



ICRC

FEBRUARY 2010

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The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization, whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.



NEWSLETTER

FROM THE DELEGATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC) IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

EDITORIAL

The violence that erupted in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010 caused grave humanitarian consequences, some of which have lasting effects. Given the diversity and magnitude of humanitarian needs during and after the emergency, the ICRC substantially stepped up its response capacity in the country. From the first day of violence, the ICRC alongside other actors, was able to offer an immediate response, in particular to meet urgent medical needs. As peoples' access to essential services and goods was partially and temporarily disrupted, the ICRC in coordination with the authorities and other humanitarian organisations provided food and non-food items as well as safe drinking water. In order to give proper shelter to thousands of people before the onset of winter, the ICRC partially reconstructed destroyed houses. Furthermore, ICRC delegates, by virtue of the organisation's mandate in favour of detainees, visited people arrested in relation to the events.

We are confident that through ICRC's emergency response, the organisation contributed to alleviating some of the immediate suffering. While the humanitarian situation in Southern Kyrgyzstan has seen some normalisation over the last months, there are, however, less visible but dire humanitarian repercussions of the June violence that should not be ignored or forgotten. For example, dozens of families still live in a state of uncertainty because a loved one has been unaccounted for since the events. Other people continue to face difficulties to make up for loss of business and source of income, while others see their livelihoods suffer because of distortions to markets and trading.

The ICRC, within the scope of its mandate, its limited capacity, and its fields of expertise endeavours to contribute to the overall recovery effort. It has offered its support to the authorities for the identification of mortal remains to honour the right of families to know the fate of their next of kin. Furthermore, it is committed to

fostering understanding of and response to the specific needs of families of missing persons, and to contributing to the implementation of this response. Moreover, supporting individual or small-scale community projects in order to facilitate the resumption of economic activities or access to clean water will constitute fields of humanitarian intervention for the ICRC in the months to come.

A key lesson to be learnt from the June events is the importance of emergency preparedness during peacetime, an element that is critical to swift and effective response to a humanitarian crisis. With this in mind, and building upon past programmes, the ICRC will increase its efforts to strengthen some of the existing prevention and response capacities that do exist in the country. This includes the rehabilitation of health facilities and offering specialized training to surgical staff, the development of first aid capacities, the reinforcement of the response capacity of the National Red Crescent Society of the Kyrgyz Republic, and the promotion of International Humanitarian Law and humanitarian principles, including their integration into national laws and the operational documentation of the Armed Forces.

Meanwhile, traditional humanitarian activities such as the protection of people deprived of freedom, including through support to the authorities in their fight against multi-drug resistant tuberculosis amongst detainees will remain core occupations of the ICRC delegation in Kyrgyzstan.

Strengthening the dialogue and reinforcing the cooperation and coordination with the authorities, other stakeholders, the National Red Crescent Society of the Kyrgyz Republic and civil society will be key to successfully meeting the humanitarian challenges of the future.

*Christoph Hartmann,
Head of Delegation*

When responding to humanitarian emergencies following an outbreak of violence, the primary aim of the ICRC is to protect the lives and integrity of victims. While multi-faceted emergency assistance saves lives and mitigates against the worst immediate effects of violence, the ICRC's ultimate goal remains to restore people's ability to be self-sufficient and their access to essential services.

The selection of beneficiaries of ICRC assistance programmes is based exclusively on criteria of vulnerability because of violence and its humanitarian consequences, with strictly no considerations given to political, cultural, religious, ethnic, social, or other affiliation. Not being a development agency, the ICRC has no mandate or capacity to fight general poverty.

HEALTH ASSISTANCE

During a humanitarian emergency, the aim of the ICRC health programmes is to ensure that the most urgent medical needs of victims are attended to. This may include supporting the existing health system and structures, distributing medical equipment and medicine, and rehabilitating or upgrading health facilities to enable them to cope with the influx of patients. To strengthen the capacity of medical staff to treat wounds typically associated with situations of violence, the ICRC may offer specific training and opportunities to exchange with experienced and specialised ICRC surgeons.

As early as the 11th of June 2010, the ICRC responded to the violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan by providing supplies of surgical material to several hospitals in Osh and Jalal-Abad cities. Subsequently, 20 other health facilities, including provincial hospitals, police and military hospitals, and a paediatrics hospital also received material assistance consisting of basic surgical and medical equipment and medicines.

In Osh and Jalal-Abad, the ICRC fitted ambulance services with emergency equipment and the Blood Centre of Jalal-Abad received material support. 28 people benefited from ICRC supported medical assistance and/or from transport to specialised health facilities in Bishkek.

As of August, the ICRC focused its assistance on the partial rehabilitation and equipment of 11 family healthcare centres in Osh and Kara Suu districts with a view to strengthening the authorities' capacity to offer health care, including in emergencies. It also provided a supply of medical items to the Jalal-Abad Medical Service of the Ministry of Interior, the Territorial Hospital, and Family Healthcare Centre N°2 in Uzgen.

In October, 102 medical personnel from Bishkek, Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken, representing respectively the Ministries of Health, Interior and Defence as well as the GSNB and the Border Troops Service, attended two seminars on bullet wound surgery during which they shared expertise and experience with ICRC specialised surgeons. This initiative built upon a one-day seminar that had taken place in Bishkek in April in which 130 medical staff participated. Similar ca-

capacity-building opportunities will be offered in 2011, with a particular focus on emergency trauma care, in order to continue to contribute to emergency preparedness.

In 2011, the ICRC worldwide will work towards sensitising authorities, arms carriers, and civil society on the importance of respect for the medical mission, as a critical element to unhindered access to health care for people wounded during armed conflict or other situations of violence.



ICRC chief surgeon and local medical staff visiting patients in Bishkek

WATER AND HABITAT

The ICRC water and habitat programmes aim to ensure that victims of violence have access to safe drinking water and adequate shelter. Beyond the provision of emergency assistance, the ICRC may offer its support to the authorities and communities to rehabilitate public infrastructure critical to the provision of essential services and goods.

From June to September 2010, the ICRC contributed to maintaining a sound sanitary environment, including through donation of a water truck, a sewage truck and an excavator to the local water board authorities of Osh town («Oshgorvodokanal»). To the same end, four water pumps were provided in order to improve the functioning of water distribution stations.

Furthermore, the ICRC rehabilitated four boreholes in communities in and around Osh town and provided pumps and electrical cabling to improve the provision of water for an average of 2'000 people per neighbourhood. Three electrical transformers and other electric material were donated to the provincial electric network power company.

Rehabilitation of medium-size water supply infrastructure is now underway in Suratash (borehole drilling and provision of a 275m³ water tank and a water tower), in Jilkeldi (provision of a pump) and in Boston (provision of a 12m³ water tank). Thousands of people will benefit from improved access to drinking water. Other similar projects are planned for the coming months, notably in Bazar Korgon.

In mid-September, the ICRC started the partial reconstruction of 363 houses, located in Furkat and Cheremushki districts of Osh town. These houses were burnt or otherwise damaged during the events of June 2010. By December, some 3'000 people were provided with a two or three-room

ASSISTANCE

shelter, depending on the size of the family, just in time to allow them to cope with winter conditions.

It was a challenge to complete this work before the onset of winter. «In the beginning, people didn't believe that their houses could be partially rebuilt within such a short period of time, said Francesca Coloni, an ICRC civil engineer based in Osh. «But as soon as construction began in earnest, everybody young and old, men and women pitched in to help. It was very impressive».

In addition to its construction programme, the ICRC contributed to the overall partial reconstruction effort through the donation of roofing kits for 200 houses in Pamirskaya, Tashlak, Furkat and Cheremushki (Osh oblast) and for 250 houses in Bazar Korgon (Jalal-Abad oblast). Moreover, 46 families received material kits and incentives to repair their partially damaged houses by themselves.

This shelter project was planned and implemented in full coordination with the State Directorate for Reconstruction and Development of Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces, with the authorities of Osh town and Oblast, and with other humanitarian organisations. It was complementary to the shelter construction programme of the UNHCR.



Partial reconstruction of destroyed houses in Southern Kyrgyzstan



Ensuring access to safe water in Southern Kyrgyzstan

ECONOMIC SECURITY

In situations of violence, the ICRC relief interventions consist of distribution of food and essential household items to ensure the survival of people in need. Once violence ends, the ICRC productive interventions aim to allow affected households to restore their livelihood and to become self-sufficient again.



Delivering assistance in Southern Kyrgyzstan

The outburst of violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010 caused disruption to markets, trade and commerce. The ICRC swiftly started to deliver food and essential household items, through one-off or repeated distributions, to over 320'000 affected people in Osh and Jalalabad oblasts (Ak-Tilek, Shark, Furkat, Tashlak, VLKSM, Suzak and Bazar Korgon districts) that could no longer meet their basic needs. In addition, more than 48'000 people, representing some 7'750 households, received tents, blankets, tarpaulins, kitchen sets, jerry cans, buckets, mattresses and hygiene kits to help them to mitigate against the effects of their material loss. Just before the onset of winter, 6'525 people who had lost their homes received blankets, mattresses, hygienic parcels and baby-kits, in order to

make up for their loss of private property during the violence and to allow them to cope with winter conditions.

In December 2010, the ICRC completed its emergency relief response to the June events. In February 2011, the ICRC launched a new programme to allow people or groups of people that lost their source of income because of the violence to rebuild their economic livelihood. To this end, the ICRC introduced a programme of Micro-Economic Initiatives (MEI). Based on a business plan developed by the potential beneficiary, ICRC assistance is granted to start a small business or livelihood activity that can contribute the household reaching a certain level of economic self-sufficiency within a relatively short time. The ICRC will

implement the MEI programme according to its limited capacity and resources in geographical areas of South Kyrgyzstan where it has a presence.

The ICRC believes that the MEI programme constitutes one adequate form of humanitarian response to assist and support some of those households in both urban and rural areas that are still particularly vulnerable because of the June 2010 events and its lasting consequences (including the disruption of local, regional and international commerce and trading). Besides the MEI programme, the ICRC will continue to implement other forms of productive intervention assistance, including in the agricultural sector.



More than 2'800 daily workers, most of whom came from the areas directly affected by the violence, participated in a cash-for-work programme to clear rubble, ash and debris from the destroyed or burnt houses and surrounding streets. The wages received by the workers helped them to cover their basic needs and those of their families.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER HUMANITARIAN ACTORS AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

Coordination is critical to ensure complementarity of humanitarian interventions and to avoid gaps, and thus to make relief response relevant and effective. The ICRC is fully committed to coordinating with all relevant entities including governmental authorities and other humanitarian actors, in particular those with major operational capacity and field presence.

The ICRC's approach to coordination is driven by its operational requirements and the need to preserve its independence. The ICRC, as part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, ensures particularly strong coordination in the field with other components of the Movement, such as the National Red Crescent Society of the Kyrgyz Republic.

VISITS TO PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF FREEDOM

Regular visits by the ICRC to people deprived of freedom aim to ensure that the detaining authorities provide detainees with humane treatment, access to health care, possibilities to maintain family links, and decent material conditions of detention at all times. Such visits are conducted according to standard operating modalities strictly followed in the approximately 80 countries where the ICRC carries out this activity. These include a resolutely constructive dialogue with the detaining authorities that respects full confidentiality of all observations, recommendations, and bilateral discussions. The ICRC may support efforts by the authorities to improve the living conditions in temporary or permanent places of detention, including through training of prison officials on universally recognised detention standards.

The ICRC has been carrying out humanitarian visits to detainees in the Kyrgyz Republic since 1999.

Between June and December 2010, ICRC delegates carried out 74 visits to people deprived of freedom in 27 places of detention, primarily in Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces but also in other parts of the country. The ICRC proposed to families and detainees to

exchange family news through 'Red Cross Messages' (a kind of an open letter used to transmit strictly family news). Whenever appropriate, the ICRC provided humanitarian assistance, such as mattresses, blankets and hygiene kits to detainees.

From 2008 until December 2010, the ICRC supported rehabilitation works on sanitary and ventilation infrastructure in 17 places of

detention, including police stations (IVSs), temporary (SIZOs) and permanent detention facilities (Colonies) in different regions of the country. The aim of these interventions was to improve the overall living conditions of the detainees and to reduce the risks of airborne respiratory infections.



An ICRC delegate is delivering a Red Cross message

THE MISSING

Violence often results in people becoming unaccounted for and family links being broken. Regardless of the circumstances of somebody going missing, the lack of news and the uncertainty about the whereabouts of a loved one are difficult to bear for the families affected. The ICRC promotes the right of the next of kin to know the fate of a relative unaccounted for in relation to a situation of violence. To this end, it maintains a dialogue with all authorities and other stakeholders concerned to make available any information they may have, on the one hand, and to sensitise them on the specific legal, social, economic, psychological and other needs of families of missing persons, on the other hand. When appropriate, the ICRC offers its technical expertise and experience to contribute to the authorities' responsibility and efforts to identify human remains and to process related data. Furthermore, it may directly assist, to the extent of its mandate and possibilities, families of missing persons to have their multifaceted immediate, medium and long-term needs covered.

FAMILIES OF MISSING PERSONS

The ICRC has continued to record the identity of and to maintain a dialogue with families that lost track of a next of kin in relation to the June 2010 events, with the aim of clarifying the whereabouts of the missing persons and to restore family links.

At the end of 2010, the ICRC started an in-depth assessment of the multifaceted specific needs of the families of the missing in Osh and Jalal-Abad Oblasts, in order to be able to propose and promote adapted responses. Findings and recommendations will be shared with the authorities concerned.

In October 2010, the ICRC and the National Red Crescent Society of the Kyrgyz Republic provided food assistance to 78 families of people unaccounted for who had been the main breadwinner in the household. In December 2010, the ICRC organised a second round of food assis-

tance to 63 families of the previous 78 families whose relative was still missing. Furthermore, it granted financial support to 39 of the families that were particularly vulnerable to allow them to buy coal and clothes before the onset of winter.

FORENSIC INSTITUTIONS

In June, the highest authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic requested technical support from the ICRC to identify the human remains of people killed during the events.

The ICRC proposed an approach based on the comparison of a comprehensive physical description of missing persons (ante-mortem data) with the description of unidentified human remains (post-mortem data). This approach would complement the process of identification launched by the national authorities based on DNA analysis. To this end and as a preparatory measure, the ICRC trained 15 staff members of the ICRC and the National Red Crescent Soci-

ety of the Kyrgyz Republic on the collection of ante-mortem data. In November 2010, officials from central and local levels of the Ministries of Interior and Health attended a presentation by ICRC's regional forensic advisor on a software database designed to manage ante and post-mortem data related to missing persons and unidentified mortal remains.

In order to strengthen the authorities' capacity to handle human remains, including in situations of violence, the ICRC's regional forensic advisor maintained a dialogue with officials concerned and contributed to an assessment of existing capacities of forensic institutions at national level and in the Southern oblasts in particular.

In the framework of emergency preparedness, and with the aim of strengthening the authorities' capacity to properly handle human remains, the ICRC provided financial and material support to the rehabilitation and equipment of the morgues of Osh city and Kara Suu.

TUBERCULOSIS CONTROL IN PRISON

Since 2004, the ICRC has been providing technical support to the State Service on Execution of Punishments of the Kyrgyz Republic (SSEP) in an effort to establish a comprehensive and sustainable multi-drug resistant (MDR) tuberculosis (TB) control programme in Colony 27. ICRC's intervention is closely coordinated with the World Health Organisation's TB control strategy for the Kyrgyz penitentiary system and with other stakeholders contributing to this programme.

Between June and December 2010, 47 detainees were enrolled in the MDR-TB treatment programme in Colony 27. 16 people that were enrolled two years ago completed their treatment successfully. The ICRC has supported the Colony's medical staff in their

daily duties, supplied pharmaceuticals and consumables to the MDR-TB hospital, and provided psychological support and additional food rations to the MDR-TB patients to improve the adherence to long-lasting and heavy treatment.

With the support of the ICRC, five high-ranking officials of the SSEP carried out a study tour to the TB control programmes in prisons in Azerbaijan and Georgia in October 2010. The tour came at a time when both the health and SSEP authorities were working on five-year strategic plans, an occasion that offers the opportunity to strengthen TB and MDR-TB control programmes in prison.

With the support of the National Red Crescent Society of the Kyrgyz Republic, the

ICRC carried out a study on the reasons for the high default rate from MDR-TB treatment among released detainees. Findings will be used to contribute to strengthening adherence to post-release treatment, which is of utmost importance from a public health point of view.

ASSISTANCE TO THE NATIONAL BLOOD CENTRE IN BISHKEK

As part of its efforts to improve emergency preparedness, the ICRC provided a Refrigerated Centrifuge to the National Blood Centre in December 2010.

PROMOTION AND INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW (IHL) AND HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

IHL is a set of rules that seek, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflict. It protects persons who are not or are no longer participating in the hostilities and restricts the means and methods of warfare. IHL is chiefly enshrined in the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, their Additional Protocols, and in customary international humanitarian law. Kyrgyzstan became a State Party to the Geneva Conventions in 1992. States have the obligation to ensure that their armed and security forces and the population are aware of the rules of IHL and of universal humanitarian principles.

By virtue of its mandate, the ICRC supports national authorities in their efforts to promote IHL and humanitarian principles and to integrate this set of rules into national law, with the aim of preventing or limiting the worst excesses of situations of armed conflict or other situations of violence. Furthermore, the ICRC offers its legal and technical expertise to Armed Forces to promote and facilitate the integration of IHL and humanitarian principles into their operational documentation, education, training and equipment, and sanctions system.

For more than ten years, the ICRC in the Kyrgyz Republic has sensitised a wide range of audiences on IHL and humanitarian principles as well as on the mandate and activities of the ICRC, which are enshrined in the Geneva Conventions, the Statutes of the ICRC, and the Resolutions of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Targeted audiences include the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence, executive and legislative authorities, academic circles and Law Enforcement Agencies.

To reach tomorrow's decision-makers and opinion leaders, the ICRC has been cooperating with universities to encourage the inclusion of IHL into law faculty curriculum.

To this end cooperation with the Kyrgyz State Academy of Law and the Kyrgyz Russian Slavonic University is already well advanced, and dialogue is ongoing with the American University, the Diplomatic Academy and the National Police Academy.

The end of the 2010/11 school year will see the accomplishment of a ten-year cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the ICRC to implement a programme aimed at sensitising pupils and students on humanitarian values and principles. In November and December 2010, teachers of the 10th and 11th grades were sensitised on the use of the teaching manual «Through humanism to peace» in secondary schools of the Kyrgyz Republic.

In December 2010, ten high-ranking officers of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic participated in a two-day seminar on «Consideration of IHL norms within staff work» organized by the ICRC. This seminar was part of a long-term process of cooperation with the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces, and in particular their operational decision makers (i.e. General Staff), which aims to promote and technically assist the integration of IHL into operational documents and procedures.

The ICRC maintained a dialogue with representatives of the Police on humanitarian subjects of common interest.



Workshop with the armed forces on integration of international humanitarian law (IHL)

COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL RED CRESCENT SOCIETY OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC AND COORDINATION WITH PARTNERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society of a given country is ICRC's privileged cooperation partner. The ICRC, alongside the other components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (namely the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies of third countries), contributes to strengthening the capacity of the National Society to fulfil its own responsibilities, as a Movement component and as an auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field and in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. These responsibilities include disaster preparedness and response (both in situations of natural or manmade disasters and of violence), promotion and dissemination of humanitarian principles, restoring contact between dispersed family members, and programmes to mitigate against human suffering in such fields as health, education and social welfare.

The National Red Crescent Society of the Kyrgyz Republic (the NRCSK) and the ICRC implemented their partnership under the auspices of the 2010 Cooperation Agreement in fields such as Restoring Family Links, Law and Fundamental Principles and Emergency Preparedness and Response.

A tripartite Memorandum for Partnership and Coordination between the NRCSK, the ICRC and the International Federation was signed in May 2010. It outlines the functional Movement coordination mechanisms for the Kyrgyz Republic. These mechanisms have been implemented to varying degrees at all three levels (strategic, operational and technical) as a response to the June 2010 violence. Indeed, during the emergency and its aftermath, the ICRC and the NRCSK stepped up their humanitarian interventions and cooperated closely to provide health and relief assistance to people in need. NRCSK volunteers supported distributions of food and non-food items in Osh and Jalal-Abad oblasts. The NRCSK maintained regular contacts with various hospitals in Osh and Jalal-Abad in order to assist the ICRC in the provision of medi-

cal supplies where necessary. The NRCSK also provided psychological support to vulnerable persons after the June events.

The ICRC provided advice to the NRCSK Statutes that were adopted by the Society in March 2010. It continues to provide legal and technical support to the Draft National Society Status Law, which if adopted by Parliament will replace the 1992 Presidential

Decree (as amended in 1996).

Regular coordination takes place between Movement components with a presence in the Kyrgyz Republic (NRCSK, the Federation, ICRC, German Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross and the Turkish Red Crescent), while Movement components not present in country (including British Red Cross) provide support to the NRCSK from a distance.



Distributing assistance in Southern Kyrgyzstan in cooperation with the National Red Crescent Society of the Kyrgyz Republic (NRCSK)

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