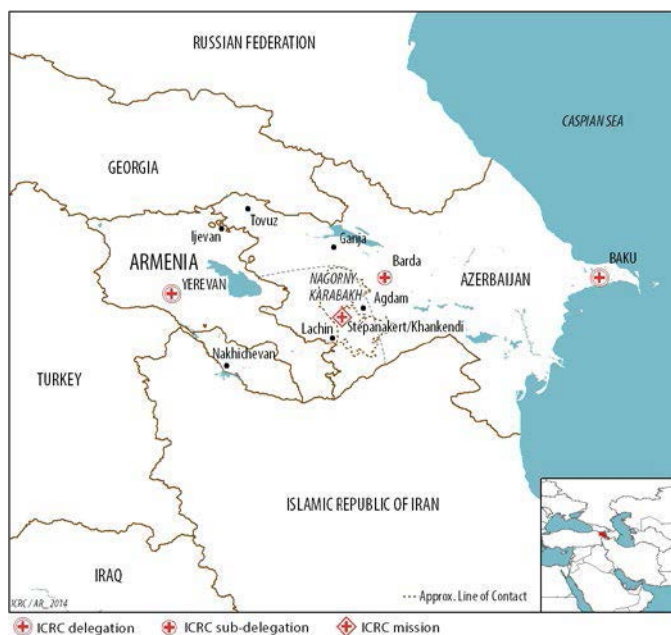


ARMENIA



The ICRC has been working in Armenia 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 international border with Azerbaijan. It promotes the national implementation of IHL and its integration into the armed and security forces' doctrine, training and sanctions and into academic curricula. The ICRC works in partnership with and aims to help the Armenian Red Cross Society strengthen its capacities.

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

In 2014:

- ▶ the authorities were reminded of their responsibility to protect civilians, especially those living near the international border with Azerbaijan, and border troops learnt more about IHL at dissemination sessions
- ▶ civilians living near the international border with Azerbaijan improved their livelihoods, had better access to water and coped with conflict-related losses, aided by ICRC supplies, construction projects or grants
- ▶ with the ICRC acting as a neutral intermediary, 8 civilian internees were voluntarily repatriated from Azerbaijan, and the remains of 1 civilian were returned to his family for burial
- ▶ the pilot phase of collecting DNA samples from families of missing persons was completed; families met their psychosocial/other needs through the Armenian Red Cross Society and local service providers
- ▶ the authorities and forensic specialists strengthened their capacities to clarify the fate of missing persons by learning best practices on a study tour abroad
- ▶ with ICRC support, the National Society held a series of first-aid courses for conflict-affected communities and organized a national moot court competition in IHL for students

EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)

Protection	513
Assistance	1,193
Prevention	399
Cooperation with National Societies	271
General	-
Total	2,376

of which: Overheads 145

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	100%
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PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	4
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	30

YEARLY RESULTS

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

HIGH

PROTECTION	Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)	
Red Cross messages (RCMs)	
RCMs collected	30
RCMs distributed	37
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	2
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)	
ICRC visits	
Detainees visited	11
Detainees visited and monitored individually	11
Number of visits carried out	9
Number of places of detention visited	6

ASSISTANCE	2014 Targets (up to)	Achieved
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)		
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Productive inputs ¹	Beneficiaries 120	5,484
Cash	Beneficiaries 100	567
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries 4,000	2,904

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

CONTEXT

The consequences of the unresolved Nagorny Karabakh conflict continued to be felt, particularly along the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the Line of Contact. An upsurge of military activity and incidents of cross-border fire, coupled with the continued presence of mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW), resulted in an increase in military and civilian casualties, and in conflict-related detention, compared with recent years. The insecurity limited daily movement, access to basic services and livelihood opportunities for civilians in border areas. Hundreds of families in Armenia remained without answers on the fate of relatives missing in relation to the conflict.

High-level meetings between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, held under the aegis of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, helped to ease tensions. However, no progress was made towards a peaceful resolution to the conflict. May marked 20 years since the ceasefire agreement.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC continued working to alleviate the humanitarian consequences of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. It monitored the situation of civilians living on both sides of the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, raised concerns with the relevant authorities and reminded them of their obligations under IHL.

The ICRC took an integrated approach to helping border communities improve their living conditions and strengthen their resilience. At the request of local leaders, communities received trees that they planted near schools to help reduce their exposure to cross-border shooting. A kindergarten underwent rehabilitation and had protective walls built around it, enhancing the safety of students and teachers. Farming households increased their harvest with ICRC-provided agricultural supplies/equipment, and households that lost their sources of income following border incidents received cash to help them through the winter. Residents of three villages benefited from upgraded water networks that brought clean water closer to their homes. Border communities learnt first aid from Armenian Red Cross Society trainers.

Resolving the fate of people who went missing during the conflict remained a priority. The ICRC, in coordination with the Armenian State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons (CEPOD) and in cooperation with the National Society, carried out the pilot phase of a DNA sample-collection project to facilitate future efforts to identify human remains. Trained National Society/ICRC teams collected buccal swabs from relatives of missing persons, whose informed consent had been obtained and who had access to psychological support throughout the process. The CEPOD, with ICRC technical support, continued to compile ante-mortem information on missing persons in a centralized database. During a study tour in Georgia, CEPOD members and forensic specialists gleaned best practices from work on cases of missing persons.

Families of the missing addressed some of their needs with help from the National Society, local service-providers and the ICRC, which provided psychosocial, legal and medical support through individual visits, group information sessions and commemorative events. Economically vulnerable families also received assistance

in the form of grants for income-generating activities, vocational training, cash or home repairs. The authorities designated a place for a monument to be erected in recognition of missing persons. The adoption of a law protecting the rights of their families, however, remained pending.

The National Society/ICRC continued to collect and analyse information on the needs of victims of mines/ERW and their families, with a view to providing them with assistance and sharing the findings with the authorities to help them develop a national strategy addressing weapon contamination-related issues.

Security detainees had their treatment and living conditions monitored during ICRC visits. At the request of all parties concerned, the ICRC facilitated the repatriation of civilian internees and the remains of a deceased civilian from Azerbaijan.

Humanitarian issues arising from the conflict remained central to dialogue with all actors. IHL promotion among military personnel continued, notably through a course for commanding officers, training of trainers, and briefings for peacekeeping troops and for units deployed along the international border with Azerbaijan. The authorities, with the ICRC's encouragement, confirmed their interest in establishing a national IHL committee and agreed to consider the adoption of constitutional amendments necessary to ratify the Rome Statute. Drawing on ICRC resources, the media helped raise awareness of the plight of conflict-affected people and of ICRC activities in their behalf. Academics took part in various IHL events held by the National Society, other local partners and the ICRC.

The National Society built its emergency-preparedness and communication capacities with financial, material and technical support from the ICRC.

CIVILIANS

Parties to the conflict are reminded to take extra precautions

For civilians living along the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, exchanges of fire and the presence of mines/ERW were sources of constant insecurity and at times caused casualties. Through its presence in border regions and contacts with local communities, civilian and military authorities and National Society branches, the ICRC kept abreast of the humanitarian situation, monitored respect for IHL among the parties to the conflict and noted issues faced by the population. It raised concerns with the relevant authorities and reminded them of their obligations under IHL, especially with regard to the protection of civilians and the need to take extra precautions, particularly during the farming season, public holidays and the implementation of ICRC activities for border communities.

Border communities have more accessible water supply

The ICRC continued to address the humanitarian needs of border communities through an integrated approach aimed at helping them strengthen their coping mechanisms and improve their living conditions.

At the request of local community leaders, residents of three villages in Tavush region, near the international border, received 450 trees, which they planted near schools and kindergartens; this helped reduce their exposure to the line of fire, making access to the schools safer for some 3,000 people. In Aygepar village, 30 children and staff benefited from structural improvements to their kindergarten, such as repairs to a corridor and to a playroom

that could double as a safe room in case of emergencies, and the construction of protective walls around the school. Community members acquired first-aid skills through a series of training sessions conducted by the National Society.

In Chinari, Movses and Nerkin Karmiraghbyur villages, more than 2,870 people had better access to clean water after improvements to their water networks, which took into account their specific requests. For example, a gravity-fed mechanism kept water flowing with minimal need for maintenance, and additional pipelines brought drinking water closer to their homes, sparing residents – most of them elderly – long treks.

Some 680 farming households (2,424 people) increased their wheat harvest with fertilizers, herbicides and protective clothing provided by the ICRC. In six border villages, 91 households (367 individuals) affected by the escalation of hostilities in July/August received cash grants to compensate for the loss of their properties/livelihoods and to help them through the winter.

The National Society collected information on 457 mine/ERW victims and their families in order to assess their needs, with a view to providing them with assistance and sharing the analysis with the Armenian Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise, in support of its efforts to develop a national strategy addressing weapon contamination and its consequences.

Pilot phase of DNA-collection project is successfully completed

By the end of 2014, 4,542 people remained unaccounted for as a result of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, of whom 401 were registered as missing in Armenia.

To facilitate future efforts to identify human remains and provide answers to the families concerned, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Health's forensics centre and the ICRC agreed on a protocol for the collection of DNA samples from missing persons' families. In the pilot phase of the initiative, trained National Society and ICRC staff collected buccal swabs from 86 relatives of missing persons in Ararat region, in line with standard operating procedures that included obtaining the families' informed consent and ensuring respect for confidentiality. Samples sent for profiling and quality control to a DNA laboratory abroad returned with a 100% success rate. Psychological support was made available to the families throughout the process.

The ICRC continued to review and hand over files containing ante-mortem data provided by the families, together with the pertinent documents, photographs and information regarding DNA samples, to the Armenian CEPOD. A database administrator, aided by ICRC technical support, entered the data into the CEPOD's centralized database. To ensure the quality of data entry, administrators from the Armenian, Azerbaijani and *de facto* CEPODs attended a refresher course in Tbilisi, Georgia. Following a study visit to the same country, Armenian CEPOD representatives and forensic specialists brought home best practices and lessons learnt from the work of their Georgian counterparts in exhuming and identifying human remains in the context of past armed conflict. To strengthen the CEPOD's institutional and technical capacities, the Ministry of Defence, as CEPOD chair, took steps towards establishing a full-time CEPOD working group office.

Progress in clarifying the fate of the missing continued to be hampered by the absence of an agreed-upon mechanism for sharing

information between the sides; the ICRC, as a neutral intermediary, facilitated the exchange of queries about missing persons between the respective CEPODs. Coordination with them continued, with a view to consolidating a list of missing persons that would serve as a common source of reference for following up cases.

Families of missing persons obtain comprehensive support

Many families continued to struggle with not knowing the fate of missing relatives. They often faced emotional, psychological, health, economic, legal and administrative difficulties.

With the help of ICRC-trained National Society staff and other local partners, 59 people received psychosocial, legal, and/or medical assistance, as well as help in obtaining social benefits. Some received follow-up home visits to check on their well-being. During nearly 70 information sessions held in Yerevan and nine other regions, and attended by local NGOs, specialists and the authorities, over 279 people discussed their multifaceted needs and learnt of services that could help them. Commemorative and recreational events organized with the involvement of community members, religious leaders and the authorities helped the families cope more effectively with their situation, raised awareness of the issues they faced and spurred community and peer support for them. With help from the authorities, a place in Yerevan was designated for the construction of a monument to commemorate missing persons in Armenia and acknowledge the plight of their families.

Forty-two economically vulnerable families (150 people) started small businesses using grants or interest-free loans, or covered their household needs through unconditional cash assistance. Thirty-eight people boosted their employment prospects by participating in skill-building workshops. The homes of 13 families (50 people) were repaired, the result of a joint programme with the Fuller Center for Housing in Armenia.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Civilian internees voluntarily repatriated under ICRC auspices

Detainees at six places of detention received visits conducted in accordance with standard ICRC procedures, following which delegates shared their findings and recommendations confidentially with the authorities concerned. Foreigners held at a women's prison restored/maintained contact with their families abroad using ICRC-provided phone cards.

At the request of all parties concerned, eight civilian internees held in Azerbaijan – including a family of five interned for nearly five years – were repatriated to Armenia under the auspices of the ICRC, which acted as a neutral intermediary (see *Azerbaijan*). It likewise facilitated the repatriation of the remains of one deceased civilian, enabling his family to bury him. Armenian families maintained contact with relatives held in Azerbaijan through RCMs.

ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

The humanitarian consequences of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, and the ICRC's work for conflict-affected people, remained at the core of discussions with the authorities, armed forces, the diplomatic corps, international organizations and members of civil society.

Commanders familiarize themselves with IHL considerations in military decision-making

Dialogue with military authorities focused on their responsibilities under IHL, particularly the need to protect civilians, and the

ICRC's role as a neutral intermediary (see *Civilians and People deprived of their freedom*).

Around 480 military personnel serving along the international border with Azerbaijan familiarized themselves with IHL principles and the ICRC's mandate at information sessions, during which the National Society also presented its activities; over 130 peacekeeping troops also learnt about IHL and the ICRC during predeployment briefings. Twelve operational commanders learnt more about the necessity of incorporating IHL considerations in military decision-making processes at a seminar organized with the Defence Ministry's policy department; one colonel attended an advanced course abroad (see *International law and policy*). Through a train-the-trainer workshop, 15 military institute instructors strengthened their ability to teach IHL to future army officers.

Authorities consider constitutional amendments to enable ratification of Rome Statute

Discussions with the authorities encouraged Armenia's accession to key treaties. As constitutional reforms were in progress, dialogue promoted the adoption of amendments that would enable Armenia to ratify the Rome Statute. The Commission for Constitutional Amendments included these in its final concept paper.

At an ICRC-convened round-table, representatives of the Constitutional Court and of the Defence, Foreign Affairs and Justice Ministries confirmed their interest in creating a national committee to facilitate the incorporation of IHL in domestic law and policies.

The adoption by Parliament of the ICRC-promoted law on missing persons remained pending.

Academics advance IHL development

With local partners, the International and Comparative Law Center (ICLaw) and the ICRC pursued joint initiatives promoting the study and development of IHL. Almost 30 law students and legal professionals broadened their knowledge through lectures, case studies and interaction with experts during a summer course jointly organized with the American University of Armenia. Thirty researchers from various countries discussed contemporary IHL issues at a youth conference hosted by the Russian-Armenian Slavonic University and the ICRC; a side event tackled challenges to humanitarian access worldwide. Teams from four universities gained practical experience at a National Society-organized IHL moot court competition; previous winners sharpened their skills at a competition in Belarus. University students and civil servants also learnt about IHL-related matters during ICRC guest lectures. ICLaw received publications for its IHL resource centre.

IHL specialists, professors and legal professionals enriched their knowledge and exchanged views with their peers at experts' meetings and workshops, locally and abroad. Some contributed their expertise during IHL events, for example by facilitating sessions.

Media raise visibility of humanitarian issues

The media played a key role in keeping humanitarian issues visible and informing stakeholders and the wider public of the ICRC's multidisciplinary activities for conflict-affected people. Drawing on ICRC briefings, press releases/events and interviews, journalists reported on missing persons, people living along the international border with Azerbaijan and POWs/civilian internees. A series of reports aired online highlighted the daily challenges faced by missing persons' families; a report on public television featured the

Defence Ministry and the ICRC's efforts to ensure respect for IHL in military operations (see above). Twelve reporters learnt about their roles and responsibilities in conflict reporting during a workshop organized jointly with the Media Initiatives Center. They heard first-hand accounts from families of missing persons and mine/ERW victims during a three-day field visit to Syunik region, and subsequently produced reports to raise awareness of their plight.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Armenian Red Cross was the ICRC's main partner in activities for families of missing persons and mine/ERW victims (see *Civilians*). With ICRC financial, material and technical support, including practical guidelines on the Safer Access Framework, it built up its capacities to fulfil its humanitarian role. It reinforced its first-aid capacities, holding refresher courses for 14 trainers, two regional first-aid competitions and first-aid courses for border communities (see *Civilians*). It also worked to boost its public profile, pursuant to its 2013–20 communication strategy. It assumed responsibility for organizing the annual moot court competition, participated in IHL-dissemination sessions for military units (see *Actors of influence*) and launched an online campaign as part of the Movement-wide "My Red Cross Story" initiative on World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day. A draft law to strengthen the National Society's legal basis had not yet been finalized.

Movement partners gave updates on their activities and discussed common concerns during coordination meetings.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total			
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)					
Red Cross messages (RCMs)					
			UAMs/SCs*		
RCMs collected		30			
RCMs distributed		37			
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons					
			Women	Girls	Boys
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		2			
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		2			
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		402	23		6
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)					
ICRC visits					
			Women	Minors	
Detainees visited		11	1		
			Women	Girls	Boys
Detainees visited and monitored individually		11	1		
Detainees newly registered		1			
Number of visits carried out		9			
Number of places of detention visited		6			

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

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)				
Productive inputs ¹	Beneficiaries	5,484	29%	42%
Cash	Beneficiaries	567	39%	31%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	2		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	2,904	40%	20%

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