

# AZERBAIJAN



ICRC/AR, 2011  
 + ICRC delegation    + ICRC sub-delegation    + ICRC mission

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)	
Protection	2,010
Assistance	3,659
Prevention	638
Cooperation with National Societies	353
General	-
	<b>6,659</b>
	<i>of which: Overheads 406</i>

IMPLEMENTATION RATE	
Expenditure/yearly budget	83%

PERSONNEL	
Expatriates	12
National staff (daily workers not included)	70

## KEY POINTS

- In 2011, the ICRC:**
- monitored the situation of civilians living in communities on both sides of the international border with Armenia and the Line of Contact, bringing their concerns to the attention of the relevant authorities when necessary
  - with the National Society and the British Red Cross, enhanced the living conditions of residents in up to 8 villages along the Line of Contact through cash grants for income-generating activities and by improving water access
  - with local NGO partners, provided psychological, health, social and income-generating support to 293 families of missing persons
  - acted as a neutral intermediary in the repatriation of 1 civilian internee from Azerbaijan to Armenia and 1 POW from Armenia to Azerbaijan, while monitoring 121 detainees individually during visits to 27 detention places
  - handed over its TB control activities in prisons to the Azerbaijani authorities, as planned, after 15 years of successful cooperation that resulted in a significant reduction in detainee deaths from the disease
  - completed the collection of ante-mortem data from families of missing persons in relation to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, donating ante/post-mortem database software to the authorities and training staff to use it

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 strengthen the capacities of the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan.

## CONTEXT

Despite several high-level meetings between Armenia and Azerbaijan, mediated by the three co-chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and meetings mediated by the president of the Russian Federation, little progress was made in finding a peaceful solution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

Incidents along the international border with Armenia and the Line of Contact increased. These, along with the presence of mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW), continued to affect the lives of the local civilian population, causing both civilian and military casualties and exacerbating political tensions between the two countries.

Internally, demonstrations, both political and religious in tone, led to the arrest and detention of some protestors by the Azerbaijani authorities.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC in Azerbaijan continued to work to alleviate the humanitarian consequences of the unresolved Nagorno Karabakh conflict, acting as a neutral intermediary during the return of one civilian internee from Azerbaijan to Armenia and one POW from Armenia to Azerbaijan. During field visits to communities living near the Line of Contact and on both sides of the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, ICRC delegates monitored respect for IHL and civilian needs, raising them with the relevant authorities when necessary.

To better address the needs of communities closest to the front-line – identified in a joint assessment by the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan, the British Red Cross and the ICRC in 2010 – a multifaceted programme was launched aimed at improving access for people in eight villages to water for drinking and irrigation, livelihood activities, public infrastructure and adequate housing. In Nagorno Karabakh, as planned, the ICRC handed over to the *de facto* authorities drug distribution to and the management of 70 previously assisted primary health care facilities in three conflict-affected districts in October.

In line with an agreement concluded with the Azerbaijani authorities in 2008, the ICRC and the National Society completed the collection of ante-mortem data from families of persons missing in relation to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, with the exception of those who could not be located or who were living abroad. The first 250 questionnaires were given to the State Commission on Prisoners

Main figures and indicators	PROTECTION		Total	
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>				
		UAMs/SCs*		
RCMs collected			28	
RCMs distributed			20	
Phone calls facilitated between family members			60	
<b>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</b>				
		Women		Minors
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		8	52	5
People located (tracing cases closed positively)			15	
Tracing cases still being handled at 31 December 2011 (people)		345	4,193	93
<b>Documents</b>				
People to whom travel documents were issued			26	
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>				
<b>ICRC visits</b>				
		Women		Minors
Detainees visited and monitored individually		1	121	3
Detainees newly registered			42	
Number of visits carried out			61	
Number of places of detention visited			27	
<b>Restoring family links</b>				
RCMs collected			99	
RCMs distributed			104	
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative			20	
Detainees released and transferred/repatriated by/via the ICRC			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</b>					
Food		Beneficiaries	1,825	87%	
		<i>of whom IDPs</i>	183		
Essential household items		Beneficiaries	1,825	87%	
		<i>of whom IDPs</i>	183		
Agricultural, veterinary and other micro-economic initiatives		Beneficiaries	3,951	25%	1%
Water and habitat activities		Beneficiaries	4,900	40%	23%
		<i>of whom IDPs</i>	400		
<b>Health<sup>1</sup></b>					
Health centres supported		Structures	70		
Average catchment population			47,710		
Consultations		Patients	50,445		
		<i>of which curative</i>		17,921	14,987
		<i>of which ante/post-natal</i>		2,314	
Health education		Sessions	178		
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>					
<b>Economic security, water and habitat</b>					
Essential household items		Beneficiaries	5,638		

1. figures available for Jan-June only

of War, Hostages and Missing Persons, where ICRC-coached staff began entering the data in ICRC-provided ante/post-mortem database software. To meet the psychological and social needs of relatives of the missing, the ICRC launched a psychological and social support programme in partnership with local NGOs, through which relatives of missing persons shared their experiences and concerns with peers at group meetings and learnt about other available support mechanisms. The ICRC facilitated individual follow-up sessions with psychologists, legal advisers, health and/or social workers when requested. In Nagorny Karabakh, the collection of ante/post-mortem data was completed and ICRC-trained staff began entering it in the database using the software provided. Relatives of missing persons accessed grants to kick-start income generation and received psychological support; some benefited from housing repairs.

ICRC delegates monitored the treatment and living conditions of people deprived of their freedom, including those interned in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict and those arrested

in connection with protests or demonstrations, providing confidential feedback to the detaining authorities. After 15 years of technical and financial assistance, and with the programme considered a model for other countries in the region trying to tackle TB prevalence in detention facilities, the ICRC handed over the TB programme in prisons to the Azerbaijani authorities in March. It continued to monitor the situation and was on hand to provide technical advice, particularly regarding the coordination of the Health and Justice Ministries in following up released detainees still undergoing treatment for the disease. The ICRC maintained its support to the national reference laboratory.

The ICRC encouraged the authorities to accede to and implement IHL treaties, providing requested input on the protection of cultural property during armed conflict. It also pursued discussions with the relevant authorities on the integration of IHL into the training of the military and organized three training sessions for senior Defence Ministry officers and a seminar on law enforcement

for internal troops and the police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. It maintained contact with the media to heighten public awareness of humanitarian issues and ICRC activities. Delegates continued to assist the education authorities in efforts to integrate IHL into university curricula.

The ICRC maintained its support to the Azerbaijani Red Crescent in strengthening its tracing and dissemination capacities and pursued cooperation with others involved in mine action.

## CIVILIANS

Civilians living on both sides of the Line of Contact and of the international border with Armenia, including IDPs in temporary settlements, faced continued insecurity owing to cross-border fire and the presence of mines/ERW. The ICRC increased the frequency of its field visits to these communities, monitoring civilians' needs and concerns and raising them with the authorities when necessary. The organization maintained its dialogue with the authorities, including the *de facto* authorities in Nagorny Karabakh, reminding them of their obligations towards civilians, including IDPs. Concerns about the welfare of the Hasangaya IDP community, for example, led the authorities to organize ad hoc relief distributions.

A 2010 ICRC household survey confirmed that the prevailing insecurity was impeding access to means of livelihood for people living in communities near the Line of Contact, particularly to land and water for irrigation, as well as to public services and adequate housing. With a view to empowering these communities to meet their own needs in a sustainable way, the National Society, the British Red Cross and the ICRC provided conditional cash grants to the most vulnerable 939 households (3,759 people) in eight villages, mainly for livestock but also for agriculture and small business activities. Access to water for drinking and irrigation improved for 4,900 people, including 400 IDPs, following the construction of new boreholes and water distribution systems, in cooperation with local authorities. Thus, in four villages near the Line of Contact, people gained access to 150 litres of water per person, daily. Donations of materials helped in the maintenance of the new infrastructure. In Nagorny Karabakh, some 8,400 people, including the elderly, IDPs and families of missing persons, attended consultations at 70 rural health centres supplied by the ICRC with medicines and consumables. Ahead of the planned handover of ICRC-supported primary health care programmes to the *de facto* authorities, which happened in October, and to prepare them to assume responsibility for medical supplies, staff attended training in drug management. A nursing school library in Stepanakert/Khankendi received medical books and training materials. Meanwhile, the ICRC began assessing the needs of mine victims, with a view to addressing them in 2012.

Some 365 vulnerable households (1,825 people) in Nagorny Karabakh, including elderly people, invalids and some families of the missing, used ICRC food rations and hygiene items to meet their most urgent needs. In a bid to secure more sustainable, long-term support for such people, the ICRC engaged with local actors/authorities, leading the *de facto* Social Security Ministry to accept ICRC lists of vulnerable people in need of housing assistance for possible inclusion in its housing programme.

### Relatives of missing persons receive comprehensive support

At year-end, 4,603 people remained unaccounted for as a result of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, with 4,193 cases being handled by the ICRC in Azerbaijan, including Nagorny Karabakh. The

Azerbaijani authorities were reminded of their responsibilities towards, and the needs of, families of missing persons and discussed the humanitarian nature of the issue with the ICRC, which continued to assist in improving legislation protecting the rights of missing persons and their families.

In line with agreements concluded in 2008 with the Azerbaijani State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons and the National Society, ICRC-trained volunteers completed the collection of ante-mortem data, except from 52 families who could not be located and 12 who lived overseas. In all, 3,619 families of missing persons had been interviewed by ICRC-trained National Society volunteers and by ICRC staff, who collected responses to the questionnaires, along with photographs and documents relating to the missing. The first 250 such questionnaires were handed over to the State Commission, where, following a refresher course, ICRC-coached staff began entering the data in ante/post-mortem database software.

To facilitate future exhumations, information pertaining to possible gravesite locations was also systematically extracted from ante-mortem data and recorded. The ICRC stressed to the authorities the importance of taking the necessary preparatory steps, in line with best forensic practice, such as the identification of appropriate storage facilities and the training of forensic experts.

In Nagorny Karabakh, ante-mortem data collection continued, with interviews taking place with 38 families. The *de facto* authorities strengthened their data management capacities by installing ICRC ante/post-mortem database software and allocating a database manager who, following ICRC training, received the first 50 questionnaires for input. To help ensure the proper management of five sets of human remains recovered by the ICRC, a forensic specialist examined and appropriately stored them, in coordination with the relevant institutions.

Families of missing persons still faced legal, psychological, social and economic problems. Having identified their specific needs and traditional coping mechanisms, ICRC facilitated access for some 290 families to comprehensive support in Baku and, from September, in districts close to the Line of Contact. After attending specific training, psychologists and social workers at four local NGOs, identified as appropriate partners, facilitated 42 group gatherings, where relatives shared their pain, and made 92 home visits to more vulnerable or isolated family members. Other individuals received training to provide such relatives with comfort during difficult times. Furthermore, some 30 NGOs agreed to provide families of missing persons with free services, enabling them to discuss legal/administrative concerns with lawyers or obtain free medical care. In Nagorny Karabakh, following assessments of families' needs and existing support structures, some 36 relatives attended three group meetings hosted by ICRC-coached local psychologists. Seven individuals attended follow-up consultations with psychologists. Plans to facilitate vocational training and micro-credit for economically vulnerable families were shelved, the former because relatives lacked interest and the latter because no agreement was reached between the ICRC and the anticipated partner organization. Nonetheless, small business grants meant 48 families (192 people) of missing persons stood to generate additional income; the living conditions of four elderly relatives also improved thanks to a joint home rehabilitation programme with the *de facto* Construction Ministry, which saw them provide the building materials and the ICRC cover labour costs.

## Families separated by conflict maintain contact

With communication links between Azerbaijan and Armenia, including Nagorny Karabakh, not yet fully restored, a few families still depended on ICRC family-links services, including phone calls, to maintain contact with relatives, including those detained in Azerbaijan or elsewhere. A family divided on the two sides of the Line of Contact was reunited in Tbilisi, Georgia. Refugees and asylum seekers in Azerbaijan travelled with ICRC-issued travel documents to resettle in third countries or to reunite with family members.

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Detainees held under the authority of Azerbaijan's Internal Affairs, Defence, Justice and National Security Ministries, including six POWs and six civilian internees held in relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict and those held in pre-trial facilities in relation to protests or demonstrations, were visited by the ICRC according to its standard procedures. Particular attention was paid to vulnerable inmates, including POWs, civilian internees, security detainees, women, minors and foreigners. In Nagorny Karabakh, people held in detention facilities under the responsibility of the *de facto* Ministry of Justice received similar visits.

Inmates maintained contact with their families via RCMs, a family parcel service and, for foreigners, 40 phone calls, while two families living in Nagorny Karabakh received financial support to visit their relatives in prison in Armenia. At the request of all parties, one POW was repatriated from Armenia to Azerbaijan and one civilian internee was repatriated from Azerbaijan to Armenia, with the ICRC acting as a neutral intermediary.

Clothing, hygiene and other items improved living conditions for some 5,600 detainees. They included disabled detainees who accessed local physical rehabilitation services, in cooperation with the authorities, and/or were fitted with prosthetic/orthotic devices. Donations of books and games also broke the monotony of incarceration for inmates. In Nagorny Karabakh, a television was donated for the family visit room.

## Authorities assume greater responsibility for detainee health

Following more than 15 years of ICRC technical and financial support in tackling TB and multi-drug resistant (MDR) TB in Azerbaijani places of detention, the country's prisons boasted one of the highest MDR TB cure rates in the world. With Baku's Special Treatment Institute for detainees with TB seen as a regional model of cooperation for other countries battling the

disease, the Justice Ministry took over full responsibility for the programme in March. The ICRC continued monitoring the situation and remained available to provide technical expertise when necessary, particularly in encouraging coordination between the penitentiary and civilian health sectors, and to promote the model beyond Azerbaijan. Thus, government officials from Central Asia and the Caucasus better understood the programme's potential following ICRC-facilitated study tours.

To ensure the programme's long-term sustainability, the national reference laboratory continued to develop its capacities, including the training of laboratory technicians in Azerbaijan and abroad, with ICRC technical, material and training support. A local NGO followed up released detainees, providing food, hygiene items and transport to health facilities. To provide first-hand experience in MDR TB management, infection control and the organization of TB control in prisons, a visiting TB epidemiologist assessed and documented the treatment outcomes of the first 100 drug-resistant patients, demonstrating a 72% cure rate. The production of a film documenting the programme's progress and achievements, for future use by the national authorities and international partners, was under way.

## AUTHORITIES

Azerbaijan was not party to several key IHL instruments. At meetings, the ICRC encouraged the authorities to accede to such treaties, particularly the 1977 Additional Protocols, the Rome Statute and those related to weapons. The authorities showed a marked interest in working on, and receiving training in, the protection of cultural property during armed conflicts. Both the Culture and Tourism Ministry and the Ichari Shahar, Baku's inner city administration, requested ICRC advice on the compatibility of domestic law with the obligations deriving from the Hague Convention on Cultural Property. Several representatives from various ministries learnt about protecting cultural property during armed conflicts at a seminar co-organized with Azerbaijan's International Council of Museums and the Culture and Tourism Ministry. Three government officials attended a regional IHL conference in St Petersburg, Russian Federation (see *Moscow*).

The Azerbaijani parliament continued working to improve legislation to protect the rights of missing persons and their families, with the ICRC providing relevant documents and sample laws. During all contacts with the authorities, the ICRC emphasized the need to protect civilians and people deprived of their freedom and to facilitate humanitarian access to conflict-affected populations.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	AZERBAIJAN	IN AZERBAIJAN, IN RELATION TO THE NAGORNY KARABAKH CONFLICT
<b>ICRC visits</b>		
Detainees visited and monitored individually	109	12
	<i>of whom women</i>	1
	<i>of whom minors</i>	3
Detainees newly registered	42	
Number of visits carried out	49	12
Number of places of detention visited	26	1
<b>Restoring family links</b>		
RCMs collected	63	36
RCMs distributed	69	35
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	20	
Detainees released and transferred/repatriated by/via the ICRC		1
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		1

## ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

With IHL not fully integrated into the armed forces' doctrine, training, operations and sanctions, the military authorities in Azerbaijan discussed with the ICRC progress made in this regard, as well as their duties under IHL to protect civilians and detainees and to ensure humanitarian access to conflict-affected populations. To facilitate IHL implementation within the Azerbaijani armed forces, the Defence Ministry's law department requested ICRC input during the drafting of an IHL manual, which was printed and distributed to military units. A senior ministry official enhanced his IHL understanding at the Senior Workshop on International Rules Governing Military Operations, held in South Africa (see *Pretoria*). Plans to provide train-the-trainer courses were shelved in favour of enhancing the IHL knowledge of operational decision-makers. Thus, 43 senior officers boosted their capacities to integrate IHL in operations at one of three two-day ICRC seminars.

Twenty-five senior Internal Affairs Ministry personnel, including, for the first time, five police officers, explored international policing standards and their applicability to their work during a four-day workshop. In support of the ministry's efforts to further develop such training, seminars/workshops were planned for 2012.

In Nagorny Karabakh, more than 800 military personnel positioned along the Line of Contact learnt about basic IHL principles and the ICRC's mandate and activities there during a series of short presentations, as did 75 military cadets at a military school.

## CIVIL SOCIETY

News releases, publications and briefings kept international and national organizations, diplomats and think-tanks up to date with ICRC action. The media played a key role in raising public awareness of humanitarian issues, drawing on this information and courses when reporting on National Society/ICRC activities, particularly those on behalf of detainees, internees and missing persons. Journalists from 16 local media agencies in Azerbaijan, as well as two journalists in Nagorny Karabakh, better understood the ICRC's mandate, independent humanitarian action in general and IHL after attending ICRC-organized workshops.

Having been invited by Azerbaijan's Institute of Educational Problems to participate in the drafting of a curriculum for the "Knowledge of Life" subject, the ICRC proposed IHL-related topics and attended a meeting of national advisers. Baku State University's journalism faculty integrated an IHL module into its curriculum and students learnt about IHL and the Movement at two ICRC presentations. Students at the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy were better placed to understand IHL following an assistant professor's attendance at a regional conference and the donation of IHL books to the library. In Nagorny Karabakh, university students attended IHL seminars/presentations.

## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Azerbaijani Red Crescent responded to the needs of people affected by conflict, including the families of missing persons (see *Civilians*). It signed a memorandum of understanding with the ICRC and the International Federation, establishing structured coordination mechanisms.

Drawing on ICRC expertise, the National Society continued its support to mine victims. It collected data on mine incidents and assessed the needs of families that had lost breadwinners,

in close collaboration with the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action, before facilitating access for 47 families to livestock, bought with ICRC funds.

In accordance with the National Society's mandate, ICRC-trained volunteers dealt with non-conflict-related tracing cases. To enhance the tracing capacities of field branches, National Society guidelines were finalized and translated into Azerbaijani and Russian, with ICRC support.

National Society staff at 12 branches located along the Line of Contact and the international border refreshed their knowledge of the Movement and its Fundamental Principles at a two-day ICRC training course, enabling them to relay the relevant information to conflict-affected civilians. With ICRC financial and technical support, 15 National Society managers refreshed their knowledge of the Safer Access approach and 12 youth trainers honed their first-aid teaching skills.