

ARMENIA



EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)	
Protection	399
Assistance	655
Prevention	378
Cooperation with National Societies	279
General	-

► **1,711**
of which: Overheads 104

IMPLEMENTATION RATE	
Expenditure/yearly budget	85%

PERSONNEL	
Expatriates	4
National staff (daily workers not included)	27

KEY POINTS

In 2011, the ICRC:

- monitored the situation of civilians living in communities on both sides of the international border with Azerbaijan, bringing their concerns to the attention of the relevant authorities when necessary
- acted as a neutral intermediary in the repatriation of 1 civilian internee from Azerbaijan to Armenia and 1 POW from Armenia to Azerbaijan, whilst visiting 2 POWs and 8 security detainees in Armenia
- in conjunction with the National Society and local partners, provided psychological, social and income-generating support to vulnerable families of missing persons and enabled the rehabilitation of some of their homes
- completed the collection of ante-mortem data from families of persons missing in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, donating ante/post-mortem database software to the authorities and training staff to use it
- provided expertise to the Armenian authorities as they voted to ratify Additional Protocol III and worked towards completing a draft law on missing persons and their families
- accompanied the Armenian armed forces as they continued to integrate IHL into their doctrine, training and operating procedures

The ICRC has been working in Armenia since 1992 in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh armed conflict. It focuses on the issue of missing persons and on detainees held for conflict-related or security reasons, and works to protect and assist communities living along the international border with Azerbaijan. It promotes the national implementation of IHL and its integration into the armed and security forces' doctrine, training and sanctions and into academic curricula. The ICRC works in partnership with and aims to strengthen the capacities of the Armenian Red Cross Society.

CONTEXT

Despite several high-level meetings between Armenia and Azerbaijan, mediated by the three co-chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and meetings mediated by the president of the Russian Federation, little progress was made in finding a peaceful solution to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict.

Incidents along the international border with Azerbaijan and the Line of Contact increased. These, along with the presence of mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW), continued to affect the lives of the local civilian population, causing both military and civilian casualties and exacerbating political tensions between the two countries.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC in Armenia continued to work to alleviate the humanitarian consequences of the unresolved Nagorny Karabakh conflict, acting as a neutral intermediary during the return of one civilian internee from Azerbaijan to Armenia and one POW from Armenia to Azerbaijan. During field visits to communities living on both sides of the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, ICRC delegates continued to monitor the needs of civilians, raising them with the relevant authorities when necessary. As insecurity prevented many communities along the international border from easily accessing work and food, the Armenian Red Cross Society and the ICRC carried out a household survey aimed at identifying the most vulnerable and assessing their needs in order to tailor a response, to be implemented in 2012.

The fate of persons missing in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict continued to be the focus of ICRC work in the region. Based on the findings and recommendations of an ICRC-sponsored household economic survey completed in 2010, the National Society/ICRC worked on addressing the legal, material and psychological needs of families of missing persons. They launched a psychological and social support programme in partnership with local NGOs, through which relatives of missing persons shared their experiences and concerns with peers at group meetings and learnt about other available support mechanisms. The ICRC facilitated individual follow-up sessions with psychologists and/or legal advisers when requested. Some relatives, heartened by support from their peers, found the confidence to share their employment concerns with and seek additional support from local officials.

Main figures and indicators	PROTECTION		Total	
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Red Cross messages (RCMs)				
RCMs collected			40	UAMs/SCs*
RCMs distributed			37	
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons				
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered			1	Women
People located (tracing cases closed positively)			3	Minors
Tracing cases still being handled at 31 December 2011 (people)			410	23
				16
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
ICRC visits				
Detainees visited and monitored individually			10	
Number of visits carried out			13	
Number of places of detention visited			6	
Restoring family links				
RCMs collected			6	
RCMs distributed			8	
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support			4	
Detainees released and transferred/repatriated by/via the ICRC			1	

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

Main figures and indicators	ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)					
Economic security, water and habitat					
Agricultural, veterinary and other micro-economic initiatives	Beneficiaries		67	46%	31%
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)					
Economic security, water and habitat					
Essential household items	Beneficiaries		2		

Meanwhile, with a local NGO, the ICRC enabled 10 vulnerable families of the missing in the border regions of Tavush and Gegharkunik to rehabilitate their dilapidated homes and 8 others to begin similar work on the homes in Armavir, Gegharkunik and Shirak, all part-funded through long-term, interest-free loans. In a bid to help kick-start income-generating activities, the ICRC also reached an agreement with the same NGO to provide agricultural loans to 23 vulnerable families of missing persons. Plans to provide micro-credit and livestock loans to others for the implementation of livelihood activities were shelved following difficulties agreeing on working modalities with potential partners. At central level, with the aim of facilitating identification of human remains during future exhumations and thus clarifying the fate of missing persons, an ICRC-trained administrator at the State Commission for Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons began entering collected ante-mortem data in ICRC-provided software. With the National Society, the ICRC continued to raise awareness of the issue of missing persons among the general public and other organizations working in Armenia.

Delegates continued to monitor the treatment and living conditions of people deprived of their freedom, including those detained in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict or for security reasons, and provided confidential feedback to the authorities.

Regular meetings took place with the authorities to discuss Armenia's accession to and implementation of IHL treaties. Following such dialogue, Armenia voted to ratify Additional Protocol III. The ICRC also continued supporting an interministerial working group as it made the final amendments to a draft law on missing persons. In line with a cooperation agreement signed in 2009 aimed at integrating IHL into their doctrine, training and operating procedures, the Armenian armed forces carried out a self-assessment to measure the extent to which this had been achieved. It shared its findings with the ICRC, which offered its support and expertise in addressing any shortcomings. Alongside,

the delegation continued its support to universities teaching IHL, including by providing relevant materials, by co-organizing an IHL conference for young researchers and by sponsoring lecturers' participation in IHL-related events.

Cooperation between the Armenian Red Cross and the ICRC included assisting families of missing persons, restoring family links, running first-aid courses and disseminating IHL, in particular in branches along the international border. While doing this, the National Society also strengthened its emergency response capacities, in coordination with the International Federation.

CIVILIANS

Civilians on both sides of the international border with Azerbaijan faced continued insecurity because of cross-border fire and the presence of mines/ERW. In Armenia, through field trips to border regions and contacts with local civilian and military authorities and National Society branches, the ICRC kept abreast of the situation. During these field trips, civilians were able to raise their concerns with ICRC delegates, who brought them to the attention of the authorities concerned, reminding them of their obligations under IHL, particularly their responsibilities towards civilians.

The prevailing insecurity impeded access to means of livelihood for communities settled near the international border, particularly in terms of access to land and water for irrigation. With a view to empowering these communities to meet their own needs in a sustainable way, through increased food production and income generation, the National Society and the ICRC completed a detailed assessment in the border villages of the Tavush region. The findings helped to prioritize needs, identify the most vulnerable households and thus tailor livelihood activities to be implemented in 2012. Similarly, dialogue with relevant officials and NGOs involved in mine/ERW clearance began, ahead of an assessment of the needs of mine/ERW victims, planned for 2012. Meanwhile, communities sought advice on their rights and entitlements.

Relatives of missing persons receive comprehensive support

At the end of 2011, 4,603 people were still unaccounted for as a result of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, with families in contact with the Armenian Red Cross/ICRC delegation in respect of 410 such persons. Families had lost assets while searching for missing relatives, lacked opportunities to improve their economic conditions and struggled to live with the psychological trauma of a relative's disappearance. In order to address their needs, a psychological and social support programme was successfully launched, benefiting 130 people from 100 families in total. Not all who responded positively when invited to participate attended. Nonetheless, at group meetings organized by the National Society/ICRC in partnership with ICRC-trained local service providers from three NGO partners and the National Society, families of the missing living in Lori, Shirak, Tavush and Yerevan shared their concerns and experiences with peers, some for the first time, and obtained legal, financial and psychological guidance/support from skilled professionals. Some individuals chose to attend follow-up visits or consultations with lawyers or psychologists aimed at resolving specific problems, and some submitted their concerns to officials. For example, in Tavush, heartened by the support of their peers following group meetings, some families gained the confidence to present their employment concerns to the province's governor and enquire about any additional entitlements from either the authorities or other agencies. Over 140 families also participated in two events highlighting their plight and commemorating the missing.

In parallel, in partnership with the ICRC, a local NGO specializing in house rehabilitation via long-term, interest-free loans continued to help families of the missing repair their dilapidated homes. Ten families residing in the Tavush and Gegharkunik border regions completed the rehabilitation of their homes and work began on another eight houses (29 people) in Armavir, Gegharkunik and Shirak. Meanwhile, 6 vulnerable households of missing persons (38 people) kick-started income generation activities using agricultural inputs, such as cows and fruit trees, provided on the basis of an additional agreement between the ICRC and the same NGO. Failure to agree on lending conditions led two local partners and the ICRC to cancel their preliminary agreement to provide micro-credit and livestock loans to other families. Plans to provide grants for income-generating activities to elderly relatives of missing persons were also cancelled after a needs assessment deemed the initiative unsuitable for this beneficiary group.

At central level, the authorities received updated lists of missing persons and discussed with the ICRC the humanitarian nature of the issue and support to the families. The ICRC also provided input for a draft law on missing persons (see *Authorities*). While the National Society/ICRC had completed ante-mortem data collection in 2009, with 323 questionnaires collected, information from some 70 families remained elusive, either because they had moved without providing a new address or because they had refused to cooperate. In 2011, the ICRC located 22 families whose whereabouts were previously unknown, including 5 who had moved to Armenia from Nagorny Karabakh. To ensure centralized management of this data, and following a refresher course, an ICRC-trained data administrator for the State Commission for Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons began using ICRC-provided database software designed to match ante/post-mortem data. However, a new data administrator would need similar training in 2012 as the database was transferred

to another structure within the Defence Ministry in December. The National Society/ICRC continued preparing electronic files, including photographs and other documents, for handover to the authorities.

To help ensure proper management of human remains and preserve data for future identification, a manual on the subject was translated into Armenian for distribution and an ICRC forensic adviser assessed the capacities of Armenia's medical structures before sharing findings and recommendations with the authorities.

Families separated by conflict maintain contact

With conventional communication links between Armenia and Azerbaijan, including Nagorny Karabakh, not yet fully restored, a few family members separated by conflict relied on ICRC-provided services, including RCMs and ICRC-facilitated satellite phone calls, to keep in touch, including with those held in detention facilities (see *People deprived of their freedom*).

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Civilians and soldiers continued to be captured on both sides of the international border with Azerbaijan and the Line of Contact in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, albeit in small numbers. Detainees, including 2 POWs held in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict and 8 security detainees, received visits from the ICRC according to its standard procedures. Delegates assessed their treatment and living conditions and shared their findings and any recommendations confidentially with the relevant authorities. Particular attention was paid to vulnerable detainees, including foreigners, women, minors and those arrested in post-electoral events in 2008.

Detainees used RCMs to maintain contact with their families, when necessary, and inmates of Azeri origin received clothing and books. At the request of all parties, one POW was repatriated from Armenia to Azerbaijan and one civilian internee from Azerbaijan to Armenia, with the ICRC acting as a neutral intermediary. Four detainees received visits from their relatives, including two detainees from their families living in Nagorny Karabakh.

AUTHORITIES

Following a sustained dialogue with the ICRC on humanitarian issues, including ICRC activities, the Armenian authorities voted to ratify Additional Protocol III. State officials and the ICRC discussed other IHL treaties, including weapon treaties and implementation of the Hague Convention on Cultural Property and its two protocols. Two high-ranking Ministry of Defence officials strengthened their IHL knowledge at an international course in San Remo.

The interministerial working group established in 2009 to draft a law protecting the rights of missing persons and their families, of which the ICRC was a member, made final amendments to the document ahead of its submission to the government and subsequent vote in parliament.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

While IHL was taught at the Defence Ministry's main institutes of higher education, it had not been fully integrated into military doctrine, education and training. In 2011, the ministry completed an assessment aimed at identifying gaps in this process and shared the results with the ICRC to enlist its support in addressing them.

The attendance of two senior army officials at an international IHL course contributed to these efforts (see *Authorities*).

Twenty-nine officials tasked with teaching IHL within their respective military units enhanced their knowledge of the application of IHL norms during the planning and execution of military operations at two five-day courses organized jointly by the Defence Ministry and the ICRC. Some 70 officers and soldiers set to join the NATO-led international force in Afghanistan attended briefings on the ICRC's mandate and activities.

During all contact with the Defence Ministry and armed forces representatives, the ICRC emphasized the need to protect civilians and detainees and to ensure ICRC access to vulnerable populations (see *Civilians*).

CIVIL SOCIETY

Journalists played a key role in promoting IHL to the public, drawing on press releases, meetings and interviews to produce articles on humanitarian issues and National Society/ICRC activities, including those for missing persons and their families and for detainees. Ten reporters learnt more about IHL, international human rights law and the Movement during a workshop co-organized with a local media organization, after which two journalists wrote about ICRC activities. News releases and publications, in Armenian, English and Russian, kept international organizations, diplomats and think-tanks up to date on ICRC action.

Sixty journalism students at Yerevan State University better understood IHL's applicability to the reporting of conflicts following two ICRC seminars. The European Educational Academy helped to increase interest in and knowledge of IHL among university students by integrating a 120-hour IHL module, headed by a former ICRC IHL summer course participant, into its law course. Some 25 graduates, including scientists and researchers, and lecturers from Hungary, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Poland and former Soviet countries discussed the challenges of IHL application at a conference in Yerevan, organized in partnership with the Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University. With ICRC sponsorship, one of its professors also participated in an international conference in the Russian Federation and an Armenian IHL expert attended the ICRC-supported International Olympiad on IHL in Belarus (see *Moscow*).

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

With ICRC technical and financial support, and in cooperation with the International Federation, the Armenian Red Cross continued to respond to the needs of conflict-affected people, including the families of missing persons (see *Civilians*), and to strengthen its capacity to provide key services, such as restoring family links, first aid, and dissemination of basic IHL and the Fundamental Principles.

Fifteen National Society managers became acquainted with the Safer Access approach in conflict situations at two ICRC-organized training sessions. To reinforce its emergency response capacities, the National Society assessed the extent to which the approach could be further integrated into its documentation and procedures. Compilation of the findings of an ICRC-supported countrywide assessment of potential family-links needs during disasters, carried out in 2010, continued, aimed at addressing shortcomings and increasing the Movement's family-links capacity in Armenia.

ICRC-trained National Society staff equipped 76 local community representatives and Red Cross volunteers from two regions along the international border with basic first-aid skills, with 67 receiving internationally recognized qualifications.

To identify gaps in, and boost, dissemination and prevention activities at branch level, Armenian Red Cross and ICRC staff visited 13 branch offices. Their findings and recommendations served as a reference tool for future National Society/ICRC cooperation. For example, the Vayots Dzor branch raised awareness of the situation of vulnerable community groups and its own activities at an exhibition of handicrafts made by disabled children and the elderly, with ICRC financial and technical support.

The Armenian Red Cross, the ICRC and the International Federation signed a memorandum of understanding establishing structured coordination mechanisms.