



azerbaijan

The ICRC has been working in Azerbaijan since 1992 in relation to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. 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, and monitors the situation of communities along the Line of Contact. It supports the authorities in bringing the spread of tuberculosis in prisons under control and ensuring adequate limb-fitting services. The ICRC promotes the implementation of IHL and its integration into the training of the armed and security forces and into university and school curricula. It works to strengthen the capacities of the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan.

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	2,115
Assistance	2,281
Prevention	1,355
Cooperation with National Societies	448
General	-

► **6,198**

of which: Overheads 378

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	100%
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PERSONNEL

9	expatriates
72	national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2007, the ICRC:

- reached a consensus with the authorities on the text of a framework agreement on ante-mortem data collection and management by the State Commission on Missing Persons
- trained personnel from the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan in preparation for the collection of ante-mortem data from the families of persons missing as a result of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict
- visited and facilitated the repatriation of POWs and civilian internees detained in connection with the Nagorno Karabakh conflict
- welcomed the Justice Ministry's implementation of the directly observed treatment, short course-plus pilot project for detainees with multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis
- transferred responsibility for all physical rehabilitation services to the authorities
- cooperated with the authorities in integrating IHL basics into compulsory secondary school curricula

CONTEXT

Oil-rich Azerbaijan sought to maintain a balanced foreign policy with regard to its neighbours and the United States and the rest of Europe, while the unresolved Nagorno Karabakh conflict and growing inflation generated frustration on the domestic scene.

Law enforcement agencies stepped up efforts to limit the influence of religious groups. In October, the National Security Ministry reported that it had thwarted the plans of an Islamist group to attack foreign embassies and government buildings in Baku.

In Nagorno Karabakh, a new *de facto* president was elected in July. Unrecognized by the international community, the elections caused considerable controversy.

To make progress towards a settlement of the 19-year Nagorno Karabakh conflict before the presidential elections in Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2008, the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents met on the sidelines of the June summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States in St Petersburg, Russian Federation, while the foreign ministers met on four occasions in the Russian Federation, Switzerland, Serbia and Spain. In June, for the first time since the beginning of the conflict, representatives of the Armenian and Azerbaijani intelligentsia, led by the two countries' ambassadors to the Russian Federation, made a joint trip to Baku, Stepanakert/Khankendi and Yerevan in an endeavour to promote dialogue and foster trust between people affected by the conflict.

In November, the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe presented a set of Basic Principles for the Peaceful Settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh Conflict to the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers. The parties to the conflict were urged to endorse them prior to negotiating a comprehensive peace agreement, although few expected consensus to be found in the short term. On the ground, while there were no major incidents, tensions were rife along the front line and there were more reports of ceasefire violations and military casualties than in recent years.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

	Total		Total	Women	Children
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)			CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM		
Detainees visited	10,700		<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>		
Detainees visited and monitored individually	73		Food <i>Beneficiaries</i>		
Number of visits carried out	35		300	70%	
Number of places of detention visited	24		Essential household items <i>Beneficiaries</i>		
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS			Water, sanitation and habitat projects <i>Beneficiaries</i>		
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>			963		
RCMs collected	122		<i>Health</i>		
RCMs distributed	108		Health centres supported <i>Structures</i>		
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>			66		
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	229		WOUNDED AND SICK		
<i>of whom females</i>	59		<i>Physical rehabilitation</i>		
<i>of whom minors at the time of disappearance</i>	11		Patients receiving services <i>Patients</i>		
Tracing cases still being handled at 31 December 2007 (people)	4,413		19,068	1,273	4,867
<i>of which for females</i>	358		Prostheses delivered <i>Units</i>		
<i>of which for minors at the time of disappearance</i>	108		1,342	95	29
DOCUMENTS ISSUED			Orthoses delivered <i>Units</i>		
People to whom travel documents were issued	4		2,065	205	1,589

ICRC ACTION

Tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan and their impact on the population living along the Line of Contact and the international border continued to elicit the ICRC's attention. Through regular field missions, the organization reinforced its dialogue with representatives of local communities, the authorities, National Society branches, IDPs and the families of missing persons and addressed humanitarian issues linked to the conflict. Given the continuing problem of mines, the ICRC pursued its programme, conducted in partnership with the National Society, to create mine-free play areas for children.

Dialogue between the State Commissions on Missing Persons and the ICRC resulted in a consolidated list of persons missing in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. Moreover, the ICRC and the Azerbaijani authorities cooperated closely to finalize a framework agreement regarding the collection and centralized management of ante-mortem data by the State Commission.

The ICRC continued to monitor the conditions of detention and treatment of people deprived of their freedom, visited people held in connection with the conflict and tackled issues of humanitarian concern with the relevant authorities. It facilitated the transfer or repatriation of POWs and civilian internees.

As in past years, the ICRC supported the Justice Ministry in strengthening its services in the prison tuberculosis (TB) control programme. In particular, it supported a national directly observed treatment, short course-plus (DOTS-plus) pilot project to fight multi-drug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) in prisons.

The ICRC maintained its dialogue with the authorities, particularly the judiciary, to obtain their support for IHL implementation. A review of national legislation in relation to the missing persons issue was completed in order to see where amendments were required.

Activities were carried out with the armed forces and interior troops aimed at the integration of IHL into military training, with ICRC support. The subject was also broached with the police and border guard service.

The ICRC helped enhance knowledge and understanding of IHL in the media and academia. It cooperated with the education authorities in integrating IHL basics into compulsory secondary school curricula.

Cooperation with the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan continued to focus on its tracing, dissemination and mine-action programmes. The ICRC provided training to National Society personnel in preparation for the collection of ante-mortem data from the families of persons missing in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict.

CIVILIANS

The half a million or so people living in 11 conflict-affected districts along the Line of Contact and the international border with Armenia continued to face security problems stemming from ceasefire violations, mines and explosive remnants of war. Given problems of access to safe drinking water, two villages were assessed by the ICRC with a view to improving their water supply. In order to monitor the situation faced by conflict-affected populations and to remind the authorities of their obligations under IHL, the ICRC conducted regular field missions from its office in Barda and expanded contacts with the local communities and the civilian and military authorities in the front-line regions.

A mine incident involving a child in Gedabay confirmed the need to pursue the programme to create mine-free play areas for children. To this end, 27 mine-affected communities were assessed in May, and by October 10 of them had safe playgrounds constructed by the ICRC in partnership with the Azerbaijani Red Crescent.

Vulnerable people in urban areas of Nagorny Karabakh continued to cope in difficult conditions thanks to assistance from the ICRC.

Sixty-six rural health centres in Nagorny Karabakh received essential drugs and medical disposables. Epidemiological services welcomed a donation of drugs for a campaign against intestinal parasites among schoolchildren in Stepanakert/Khankendi, as

well as a donation of anti-pediculosis drugs. To promote hygiene, 30,000 leaflets on the top four communicable diseases were published with ICRC support.

- ▶ 300 people received food and essential household items

Clarifying the fate of missing persons

The lists of persons missing in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict were consolidated by the Armenian and Azerbaijani State Commissions on Missing Persons and the ICRC. By the end of the year, 4,413 people from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh were still recorded by the ICRC as unaccounted for.

The authorities and the ICRC reached a consensus on the text of a framework agreement on ante-mortem data collection and management by the respective State Commissions. Preparations for ante-mortem data collection entailed the training of Azerbaijani Red Crescent personnel and cooperation with the State Commission to identify sources of information on missing persons and possible gravesites.

In Nagorny Karabakh, discussions with the State Commission were pursued with a view to implementing the proposals regarding more efficient action to ascertain the fate of missing persons outlined by the ICRC in a 2005 memorandum. Accordingly, a working group within the commission was scheduled to be set up early in 2008.

- ▶ in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, new tracing requests registered for 229 people (including 59 females and 11 minors at the time of disappearance); 1 person located; 4,413 people (including 358 females and 108 minors at the time of disappearance) still being sought

Support to families of missing persons

The capacities of psychologists and existing psychological support services continued to be assessed for the possible referral of families of missing persons. Psychologists from Nagorny Karabakh participated in an ICRC workshop on helping missing persons' families deal with loss and grief.

Restoring family links

RCMs remained the only means for some family members separated by conflict to communicate with each other.

- ▶ 64 RCMs collected from and 50 RCMs distributed to civilians, of which 58 collected and 42 distributed in Nagorny Karabakh
- ▶ 4 people issued with an ICRC travel document

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

People deprived of their freedom received visits from the ICRC in accordance with the organization's mandate. Among those visited were one Armenian POW and one civilian internee from Nagorny Karabakh detained in Azerbaijan, the latter being released with the ICRC acting as a neutral intermediary. In Nagorny Karabakh, one Azerbaijani serviceman and two Azerbaijani civilian internees received ICRC visits and re-established contact with their families through RCMs and were later transferred to the Azerbaijani authorities. Detainees' living conditions and treatment were monitored and contact with their families preserved. The authorities were kept informed of the ICRC's observations and recommendations through confidential oral and written reports.

To improve the living conditions of detainees and assist the authorities in addressing detainees' basic needs, a water and habitat assessment was undertaken by the ICRC in Penal Colony 4, a women's detention facility, and inmates received a one-off distribution of hygiene items. Detainees held in the security remand facility of the National Security Ministry enjoyed a greater variety of reading matter with the donation of books to the renovated facility's library.

Police and penitentiary officials, as well as senior members of the armed and security forces, attended information sessions on the ICRC's detention-related activities.

Azerbaijan

- ▶ 10,550 detainees visited, of whom 68 monitored individually and 17 newly registered, during 33 visits to 19 places of detention
- ▶ 23 RCMs collected from and 11 RCMs distributed to detainees
- ▶ 963 women detainees benefited from water and sanitation projects

In relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, in Azerbaijan (including Nagorny Karabakh)

- ▶ 150 detainees visited, of whom 5 monitored individually (including 2 POWs and 3 civilian internees) and 4 newly registered (including 1 POW and 3 civilian internees)
- ▶ 35 RCMs collected from and 47 RCMs distributed to detainees
- ▶ 4 detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC support

TB control programme

MDR-TB remained a serious problem in Azerbaijan's prisons. The authorities pursued their efforts to tackle it, with technical and financial support from the ICRC. To allow DOTS treatment to start in Penal Colony 3, a joint project to renovate the MDR-TB ward was completed in May, with the Justice Ministry bearing 80% of the cost and the ICRC 20%. Four indoor sputum booths and an incinerator were built and a TB ward rehabilitated to strengthen infection control measures and ensure proper disposal of sanitary waste. Two civilian laboratories serving two remote penitentiaries were partly renovated. Biomedical construction engineers working for the Justice Ministry received technical assistance, focusing on the prevention of communicable diseases.

The establishment of a national DOTS-plus expert commission comprising civilian and penitentiary health-care providers was facilitated by the ICRC, thereby strengthening cooperation between the Health and Justice ministries. In April, the Justice Ministry launched the first DOTS-plus pilot project for detainees with MDR-TB. Previously, 30 health professionals had received local training in MDR-TB from WHO experts. Ancillary drugs for the management of side-effects of second-line TB drugs were paid for by the ICRC.

The bacteriological laboratory at the prison TB hospital (STIDT) performed 14,277 sputum smear examinations, grew 2,881 cultures and undertook 768 drug sensitivity tests. With the support of the ICRC, the blood biochemistry/serology department of the STIDT laboratory became fully functional. Techniques allowing for biochemical identification of mycobacteria and second-line drug susceptibility testing were introduced in the STIDT laboratory. TB diagnostic services were decentralized to civilian laboratories in Ganja and Salyan, which started serving detainees from Pre-trial Centre 2 and Penal Colony 5.

A comprehensive TB manual for prisons was developed and officially endorsed by the medical department of the Justice Ministry.

- ▶ 777 detainees commenced DOTS treatment
- ▶ 66 detainees commenced DOTS-plus treatment
- ▶ 490 detainees completed treatment
- ▶ 11 health professionals of the Justice Ministry took part in 8 international conferences/study tours/seminars on TB treatment
- ▶ Justice and Health Ministry staff and National Society volunteers attended 21 training courses on TB treatment

WOUNDED AND SICK

Amputees and other people with disabilities continued to need access to quality rehabilitation services. The Ahmedly Prosthetic Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Centre in Baku and the prosthetic/orthotic centres in Ganja and Nakhichevan received material and training support from the ICRC till the end of June, when responsibility for all physical rehabilitation services was transferred to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. A plan of action for national physical rehabilitation services was finalized with the authorities, and the implementation of the recommendations concerning the accessibility of disabled people to such services set to be monitored by the ICRC.

Ten technicians, a physiotherapist and a doctor attended three technical seminars on ankle-foot orthoses.

To acquire basic war-surgery techniques, two surgeons from the Defence Ministry participated in a war- and emergency-surgery seminar in Nalchik, Russian Federation, with ICRC support.

- ▶ 19,068 patients (including 1,273 women and 4,867 children) received services at 3 ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centres
- ▶ 211 new patients (including 28 women and 6 children) fitted with prostheses and 707 (including 63 women and 580 children) fitted with orthoses
- ▶ 1,342 prostheses (including 95 for women, 29 for children and 124 for mine victims), 2,065 orthoses (including 205 for women, 1,589 for children and 11 for mine victims), 3,243 crutches and 428 wheelchairs delivered

AUTHORITIES

In view of the forthcoming collection of detailed data on missing persons, a review of the ICRC study on the compatibility of national legislation with IHL rules governing the legal status of missing persons and their families and the exhumation and identification of human remains was completed with a view to encouraging the authorities to adopt the required complementary measures.

- ▶ 27 judges participated in a round-table on the repression of IHL violations
- ▶ a military court judge sponsored to attend a regional seminar in Budapest, Hungary, focusing on the role of the judiciary in the implementation of IHL

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Cooperation with the armed forces

The Defence Ministry and the ICRC pursued cooperation in the field of IHL integration and discussed the responsibility of the military authorities in this regard. Military instructors continued to receive training in IHL from the ICRC.

- ▶ 4 military instructors attended a Senezh IHL train-the-trainer course in the Russian Federation
- ▶ 35 army officers participated in a five-day IHL course

Cooperation with the interior troops, police and border guards

Together with the ICRC, the commander of the interior troops and members of the working group on IHL implementation examined issues such as the incorporation of IHL into military doctrine, teaching and training. High-ranking officers continued to undergo intensive IHL training.

An introductory meeting with the police academy prepared the ground for IHL and international human rights law to be included in the academy's curricula at a future stage.

The border guard service and the ICRC initiated a dialogue to gauge the need for the organization's support in integrating IHL and international human rights law into training.

- ▶ 30 officers of the interior troops participated in a five-day IHL course

CIVIL SOCIETY

Several initiatives targeting the media and academia were undertaken to cultivate awareness of and support for IHL. Thus, there was increased and more accurate coverage of IHL issues, while future leaders and decision-makers benefited from efforts to integrate IHL into school and university curricula.

Raising awareness of IHL among the general public

- ▶ journalists and the general public attended a photo exhibition on the issue of missing persons and the plight of their families
- ▶ an information leaflet produced on ICRC activities in Nagorny Karabakh

Teaching humanitarian values to schoolchildren

- ▶ in Azerbaijan, 459 teachers from 289 schools attended training courses as part of plans to integrate basic elements of IHL into school curricula
- ▶ in Nagorny Karabakh, 126 teachers attended 11 IHL seminars

Promoting IHL among students

- ▶ international law teachers and NGO legal experts attended a seminar on IHL and human rights held in cooperation with the Eurasian Lawyers Association
- ▶ 18 students attended an IHL summer school
- ▶ in Nagorny Karabakh, students attended an IHL dissemination session on the ICRC's mandate and activities
- ▶ in Nakhichevan, university lecturers and students attended IHL presentations

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Azerbaijani Red Crescent continued to receive ICRC support for its tracing, dissemination and mine-action programmes, three priority areas included in the National Society's strategic work plan for 2008–10. Its legal base was strengthened by a law on the National Society adopted by Azerbaijan in May.

Children living in 10 villages along the front line had access to safe play areas thanks to the operational partnership between the ICRC and the Azerbaijani Red Crescent (see *Civilians*). The National Society and the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action signed an agreement on the collection of incident data and mine survivors' needs, which defined the National Society's role within the National Mine Action Plan.

Following preparations for ante-mortem data collection, the National Society was set to become involved in efforts to clarify the fate of missing persons (see *Civilians*).

Azerbaijani Red Crescent representatives met their Armenian and Georgian counterparts in Tbilisi, Georgia, to discuss dissemination and tracing, share experiences and establish best practices.