". In the framework of a joint initiative, ODIHR and the IOM Office in Tbilisi agreed to organise the visit of a group of border guard officials (mainly future instructors of the centre) to Poland. The visit took place on 12-16 November 2001.

The delegation consisted of the following persons:

1. Master Sergeant Tengiz Chkheidze, Representative of the State Department, State Border Guard Service of Georgia. He has been appointed to the position of Director of the Border Guards Training Centre
2. Master Sergeant Tristan Sardlishvili, Border Checkpoint Guard Unit, future instructor/lecturer at the Training Centre
3. Senior Sergeant Ketevan Kobakhidze, Airport Border Guard Unit, future instructor/lecturer at the Training Centre
4. Senior Sergeant Liana Chutlashvili, Airport Border Guard Unit, future instructor/lecturer at the Training Centre
5. Ms. Nino Chkoidze, Administrative Assistant/Training Co-ordinator, IOM Tbilisi

Programme of the visits

Both visits followed a similar programme set up by the Training Department of the Polish Border Guard Headquarters, taking into account the current priorities of Azerbaijani and Georgian Border Services. The Polish Border Service also assisted with necessary logistic support during the visits. The programme included:

- visit to the Training and Personnel Department of the Border Guard Headquarters in Warsaw
- visit to Warsaw airport
- visit to the Polish Border Guards Training Centre in Kętrzyn
- visit to the checkpoint GPK Bezledy Sępopol (Polish-Russian border)
- meeting with ODIHR staff

Visits to Border Guard Headquarters and Warsaw airport

On the first day of the visit each of the delegations met with the Director of the Personnel and Training Department of the Headquarters. The delegations were briefed on the structure of the Polish Border Service, its role and tasks in light of recent changes in Polish legislation on border guards. Special focus was made on the ongoing reform of Polish Border Service, which was transformed from a military structure to a civil police-type institution under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration. The delegation received detailed information on the advantages and deficiencies of the new system, recent amendments to the law on border service

that empower border guards to combat illegal migration not only in the border areas but in the rest of the country as well.

In the afternoon of Day 1, border guard officials visited Warsaw airport Okęcie. The delegation was briefed on the legislative basis and practical functioning of the airport's checkpoints, on security measures and the rights and responsibilities of customs, border and security officers. Polish officials shared statistical information on asylum-seekers and attempts at illegal border crossings. Both delegations were impressed at how simple, fast and at the same time efficient the passport and customs controls are, and in general, how well the airport is organised. For example, a clear definition of the category of officials who have the right to check a person's identity documents and search his/her luggage is of primary importance. Poor co-operation between different services, with a wide range of ill-defined responsibilities, is unfortunately very typical of airports in many of the Newly Independent States.

Visit and Sessions at the Border Guards Training Centre in Kętrzyn

Kętrzyn Training Centre is one of the two Training Centres of the Polish Border Service, the other one being in Koszalin. While the Centre in Koszalin specialises in preparing border guards for serving at the "green border", the Centre in Kętrzyn trains personnel for checkpoints.

The delegation was received by Major Jarosław Suszek, Commandant of the Centre and was briefed on the structure of the centre, training system and methods. Then the delegation met with the heads of all the departments, visited the library and classrooms and sat in on some classes.

The Centre in Kętrzyn is similar to any kind of civil educational institution. The only visible difference between the trainees of the Centre is the uniform. The Centre has four departments:

- ❑ communication and computer sciences (communication and information technologies, safety techniques, administration)
- ❑ general human sciences (law, history, political geography, ethics, psychology, languages)
- ❑ control of border crossing (visas and readmission, border control and identification techniques)
- ❑ border protection (operational activities, emergency situations, shooting, topography, detention techniques, first medical aid)

The above demonstrates that the only typically military course is pistol shooting. At the same time, a clear emphasis is placed on preparing well-educated border guards with significant level of knowledge of social sciences and humanities. Azerbaijani and Georgian border officials were provided with training materials and programmes.

Conclusions

According to the Heads of the delegations, the following information was of primary importance and interest for Azerbaijani and Georgian border guard officials:

- the fact that the Polish Border Service is under the Ministry of Interior and Administration;
- differences between the Polish Ministry of Interior and those of its counterparts in Azerbaijan and Georgia. The Ministry of the Interior is responsible not only for police (as it is the case in Azerbaijan in Georgia) but also for all issues concerning the internal security of the state;
- the fact that the Polish Border Service is becoming entirely professional. Draftees and non-commissioned officers will not be used anymore, since it is not profitable in terms of both quality and finance. Too many financial resources and too much time is needed to prepare non-commissioned officers to serve as border guards. At the same time, after 18 months some of them are then transferred to the active reserve;
- the fact that the most people eligible for Border Guard training are individuals with completed college education;
- a significant amount of courses in social sciences, particularly in law, psychology and history in training programmes of Polish Border Service;
- stress placed by the Polish Border Services on rapid reaction (data collection, analysis, statistics) and not on physical border protection from intruders;
- the close co-operation between Polish border officials and their German and Lithuanian colleagues (joint border clearance and patrols, exchange of liaison officers, consultation points);
- restriction in the Polish legislation on border service on the use of coercive measures, while stressing the principle of proportionality in the use of force, as well as the concept of presumption of innocence and respect for a person's dignity.

Azerbaijani officials stressed the usefulness of Polish experience in elaboration of new legislation on border service, since Azerbaijan is the first state of the Southern Caucasus to actively launch the reform of its border service. Some of the delegation's members are to take an active part in the law-making process.

Both delegations and their Polish interlocutors were unanimous that the training visit to Poland had been of a very high importance and helped to establish first bilateral contacts between Border Services of the two Southern Caucasus countries and Poland.

Phase 2: Expert Assessment Mission to Azerbaijan (24 July – 17 August 2001)

Background

One of the recommendations which emerged during the training visit of Azerbaijani delegation to Poland was to organise the visit of an expert in curriculum development from Poland to Baku on a one-month assessment mission to assist in the elaboration of efficient programmes for the Border Inspection Training Centre. ODIHR and the office of the Commandant-in-Chief of the Polish Border Service selected Lieutenant-Colonel Janusz Mazurek, Senior Lecturer at the Training Centre for Border Guards in Koszalin, responsible for elaborating training programmes and methodology, for this mission. The visit took place on 23 July – 18 August 2001. The decision by the Government of Azerbaijan through the Ministry for National Security (MNS) to cover a part of the expert's accommodation costs shows that the ODIHR-IOM project has an indubitably high importance for Azerbaijan.

Programme of the mission

The programme of the visit was elaborated by the IOM together with the Ministry for National Security of Azerbaijan¹ and included:

- Meetings with MNS officials
- Meetings and sessions at the Border Inspection Centre
- Visits of several border crossing checkpoints and of the airport
- Training sessions for Border Inspection's staff on the Polish training system
- Analysis of the current needs of the Azerbaijani Border Service
- Elaboration of a model training programme to respond to these needs, taking into account the economic/political and security situation
- Independent work by the expert and preparation of the final report

Summary of the expert's conclusions and recommendations²

- Serious problems in border control are a result of shortcomings of the skilled staff. Most of the border guards have a military background; courses to upgrade skills to perform border control tasks are organised. The human factor is always decisive in any organisational achievements
- General outlines for training should be separation of border guards from military methods in favour of semi-military structures. Admitting female border guards to the Border Service is a crucial step in that direction
- Prompt introduction of new, professionally trained officers in the border system, including in the management sphere should be ensured
- Three different programmes should be set up for three categories of trainees (low-rank, middle-rank and high-rank), including significant number of lessons in human sciences, economics, languages and law, including human rights

¹ The Ministry for National Security of Azerbaijan is responsible for the protection of the state border at border checkpoints.

² The complete version of the report in English and Russian is available on request.

Possible follow-up activities

Giving political and security situation, resulting from “frozen” internal conflicts, the following initiatives are under discussion at the OSCE/ODIHR as possible follow-up activities for future years:

Georgia

- IOM Office in Tbilisi is planning to hold regular meetings with representatives of the Border Guard Service to discuss training programmes at the future Training Centre
- Depending on the meetings’ results, ODIHR will consider sending an international expert to assist the new training centre in developing recommendations for a training curriculum that best corresponds to operational demands of border services and includes human rights

Azerbaijan

- To organise a visit to Poland of a group of Azerbaijani top level officials representing Ministry of National Security, Border Guards Headquarters, Law Enforcement Agency of the Presidential Administration, the Parliament
- To organise a one-year training in Kętrzyn for a group of border officials from Azerbaijan. After completion of the training course, the trainees will be appointed to top-ranking positions within the Azerbaijani Border Service.

Armenia

- To organise a training visit of a group of Armenian border officials to Poland to familiarise them with the Polish experience