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## **ARMENIAN RESETTLEMENT FROM LEBANON TO THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OF AZERBAIJAN ENDANGERS PEACE PROCESS**

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Jamestown (23 September 2020)

On August 25, the Armenian media announced the arrival of two ethnic-Armenian families from Beirut, Lebanon, to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan (Asbarez, August 25). This was declared part of Yerevan's assistance programs to Lebanon's Armenian community. The wider initiative specifically includes a plan to resettle in Armenia and the occupied territories of Azerbaijan (namely, Karabakh) Lebanese-Armenians who suffered socio-economically as a result of the August 4 explosion at the Beirut port warehouses.

A day after last month's catastrophic event in Beirut, President Arayik Harutyunyan, the leader of the local administration of the occupational forces in Karabakh, held a phone conversation with Aram I, the Catholicos of Cilicia, who heads the Armenian Apostolic Church based in Lebanon. Harutyunyan told Aram that Karabakh's separatist authorities were ready to receive 100  families (Civilnet, August 5). Later, speaking at an August 25 meeting devoted to the assistance programs to Lebanese-Armenians, Harutyunyan declared that his administration would welcome and provide housing to all [...] compatriots who wish to move to Karabakh (Asbarez, August 25).

According to Harutyunyan, Lebanese-Armenians are encouraged to resettle in their homeland by the provision of housing and other necessities. On September 10, the Armenian media disseminated a video of the settlement of the first Lebanese-Armenian family in Shusha, a historical Azerbaijani town in Karabakh (Twitter.com/aghavalyan, September 10). Local media further reported on plans to move 15 additional families in the near future (Arstakhpress.am, September 8).

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