

ICRC PLAN OF ACTION IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

2007





For further information,
please contact:

ICRC REGIONAL DELEGATION
IN MOSCOW
Grokholsky per., 13, build. 1
MOSCOW 129090
RUSSIAN FEDERATION
Tel : ++ 70 95 / 626 5426
Fax : ++ 70 95 / 564 8431
e-mail : moscou.mos@icrc.org
web: www.icrc.org

ICRC IN THE NORTHERN CAUCASUS
Mechieva str., 207
NALCHIK 360004
RUSSIAN FEDERATION
Tel.: ++ 7 8662 / 77 45 74
e-mail: nalchik.nat@icrc.org

MOSCOW (REGIONAL)

COVERING: the Russian Federation, with specialized services for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and parts of Central Asia.

The Moscow delegation, which opened in 1992, combines operational functions in the Russian Federation with regional functions for other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. In the Russian Federation, the ICRC assists vulnerable populations affected by the conflict in Chechnya, in cooperation with the National Society, and supports capacity building of the National Society in the northern Caucasus. The ICRC seeks to gain access, in accordance with its standard procedures, to all persons detained in connection with the conflict in Chechnya. In all the countries covered, it runs long-term communication programmes to promote IHL and foster understanding of the ICRC's mandate and work.

BUDGET IN CHF,000	
Protection	2,075
Assistance	16,562
Prevention	6,617
Cooperation with National Societies	2,708
General	–
Total	27,962

BUDGET IN USD,000	
<i>Of which:</i> ICRC Regional delegation in Moscow	4,6
ICRC in the northern Caucasus	18,5

PERSONNEL	
Expatriates	27
National staff (daily workers not included)	322



François Bellon, Head of the ICRC delegation in Moscow.

ICRC Plan of Action in the Russian Federation in 2007

GENERAL SITUATION

In Chechnya, the overall security situation has improved slightly. The Chechen Government has strengthened its hold, the armed opposition has been weakened by the killing of key figures and a “reconstruction” programme has been developed. Acts of violence continue in Dagestan and particularly Ingushetia, with attacks against the police and government representatives also causing casualties among civilian bystanders. Ethnic, religious and economic factors are contributing to unrest in Adygea, south of Stavropol Krai and Kabardino-Balkaria. In North Ossetia, the only captured hostage-taker in the 2004 Beslan school siege has been sentenced to life imprisonment.

About 30,000 IDPs from Chechnya still reside in Ingushetia and Dagestan. In general, economic conditions are dismal throughout the region, with unemployment rife.

At the federal level, an anti-terrorist bill became law, granting new counter-terrorism powers to law-enforcement agencies and the military. Moreover, a new law on NGOs came into force, imposing tougher controls on such organizations operating in Russia.

The ICRC still has no news of its Grozny staff member, Usman Saidaliev, abducted by unidentified armed men from his home in Chechnya in August 2003.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Assistance and protection activities will continue to be the focus of the ICRC’s large-scale operation in the northern Caucasus. Despite the unstable security environment, ICRC expatriate teams based in Nalchik (Kabardino-Balkaria) and Nazran (Ingushetia) were able to make regular visits to Chechnya in 2006.

As discussions with the Russian authorities failed to gain acceptance of the organization’s standard visiting procedures, the ICRC was unable to resume its visits to people arrested in connection with the situation in Chechnya. It will nonetheless continue to organize family visits for sentenced detainees held in penitentiary colonies far from their homes.

The ICRC will pursue its dialogue with the authorities on its activities in the Russian Federation. Particular emphasis will be placed on the issue of missing persons, on the promotion of respect for the civilian population, in particular residents in Chechnya and IDPs in Dagestan and Ingushetia, and on supporting the families of people still unaccounted for in their quest to shed light on the fate of their relatives. By reinforcing its expatriate presence, especially in Chechnya, the ICRC will be in a better position to monitor the situation of the civilian population. Sporadic contacts are held with Chechen Diaspora representatives to inform them about the ICRC activities.

The ICRC’s assistance operation in the northern Caucasus remains substantial, although, in light of the changing needs, a gradual reduction is now under way. The organization is continuing with its dual approach, which involves providing direct assistance to vulnerable households on the one hand, and supporting public services and boosting families’ productive and income-generating capacities on the other hand.

Thanks to improvements in the health services the ICRC was able to reduce its assistance. However the ICRC still needs to continue to assist several health facilities and the Grozny central blood bank. The ICRC further supports the training of health workers and hospital doctors, as well as of technicians at Grozny’s prosthetic/orthotic centre, to which it also provides orthopaedic materials.

The ICRC's mine action in Chechnya helps communities affected by mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) to run self-sustaining mine-risk education programmes and to set up and maintain safe play areas for children.

As in the past, the ICRC will work with the authorities, the armed forces and other weapon bearers to integrate IHL into documentation, practical training and education. To promote IHL and its mandate and activities more widely, the ICRC will adopt a selective approach, targeting universities, NGOs and think-tanks concerned with IHL and humanitarian issues. It will also continue to build a network of contacts with specialized media and publishers whose audiences include leaders and opinion-makers in Russia.

Cooperation with the Russian Red Cross Society aims to strengthen the National Society's structure, its capacity to promote IHL and the Fundamental Principles, and its tracing service, which deals mainly with files related to the Second World War. The ICRC supports the National Society in building the capacities of its branches in the northern Caucasus and southern Russia, in cooperation with the International Federation, paying particular attention to the recently re-established Chechen branch. The Russian Red Cross is the ICRC's main operational partner in the northern Caucasus, where it runs assistance and psychological programmes for vulnerable IDPs and residents.

Coordination with its Movement partners, UN agencies and other humanitarian organizations working in the northern Caucasus is an essential aspect of the ICRC's operation in the Russian Federation.

In order to implement its programmes in the Russian Federation the ICRC needs **USD 23.1 million**, including **USD 18.5 million** for the operations in the northern Caucasus.

HUMANITARIAN ISSUES AND ICRC OBJECTIVES

CIVILIANS

Families in Chechnya and, to a lesser degree, in neighbouring republics are seeking missing relatives allegedly arrested by federal or republican security forces or captured by armed groups. Years of conflict, marked by waves of displacement of the population living in Chechnya, have led to separation and loss of contact for numerous families. Elsewhere in the Russian Federation, refugees and asylum seekers need documents to travel to a host country accepting them for resettlement.

Objective

The authorities ascertain the fate of persons unaccounted for and provide answers to their families. Relatives separated by conflict within and outside the Russian Federation are able to re-establish and maintain links, and families are reunited upon request. Refugees and asylum seekers have the necessary documents to travel to their host countries.

Plan of action

Protection

- ▶ collect allegations of arrest or disappearance; urge the authorities to investigate allegations properly and provide answers to the families of missing relatives;
- ▶ encourage the authorities to address the issue of missing persons, including the recovery and identification of those who might be dead; provide the authorities with information and technical support;
- ▶ maintain the tracing service to restore family links and reunite relatives separated by conflict;
- ▶ issue travel documents allowing refugees and asylum seekers to leave the Russian Federation for third countries accepting them for resettlement.

Military and security operations, insecurity and violence – though to a lesser extent than in the past years – continue to affect civilians in Chechnya and, to a lesser degree, in neighbouring republics. The region has high poverty and unemployment rates. In Chechnya, much infrastructure has been destroyed or is in a state of disrepair, in particular water-supply systems, sanitation and housing. The widespread presence of mines and ERW presents a further risk to the population, especially children, who lack safe recreation areas.

Approximately 30,000 Chechen IDPs remain in Ingushetia and Dagestan, some in temporary settlements and some in private accommodation. In both republics, most collective centres are closing.

Objective

Civilians, including IDPs, are respected and protected by the authorities according to their rights under IHL and human rights law. The authorities take measures to prevent disappearances. IDPs return to their places of origin only on a voluntary basis and if security permits. The civilian population's basic needs in terms of water, housing, sanitation, food and other essential items are met. The number of mine- and ERW-related accidents in Chechnya is reduced.

Plan of action

Protection

- ▶ monitor the situation of civilians, including IDPs in Ingushetia and Dagestan, and intensify the dialogue with the authorities to ensure their protection, including with regard to the problem of disappearances.

Assistance*Economic security*

- ▶ provide up to 4,800 vulnerable households (25,000 people) in urban areas of central Chechnya with essential household items twice a year; provide 800 of these households with grants to generate additional income and reduce their dependency on outside assistance;
- ▶ maintain emergency supplies in Nalchik for up to 5,000 families;
- ▶ provide the 1,600 most vulnerable IDP households (7,500 people) in Ingushetia and the 700 most vulnerable households (3,000 people) in Dagestan with essential household items twice a year; provide 400 of these households in Ingushetia and 200 of these households in Dagestan with grants to generate additional income and reduce their dependency on outside assistance.

Water

- ▶ improve access to water supply for the population of Grozny by supporting the municipal water board, GrozVodokanal, maintaining and operating a water-filling station and maintaining an emergency-response capacity;
- ▶ improve access to water supply for the rural population by supporting the rural water board, ChechVodokanal;
- ▶ in Ingushetia and Dagestan, improve collective shelter, extend or rehabilitate water supply in 6 IDP settlements, maintain 10 hygiene facilities and rehabilitate sanitation facilities in 2 collective centres.

Mine action in Chechnya

- ▶ support 15 communities in constructing safe play areas for children; support the local authorities in developing a "safer village plan", including mine-information exchange with the regional authorities;
- ▶ teach children to share mine-related information with others; continue to use the Rainbow magazine as a vehicle for mine-awareness messages;
- ▶ convey mine-risk messages through fact sheets and training of journalists.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

The ICRC could not resume its detention visits in the Russian Federation. Although the authorities accepted the principle of ICRC visits to people arrested in connection with the situation in Chechnya, no agreement was reached on respect for the organization's standard procedures. The family visits programme continues.

Objective

People deprived of their freedom are able to maintain family links. Families of detainees are notified of the arrest, place of detention, transfer, release or death of their next of kin. The right of families to receive the remains of deceased detainees is respected.

Plan of action*Protection*

- ▶ enable people detained in connection with the conflict and serving sentences in penitentiary colonies elsewhere in the Russian Federation to receive a yearly family visit;
- ▶ remind the authorities of their legal obligations to keep families informed of the whereabouts of their detained relatives and to notify families of the death of detained relatives and return their remains.

WOUNDED AND SICK

The health-care system in the northern Caucasus remains insufficient, following years of conflict and neglect. Hospitals still lack basic medical materials and life-saving equipment for the provision of safe and effective health services. Staff also lacks the necessary training, especially in the use of modern medical equipment.

Objective

ICRC-supported hospitals in Chechnya provide an acceptable standard of health care to all their patients. The ICRC is able to cover the health needs of people with conflict-related injuries, providing medical supplies as necessary.

Plan of action*Assistance*

- ▶ support 7 referral health facilities in Chechnya by providing monthly supplies of essential medicines and consumables for use in their surgical, medical, obstetric/gynaecology, paediatric departments, and quarterly supplies of diagnostic and laboratory consumables;
- ▶ support 13 facilities in Chechnya in repairing and maintaining medical equipment;
- ▶ organize training in surgery and other areas of need, including management and maintenance, for surgical, medical and other staff, and provide relevant literature;
- ▶ maintain emergency supplies for up to 250 war-wounded patients in the region;
- ▶ supply the Grozny blood bank with reagents, tests and blood bags on a quarterly basis.

There is still a great demand for physical rehabilitation services in Chechnya. Recent hostilities have left many people in need of orthopaedic appliances. The Grozny prosthetic/orthotic centre now has around 1,800 patients on its books and needs more trained staff to be fully functional.

Objective

Amputees and other disabled people in Chechnya have access to good-quality prostheses and orthoses and physical rehabilitation services at the Grozny prosthetic/orthotic centre.

Plan of action*Assistance*

- ▶ ensure appropriate rehabilitation services for 500 physically disabled people at the Grozny centre; develop management capacity of the Grozny centre; train 4 new orthopaedic technicians from Chechnya and support further training for qualified technicians; coordinate its programme with other actors working in the field of physical rehabilitation in Chechnya.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Given that the Russian Federation's armed forces are among the largest in the world, the full integration of IHL and its basic principles into the doctrine, training and education of the armed, police and security forces can only be achieved over time and with the full support of the authorities.

Objective

The armed forces integrate IHL into their doctrine, training, education and operations. The police do the same for international human rights law and internationally recognized standards. All weapon bearers understand the ICRC's mandate and support its activities.

Plan of action*Prevention*

- ▶ assist the Ministry of Defence in integrating IHL into military doctrine and education; continue support for IHL training and education at all levels of military academies and schools;
- ▶ encourage the Ministry of the Interior to integrate international human rights law and the basic rules of IHL into the activities of the police and interior troops; conclude a cooperation agreement on implementation of IHL integration and draw up a plan of action;
- ▶ support the organization of competitions on IHL for future career officers and sessions for units due to be deployed in peace-support operations abroad.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Regular contacts with the media and other representatives of civil society offer opportunities to shape the debate on IHL and bring other humanitarian issues to the fore. The reform of the education system in the Russian Federation is under way. The ICRC secondary-school programme, aimed at introducing adolescents to the basic principles of IHL, is being taught across the Russian Federation. At university level, IHL is being taught in faculties of law, international relations and journalism.

Objective

Decision-makers, the media, NGOs, key research institutes and think-tanks accept and recognize the ICRC as a

neutral and independent humanitarian organization active worldwide, working on the basis of an internationally recognized mandate for the protection of the victims of international and internal armed conflicts and other situations of violence. At national and local levels, whenever possible with reference to the conflict in Chechnya, members of civil society support the work of the ICRC and assist it in increasing awareness of humanitarian issues among the public, decision-makers and all those involved in armed conflict or violence, thus achieving greater respect for human dignity. Young people, as future leaders and decision-makers, learn about IHL in their academic courses.

Plan of action*Prevention*

- ▶ organize press conferences, photo exhibitions and training in IHL for journalists; promote ICRC activities through a quarterly newsletter and audiovisual tools; strengthen contacts with the media in the northern Caucasus; regularly brief selected experts on humanitarian diplomacy and IHL issues and support NGOs in enhancing their knowledge of IHL;
- ▶ support the school programme teams in the Russian Federation and continue to lobby the education authorities to make sure that IHL teaching is maintained in the secondary-school curriculum after the education reform; provide training in the programme for teachers and teacher-trainers; promote the programme through extracurricular events and competitions;
- ▶ strengthen cooperation with selected universities across the Russian Federation, supporting them in organizing IHL courses and competitions and providing them with updated information.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Russian Red Cross Society is a huge National Society, with a complex structure, consisting of 96 regional branches covering a vast territory. The National Society is the ICRC's principal operational partner in the northern Caucasus.

Objective

The Russian Red Cross has a strong legal basis for independent action. It carries out effective activities to restore family links and promote IHL and the Movement's Fundamental Principles. Based on a long-term development plan, the National Society branches in the northern Caucasus are strengthened and have the operational capacity to deliver emergency humanitarian assistance as needed. The activities of all the components of the Movement are coordinated.

Plan of action

Cooperation

- ▶ provide financial and structural support for key management at the Russian Red Cross headquarters; assist the National Society in developing a strategic plan to reduce its dependence on ICRC financial support; help finance the tracing centre and strengthen the capacity of the IHL dissemination department, particularly staff training in the branches;
- ▶ support capacity building in the Chechen and Ingush branches of the Russian Red Cross; support the home-visiting nurses programme in 10 regions of the northern Caucasus and southern Russia, including Chechnya; support activities involving the provision of first aid, psychological assistance, children's playrooms and recreation centres;
- ▶ maintain a fruitful exchange between the Russian Red Cross, the ICRC and the International Federation through regular tripartite meetings.