



georgia

The ICRC has been present in Georgia since 1992. It visits detainees throughout Georgia, including Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and supports the authorities in bringing tuberculosis in prisons under control. It contributes to efforts to provide answers to families of missing persons and protects and assists displaced people and other vulnerable groups in conflict-affected regions. The ICRC also promotes the integration of IHL into the training of the armed and security forces and into university and school curricula. In cooperation with Movement partners, the ICRC helps to strengthen the capacities of the National Society.

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	1,535
Assistance	9,399
Prevention	1,281
Cooperation with National Societies	312
General	-

► **12,527**

of which: Overheads 761

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	96%
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PERSONNEL

27 expatriates
285 national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2006, the ICRC:

- ▶ through a visit by President Jakob Kellenberger, reaffirmed its intent to continue to provide relevant humanitarian services in the southern Caucasus and stressed the necessity of making progress on the issue of missing persons in the region;
- ▶ maintained a permanent presence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and re-established a more regular presence in villages in the conflict zones to address the protection and assistance needs of the population;
- ▶ visited detainees held in Georgia proper, Abkhazia and South Ossetia and contributed to improving conditions of detention, including discussing the problem of overcrowding with the Georgian authorities and extending the tuberculosis control programme for detainees to all prisons in Georgia proper;
- ▶ distributed food and essential household items to destitute people in Abkhazia and western Georgia and gave grants to vulnerable households to help reduce their dependency on external aid;
- ▶ repaired and upgraded collective centres for IDPs and, with the authorities, created a database to consolidate information on all IDP collective centres throughout Georgia;
- ▶ intensified lobbying and advocacy for the long-term inclusion of IHL provisions in the different reform processes related to prisons (notably health), the national strategy on IDPs, physical rehabilitation services, education and social welfare.

CONTEXT

Georgia's relations with the Russian Federation deteriorated in 2006 over energy supplies, a spy scandal, Georgia's ambiguity towards membership of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and its objection to Russian membership of the World Trade Organization. Georgia meanwhile strengthened its relationship with NATO through an Intensified Dialogue on Membership Aspirations and with the European Union through an agreed action plan within the European Neighbourhood Policy. The negotiations over the future of Kosovo and statements from the Russian Federation on the importance of self-determination over territorial integrity further complicated relations between Georgia and the Russian Federation. The tensions reached their peak in autumn with a spy scandal, following which the Russian Federation imposed a transport and postal embargo in addition to the existing ban on Georgian wine and mineral water. In December, the Russian Duma recommended that the international community take into account the wishes for independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The negotiating processes for the settlement of both conflicts were suspended in the middle of the year.

Relations with Abkhazia were damaged in July following the attempted secession by the local representative of the Georgian authorities of the Upper Kodori Valley, a territory which had remained officially controlled by Tbilisi. The region was brought back under the control of the Georgian authorities, but the action and the intention to install a government-in-exile, along with what was perceived in

Abkhazia as Georgia's militarization of the region, led to a suspension of contacts between the sides. Given the rising tension, UN Security Council resolution 1716 in October extended the mandate of the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) for six months and called on the parties to renew dialogue and comply with previous agreements regarding non-violence and confidence building. Security improved in Abkhazia towards the end of the year, with less criminality in the region of Gali and successful UN monitoring of the Kodori Valley.

The *de facto* authorities of South Ossetia indicated a wish to join North Ossetia as part of the Russian Federation. They held presidential elections and a referendum on independence in November. A South Ossetian opposition movement with an agenda for union with Georgia was formed in villages with predominantly Georgian populations, which held its own presidential elections on the same day. The leading candidates in both elections won overwhelming majorities, but there was no international recognition of either vote, making the landscape for negotiations in South Ossetia ever more complex, with rival authorities for South Ossetia, one in the Georgian village of Kurta and the other in the main town Tskhinvali. The *de facto* authorities in Tskhinvali demanded an agreement to end hostilities in order to restart negotiations, while the Georgian government called for a change in the negotiating format. Tensions persisted in South Ossetia, with significant numbers of armed incidents and people wounded.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM		
Detainees visited	15,186	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>		
Detainees visited and monitored individually	68	Food	Beneficiaries	15,485
Number of visits carried out	97	Essential household items	Beneficiaries	16,507
Number of places of detention visited	24	Agricultural inputs and micro-economic initiatives	Beneficiaries	2,778
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS		Water supply schemes and sanitation systems (completed projects)	Beneficiaries	200
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>		Habitat structures	Beneficiaries	3,650
RCMs collected	3,641	WOUNDED AND SICK		
RCMs distributed	3,712	Hospitals supported	Structures	3
People reunited with their families	5	Operations	Operations performed	535
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>		<i>Physical rehabilitation</i>		
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	29	Patients receiving services	Patients	1,143
Tracing requests closed positively (persons located)	15	Prostheses delivered	Pieces	380
Tracing requests still being handled at 31 December 2006	3	Orthoses delivered	Pieces	517

Meanwhile, economic and social reform in Georgia proper progressed, with continuing extensive international support. However, the lack of change perceived by most of the impoverished population, high unemployment, rising energy prices and gas cuts during a particularly harsh winter resulted in demonstrations in various parts of the country. Georgia tried to deal with the sharp rise in the price of Russian gas by finding alternative supplies from Azerbaijan and Turkey.

ICRC ACTION

The ICRC continued to provide assistance and protection to the population in the conflict zones of Abkhazia and South Ossetia through a permanent presence in Sukhumi, Gali, Zugdidi and Tskhinvali. In light of its observations of the effects of the conflict on the civilian population, the organization reminded the authorities of their obligations under IHL. With the improved security in 2006, the ICRC was able to reach all the communities in Gali for the first time in over five years and extended its presence in South Ossetia.

Regular ICRC visits to detainees continued. Severe overcrowding in Georgia's prisons, a prison riot in March and infrastructural problems in Abkhazia and South Ossetia gave rise to serious concern. Representations, including written reports, with the ICRC's findings and recommendations were made to the authorities. Tuberculosis (TB) screening and treatment in Georgia's prisons and the gradual handover of the programme to the authorities went ahead. Experience gained in the TB control programme was used to support the authorities in the development of general health

care in penitentiary institutions. Work was pursued to upgrade prison buildings and water supply systems.

Over 2,100 people remained missing in connection with the different conflicts in Georgia. Progress in determining their fate and in providing support to the families was slow. Position papers outlining the ICRC's humanitarian concerns in relation to this issue were submitted to the highest authorities in Tbilisi and Sukhumi.

The ICRC reviewed its assistance activities, given the improved situation of the most vulnerable sectors of the population. It ended food distributions in western Georgia after four years of support to IDPs and residents. Likewise, the ICRC food canteens, which had served the destitute in Abkhazia for the last 14 years, closed. The organization gave grants to vulnerable households to foster income-generating activities. The handover of responsibility for support to the destitute to the authorities allowed the ICRC to close its office in Kutaisi and reduce staff in western Georgia by 60%.

The ICRC, working with the authorities, completed a database of all IDP collective centres to help in determining priorities. Work on the rehabilitation of dilapidated centres continued. The organization maintained support to physical rehabilitation services in Tbilisi and Gagra. It pursued development of IHL training for the armed forces and continued to work for the inclusion of IHL teaching in secondary schools and universities.

The ICRC supported the Red Cross Society of Georgia in developing its capacities in the areas of dissemination and institutional and statutory reform.

CIVILIANS

Missing persons

More than 12 years on, some 2,000 people remained unaccounted for in relation to the conflict in Abkhazia and about 120 in relation to the conflict in South Ossetia.

The ICRC submitted a position paper to the Georgian and *de facto* Abkhaz presidents highlighting six priority areas to be worked on to resolve cases of missing persons. Authorities from both sides expressed a renewed interest in finding solutions. Scant progress in ascertaining the fate of the missing was offset by the reappointment of a Commission on Missing Persons in Georgia, the drafting of new statutes for the commission in Abkhazia and working sessions with both commissions.

The ICRC facilitated two missions to Georgia, including Abkhazia, of the special rapporteur of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on missing persons in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, whose report was to be issued in January 2007.

Eight Abkhaz experts participated in a first ICRC workshop on forensic techniques in Sukhumi. The family association Mothers of Abkhazia signed an agreement to receive support to undertake publication of a book on persons missing in Abkhazia.

Family links

The number of RCMs exchanged between Georgia and Abkhazia decreased by 4.5% compared with the previous year. With an improved but expensive telephone service between Georgia and Abkhazia, the destitute still relied on the ICRC to keep in touch with family members living on the other side of the ceasefire line.

- ▶ 3,145 RCMs (including 1,397 in Abkhazia) collected and 3,199 (including 1,596 in Abkhazia) distributed
- ▶ 5 vulnerable people reunited with their families in Abkhazia
- ▶ new tracing requests registered for 29 people (9 females, 2 minors at the time of disappearance); 15 people located; 3 people still being sought
- ▶ 8 people issued ICRC travel documents
- ▶ 54 official documents relayed between family members across front lines and borders

Economic security and basic needs

Given improved socio-economic conditions in Abkhazia, assistance programmes were revised, and local authorities and organizations took on more responsibility for supporting vulnerable groups. The programme of quarterly distributions of food rations and essential household items was completed as planned at the end of February. The canteen (soup kitchen) programme, whose beneficiaries decreased by 35% over the year, ceased at the end of December.

Responsibility for implementing the home assistance programme was handed over fully to the Red Cross in Abkhazia. In line with a memorandum of understanding signed between the *de facto* authorities of Abkhazia and the Red Cross in Abkhazia, long-standing ICRC assistance programmes were scheduled to close by the end of 2007.

The socio-economic conditions of the Mingrelian (Georgian) population in the volatile region of Gali were assessed. A total of 250 economic support projects were identified for implementation in 2007.

In western Georgia, the ICRC carried out additional distributions of food and essential household items to prevent deterioration in the economic conditions of a destitute population. By the end of the year, 85% of the population had been assessed by the new social welfare system, while 72% were already receiving monthly cash allowances.

Through agriculture, trade and craft grants, as well as technical coaching, vulnerable individuals benefited from an increase in their productive capacity and their regular incomes. A total of 1,583 income-generating activities were set up, ranging from vegetable production and animal husbandry to mechanical workshops.

Twenty-four collective centres housing 3,267 IDPs were rehabilitated in close collaboration with the Georgian Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation and the

de facto South Ossetian Ministry of Special Affairs. Twenty-two centres benefited from the training of maintenance teams and the distribution of toolboxes. Following assessment and registration of the more than 1,200 collective centres in western and eastern Georgia, a comprehensive database containing all relevant information was set up.

Summary of assistance in Abkhazia and western Georgia

- ▶ 15,485 people (10,101 households) received food rations and 16,507 people (11,011 households) received essential household items
- ▶ 2,778 people (731 households) received income-generating support
- ▶ 2,600 IDPs benefited from shelter and habitat projects and 200 people from water and sanitation projects

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

The ICRC pursued its visits to detainees in Georgia proper, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, monitoring individually people arrested for security reasons. Most arrests were linked to the tensions between Georgia and the Russian Federation, as well as to the elections that took place in South Ossetia and Georgia.

In Georgia proper, although the authorities opened two new prisons and decided to institute legal reforms and increase the budget of the penitentiary system, conditions of detention worsened because of overcrowding. The government received international support for the prison reform process. Five detention facilities were assessed by the ICRC and reports subsequently submitted to the authorities. Two international experts in prison reform undertook a week-long mission, sponsored by the ICRC, to advise the Georgian Ministries of Justice and of Health, Labour and Social Affairs on the ongoing reform of detainee health care. Conducting a comprehensive health needs assessment in prison was one of the key recommendations of their report, and the ICRC assisted the Georgian government in holding a seminar to prepare the assessment.

In several prisons, the ICRC conducted rehabilitation work on the medical wards, allowing for better care of sick detainees and healthier working conditions for the prison medical staff. In other prisons, medical equipment or supplies were provided. Work on water supply systems and sanitary installations was also performed.

- ▶ 14,747 detainees visited, 59 (2 females) of them monitored individually, including 42 (2 females) newly registered, during 77 visits to 19 places of detention; these figures include 111 detainees visited (1 monitored individually) in South Ossetia during 9 visits to 2 places of detention; 469 RCMs collected from and 477 distributed to detainees
- ▶ 439 detainees visited in Abkhazia, 9 of them monitored individually, including 7 newly registered, during 20 visits to 5 places of detention; 27 RCMs collected from and 36 distributed to detainees
- ▶ 2 detention certificates issued for former detainees or their families
- ▶ 1,050 detainees in 4 places of detention benefited from rehabilitation work in their places of detention, mainly in the medical wards; an additional 370 detainees in 1 place of detention will benefit from an ongoing project

TB control programme

Aiming to bring the TB epidemic in the penitentiary system under control, the Georgian government continued to implement a directly observed treatment, short course (DOTS) strategy for detainees with active TB. Coordination mechanisms between the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Affairs still needed to be strengthened to increase the likelihood of detainees completing their treatment after release.

The Ministry of Justice conducted mass TB screening in nine detention facilities with the technical support of the ICRC and the national TB programme, including for the first time the new Kutaisi prison and Rustavi-6 prison. Plans were made to include the newly reopened Rustavi-2 prison in the TB control programme, thus ensuring that the entire detainee population in Georgia had full access to proper diagnosis and treatment of TB.

- ▶ 15,983 detainees screened for TB in 14 detention facilities
- ▶ 600 detainees commenced DOTS treatment
- ▶ 368 detainees completed treatment
- ▶ 422 detainees still under treatment

WOUNDED AND SICK

The hospitals in Agudzera, Sukhumi and Tkvarcheli received essential analgesics and suture material from the ICRC. The assistance ended in December as planned.

- ▶ 535 surgical operations performed at ICRC-supported hospitals

Rehabilitation work was implemented at Tskhinvali hospital with ICRC support. Over 2,600 metres of the sewage, water and heating pipe system were installed and a workshop with tools and equipment for the maintenance team was set up. The generator house, heating room and laundry facilities were rehabilitated and faulty equipment was replaced.

Physical rehabilitation

According to official estimates, there were 4,000 amputees in Georgia. There were around 600 in Abkhazia, most of whom were weapon-wounded. Two government physical rehabilitation centres, namely the main centre in Tbilisi and the centre in Gagra, continued to receive ICRC assistance. With the aim of promoting the development of a comprehensive physical rehabilitation policy, a round-table took place under ICRC auspices for the authorities, associations for the disabled, service providers and international organizations.

The Georgian Foundation for Prosthetic Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (GEFPOR) in Tbilisi moved further towards autonomy but still had 60% of its costs reimbursed by the ICRC. With ICRC support, GEFPOR continued to apply to different potential donors. Some income-generating activities were developed.

In Abkhazia, a timetable was discussed for the gradual takeover by local health authorities of responsibility for the Gagra Orthopaedic Centre. Renovations were undertaken in Gali hospital for the transfer of the repair workshop from the ICRC office. A Gagra technician attended an ICRC technical seminar on hip prostheses in the Russian Federation.

A cooperation agreement with the health authorities in South Ossetia and a contract with the Vladikavkaz Orthopaedic Centre were signed regarding ICRC financing of the fitting of Ossetian patients with prosthetic/orthotic appliances.

- ▶ 1,143 patients (184 women and 256 children) received services at the ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centre

- ▶ 125 new patients (20 women and 2 children) fitted with prostheses and 225 (35 women and 157 children) with orthoses
- ▶ 380 prostheses (44 for women and 15 for children; 79 for mine victims) and 517 orthoses (58 for women and 408 for children), 764 crutches and 24 wheelchairs delivered

AUTHORITIES

The Georgian authorities and the ICRC remained in close contact regarding the country's accession to IHL treaties and their incorporation into domestic law. Georgia ratified Additional Protocol III in December.

A representative of the International Law Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the head of the International Legal Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Justice participated in the 3rd European meeting of national IHL committees held in January in Athens, Greece. A study on the compatibility of national legislation on missing persons with IHL was completed by a Georgian expert.

- ▶ 32 municipality staff members from western Georgia, 20 members of the Abkhaz parliament and 11 representatives of NGOs and the *de facto* authorities of South Ossetia attended training and awareness sessions on IHL and the work and mandate of the ICRC

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The Georgian Ministry of Defence continued to work with the support of the ICRC on the integration of IHL into armed forces training. The ministry invited the ICRC twice to international conferences focusing on military reform and strategy issues. An IHL training needs assessment for the police and security forces was carried out in May.

Armed personnel in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and the ICRC met to discuss further cooperation in the field of IHL dissemination.

- ▶ 24 staff members of a new sub-unit at the Ministry of Defence Training Centre tasked to organize the training of Georgian units deployed on international peacekeeping missions attended a five-day training course to become IHL instructors

- ▶ 15 senior officers of the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces of Georgia participated in an IHL seminar

Information sessions on the ICRC's mandate and activities were held for:

- ▶ 19 cadets of the Military Naval Academy of the Georgian Ministry of Defence and 6 representatives of police forces in western Georgia;
- ▶ 44 officers of the Georgian Border Police in Batumi;
- ▶ 26 officers of the Abkhaz police;
- ▶ 60 officers of the Abkhaz border troops detachment in Sukhumi;
- ▶ 78 officers and 39 servicemen of the CIS peacekeeping forces deployed in Abkhazia;
- ▶ 35 military observers at the UNOMIG Gali office;
- ▶ 54 observers of the Georgian, Russian and North Ossetian Joint Peacekeeping Force battalions deployed in the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict zone.

CIVIL SOCIETY

To raise public awareness of and support for IHL, a number of initiatives targeting the media and academia were carried out.

Media

- ▶ 2 video clips and several radio broadcasts made on ICRC assistance programmes
- ▶ 2 media round-tables organized on ICRC activities in the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict zone and in Abkhazia

Schools

- ▶ some 144,000 pupils, including 6,000 in Abkhazia, used ICRC-sponsored textbooks on IHL
- ▶ 560 teachers trained in IHL in Tbilisi and 17 regions of Georgia
- ▶ 9 teachers from 5 regions of Georgia trained as IHL teacher-trainers
- ▶ a CD-ROM on IHL produced for teachers
- ▶ a school competition held on the basics of IHL

Universities

- ▶ a team of Georgian students sponsored to participate in the Jean Pictet moot court competition in Serbia and Montenegro
- ▶ 54 students from Zugdidi University and Batumi Maritime Academy attended presentations on the ICRC's mandate and activities

- ▶ 50 students from Sukhumi University took part in a two-day workshop on IHL
- ▶ 1 IHL lecturer from Sukhumi University participated in an IHL round-table in Moscow, Russian Federation

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The ICRC and the International Federation jointly supported the Red Cross Society of Georgia's institutional and statutory reforms through financing and participating in an organizational capacity evaluation (headquarters and branch capacity) and providing financial support for an external financial audit. The National Society's statutory reform process was partially completed. Documents such as those defining internal rules and procedures were drafted.

The objectives, plan of action and budget of the dissemination programme were set by the National Society in consultation with the ICRC and the International Federation. Subsequently, 1,743 people attended 131 dissemination sessions for external audiences and 540 National Society staff and volunteers attended 43 sessions on IHL and the Movement. The National Society continued to receive training and advice for capacity-building and financial support from the ICRC.