



azerbaijan

The ICRC has been working in Azerbaijan since 1992 in relation to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. It focuses on addressing the issue of missing persons and the problems of detainees held in connection with the conflict, detained for security reasons or otherwise vulnerable, and monitors the situation of communities along the Line of Contact. It supports the authorities in bringing the spread of tuberculosis in prisons under control and ensuring the provision of adequate physical rehabilitation services for the disabled. The ICRC promotes the national implementation of IHL and its integration into the training of the armed and security forces and into university and school curricula. It works to strengthen the capacities of the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan.

EXPENDITURE (IN CHF ,000)

Protection	1,525
Assistance	1,719
Prevention	1,220
Cooperation with National Societies	221
General	-

► **4,685**

of which: Overheads 286

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	97.2%
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PERSONNEL

9 expatriates
56 national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2005, the ICRC:

- submitted a set of proposals to the authorities with a view to clarifying the fate of persons missing in relation to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and ultimately to providing answers to their families; conducted a name-by-name comparison of the ICRC's list of missing persons with the authorities' list in order to reach a consolidated list;
- positioned itself as an actor in conflict-affected areas of the country by establishing a more permanent presence along the international border/Line of Contact and by supporting the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan in the implementation of the Safe Play Areas programme;
- pursued efforts to obtain access to 6 Armenian POWs held in Azerbaijan and visited one of them; visited 3 Azerbaijani POWs detained in Nagorno Karabakh in connection with the conflict and participated in their repatriation;
- visited 34 places of detention to monitor conditions, including the functioning of the health system, and maintained support to the TB control programme in prisons;
- supported IHL training for the armed forces, notably improving cooperation with the Ministry of Defence; held the second national IHL moot-court competition for law students as part of its efforts to promote IHL.

CONTEXT

Azerbaijan continued to tread a fine line between the conflicting geopolitical interests of Russia, the United States, Turkey, Iran and Europe. The country's energy sector remained in the international spotlight, particularly with the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. Azerbaijan signed an Individual Partnership Action Plan with NATO and was included in the European Union's European Neighbourhood Policy. Military cooperation with the United States intensified with the announcement that two radar stations were to be established with US support in northern and southern Azerbaijan. Although the Azerbaijani authorities repeatedly stated that these radar stations would not be used against any neighbouring countries, both Iran and Russia expressed their concerns. In parallel, Baku intensified cooperation with Iran and Russia in the economic, military and energy spheres.

Domestically, the year was dominated by a sense of uncertainty linked to the November parliamentary elections. According to international election monitors (from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Council of Europe), excluding ones from the Commonwealth of Independent States, the elections did not meet a number of international standards. The results were nevertheless accepted by the major powers, which identified some improvements over previous elections.

Eleven years after a ceasefire was concluded in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, encouraging developments seemed to take place within the framework of the Prague Process. The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan held talks twice during the year, and the foreign ministers met numerous times. According to a statement by the 13th Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), adopted in December 2005, talks on the resolution of the conflict were poised to make the transition from negotiation to decision. The OSCE Minsk Group, mediating between the two sides, expressed hope that a breakthrough might be achieved in 2006 leading to a lasting settlement.

At the same time, tensions were reported throughout the year along the international border/Line of Contact, particularly in the spring. The authorities of both Armenia and Azerbaijan continued to use militant rhetoric for domestic consumption.

Following a proposal by Azerbaijan for a new UN resolution entitled "Situation in the occupied territories", an OSCE fact-finding mission took place in January 2005 to assess the issue of settlements. The mission found evidence of the presence of settlers in the territories examined but – excepting Lachin – did not determine that such settlements resulted from a deliberate policy by the Armenian authorities.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM		
Detainees visited	15,106	<i>Water and habitat</i>		
Detainees visited and monitored individually	177	Water-supply schemes and sanitation systems (completed projects)	Beneficiaries	600
Number of visits carried out	101	Habitat structures	Beneficiaries	600
Number of places of detention visited	42	WOUNDED AND SICK		
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS		<i>Physical rehabilitation</i>		
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>		Patients receiving services	Patients	9,280
RCMs collected	122	Prostheses delivered	Pieces	1,248
RCMs distributed	114	Orthoses delivered	Pieces	2,397
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>				
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	467			
Tracing requests closed positively (persons located)	9			
Tracing requests still being handled at 31 December 2005	3,478			
DOCUMENTS ISSUED				
People to whom travel documents were issued	64			
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	2			

ICRC ACTION

The fate of people missing as a result of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict continued to be the major focus of the ICRC in Azerbaijan. To help resolve this issue, the ICRC pursued efforts to foster a dialogue between all parties concerned, reminding them of their obligations under IHL and presenting them with proposals on ways to advance the process.

In addition to monitoring the general conditions in places of detention, the ICRC further mobilized national partners and involved potential new donors and stakeholders in its programme to tackle high levels of tuberculosis (TB) among inmates. In all places of detention visited, while continuing to keep a close eye on vulnerable groups, including those serving life sentences, foreigners, women and juveniles, the ICRC shifted its attention to addressing structural problems, particularly in the field of detainee health care.

The ICRC continued to provide support to certain health services, notably in the sphere of physical rehabilitation.

As planned, support to the authorities in the implementation of IHL, as well as the promotion of IHL among the armed and security forces, secondary-school pupils and university students, remained a priority for the ICRC. Particular progress was noted in terms of improved cooperation with the Ministry of Defence in the integration of IHL into military doctrine and training.

The ICRC strengthened its collaboration with the Azerbaijani Red Crescent through the operational partnership in the Safe Play

Areas programme. These activities and a more regular presence along the international border/Line of Contact helped the ICRC increase its knowledge of the humanitarian situation in conflict-affected communities.

CIVILIANS

Missing persons

Thousands of families remained without news of the fate or whereabouts of relatives missing as a result of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. The ICRC conducted a name-by-name comparison of its list of missing persons with the authorities' list and contacted the families of those people who were not on its own list in order to reach a consolidated list. By the end of the year, the ICRC's list of missing persons from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh contained 3,478 names.

► 467 new tracing requests registered

The ICRC presented all parties with a memorandum outlining proposals for addressing the issue of the missing in a comprehensive fashion. The Azerbaijani authorities formally approved most of the proposals and, consequently, the ICRC initiated discussions with them on implementation, focusing on ante-mortem data collection and psychological support for families. The authorities agreed that volunteers of the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan would carry out the ante-mortem data collection, with technical support from the ICRC, while the authorities would be responsible for managing the information collected.

Difficulties were encountered in finding structures able to provide adequate psychological support to the families of missing persons. An ICRC survey of the needs of families of the missing showed, however, that they considered their main problems to be financial rather than psychological.

In Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC encouraged the *de facto* authorities to establish a working group on missing persons in order to implement its proposals. In addition, the organization supported the creation of a burial site for unidentified human remains. Six sets of human remains were subsequently interred at the site, with plastic sheeting and reference tags provided by the ICRC to allow for possible later identification.

Family links

The ICRC issued travel documents to 64 people, mainly Afghan refugees, who had been accepted for resettlement in a third country or were returning to Afghanistan. In Nagorny Karabakh, it helped two people to obtain such documents.

Given the disruption of postal and telephone services between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh, the RCM network was the only way for some people to maintain contact with family members from whom they had become separated as a result of conflict.

► 4 RCMs collected in Azerbaijan
► 82 RCMs collected and 84 distributed in Nagorny Karabakh

Conflict-affected communities

The ICRC undertook eight field missions to front-line areas. These missions enabled it to gain a better understanding of the situation faced by populations living there and to prepare for the reopening of an office.

The ICRC also resumed its involvement in mine action, working in close cooperation with the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action and the Azerbaijan Campaign to Ban Landmines. As part of the Safe Play Areas programme, the ICRC provided operational support to the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan in the construction of mine-free playgrounds for children in 15 villages.

In Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC conducted three distributions of essential household items (soap, washing powder and school kits) and food parcels to some 400 vulnerable people (300 pensioners, 40 disabled persons, 60 members of families of missing persons).

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

The ICRC continued to visit people held in connection with the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh and to monitor the conditions of detention and treatment of detainees. It regularly visited three Azerbaijani soldiers detained by the *de facto* authorities of Nagorny Karabakh and later participated in their repatriation.

The ICRC pursued its dialogue with the Azerbaijani authorities to obtain unrestricted access to people detained in relation to the conflict. Of the six Armenian POWs held by the Ministry of Defence during the year, the ICRC obtained access to one and helped him to remain in contact with his family. The organization also helped two Armenian civilians who had crossed the international border to return home.

In Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC provided particularly vulnerable detainees with food items and clothing. Financial assistance was given to 10 families to facilitate visits to their detained relatives.

- in Azerbaijan, 13,991 detainees visited (including 50 detainees newly registered and 168 monitored individually) during 73 visits to 34 places of detention
- in Nagorny Karabakh, 1,115 detainees visited (including 8 detainees newly registered and 9 monitored individually) during 28 visits to 8 places of detention

- 15 RCMs collected from and 11 distributed to detainees in Azerbaijan
- 21 RCMs collected from and 19 distributed to detainees in Nagorny Karabakh

TB control programme

The prevalence of TB and high rates of multi-drug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) among detainees remained a serious problem in Azerbaijan. The ICRC maintained its firm commitment to building the capacities of the relevant authorities to implement the directly observed treatment, short course (DOTS) regime, including the laboratory requirements for this programme. Azerbaijan's application to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria for funding for a five-year TB programme, including a pilot project in prisons to treat 100 MDR-TB cases, was approved.

The ICRC donated a mobile mass miniature radiographic unit to the Ministry of Justice, allowing more than a third of the total prison population of Azerbaijan (5,816 detainees/prisoners) to be screened for TB.

In terms of structural improvements, seven projects to rehabilitate specialized units, such as X-ray facilities, and to refurbish nurses' and visitors' rooms were carried out with ICRC support.

Furthermore, in an effort to ensure that released detainees were registered for treatment in civilian TB facilities, the ICRC visited the Baku and Sumgait TB dispensaries in order to identify potential obstacles. Thus, of the 154 detainees released while under TB treatment in 2005, 91 of them were registered in civilian TB dispensaries. A pilot project was developed to involve six Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan nurses in follow-up of and support to released detainees.

In cooperation with WHO, the ICRC organized regional training in TB surveillance, monitoring and supervision, sponsoring the participation of doctors from the Azerbaijani Ministry of Justice, as well as from Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Doctors, nurses and laboratory technicians from the Ministry of Justice benefited from a variety of specialized training sessions and workshops supported by the ICRC.

In December, the Ministry of Justice and the ICRC marked 10 years of collaboration in bringing TB under control in prisons of Azerbaijan, whereby 7,063 inmates

diagnosed with TB had been treated. The minister of justice and the minister of health participated in the event, and a study tour was organized to the prison TB hospital for representatives of the government, diplomatic community and international agencies to solicit continued commitment to the programme.

In line with WHO recommendations, the ICRC encouraged the authorities also to take HIV/AIDS into account and stressed the importance of combating TB and AIDS jointly.

- 5,816 detainees screened for TB, with 81 integrated into treatment
- 6,677 detainees screened for TB in 3 pre-trial isolators and 1 high-security prison, with 99 TB cases detected
- 769 detainees integrated into DOTS treatment
- 751 detainees completed TB treatment
- 14 doctors, nurses and laboratory technicians from the Ministry of Justice trained in TB diagnosis, treatment and epidemiology

WOUNDED AND SICK

Physical rehabilitation

The ICRC sought to ensure that amputees and other disabled people had access to good-quality rehabilitation services. The organization maintained its support to the Ahmedly Orthopaedic Centre in Baku, as well as the two physical rehabilitation centres in Ganja and Nakhichevan. It also encouraged Red Crescent branches to assist in raising awareness of the physical rehabilitation services available.

At a joint evaluation and planning seminar, the ICRC and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection analysed the previously agreed plan of action on physical rehabilitation and discussed ways of moving the programme forward. The ICRC also financed an external evaluation of physical rehabilitation services in Azerbaijan.

In addition, the ICRC provided crutches to 18 Chechen amputees and a wheelchair to a disabled Chechen woman, before the authorities decided to allow access for refugees to free-of-charge physical rehabilitation services in the Baku centre. In order to ensure access and quality of services, the ICRC accompanied 10 Chechen patients to the centre.

- 3 physical rehabilitation centres supported

- ▶ 9,280 patients, including 5,383 amputees, received services at 3 ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centres
- ▶ 203 new patients fitted with prostheses and 450 with orthoses
- ▶ 1,248 prostheses (125 for mine victims), 2,397 orthoses, 4,058 crutches and sticks and 210 wheelchairs delivered to patients
- ▶ 8 technical monitoring missions carried out (3 in Baku, 3 in Ganja and 2 in Nakhichevan)
- ▶ 2 seminars on prosthesis production held (1 in Baku and 1 in Ganja), attended by 9 technicians
- ▶ a one-month course in scoliosis treatment (physiotherapy and corset production) organized

To improve the care of victims of mines and explosive remnants of war, the ICRC sponsored the participation of four surgeons from the Azerbaijani Ministries of Defence and Health and three from Nagorny Karabakh, as well as three from Armenia, in its annual regional war-surgery seminars in Sochi, Russia.

Support to primary-health-care facilities in Nagorny Karabakh

In Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC concentrated on distributing drugs and renewable medical items to rural health centres. Drug-management procedures were monitored during distributions, and feedback was given on the reporting procedures.

- ▶ 65 health-care facilities in Nagorny Karabakh supported
- ▶ basic medical materials donated to the Stepanakert/Khankendi Spinal Rehabilitation Centre, an old people's home, a hospital, a pre-trial detention facility and a prison
- ▶ anti-helminthic medication provided for a campaign to combat the prevalence of intestinal parasites in schoolchildren
- ▶ training material provided for first-aid training sessions for firefighters, emergency health workers, education staff and volunteers from the general public (48 participants in 4 courses)

AUTHORITIES

The ICRC maintained contact with the Azerbaijani authorities regarding the incorporation of IHL provisions into national legislation. In particular, discussions were held with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on government plans to establish an inter-ministerial committee for the implementation of IHL.

The ICRC commissioned a national study on the compatibility of Azerbaijani legislation with the requirements under IHL for the protection of cultural property. A proposal was made to set up a working group within the State Commission for the Protection of Cultural Property. Another study on the compatibility of existing legislation with the provisions of IHL on missing persons, also commissioned by the ICRC, was completed.

A one-day workshop on the ICRC's mandate and IHL was conducted for employees of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights of Azerbaijan. Also, two State officials participated in an IHL round-table in Moscow.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The Azerbaijani minister of defence met the ICRC to express his ministry's wish to increase cooperation. The ICRC thus provided the authorities with a model ministerial order on IHL integration. It also met the assistant to the president on military and security issues and ministerial legal experts to discuss IHL integration within the armed forces.

- ▶ 31 officers from the combat training, operational, legal and education departments of the armed forces of Azerbaijan took part in 2 five-day IHL courses
- ▶ some 350 officers, cadets and teachers from the Higher Naval School attended a presentation on IHL and ICRC activities
- ▶ 2 officers from the Ministry of Defence participated in an IHL course in San Remo
- ▶ 2 officers from the Ministry of Defence participated in Senezh IHL training in Moscow
- ▶ a cadet team from the Azerbaijan Higher Military School took part in the Yaroslav Mudriy IHL competition in Odessa, Russian Federation

- ▶ a retired officer from the Ministry of Defence hired to facilitate understanding of IHL training and the teaching needs of the armed forces
- ▶ basic information on IHL published in the official newspaper of the Ministry of Defence, and 1,200 copies of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Additional Protocols distributed
- ▶ 14 officers from the internal troops, including commanders and chiefs of staff of regiments and line battalions, participated in a three-day IHL course
- ▶ 14 police officers from the operational, legal and education departments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs took part in a five-day course on IHL and international human rights law
- ▶ 2 officers from the internal troops and 2 teachers from the Police Academy participated in a course on IHL and international human rights law in Moscow
- ▶ in Nagorny Karabakh, 13 arms bearers responsible for combat training attended a five-day IHL course

CIVIL SOCIETY

The ICRC maintained regular contact with the media in Azerbaijan in order to ensure coverage of issues of importance to the organization. It issued and distributed quarterly newsletters and regular press releases on its activities. An exhibition on IHL was mounted for World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day on 8 May, and a film on the history of the Movement, *Story of an idea*, was dubbed into Azerbaijani and shown during the event. A documentary film on the TB control programme in prisons was produced in Azerbaijani and shown at the event marking the 10th anniversary of ICRC-Ministry of Justice collaboration.

Ten years after the launch of the ICRC's secondary-school IHL programme, pupils throughout Azerbaijan continued to learn about humanitarian principles via literature-based course books on IHL themes. Four hours' worth of IHL topics were included in the obligatory curriculum. The ICRC continued to reinforce national capacity to teach IHL through a series of tailor-made courses.

In Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC held an IHL course for 14 education officials and conducted 11 teacher-training seminars.

IHL was included in the curricula of six third-level institutions, as well as in the State educational standards for international law

faculties in Azerbaijan. The ICRC delivered presentations on IHL and ICRC activities to law students of two Baku universities and one university in Nakhichevan. Besides sponsoring the participation of university students and teachers in events such as an IHL round-table and summer school in Moscow and the Martens Readings scientific conference in St. Petersburg, the ICRC held a second national IHL moot-court competition for students of law and international relations.

In Nagorny Karabakh, the main university-level institution continued to teach 24 hours of IHL to third-year law students and hosted two IHL dissemination sessions given by the ICRC. The ICRC also maintained contact with two private universities, each of which conducted IHL courses.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The ICRC continued to support the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan in its tracing and dissemination activities.

As part of its mine action activities, the ICRC focused on enhancing its long-term partnership with the National Society and, in particular, implementing the Safe Play Areas programme, resulting in the construction of 15 secure children's playgrounds in villages along the Line of Contact.