



# tashkent (regional)

The regional delegation for Central Asia was opened in 1992 to enable the ICRC to step up its activities for victims of the Tajik civil war. In all the countries covered, it assists governments in ratifying IHL instruments and adopting implementing legislation, and promotes the integration of IHL into armed forces' training and secondary school and university curricula. The ICRC helps build the capacities of the region's National Societies, in particular to promote IHL and to restore family links. It also endeavours to protect and assist people detained for security reasons; in Kyrgyzstan, where the ICRC conducts regular visits to detainees, it supports the efforts of the authorities to control tuberculosis in prisons.

## COVERING

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

## EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	2,055
Assistance	1,699
Prevention	2,572
Cooperation with National Societies	1,031
General	-

► **7,355**

of which: Overheads 449

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	84%
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## PERSONNEL

16	expatriates
91	national staff (daily workers not included)

## KEY POINTS

### In 2007, the ICRC:

- continued to visit detainees in Kyrgyzstan and to support the government's programme for tuberculosis control in prisons
- welcomed the creation of an interministerial working group by the Kyrgyz authorities to follow up the ICRC's report on the conditions of detainees in police custody
- endeavoured to resume visits to detainees in Uzbekistan and continued dialogue with the authorities to this end, but no progress had been made by the end of the year
- downgraded the mission of Dushanbe to an office after the withdrawal of its head of mission in October owing to lack of progress in negotiations with the Tajik authorities on the resumption of ICRC visits to detainees
- pursued its dialogue with the government of Turkmenistan with a view to starting visits to detainees, but no progress was made
- welcomed the Tajik Ministry of Defence's initial agreement to establish a steering committee for the integration of IHL into military doctrine, education and training

## CONTEXT

Uzbekistan's president, Islam Karimov, was re-elected in December. Human rights issues strained relations with a number of countries.

In Kyrgyzstan, a new constitution extending the president's powers was adopted by referendum. In December, the presidential political party won a majority of the seats contested in the parliamentary elections.

Tajikistan strengthened its cooperation with regional organizations to combat "terrorism", extremism and drug trafficking. Alleged members of banned Islamist groups continued to be arrested.

The president of Kazakhstan's political party won all of the contested seats in August's general elections. The country's economic growth continued and it further developed relations and military cooperation with neighbouring States. In November, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe announced that Kazakhstan would hold the presidency of the organization in 2010.

Following the death of the president of Turkmenistan at the end of 2006, the new government worked to normalize relations with neighbouring countries and opened the country to more international contact, seeking to diversify export routes for its energy resources.

**MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS**

	Total		Total	Women	Children		
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)<sup>1</sup></b>			<b>CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM<sup>2</sup></b>				
Detainees visited	7,674		<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>				
Detainees visited and monitored individually	76		Water, sanitation and habitat projects				
	<i>of whom females</i>	2	Beneficiaries	2,540	50%		
	<i>of whom minors</i>	5	<i>Physical rehabilitation</i>				
Number of visits carried out	82		Patients receiving services	Patients	1,218	271	324
Number of places of detention visited	44		Prostheses delivered	Units	410	85	41
<b>RESTORING FAMILY LINKS</b>			Orthoses delivered	Units	131	15	93
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>							
RCMs collected	378						
RCMs distributed	431						
<b>DOCUMENTS ISSUED</b>							
People to whom travel documents were issued	75						

1. Kyrgyzstan only

2. The water, sanitation and habitat figures include Kyrgyzstan and the physical rehabilitation figures include Tajikistan

## ICRC ACTION

ICRC visits to places of detention continued in Kyrgyzstan but remained on hold in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, while ongoing dialogue with the Turkmen authorities on detention-related activities failed to produce an agreement. In Uzbekistan, the ICRC discussed resuming its visits to detainees, suspended since December 2004, with the ministries concerned. The visits resumed in May but had to be stopped again owing to non-respect for the ICRC's standard working procedures. In Tajikistan, the ICRC endeavoured to reach an understanding with the authorities on the resumption of visits to detainees, suspended since September 2004. No progress had been made by the end of the year, and the head of mission was withdrawn from Dushanbe in October and the mission downgraded to an office with 21 national staff members pursuing IHL promotion and supporting the National Society.

In Kyrgyzstan, the regional delegation continued to assess detainee treatment and conditions of detention in prisons, police stations and pre-trial institutions. Following visits, the ICRC submitted confidential reports on its observations to the government, including recommendations for the authorities' penitentiary reform plans. In response to a summary report on conditions in police detention, the authorities decided to establish an interministerial working group tasked with proposing measures to implement the ICRC's recommendations. The regional delegation worked with other international organizations to support the Kyrgyz government's tuberculosis (TB) programme in prisons and provided limited assistance to detainees, in particular during the winter. It also endeavoured to mobilize donor support for the government's reform plans. The prison authorities received assistance in drafting an application to WHO for the expansion of the directly observed treatment, short course-plus (DOTS-plus) programme to treat multi-drug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) in the civilian sector and to include prisons. After obtaining the WHO's approval, the authorities, with ICRC support, started to introduce DOTS-plus in TB colony 27. The ICRC also rehabilitated prison medical infrastructure and sanitary facilities to improve conditions for detainees undergoing treatment for TB.

To ensure the sustainability of the only physical rehabilitation centre in Tajikistan, the ICRC met the minister of labour and social welfare to discuss the centre's future and gradually decreased its support, while maintaining essential technical assistance to ensure proper running of the centre and the quality of services provided.

Cooperation was strengthened and expanded with many universities, secondary schools, military lyciums and training institutions in Central Asia. IHL events, courses and competitions were organized at national and regional level, and the ICRC sponsored the participation of Central Asian military personnel, academics and government officials in IHL conferences and events abroad.

The regional delegation worked closely with the International Federation to help Central Asian National Societies develop stronger institutional bases and to harmonize existing Movement programmes and procedures. In addition, the ICRC organized various national and regional training seminars for the leadership, staff and volunteers of the National Societies.

## CIVILIANS

The ICRC was not in a position to resume dialogue with the relevant authorities in Uzbekistan with a view to carrying out humanitarian activities in favour of the civilian population affected by internal disturbances.

Plans to work with the region's police and security forces on training in international standards applicable to policing got under way (see *Armed forces and other bearers of weapons*).

Families in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan benefited from the ICRC's family-links service.

- 68 RCMs collected from and 230 RCMs distributed to civilians
- 75 people issued with an ICRC travel document

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

### Kyrgyzstan

People held in 44 places of detention in Kyrgyzstan received visits from ICRC delegates and exchanged RCMs with their families. The ICRC made recommendations for improvements in their conditions of detention where needed, particularly in the case of female detainees, minors and foreign nationals. Visits to facilities under the authority of the State security services were suspended in July owing to non-respect for some of its standard working procedures.

The ICRC made high-level representations to the relevant authorities, but the situation had not changed by the end of the year.

People held in police stations also received ICRC visits. In July, the ICRC presented the authorities with a summary report on the treatment, conditions of detention and respect for judicial guarantees of detainees in police custody. Following this, the minister of foreign affairs announced the creation of an interministerial working group tasked with proposing measures to implement the ICRC's recommendations.

Detainees received assistance such as mattresses, blankets and warm jackets to help them through the winter months, as well as hygiene items, cleaning products and stationery.

TB remained a serious threat to public health, and prisons continued to be a primary breeding ground for the disease. The Ministries of Health and Justice pursued their efforts to bring the disease under control, with ICRC support. In TB colony 27, the ICRC assisted the authorities in the daily supervision of TB diagnostic and treatment activities, drug management and staff training. These activities were also carried out in colony 2 for women and the colony for minors and in other places of detention. The authorities in charge of the national TB programme, with ICRC assistance, drafted an application to WHO for the expansion of the DOTS-plus programme for the management of MDR-TB in the civilian sector and its introduction in prisons. Following the application's approval, the authorities introduced DOTS-plus for detainees with MDR-TB in colony 27, with the ICRC's assistance.

X-ray screening for TB in prisons took place throughout the year, with ICRC support. Rehabilitation of medical infrastructure, particularly the TB hospital in colony 27, and of sanitary installations continued, improving conditions of detention and making prison facilities more conducive to the treatment of detainees with TB. Additional rehabilitation work was carried out in colony 14 for minors, colony 2 for women and SIZO 1.

With ICRC support, prison health staff participated in national and international seminars and conferences on TB and TB/HIV co-infection. Educational support was provided on TB, HIV and drug use to detainees and custodial personnel, in cooperation with other national and international partners.

- ▶ 7,674 detainees visited, of whom 76 monitored individually (including 2 females and 5 minors) and 53 newly registered (including 2 females and 5 minors), during 82 visits to 44 places of detention
- ▶ 217 RCMs collected from and 118 RCMs distributed to detainees
- ▶ 2,540 detainees benefited from water/sanitation/habitat projects

### **Uzbekistan**

ICRC visits to detainees in Uzbekistan resumed temporarily in May, but the first visit since December 2004 had to be suspended after a few hours because the ICRC's working procedures were not respected. Dialogue was pursued with the relevant authorities, but no tangible progress was made.

Following a meeting with the head of the penitentiary administration of the Ministry of the Interior in November, the ICRC received written feedback on its summary report submitted in 2006. Former detainees received limited ad hoc assistance.

### **Tajikistan**

Dialogue between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice and the ICRC on resuming visits to places of detention in Tajikistan, interrupted since September 2004, yielded no breakthroughs. As a consequence, the ICRC's head of mission in Dushanbe was withdrawn in November and the mission downgraded to an ICRC office.

- ▶ 93 RCMs collected from and 83 RCMs distributed to detainees

### **Turkmenistan**

The dialogue with the Turkmen authorities initiated in 2005 to gain access to security detainees failed to produce a result. In December, the ICRC vice-president was invited to Ashgabat by the minister of foreign affairs to attend a conference on preventive diplomacy and to pursue negotiations on access to places of detention. However, he was not received by the minister, for which no explanation was provided.

## **WOUNDED AND SICK**

The Tajik Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, with ICRC support, ran the physical rehabilitation centre in Dushanbe, with satellite workshops in Khojand, Khorog and Kulyab. The government kept up its efforts to take more financial responsibility for running the facility as the ICRC gradually scaled back its funding. The authorities and the ICRC discussed ways to increase staff salaries in order to retain trained technical personnel and issues related to the status and overall management of the centre.

- ▶ 1,218 patients (including 271 women and 324 children) received services at the ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centre
- ▶ 149 new patients (including 26 women and 8 children) fitted with prostheses and 51 (including 5 women and 40 children) fitted with orthoses
- ▶ 410 prostheses (including 85 for women, 41 for children and 42 for mine victims), 131 orthoses (including 15 for women and 93 for children), 252 crutches and 1 wheelchair delivered

## **AUTHORITIES**

In Kyrgyzstan, the Administrative Liability Code was amended to include provisions on the misuse of the red cross and red crescent emblems. Members of the national IHL committee attended the Second Universal Meeting of National IHL Committees held in Geneva, Switzerland, which focused on legal measures and mechanisms to prevent disappearances, to clarify the fate of missing persons and to assist their families.

With ICRC support, a group of Tajik experts completed a compatibility study on the Ottawa Convention and national legislation. The Tajik Mine Action Centre – the initiator of the study – planned to use the study's conclusions to improve overall compliance with the convention.

The second revised Uzbek translation of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Additional Protocols was published with the ICRC's advice and financial support. On the 30th anniversary of the Additional Protocols, the ICRC and the Uzbek Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented the translation to representatives of the authorities, academic circles and civil society.

## ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

In 2007, the ICRC focused on working with the region's Ministries of Defence to integrate IHL into the doctrine, education and training of the armed forces.

After some 400 Tajik military officers attended ICRC-organized IHL training, the Tajik Ministry of Defence responded favourably to a proposal to establish a steering committee for the permanent integration of IHL into military doctrine, education and training.

Teams from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan participated in the fifth al-Farabi IHL competition in Kazakhstan organized by the Kazakh Ministry of Defence with the ICRC's support.

A delegate in charge of relations with police and security forces began work in October. Relevant information was gathered in order to evaluate to what extent international standards applicable to policing, in particular regarding the use of force, had been integrated into the national legislation of the countries in the region and into the training programmes and standard operating procedures of their police and security forces.

## CIVIL SOCIETY

### Secondary schools

The ICRC focused on the integration of IHL into pre-military education in schools, military lyceums and in-service training institutes in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Following the Kazakh authorities' approval of the Exploring Humanitarian Law modules as an additional learning tool, the ICRC established contacts with the country's military lyceums and supported the signing of an agreement between the Ministry of Education and the Kazakh Red Crescent Society to pilot the programme in selected schools.

Students in secondary schools and military lyceums participating in military exercises learned about IHL and the ICRC. Students in the military faculty of the Tashkent Pedagogical University participated in IHL competitions, and pupils in summer camps in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan attended ICRC-led IHL information sessions.

Representatives of the region's Ministries of Education and Defence and military lyceums attended the 3rd regional seminar on military lyceums held in Bishkek and organized by the ICRC. The participants exchanged their experiences and concerns about the incorporation of IHL into pre-military training in Central Asia.

In Uzbekistan, an electronic textbook including IHL, designed for pre-military training in schools and military lyceums, was prepared jointly with the Ministry of Defence.

- 9 national seminars for representatives of education authorities, teachers of pre-military training schools and military lyceums conducted in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

### Universities

A network of 21 Central Asian universities continued to cooperate with the ICRC in developing courses and research in IHL. In cooperation with the ICRC and in order to reinforce the teaching of IHL and other international law disciplines, the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavonic University established an international law chair. University students and lecturers attended the following IHL events and activities during the year:

- national IHL courses in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
- a national IHL competition in Tajikistan
- the second Central Asian IHL essay contest for undergraduate and postgraduate students in Almaty, Kazakhstan
- the Jean Pictet IHL moot court competition in El Escorial, Spain (a Kyrgyz team)
- the 8th annual Central Asian IHL competition in Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan
- international IHL courses in Warsaw, Poland, and Moscow, Russian Federation
- the 3rd Central Asian advanced IHL course in Tashkent
- several undergraduate students completed diploma papers on IHL

### Media

The ICRC kept in touch with the region's media to improve coverage of humanitarian issues and activities. National newspapers, radio stations, television channels and websites in Central Asia reported on ICRC activities and events. Four episodes of the "From the Field" series were dubbed in Uzbek. The ICRC film *In the heart of action* was dubbed in Tajik and Uzbek and broadcast on the Kyrgyz national television channel. An updated version of the *Discover the ICRC* brochure was translated and printed in Tajik, Turkmen and Uzbek. Some 3,000 copies of Henry Dunant's *A Memory of Solferino* in Uzbek were distributed through the Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan. A brochure on the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Additional Protocols in Russian was reprinted locally and translated and printed in Turkmen.

## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The National Societies of the region continued to build their institutional capacities with financial support and advice from the ICRC and the International Federation. They remained ready to assist victims of armed conflict, other situations of violence and natural disaster, while working on national and regional contingency planning. They also helped restore and maintain family links and contributed to the dissemination of IHL and humanitarian values, particularly in secondary schools and among armed forces. In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the National Societies were also involved in mine incident data collection and mine-risk prevention and education in sensitive areas.

With guidance and financial assistance from the ICRC and the International Federation, the Central Asian National Societies revised and strengthened their legal bases and organizational structures. For the National Societies of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, this included revising and adopting new statutes.

- staff of the Central Asian National Societies participated in training sessions on IHL, the Seville Agreement and the Movement's Fundamental Principles
- 60 volunteers from the region's National Societies attended an ICRC-organized regional seminar where they exchanged working experiences and increased their response capacities in case of crisis
- the Movement and its Fundamental Principles promoted through a variety of events organized by the National Societies for World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day (8 May)
- some 20 IHL lecturers from the Central Asian National Societies received special training to equip them to carry out dissemination sessions for the region's armed forces
- 9 leaders of the region's National Societies took part in the leadership development course in Geneva, Switzerland, updating and exchanging their knowledge and skills on issues relating to the Movement, governance and management

