

## Azerbaijan

### General Information

- Population: 9 million.
- Location: bounded by the Caspian Sea to the east, Russia to the north, Georgia to the northwest, Armenia to the west and Iran to the south.
- Some of the main elements of the Azerbaijani culture are: music, literature, folk dances and art, cuisine, architecture, cinematography and Novruz Bayram. The latter is derived from the traditional celebration of the New Year in the ancient Persian religion of Zoroastrianism. Novruz is a family holiday.

### Challenges

- Under article 48 of its Constitution, Azerbaijan is a secular state and ensures religious freedom. Of the nation's religious minorities, Christians are mostly Russian and Georgian Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic (almost all Armenians live in the break-away region of Nagorno-Karabakh).
- Around 95 percent of the population is Muslim.
- But according to a recent Gallup Poll Azerbaijan is one of the most irreligious countries in the Muslim world, with about 53% of respondents indicating the importance of religion in their life as little or none.
- The same poll indicates that only 20% of the respondents attended religious services.

### Prayer

- Baptist missionaries: Police in Azerbaijan have threatened six Baptists with criminal prosecution for sharing their beliefs with others, Forum 18 News Service has learned. The passports of three have been confiscated, as has Christian literature and a car.

### Reference

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azerbaijan#Demographics>
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion\\_in\\_Azerbaijan#Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Azerbaijan#Christianity)
- <http://www.persecution.org/2012/06/29/police-detain-baptists-in-azerbaijan-confiscate-passports-car-and-christian-literature/>