



azerbaijan

The ICRC has been working in Azerbaijan, in the context of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, since 1992. 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. It supports the authorities in bringing the spread of tuberculosis in prisons under control. It also promotes the national implementation of IHL and its integration into the training of the armed and security forces and into university and school curricula. In addition, the ICRC assists the health authorities in making limb-fitting services available across the country. In Nagorno Karabakh, the ICRC also supports primary-health-care services.

EXPENDITURE IN CHF

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Protection | 1,291,003 |
| Assistance | 1,037,614 |
| Preventive action | 848,717 |
| Cooperation with National Societies | 144,358 |
| General | - |
| | ▶ 3,321,691 |
| | of which: Overheads 202,732 |

PERSONNEL

| | |
|-----------|----------------|
| 7 | expatriates |
| 49 | national staff |

KEY POINTS IN 2004

- ▶ The ICRC focused on addressing the issue of persons missing in connection with the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, by encouraging discussion on the issue, by submitting updated lists of names of people unaccounted for, by maintaining contacts with the official commissions and by advising the *de facto* authorities of Nagorno Karabakh on the recovery of human remains.
- ▶ The ICRC continued visits to detention facilities.
- ▶ The ICRC supported the authorities of Azerbaijan in implementing a TB-control programme in prisons.
- ▶ The ICRC organized IHL seminars and courses for the armed and security forces in Azerbaijan, further developed the teaching of IHL in secondary schools and universities and continued assisting the authorities in implementing IHL treaties.
- ▶ The programme in Nagorno Karabakh to create safe playgrounds for children in mine-affected communities was expanded to cover a total of 40 villages.
- ▶ In Nagorno Karabakh, the ICRC completed the distribution of medicines to 66 health centres and continued training health workers in proper drug management.

CONTEXT

The tenth anniversary of the ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan saw no significant progress in resolving the conflict. Talks on a peace settlement between the two countries went ahead, with several meetings between Armenian and Azerbaijani officials held under the aegis of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) during the year and a meeting between the two presidents taking place in Kazakhstan. At the UN General Assembly session in November, the Azerbaijani delegation put forward a new resolution requesting a fact-finding mission (under the umbrella of the OSCE) in the seven so-called "occupied territories" around Nagorno Karabakh.

In Azerbaijan, the government of President Ilham Aliyev continued to consolidate its power base while pursuing a complementary foreign policy, endeavouring to balance its relations with the United States, Russia, Turkey and Iran. Rapid economic growth in the oil sector led to a widening of the gap between rich and poor, with half of Azerbaijan's population continuing to live at or below the poverty line.

Violations of the ceasefire along the line of contact remained a concern, as did the number of incidents involving mines and other explosive remnants of war.

ICRC ACTION

The main priority of the ICRC in Azerbaijan was to help resolve the issue of missing persons. To this end, it presented the authorities in Azerbaijan, as well as relevant actors in Nagorny Karabakh, with lists of the names of some 3,000 people still unaccounted for in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict.

The ICRC continued to monitor the living conditions of all detainees, particularly vulnerable groups within the prison population. As part of its work in places of detention, the ICRC provided assistance to the small number of people detained in connection with the conflict, liaising with the authorities regarding their detention and repatriation/transfer.

As part of its continuing efforts to control tuberculosis (TB) within the Azerbaijani prison system, the ICRC promoted better health care in prisons, in particular the directly observed treatment, short course (DOTS) strategy for TB control developed by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Throughout the year the ICRC sought to expand contacts with the media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and professional circles that had the potential to serve as relays to raise awareness of international humanitarian law (IHL) and humanitarian issues and action. It pursued its efforts to encourage the authorities to ratify and implement IHL treaties and to promote IHL among the armed forces and secondary-school and university students.

As before, the ICRC coordinated its activities with other organizations working in the region, mainly UNHCR, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, WHO, Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (the German agency for technical cooperation), the Clasen Group on missing persons and the Halo Trust. It also cooperated closely with the Azerbaijani Red Crescent Society and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

In Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC continued to create safe play areas for children in mine-affected communities, expanding the programme to include more areas. It also supplied health facilities in remote rural areas with basic medicines.

CIVILIANS

Encouraging dialogue on the missing persons issue

At every opportunity, the ICRC reiterated the duty of the authorities to provide clear answers to the thousands of families without news of the fate or whereabouts of relatives missing in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. As part of the process, the ICRC submitted updated lists, containing the names of 3,000 people unaccounted for in relation to the conflict, to the Azerbaijani authorities and to relevant actors in Nagorny Karabakh. While maintaining contacts with the commissions set up to address the issue of the missing, the ICRC continued to remind the authorities of their obligations under IHL and sought to convince them of the need to establish mechanisms to deal comprehensively with this issue.

To keep the subject high on the agenda, the ICRC dubbed the video *The Missing: End the Silence* into Azerbaijani and broadcast it on national TV stations. In addition, meetings to discuss technical aspects of the issue were organized between an ICRC forensic expert and the Azerbaijani authorities and forensic experts.

In Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC advised the *de facto* authorities on dealing with human remains and assisted the local authorities in fencing cemeteries for unidentified soldiers in the town of Mardakert/Agdara. A visiting ICRC forensic expert gave a presentation on forensic science in relation to the missing to the authorities. In addition, the ICRC assisted the Nagorny Karabakh forensic institute in repairing the refrigerator of the morgue.

- ▶ 3,145 tracing requests in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict received since 1992

Family contact through Red Cross messages

With telephone and postal links between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh still disrupted as a result of the conflict, the Red Cross message (RCM) service was the only way for some people to maintain contact with family members from whom they had become separated as a result of the conflict. The ICRC issued travel documents to enable refugees without the necessary identification papers either to resettle in a third country or to return to their home country.

- ▶ 249 RCMs delivered
- ▶ 47 travel documents issued for 63 people

Safe play areas in Nagorny Karabakh

The ICRC completed the Safe Play Area programme to create playgrounds for children free from the risk of injury by explosive remnants of war, expanding the number of planned sites from 30 to 40 mine-affected villages in Nagorny Karabakh. A set of playground equipment was designed and adapted to the needs of disabled children at the rehabilitation centre.

The ICRC printed 1,000 copies of the *Outdoor Games Resource Book* on mine-risk education for distribution among schools. The project was funded by the Norwegian Red Cross.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Visiting people detained in connection with the conflict

The ICRC continued to visit people still detained in relation to the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh. It assisted in the transfer of two Azerbaijani soldiers who had been captured after crossing the line of contact.

Monitoring the situation of detainees

With continued access to the entire civilian prison population in Azerbaijan, the ICRC monitored conditions of detention and treatment, focusing on such vulnerable groups as foreign nationals and people serving life sentences. Improvements to the water supply for detainees in the Shovelian Pre-trial Isolator were also completed.

In Nagorny Karabakh, where the ICRC also had access to the entire civilian prison population, small-scale assistance was distributed in two places of detention.

The ICRC maintained the RCM service for detainees wishing to exchange news with their families.

- ▶ 32 places of detention visited in Azerbaijan, 114 detainees closely followed
- ▶ 179 detainees visited in 2 places of detention in Nagorny Karabakh
- ▶ 14 RCMs delivered to detainees in Nagorny Karabakh and Azerbaijan
- ▶ 15 detainees benefited from the ICRC family-visits programme in Nagorny Karabakh

Containing the life-threatening TB epidemic

The prevalence of TB among prisoners, coupled with a high level of resistance to first-line TB drugs, remained a serious problem in Azerbaijan. The ICRC maintained its firm commitment to the DOTS-based TB-control programme in prisons, monitoring it and advising the authorities on its implementation. It promoted health education, provided medicines, laboratory supplies and equipment and arranged staff training in the country and abroad. The main aim of the programme was to increase the capacity of the authorities to deal effectively with the problem and to foster interaction between TB management in the prison population and TB management in society as a whole.

Detainees with TB continued to be treated in the Special Treatment Institute for Detainees with Tuberculosis (STIDT) in Baku. Active case-finding went on in three isolators, commencing in the prison colonies, to diagnose prisoners with TB in the early stages of the disease. From May prison TB statistics were integrated into national TB statistics.

During the year the ICRC's health-education component of the TB-control programme was extended to cover all detention places. A biochemistry laboratory was constructed and the microscopy room rehabilitated in the STIDT. Over 700 leaflets and 11 posters on TB were distributed to the prison population, and doctors were supplied with 300 booklets to hand out to new inmates. The ICRC marked World TB Day (24 March), in cooperation with the Azerbaijani Red Crescent, by giving presentations and distributing educational materials.

Regular interagency meetings improved collaboration between the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health. A major priority was the improvement of access to civilian TB services for released prisoners with the disease. The Azerbaijani Red Crescent continued to take part in the interagency meetings. Discussions were held on developing a pilot programme to keep track of released prisoners suffering from the disease.

With technical support from the ICRC, the Ministry of Justice submitted an application to WHO's Green Light Committee for the "DOTS-plus" application, particularly concerning multi-drugs resistance.

- ▶ 3,078 patients completed TB treatment since 1995
- ▶ 765 prisoners with newly detected TB integrated into the programme
- ▶ 7 government TB officials participated in regional and international courses

WOUNDED AND SICK

Proper treatment for amputees and other disabled people

The ICRC maintained its support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to help it ensure that amputees and other people with disabilities had access to good-quality rehabilitation services at the government-run Ahmedly Prosthetic Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Centre in Baku and its branches in Nakhichevan and Ganja, in western Azerbaijan.

At ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centres:

- ▶ 130 prostheses delivered;
- ▶ 87 new patients fitted with prostheses;
- ▶ 915 orthoses delivered;
- ▶ 339 new patients fitted with orthoses.

A planning seminar was held in Baku on how to improve the physical rehabilitation programme of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, during which a framework for future cooperation between the ministry and the ICRC was defined.

- ▶ 4 physiotherapists participated, with ICRC support, in a refresher course in Tbilisi (Georgia)
- ▶ 6 surgeons from the Ministries of Defence and Health attended, with ICRC support, a war-surgery seminar in Moscow (Russian Federation)

Support to primary-health-care and surgical facilities in Nagorny Karabakh

The ICRC continued to support 66 health facilities in rural and war-affected districts of Nagorny Karabakh, supplying them with essential medicines and training local health workers in proper drug management.

- ▶ medicines distributed and drug-management procedures monitored in health facilities in 63 remote villages and 3 regional polyclinics

AUTHORITIES

Throughout the year the ICRC maintained contacts with the authorities concerned with the national implementation of IHL, providing them with advice and technical support in incorporating its provisions into domestic legislation and in translating IHL treaties into the national languages.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, the ICRC supported a round-table on the subject. The event, organized by the Azerbaijani National Commission on the Implementation of the Hague Convention and Protocols, was attended by government officials, academics and foreign experts. An official from the Azerbaijani Foreign Affairs Ministry attended an IHL course in Warsaw, Poland. The ICRC also organized a two-day course on IHL for Azerbaijani civil servants. Furthermore, it supported a one-day conference in Baku on the repression of war crimes at national and international levels.

The ICRC met Azerbaijan's President Aliyev, with discussions focusing particularly on the issue of the missing and IHL training for the armed forces.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The ICRC met the Azerbaijani defence minister for discussions on IHL training for the armed forces. The ICRC gave presentations during Equity International's human rights-based security training sessions for oil-pipeline guards. In addition, it took part in a NATO planning meeting in Baku in June, giving presentations on IHL and the role of the ICRC for senior officers.

In Azerbaijan:

- ▶ 1 officer from the Ministry of Defence and 1 officer from the internal troops attended an IHL course at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy;
- ▶ 1 Ministry of Defence officer participated in a regional conference on the protection of cultural property held in St Petersburg, Russian Federation;
- ▶ 4 five-day courses on IHL/international human rights law were held for 30 internal troops and 30 police officers;
- ▶ 1 Internal Troops officer participated as an observer in the cadets competition of the interior troops at the Saratov Military Institute of the Russian Federation;

- ▶ presentations on the ICRC, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and IHL were given for 34 operational commanders, deputy operational commanders and instructors of the Special State Protection Service (in charge of oil-pipeline guards).

In Nagorny Karabakh:

- ▶ 1 dissemination session was held in a regional police station;
- ▶ 1 four-day IHL instructors' course was held for 18 officers responsible for training of arms bearers.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The ICRC cultivated a network of contacts with the media in Azerbaijan, including the military press, as well as with international organizations, NGOs and diplomatic representatives, and produced and distributed various information materials. Topics of particular interest to these audiences during the year included detention-related activities the issue of the missing, the ICRC's TB and school programmes and the Safe Play Area programme. The ICRC's role in the transfer of captured Azerbaijani servicemen received extensive media coverage.

Building a network of IHL experts

The ICRC pursued efforts to develop Azerbaijan's teaching and research capacities in the field of IHL by providing educational institutions with reference literature, training and support materials and sponsoring the participation of students and lecturers in IHL-related events.

In Azerbaijan, the ICRC kept in regular contact with the seven universities where IHL was taught (its main partners being Baku State University, Khazar University and Western University). The ICRC financed a team of three students from Baku State University to participate in the Jean Pictet international IHL moot-court competition in France. In cooperation with the Azerbaijan Young Lawyers' Union, the ICRC organized the first national moot-court competition on IHL for students from Azerbaijani universities. A presentation on the ICRC and IHL was also given to the law and social sciences faculty at Nakhichevan State University, while around 300 books and brochures on IHL were donated to the same faculty. Two IHL teachers from Azerbaijani universities participated in the regional round-table on IHL for civil servants and academics held in Moscow.

In Nagorny Karabakh, Artsakh State University, which taught law and journalism, initiated a 24-hour IHL course for third-year law students. The ICRC gave a presentation on its role, mandate and activities and on the basic principles of IHL for 25 of the university's law students. Contacts were also maintained with two private universities in the region. A special 38-hour IHL course for fourth-year law students was launched at Mesrop Mashtots University.

Promoting IHL concepts in schools

The ICRC, in cooperation with the education authorities, maintained its support for a school programme to familiarize secondary-school pupils aged 11 to 15 with the basic principles of IHL and humanitarian action. This process included producing course books on IHL themes in cooperation with local education experts, distributing them to schools countrywide and organizing ongoing training and refresher courses on programme content and methodology for teachers and teacher trainers/methodology specialists. In 2004 the Ministry of Education included IHL in the obligatory curriculum of the "man and society" subject area for 8th, 10th and 11th grades. As part of the school programme, *The Little Prince*, a play on promoting IHL concepts, was performed seven times in different regions of Azerbaijan, including four times in line of contact/border areas.

In Nagorny Karabakh, agreement was reached on the training of a number of specialists to take charge of IHL teaching, so that the school programme could gradually be handed over.

In Azerbaijan:

- ▶ 24 training seminars were held for 436 teachers from 361 schools;
- ▶ over 300 students took part in a competition on humanitarian principles and the basic principles of IHL;
- ▶ 5 IHL essay competitions were held.

In Nagorny Karabakh:

- ▶ 5 seminars were held for 147 teachers on interactive teaching methods and teaching IHL principles.

NATIONAL SOCIETY

The ICRC renewed its annual cooperation agreement with the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan and continued to support the National Society's efforts to develop dissemination and tracing programmes by

providing training and financial support for key staff members.

The tracing training video, aimed particularly at those involved in disaster preparedness and response, was completed, and the ICRC conducted nine tracing seminars for volunteers. A network of dissemination volunteers in seven regional centres was established and received ICRC support in organizing a campaign on the emblem.

The Azerbaijani Red Crescent organized distributions of school materials provided by the ICRC for internally displaced children.