



azerbaijan

The ICRC has been working in Azerbaijan since 1992 in relation to the Nagorno Karabakh armed conflict. It focuses on the issue of missing persons and on detainees held for conflict-related or security reasons, or who are otherwise vulnerable; provides support for health-related issues in places of detention, particularly tuberculosis control; and monitors the situation of communities along the Line of Contact and the international border with Armenia. It promotes the national implementation of IHL and its integration into armed and security forces' training and into academic curricula. The ICRC works to strengthen the capacities of the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan.

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	3,085
Assistance	1,979
Prevention	885
Cooperation with National Societies	355
General	-

► **6,305**

of which: Overheads 385

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	93%
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PERSONNEL

10	expatriates
80	national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2009, the ICRC:

- monitored the situation of civilians living along the Line of Contact and the international border with Armenia, discussing any concerns with the authorities
- with the local authorities, provided clean drinking water to 22,743 people in conflict-affected areas through rehabilitation projects
- with the National Society, collected further ante-mortem data from families of persons missing in relation to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict
- co-organized a round-table for parliamentarians, ministry officials and NGO staff on legislation related to missing persons
- visited detainees held under the authority of the Interior, Justice and National Security Ministries, including people detained in relation to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, to monitor their living conditions, providing them with assistance and the ministries with feedback as necessary
- provided substantial support to the Ministry of Justice to treat detainees with tuberculosis or multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis

CONTEXT

A referendum passed in March 2009 extended the term of office of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev indefinitely. A new law was adopted in May requiring all religious organizations in the country to re-register, prompting allegations that the government was increasing control over such organizations.

Despite six meetings in 2009 between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, mediated by the three co-chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, little progress was made in finding a peaceful solution to the conflict over Nagorno Karabakh. The *de facto* Nagorno Karabakh authorities made repeated requests to the parties and to the Minsk Group to be involved in the conflict-resolution process. There were regular reports of exchanges of fire along the Line of Contact and the international border with Armenia, with some allegations that the number of ceasefire violations had increased significantly since 2008. The ceasefire violations, along with the presence of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), continued to affect civilians living in these areas.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

	Total		Total	Women	Children
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)			
Detainees visited	13,889	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>			
Detainees visited and monitored individually	143	Food	Beneficiaries	1,200	85%
		Essential household items	Beneficiaries	1,200	85%
	1	Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	22,743	37%
					36%
Number of visits carried out	76	<i>Health</i>			
Number of places of detention visited	33	Health centres supported	Structures	70	
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS		Consultations	Patients	70,733	
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>					
RCMs collected	135				
RCMs distributed	98				
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>					
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	101				
	16			25,785	5,120
	2			11,216	17,490
		PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM			
Tracing cases still being handled at 31 December 2009 (people)	4,153	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>			
		Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	270	
	353				
	97				
DOCUMENTS ISSUED					
People to whom travel documents were issued	93				
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	1				

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC in Azerbaijan continued to tackle the humanitarian consequences of the unresolved Nagorny Karabakh conflict. During field visits, ICRC delegates monitored civilians' needs and concerns, discussing the findings with the authorities where necessary, and rehabilitated water networks to provide clean drinking water for 22,743 people living along the front line. In Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC continued to support primary health care facilities and provide vulnerable people with food and essential household items.

In line with an agreement concluded with the Azerbaijani authorities in 2008, the ICRC and the National Society collected ante-mortem data from the families of persons missing in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. Although the project was not completed as planned, the majority of families were contacted, despite some difficulties in tracing them. The delegation also participated in a round-table co-organized with the authorities on a law on missing persons. In addition, the ICRC collected ante-mortem data in Nagorny Karabakh, as well as conducting awareness-raising activities and training a *de facto* authority representative in database management.

ICRC delegates monitored the treatment and living conditions of people deprived of their freedom, including those detained in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, regularly providing confidential feedback to the authorities. Given the epidemic of multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR TB) in Azerbaijan's prisons, the ICRC provided materials and expert advice to support the authorities in their efforts to combat both TB and MDR TB and encouraged the Health and Justice Ministries to coordinate their activities, particularly in following up released detainees suffering from MDR TB. These efforts were complemented by ICRC technical assistance and management support to the newly opened national reference laboratory.

As in past years, the ICRC supported the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan in strengthening its tracing and dissemination

capacities and its cooperation with others involved in mine action. With the help of the ICRC and local partners, the National Society constructed three additional safe play areas for children in conflict-affected villages, continued collecting data on mine-related incidents and conducted a mine-action workshop for its branches.

The ICRC strengthened contacts with the media to heighten public awareness of humanitarian issues and its activities, particularly the ante-mortem data collection project. It also pursued discussions with the military authorities on the integration of IHL into military training and training for interior troops. The delegation continued to assist the education authorities in integrating IHL into secondary school curricula and to provide IHL training and other assistance to universities.

CIVILIANS

Vulnerable civilians share their concerns and gain access to clean water

Civilians living near the Line of Contact and the international border with Armenia, including IDPs, continued to report regular breaches of the ceasefire, the presence of mines and ERW, impeded access to water, health and education, and inadequate housing conditions. They were able to raise their concerns with the ICRC during its regular field trips and, through ICRC intercession, bring them to the attention of the national and local authorities, who were also reminded of their obligations and responsibilities towards civilians.

Planned discussions with the authorities regarding identity documents for minority groups could not take place. Refugees, asylum seekers and members of minority groups continued to be issued with ICRC travel documents to facilitate family reunification or their resettlement in third countries, sometimes at UNHCR's request.

► 93 people issued with an ICRC travel document

Vulnerable civilians living along the front line faced fewer health risks thanks to water-network rehabilitation projects implemented by the residents, authorities and the ICRC in five communities and one IDP collective centre.

- 22,743 people benefited from water/sanitation/habitat projects

The Azerbaijani Red Crescent pursued mine action with ICRC support (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*).

Vulnerable people in Nagorny Karabakh access health care and receive assistance

The elderly, IDPs, returnees and families of missing persons in three conflict-affected districts had access to adequate primary health care services, owing in part to regular ICRC distributions of essential medicines to 70 village health centres. Epidemiological services and the spinal rehabilitation centre received donations of medical supplies, while hygiene-promotion leaflets were printed and distributed to the general public to support epidemiological education campaigns focusing on mother and child health.

No medical emergencies necessitating ICRC intervention took place.

In the 70 ICRC-supported health centres (average monthly catchment population: 13,000):

- 70,733 people given consultations, including 28,706 attending ante/post-natal consultations and 42,027 attending curative consultations

Isolated people in the two largest towns, including invalids, elderly people, IDPs and relatives of the missing, received food and essential household items. Following weather-related damage to buildings in Shushi/a, 132 vulnerable people received tents, clothing and blankets.

- 1,200 people received food and essential household items

Families provide data to help trace their relatives

RCMs remained the only means for some family members separated by the conflict to communicate with one another.

The updating and consolidation of lists of missing persons by the State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons progressed. By the end of 2009, a total of 4,558 people were still unaccounted for as a result of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, with 4,153 cases of missing persons being handled by the ICRC in Azerbaijan.

In line with agreements concluded in 2008 with the State Commission and the Azerbaijani Red Crescent, the collection of ante-mortem data from the families of missing persons continued. National Society volunteers received in-depth ICRC training in data-collection techniques and ways of dealing with the psychological impacts of the collection process on the families. Although there were some difficulties in tracing families, over 1,200 families living in the Baku area, some 780 families in western Azerbaijan and some 60 families in central and southern Azerbaijan completed questionnaires and provided other documents. The National Society provided a telephone support service, and events were held with families to commemorate missing relatives.

In Nagorny Karabakh, the *de facto* authorities were assisted in improving the capacity of the working group on data collection and consolidation, with a member attending a database-management training course in Moscow, Russian Federation, alongside two representatives from the Azerbaijani State Commission. Families of the missing in Nagorny Karabakh provided ante-mortem data to the ICRC, and a survey was conducted to assess their economic vulnerability and needs.

Public campaigns helped to raise awareness of the issue of missing persons and the plight of their families (see *Civil society*).

- 56 RCMs collected from and 54 RCMs distributed to civilians; 14 calls facilitated between family members
- new tracing requests registered for 101 people (16 women; 2 minors at the time of disappearance); 4,153 people (353 women; 97 minors at the time of disappearance) still being sought

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Detainees in detention facilities under the authority of the Interior, Justice and National Security Ministries, including people detained in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, were visited by the ICRC according to its standard working procedures. The authorities were provided with confidential feedback and reminded of their responsibility to ensure that conditions of detention met internationally recognized standards.

Detainees were able to correspond with their families via RCMs, while families in Nagorny Karabakh received ICRC financial support to visit their relatives in prison. At the request of all parties, the remains of one Armenian soldier were transferred from Azerbaijan to his family in Nagorny Karabakh, with the ICRC acting as a neutral intermediary.

Vulnerable foreign detainees received clothing and personal items, female detainees were given personal hygiene items and others benefited from donations of books and games. Where necessary, detainees in Nagorny Karabakh received medicines, food and clothes.

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- 13,881 detainees visited, of whom 135 monitored individually (1 minor) and 51 newly registered (1 minor), during 65 visits to 31 places of detention
- 76 RCMs collected from and 43 RCMs distributed to detainees; 20 phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a relative detained

In relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict

- in Azerbaijan, 7 POWs visited and monitored individually, including 6 newly registered, during 8 visits to 1 place of detention
- in Nagorny Karabakh, 1 POW registered, visited and monitored individually, during 3 visits to 1 place of detention; 3 RCMs collected from and 1 RCM distributed to the POW
- 11 phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a relative detained
- 4 detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC support

Detainees with TB and other health problems receive treatment

The authorities pursued efforts to tackle the MDR TB epidemic in prisons, with ICRC technical and financial support, including for the implementation of a directly observed treatment, short course (DOTS)-plus pilot project. The Health and Justice Ministries cooperated to develop joint policies to address MDR TB throughout society through a national working group and attended coordination meetings of international organizations working on TB and HIV alongside the ICRC. A manual on managing MDR TB in prisons was finalized. Following the signing of a memorandum of understanding in March, the Health and Justice Ministries and the ICRC began cooperating in following up 17 detainees with MDR TB after their release, providing them with medical treatment, food and hygiene items, and subsidizing their transport to health facilities.

Penitentiary and civilian doctors and other penitentiary health staff learnt more about the management of MDR TB at WHO-run courses with ICRC support and about HIV/TB co-infection at an ICRC-organized course.

The national reference laboratory opened in May and increased its capacity with ICRC technical, material and training support. Conditions in the prison TB hospital in Baku improved after separate wards were established for infectious and non-infectious patients and sanitation infrastructure was renovated. The Justice Ministry screened detainees, providing treatment where necessary. Until June, ill detainees were given hygiene items and medicines to manage the side-effects of anti-TB drugs by the ICRC, following which the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria took over these activities.

Following an ICRC assessment, 16 disabled detainees received treatment at the Ahmedly Prosthetic Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Centre (APORC) in Baku.

The general public, health workers and potential donors learnt about TB through a piece of drama performed by a local company and funded by the ICRC.

- ▶ 779 detainees began DOTS treatment
- ▶ 458 detainees successfully completed DOTS treatment
- ▶ 96 detainees began DOTS-plus treatment
- ▶ 270 detainees benefited from water/sanitation/habitat projects

WOUNDED AND SICK

APORC, autonomous since 2007 following the cessation of direct ICRC support, maintained contact with the delegation and received a one-off donation of materials. Disabled Chechen refugees benefited from an ICRC donation of two wheelchairs to a local organization.

Labour and Social Protection Ministry officials and staff of APORC and the physical rehabilitation centre in Nagorny Karabakh learnt more about rehabilitation and reintegration services for mine victims at workshops and seminars abroad. Two military surgeons from Nagorny Karabakh also improved their skills and knowledge at the yearly ICRC war- and emergency-survival seminar in Vladikavkaz, Russian Federation.

AUTHORITIES

The authorities continued to discuss accession to and implementation of IHL treaties with the ICRC, which encouraged them to create a national IHL committee. The authorities and the ICRC co-organized a round-table for parliamentarians, ministry officials and NGO staff to consider a law to protect the rights of missing persons and their families, at which a study on the issue, commissioned by the ICRC in 2008, was presented. National experts began work on updating Azerbaijan's input to the ICRC study on customary IHL. Improved Azerbaijani translations of the Rome Statute and the Hague Convention on Cultural Property and its two Protocols were published.

Representatives of the Culture, Foreign Affairs and Tourism Ministries discussed IHL and learnt about the ICRC at the second Commonwealth of Independent States regional seminar on IHL implementation held in St Petersburg, Russian Federation (see *Moscow*) and an IHL course in Poland.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The military authorities in Azerbaijan and the ICRC discussed progress made on the integration of IHL into the training of the armed forces, as well as their duty under IHL to protect civilians and detainees and ensure ICRC access to vulnerable populations. Planned IHL train-the-trainer courses did not go ahead as the authorities preferred to focus on other training. Air force and army lawyers and officers gained knowledge of IHL during ICRC-organized courses, including in Nagorny Karabakh, while navy officers attended an ICRC course for the first time to learn about IHL relevant to conflict at sea.

IHL-related topics were integrated into military training curricula and the military school for interior troops with ICRC input and advice. Officers and trainers under the responsibility of the Interior Ministry increased their awareness and knowledge of IHL, international human rights law and the ICRC's mandate and activities during ICRC-organized courses.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The media continued to promote public awareness of humanitarian issues, drawing on ICRC press releases, briefings, newsletters and courses. Journalists reported on ICRC and National Society activities in regions along the Line of Contact and the international border with Armenia, including water projects and the construction of safe play areas for children. The round-table on a law on missing persons and their families also received coverage (see *Authorities*), while national and local radio and television stations aired ICRC broadcasts on the ante-mortem data-collection project (see *Civilians*). Journalists in front-line areas learnt about their rights under IHL and international human rights law at an ICRC workshop.

NGOs working with families of missing persons cooperated with the ICRC to increase awareness of the issue. The ICRC did not seek contacts with religious leaders owing to the new law for religious organizations (see *Context*).

Education reforms progressed and representatives of the Education Ministry in charge of developing new curricula consulted the ICRC on the integration of IHL into the new secondary school textbooks. These representatives, along with teachers and advisers from the Institute of Educational Problems, learnt more about IHL at ICRC-organized workshops and received a CD-ROM on teaching IHL. Schoolchildren in Nagorny Karabakh learnt about the history of the ICRC and IHL through a performance staged by pupils as part of the “Our world. Your move.” communication campaign.

For the first time, civil servants attended ICRC presentations given at the request of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy. Baku State University included IHL in its journalism curriculum, with ICRC advice. Students of the National Academy of Aviation and Azerbaijan University of Languages, law students in Nagorny Karabakh, and IHL lecturers learnt more about IHL and the ICRC at dissemination sessions and seminars run by the ICRC, as well as on courses abroad.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Azerbaijani Red Crescent, with Movement support, continued to respond to the needs of people affected by conflict. Meetings between the National Society, the International Federation and the ICRC increased the efficiency of joint activities.

The collection of ante-mortem data from families of the missing progressed (see *Civilians*). The National Society handled non-conflict-related tracing cases, using tracing guidelines and procedures for field branches drafted with ICRC support.

Volunteers refreshed their knowledge of the Movement and its Fundamental Principles, basic IHL principles, the emblem and the Safer Access approach at an ICRC-funded workshop, and relayed information on these topics to the general public.

Backed by ICRC technical support, the National Society worked with the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) and others involved in mine action to collect data on mine-related incidents and assessed the needs of families following such incidents with a view to providing the necessary support. It conducted a mine-action workshop for branches along the front line and constructed three new safe play areas for children in mine-affected regions, with support from ANAMA, the Azerbaijan Campaign to Ban Landmines and the ICRC.