



ICRC delegation ICRC mission ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic centre

# armenia

The ICRC has been working in Armenia, 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.

## EXPENDITURE IN CHF

Protection

**590,851**

Assistance

**1,175,659**

Preventive action

**899,924**

Cooperation with National Societies

**159,789**

General

-

► **2,826,223**

of which: Overheads **172,493**

## PERSONNEL

**6** expatriates

**62** 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 persons 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 carried out protection visits to vulnerable detainees or people arrested in connection with internal troubles.
- The ICRC continued to support the authorities of Armenia in implementing a TB-control programme in prisons, increasing their capacity to deal with the spread of the disease and promoting the involvement national TB initiatives.
- The ICRC organized seminars and courses on IHL for the armed and security forces, further developed the teaching of IHL in secondary schools and universities and continued assisting the authorities in implementing IHL treaties.

## 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 held between Armenian and Azerbaijani officials under the aegis of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) during the year. 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 Armenia, the opposition's campaign of street demonstrations gradually lost momentum over the year as internal differences over tactics resurfaced. The government continued to pursue a complementary foreign policy, whereby it sought to balance its relations with the United States, the European Union, Russia and Iran.

## ICRC ACTION

The main priority of the ICRC in Armenia was to help resolve the issue of missing persons. To this end, it presented the authorities in Armenia with lists of 3,000 names of persons still unaccounted for in connection with the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

The ICRC visited and provided assistance to a small number of people detained in connection with the conflict, liaising with the authorities regarding their detention and repatriation. It continued to monitor the material conditions of all detainees, particularly vulnerable groups within the prison population, including women and minors.

As part of its continuing efforts to control tuberculosis (TB) within the Armenian prison system, the ICRC promoted better health care in prisons, in particular the directly observed treatment, short course (DOTS) strategy developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a means to control TB. It also engaged in dialogue with the Armenian authorities regarding ICRC support to the HIV/AIDS programme in places of detention.

The ICRC sought to expand contacts with the media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and professional circles which had the potential to serve as relays to raise awareness of international humanitarian law (IHL) and humanitarian issues and action. It encouraged the authorities to ratify and implement IHL treaties and promoted IHL among the armed forces and secondary-school and university students.

The ICRC coordinated its activities with other organizations working in the region, in particular UNHCR, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, WHO and the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (the German agency for technical cooperation). It maintained regular contacts with organizations dealing with the issue of the missing, such as the Clasen Group. It also cooperated closely with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

## 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 still 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 Armenian authorities.

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 in Armenia, the ICRC dubbed the video *The Missing: End the Silence* into Armenian. In addition, it organized a number of meetings between an ICRC forensic expert and Armenian authorities and forensic experts.

- ▶ 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 been separated as a result of the conflict.

- ▶ 335 RCMs delivered or collected
- ▶ 1 travel document issued
- ▶ 2 personal documents forwarded to Abkhazia

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

### Visiting people detained in connection with the conflict

The ICRC continued to visit people still held in relation to the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh, as well as those detained for security reasons in Armenia proper.

- ▶ 69 detainees (of whom 16 newly registered) visited in 16 places of detention
- ▶ 23 RCMs delivered to detainees and 32 RCMs collected
- ▶ 13 detainees benefited from ICRC-supported family visits

### Monitoring the situation of detainees

With access to the entire civilian prison population in Armenia, the ICRC monitored conditions of detention and treatment, focusing on such vulnerable groups as women, minors, foreign nationals and people serving life sentences. Where needed, the ICRC provided small-scale assistance to improve detainees' living conditions. An agreement was signed with the Armenian branch of the Union Internationale de la Marionnette for an ICRC-funded puppeteer programme for women and minors detained in the Abovian detention complex.

In addition, the ICRC maintained the RCM service for detainees wishing to exchange news with their families.

### 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 Armenia. 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 also promoted health education in prisons, provided medicines, laboratory supplies and equipment and arranged staff training in the country and abroad. The 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. In addition, the ICRC completed a TB/HIV survey involving the collection of saliva samples and a behavioural study among inmates and staff of penitentiary institutions in the framework of a baseline study on HIV.

Detainees with TB continued to be treated at the TB department of the hospital for detainees in Yerevan. The ICRC also supported the Ministry of Justice in rehabilitating areas in other detention facilities to house TB patients (Goris and Noubarashen Criminal Executive Institutions).

The ICRC organized round-table discussions on the proposed TB-control programme involving medical staff from facilities throughout the Armenian prison system. On World TB Day (24 March) the administration of the hospital for detainees and the ICRC's TB team organized an open-house, allowing families of TB patients to visit the premises of the TB department. The follow-up of detainees released while under treatment proved successful, with two-thirds of them completing treatment.

- ▶ 149 patients completed TB treatment since 2002
- ▶ 109 prisoners with newly detected TB integrated into the programme
- ▶ 3 renovation projects completed in 3 detention facilities benefiting some 3,200 inmates per year
- ▶ 1 government official participated in the TB management course in Warsaw (Poland), 2 laboratory specialists from the Ministry of Justice trained in TB lab-management in Warsaw, 1 TB doctor from the ministry participated in the regional conference of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease in Moscow (Russian Federation), 2 TB specialists from the ministry participated in TB drug-management training in Tbilisi (Georgia), and 3 laboratory specialists travelled to Tbilisi on a regional exchange
- ▶ two-day seminar on collaboration between civilian and penitentiary TB-control programmes in Armenia organized

## WOUNDED AND SICK

The ICRC paid for three surgeons from the Armenian Ministry of Defence to attend a war-surgery seminar in Moscow.

## AUTHORITIES

The ICRC maintained regular contacts with the authorities concerned with the national implementation of IHL, providing them with advice and technical support in incorporating it into domestic legislation, in

particular with respect to the translation of IHL treaties into the national language.

The ICRC assisted in the realization of a study on the compatibility of national legislation with the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and in the organization of a one-day conference in Yerevan on the national implementation of the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. It also facilitated the participation of two Armenian representatives in a regional conference on the Hague Convention organized in St Petersburg under the auspices of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and of three governmental experts in a round-table on IHL held in Moscow.

The ICRC met Armenia's President Kocharyan, with discussions focusing particularly on the issue of the missing.

## ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

During the year the ICRC met Armenia's deputy minister of defence and discussed the ICRC's support to ongoing IHL teaching in the Armenian armed forces. It also produced a set of posters containing extracts from the *IHL for Commanders* manual. IHL instructors from the Military Institute prepared the content and layout of the posters, in close cooperation with the ICRC.

To enhance knowledge of IHL among members of the armed forces, the ICRC:

- ▶ sponsored 2 high-ranking officers from the Ministry of Defence to take part in an IHL course at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy;
- ▶ supported the participation of teams from the Military Institute in the 5th General Skobolev IHL competition in Kazan, Russian Federation, and in the 4th Yaroslav the Wise international IHL competition in Ukraine;
- ▶ held a five-day IHL course for 12 officers of the Ministry of Defence in Yerevan in October;
- ▶ organized a round-table for 11 officers of the Military Institute in Yerevan in December;
- ▶ held a five-day IHL course for 12 officers of the Ministry of Defence in Tsakhkadzor in December.

## CIVIL SOCIETY

Throughout the year the ICRC maintained contacts with the media, 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 included ICRC activities in the repatriation/transfer of captured servicemen and civilians, the issue of the missing and the ICRC's TB and school programmes. The ICRC held a round-table with media representatives, dedicated to the Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World (see *Nairobi*). Twenty-two IHL media kits were sent to the Caucasus Media Institute.

### Building a network of IHL experts

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

In Armenia, the main institutions with which the ICRC had contacts were Yerevan State University, Acharian University, Armenian-Russian State (Slavonic) University and the Humanitarian Institute in Hrazdan. A set of IHL-related publications was donated to the Hrazdan Humanitarian Institute, which had formally integrated IHL into its curriculum. The ICRC also facilitated the participation of Armenian representatives in IHL courses in Poland, France and Russia. A session on IHL/ICRC activities was held at the French University in Armenia.

### Promoting IHL concepts in schools

With the aim of familiarizing secondary-school pupils aged 11 to 13 with the basic principles of IHL and humanitarian action, the ICRC kept up its support for a school programme, in cooperation with the education authorities. The programme included producing course books for students and manuals for teachers 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. The programme was officially recommended by the education authorities.

- ▶ 60 seminars conducted by Armenian trainers, with ICRC support, for 560 literature teachers from the Shirak, Lori, Gegharkunik, Syunik and Tavush regions

## NATIONAL SOCIETY

The ICRC continued to provide financial and technical support to the Armenian Red Cross for its tracing, dissemination and first-aid programmes. With the support of the ICRC, the National Society held six 42-hour courses in saving lives in emergency situations, with 70 participants in the Tavush, Gegharkunik and Syunik regions. The Armenian Red Cross was closely involved in the ICRC's programme to promote IHL teaching in secondary schools. The ICRC assisted the National Society in organizing four dissemination and three tracing seminars for staff and volunteers of the National Society. Furthermore, dissemination instructors from the National Society conducted numerous sessions throughout the year to spread knowledge of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, its Fundamental Principles and the emblem among schoolchildren and the general public. More than 18,000 people attended the sessions throughout Armenia.

The ICRC assisted the Armenian Red Cross in producing 500 copies of its *2003 Annual Report* in Armenian and English and 3,500 dissemination posters in Armenian. In addition, the organization facilitated the participation of the National Society's head of international affairs in the annual meeting of National Society legal advisers held in Geneva.