



## Section 8. Regional economy

DOI:10.29013/EJEMS-26-2-77-81



### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVING THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM OF WAR VETERANS IN THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN BASED ON ADVANCED EXPERIENCES

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**Cite:** Shirin Mahammad Mazahir. (2026). *Opportunities For Improving the Social Security System of War Veterans in The Republic of Azerbaijan Based on Advanced Experiences. European Journal of Economics and Management Sciences 2026, No 2.* <https://doi.org/10.29013/EJEMS-26-2-77-81>

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#### Abstract

This study analyzes the legal and institutional foundations of the social protection system for war veterans in the Republic of Azerbaijan and explores possibilities for its improvement. It identifies the problems of the current legal-normative framework, inherited from the socialist system and not aligned with the demands of modern times-particularly its lack of adaptation to individual needs and reliance on centralized administrative mechanisms. Through a comparative analysis of the advanced practices of various countries-Germany, Turkey, and Israel-the research highlights the advantages of these models in areas such as defining legal status, establishing regional administrative structures, providing rehabilitation and psychosocial support services, and ensuring mechanisms for individualized approaches and public participation.

**Keywords:** *Republic of Azerbaijan, social protection, war veterans, international experience, comparative analysis*

#### Introduction

The social protection system of Azerbaijan has been formed for many years under the influence of the Soviet socialist model. In this model, the state fully assumed the responsibility of ensuring the social well-being of citizens, with particular priority given to the provision of persons who have lost their ability to work, the elderly, and war veterans. War veterans were valued both ideologically as a symbol of heroism and factually held

a central place in the state's social protection policy. Although Azerbaijan transitioned to a market economy after independence, traces of the socialist model and social expectations towards the state have continued to persist in public consciousness. This necessitates the formation of legislation in the field of social security for veterans not only within the framework of a market economy but also in accordance with society's expectations of justice and care.

Germany, as an advanced example of a social welfare state, has established a system that comprehensively regulates the social security of war veterans from a legal perspective. Especially after the Second World War, the large-scale social integration and well-being of war veterans and civilian victims became one of the important areas of German law. The normative legal acts adopted for this purpose encompass the social protection of both persons who have lost their health due to war and their family members. In Germany, this system is not limited only to material compensations, but is based on a multifaceted structure that also includes rehabilitation, medical assistance, psychological support, and social reintegration mechanisms.

In Germany, the social security of war veterans is mainly regulated by the “Federal Pensions Act” (*Bundesversorgungsgesetz*). This law was adopted in 1950 and, through improvements at various stages, has provided comprehensive legal guarantees to war veterans and their families (Act on the provision of care for victims of war (Federal Pensions Act – BVG). According to the law, persons who have suffered physical or psychological harm as a result of participating in armed conflicts are provided with financial assistance, medical treatment, prosthetic and rehabilitation services, as well as opportunities for integration into the labor market through vocational training. The law also provides for the provision of social benefits to family members – especially widows and minor children. The law also notes that these benefits are not limited only to past wars, but can also apply to persons involved in other international and internal conflicts (Boztepe, A.Ş.).

The German model is also important in terms of transparency and individualized approach. The condition of veterans is assessed through medical and social expert examinations, and individual social plans are prepared according to their needs. For example, if a veteran has lost his ability to work, he is not only provided with a pension, but also opportunities for placement in special nursing homes or social assistance at home are created. Administrative procedures for determining the legal status of veterans and using the benefit system have been simplified,

and special service offices have been established to increase citizen satisfaction. These structures operate in a coordinated manner at the federal and local levels.

In Germany, according to the Federal Pensions Act, the institutional mechanism operates in a coordinated manner between central and local administrative bodies. The main implementing body of the system is the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (*Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales*), but in practice, these tasks are carried out by the social security authorities of the federal states (Boztepe, A.Ş.). The receipt of applications, determination of legal status, assessment of needs, and assignment of social benefits fall within the authority of these authorities. Relevant medical expert commissions operate to determine the health status of veterans, and based on their opinions, the scope and form of social security are determined. In addition, rehabilitation centers, vocational training programs, and psychosocial support structures are an integral part of this institutional system (*Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales*). An individual file is prepared for each application and tracked through an electronic system, which both ensures transparency and increases citizen satisfaction. A system of social courts exists to protect the rights of applicants, and citizens can appeal to these instances if they are dissatisfied with decisions.

In brotherly Turkey, the social security of war veterans mainly covers persons with “Gazilik” (veteran) status and their families. This system is implemented both through legal normative acts and the coordinated activities of various state institutions. The main legal framework is regulated by the Social Insurance and General Health Insurance Law of the Republic of Turkey (Law No. 5510) (*Bundesversorgungsgesetz*), the Social Services Law (Grossman, G.), the Turkish Heroes and Veterans Law (Haupt, C.P.), and other additional decisions and presidential decrees. In Turkey, monthly social benefits for persons who have obtained “Gazi” status hold an important place. Persons who officially acquire this status are paid a fixed monthly pension by the state, and these payments may vary according to the level of need, degree of injury, and length of service.

Additionally, in some cases, additional payments included in social assistance packages – holiday allowances, individual benefits for medical needs, and support payments for family members – are provided to veterans. The legal basis of these payments is clearly defined by legislation and sustainability is ensured within the budget framework (Hoffman, M.).

Furthermore, the medical needs of veterans and their immediate family members are fully covered by the state in Turkey. Persons with Gazi status can benefit from both primary healthcare services and specialized rehabilitation and surgical services free of charge through the Social Security Institution (SGK) and the Ministry of Health (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan). These guarantees cover not only hospital visits but also technical aids such as medication supply, prostheses, and orthopedic devices. The comprehensiveness and continuity of medical support demonstrate the state's special approach to this group. That is, these issues are resolved directly through the ministry, not just through some funds. Also, the children of persons with Gazi status benefit from various educational privileges in Turkey. These privileges include admission to state universities without examination, exemption from tuition fees, and provision with scholarships (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan). On the other hand, veterans themselves have the right of priority within certain quotas when being recruited to public institutions. Through this policy, the state encourages not only the social protection of veterans but also their active economic participation, keeping them as an integral part of the labor market. This is an important component of social integration.

Important steps have also been taken in the field of housing provision for veterans in Turkey. They are accepted as a priority group in the state's social housing programs and benefit from long-term mortgage opportunities with lower interest rates. In addition, veterans are fully or partially exempted from property and vehicle taxes. These concessions serve to improve the living conditions of both the veteran and his family and reduce their economic burden. Such measures are

accepted as part of social welfare aimed at preserving the financial stability of veterans (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan).

The psychological and social adaptation of veterans to society after war and armed conflicts is one of the areas prioritized in Turkey. For this purpose, not only physical but also psychological support programs are implemented in rehabilitation centers. Individual and group therapies conducted by professional psychologists and social workers help veterans cope with traumatic experiences. Also, involvement in social activities, integration through sports and cultural events is encouraged, which creates conditions for veterans to feel themselves as active members of society.

In the Turkish model, the accuracy of legal recognition and the status-based approach are important. The inclusiveness of the social security system has been increased especially thanks to the broad legal framework given to the concept of "injured while serving the homeland". The rights and duties of persons with this status are clearly defined by law, and coordination between administrative bodies is established at a high level. At the same time, the Coordination Centers for Martyrs' Relatives and Veterans operating in every province of the country ensure the effectiveness of services at the local level and allow for flexible response to needs (Haupt, C. P.). Finally, the promotion by the public of the high symbolic and social status towards veterans and martyrs' families in Turkey creates conditions for them to gain a prestigious position in society and strengthens social cohesion.

Israel, being a country with long-term and intense conflict experience, the social protection of war veterans is of strategic importance in state policy. The legal-institutional system in this field is organized in a highly specialized, transparent, and differentiated manner. The concept of a veteran is not limited only to persons who have served in the army, but also includes civilians injured in national security operations. The main normative document is the "Disabled Veterans Law" (*Hok Nechey Milchama*) adopted in 1959 and other complementary laws and decisions. According to this law, persons who have suffered physical

or psychological injury while serving in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) are deemed worthy of relevant state benefits and long-term support. The law clearly defines the rights of veterans, types of benefits, and the functions of the bodies dealing with their protection (Hoffman, M.).

The implementation of veterans' rights and organization of services are mainly carried out by the Rehabilitation Department of the Ministry of Defense of Israel. This department operates across a wide spectrum, from recognition of status to medical assessment, determination of social payments, psychological support, education and employment services. An individual assessment is conducted for each veteran, and based on this, a social support program is prepared. The Rehabilitation Department also coordinates rehabilitation centers, legal advisory services, and community integration projects (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan).

It should also be noted that in Israel, not only soldiers but also civilians injured during terrorist attacks or enemy attacks can, under certain conditions, benefit from the rehabilitation and material support opportunities of the veteran system. This is a rare approach based on a broad public security concept. In this regard, the Israel Heroes and Disabled

Veterans Association is not only a social service provider but also a powerful lobby influencing legislation and state policy. These organizations participate in negotiations with government structures and play an active role in shaping public opinion. Although many countries have veteran organizations, their influence capabilities have not reached such an institutional level. All these elements distinguish the Israeli model from other countries and make it an innovative, legally progressive, and reality-adapted system.

### Conclusion

Thus, as a result of our research, we can note that the Republic of Azerbaijan can benefit from the successful experiences of various states such as Germany, Turkey, and Israel in order to improve the social security system of war veterans, and by integrating specific elements from each of these models, adapted to the Azerbaijani reality, can form a sustainable framework both institutionally and legally. The main step that can be taken from the German model is the creation of a unified and comprehensive legislative base, the establishment of a specialized administrative structure based on the territorial principle, and the completion of benefits not only with material support but also with rehabilitation and reintegration-oriented services.

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submitted 26.03.2026;  
accepted for publication 09.04.2026;  
published 30.04.2026  
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