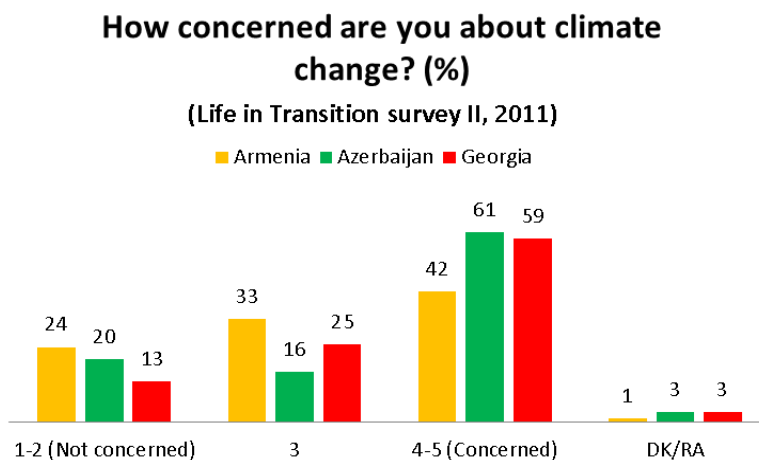


Does Climate Change Matter in the South Caucasus?

The [Environment and Security Initiative](#) confirmed that climate change has already negatively impacted the South Caucasus in its 2011 study, "[Regional Climate Change Impact Study for the Caucasus Region](#)". The issue of climate change was recently given media coverage when a group of approximately 40 people gathered at Turtle Lake in Tbilisi on August 5th to protest the destruction of trees and shrubs in order to construct a new restaurant complex. Their aim was to protect the plants in order to help reduce pollution. This post assesses knowledge of and attitudes about climate change in the South Caucasus. Data from the 2011 [Life in Transition survey](#) shows that the general concern for issues related to climate change is higher in Azerbaijan with Georgia being very close and Armenia somewhat behind. However, there is little understanding about what climate change is in all three countries.

The Life in Transition survey shows that the majority of people in the South Caucasus have a certain degree of concern about climate change. Measured on a scale from 1 (not concerned) to 5 (extremely concerned), the data shows a high degree of indifference in Armenia (33%). Six out of 10 Azerbaijanis express concern (61%), followed by 59% of Georgians, and fewer Armenians (42%).

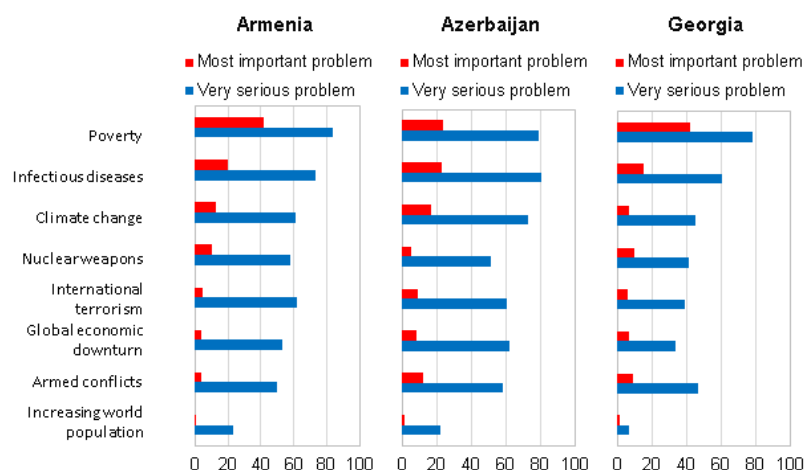


However, when asked to assign a relative value to climate change by choosing from a list of serious problems currently facing the world, respondent's opinions differ from what was expressed in the figure above. 73% of Azerbaijanis view climate change as a very serious problem, followed by Armenians (61%) and Georgians (45%). The answers to the next question, "Which is the most important?", are consistent; 17% of Azerbaijanis, 13% of Armenians and 7% of Georgians view climate change as the most important issue.

In your opinion, which of the following do you consider to be a very serious problem currently facing the world?

And which is the most important?

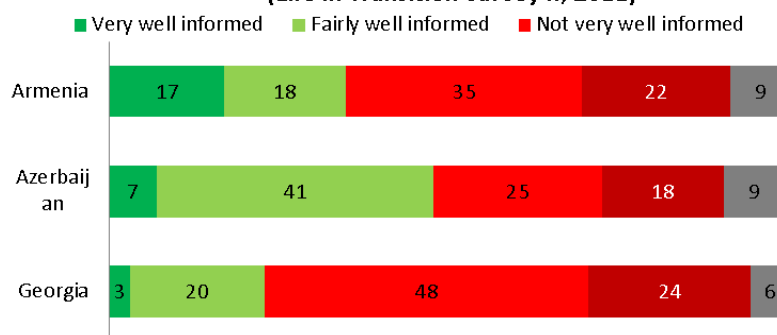
(Life in transition survey II, 2011)



In order to measure general awareness of climate change, it is important to assess how people feel they understand the causes of this phenomenon. Throughout the region, the majority of people feel they are “not very well informed” or “not at all informed” about the issue. Again, Azerbaijanis show the highest propensity with 48% of them feeling well informed about the topic, Armenians being second (35%) and Georgian third (23%). Thus, the lack of concern may be due to a lack of knowledge.

Personally, do you think you are well informed or not about the causes of climate change? (%)

(Life in Transition survey II, 2011)



Finally, respondents were asked if they had personally taken actions aimed at helping to fight climate change. Very few people said they had done so—2% in Armenia, 2.5% in Azerbaijan and 1.6% in

Georgia. For more information on climate change and the South Caucasus in general, visit the Life in Transition data on the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's [website](#).