



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.

ICRC delegation
 ICRC sub-delegation
 ICRC mission
 ICRC office
 ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic centre

EXPENDITURE (IN CHF ,000)

Protection	1,370
Assistance	12,419
Prevention	1,280
Cooperation with National Societies	274
General	3

► **15,346**

of which: Overheads 937

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	102.4%
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PERSONNEL

25 expatriates
335 national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2005, the ICRC:

- established a permanent presence in South Ossetia following renewed tensions between the breakaway region and Georgia;
- visited 19 places of detention (including 2 in Abkhazia and 2 in South Ossetia) to monitor the conditions, including the functioning of the health system, and maintained its support for the TB control programme in prisons;
- offered technical support to the authorities with a view to clarifying the fate of persons missing in relation to the Abkhazia and South Ossetia conflicts;
- distributed food and essential household items, as well as grants (agricultural, trade and craft), to some 51,600 vulnerable people in Abkhazia and western Georgia and rehabilitated 28 collective centres housing IDPs (including 3 in the Georgia-South Ossetia conflict zone);
- supported 3 hospitals in Abkhazia and 2 physical rehabilitation centres (1 in Tbilisi and 1 in Abkhazia);
- supported IHL training for the armed forces; held a national moot-court competition and a national essay competition for law students as part of its efforts to promote IHL.

CONTEXT

Georgia continued to receive extensive international support for the process of economic and social reform. The government was able to raise the State budget on three occasions, thanks to the increased income from customs, taxes and privatization. Meanwhile, with rising prices and high unemployment, much of the population still had difficulty making ends meet.

Following the sudden death of Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania, repeated reshuffles in the executive at central and regional levels hampered the implementation of ambitious reform plans.

Georgia pursued its efforts to integrate Euro-Atlantic structures, working to implement an Individual Partnership Action Plan with NATO and to establish a European Neighbourhood Policy action plan with the European Union. Georgia and Russia finally reached agreement on the closure of Russian military bases and the withdrawal of troops from Georgia by 2008, which actually began in the second half of the year. The two countries had tense exchanges over Russia's presence and role in Georgia's conflicts with the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Following the rerun of the Abkhaz presidential election, won by Sergei Bagapsh, both Georgia and Abkhazia confirmed their willingness to resume peace negotiations. The parties met in Geneva and Tbilisi under the auspices of the UN, and steps were taken to finalize a draft agreement on the non-resumption of hostilities. However, the agreement had yet to be signed by the end of the year. Likewise, the official return of Georgian IDPs to the Gali district had still not taken place. The security situation in this district deteriorated steadily, especially at the end of the year, while the Kodori Valley and other parts of the cease-fire zone between Abkhazia and Georgia were relatively calm.

In the conflict between Georgia and South Ossetia, there was little progress in implementing the agreement signed in Sochi in November 2004. Tensions remained high, and several violent incidents undermined prospects for confidence-building. During the year, both sides presented similar peace proposals, calling for a three-stage peace process involving demilitarization, socio-economic rehabilitation and the definition of the breakaway region's political status. Although negotiations continued, there were no tangible results. The economy in South Ossetia was weakened by restrictions on trade between the conflict zone and nearby regions.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM		
Detainees visited	8,165	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>		
Detainees visited and monitored individually	22	Food	Beneficiaries	51,697
Number of visits carried out	68	Essential household items	Beneficiaries	51,606
Number of places of detention visited	19	Agricultural inputs and micro-economic initiatives	Beneficiaries	16,987
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS		Water-supply schemes and sanitation systems (completed projects)	Beneficiaries	5,974
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>		Habitat structures	Beneficiaries	350
RCMs collected	3,006	WOUNDED AND SICK		
RCMs distributed	3,203	Hospitals supported	Structures	3
People reunited with their families	6	Admissions	Patients	58
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>		Operations	Operations performed	819
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	34	<i>Physical rehabilitation</i>		
Tracing requests closed positively (persons located)	14	Patients receiving services	Patients	1,077
Tracing requests still being handled at 31 December 2005	21	Prostheses delivered	Pieces	343
DOCUMENTS ISSUED		Orthoses delivered	Pieces	653
People to whom travel documents were issued	30			

ICRC ACTION

Given the ongoing tensions and periodic violence in South Ossetia, the ICRC opened an office in Tskhinvali in order to monitor and address humanitarian issues related to the conflict. The organization carried out basic repairs to centres hosting IDPs, as well as to the emergency surgical facilities of key hospitals.

The ICRC continued to visit detainees held in Georgia proper, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It urged the Georgian government to reduce the severe overcrowding in pre-trial detention centres, pointing out the potential impact on both detainee and public health. In the most urgent cases, the ICRC provided beds and bedding and upgraded prison infrastructure and water-supply systems. Working closely with the government and other international actors involved, the organization continued to support the tuberculosis (TB) control programme in prisons, expanding activities to include facilities in western Georgia. The ICRC completed a comprehensive assessment of the management of health services for detainees and submitted its recommendations to the justice and health authorities.

The ICRC remained focused on the issue of persons missing as a result of the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. While encouraging the authorities to take measures to identify human remains and inform families, the organization assessed the needs of families of the missing and completed a study on national legislation relating to the problem.

In Abkhazia and western Georgia, the ICRC continued to distribute food and other basic supplies to a core of people who were most needy and without any productive capacity, while it helped other beneficiaries to start micro-economic initiatives, enabling them to earn an income in cash or kind, thus reducing their dependence on external assistance. It also strove to improve the living conditions of IDPs in western Georgia and in the Georgia-South Ossetia conflict zone through the rehabilitation of collective centres. At the same time, the ICRC pursued its dialogue with the authorities, encouraging them to take measures to improve security, local economic conditions and access to health care of civilians in conflict-affected areas.

As planned, the ICRC maintained its support to medical facilities in Abkhazia, as well as to physical rehabilitation services in Tbilisi and Gagra. In partnership with the health authorities, it organized an assessment of the national physical rehabilitation policy in Georgia.

The ICRC also supported the authorities' efforts to enact legislation to meet the country's obligations under IHL and to integrate IHL into the curricula of military training institutions, universities and secondary schools.

In close collaboration with the International Federation, the ICRC continued to support the Red Cross Society of Georgia, specifically to develop the National Society's dissemination capacities.

CIVILIANS

Family links

While assessing whether its RCM network was still needed, the ICRC found that, although communications between Georgia and Abkhazia had improved, telephone calls were expensive and the postal service did not fully cover Abkhazia. Consequently, some 6,200 people still relied on RCMs to keep in touch with family members. The Chechen community in the Pankisi Valley continued to be offered the family-links services, but they made limited use of it (8 messages exchanged and 3 tracing requests opened). Compared with 2004, the overall volume of RCMs exchanged decreased by 30%.

- 3,203 RCMs delivered (of which 1,854 in Abkhazia) and 3,006 RCMs collected (of which 1,560 in Abkhazia)
- 6 people reunited with their families

The missing

More than 12 years on, around 2,000 people remained missing in connection with the conflict in Abkhazia and about 120 in connection with the conflict in South Ossetia.

Despite having new statutes, the Georgian State commission dealing with the search for missing persons still had to adopt all best practices for handling issues related to the missing and their families. Although the Abkhaz commission for missing persons had been temporarily disbanded, by the end of the year the Abkhaz authorities began drafting new statutes for the commission with the ICRC's technical support. In South Ossetia, while tensions early in the year left little room for dialogue on the subject of the missing, the South Ossetian authorities responded favourably to an

ICRC proposal to initiate cooperation on this issue.

The approximately 2,000 sets of personal ante-mortem data gathered in Georgia and Abkhazia were recorded by the commissions, but there was little progress in the task of identifying remains. With a view to accelerating the exhumation process, the ICRC offered its technical assistance to help the commissions apply internationally accepted standards to ensure that the exhumations yielded accurate information.

Meanwhile, the ICRC assessed the needs of families of missing persons. It found that many experienced economic problems, felt neglected, struggled with legal problems and were ill-informed about how to deal with them. The organization also conducted a study to identify Georgian legislation that could provide legal protection for the families of the missing. On the basis of the needs assessment and the legal study, the ICRC began to examine ways to support families in Georgia and Abkhazia in cooperation with the commissions.

Economic security and basic needs

As an increasing number of residents of Abkhazia with Russian passports became eligible for Russian pensions, this improved their economic security and allowed the ICRC to stop its assistance to some of them. The caseload of people receiving food and essential household items was thus reduced from 15,593 to 8,363. The ICRC and its local partner continued to provide home care and cooked food to a number of these still highly vulnerable beneficiaries. Simultaneously, the organization provided grants to 4,567 people (1,391 households) to start micro-economic projects (agricultural, trade or craft) and decrease their dependence on external assistance.

In western Georgia, the ICRC continued to assist up to 36,013 people with food and essential household items, to distribute agricultural, trade and craft grants to 12,420 people (3,231 households), and some 8,900 people received a last food ration in 2005. At the end of 2005, there were 15,460 beneficiaries who either did not have any productive capacity or would receive a grant in 2006.

- ▶ 15,684 people in Abkhazia received food and essential household items, of these 4,567 also received grants
- ▶ 36,013 people in western Georgia received food and essential household items, of these 12,420 also received grants

ICRC engineers rehabilitated buildings, sanitation and water-supply facilities to improve living conditions in 28 collective centres housing IDPs, including three in the Georgia-South Ossetia conflict zone. These rehabilitation projects benefited 2,695 IDPs. The organization established maintenance teams in the 28 centres, providing training and tools.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Visiting detainees and improving living conditions

The ICRC continued to visit detainees in Georgia proper, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, monitoring individually people arrested for security reasons, and paying special attention to foreigners.

In Georgia proper, the government received international support for its engagement in a process of prison reform. Even so, overcrowding increased, especially in pre-trial detention facilities. The overcrowding not only compromised detainee health but also, when prisoners were released, threatened public health. Having assessed the situation, the ICRC provided technical and material assistance to help the authorities improve overall conditions in prisons, thus benefiting all inmates and contributing to the reform process. For example, the organization responded to an urgent request by the Ministry of Justice to provide 400 beds and bedding for detainees.

Furthermore, the ICRC completed the water-supply system at a new prison under construction near Tbilisi (capacity 1,500), undertook emergency plumbing repairs at the central penitentiary hospital in Tbilisi (250 beneficiaries), rehabilitated the drinking-water supply of Ksani colony near Tbilisi (600 beneficiaries) and installed windows and rehabilitated showers in Geguti colony in western Georgia (650 beneficiaries). In South Ossetia, the organization upgraded the water-supply system and installed showers at the prison in Tskhinvali (50 beneficiaries).

The ICRC undertook an assessment of the management of health services in Georgia's penitentiary system and shared its findings with the government. Regular meetings then took place with the Ministries of Justice and of Health in order to encourage the integration of the ICRC's recommendations into the ongoing reform of the penitentiary system.

- ▶ 8,165 detainees visited (including 421 in Abkhazia and 95 in South Ossetia), of whom 10 newly registered and 22 monitored individually (including 3 in Abkhazia and 3 in South Ossetia), during 68 visits (including 8 in Abkhazia and 15 in South Ossetia) to 19 places of detention (including 2 in Abkhazia and 2 in South Ossetia)
- ▶ a family visit arranged for a security detainee in South Ossetia and the return home of a security detainee from Abkhazia organized
- ▶ water and sanitation conditions improved for 4,050 detainees

TB control programme

Detainees in Georgia remained at high risk of TB infection, as did the population at large when families visited their relatives in prison or when infected detainees were released. Supported by the ICRC, the government continued to implement the directly observed treatment, short course (DOTS) strategy for detainees with active TB.

In support of the TB control programme in prisons, the ICRC cooperated closely with the authorities and other international actors, providing technical assistance and medication. The Ministry of Justice conducted mass TB screening in 10 detention facilities, including for the first time in two detention facilities in Zugdidi and Batumi in western Georgia. The largest screening operation since the programme began was organized for 3,000 detainees at the most crowded pre-trial detention facility.

- ▶ 6,532 detainees screened for TB in 10 detention facilities
- ▶ 316 detainees diagnosed with TB admitted for treatment
- ▶ of the detainees starting treatment in 2005, 20 completed DOTS treatment and 254 were still undergoing treatment at year's end

WOUNDED AND SICK

Hospital support

In Abkhazia, problems related to a lack of recognition of the area's status continued to hinder the delivery of essential medicines and supplies. The ICRC thus provided three referral hospitals in Sukhumi, Agudzera and Tkvarcheli with essential analgesics and suture material.

- ▶ 819 surgical operations performed in 3 ICRC-supported hospitals in Abkhazia
- ▶ 58 weapon-wounded cases admitted to these 3 hospitals

In the Georgia-South Ossetia conflict zone, the ICRC carried out the partial rehabilitation of three Georgian health facilities and launched a project to improve the water and sanitation conditions in Tskhinvali hospital. The ICRC also sponsored the participation of two surgeons (one Georgian and one Ossetian) in the organization's annual regional war-surgery seminars in Sochi, Russia.

Physical rehabilitation

There were 4,000 amputees in Georgia, according to official estimates. In Abkhazia, there were around 600, most of whom were war-wounded. Therefore, the ICRC continued to assist two government physical rehabilitation centres, namely the main centre located in Tbilisi (which also served patients from South Ossetia) and the centre in Gagra, which was the only rehabilitation centre serving disabled people from Abkhazia.

The ICRC pursued its efforts to ensure that the Georgian Foundation for Prosthetic and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (GEFPOR), which it had helped set up, could gradually take over the physical rehabilitation programme in Tbilisi. To this end, it supported training for senior GEFPOR officials to further develop their organizational and financial management expertise and held a month-long course to upgrade the skills of six physiotherapists.

Moreover, in collaboration with the health authorities, the organization arranged for an independent evaluation of the national physical rehabilitation policy in Georgia to be conducted.

As part of its support to the centre in Gagra, the ICRC organized a three-week physiotherapy course to upgrade the skills of local professionals. In partnership with the local health authorities, the organization held a round-table on physical rehabilitation. Subsequently, the Abkhaz authorities agreed to progressively assume full responsibility for the Gagra centre.

- ▶ 1,077 patients, including 567 amputees, received services at 2 ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centres
- ▶ 124 new patients fitted with prostheses and 247 with orthoses
- ▶ 343 prostheses (70 for mine victims), 653 orthoses (1 for a mine victim), 892 crutches and 5 wheelchairs delivered

AUTHORITIES

The ICRC continued to promote Georgia's accession to IHL treaties prohibiting or regulating the use of certain types of weapons, including Protocols IV (blinding laser weapons) and V (explosive remnants of war) to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Ottawa Convention. To further support the authorities' efforts to enact legislation to meet Georgia's obligations under IHL, the ICRC completed a study of national legislation relating to missing persons and the rights of their families. It also reviewed Georgian legislation on the use and protection of the red cross and red crescent emblems. A five-day IHL training course for 23 State officials was co-organized by the ICRC and the Georgian Young Lawyers Association.

The ICRC regularly provided embassies of countries belonging to the ICRC Donor Support Group in Tbilisi, as well as the UN, the European Commission and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), with material on the ICRC's activities in the country and around the world.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

A presidential order disbanded the interior troops, integrating the majority of them into the Ministry of Defence land forces. Two battalions were left under the Ministry of the Interior and were deployed in Tbilisi and Zugdidi.

- ▶ participation of the deputy head of operational management of the land forces of Georgia sponsored in an IHL course in San Remo
- ▶ a three-day IHL course conducted for 36 officers of the 21st Battalion of the Kutaisi Brigade prior to its deployment to Iraq, as well as a half-day IHL training course for 8 officer-instructors and 32 sergeants of the Non-Commissioned Officers School
- ▶ the organization's activities presented to 60 military personnel from the UN Observer Mission in Georgia, 4 observers from the OSCE and 50 servicemen of the Russian Battalion of the Joint Peacekeeping Force in the Georgia-South Ossetia conflict zone
- ▶ 6 presentations given on the organization's activities for 41 police officers in Tskaltubo, Abasha and Poti, as well as for 80 officers of the Rapid Deployment Force of the Ministry of the Interior in Zugdidi

- ▶ the organization's activities presented to 145 officers of the Abkhaz military and law-enforcement bodies, and 11 briefings given to 42 officers at checkpoints throughout Abkhazia

CIVIL SOCIETY

The ICRC organized several round-tables in western Georgia and Abkhazia in order to update media representatives on its humanitarian activities. It produced press releases and fact sheets and gave radio and TV interviews, highlighting its TB control programme in prisons and micro-economic initiatives to assist vulnerable civilians.

The ICRC maintained its support for a school programme to familiarize pupils in Georgia with the basic concepts of IHL and humanitarian action. As the education system went through its reform process, the organization cooperated with the Ministry of Education in integrating IHL-related topics into new curricula and textbooks. The ICRC organized a nationwide competition on teaching the basics of IHL, and 63 teachers from the different regions of Georgia participated in the final round. In Sukhumi, the ICRC organized an IHL competition for 35 pupils from 7 districts of Abkhazia.

- ▶ some 154,000 pupils, including 6,000 in Abkhazia, used ICRC-sponsored textbooks
- ▶ 106 groups of teachers (1,056 teachers) trained in Tbilisi and 15 regions of Georgia
- ▶ 7 teachers trained as teacher-trainers in Georgia and 12 in Abkhazia

IHL was taught in the law and journalism faculties of six universities in Georgia. The ICRC worked closely with the Georgian Young Lawyers Association to promote IHL in academic circles, notably co-organizing an IHL moot-court competition and a national IHL essay competition for law students. The organization sponsored the participation of university students and teachers in such events as the international Jean Pictet IHL competition, the Moscow IHL summer school and the Moscow IHL round-table for State officials and academic circles. In order to promote IHL rules and principles among current and future decision-makers in South Ossetia, the ICRC organized a one-day IHL training course for 20 professors and students of the University of Tskhinvali, in which 13 local government officials also participated.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Red Cross Society of Georgia focused on adopting new statutes and preparing for elections, as well as drawing up a new strategic plan for 2006–09.

The ICRC signed an agreement with the National Society on enhancing its capacities in the fields of dissemination and communication.

- ▶ with ICRC support, 14 National Society regional dissemination officers conducted 114 internal sessions with 802 participants and 164 external sessions with 1,148 participants