
AZERBAIJAN JEWS KNOW FEARS OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH 'CULTURAL GENOCIDE' UNFOUNDED

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By Shneur Segal, chief Ashkenazi rabbi of Azerbaijan

When peace was announced in Nagorno-Karabakh last month, celebrations in the streets of Baku – Azerbaijan's capital – were to be expected. Following 30 years of illegal occupation, some 700,000 displaced Azerbaijanis were going to be able to return home.

Perhaps not so expected was the sight of Israeli flags flying proudly alongside those of Azerbaijan throughout these celebrations.

As an Azerbaijani, a Jew and a religious leader, this came as no surprise to me. Azerbaijan is not – as portrayed in some parts of the media – an intolerant Muslim nation locked in a religious conflict with Christian Armenia. Instead, Azerbaijan is a place of religious and cultural tolerance and inclusivity in a region fraught with ethnic and religious tensions.

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