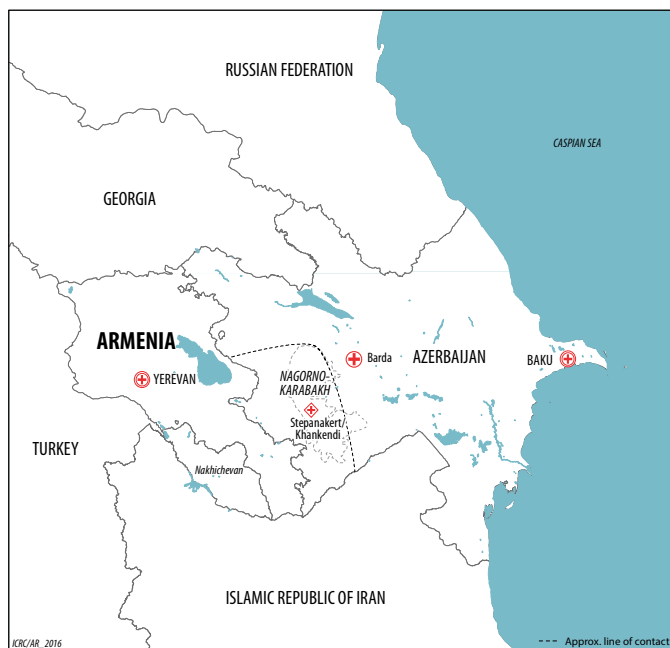


ARMENIA



The boundaries, names and designations used in this report do not imply official endorsement, nor express a political opinion on the part of the ICRC, and are without prejudice to claims of sovereignty over the territories mentioned.

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS IN 2016

- ▶ With ICRC support, people living near the international border with Azerbaijan launched new livelihoods and improved their protection from cross-border fire. Counselling sessions helped them cope with conflict-related trauma.
- ▶ Through bilateral dialogue and workshops, the ICRC reminded the sides to the conflict of IHL provisions on the conduct of hostilities, particularly their obligation to protect civilians.
- ▶ Work to clarify the fate of missing persons moved forward with preparations for the exhumation process: the authorities received training in gravesite mapping, which included assessment visits to alleged burial sites.
- ▶ The families of missing persons eased their circumstances through peer-group counselling, commemorative events and livelihood assistance arranged by the ICRC and its partners.
- ▶ Movement partners began drafting a contingency plan to strengthen joint crisis response. The Danish Red Cross, the National Society and the ICRC launched a project to develop the National Society's branch in the Tavush region.

EXPENDITURE IN KCHF

Protection	418
Assistance	1,798
Prevention	443
Cooperation with National Societies	343
General	37
Total	3,039
<i>Of which: Overheads</i>	<i>185</i>

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	110%
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PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	6
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	35

The ICRC has been working in Armenia since 1992 in relation to the Nagorno-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 help the Armenian Red Cross Society strengthen its capacities.

YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

HIGH

PROTECTION

	Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)	
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	1
Phone calls facilitated between family members	170
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)	
ICRC visits	
Detainees visited	2,189
Detainees visited and monitored individually	10
Number of visits carried out	22
Number of places of detention visited	7
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	3
RCMs distributed	2
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	8

ASSISTANCE

	2016 Targets (up to)	Achieved
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)		
Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Cash	Beneficiaries	4,160
		459
Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	80
		4,683

CONTEXT

Rising tensions between the sides in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict escalated in April as heavy fighting erupted along the Line of Contact. Two high-level meetings took place between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, under the auspices of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, but brought no major changes in the negotiation process; the risk of renewed hostilities remained high. In December, deadly clashes broke out on the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Civilians living in border areas contended with the consequences of the conflict. Crossfire and the increased presence of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) threatened their safety, restricting movement, livelihoods and access to basic services. Hundreds of families in Armenia remained without news of relatives who went missing in connection with the conflict in the 1990s.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC continued working to alleviate the humanitarian consequences of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It monitored the situation of civilians living near the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. When necessary, it reminded the sides of their obligations under IHL.

Following the April events, the ICRC expanded its activities, supported by a budget extension in July.

Communities in Tavush region, along the international border, coped with the precarious security conditions with help from the ICRC, which implemented activities based on their requests. For example, it constructed “safer rooms” in public buildings, mostly schools and kindergartens, to serve as temporary shelters in case of cross-border fire. Some households reduced their vulnerability to similar risks by reinforcing parts of their homes that faced military positions, using ICRC-provided construction materials. Residents had better access to water for drinking and irrigation following upgrades to the requisite infrastructure. In one village, households whose farming activities were curtailed by the insecurity were presented with options for alternative livelihoods; they chose to launch collective bee-keeping and calf-rearing businesses, with ICRC grants as capital. Particularly vulnerable households, including the families of civilian casualties, were given multipurpose cash grants for their most pressing needs. Children and other residents coped with conflict-related trauma through counselling sessions held by the Armenian Red Cross Society and a local NGO.

Communities learnt about the dangers of mines and ERW, and safe behaviour in case of military escalation, through awareness sessions run by the National Society. First-aid training better prepared them for such an eventuality.

Work to clarify the fate of missing persons progressed with the Armenian State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons (CEPOD). The authorities prepared for eventual exhumations through training in gravesite mapping, which involved assessment visits to alleged burial sites. DNA-sample collection proceeded as planned. Relatives of missing persons received comprehensive support, including through counselling, commemorative events and referrals to appropriate service providers; some households kickstarted income-generating activities and repaired their homes with ICRC assistance.

Having finished entering data on the needs of mine and ERW victims in the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database, the ICRC entrusted database management to the Armenian Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (CHDE) for sustainable follow-up, to help with the development of a national strategy to address weapon contamination and its consequences.

During visits to detainees, the ICRC checked on their treatment and living conditions, provided family-links services and extended small-scale assistance. It also visited one civilian who was temporarily detained after crossing the international border into Armenia; she was eventually repatriated to Azerbaijan, under ICRC auspices.

Cooperation with the armed forces in incorporating IHL in military decision-making continued, through dissemination sessions for units stationed along the international border, predeployment training for peacekeepers, and IHL courses for commanders and military instructors. In light of judicial reforms, the ICRC offered technical support to the authorities for incorporating IHL in domestic legislation, particularly in relation to the right of families to know the fate of their missing relatives and bringing the criminal code in line with IHL. Local media kept the public informed on key humanitarian issues and the plight of conflict-affected people; journalists produced features on the ICRC after observing its activities during field trips. Students and researchers benefited from various IHL events supported or organized by the ICRC with local partners and legal experts.

The National Society worked with ICRC teams to assist conflict-affected people and continued to receive capacity-building support. The Armenian Red Cross, the Danish Red Cross and the ICRC embarked on a project to develop operational and organizational capacities at the National Society’s Tavush branch. Movement partners in Armenia began contributing input for a joint contingency plan, to ensure a strong collective response in case of crisis.

CIVILIANS

Dialogue with all sides emphasizes IHL compliance in conduct of hostilities

Through its field presence and contact with community leaders and local authorities, the ICRC monitored the situation along the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and compliance with IHL by the sides to the conflict. It documented military incidents that affected civilians and their property, including instances where civilians were wounded. Through written and oral representations, it raised these concerns confidentially with the sides concerned and reminded them of IHL provisions on the conduct of hostilities, particularly their obligation to protect civilians. It also reminded them to take precautions to ensure civilians’ safety ahead of cultural events or seasonal activities such as harvesting.

Border communities withstand threats to their safety, livelihoods and psychological health

The ICRC continued to help people in Tavush region, along the international border, cope with the chronic insecurity and its effects on their physical and psychological well-being. It worked with them to identify the risks they faced and implemented projects on the basis of their requests.

A total of 1,743 people benefited from infrastructural projects aimed at improving their safety. In nine villages, the ICRC supported the construction or rehabilitation of ten “safer rooms” in public buildings,

mainly schools and kindergartens. Equipped with drinking water, medical kits and other emergency supplies, the rooms afforded residents places to take refuge in in the event of cross-border military activity. Children attending a local kindergarten were better shielded against such risks after the ICRC built a protective wall in front of their playground. Using ICRC-donated construction materials, 98 households walled up parts of their homes that faced military positions, thereby reducing their vulnerability to small-calibre bullets.

Where water was scarce owing to degraded infrastructure and lack of maintenance, the ICRC restored or replaced pipelines and other infrastructure, which increased the available supply and facilitated its flow to villages; 2,940 people had better access to water for drinking and irrigation.

Over 110 people (31 households) benefited from cash-based assistance. Under a pilot project in the village of Berekamavan, the ICRC identified vulnerable households whose farming activities had been curtailed by the prevailing insecurity, and offered them options for alternative livelihoods that matched their needs and capacities. With ICRC grants for capital, 20 households launched collective bee-keeping and calf-rearing businesses in safer pastures away from the border; some of them also raised cows individually, profiting from the sales of milk and calves. Particularly vulnerable households, including the families of civilian casualties, received multipurpose cash grants for their most pressing needs.

To help residents cope with the psychological toll of living near the front line, specialists from the National Society and a local NGO took an ICRC-supported course in stress management. They conducted counselling sessions for local communities, through which teachers, children and parents learnt of constructive ways to deal with conflict-related trauma.

CHDE takes over follow-up of mine/ERW victims and their families

Over 2,000 residents learnt how to mitigate risks related to mines and ERW, and safe behaviour in case of military escalation, during dissemination sessions run by National Society volunteers trained by the CHDE with ICRC support. To improve their preparedness, community members learnt life-saving skills through first-aid training, and medical professionals attended a war-surgery seminar.

Having finished encoding data collected by the National Society on some 580 victims of mine and ERW incidents in the IMSMA database, the ICRC turned the database over to the CHDE for analysis and follow-up, to feed into its development of a national strategy addressing weapon contamination and the challenges faced by victims' families. Meanwhile, the ICRC continued providing small-scale assistance for such families: 15 households (78 people) started small businesses with conditional grants or interest-free loans, or covered urgent expenses with unconditional cash assistance; the homes of six households (28 people) were repaired through a joint programme with a housing NGO.

Work to resolve missing persons' cases moves towards exhumation and identification

More than 4,500 people remained unaccounted for in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict; over 400 of them were registered as missing by the ICRC delegation in Yerevan.

Having submitted an updated list of missing persons to the sides in 2015, the ICRC encouraged them to use it as a common reference

for following up cases. It examined the list against public archives and generated analytical reports on incidents of disappearance, and forwarded them to the authorities to facilitate the location of burial sites.

Authorities underwent training in the proper collection and management of gravesite data, which involved assessment visits to alleged burial grounds of missing soldiers and civilians. A draft document on procedures for the exhumation, identification and return of human remains was under discussion with the Armenian authorities. A study tour to Cyprus, for CEPOD members to observe best practices in this regard, was postponed to January 2017.

To facilitate future identification of exhumed remains, the ICRC, in coordination with the Armenian authorities and the National Society, continued collecting buccal swabs from relatives of missing persons. It did this in line with standard operating procedures, which included obtaining the families' informed consent and ensuring confidentiality. Families had access to psychological support throughout the process. Random samples were sent abroad for testing, to ensure quality control for long-term preservation. An ICRC geneticist assessed local capacities for DNA profiling.

The ICRC continued to review and hand over ante-mortem data to the CEPOD; this included questionnaires filled out by the families concerned, together with relevant documents and photographs. The information was entered into the centralized ante/post-mortem database for use in the identification process.

Families of missing persons find relief, with community support

Families coped with the uncertainty surrounding the fate of their missing relatives, and its socio-economic repercussions, with the help of a comprehensive support programme run by the ICRC with the National Society and other local partners throughout Armenia.

Over 270 relatives of missing persons discussed their needs and learnt of services that could help them during information sessions co-facilitated by local leaders, specialists and NGOs. Fifty-five people were referred to the appropriate channels for psychosocial, medical and/or legal assistance, and for help in accessing social service benefits. Some received follow-up home visits. Fifty-three people strengthened their ability to support their peers by attending basic counselling workshops.

With ICRC cash assistance, 43 households (145 people) started income-generating activities, undertook vocational training or met their immediate household needs, and 21 households (94 people) repaired their homes.

Families commemorated their missing relatives at 20 public events attended by over 500 people. Organized with the involvement of local authorities, religious leaders, artists and other community members, the events helped the families process their grief and broadened awareness of the difficulties they faced. Families from Yerevan received copies of a memory book honouring their loved ones, to which they had contributed.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

The ICRC visited an Azerbaijani civilian who was temporarily detained after crossing the international border into Armenia; it assessed her treatment and the conditions in which she was held. With the agreement of all parties concerned, she was subsequently repatriated, with the organization acting as a neutral intermediary.

Over 2,000 people held in places of detention under the justice ministry likewise received visits. In line with its standard procedures, the ICRC monitored their treatment and living conditions and shared its findings with the relevant authorities, noting the specific needs of particularly vulnerable people. Detainees at the Nubarashen prison had a newly refurbished and equipped fitness room; those serving life sentences also benefited from free consultations with an ophthalmologist and eyeglasses provided by the ICRC.

Foreign detainees got in touch with their families using ICRC-provided phone cards; women also received personal hygiene parcels. An ICRC proposal to allow foreign detainees to contact their families via video calls, and the required legislative amendments, were being discussed with the justice ministry.

ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

Humanitarian issues arising from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and the ICRC's work for the people affected, remained central to dialogue with the authorities, armed forces, international community and civil society.

Armed forces familiarize themselves with IHL considerations in military operations

Dialogue with the armed forces focused on the protection of civilians living along the international border and the ICRC's role as a neutral intermediary (see above).

Troops stationed along the international border learnt about the ICRC and basic IHL during information sessions. Over 80 surgeons from military and civilian hospitals were briefed on the same topics at an ICRC war-surgery seminar (see *Civilians*). During predeployment training, peacekeeping contingents familiarized themselves with IHL rules applicable to their duties, and with the ICRC's mandate and activities, including those connected to the Health Care in Danger project and addressing sexual violence.

Ten command officers learnt more about incorporating IHL in military planning and decision-making at a seminar organized by the defence ministry and the ICRC. Two officers participated in an advanced course on the subject in San Remo, Italy. Fourteen instructors from two major military academies honed their IHL-teaching skills at a train-the-trainer workshop; two others attended a regional seminar in Belarus, on improving IHL education in military institutes (see *Moscow*).

A military lawyer from the defence ministry contributed to an ICRC experts' meeting in Canada, on proportionality in the conduct of hostilities (see *Washington*).

Authorities consider aligning judicial reforms with IHL

With judicial reforms ongoing, the ICRC presented its recommendations for aligning criminal law with IHL to the working group revising the criminal code. Engagement with the working group reforming the civil code, which may define the legal status of missing persons, centred on the possibility of amending domestic legislation to incorporate the families' right to know the fate of their missing relatives.

The authorities drew on ICRC expertise in the application of IHL treaties. Defence personnel took part in discussions on the legal aspects of the use of weapons in modern conflicts at a regional conference in the Russian Federation (see *Moscow*). Representatives of the foreign affairs and justice ministries exchanged views on IHL

implementation with their counterparts at a universal meeting of national IHL committees in Geneva, Switzerland.

Fifteen investigators and prosecutors discussed the suppression of war crimes at an ICRC seminar on international criminal law organized with the Academy of Justice.

Academics develop expertise in IHL

Legal professionals, researchers and students deepened their knowledge of IHL through ICRC-provided reference material and IHL-themed events, which in turn fostered domestic expertise. The events included public lectures by international law experts brought in by the ICRC, and a summer IHL course for legal specialists and law students. With the Armenian-Russian (Slavonic) University, UNHCR's Yerevan office and other partners, the ICRC organized the first public international law summer school in Armenia, which acquainted participants with basic IHL. University students supplemented their studies with practical skills gained at a moot-court competition judged by IHL experts from the government, and at similar events abroad. Researchers and experts from 12 countries discussed the challenges of modern armed conflicts from an IHL perspective at a yearly conference organized by the Slavonic University and the ICRC.

The media draw attention to humanitarian issues

Local media used the ICRC's news releases, factsheets, press lines and interviews to give wide coverage to its response to the events in April. They regularly highlighted ICRC activities concerning missing persons and the plight of their families, mine and ERW victims, civilians living along the international border, and detainees; this broadened public awareness and understanding of humanitarian needs linked to the conflict, and the ICRC's mandate. Journalists were briefed on conflict reporting and the ICRC during workshops, to which the National Society contributed. Some supplemented their knowledge with field visits to Tavush and Syunik, which yielded features on the ICRC's work for border communities and commemorative events for missing persons.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Movement partners work to strengthen joint crisis response

Increased tensions related to the conflict highlighted the need for improved emergency preparedness and response. The International Federation, the Armenian Red Cross, six partner National Societies and the ICRC began drafting a contingency plan to ensure a strong collective Movement response in the event of a crisis in Armenia.

With ICRC financial, material and technical support, the National Society reinforced its ability to train volunteers in first aid, assist border communities and missing persons' families, and run mine-awareness sessions (see *Civilians*); it also held talks and other activities promoting IHL among students and the general public.

The National Society, the Danish Red Cross and the ICRC embarked on a partnership focused on helping the National Society's branch in Tavush expand its capacity to respond to the population's needs, through support for emergency preparedness and the provision of material and human resource assistance.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total			
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)					
RCMs and other means of family contact			UAMs/SC		
RCMs collected		1			
Phone calls facilitated between family members		170			
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons			Women	Girls	Boys
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		407	24		6
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	1			
Documents					
People to whom travel documents were issued		1			
Official documents relayed between family members across borders/front lines		2			
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)					
ICRC visits			Women	Minors	
Detainees visited		2,189	160	9	
			Women	Girls	Boys
Detainees visited and monitored individually		10	2		
Detainees newly registered		2	1		
Number of visits carried out		22			
Number of places of detention visited		7			
RCMs and other means of family contact					
RCMs collected		3			
RCMs distributed		2			
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		8			
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		1			
Detainees released and transferred/repatriated by/via the ICRC		1			
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		5			

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Cash	Beneficiaries	459	184	135
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	10	5	3
Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	4,683	1,405	1,873
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
Health				
Visits carried out by health staff		4		
Places of detention visited by health staff	Structures	3		
Health facilities supported in places of detention visited by health staff	Structures	1		