



tashkent (regional)

Since 1992, the ICRC's regional delegation in Central Asia has worked with the armed forces and civilian educational establishments to develop IHL teaching programmes, has promoted the ratification of IHL instruments and the adoption of implementing legislation, and has helped National Societies in the region promote IHL and strengthen their capacities to assist victims of violence. The regional delegation focuses on protecting and assisting detainees held for security reasons. It also supports efforts to control tuberculosis in Kyrgyz prisons.

COVERING

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	2,583
Assistance	1,134
Prevention	2,837
Cooperation with National Societies	935
General	-

► **7,488**

of which: Overheads 457

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	95%
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PERSONNEL

20	expatriates
97	national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2006, the ICRC:

- continued visits to detainees in Kyrgyzstan and supported the national programme for tuberculosis control in prisons;
- worked to resume visits to detainees in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan;
- continued its dialogue with the government of Turkmenistan with a view to starting visits to detainees;
- continued to promote IHL in secondary schools and universities and among the armed forces of the region, in collaboration with the National Societies.

CONTEXT

Human rights organizations and some media criticized Uzbekistan for the imprisonment of prominent opposition leaders and trials of alleged Islamic extremists. The government requested UNHCR to leave the country after it played an active role in assisting refugees from Andijan who had fled to Kyrgyzstan in May 2005. It also closed down a number of NGOs. Meanwhile, Uzbekistan stepped up diplomatic contacts with China, India, Pakistan and the Russian Federation. In the second half of the year, negotiations aimed at improving relations with the European Union began.

More than a year after the "Tulip Revolution" brought about a change of government, Kyrgyzstan showed few signs of economic reform or growth. Poverty and unemployment prompted large numbers of people to emigrate. The end of the year was a tumultuous period of political crises involving the continuing standoff between the president and parliament, the resignation of the government and the successive adoption of two conflicting constitutions, which paralysed the normal functioning of the government.

The incumbent president won the presidential elections in Tajikistan in November 2006, with the main opposition parties boycotting the elections. Some key opposition leaders remained in custody, and alleged members of banned Islamic groups were arrested.

Kazakhstan's economic growth continued. President Nazarbayev was re-elected. The country further developed relations and military cooperation with neighbouring States.

Turkmenistan sought to diversify export routes for its energy resources and, while still controlling most spheres of domestic life, its government opened the country to more international contact. The future of the country's leadership was uncertain after the death of President Niyazov in December 2006.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses) ¹		WOUNDED AND SICK		
Detainees visited	11,686	<i>Physical rehabilitation</i> ²		
Detainees visited and monitored individually	52	Patients receiving services	Patients	1,252
Number of visits carried out	59	Prostheses delivered	Pieces	400
Number of places of detention visited	35	Orthoses delivered	Pieces	204
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS				
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>				
RCMs collected	424			
RCMs distributed	422			
DOCUMENTS ISSUED				
People to whom travel documents were issued	46			

1. Kyrgyzstan only

2. Tajikistan only

ICRC ACTION

ICRC operations in Central Asia focused on detention-related activities. Visits continued in Kyrgyzstan to detainees in prisons. Delegates also visited people held in police stations, to which the ICRC had gained access in the second half of 2005. Detention visits remained on hold in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, after being suspended in late 2004.

In Kyrgyzstan, the regional delegation assessed the treatment and conditions of detention in the penitentiary system as a whole. Following its visits, the ICRC submitted confidential reports on its findings to the government, including recommendations for the authorities' reform plans. When the authorities put their reform plans to the international community, the ICRC endeavoured to mobilize donor support for them. The regional delegation also continued to work with other international organizations to support the Kyrgyz government's tuberculosis (TB) programme in prisons.

In Tajikistan, the ICRC made little headway in its efforts to restart visits to detainees. In Uzbekistan, negotiations to resume visits intensified in autumn but there was no concrete breakthrough during the year under review. Dialogue with the Turkmen authorities on detention-related activities continued but without reaching an agreement.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the regional delegation had worked with Central Asian military training institutions, universities and secondary schools to develop and institutionalize IHL instruction. It continued to organize IHL events, courses and competitions at national or regional level, and sponsored the partici-

pation of Central Asian military personnel, academics and government officials in IHL conferences and events in other countries.

The ICRC gradually decreased its support to the only physical rehabilitation centre in Tajikistan, as the government was ready to assume more responsibility for running the facility.

The regional delegation worked closely with the International Federation to help Central Asian National Societies develop stronger institutional bases. By the end of the year, a memorandum of understanding to improve cooperation was signed by the ICRC, the International Federation and each of the five National Societies.

CIVILIANS

The ICRC facilitated the restoration of family links, in particular for families in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

- ▶ 151 RCMs collected from and 245 RCMs distributed to civilians
- ▶ 46 people issued with ICRC travel documents

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Kyrgyzstan

From the end of May, detainees held in detention facilities administered by the Prisons Department, including those condemned to death, were again able to receive visits from ICRC delegates and to exchange RCMs with their families. The ICRC made recommendations to improve their conditions of detention. People detained in police stations also received visits from the ICRC, which began in August 2005.

Since a moratorium on capital executions was adopted in 1998, legislation to clarify the status of people condemned to death was delayed. The ICRC gave priority to these detainees because of their particular vulnerability. They received regular visits and basic assistance such as bedding and hygiene kits. Additionally, detainees sentenced to death whose families were abroad could correspond with them via RCMs.

When developing the prison reform policy adopted in March 2006, the Kyrgyz authorities drew on the ICRC's input, including its comprehensive report on the prison system submitted in August 2005. The ICRC contacted potential donors and organizations to draw attention to the reform plan and the government's need for funds to implement it, but made little headway in attracting funding for the process.

TB remained a serious threat to public health, and prisons continued to be a primary breeding ground for the disease. The Kyrgyz Ministry of Health had already introduced the WHO-approved directly observed treatment, short course (DOTS) strategy around the country, while the Ministry of Justice continued its efforts to introduce DOTS in prisons, with the support of the Ministry of Health, the ICRC and other international organizations.

In 2006, detainees in TB colony 27 benefited from upgrades to the water and sanitation system and laboratory facilities. Prison staff and detainees received TB education, patients were given medications to control the side effects of the TB treatment, and the infirmary and roof of the TB hospital were repaired with the ICRC's financial support. Medical staff were trained and supervised in introducing DOTS in the colony, and the DOTS programmes in colony/SIZO 14 for minors and colony 2 for women were strengthened.

- 11,686 detainees visited, 52 (1 woman) of them monitored individually, including 23 newly registered, during 59 visits to 35 places of detention
- 171 RCMs collected from and 84 RCMs distributed to detainees
- 26 phone calls made by released detainees to inform their families of their whereabouts

Uzbekistan

A dialogue was pursued with the relevant authorities on resuming visits to places of detention suspended since December 2004.

- 3 RCMs distributed to detainees through the Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan
- 4 phone calls made by released detainees to inform their families of their whereabouts

Tajikistan

In Tajikistan, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice and the ICRC worked to establish the conditions needed to restart visits interrupted in September 2004. No progress had been made by the end of the year.

- 102 RCMs collected from and 90 RCMs distributed to detainees through the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan

Turkmenistan

Dialogue with the Turkmen authorities to gain ICRC access to security detainees continued. However, the death of the president in December postponed the discussions.

WOUNDED AND SICK

The Tajik Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, with ICRC support, ran the physical rehabilitation facility 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. Nevertheless, the government had difficulty covering transport expenses and food for patients, and could not fully cover salaries needed to retain qualified staff. It was clear that the centre would still need external financial support to ensure long-term access to physical rehabilitation services.

- 1,252 patients (216 women and 351 children) received services at the ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centre

- 143 new patients (19 women and 8 children) fitted with prostheses and 97 (17 women and 61 children) with orthoses
- 400 prostheses (66 for women and 31 for children; 47 for mine victims), 204 orthoses (33 for women and 127 for children), 320 crutches and walking aids delivered

AUTHORITIES

Kyrgyzstan reconstituted its national committee for the implementation of IHL under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice, and used the ICRC's technical support to draft a bill to strengthen war crimes legislation. The draft bills proposed additions to the Criminal Code concerning military crimes and to the Administrative Liability Code concerning violations of the Emblem Law.

Tajikistan's authorities announced their intention to conduct a study on the compatibility of national legislation with the Ottawa Convention.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Several armed, security and police forces in Central Asia still needed to enhance IHL integration into their education and training. The ICRC therefore focused on promoting the integration of IHL into military training programmes across the region and, in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, into the training curricula of interior troops and border forces. The Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan authorities agreed on formal cooperation with the ICRC in the field of IHL training for the armed forces. Members of the region's armed forces and some government ministries participated in the Al Farabi IHL competition in Kazakhstan. The ICRC also played an advisory role in NATO exercises in Kazakhstan.

- in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, army instructors participated in IHL train-the-trainer courses
- in Kyrgyzstan, the Ministry of Defence and the ICRC concluded an agreement on the integration of IHL in military training
- in Tajikistan, military lawyers and prosecutors attended an IHL train-the-trainer course
- an IHL instruction manual for the Uzbek armed forces was published

CIVIL SOCIETY

Secondary schools

In Kazakhstan, the education authorities approved the Exploring Humanitarian Law modules as an additional learning tool and recommended their use in schools starting in 2007.

The delegation also focused on pre-military education in schools and military lyceums (under the authority of the Ministry of Education) in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The Kyrgyz National Military Lyceum integrated IHL into its pre-military training curriculum.

The ICRC established a resource centre on IHL in Kyrgyzstan. An agreement was signed between the Tajik Red Crescent and the Ministry of Education on educating students in IHL and human rights law.

- national seminars for teachers of pre-military training conducted in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
- staff of Tajikistan's National Military Lyceum attended an IHL seminar
- directors of the military lyceums attended the 2nd regional IHL workshop in Uzbekistan
- 22 students representing all Kyrgyz regions attended the finals of a national student competition on IHL principles organized in cooperation with the Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan and the Ministry of Education
- 50 students attended an IHL summer camp in Tajikistan

Universities

For 10 years, a network of Central Asian universities had cooperated with the ICRC to develop courses and research in IHL. In January 2006, the network was enlarged to include Khudjant State University (Tajikistan) and Samarkand and Nukus state universities (Uzbekistan).

To enhance IHL teaching expertise, representatives of partner universities (except for those in Uzbekistan, who were not permitted to travel abroad) worked with the ICRC to organize IHL events at the regional and national level. With the ICRC's sponsorship, their representatives also attended IHL events further afield.

Several undergraduate students completed diploma papers on IHL, and a growing number of lecturers from the region were used as resource persons during the various teaching programmes. University students and lecturers attended the following IHL events and activities during the year:

- ▶ the first Central Asian IHL scientific and practical conference for undergraduate and postgraduate students in Almaty, Kazakhstan;
- ▶ the seventh annual Central Asian IHL competition in Issyk Kul, Kyrgyzstan;
- ▶ national IHL courses in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan;
- ▶ IHL courses in Warsaw and Moscow;
- ▶ a national IHL competition in Tajikistan;
- ▶ the Jean Pictet IHL competition in Belgrade (a Kyrgyz team);
- ▶ the second Central Asian advanced IHL course in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

Media

The ICRC kept in touch with the region's media to improve coverage of humanitarian issues and activities. Tajik television produced two spots on mine action, broadcasting them in the mine-affected Soughd region. The summer camp for students and a round-table for journalists were broadcast by the national and local television stations. Kyrgyz television broadcast the film "Through humanism to peace", accompanied by an interview with the chairman of the Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan. Henry Dunant's *A Memory of Solferino* was published in Uzbek, the first translation of the book in a Central Asian language.

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 helped restore and maintain family links, promoted IHL and were ready to assist victims of violence and natural disaster. They developed their capacities through activities organized at national and regional level, often with the ICRC's funding or expertise. They helped the ICRC develop and implement its activities, assisting in the exchange of RCMs or promoting IHL in secondary schools or among armed forces. In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the National Societies were also involved in mine-risk education.

In 2006:

- ▶ branch-level staff and volunteers from each of the Central Asian National Societies attended IHL training organized by the ICRC; 10 volunteers from each National Society exchanged experiences in a regional seminar for Red Crescent volunteers;
- ▶ National Society administrators were given financial training;
- ▶ National Society coordinators organized a programme entitled "Humanitarian and medical assistance to the victims of a conflict" at a regional working meeting on harmonization of programme materials and methods;
- ▶ the National Societies of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan helped relay RCMs between detainees and their families, and followed up tracing requests;
- ▶ the National Societies in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan adopted new statutes during the reporting period, and the Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan engaged in structural reform;
- ▶ National Societies promoted the Movement and its Fundamental Principles in a variety of events during World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day;
- ▶ National Society leadership from Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan participated in the regional family-links conference in Kyiv;
- ▶ the Central Asian National Societies signed a memorandum of understanding with the ICRC and the International Federation to improve Movement coordination.