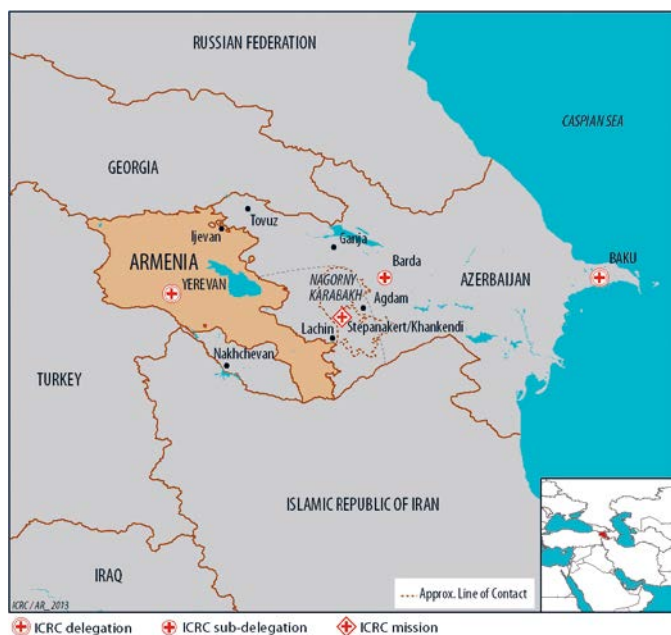


# ARMENIA



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 strengthen the capacities of the Armenian Red Cross Society.

## KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

### In 2013:

- ▶ with the ICRC acting as a neutral intermediary, two civilian internees were voluntarily repatriated from Azerbaijan and two POWs held in Armenia and Azerbaijan respectively were able to maintain contact with their families
- ▶ over 1,000 conflict-affected families in the Tavush border region improved food production and access to water owing to ICRC water and livelihood-assistance projects
- ▶ civilians living in exposed villages along the international border shared their conflict-related concerns with the ICRC for follow-up with the relevant authorities
- ▶ preparations continued for a DNA-sample collection project to help clarify the fate of people missing in relation to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict
- ▶ families of missing persons accessed comprehensive support from the ICRC/ local partners/the Armenian Red Cross Society by way of home visits, information sessions and workshops addressing their psychosocial needs
- ▶ senior officers and troops stationed along the international border and those bound for peacekeeping missions abroad learnt more about IHL and ICRC activities during dissemination sessions

## EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)

Protection	463
Assistance	1,054
Prevention	475
Cooperation with National Societies	235
General	-

**2,228**

of which: Overheads 136

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	<b>102%</b>
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## PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	4
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	30

## YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

**HIGH**

PROTECTION	Total
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>	
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>	
RCMs collected	16
RCMs distributed	21
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>	
<b>ICRC visits</b>	
Detainees visited and monitored individually	6
Number of visits carried out	10
Number of places of detention visited	4
<b>Restoring family links</b>	
RCMs collected	7
RCMs distributed	14

ASSISTANCE	Targets	Achieved	
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>			
<b>Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>			
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	480	4,007
Cash	Beneficiaries	40	199
Work, services and training	Beneficiaries	80	
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	300	2,799

## CONTEXT

Tensions remained high along the Line of Contact and the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Cross-border exchanges of fire and the presence of mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW) continued to have adverse consequences for security and the socio-economic situation, causing both military and civilian casualties and exacerbating political tensions between the two countries.

Mediators from the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe periodically visited the region and met with Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders, with a view to reaching a peaceful settlement to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. Notably, the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan met for the first time in almost two years, at a summit organized in Austria by the Minsk Group.

The government began negotiations to join the Russian Federation-initiated Customs Union and also confirmed its interest in strengthening cooperation with the European Union. In February, President Serzh Sargsyan was re-elected in a process monitored by international observers.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC continued working to alleviate the humanitarian consequences in Armenia of the unresolved Nagorny Karabakh conflict. It monitored – through regular field visits – the situation of civilians living on both sides of the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and when necessary, reminded the Armenian, Azerbaijani and *de facto* Nagorny Karabakh authorities of their obligations under IHL.

The ICRC implemented an integrated approach in border areas, where insecurity hindered access to water and restricted livelihood opportunities, to help communities improve their economic and living conditions. To this end, it distributed agricultural inputs and rehabilitated water and community infrastructure, and provided cash assistance to particularly vulnerable people to help them meet their immediate needs. At their request, the ICRC raised border communities' concerns with the relevant authorities. In March, the authorities announced their decision to provide subsidies in response to the needs of such communities. Further, ICRC workshops helped bolster local leaders' capacities to communicate their villages' concerns to the appropriate authorities.

Acting as a neutral intermediary and at the request of the parties concerned, the ICRC facilitated the voluntary repatriation of two Armenian civilian internees from Azerbaijan and the recovery of the remains of an Azerbaijani civilian killed in a mine explosion near the international border.

Resolving the fate of people who went missing during the conflict remained a priority. The ICRC assisted the Armenian State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons (CEPOD) in setting up and managing a centralized system for ante-mortem data collected from the families of missing persons, providing technical support throughout the process. It made preparations, with the Armenian Red Cross Society, to collect DNA samples from relatives of the missing, with a view to preserving such information for future efforts to identify human remains.

The ICRC continued to encourage the authorities to meet the needs of the families of missing persons, including through the adoption of a law protecting their rights; it also extended its support for the families, including those not previously reached, and expanded the scope of support to include activities for the younger generation who grew up with their relatives missing. ICRC training helped bolster the capacities of local partners and the National Society, enabling more families to access psychological, social and legal support. Vulnerable families also received economic assistance in the form of vocational training and grants or interest-free loans to start income-generating activities; others benefited from home repairs.

National Society/ICRC teams surveyed victims of mines/ERW and their families to learn about their needs. Through these efforts, the ICRC aimed to help reduce the impact of weapon contamination in the country, while supporting the authorities in shaping a national strategy to address the issue.

The ICRC visited detainees according to its standard procedures and monitored treatment and conditions as well as respect for IHL in relation to POWs. It shared its findings and recommendations confidentially with the authorities concerned and provided material assistance to the most vulnerable detainees.

Humanitarian issues arising from the conflict remained central to the ICRC's dialogue with the authorities. The ICRC also encouraged Armenia's accession to IHL treaties and the creation of an IHL committee. Dialogue with the armed forces on the incorporation of IHL principles in military doctrine, training and operations continued; this also took the form of courses for officers and dissemination sessions for front-line troops. Engagement with the media, which included interviews and a field trip to project sites, enhanced their reporting on ICRC activities and raised public awareness of the plight of conflict-affected people.

Partnering with the National Society also meant helping it to strengthen its core capacities (particularly in the areas of emergency preparedness and response), including first-aid instruction, restoring family links, and disseminating IHL and Movement principles.

## CIVILIANS

### Neutral intermediary role facilitates humanitarian action along international border

For civilians living along the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, cross-border exchanges of fire and the presence of mines/ERW were sources of continued insecurity. Field trips to border regions and contacts with local communities, civilian and military authorities and National Society branches enabled the ICRC to remain abreast of the humanitarian situation and monitor respect for IHL. It also raised civilians' concerns with the relevant authorities, reminding them through written representations, when necessary, of their obligations under IHL, especially with regard to protecting civilians.

Armenia and Azerbaijan concluded a temporary security agreement, with the ICRC acting as a neutral intermediary, which allowed the remains of an Azerbaijani mine victim to be recovered from no-man's-land and handed over to his family.

At the request of local leaders, the ICRC encouraged the Armenian authorities to address the economic needs of people in border communities. In March, the government moved to abolish land taxation and reduce the price of irrigation water in border areas. During an ICRC workshop on humanitarian negotiation, community leaders from border villages and National Society representatives learnt techniques for communicating their concerns to the authorities and international organizations and lobbying for their needs.

### **Agricultural support enables vulnerable families in Tavush region to produce more food**

Cross-border exchanges of fire continued to pose security risks, impeding communities' access to cultivable land – their main source of livelihood; poor infrastructure forced some people to leave their villages. Some 1,146 farmers and their families (3,857 people in total) living in five vulnerable villages in the Tavush region produced more food and added to their income, owing to agricultural support in the form of potato and wheat seed, fertilizer, herbicides and fruit trees.

Nearly 2,800 people had more access to water for drinking and irrigation purposes following the rehabilitation/construction of water infrastructure such as pipelines and public tap stands. Repairs at a kindergarten in Aygepar created a safer environment for some 30 children and teachers.

Those with particular vulnerabilities met their immediate needs with the help of cash assistance. For example, the situation was eased for two families (10 individuals) whose breadwinners were wounded and unable to work, and 42 households (150 people) in the Tavush region were enabled to repair their roofs after a winter storm.

Some 50 people in border villages became certified first-aiders through courses supported by the ICRC, including some conducted by National Society staff who had attended train-the-trainers courses; this helped build up local emergency response capacities.

### **Mine/ERW victims' needs tackled through cooperation with CHDE and National Society**

Some 500 people were estimated to be living in mine/ERW-contaminated areas in Armenia. The National Society, with ICRC support, collected responses to 279 questionnaires on victims' needs and entered the data into the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database; as part of efforts to advocate for support for mine/ERW victims. Two National Society staff members and two employees of the Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (CHDE) learnt to use the latest IMSMA version while 12 National Society volunteers, after ICRC training, extended the survey throughout Armenia. At meetings with IMSMA database managers, ongoing and planned activities to address weapon contamination were discussed.

To ensure the sustainability of these endeavours, the CHDE began to consider a national strategy to address weapon contamination. With technical and financial ICRC support, its director participated in a conference in the Russian Federation, where he learnt from the extensive experience of his counterparts in the field of demining.

### **Families of the missing acquire employable skills and access to comprehensive support**

By the end of December, 4,603 people remained unaccounted for as a result of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, with 413 people in Armenia registered as missing.

Many families struggled with their distress at not knowing the fate of their missing relatives. They often lacked opportunities for economic betterment and felt isolated, in part owing to the lack of official recognition of their status. With the help of ICRC-trained local partners and National Society staff, 112 families received psychosocial assistance, including through home visits and individual follow-up; this brought the total number of families supported since 2011 to approximately 300. During information sessions with local NGOs and professionals, over 200 people learnt more about physical and mental health, and about social, legal and other issues; some also received free medical diagnoses and other consultations. Young people whose relatives were missing created artwork in their memory at artists' workshops, while cultural and social events stirred up community and peer support for families and raised awareness of the issues they faced.

Forty-five people gained employable skills through vocational workshops in five regions. Following an assessment of their needs, 49 families (199 people) embarked on small businesses using grants or interest-free loans, or covered their household needs through unconditional cash assistance; and 13 families (57 people) benefited from repairs to their homes, the result of a joint programme with the Fuller Center for Housing in Armenia. Fourteen elderly people living alone were helped to cover their health and heating expenses for the winter.

### **Preparations advance for DNA sample collection to help clarify fate of the missing**

Files containing ante-mortem data provided by families of people missing in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, together with their translations, photographs and other pertinent documents were handed over to the CEPOD. An ICRC-trained administrator, with technical support, managed and entered data into the CEPOD's ante-mortem database.

To preserve information to be used in future efforts to identify human remains and provide answers to families, preparations continued for collecting DNA samples from relatives of the missing. Although the planned pilot phase did not begin owing to the complexity of the project, agreements and operating procedures were drafted, plans discussed with Armenian authorities, and an information leaflet prepared for families from whom samples will be collected.

Coordination with the authorities continued, with a view to establishing a consolidated list of persons missing in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict; however, progress in clarifying the fate of missing persons remained hampered by the absence of an agreed-upon mechanism for the sharing of information between the Armenian and Azerbaijani CEPODs and the *de facto* commission in Nagorny Karabakh. Acting as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC facilitated the exchange of information while continuing to encourage the re-establishment of direct communication between the parties.

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

### Authorities reminded of their obligations towards POWs and other detainees

Delegates visited, in accordance with standard ICRC procedures, six detainees in four places of detention, including one Azerbaijani POW held in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. They paid particular attention to vulnerable detainees, such as women, foreigners and minors, and shared findings and recommendations confidentially with the authorities concerned. Foreigners held at the women's prison restored contact with their families abroad thanks to ICRC-provided phone cards. The POW maintained contact with his family through RCMs and received books to help make his time in detention more bearable. The ICRC also interviewed him before his departure to a third country, to ensure that the resettlement was voluntary.

At the request of all parties concerned, the ICRC, acting as a neutral intermediary, facilitated the voluntary repatriation of two civilian internees from Azerbaijan to Armenia.

The family of an Armenian POW in Azerbaijan visited the ICRC delegation regularly to send and receive RCMs and to discuss their relative's case. With ICRC support, one family visited a relative detained in Nagorny Karabakh.

### AUTHORITIES, ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS, AND CIVIL SOCIETY

#### Local media highlight plight of conflict-affected people

Humanitarian issues arising from the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, along with the ICRC's work for conflict-affected people, remained a central theme of discussions with the authorities, armed forces, and civil society. To raise public awareness of the consequences of the conflict, a local journalist, with help from the ICRC, wrote and published a series of six articles highlighting the plight of families whose relatives were missing. An invitation to visit ICRC projects in the Tavush region resulted in reports by the national and regional media on the difficulties faced by persons living along the international border.

Veteran and aspiring journalists participated in events designed to add to their knowledge of IHL and the ICRC and enhance the quality of reporting on humanitarian issues.

#### Over 300 front-line troops learn about IHL and ICRC activities

Dialogue with the armed forces focused on protecting civilians in insecure areas along the international border, and on the ICRC's role as a neutral intermediary (see *Civilians*).

Some 27 officers participated in two workshops organized with the Defence Ministry, as part of efforts to incorporate IHL in military planning and operations. Two other officers refined their knowledge of IHL at a course in San Remo. Over 300 officers and conscripts in the border area of Tavush region, and peacekeepers preparing to serve in Afghanistan and Kosovo<sup>1</sup>, learnt about IHL and ICRC activities at dissemination sessions.

After a briefing on the Health Care in Danger project, the Defence Ministry's policy department contributed to an ICRC survey on best practices in connection with respecting health care workers and facilities during armed conflict and other emergencies.

### Authorities move closer to adopting draft law on the missing

Dialogue with the authorities encouraged Armenia's accession to IHL treaties and promoted the adoption of a domestic law strengthening the rights of the families of missing persons; discussions on forming a national IHL committee to aid such processes were revived. Key ministries reviewed the draft law on the missing and took steps towards submitting it to the parliament for adoption.

An IHL expert enhanced his teaching ability through a course for instructors in Geneva, Switzerland. Lecturers from partner universities demonstrated and added to their knowledge at the Martens Readings International Conference on IHL (see *Moscow*).

### Future decision-makers practice application of IHL

Students from local universities tackled IHL issues at a national moot court competition, organized with the National Society and the International and Comparative Law Center-Armenia. In addition, 24 scholars from 10 countries discussed challenges related to the development of IHL at a three-day conference; on the sidelines, local and international IHL experts discussed the integration of IHL in university education. Graduate students and representatives from State agencies and NGOs furthered their knowledge of IHL during a summer course organized with the ICRC's academic partners.

### RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Armenian Red Cross, with financial, material and technical support from the ICRC, continued to strengthen its capacities in communication, restoring family links and emergency preparedness. The signing of three agreements further enhanced joint action for families of the missing and of mine/ERW victims, and for IHL promotion. Encouraged to do so by the ICRC, the National Society began to take ownership of events aimed to boost its visibility. To expand its volunteer network, the Lori branch proposed and implemented a dissemination project on IHL and the Fundamental Principles among teachers and local authorities.

In addition, the National Society organized a round-table to discuss and coordinate tracing services with government officials. The event also presented the ICRC's tracing activities in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict.

In line with a formal agreement reached at the 31st International Conference, Movement partners met regularly to coordinate activities and discuss support for the National Society. The National Society took part in discussions at the 2013 Council of Delegates, with International Federation and ICRC support.

1. UN Security Council Resolution 1244

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total		
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>			UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected		16		
RCMs distributed		21		
<b>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</b>			Women	Minors
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		2		
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		413	25	10
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>				
<b>ICRC visits</b>			Women	Minors
Detainees visited		6	1	
Detainees visited and monitored individually		6	1	
Detainees newly registered		2	1	
Number of visits carried out		10		
Number of places of detention visited		4		
<b>Restoring family links</b>				
RCMs collected		7		
RCMs distributed		14		
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		1		
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		1		

\* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>				
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	4,007	29%	40%
Cash	Beneficiaries	199	44%	23%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	45		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	2,799	35%	30%