

AZERBAIJAN



KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

In 2013:

- ▶ with the ICRC acting as a neutral intermediary, two civilian internees were voluntarily repatriated to Armenia and the remains of one mine victim were recovered along the international border with Armenia
- ▶ through National Society, British Red Cross and ICRC support, vulnerable communities benefited from livelihood assistance and infrastructure repairs, some of which took place under ICRC-obtained temporary security agreements
- ▶ Azerbaijani authorities and *de facto* Nagorno Karabakh authorities approved a DNA collection project for clarifying the fate of people missing in relation to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, and identified storage sites for the samples
- ▶ families of missing persons accessed comprehensive support from the ICRC/ local partners by way of home visits, information sessions and workshops addressing their psychosocial needs
- ▶ the Ministry of Defence postponed the annual IHL workshops for senior officers owing to the perspective participants' lack of availability

EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)	
Protection	2,027
Assistance	4,465
Prevention	750
Cooperation with National Societies	282
General	-

7,523

of which: Overheads **459**

IMPLEMENTATION RATE	
Expenditure/yearly budget	103%
PERSONNEL	
Mobile staff	13
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	69

The ICRC has been working in Azerbaijan 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 Line of Contact and the international border with Armenia. It promotes implementation of IHL and its integration into armed and security forces' training and into academic curricula. The ICRC works in partnership with and aims to help strengthen the capacities of the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan.

YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

HIGH

PROTECTION	Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)	
Red Cross messages (RCMs)	
RCMs collected	33
RCMs distributed	54
Phone calls facilitated between family members	47
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	12
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)	
ICRC visits	
Detainees visited	10,827
Detainees visited and monitored individually	147
Number of visits carried out	48
Number of places of detention visited	20
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	77
RCMs distributed	42
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	76

ASSISTANCE	Targets	Achieved
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)		
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Food commodities ¹	Beneficiaries	1,400
Essential household items ¹	Beneficiaries	1,400
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	6,250
Cash	Beneficiaries	2,310
Work, services and training	Beneficiaries	15,363
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	15,000

1. Owing to operational and management constraints, figures presented in this table may not reflect all activities carried out during the reporting period

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.

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev gained a third term in elections conducted in October. The country's economy continued to rely heavily on the oil sector. Nagorny Karabakh remained dependent on aid from its diaspora and subsidies from Armenia.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC continued working to alleviate the humanitarian consequences in Azerbaijan of the unresolved Nagorny Karabakh conflict. It monitored – through regular field visits – the situation of civilians living near the Line of Contact and 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.

In partnership with the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan and the British Red Cross, the ICRC continued to implement activities to help people living in villages along the Line of Contact and the international border become resilient and self-sufficient. These included improving their access to water for drinking and irrigation, providing them with livelihood opportunities, and affording them better protection against exchanges of cross-border fire through home repairs. Some activities, including repairs to water infrastructure, the construction of protective walls, and harvesting near the Line of Contact and international border were made possible through temporary security agreements between the defence authorities, facilitated by the ICRC in its role as neutral intermediary.

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 Azerbaijani State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons (CEPOD) and the *de facto* commission in Nagorny Karabakh 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. The Azerbaijani authorities and the *de facto* authorities in Nagorny Karabakh approved a project to collect biological reference samples from close relatives of missing persons for future DNA profiling, and identified storage sites for the samples.

The ICRC continued to encourage the authorities to meet the needs of the families of missing persons; it also helped build the capacities of local NGOs to address, comprehensively, the psychological, legal, administrative, health-related and economic needs of the families. It worked with local partners to reduce the families' isolation by promoting peer support and facilitating their access to suitable service providers.

Azerbaijani Red Crescent/ICRC teams surveyed victims of mines/ERW and their families to assess their needs; they also assisted some vulnerable families who had lost their breadwinners in mine/ERW-related incidents. In Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC supported the *de facto* authorities in managing information about mine incidents and mine victims. Vulnerable elderly and disabled people and their families received food and hygiene parcels to help them meet their basic needs.

The ICRC visited detainees according to its standard procedures and monitored treatment and conditions as well as respect for IHL in relation to POWs/civilian internees. It shared its findings and recommendations confidentially with the authorities concerned and provided material assistance to the most vulnerable detainees. The Azerbaijani authorities, in high-level discussions, expressed their readiness to renew an agreement on ICRC access to detainees.

Humanitarian issues arising from the conflict remained central to the ICRC's dialogue with the authorities, including the *de facto* authorities in Nagorny Karabakh. Promoting the incorporation of IHL in military training and operations continued, with ICRC presentations for active servicemen and for the *de facto* armed forces in Nagorny Karabakh. Media coverage of ICRC activities helped raise public awareness of the plight of conflict-affected people. Owing to administrative constraints and other factors, some planned activities were cancelled or postponed.

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

CIVILIANS

Neutral intermediary role facilitates humanitarian activities

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, including the *de facto* authorities in Nagorny Karabakh, 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. Acceptance of the ICRC's neutral intermediary role also led to provisional agreements that facilitated activities benefiting communities along the Line of Contact and international border (see below). Under a security guarantee obtained by the ICRC at a local community's

request, over 50 farmers safely harvested their crops along the Line of Contact, enabling them to sustain their families (some 225 people) with a year's supply of bread.

Conflict-affected families gain safe access to livelihood and water

Aside from threatening their physical safety, the prevailing security situation impeded access to land, water and livelihood for people living near the Line of Contact and the international border. The National Society, the British Red Cross and the ICRC jointly helped communities meet their needs in a sustainable way, improve their living conditions and boost their resilience, mainly in the Agdam, Gazakh, Terter and Tovuz districts.

Some 500 households (2,375 individuals) covered their immediate needs or increased their income through agricultural/livestock activities or small businesses with the help of cash grants. Consultations/trainings with local professionals, arranged by the ICRC, helped 1,457 beneficiaries manage their grants.

During community meetings, people who lived in constant fear of stray bullets from cross-border exchanges of fire identified self-protective measures and proposed projects to improve their living environment, such as the construction of a health point and school canteen, and the provision of tents for communal events. Some 1,830 households (8,566 individuals) benefited from such initiatives with support in the form of materials and labour, including 22 families (100 individuals) who made their homes safer by constructing protective walls.

Some 2,385 people had safer access to water for drinking and irrigation after the rehabilitation/construction of water-supply systems, done with the authorities concerned. During an ICRC-obtained temporary security agreement, technicians rehabilitated a borehole near the Line of Contact serving 315 people. Local engineers, after undergoing training, became more adept at maintaining water infrastructure, helping ensure the sustainability of the equipment. The donation/installation of meters for 1,886 people helped water officials monitor consumption. Some 5,000 people learnt about responsible water usage and good hygiene practices through an awareness campaign conducted by National Society volunteers.

National Society boosts capacities to respond to vulnerable communities' needs

Nineteen National Society staff and volunteers at four frontline branches learnt, at workshops, to assess and address the needs of conflict-affected people; donations of office equipment and vehicles improved working conditions at two branches. Villages along the Line of Contact improved their emergency response capacities after 60 people learnt basic first aid at courses conducted by ICRC-trained National Society volunteers.

Families of mine/ERW victims begin income-generating activities

National Society/ICRC teams and the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) continued to collect data on mine-related incidents and the needs of families who had lost breadwinners in such incidents; similar assessments were conducted by the ICRC in Nagorny Karabakh in support of the *de facto* authorities. The database manager in Nagorny Karabakh and Azerbaijani Red Crescent staff learnt, at workshops, to use the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.

Following assessments, 12 households (50 people) in Azerbaijan who had lost their breadwinners in mine/ERW incidents boosted their income or food production through livestock activities, aided by productive inputs. In Nagorny Karabakh, grants enabled 42 households (about 200 people) to boost their livelihoods and self-sufficiency. Five families improved their living conditions through home repairs. Some 290 elderly or disabled people and their families (815 people in total) benefited from three distributions of food parcels and hygiene kits.

Efforts to encourage the authorities and agencies concerned to meet the needs of mine/ERW-affected and other vulnerable people continued.

Families of the missing receive comprehensive support to meet multifaceted needs

By the end of December, 4,603 people remained unaccounted for as a result of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, with 3,765 people in Azerbaijan registered as missing and 425 in Nagorny Karabakh.

Many families struggled with their distress at not knowing their missing relatives' fates. They often lacked opportunities for economic betterment and felt isolated, in part owing to the lack of official recognition of their status. With local partners, the ICRC continued to provide comprehensive support for their psychosocial needs while encouraging the authorities to enforce their right to free medical care and other benefits.

Some 365 families received psychological support during group sessions and home visits to cope with their situations. Following assessments, 269 families were referred to the authorities or to service providers for their social and legal needs, while 376 families received free medical services from the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Forty-five vulnerable families received electric heaters for the winter and two people received wheelchairs. Agreements signed with local partners helped ensure that such support will reach more families.

In Nagorny Karabakh, 63 families (280 people) increased self-sufficiency through vocational workshops and microeconomic initiatives; 5 families benefited from home improvements. Families accessed peer support and free medical consultations at ICRC-facilitated sessions. Elderly relatives of missing persons received social or medical assistance after individual visits and referrals. Around 160 families commemorated their missing relatives at a concert organized by the ICRC.

Authorities approve DNA collection project for clarifying the fate of missing persons

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, continued to be handed over to the CEPOD and the *de facto* commission in Nagorny Karabakh.

To preserve information to be used in future efforts to identify human remains and provide answers to families, the Azerbaijani authorities approved a project for collecting biological reference samples from close relatives of missing persons for future DNA profiling and identified storage facilities for the samples. Similar steps were taken in Nagorny Karabakh. The ICRC began identifying suitable relatives and collected pedigree charts for some 600 cases. The drafting of agreements and forensic

procedures continued apace, with the ICRC's regional forensic adviser providing support.

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.

Families separated by conflict maintain contact with ICRC support

With no direct communication lines available between Armenia and Azerbaijan, including Nagorny Karabakh, families separated by the conflict restored/maintained contact through ICRC family-links services and other means. Members of one family divided by the Line of Contact met in Georgia twice. With ICRC help, ethnic Armenians living in Azerbaijan obtained identification documents and clarified their legal status with the pertinent agencies.

The National Society, with technical support, continued to process cases of separation unrelated to the conflict.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Civilian internees repatriated from Azerbaijan to Armenia with ICRC assistance

During visits to 20 places of detention, hosting some 10,000 inmates, delegates monitored individually 147 detainees, including 1 Armenian POW and 7 civilian internees held in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. They monitored treatment and living conditions to ensure their compliance with IHL and/or internationally recognized standards, and shared their findings/recommendations confidentially with the authorities concerned.

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 Azerbaijani government, in high-level discussions, expressed its readiness to renew an agreement on ICRC access to detainees.

Detainees maintained contact with their families via RCMs, family parcels, short oral messages and, in foreigners' cases, phone calls. The Armenian POW maintained contact with relatives in Armenia through the ICRC. Stateless persons, asylum seekers and refugees met during visits were, according to their wishes, referred to the appropriate organizations.

Vulnerable detainees received clothing, hygiene items and educational/recreational materials. In some cases, disabled detainees benefited from prosthetic/orthotic support.

In Nagorny Karabakh, detainees met their relatives in better conditions following the refurbishing of a facility hosting family visits. Two families visited their detained relatives, with the ICRC covering transport costs.

Azerbaijan's prison TB programme elicits interest abroad

Foreign officials expressed interest in Azerbaijan's prison TB control programme; delegates facilitated contacts with the authorities concerned and promoted the programme, including through the release and translation into Azeri of a documentary. After a World Health Organization report declared that Azerbaijan had an "excellent TB control programme" in the penitentiary services, the ICRC evaluation postponed from 2012 to 2013 was deemed unnecessary.

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. Interviews, briefings and news releases resulted in enhanced media coverage of the ICRC's activities in the country and worldwide, which helped foster support for its neutral, impartial, independent and humanitarian action. During a workshop, 15 journalists learnt more about the effects of the conflict on communities and about the ICRC's response, enabling them to report

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM		AZERBAIJAN	IN AZERBAIJAN, IN RELATION TO THE NAGORNY KARABAKH CONFLICT	NAGORNY KARABAKH
ICRC visits				
Detainees visited		10,817	8	2
	of whom women	709	2	
	of whom minors	117	3	
Detainees visited and monitored individually		137	8	2
	of whom women	15	2	
	of whom minors		3	
Detainees newly registered		75	3	2
	of whom women	15	1	
Number of visits carried out		36	8	4
Number of places of detention visited		16	2	2
Restoring family links				
RCMs collected		64	13	
RCMs distributed		32	9	1
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		75	1	
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support				2
Detainees released and transferred/repatriated by/via the ICRC			2	
People to whom a detention attestation was issued			3	3

more accurately on humanitarian issues. A planned visit to project sites, for journalists, was postponed.

Ambassadors and military attachés based in Baku and visiting international representatives were kept informed through regular meetings about the ICRC's work for conflict-affected communities.

Dialogue with weapon bearers facilitates access to conflict-affected communities

Meetings with the authorities at all levels centred on the humanitarian needs of people affected by conflict and on IHL-related issues. At round-tables in Barda and Ganja, where they also learnt about the ICRC's mandate and activities, local leaders representing districts close to the Line of Contact and the international border described the issues their communities faced. The *de facto* authorities in Nagorny Karabakh also learnt more, through leaflets, about the ICRC's activities in the area.

Dialogue with armed forces focused on protecting civilians in insecure areas along the Line of Contact and the international border and helped secure access for the Movement to conflict-affected people. With the ICRC acting as a neutral intermediary, the Defence Ministries of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the *de facto* defence authorities in Nagorny Karabakh agreed to temporarily suspend military operations to facilitate humanitarian activities close to the front line (see *Civilians*). The ICRC continued to request the Azerbaijani Ministry of Defence for access to certain communities situated behind checkpoints in order to provide humanitarian assistance.

Cooperation with the Defence Ministry – to promote respect for and implementation of IHL – continued; but the annual workshops on IHL were temporarily suspended owing to the unavailability of senior officers who had not yet attended the workshops. However, an infantry battalion preparing for deployment with NATO forces practiced applying IHL during exercises, after the Defence Ministry invited the ICRC to lend its expertise to the event. At the Military Academy of the Ministry of Defence, students, active servicemen and representatives of key ministries built up their knowledge of IHL through ICRC presentations.

In workshops organized with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 48 police officers and internal troops learnt more about internationally recognized standards applicable to them.

In Nagorny Karabakh, 155 officers learnt, through ICRC presentations, how to apply IHL in military operations; over 1,000 troops stationed along the Line of Contact familiarized themselves with IHL principles through dissemination sessions. In addition, 80 military cadets learnt about IHL and the ICRC's activities. One senior officer attended an IHL course in San Remo.

Future decision-makers draw on ICRC expertise in IHL

Fewer events than planned took place in academic settings, but undergraduate and graduate students continued to approach the delegation and enlisted ICRC expertise to further their research on IHL. At the Martens Readings International Conference on IHL (see *Moscow*), one professor from Baku State University and one parliamentary staff member tackled IHL-related topics with over 100 other participants. Junior diplomats and students also learnt more about the ICRC's mandate and activities during information sessions.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Azerbaijani Red Crescent continued to work with the ICRC to develop its ability to respond to the needs of conflict-affected communities and other vulnerable populations (see *Civilians*). With financial, material and technical support from the ICRC, it continued to strengthen its capacities in restoring family links, particularly in disasters, emergency preparedness, first-aid training, fundraising, and public communication on the Movement.

A senior staff member of the National Society attended the 2013 Council of Delegates with ICRC support.

A series of National Society/ICRC events, including a forum with students and youth volunteers and a photo exhibit, helped raise awareness of and interest in the Movement's activities in the country.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total		
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Red Cross messages (RCMs)			UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected		33		
RCMs distributed		54		
Phone calls facilitated between family members		47		
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons			Women	Minors
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		15		
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		12		
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>				
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		4,190	343	89
Documents				
People to whom travel documents were issued		6		
Official documents relayed between family members across border/front lines		2		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
ICRC visits			Women	Minors
Detainees visited		10,827	711	120
Detainees visited and monitored individually		147	17	3
Detainees newly registered		80	16	
Number of visits carried out		48		
Number of places of detention visited		20		
Restoring family links				
RCMs collected		77		
RCMs distributed		42		
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		76		
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		2		
Detainees released and transferred/repatriated by/via the ICRC		2		
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		6		

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Food commodities ¹	Beneficiaries	2,419	52%	27%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	501		
Essential household items ¹	Beneficiaries	2,539	21%	10%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	515		
Cash	Beneficiaries	2,871	45%	14%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	338		
Work, services and training	Beneficiaries	15,363	45%	10%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	193		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	9,592	40%	20%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	4,796		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection programme)				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	5,030		

1. Owing to operational and management constraints, figures presented in this table may not reflect all activities carried out during the reporting period.