



*...Culture, arts, & heritage of Azerbaijan & the Caucasus*

## For Immediate Release

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Dear Lonely Planet editors and Mr. Kohn, Mr. Noble, and Ms. Systemans,

The Karabakh Foundation and Lonely Planet share an interest in connecting people and genuine cultural experiences. Our foundation's focus is Azerbaijan. I wanted to share with you some feedback regarding your Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan Travel Guide.

While many of our constituents have expressed appreciation for Lonely Planet's thorough coverage of Azerbaijan, several seasoned travel enthusiasts have expressed concerns about some of the Guide's content. In particular those familiar with recent Azerbaijani history were startled to find an entire chapter about "Nagorno-Karabakh," an occupied territory within Azerbaijan's borders that is not recognized by any nation, including Armenia. As a potential advertiser in the guide, we are concerned that this inclusion sends the wrong message to our constituents.

What prompted readers to bring this odd inclusion to our attention was the use of only the Armenian and English names for Karabakh, historically an iconic and beloved region of Azerbaijan. Over centuries Azerbaijanis took great pride in the cultural accomplishments of Karabakh. The "Conservatory of the Caucasus," Karabakh produced renowned composers, conductors, poets, and musicians. In the 1990s war brought the region's long, proud history to a crashing, if temporary, stop. The pride in Karabakh and yearning for homeland continues among the Azerbaijani displaced persons from Karabakh and Azerbaijanis of many backgrounds.

The Karabakh Foundation protests the spotlighting of the illegal entity "Nagorno-Karabakh." If Lonely Planet decided to include the area based on historic rather than contemporary significance, then even more so this chapter should not have been included. A chapter on the Karabakh that is known to Azerbaijanis would have provided excellent cultural background to visitors of all three geographic areas described in the book's title.

I wish to point out further that Abkhazia and South Ossetia, other contested areas in this region, are not recognized by Lonely Planet in the same way that Nagorno-Karabakh is featured. This makes the inclusion all the harder to understand.

The Karabakh Foundation's archivists and cultural experts are ready to provide you with any materials you might need for the planned 4th edition of this guide as well as any future publications highlighting Azerbaijan and the Caucasus. We can offer photographs, restaurant listings, and other tools that will assist in sharing the wonders of this marvelous region of the world. And we look forward to sharing future Lonely Planet publications with our audiences.

Respectfully,

Diana Cohen Altman

Executive Director

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### **About the Karabakh Foundation**

*The Karabakh Foundation seeks to increase awareness and understanding in the United States of the cultural heritage and traditions of the country of Azerbaijan, the Caucasus area, and the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. While coalescing significant artistic and scholarly talent, the Foundation is nurturing a new generation of artists and scholars toward important accomplishments.*

*The Foundation serves as a dynamic facilitator and clearinghouse raising the public profile of Azerbaijan, its Karabakh region, and the Caucasus region in general. Main activities include preserving and disseminating cultural content via archival collecting, public programs, publications, exhibitions, speaking forums, international collaborations, scholarly exchange, artistic sponsorship, and related venues.*

*Foundation support comes primarily from Khazar University, the first private university in Azerbaijan and one of the country's leading institutions of higher learning. Additional information about the Karabakh Foundation may be found at [www.karabakhfoundation.org](http://www.karabakhfoundation.org).*

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