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# PRESS RELEASE

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## **U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and Azerbaijan's Ministry of Health and State Veterinary Service hold Laboratory Directors' Forum in Baku**

Laboratory directors from the Ministry of Health and the State Veterinary Service of Azerbaijan came from regions in Azerbaijan, near and far, to meet with U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) officials and partners in Baku to discuss a variety of issues in Baku March 12-13. Organized as part of the Cooperative Biological Engagement Program, the two-day forum brought together 10 lab directors from regions throughout Azerbaijan. Nine of the directors manage Epidemiological Monitoring Stations built or renovated by DTRA in support of the program. The purpose of the forum was to gather partners and discuss important issues face to face in a constructive environment.

During the two-day event, U.S. and Azerbaijan government partners recognized the recent success of commissioning laboratories built for the program and the importance of moving forward to transition full responsibility of the labs to the government of Azerbaijan. The group discussed plans for ensuring effective facility and equipment maintenance, laboratory repairs, procurement, supply inventories, and training.

The forum was held at the Republican Veterinary Laboratory with State Veterinary Service partners and at the Anti-Plague Station with Ministry of Health partners. The event was well attended, and discussions were lively and productive.

This was the first forum of its kind, inviting all laboratory directors together, and continues a record of positive engagement among the U.S. Embassy, the Ministry of Health, the State Veterinary Service, the Department of Defense, and the government of Azerbaijan on important bio-related issues.

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