



georgia

The ICRC has been working in Georgia since 1992. It covers the basic protection and assistance needs of internally displaced people and destitute residents in the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as in other areas prone to or affected by conflict. It supports government commissions and families in Georgia, including Abkhazia, seeking to clarify the fate of missing persons. In and around the Gali area, the ICRC assists emergency surgical and blood-transfusion services. Across Georgia, including Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the ICRC visits detainees and supports the authorities in their efforts to curb the spread of tuberculosis in prisons. To ensure the continued availability of physical rehabilitation services in Georgia, the ICRC works in cooperation with a local partner in Tbilisi and the authorities in Gagra. It also promotes the national implementation of IHL and its integration into the training of the armed and security forces and into university and school curricula. Cooperation programmes with the Red Cross Society of Georgia focus primarily on dissemination.

EXPENDITURE IN CHF

Protection

1,115,123

Assistance

12,731,350

Preventive action

1,291,168

Cooperation with National Societies

168,666

General

-

► **15,306,308**

of which: Overheads **925,479**

PERSONNEL

25 expatriates

360 national staff

KEY POINTS IN 2004

- The ICRC assessed and implemented income-generating projects alongside existing food-aid programmes for the most vulnerable residents and IDPs in conflict-affected areas of western Georgia.
- The TB programme was expanded throughout the prison system, with a renewed cooperation agreement signed by the ICRC and Georgia's Ministries of Justice and of Labour, Health and Social Affairs.
- Ante-mortem research interviews with the families of persons missing as a result of the conflict in Abkhazia were conducted to help identify human remains.
- The ICRC supported hospitals, polyclinics and blood banks in western Georgia, including Abkhazia, while handing over management of the Tbilisi prosthetic/orthotic centre to an independent local foundation.
- The ICRC promoted and supported the inclusion of IHL teaching in schools and universities and worked closely with the Defence and Interior Ministries to support the ongoing integration of IHL into military training at all levels.
- The ICRC supported the Red Cross Society of Georgia's successful revision of its statutes and helped assess its dissemination and tracing capacities.

CONTEXT

The momentum of the so-called Rose Revolution of November 2003, which saw the departure of long-serving President Eduard Shevardnadze, continued to be felt, with the election of opposition candidate, Mikheil Saakashvili, to the Georgian presidency. The new government strove to reinforce its legitimacy through some improvements in the social field, with foreign political and economic support. In May the national authorities successfully brought the wayward Adjara region under central control.

The October elections in Abkhazia heightened political tensions among various groups vying for power; an agreement was ultimately reached among the different power brokers, and new elections were scheduled for January 2005.

ICRC ACTION

The ICRC remained active in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The delegation gave priority to the issue of persons unaccounted for in Georgia and Abkhazia as a result of armed conflict, to the situation of minorities in Abkhazia and of civilians in areas plagued by unrest, and to the problems of people imprisoned for conflict-related or security reasons and other vulnerable detainees. In addition, it pursued the programme to contain tuberculosis (TB) in prisons, in cooperation with other humanitarian organizations and donors.

With a view to scaling back its assistance programme, the ICRC began to seek more sustainable solutions, such as income-generating projects, to the problems facing destitute people in Georgia. It nonetheless continued to distribute food and other basic supplies to the most needy and to improve housing conditions in collective centres for internally displaced people (IDPs).

In and around the conflict-prone Gali area, the ICRC maintained support to emergency surgical and blood-transfusion services. Meanwhile, it handed over responsibility for the Tbilisi physical rehabilitation centre to an independent local foundation, the Georgian Foundation for Prosthetic and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (GEFPOR).

During the upsurge in hostilities in South Ossetia in August, the ICRC reminded the authorities of their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL). It also closely monitored the emergency medical facilities on all sides.

The ICRC continued to promote IHL, with a focus on strengthening the capacities of State agencies and local civil society partners to carry on this work independently. The delegation also kept up its extensive communication efforts to familiarize the media, the general public, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and public- and private-sector decision-makers with the ICRC's mandate and work in Georgia.

As before, the ICRC supported the Georgian Red Cross in its dissemination efforts and, to a limited extent, its tracing activities. With the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, it assisted in the revision of the National Society's statutes.

CIVILIANS

Encouraging dialogue on the issue of missing persons

Many families were still without news of some 2,000 relatives who went missing during the 1992–93 armed conflict in Abkhazia, and around 100 who went missing in South Ossetia. As in the past, the ICRC urged both the Georgian and the Abkhaz sides to exchange all relevant information in their possession and provided them with the necessary technical assistance. Interviews with the families of missing persons, conducted in accordance with a memorandum of understanding concluded with the authorities, facilitated the collection of ante-mortem data which would help to identify human remains. The data collected continued to be entered into the databases in Georgia and Abkhazia. In partnership with Physicians for Human Rights, the ICRC trained local professionals of the Georgian Centre for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture and offered psychological support to those interviewing the families of the missing. Following a mission to Georgia by an international forensic expert, the ICRC established contacts with local forensic experts, anthropologists and archaeologists. The ICRC also analysed and submitted recommendations on the statutes of the Georgian State Commission for the Missing.

Red Cross message network

For some members of the Abkhaz population, the ICRC's Red Cross message (RCM) network remained the only means of keeping in touch with relatives outside Abkhazia, mostly in Georgia, but also in the Russian Federation and other countries. Messages continued to be delivered throughout Abkhazia.

The ICRC provided elderly people living alone without any family support with the opportunity to join their relatives outside Abkhazia, if they so wished.

- ▶ 4,685 RCMs delivered
- ▶ 7 people reunited with their families

Food aid for vulnerable groups in Abkhazia

The ICRC continued to operate three types of programmes (community-kitchen, dry-food and home-assistance) to cover the food requirements of Abkhazia's most vulnerable population, according to the degree of need. In this respect, the ICRC signed an updated memorandum of understanding with the authorities.

The re-registration of all beneficiaries, the registration of other members of their households and a reassessment of every household's economic situation was undertaken in the first half of the year. This exercise reduced the overall number of beneficiaries in Abkhazia from 18,900 individuals at the beginning of the year to some 15,000 at the end of the year. At the same time, all members of beneficiary households were assisted, as opposed to just some members of each household in previous years.

- ▶ up to 15,100 beneficiaries received dry-food assistance during the first nine months of 2004
- ▶ 12,300 beneficiaries received dry-food assistance during the last quarter of the year

Under a community-kitchen programme, the ICRC supplied food on a daily basis through 19 canteens and eight mobile units to some 4,000 destitute people in urban areas. Among them, 1,400 housebound people received daily meals at home distributed by 480 local Red Cross volunteers. Within the home-assistance programme, financed by the Swedish Red Cross, these 1,400 housebound people were also provided with home care and essential household items (shampoo, washing powder, hygiene kits, bedding, clothes and slippers).

In the last quarter of the year, the ICRC launched its first income-generating projects, involving agriculture, trade or crafts.

- ▶ up to 19,442 beneficiaries received food
- ▶ 3,485 tonnes of food distributed (cooked and dry food)
- ▶ 587,910 hygiene kits/soap bars distributed
- ▶ 27 households benefited from agricultural, trade or craft projects

- ▶ 2,900 m of water pipe installed to improve the water-distribution systems in Sukhumi and Ochamchira

Food, water and shelter for the needy in western Georgia

In western Georgia's Samegrelo and Imereti regions, the ICRC continued its assistance operation relaunched in 2002, on an as-needed basis.

During the first half of the year the ICRC distributed food (wheat flour, sugar, beans, oil, salt and yeast) and other necessities, such as candles and soap, quarterly, to 20,150 households – mostly elderly, chronically ill or otherwise vulnerable people who were no longer able to meet even their most basic needs. During the second half of the year the number of households receiving this assistance was reduced to 13,000, as other households either had benefited from agricultural, trade or craft projects or had received a last supply of food in May. At the same time the ICRC continued to upgrade the extremely poor and unhygienic water and living conditions in communal centres housing IDPs.

- ▶ up to 20,150 households (60,128 individuals) received food
- ▶ 2,162 tonnes of food distributed (cooked and dry food)
- ▶ 450,119 hygiene kits or soap bars distributed
- ▶ 13,677 people in 3,860 households benefited from agricultural, trade or craft projects
- ▶ 25 communal centres housing 1,863 IDPs rehabilitated

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Improving living conditions in prisons

Living conditions in prisons continued to be affected by Georgia's economic crisis. The ICRC advised the Ministry of Justice and the European Commission in their joint efforts to reform the penitentiary system and to improve detention conditions. In addition, the ICRC assessed the extent of overcrowding in places of pre-trial detention and submitted a report on the matter to the Ministry of Justice.

The ICRC continued to have regular access to places of detention throughout Georgia, including Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It focused on people detained for security reasons, whose cases it monitored on an individual basis.

- ▶ 26 detention facilities visited (including 3 in Abkhazia and 2 in South Ossetia)
- ▶ 32 detainees visited (including 13 newly registered)
- ▶ 66 RCMs delivered (including 39 in Abkhazia)
- ▶ construction of a toilet block in the Rustavi 1 prison colony completed, benefiting 612 inmates
- ▶ second phase of water and sanitation project in Tskhinvali Prison, South Ossetia, completed

Containing the life-threatening TB epidemic

The high risk of TB among detainees threatened not only the prison population but the population as a whole, spreading when families visited their relatives in prison or when infected detainees were released. The ICRC therefore continued to support the government in implementing TB-control measures in prisons and in integrating them into the National TB Programme (NTP). As part of the integration process, prison services were encouraged to use the NTP's civilian laboratories, which received ICRC assistance.

A renewed cooperation agreement dealing with TB control in prisons was signed by the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs and the ICRC. The agreement covered TB-drug procurement by the NTP and ensured access of NTP supervisors to places of detention applying the WHO-recommended directly observed treatment, short course (DOTS) approach.

Owing to the expansion of the TB-control programme to prisons in western Georgia, the ICRC decided to establish a DOTS training programme, for medical personnel treating detainees with TB.

Systematic TB screening in prisons, coupled with strict adherence to the DOTS approach, helped to reduce the number of infectious cases and to diagnose the disease much earlier. Systematic screening of incoming prisoners was carried out in six prison colonies by Ministry of Justice health staff. In Georgia's other penal institutions, screening was still carried out by an ICRC/Ministry of Justice team.

- ▶ 1,776 patients completed TB treatment since 1998
- ▶ 317 new prisoners integrated into the programme in 2004
- ▶ 26 prison doctors undertook a DOTS training course

- ▶ renovation of Central Penitentiary Hospital medical facilities completed (300 beds)
- ▶ both the medical ward at the Rustavi 1 prison colony (benefiting 800 detainees), and the Kutaisi TB laboratory (benefiting 1,500 detainees and part of western Georgia's civilian population) rehabilitated

WOUNDED AND SICK

Support for surgical facilities

As a result of both conflict and decay due to lack of maintenance and resources, health services in Abkhazia and western Georgia remained in poor shape. Abkhazia's unrecognized status hindered the delivery of essential medicines and surgical supplies, while in western Georgia, the large number of IDPs put an additional strain on the fragile infrastructure.

In 2004 the ICRC continued to provide surgical hospitals with equipment, surgical supplies and medicines, largely for patients with weapon-related injuries or requiring emergency surgery.

In western Georgia, including Abkhazia, a number of hospitals benefited from ICRC support. Assistance to these hospitals was cut back or terminated at the programme's conclusion at the end of 2004.

- ▶ 7 hospitals assisted regularly (including 5 in Abkhazia)
- ▶ 1,497 surgical operations performed (including 748 in Abkhazia) in ICRC-assisted hospitals

The ICRC pursued its support to blood-transfusion programmes in western Georgia, including Abkhazia. In Zugdidi, a cooperation agreement on a blood-transfusion programme between the ICRC and local hospitals was updated until the end of 2004. This project enabled blood to be screened for infectious diseases, thus ensuring that only uncontaminated blood was used for transfusions.

- ▶ 842 patients received blood transfusions (including 575 in Abkhazia)
- ▶ 1,552 blood units transfused (including 954 in Abkhazia)

Owing to increased tensions, including localized hostilities, in the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict zone, the ICRC conducted 11 missions to the region to assess health facilities on both sides.

Treatment for amputees and other disabled people

The ICRC maintained its support for the prosthetic/orthotic centres and workshops in Tbilisi and Gagra, the only major physical rehabilitation facilities in Georgia. To ensure the country's 4,000 amputees continued to receive quality services, it was decided in 2003 to transfer the management of the Tbilisi centre to an independent foundation. As such, the GEFPOR had since been established and had succeeded the ICRC in managing the facility. To assist in the management transition, the ICRC organized a financial-sustainability planning seminar for the GEFPOR board and staff. Under an agreement with GEFPOR, the ICRC renovated 100 square metres of additional space for the Tbilisi centre.

In Abkhazia, which was particularly affected by explosive remnants of war, the ICRC maintained its support to the prosthetic/orthotic centre in Gagra. The centre served the region's 600 amputees, most of whom were war-disabled. It also covered the Gali area through an outreach programme, visiting patients who were unable to get to the centre by their own means.

- ▶ 438 prostheses delivered
- ▶ 174 new patients fitted with prostheses
- ▶ 705 orthoses delivered
- ▶ 237 new patients fitted with orthoses
- ▶ 10 physiotherapists trained (2 from Gagra, 4 from Baku, 4 from Tbilisi) and 1 prosthetic/orthotic technician sponsored on a three-year course at the Cambodian School of Prosthetics and Orthotics)

AUTHORITIES

An ICRC-supported study on the compatibility of Georgian legislation with the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the translation of basic ICC documents played an important role in Georgia's ratification of the ICC Statute. It subsequently adopted a law on cooperation with the ICC, as well as a series of amendments to its national criminal legislation.

In meetings with the prime minister, ministers, the chairwoman of parliament and ministry representatives, the ICRC provided updates on its activities and explored areas of possible future collaboration.

The ICRC supported the participation of the head of the international cooperation

unit of the Georgian Ministry of Justice in a course on international criminal law held in Austria.

- ▶ 5 awareness sessions on the ICRC conducted for 45 municipality staff members

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The ICRC continued to work closely with the Ministries of Defence and of the Interior and provided them with financial and technical advice in support of the ongoing integration of IHL into military training and education. The organization also held information sessions on its mandate and activities for the Georgian armed forces, border guard service, interior troops and national guard. In particular, the ICRC stepped up contact with the interior troop command to find out more about the humanitarian and security situation in South Ossetia. A thousand copies of a booklet on basic IHL, in Georgian and Russian, were printed, mainly for distribution at checkpoints in the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict zone.

Presentations on IHL and the ICRC were also given for armed personnel in Abkhazia, where the ICRC maintained contact with Abkhazia's officer's school in Sukhumi.

- ▶ 177 military personnel and cadets attended IHL presentations
- ▶ the deputy head of the naval faculty of the National Defence Academy of Georgia participated, with ICRC support, in an IHL course at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy
- ▶ ICRC-awareness sessions held regularly for officers and civilian officials of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG)
- ▶ information sessions on the ICRC's mandate and activities in Abkhazia held for officers from the local law-enforcement structures, including policemen in Gali
- ▶ presentations on the ICRC given for officers of the Samegrelo regional security service and police

CIVIL SOCIETY

The ICRC fostered contacts with the Georgian and Abkhaz media. It produced a wide range of publications, press releases and fact sheets, and gave interviews for

radio and TV, particularly on its TB and physical rehabilitation programmes.

In Abkhazia, round-table discussions on ICRC activities were organized with local journalists, while in western Georgia, round-tables, entitled "The ICRC in western Georgia, present and future", were organized for media representatives.

Building a network of IHL experts

The ICRC continued to facilitate the inclusion of IHL in the law and journalism curricula of universities by arranging presentations and seminars for lecturers and by providing or supporting the production of teaching materials. IHL was taught as a separate subject at the Tbilisi, Batumi, Kutaisi, Zugdidi and Sukhumi branches of Tbilisi State University and at the Independent Diplomatic Academy. In six other faculties, it was taught as part of other subjects, such as international or medical law.

In Sukhumi and Tskhinvali, the ICRC maintained contacts with the law and journalism faculties. Law lecturers from these institutions were sent abroad to participate in advanced training courses on IHL. In Abkhazia, the ICRC organized presentations on the ICRC's mandate and activities for 150 students and five lecturers.

The ICRC pursued its cooperation with the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) and supported it in organizing workshops and other events on IHL themes. Basic documents on the ICC were provided to the GYLA to accompany a six-month course on international humanitarian and criminal law conducted by its Legal Training and Information Centre. In cooperation with the GYLA, the ICRC organized the fourth national IHL moot-court competition in Gudauri, involving teams from the Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Zugdidi and Batumi branches of the State University.

Elsewhere, the ICRC sponsored a team from Tbilisi State University to take part in the final round of the English-speaking session of the Jean Pictet international IHL moot-court competition held in France.

Promoting IHL in schools

The ICRC continued to support the school programme, carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, which aimed to familiarize secondary-school pupils with the basic concepts of IHL and humanitarian action. During the year, 132,000 textbooks for pupils in the sixth and seventh grades – *Know Yourself* and

What Hate Destroys – were reprinted. In Abkhazia and South Ossetia, under an ICRC monitored-programme, the Russian-language versions of the fifth- and sixth-grade textbooks were used to teach some 800 pupils.

- ▶ 143,000 pupils used the ICRC-sponsored textbooks
- ▶ 882 teachers and 4 teacher trainers attended refresher courses
- ▶ programme implementation monitored in 138 schools across Georgia

NATIONAL SOCIETY

After appointing a new secretary general in April, the Red Cross Society of Georgia revised its statutes. The revision process was supported jointly by the ICRC and the International Federation and should lead to the adoption of the new statutes in 2005. The National Society also developed a two-year strategic plan for 2004–2005.

The Armenian Red Cross was invited to assist the Georgian Red Cross and the ICRC in assessing the need for and establishing a first-aid programme to be run by the Red Cross Society of Georgia.

With a view to strengthening the National Society's dissemination programme, the Georgian Red Cross and the ICRC assessed the level of knowledge of Red Cross and Red Crescent issues and IHL in regional branches. The Georgian Red Cross subsequently developed a dissemination programme approved and supported by the ICRC. Fifteen dissemination officers, one in each regional Red Cross office, underwent a three-day training course on the Red Cross and Red Crescent, as well as on project writing and planning and narrative and financial reporting.