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## A BRIEF

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE LACHIN REGION OF AZERBAIJAN  
(1930-1992)

**BREVE RESEÑA HISTÓRICA DE LA REGIÓN DE LACHÍN EN AZERBAIYÁN  
(1930-1992)**

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### ABSTRACT

Understanding the history of a region is essential, as it offers invaluable insights into its cultural legacy and social development over time. In the context of Lachin in Azerbaijan, the region's strategic position at the convergence of important trade routes, together with its rich cultural tapestry characterized by diverse traditions and customs, underlines its profound importance for historical research. Tragically, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has inflicted severe repercussions on Lachin, precipitating economic turbulence and widespread displacement among its population, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive studies and mitigation efforts. But considering that before taking action it is necessary to have a deep knowledge of the social and cultural aspects, the objective of this work is to make a brief historical approach to the region of Lachin, Azerbaijan.

**Keywords:** Azerbaijan Republic, History, Lachin, Nagorno-Karabaj conflict.

### RESUMEN

Comprender la historia de una región es fundamental, por ofrecer perspectivas invaluable sobre su legado cultural y su desarrollo social a lo largo del tiempo. En el contexto de Lachin en Azerbaiyán, la posición estratégica de la región en la convergencia de importantes rutas comerciales, junto con su rico tapiz cultural caracterizado por diversas tradiciones y costumbres, subraya su profunda importancia para la investigación histórica. Trágicamente, el conflicto de Nagorno-Karabaj ha infligido graves repercusiones a Lachin, precipitando turbulencias económicas y desplazamientos generalizados entre su población, lo que pone de relieve la necesidad urgente de realizar estudios integrales y esfuerzos de mitigación. Pero considerando que antes de la toma de acción es preciso tener un profundo conocimiento de los aspectos sociales y culturales, el objetivo de este trabajo es realizar un breve acercamiento histórico a la región de Lachín, Azerbaijan.

**Palabras clave:** República de Azerbaiyán, Historia, Lachin, Conflicto de Nagorno-Karabaj.

## INTRODUCTION

Studying the historical and cultural aspects of a region/country is essential for numerous reasons. History provides the keys to understanding the present by analyzing the events, processes, and figures of the past; it allows us to comprehend how current social, political, economic, and cultural structures have been formed. The construction and strengthening of regional identity are impossible without knowing the origins, traditions, and shared values (Afrina et al., 2021). Additionally, the study of history allows the identification of past patterns and trends that can be useful for addressing current problems in the region. For example, by understanding how economic crises or social conflicts have been managed, more effective strategies can be developed to face similar challenges in the present (Wadhvani et al., 2020). History is also an integral part of a region's cultural heritage, so the preservation of historical sites, monuments, and cultural traditions is essential, often fostering the development of industries such as tourism, as there are increasing visitors interested in learning about different cultures and traditions, thus generating employment opportunities (Falero, 2019; Weng & Peng, 2014). In addition to the aforementioned reasons, studying the history of a region can also be an intellectually stimulating exercise, allowing us to explore different perspectives, analyze complex events, and understand the nature of social change. Ultimately, the study of regional history is a valuable and enriching activity that can benefit both individuals and communities as a whole (Fea, 2024).

Considering the previous elements, since the recovery of Azerbaijan's independence in 1991, the vindication of the historical past has been one of the tasks of professionals in the historical sciences. In general, the Azerbaijani nation possesses a rich and important history dating back thousands of years, which was conditioned by its strategic geographical location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, making the territory a center of great cultural, political, and economic importance over time (Gasimov, 2017). Since antiquity, Azerbaijan has been inhabited by Persian, Turkish, Arab, and nomadic peoples, among others, all leaving their cultural imprint on the country. Additionally, its location on the ancient Silk Road made it an important center for the exchange of goods and ideas between East and West. The region has also been rich in natural resources, such as oil and natural gas, which has driven its economic importance over time, perhaps with more notoriety in contemporary times (Mehdiyev, 2018). However, the nation is often better known for being embroiled in a conflict with Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, a geopolitical conflict of great complexity and with notable

international repercussions, but in which the country's position has been firm in defending its territorial integrity (Yavuz & Gunter, 2022).

Among these regions affected by the conflict, we can mention the Lachin region. Lachin district, which has rich underground and surface natural resources, was occupied by Armenian armed forces on May 17, 1992, and all Lachin residents lived the life of FDPs (forcibly displaced persons) for 30 years. However, the Azerbaijani army liberated Karabakh, including this district, from occupation within a 44-day war that ended with victory. The process of the Great Return to Lachin by Azerbaijani people is taking place. Perhaps, many people around the world don't know the relevance of this region for Azerbaijan, and under this assumption, the goal of this research is to conduct a brief historical overview of the Lachin region between 1930 and 1992.

## DEVELOPMENT

Lachin received city status in 1923 and 1930 and became the center of an administrative district in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Lachin district, with an area of 1,835 sq km, borders Armenia to the west. In 1981, its population was 51,000, with 1 city and 120 villages. It is located 443 km from Baku. The average temperatures are 0-10°C in January and 10-22°C in July, with annual rainfall of 600-900 mm. The main river is the Hekeri. The district hosts the Lachin Reserve of national importance (21,400 hectares), home to mountain goats, roe deer, wild boars, turajies (a kind of game bird), and partridges. Cattle breeding is the basis of its economy, with 252,000 animals reared in 1981. It had 89 schools, vocational schools and kindergartens, 54 clubs, 67 libraries, 34 cinemas, and 14,745 students. Rich in architectural monuments such as the Melikajdar sepulcher, Kafir Qalasy Fortress, Sultan Babi sepulcher, mosques, and the Ghulebird sepulcher. There were 13 hospitals with 470 beds, 30 medical stations, 52 doctors, and 287 health workers (1981).

The town of Lachin is located at the end of the Yevlakh-Nakhchivan highway, at the western foot of the Karabakh mountain range, 443 km from Baku and 77 km from the Agdam railway station. Before the Armenian occupation, it had service centers, plants processing butter, cheese, asphalt, bread, and dairy products, a district department of the Republican State Committee for Agricultural Production and Technical Support, a forestry department, 6 secondary schools, 34 libraries, 2 clubs, a central district hospital, a children's hospital, and other institutions and facilities (Tapdiğoğlu, 2002, p. 28).

The Lachin district has a mountainous relief. In the east, it is bordered by the southwestern slopes of the Karabakh mountain range, and in the north by the Mikhtoken mountain range. The southwestern part is occupied by the Karabakh upland (plateau). The highest point is the "Gizilbogaz" peak at 3,595 meters. The area has widespread deposits from the Jurassic and Atropogen eras, reserves of various building materials, and mineral springs of the "Narzan" type. The climate in many parts of Lachin is predominantly cold, with dry and moderately warm winters. The average January temperature ranges from 0-10°C, while in July it is between +10 to +22°C. Annual precipitation is 600-900 mm. The main river is the Hekeri.

The district's soils are largely composed of boggy mountain meadows, brown (coffee-colored) mountain forests, and carbonate mountain-black varieties. The vegetation consists of meadows with shrubs, sparse forests, broad-leaved mountain forests (oak, hornbeam, and beech), as well as subalpine and alpine grasslands. On the plateaus, there are sparse juniper forests. As of 1980, the total forest area was 33,300 hectares. Animal species found here include the mountain goat, wild boar, roe deer, various rodents, gray squirrel, tarbagan, and others.

Before the Armenian occupation, the district had a functioning state nature reserve called Lachin Reserve, occupying 21,400 hectares in the Lesser Caucasus region, mainly within the Lachin district itself. Established in 1961, official 1979 data states it protected around 400 mountain goats, 500 roe deer, 400 wild boars, 800 turajes (a game bird species), and 2,500 partridges (Mammadov, 2020a, p. 293).

According to 1981 data, Lachin district had an average population density of 27.8 people per square km, with the town of Lachin being the largest settlement. Animal husbandry played a major role in the district's economic life that year, with 23 state farms operating. Agricultural land covered up to 76,000 hectares, comprising 1,100 hectares of arable land, 300 hectares of perennial plants, 2,700 hectares of fallow land, and 5,200 hectares of pastures. 10,000 hectares were under cultivation, with 33% sown with beans and 67% with fodder plants. Livestock included 46,200 heads of cattle (14,900 cows and buffaloes) and 205,900 heads of small cattle. An association facilitated animal feeding in the district, which was also served by motor vehicle transport, with the Yevlakh-Nakhchivan highway passing through its territory (Ismayilov, 2012, p. 121).

Our research shows that in 1981, 93 children were brought up in preschool institutions in the Lachin district. There were 17 elementary schools, 36 eight-year schools, and

36 secondary schools in the district, in which 14,400 students studied, and 252 students in one rural vocational school. There were also 54 clubs, 67 libraries (which had 310,000 books), and 34 film installations in the Lachin district (Jabbarov, 2006, p. 101).

The following should be noted among the preserved historical and architectural monuments of the Lachin district: Cave-temple in the village of Khochaz (5th century); Mausoleum of Melikajdar in the village of Jijimli (14th century); Nameless burial-vault (17th-18th centuries); Kafirgala in the village of Zeyve (17th century); the burial-vaults of Sultan Bab, Sheikh Ahmad, and a nameless mausoleum (19th century); Mosque in the village of Garigishlag (1718); Hamza Sultan's Palace in the village of Hussulu (1761); Bridge over the Hekeri River (18th century); a temple at the Aghoghlan River (19th century); a Mausoleum in the village of Ghulabird (20th century) (Nabibeyli, 2009, p. 181).

The "Lachin" newspaper – the organ of the Lachin District Committee of the CPA and the Soviet of People's Deputies of the Lachin District - has been published since 1931. It should be noted that until 1966, this newspaper was published under the names "Shura Kurdustany" ("Soviet Kurdistan"), "Soviet Kurdistany" ("Soviet Kurdistan"), "Kend Hayaty" ("Rural Life"). The local editorial office of radio broadcasts operated in Lachin since 1966. The population of the district also had access to TV programs (Abbasov, 1978, p. 18). On the other hand, according to official data from 1980, 13 hospitals with 470 beds, 30 medical assistant-obstetrical stations, and a sanitary-epidemiological center were operating in the Lachin district; 52 doctors and 287 medical workers worked in the district's medical establishments (Mahmudov & Shukurov, 2005, p. 76).

In the second half of 1923, in connection with the creation of the Mountainous Karabakh Autonomous District, the Shusha uyezd was liquidated, and the Agdam uyezd was created instead. The question was raised about the creation of a single uyezd, uniting the lands of the Gubadly, Lachin, and Kalbajar districts, located far on the outskirts of the republic center. On August 6th, 1923, the Central Executive Committee of the Azerbaijan SSR decided to create a Kurdistan uyezd, uniting the northern part of Gubadly and the western part of the Javanshir uyezds. At first, the center of the Kurdistan uyezd became Pirjan, and then Minkend. However, this circumstance caused serious disputes; therefore, administrative bodies were temporarily located in the city of Shusha. A member of the Revolutionary Glory of the Azerbaijan SSR, Ismail Shafiyev, recalled this historical situation as follows:

When I was the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Agdam uyezd, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the C(b)P of Azerbaijan, Comrade S.M. Kirov, received me and said: 'The Central Committee has appointed you to a more responsible post – First Secretary of the Kurdistan Uyezd Party Committee (Shukurov, 2005a, 2005b).

Ismail Shafiyev, who participated in the 3rd All-Azerbaijan Congress of Soviets, was received by S.M. Kirov and was announced to him that the bureau of the Central Committee of the party had elected him a member of the special commission along with the chairman of the Soviet of People's Commissars Gazanfar Musabeyov, the transport commissioner Chingiz Ildirim, and the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Kurdistan district Husi Hajiyev. S.M. Kirov gave the members of the special commission instructions: "Get acquainted with the situation on the spot and choose a more favorable center for the Kurdistan district." Ismail Shafiyev and Husi Hajiyev drove around several settlements of the new uyezd and returned to the village of Abdallar. Local dwellers announced to the members of the special commission that the lower part of the Lachin rock near the village of Abdallar is flat. I. Shafiyev and H. Hajiyev believed the villagers and soon found out that the Yevlakh-Gorus road that passed through this area positively settled many issues.

According to the information of the Azerbaijani writer Ali Veliyev, who had lived and worked in Lachin for a long time and considered Lachin his homeland, in the early days of 1924, the Secretary of the Central Executive Committee of the Azerbaijan SSR, Tagi Shahbazi, arrived at the proposed place Garikakh, located above the village and Abdallar post office, and examined it. He liked the place very much. However, he did not like the name of the village of Abdallar. Tagi Shahbazi believed that the word "Abdallar" meant "joyless, gloomy" and therefore unacceptable for a new town – the administrative center of the uyezd. But T. Shahbazi liked the name of the mountain, "Lachin" rock. He believed that the name "Lachin" was more suitable for the new town, the administrative center of the new (Kurdistan) uyezd. He informed Husi Hajiyev about his decision. Thus, the history of the town of Lachin, the administrative center of the Lachin district, began (Mammadov, 2019, p. 296).

On the first street of the new town, created at the foot of Lachin Mountain, on a plain near the post office of the village Abdallar, the foundations of the first administrative buildings, hotel, and hospital were laid. It was called the "Communist" street. Since then, Lachin has become known as a town. When the uyezds were abolished in the Azerbaijan SSR on April 8, 1929, the town of Lachin was declared the administrative center of the Lachin region of

the republic. It should be noted that after the three-month activity of the Kurdistan Uyezd as the "Kurdish", it became known that the concept of "Kurdistan Uyezd" did not correspond to historical reality. For it appeared that at first when elementary schools were opened in every village, no one knew Kurdish as their native language. It should be noted that one of the reasons for the abolition of uyezds in the Azerbaijan SSR was such phenomenon that contributed to the emergence of certain ethnic prejudices.

In the Azerbaijan SSR, which was part of the Soviet Union in the 1960s-1970s, economic plans and instructions were not being fulfilled. In the summer of 1969, the highest political leadership of the USSR appointed Heydar Aliyev (1923-2003) as the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan to eliminate the economic backwardness of the Azerbaijan SSR. From the very first days of his political activity, the Azerbaijani people felt his potential abilities and united closely around him. In 1969-1982, the working enthusiasm of people increased in the republic, labor exploits were performed, and the working people of Azerbaijan began to believe more that they would see the fruits of selfless labor shortly. The working people of the Lachin district also played a marked role in the process of a new socio-economic revival in the country. During this period, the 50th anniversary of the creation of the town of Lachin, the administrative center of the Lachin district, began (Mammadov, 2020b, p. 271).

Heydar Aliyev knew about the approaching 50th anniversary of the town of Lachin. He also knew that in recent years, the dwellers of the Lachin district had been expanding their farms with great enthusiasm, fulfilling all state plans and instructions of the republic leadership. Heydar Aliyev, taking into account the achievements of the livestock breeders of the Lachin district in the All-Union Socialist Competition in 1973, enabled them to be awarded the Red Banner of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the Council of Ministers, and a monetary prize. These awards were followed by others: as a result of the efforts of H.A. Aliyev, 58 foremost people from only five farms in the Lachin district were awarded the highest state and government awards and prizes. It was also an indicator of the highest level of industriousness of the Lachin district dwellers. In the 1970s of the 20th century, the villages of Ghulabird, Malibeyli, Jagazur, Hajilar, Bozlu, Molla Ahmedli, Minkend, Kamally, Alkhasly, Hochaz, Pirjan, Erdeshevi, Vagazin, Goshasu, Gurdgazi, Shelve, Gorchu, Shamkend, Aliqulu and dozens of others were like towns, and the history of villages and urban-type settlements was estimated to span millennia (Tapdi o lu, 2002, p. 84).

On the eve of the decision "On the 50th anniversary of the town of Lachin," dated August 6th, 1974, by the

Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, a majestic monument was erected on a high hill at the entrance to the town in honor of the Lachin people who died during World War II. During this war, 3,660 Lachin residents left to defend their homeland, but only 2,426 of them returned to the Lachin district. Lachin resident Evez Verdiyev was awarded the highest military honor in the USSR, the title of "Hero of the Soviet Union," for his services to the Motherland and the heroism he showed in the battles for the liberation of Poland.

The town of Lachin already had all the political and legal grounds for making a state decision to celebrate its 50th anniversary. Heydar Aliyev thoroughly and comprehensively considered a very delicate moment: the Azerbaijan SSR was not a sovereign, independent state, and the imperial center should not be irritated for any reason. Therefore, he entrusted the adoption of a decision related to the 50th anniversary of the town of Lachin to the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan. Before this decision, on November 16th, 1971, the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan adopted the decision "On measures to improve cultural and consumer services for workers of the Lachin district.

Naturally, this decision had a very positive impact on the lifestyle of the residents of the Lachin district. It should be noted that on November 18th, 1971, Heydar Aliyev, a candidate for membership in the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, among other high-ranking political figures of the USSR, signed a decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On measures to increase the economy of the mountainous districts. (Mammadov, 2019, p. 296).

This decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU was also directly related to the economic life of the Lachin district. After a long period of economic stagnation, the Lachin district embarked on the path of economic recovery. One of the distinctive indicators of the socio-economic life of the Azerbaijan SSR from 1969 to 1982 was the application of several privileges for applicants from the outskirts and mountainous districts when entering higher educational institutions, which aimed at increasing the personnel potential of these regions by training qualified personnel. This system of privileges played a significant role in the process of intensifying the development of the Azerbaijan SSR economy. The issue related to the anniversary of the town of Lachin was decided at a joint meeting of the Bureau of the Soviet of Ministers of the Republic and the Central Committee of the CPA held on August 6, 1974. At this meeting, a decision was made

to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the town of Lachin. All this was a manifestation of the care of the great leader H.A. Aliyev (Aliyev, 2004, p. 90).

On May 8th, 1992, as a result of a concentrated attack by the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia, the town of Shusha was occupied. After this occupation, the situation in Lachin worsened considerably. On May 17th of the same year, Armenian forces occupied the town of Lachin, known as "Gara Gapy," the homeland of brave heroes, whose population lived for the sake of creation. The Lachin district became the victim of treason by the leadership of Azerbaijan at that period, which was more focused on maintaining its political power.

The National Leader H.A. Aliyev, in his speech entitled "Our people will never forgive those who betrayed Shusha and Lachin," analyzed the natural-geographical situation, military-strategic importance, natural resources, the occupation of Lachin district by the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia, and the grave consequences of this occupation. He concluded: "From the viewpoint of the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the protection of its territory, the Lachin district is of very great strategic importance... The occupation of the Lachin district shocked me as a citizen of Azerbaijan" (Mammadov, 2020b, p. 374).

The Republic of Armenia, with the help of its patrons, occupied this district of our republic and forced 70,000 Lachin residents into many years of hardship as refugees and internally displaced persons. Unfortunately, the biggest and most influential international organizations and states have shown a double standard towards the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, demonstrating leniency towards this long-standing confrontation. As a result, 20 percent of the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been under Armenian occupation for more than 30 years. It should be noted that as a result of the occupation of the Lachin district, located in the southwest of the Azerbaijan Republic, the Armenian armed forces destroyed 1 town, 1 settlement, and 125 villages, and the population of the district was temporarily settled in 59 towns and districts of the Azerbaijan Republic.

The total land area of Lachin district occupied by the Armenians was 166,488 hectares. Of this, 75,781 hectares were suitable for agriculture. The district had 33,205 hectares of forested land, consisting of oak, juniper, beech, hornbeam, lime trees, and other forest plants. Additionally, 72,000 hectares of land were mountain meadows and pastures, and 1,470 hectares were orchards. Lachin district is rich in minerals such as pebbles, sand, clay, graphite, rock crystal, marble, mercury, uranium, cobalt, chromium,

gold, and iron. The district also contained up to 200 historical, cultural, and architectural monuments, dozens of kurgans, fortresses, archaeological sites, and grave monuments (Mammadov, 2020a, p. 266).

Lachin district is famous for its natural Narzan-type mineral waters and a variety of medicinal plants, including thyme, dog rose, horsetail, hawthorn, chamomile, Solmazchicheyi, baldyrgan, and plantain. The region is home to numerous animals such as mountain goats, roe deer, wild boar, bears, leopards, wolves, foxes, squirrels, hares, and other game animals. Birds such as nightingales, eagles, turaj (a type of sport bird), pheasants, hoopoes, pigeons, and quails are also found there. The district developed animal husbandry, beekeeping, and vegetable growing.

Before the Armenian occupation, Lachin district had a water supply system with a length of 1,187 kilometers, 33 reservoirs, a central sewage system with a length of 15 kilometers, a heating system with a length of 20 kilometers, 14 bathhouses, 8 petrol stations, 6 electric substations, and electric lines with a length of 2,636 kilometers. There was also a gas pipeline with a length of 498 kilometers and 3 television broadcasting stations (Nabibeyli, 2009, p. 94).

However, as a result of the Armenian aggression and occupation, 13,745 residential buildings, 48 industrial facilities, 63 agricultural objects, 217 cultural and educational facilities, 101 schools, 5 out-of-school institutions, 2 preschool institutions, 142 medical facilities, and 460 trade objects in the town of Lachin, Gaygy settlement (“Care”), and 121 villages of the district were lost. According to calculations at the time, the Armenian forces inflicted material damage amounting to 7.1 billion US dollars on the Lachin district of the Azerbaijan Republic (Jabbarov, 2006, p. 46).

During the Armenian aggression and occupation, all residents of the Lachin district put up serious resistance to the enemy. However, the Armenians were supported by powerful patrons who equipped them with modern weapons and provided manpower. As a result, Armenian troops managed to occupy the territory of the Lachin district. Everything created by the Lachin people over years and centuries fell into the hands of the enemy. Despite this tragedy, the new generation of Lachin people continued the rich heroic traditions of their ancestors. Hundreds of Lachin residents heroically died in battles for the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan, including the Lachin district. Our research shows that 328 Lachin residents died heroically in the battles for the liberation of the Garabagh district, 225 Lachin residents became disabled, 32 people lost both parents, and 5 Lachin dwellers—Oktay Gulali oglu Gulaliyev, Kamil Balad oglu

Nasibov, Israfil Shahverdi oglu Shahverdiyev, Gorkhmaz Abysh oglu Eyvazov, and Fazil Umud oglu Mehdiyev—were awarded the title of “National Hero of Azerbaijan” (Mammadov, 2019, p. 302).

The second Garabagh war, known as the “Patriotic War,” began with a counter-offensive by the Azerbaijani National Army. The occupation forces consisted of Armenians from the Republic of Armenia, Garabagh, and various countries around the world. Among the Armenian soldiers were fighters from terrorist organizations such as PKK, PED, EPG, ASALA, and others from the Near East. The Azerbaijani National Army confronted and defeated the united Armenian forces. Our army created a historical chronicle that will be studied for a long time in military headquarters, military educational institutions, and research institutions worldwide, exploring various aspects of this conflict inherited from the 19th and 20th centuries. Finally, on November 10, 2020, at the insistence of the political leadership of the Russian Federation, a complete ceasefire and the cessation of all military operations in the Daghigh Garabagh conflict zone were announced at 00:00 Moscow time.

As a result, part of the Republic of Azerbaijan was liberated by military means, and the remaining occupied lands were peacefully liberated based on the defeated Armenia’s commitments as outlined in the Declaration of November 10, which was regarded as an “act of capitulation” for Armenia. On December 1, 2020, the territorial integrity and political and legal sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan over the entire country were restored. Thus, the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan was ensured and enshrined in international law. The Declaration of November 10, 2020, once again confirmed the international and interstate nature of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Daghigh Garabagh conflict.

On November 9th, 2020, under the leadership of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, the victorious Azerbaijani army liberated the villages of Ghulebird, Safiyan, and Turkler from occupation. On December 1, 2020, the Armenian side was forced to return Lachin district to Azerbaijan. On the occasion of the liberation of Lachin from occupation, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev, in his address on December 4th, 2020, stated, “The liberation of Lachin district from occupation is a historic event”:

Today, the foresighted opinions expressed by President Ilham Aliyev have become a reality: the return of the Lachin people to their homeland has begun, and this process continues successfully.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Lachin region, located in the southwest of Azerbaijan, boasts a rich history and culture that stretches back thousands of years. Its strategic position at the intersection of significant trade routes has made it a meeting point for various civilizations over time, resulting in a unique blend of traditions and customs. Lachin region is home to numerous historical monuments, such as the Sus fortress, the Agdam monastery, and the Khari-Bulan bridge. The region is renowned for its artisanal and cultural traditions, including carpet weaving, pottery, metalwork, and music influenced by Azerbaijani, Turkish, and Persian influences. Thus, the Lachin region holds great historical and cultural importance for Azerbaijan. Its rich heritage and strategic location make it an attractive destination for international tourists due to an integral part of Azerbaijani national identity.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Lachin became part of the Republic of Azerbaijan; however, the region was occupied by Armenian forces during the Nagorno-Karabakh War from 1992 to 1994. Nevertheless, in 2020, Azerbaijan reclaimed the Lachin region during the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War. The return of Lachin to Azerbaijan is considered a significant milestone in the country's history. However, the economic consequences for the region have been severe. The conflict has caused economic devastation, disrupting local economies, and has demanded significant reconstruction efforts to address the damage. Therefore, the Lachin region is undergoing a process of reconstruction and development, for which the Azerbaijani government is investing substantial resources in restoring historical monuments, promoting tourism, and fostering local economic growth.

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