

AZERBAIJAN



EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	1,797
Assistance	4,470
Prevention	668
Cooperation with National Societies	278
General	-

► **7,213**

of which: Overheads 440

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	98%
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PERSONNEL

Expatriates	11
National staff (daily workers not included)	54

KEY POINTS

In 2012, the ICRC:

- monitored the situation of civilians living near the Line of Contact and the international border with Armenia, raising IHL concerns with the authorities whenever necessary
- assisted the authorities in managing ante-mortem data and preparing a DNA-sample collection to help clarify the fate of people missing in relation to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict
- in partnership with local NGOs and service providers, enabled families of the missing to access comprehensive support for their multifaceted needs
- with the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan and the British Red Cross, helped improve the living conditions of people in villages near the Line of Contact, including through water and livelihood-assistance projects
- acted as a neutral intermediary in the repatriation of 1 civilian internee from Armenia to Azerbaijan, while promoting Azerbaijan's prison TB-management programme as a model in the region
- raised awareness of IHL/internationally recognized law enforcement standards among the armed forces, the police and interior troops, integrating key messages covered by the Health Care in Danger project

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, and works to protect and assist communities living along the Line of Contact and the international border with Armenia. It promotes implementation of IHL and its integration into armed and security forces' training and into academic curricula. The ICRC works in partnership with and aims to strengthen the capacities of the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan.

CONTEXT

A tripartite meeting between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, mediated by the president of the Russian Federation, and several meetings with the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, concluded with no progress made in finding a peaceful solution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, despite an official consensus on the need to strengthen confidence-building measures.

Tensions remained high along the Line of Contact and the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Incidents of cross-border fire and the presence of mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW) continued to pose a danger to civilians living in the area, in addition to causing both military and civilian casualties and exacerbating political tensions between the two countries.

On the internal scene, protests held by the political opposition took place, mainly in Baku. The Azerbaijani government continued to face pressure from the international community and NGOs to ensure better respect for human rights principles. In July, Nagorno Karabakh's general elections resulted in a victory for the incumbent *de facto* president.

Economically, Azerbaijan benefited from oil and gas revenues, while Nagorno Karabakh remained heavily dependent on aid from its diaspora and subsidies from Armenia.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC continued working to alleviate the humanitarian consequences in Azerbaijan of the unresolved Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Regular field visits enabled it to monitor the situation of civilians living near the Line of Contact and on both sides of the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, when necessary raising concerns with the relevant authorities and reminding them of their obligations under IHL.

Resolving the fate of people who went missing during the conflict remained a priority. The ICRC continued to assist the authorities in setting up a centralized system for the management of ante-mortem data collected from the families of missing persons, providing technical support throughout the process. It also worked with them on preparing for the planned collection of DNA samples from relatives of the missing, with a view to preserving as much information as possible to facilitate future efforts to identify human remains and, upon matching with the ante-mortem data, provide answers to the families.

Main figures and indicators	PROTECTION		Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)			
Red Cross messages (RCMs)		UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected	26		
RCMs distributed	31		
Phone calls facilitated between family members	57		
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons		Women	Minors
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	23	6	
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	1		
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)	4,191	344	93
Documents			
People to whom travel documents were issued	44		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)			
ICRC visits		Women	Minors
Detainees visited and monitored individually ¹	72	1	3
Detainees newly registered	49		
Number of visits carried out	37		
Number of places of detention visited	16		
Restoring family links			
RCMs collected	37		
RCMs distributed	35		
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	30		
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	4		

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

1. Including one POW held in Nagorny Karabakh before being transferred to Armenia

While encouraging the authorities to meet the needs of families of the missing, including through the adoption of a law protecting their rights, the ICRC partnered with local NGOs and service providers and, through training and other support, enabled them to address the multifaceted needs of families of missing persons in Baku and along the Line of Contact and the international border.

In partnership with the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan and the British Red Cross, the ICRC continued to implement activities to help strengthen the coping mechanisms and reinforce the self-protective measures of people living in villages along the Line of Contact. These included improving their access to water for drinking and irrigation, providing them with livelihood opportunities and repairing their homes to afford them better protection against cross-border fire.

In Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC provided families of missing persons and mine/ERW victims with psychological support, livelihood assistance and home rehabilitation. It also distributed food and hygiene items to vulnerable urban residents, such as the elderly and the disabled, to help them meet their basic needs.

In parallel, ICRC delegates visited people deprived of their freedom, including those held in connection with the conflict, to monitor their treatment and living conditions, and provided confidential feedback to the authorities. In its capacity as a neutral intermediary and upon the request of all parties concerned, it facilitated the repatriation of a civilian internee from Armenia to Azerbaijan. It continued to support and promote Azerbaijan's model of prison TB management within the region.

Humanitarian issues stemming from the conflict remained central to the ICRC's dialogue with the authorities, including the *de facto* authorities in Nagorny Karabakh. Work towards the integration of IHL into military training and operations moved forward with IHL presentations and workshops for senior Defence Ministry officers and members of the military academy. Contacts with the media helped improve their coverage of ICRC activities, thus raising public awareness of the plight of conflict-affected people, while continued

support to academic institutions helped foster wider interest in IHL. The ICRC maintained its support to the Azerbaijani Red Crescent to help strengthen its capacities in the areas of emergency preparedness, restoring family links, IHL dissemination, assistance to conflict-affected people, including mine/ERW victims, and fundraising.

CIVILIANS

Civilians living along of the Line of Contact and the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, including IDPs in temporary settlements, faced continued insecurity caused by cross-border fire and the presence of mines/ERW. Through field trips to border regions and contacts with local communities, civil and military authorities and National Society branches, the ICRC kept abreast of the humanitarian situation in these areas and monitored respect for IHL, raising civilians' concerns with the relevant authorities, including the *de facto* authorities in Nagorny Karabakh. When necessary, written representations reminded the authorities of their obligations under IHL, in particular the protection of civilians, including IDPs.

Conflict-affected communities meet their needs

Aside from threatening their physical safety and limiting their day-to-day movements, the prevailing insecurity hampered access to land, water and means of livelihood for people living near the Line of Contact. Through a tripartite operational partnership, the Azerbaijani Red Crescent, the British Red Cross and the ICRC supported the coping mechanisms of these communities by helping them improve their living conditions and empowering them to provide for their own needs in a sustainable way.

Some 500 vulnerable households (2,300 individuals) in 10 villages and 1 IDP settlement received grants for small businesses or agricultural/livestock activities, and cash to cover their immediate needs. This model of economic support was adopted after initial plans to provide micro-credit schemes proved less viable.

In seven other villages, over 1,550 households (some 6,990 individuals) benefited from community projects developed with their own input. These included the rehabilitation of public infrastructure

Main figures and indicators	ASSISTANCE	Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	815	64%	16%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	65		
Essential household items ¹	Beneficiaries	1,022	60%	12%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	65		
Productive inputs ¹	Beneficiaries	7,031	49%	23%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	844		
Cash	Beneficiaries	2,908	51%	23%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	2,001		
Work, services and training	Beneficiaries	5		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	4,474	40%	20%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	2,400		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection programme)¹				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	111		

1. Owing to operational and management constraints, figures presented in this table and in the narrative part of this report may not reflect all activities carried out during the reporting period

and of boreholes for irrigation, the construction of sanitation facilities, and the provision of tents for holding local ceremonies. Three unemployed youths attended vocational training to help them find jobs or start their own businesses.

In Goranboy district, residents lived in constant fear of stray bullets from cross-border fire; community meetings enabled them to identify self-protective measures against the risks they faced. With ICRC material and labour support, eight families (32 individuals) improved the safety of their homes by constructing protective walls.

Over 2,000 residents and 2,400 IDPs enjoyed better and safer access to water for drinking and irrigation thanks to 11 new water supply structures constructed with the cooperation of national agencies and local water boards. In addition, four water-pumping stations were rehabilitated to complement work carried out in 2011. Training in the management/maintenance of these structures and an awareness campaign on their proper use helped ensure the sustainability of these efforts.

National Society/ICRC teams continued to work with the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) in collecting data on mine/ERW-related incidents and the needs of families who had lost breadwinners as a result of such incidents; similar assessments were carried out and completed by the ICRC in Nagorny Karabakh. Efforts to encourage the authorities – including the *de facto* authorities – and relevant organizations to meet the needs of mine/ERW-affected and other vulnerable families continued. In the meantime, the Azerbaijani Red Crescent/ICRC themselves provided economic assistance to 13 vulnerable families (around 60 people) in the form of productive inputs for livestock activities. In Nagorny Karabakh, some 50 mine/ERW victims and their families (256 people) in Hadrut/Khojavand and Martakert/Aghdara received grants to kick-start their own income-generating activities, while three families (16 people) saw improved living conditions following repairs to their homes. Some 330 particularly vulnerable people – including the elderly and the disabled – and their families (815 people in total) benefited from three distributions of food parcels and hygiene kits during the year.

To develop their competencies in assessing and addressing the needs of conflict-affected people, five National Society staff attended workshops on implementing economic assistance activities, in partnership with the ICRC, and on mine victim assistance, in cooperation with ANAMA.

Families of the missing receive comprehensive support

At the end of December, 4,627 people remained unaccounted for as a result of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, with 4,191 people registered as missing in Azerbaijan, including in Nagorny Karabakh.

Many families struggled to live with the torment of not knowing the fate of their missing relatives, often suffering from feelings of isolation and hopelessness, in part owing to the lack of official recognition of their status and specific needs. The ICRC continued its comprehensive support programme aimed at facilitating their access to NGOs and service providers able to address their psychological, social and legal needs. Following an assessment of the situation of some 400 families in Baku and in areas along the Line of Contact and the international border, some families received psychological support during counselling/peer group sessions and follow-up home visits conducted by specially trained social workers and mental health practitioners. Around 250 families benefited from referrals to free medical services provided by the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Fourteen people received training in counselling techniques so they could help vulnerable relatives cope during difficult times. In addition to mobilizing community support, including through commemoration events organized by the families themselves, the programme also saw the direct involvement of the authorities, which took referrals of families seeking social and legal assistance. The ICRC continued to impress upon the authorities the need to adopt a law protecting these families' rights, including their entitlement to medical and socio-economic benefits.

In Nagorny Karabakh, family gatherings/support groups facilitated by ICRC-trained local partners helped families cope better with their psychological distress. They also learnt about their social and legal benefits through leaflets produced following a panel discussion with the *de facto* authorities on the problems they faced. Due to the difficult economic conditions and high unemployment rate, micro-credits were not distributed as planned. Nevertheless, small business grants gave some 60 vulnerable families (319 people) the means to supplement their income and improve their standard of living. Eight households headed by the elderly (17 people in total) enjoyed better living conditions thanks to a joint home rehabilitation programme with the *de facto* Construction Ministry, while seven other families benefited from ad hoc assistance.

Efforts to clarify the fate of missing persons continue

Electronic files containing some 4,000 ante-mortem data questionnaires completed by families of missing persons and

collected by National Society/ICRC teams between 2008 and 2011, together with their translations, photographs and other relevant documents, continued to be prepared for handover to the authorities. Of these files, 336 related to people missing in Armenia and over 3,600 to people missing in Azerbaijan, including Nagorny Karabakh. The Azerbaijani State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons (CEPOD) – and, in Nagorny Karabakh, the *de facto* CEPOD – progressively received these files for input into the centralized ante/post-mortem database, with ICRC technical support. At the same time, efforts to locate families who were not interviewed during the data collection period continued.

With the aim of preserving key information to facilitate the future identification of exhumed human remains and the provision of answers to families, the Azerbaijani CEPOD, the Ministry of Health and the ICRC prepared draft agreements and forensic operating procedures for the planned collection and storage of DNA samples from relatives of the missing. Discussions on the same were also ongoing with the *de facto* authorities in Nagorny Karabakh. Though originally scheduled to begin implementation in 2012, the project's pilot phase was postponed, as the scale and complexity of the endeavour required an extended preparatory phase and additional forensic resources.

Meanwhile, acting as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC transmitted requests for information concerning missing persons between the Armenian and Azerbaijani CEPODs. Despite ICRC efforts to encourage direct communication, a meeting between the two coordinating mechanisms was not possible owing to the prevailing tensions.

Families restore or maintain contact

With communication lines still not fully restored between Armenia and Azerbaijan, including Nagorny Karabakh, family members separated by the conflict used the ICRC's family-links services, such as RCMs and phone calls, to keep in touch with relatives, including those held in detention facilities (see *People deprived of their freedom*). Members of one family separated by the Line of Contact met one another at an ICRC-facilitated family gathering in Georgia.

The National Society continued to process non-conflict-related cases of separated family members. To improve its services, its tracing coordinator attended training in restoring family links in disasters.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Sporadic captures occurred along the Line of Contact and the international border with Armenia. In total, 72 detainees – including 4 POWs and 5 civilian internees held in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict – received visits, conducted in accordance with the ICRC's standard procedures. During these visits, delegates monitored the detainees' treatment and living conditions to ensure their compliance with IHL and/or internationally recognized standards, and shared their findings and any recommendations confidentially with the relevant authorities. At the request of all parties concerned, one civilian internee was repatriated from Armenia to Azerbaijan, with the ICRC acting as a neutral intermediary.

Detainees maintained contact with their families via RCMs, family parcels, short oral messages and, in the case of foreigners, phone calls. Vulnerable detainees, including POWs, civilian internees, security detainees, women, minors and foreigners, received clothing, hygiene items and educational/recreational materials to help improve their living conditions. In exceptional cases, disabled detainees benefited from prosthetic/orthotic support.

In Nagorny Karabakh, some 220 detainees in pre-trial detention facilities and ordinary prisons benefited from a distribution of hygiene items.

Azerbaijan's TB programme is held up as an example

The ICRC continued promoting Azerbaijan's prison TB-management programme as a model in the region by organizing study tours for foreign government officials, such as the ones conducted for high-level Turkmen officials (see *Tashkent*) and penitentiary service delegations from Kyrgyzstan and the Philippines. An ICRC crew shot a documentary film on the fight against TB in detention, to be used as a training tool for other countries hoping to emulate the success of Azerbaijan's programme. A review of the programme, initially planned for 2012, was postponed to 2013.

AUTHORITIES

The Azerbaijani authorities continued working on the adoption of national implementation measures to protect cultural property in armed conflict, notably by amending the criminal code to bring it in line with obligations deriving from the Hague Convention on Cultural Property. The Azerbaijani parliament continued to work on legislation protecting the rights of families of missing persons (see *Civilians*).

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	AZERBAIJAN	IN AZERBAIJAN, IN RELATION TO THE NAGORNY KARABAKH CONFLICT	NAGORNY KARABAKH
ICRC visits			
Detainees visited and monitored individually	63	8	1 ¹
	<i>of whom women</i>	1	
	<i>of whom minors</i>	3	
Detainees newly registered	48		1
Number of visits carried out ²	23	9	5
Number of places of detention visited ²	12	1	3
Restoring family links			
RCMs collected	28	7	2
RCMs distributed	19	15	1
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	22	8	
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	2	2	

1. POW later transferred to Armenia

2. Including visits not related to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict

Government officials enhanced their knowledge of IHL implementation at a regional seminar in Astana, Kazakhstan (see *Tashkent*). Experts from the Foreign Affairs Ministry contributed to part of a series of ICRC-organized consultations on the “Strengthening IHL” process (see *International law and cooperation*). Over 75 future judges learnt about IHL and its domestic implementation during ICRC presentations at a training event organized by the Judicial-Legal Council.

Humanitarian issues arising from the Nagorny Karabakh conflict remained central to all discussions, in particular the need to: protect civilians, detainees and medical personnel and infrastructure; meet the needs of families of the missing; and ensure ICRC access to conflict-affected populations. On the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, the president of Azerbaijan and the ICRC president discussed humanitarian issues of mutual concern, including the ICRC’s neutral intermediary role and work concerning people deprived of their freedom and missing persons. In May, the authorities of 13 front-line districts convened in an ICRC-organized round-table for the first time, where they raised concerns relating to their proximity to conflict zones and learnt about ICRC activities in the country.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Dialogue with all weapon bearers focused on the need to protect civilians in insecure areas along the Line of Contact and the international border, and aimed to deepen understanding of the ICRC’s mandate so as to secure its access to conflict-affected people.

With ICRC support, the Azerbaijani armed forces pursued the integration of IHL into military doctrine, training, operations and sanctions. At the Defence Ministry’s military academy, lecturers, students, future attachés and representatives of State bodies learnt about IHL and its application in armed conflict during ICRC presentations. High-ranking officers did the same during three interactive five-day workshops conducted by an ICRC expert, with one presentation dedicated to discussing issues encompassed by the Health Care in Danger project. A senior officer deepened his knowledge of IHL at a course in San Remo.

Cooperation with the Interior Ministry continued, with workshops taking place for police officers and interior troops on internationally recognized standards applicable to their functions, and presentations on IHL and the Movement given for officers/cadets at the school for interior troops.

In Nagorny Karabakh, some 700 military personnel positioned along the Line of Contact learnt IHL basics through ICRC dissemination sessions and related publications. The *de facto* military’s medical service received manuals on war surgery and first aid. Over 250 police officers learnt about internationally recognized law enforcement standards during ICRC presentations.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Workshops for journalists helped enhance media coverage of ICRC activities and thereby raise public awareness of humanitarian issues related to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. Using press releases and other updates, the media regularly reported on ICRC action for people deprived of their freedom and families of missing persons, including commemoration events on the International Day of the Disappeared.

The development of interest/expertise in IHL among academic circles continued. Secondary school students gained access to over 3,000 copies of related publications donated to National Society branches. In Baku State University, the schools of law and journalism also received IHL materials; students at the latter participated in an ICRC presentation on the protection of journalists in armed conflict, while lecturers delivered a new course, “IHL and Journalism”, developed with ICRC-provided reference material. Two University of Nagorny Karabakh law students who demonstrated an interest in the subject received sponsorship to attend an international IHL conference (see *Armenia*).

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Azerbaijani Red Crescent, the British Red Cross and the ICRC continued their coordinated multidisciplinary response to the needs of people affected by conflict, including IDPs (see *Civilians*).

The National Society also received material, financial, technical and training support to reinforce its capacities in restoring family links, emergency preparedness, first-aid training, fundraising and public communication on the Movement. It worked on a contingency plan to define its capacities and build up its role, both within the Movement and among other agencies, in disaster management and response. Two staff members went on an ICRC-financed study visit to the Turkish Red Crescent Society, while six others participated in a fundraising and resource mobilization workshop, in a bid to strengthen the Azerbaijani Red Crescent’s financial security and thus ensure the sustainability of its humanitarian activities.