

MOSCOW (regional)

COVERING: Belarus, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Ukraine



Opened in 1992, the Moscow delegation combines operational functions in the Russian Federation with regional functions. It supports families of missing persons and, with the Russian Red Cross Society, works to protect and assist vulnerable conflict- and violence-affected populations in the northern Caucasus. It helps build the capacities of the region's National Societies, particularly in the fields of emergency preparedness and restoring family links. In the countries covered, it promotes implementation of IHL and other norms relevant to the use of force and fosters understanding of the ICRC's mandate and work.

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

In 2013:

- ▶ vulnerable people affected by past conflicts, including elderly individuals and the families of missing persons or detainees, found relief in the form of income support and/or psychosocial assistance
- ▶ tens of thousands of people in the Republic of Moldova (hereafter Moldova), the Russian Federation and Ukraine lived in safer communities, after weapon-clearance activities conducted by their respective authorities
- ▶ in response to the prevailing circumstances, the ICRC reduced and, in some cases, suspended its operations in the northern Caucasus
- ▶ detainees in penal colonies across the Russian Federation, and far from their homes, maintained or restored contact with their relatives through ICRC-facilitated family visits and deliveries of RCMs and parcels
- ▶ Moldova signed the Arms Trade Treaty in September, which the Belarusian and Ukrainian authorities similarly considered during discussions with the ICRC
- ▶ the Ukrainian Red Cross Society administered first aid, while evacuating the seriously injured, with ICRC support, during protests in Kiev that began at year's end

EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)	
Protection	4,042
Assistance	4,563
Prevention	4,281
Cooperation with National Societies	1,307
General	-

14,192

of which: Overheads 866

IMPLEMENTATION RATE	
Expenditure/yearly budget	94%

PERSONNEL	
Mobile staff	21
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	223

YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

MEDIUM

PROTECTION	Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)	
Red Cross messages (RCMs)	
RCMs collected	17
RCMs distributed	11
Phone calls facilitated between family members	6
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	7
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)	
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	4
RCMs distributed	12

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	Beneficiaries 100	2
Essential household items	Beneficiaries 10,125	33
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries 3,455	1,788
Cash	Beneficiaries	337
Work, services and training	Beneficiaries 1,900	13
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries 2,850	6,172
WOUNDED AND SICK		
Hospitals		
Hospitals supported	Structures	4

CONTEXT

After its presidential elections in March 2012, the Russian Federation consolidated its position internally and regionally, securing military agreements with Central Asian governments and exercising influence, including through the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The Russian Federation's position on major international issues – in relation to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic, for instance – continued to carry weight. Internationally mediated peace negotiations (the “Geneva Talks”) dealing with previous conflicts in the region went on among representatives of the country and Georgia proper, Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The situations in most of the republics in the northern Caucasus improved slightly, but tensions lingered, including from territorial disputes between Chechnya and Ingushetia. Civilians reportedly continued to suffer the consequences of the political situation in certain areas, particularly Daghestan. Following a number of attacks, particularly in the months before the 2014 Sochi Olympics, State measures to improve the security situation intensified in the Russian Federation. Stricter measures against “terrorist” acts were signed into law in October.

The Ukrainian government's decision not to sign a free-trade agreement with the European Union in November led to massive protests in Kiev ongoing at year's end. The police reportedly used force to disperse crowds, which led to dozens of injuries and some deaths.

The Moldovan crisis ended with the naming of a new prime minister. No progress was made on the issue of Transnistria.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

In response to the prevailing circumstances, the ICRC reduced and, in some cases, suspended its activities in the northern Caucasus. For example, it began to gradually reduce its operations in Kabardino-Balkaria and closed its office in Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia. Dialogue with the Russian authorities on IHL and other norms applicable to the situation in the northern Caucasus was discontinued, as were emergency assistance activities and new initiatives for long-term improvement of the living conditions of the affected people. In Daghestan, most ICRC activities were put on hold, pending confirmation of support by the republican authorities and a new notification system for ICRC movements. Limited direct access to the people affected made it difficult to assess their needs.

Nevertheless, some of the most vulnerable people affected by past conflicts – particularly people who had been assessed and/or were already included in programmes before the decision was made to reduce operations – benefited from food-production and income-support projects. ICRC action focused on aiding the most vulnerable: struggling households, many with missing or detained members; victims of mines or explosive remnants of war (ERW); IDPs; and people living in areas that had not recovered from the effects of previous conflicts. Individuals and households met their basic needs and regained/maintained self-sufficiency after starting/expanding income-generating activities. Elderly people benefited from medical, legal and social support through a programme run by the Russian Red Cross Society, while the families of missing persons received psychosocial support through its accompaniment

programme. Dialogue and cooperation with the authorities and with other organizations emphasized the need to provide information on missing persons.

ICRC-provided technical training/support for medical personnel helped the authorities increase emergency response capacities in the northern Caucasus. Limited donations of medical supplies enabled thousands of violence-affected patients to be treated at four hospitals.

Following ICRC intervention, authorities in Chechnya demined one area. Authorities in the Republic of Moldova (hereafter Moldova) disposed of stockpiles of unstable ammunition, making over 20,000 people safer; Ukrainian authorities began efforts to do the same. The ICRC supported a Russian Red Cross data-collection initiative, aimed at formulating responses to the needs of mine/ERW victims in Chechnya.

In the Russian Federation, the ICRC enabled people detained far from their homes to contact their relatives by facilitating visits and RCM and parcel deliveries. It remained without access to detainees held in connection with the situation in the northern Caucasus.

The ICRC pursued dialogue on IHL promotion and implementation with all the authorities in the region, including their national IHL committees. It engaged the Belarusian, Moldovan and Ukrainian authorities in discussions on signing the Arms Trade Treaty, with Moldova doing so in September. The ICRC renewed dialogue with the Russian Ministry of Defence and began bilateral consultations with the CIS Council of Defence Ministers. Together with the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations and other Russian institutions and universities, the ICRC organized events on humanitarian issues, such as weapon contamination. Media coverage of these events raised awareness of IHL, the ICRC's work and humanitarian issues in general.

The ICRC, with Movement partners, supported the region's National Societies in strengthening their legal bases and reinforcing their organizational and operational capacities, particularly in emergency preparedness, disaster response and family-links services, including for detained migrants. The Ukrainian Red Cross Society, with financial support from the ICRC, provided emergency response services during the protests in Kiev.

CIVILIANS

In response to the situation in the northern Caucasus, the ICRC reduced or suspended emergency-relief and income-support activities for families affected by past conflicts (see *ICRC action and results*). Nevertheless, some of the most vulnerable communities and individuals, especially those who had been assessed or already included in programmes before the decision was made to scale down operations, continued to receive assistance.

Vulnerable households increase their income through sustainable livelihood projects

Households affected by previous conflicts in the northern Caucasus started or expanded income-generating and food-production activities through economic and agricultural support, which helped them to regain/maintain self-sufficiency. The beneficiaries included displaced households in Ingushetia and the families of missing persons, detainees, and mine/ERW victims, as well as families living in villages in Bamut and Betti-Mokhk in southern Chechnya where resources were insufficient.

Beneficiaries (342 households; 1,788 people) augmented their existing income from farming or set up businesses such as sewing or trading using productive inputs. For example, 27 households (95 persons) in Gilyani formed a collective and started a strawberry-planting project. Moreover, 65 households (337 persons), many of whom had also received productive inputs, used cash grants to launch or complement income-generating activities.

When families were surveyed six months after they had received such support, it was found that 94% of them had increased their incomes to 79% above the minimum amount necessary to meet their basic food needs; 90% were satisfied with the project.

In North Ossetia, after a fire destroyed their houses and belongings, 10 households (31 persons) living in the Mizur settlement found some relief through essential household items and cash for buying food and hygiene items, provided by the ICRC through the Russian Red Cross.

Communities regain access to a safe water supply

In Gilyani, 1,400 persons regained access to water after the completion of a water-supply project at two sites with the support of local partners, including the Chechen water board. In Dachu Borzoy, 2,650 persons preserved their access to water through the continued support for their water-supply system, which was completed in 2012. In Selmentauzen, some 360 persons were served by repairs to their flood-damaged water-supply system. A planned project in Bamut was cancelled owing to the constraints on the ICRC's action in the northern Caucasus, and the support for a project in North Ossetia was scaled down to a donation of material, which nonetheless benefited 1,750 people.

Families of the missing, children and elderly persons improve their well-being

Over 160 families with relatives missing in relation to past conflicts received psychosocial support through the accompaniment programme of the Russian Red Cross; some 1,200 elderly persons across the northern Caucasus improved their circumstances through medical/material/social support provided by the National Society's home-visiting nurses programme. Both National Society-run initiatives received continued backing from the ICRC.

Hundreds of children from displaced and other vulnerable families enjoyed recreational activities in four playrooms in Chechnya and four in Ingushetia, while 106 young people in North Ossetia attended creative classes at a psychological rehabilitation centre in Beslan.

Authorities were reminded of the need to provide families with information on the fate of their relatives missing in connection with past conflicts. Contacts with the authorities concerned, family associations and other organizations raised awareness of these families' plight. Russian representatives continued to work with their Georgian and South Ossetian counterparts to clarify the fate or whereabouts of persons missing in relation to the 2008 conflict, within the framework of the tripartite coordination mechanism dealing with the issue (see *Georgia*).

Migrants stay in touch with their relatives through Movement family-links services

With ICRC support, the National Societies of Belarus, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine provided family-links services to some 20,000 people. In Belarus and Ukraine, over

1,200 migrants held in temporary places of detention restored or maintained contact with their families through phone calls and RCM services provided by the Red Cross Society of Belarus and the Ukrainian Red Cross. With a view to strengthening its family-links services, the Russian Red Cross and the ICRC signed a plan of action based on recommendations made by the Australian Red Cross in a 2012 audit. The Russian Red Cross, the International Federation and the ICRC organized a regional meeting on migration to develop a complementary approach to helping vulnerable migrants.

Residents enjoy safer communities after weapon clearance

In Moldova, the authorities made 20,000 people in Floresti safer by disposing of 50 tonnes of obsolete and unstable ammunition. The government's explosive ordnance disposal team enhanced its capacities with technical support from the ICRC and employed new methods of weapon destruction with minimal environmental harm. In Ukraine, the authorities began working with the ICRC to deal with old stocks of ammunition, trapped in underground storage sites, that threatened 10,000 people living in Sevastopol.

Following ICRC intervention, Bamut and surrounding areas in Chechnya were cleared of mines/ERW by the Ministry of Defence.

Volunteers from the Chechnya branch of the Russian Red Cross continued to collect data on the needs of mine/ERW victims and to visit 573 families, some of whom also started income-generating projects (see above).

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

The ICRC remained ready to renew discussions with the Russian authorities regarding visits to people detained in connection with the situation in the northern Caucasus.

People held far from their homes, in penal colonies throughout the country, maintained contact with their relatives through family visits, RCMs and parcel deliveries, despite the ICRC's partial suspension of these activities in early 2013. Some 350 detainees were visited by their families, and hundreds of detainees received food and hygiene items from the ICRC to improve their conditions.

WOUNDED AND SICK

The authorities took steps to enhance the availability and quality of emergency medical care in the northern Caucasus. Physicians, nurses and ambulance workers bolstered their ability to treat those in need, including weapon-wounded or mine/ERW victims, through advanced training, several sessions of which were organized by a local training centre supported by the ICRC. For instance, 40 doctors from five republics in the northern Caucasus, as well as others from South Ossetia, attended emergency-room trauma courses; 2 specialists from Daghestan attended an advanced course in prosthesis technology; and 2 doctors from the Prigorodny district in North Ossetia participated in specialized courses. The North Ossetian State Medical Academy expanded its options for practical training with the receipt of a video-camera set.

Dozens of victims of violence received emergency treatment at four hospitals (two in Chechnya, and one each in Daghestan and Kabardino-Balkaria), thanks to donations of medical kits, drugs and other supplies from the ICRC.

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

Dialogue with the Russian authorities on IHL and other norms applicable to the situation in the northern Caucasus remained suspended, but other humanitarian issues, including IHL promotion and implementation in general, remained the focus of discussions with all authorities in the region. These discussions, including the high-level dialogue that took place during the ICRC president's visit to Moscow in October, also sought the authorities' support for ICRC operations in the region and beyond.

States push IHL implementation forward

Moldova signed the Arms Trade Treaty in September; the ICRC continued to pursue dialogue in this regard with Belarus and Ukraine's national IHL committees. Representatives of the three countries' national IHL committees discussed their experiences and plans for 2014 with the ICRC during a coordination meeting held by the Belarus committee.

With ICRC assistance, the Permanent Commission on Defence and Security Issues of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS formulated draft recommendations on implementing the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention and submitted them for comments to CIS parliaments.

In the Russian Federation, an ICRC-supported informal working group prepared draft amendments to help align the criminal code with internationally recognized standards. Russian and Ukrainian representatives contributed their views on conflict-related topics, such as detention during non-international armed conflict, at an international conference (see *Brussels*).

States take steps to address weapon contamination

Governments in the region endeavoured to address weapon contamination and mine risks in their countries (see *Civilians*). At an international conference organized by the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations and the ICRC, representatives from Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine and other countries learnt more about the constraints faced by humanitarian demining organizations when working internationally.

Armed forces enhance their knowledge of IHL

After more than three years at a standstill, dialogue between the Russian Ministry of Defence and the ICRC resumed. The Russian Ground Forces High Command invited the organization to participate in future activities; its training and research centre also approved the publication of an IHL handbook. The ICRC provided support for a competition for military psychologists aimed at familiarizing participants with issues of IHL implementation and preventing IHL violations through psychological support for those taking part in military operations.

The CIS Council of Defence Ministers began bilateral consultations with the ICRC, enabling discussion of possible areas of cooperation. The ICRC attended a meeting of the council for the first time; the participants discussed multilateral military cooperation. Representatives of the Russian Ministry of Defence and the CSTO attended an expert workshop in Sydney, Australia (see *Suva*), on protecting patients and medical staff/facilities during military operations, held as part of the Health Care in Danger project. At a CSTO international conference in November, the ICRC spoke on peacekeeping and IHL applicability.

Through an IHL instructors' course, 24 Russian military academics enhanced their teaching skills on legal frameworks applicable to security operations and armed conflicts. With ICRC support, 17 high-ranking officials and representatives of seven CIS countries and the CSTO attended an international course in IHL. Three senior military officers from Belarus and the CSTO participated in the Senior Workshop on International Rules Governing Military Operations (see *International law and cooperation*).

The Belarusian Ministry of Defence and the ICRC jointly organized seminars on incorporating IHL in operational planning and on issues covered by the Health Care in Danger project, including the Safer Access Framework. They also organized a regional round-table at which representatives of the Belarusian, Moldovan, Russian and Ukrainian Defence Ministries and the CSTO discussed the challenges of incorporating IHL provisions in military practice.

Academics discuss humanitarian issues

Academic and other institutions, working with the ICRC, helped increase awareness of humanitarian concerns. For instance, the Russian Association of International Law and the St. Petersburg State University co-organized the Martens Readings International Conference, which brought together over 100 IHL experts. Issues such as victims' legal protection and access to health care during conflict were discussed. Russian, Belarusian and Moldovan students tested their grasp of IHL at the regional Martens moot-court and the Jean-Pictet competitions (see *Bangkok*).

Over 80 researchers spoke on humanitarian issues at international round-tables co-organized with the Franco-Russian Centre for Social and Human Sciences, the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and the Russian State University for the Humanities. At a round-table organized by the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Russian Association of International Law, participants discussed the challenges of applying IHL to cyber warfare.

Russian media, in some cases using ICRC sources and/or covering the aforementioned events, drew attention to humanitarian issues, including in connection with the northern Caucasus. In particular, the plight of missing persons and mine/ERW victims, the needs of vulnerable groups affected by previous conflicts, and pressing humanitarian concerns elsewhere in the world received attention. Contacts with the media and other civil society actors included a round-table at which Russian youth journalists learnt about the ICRC and an international conference in Geneva, Switzerland, on contemporary conflict reporting, which was attended by Moldovan and Russian representatives.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The region's National Societies, with help from the International Federation/ICRC, continued to strengthen the legal bases for their activities and reinforce their operational capacities. The Russian Red Cross prepared a revised draft of the law on the National Society and the emblem, high-level authorities confirmed their support for such efforts.

With ICRC assistance, National Society staff in the northern Caucasus enhanced their fundraising skills through training conducted by the Danish Red Cross. Staff in Ingushetia and North Ossetia trained in providing community-based psychosocial

support. Following the signing of an agreement with the Ministry of Emergency Situations, several National Society branches in the northern Caucasus acted as government auxiliaries during emergencies. Staff trained in emergency preparedness and disaster response, in line with the Safer Access Framework, and worked on building communities' first-aid capacities.

The Ukrainian Red Cross administered first aid and evacuated the seriously wounded, with ICRC support, during protests in Kiev that began in November.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total		
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Red Cross messages (RCMs)			UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected		17		
RCMs distributed		11		
Phone calls facilitated between family members		6		
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons			Women	Minors
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		32	2	7
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		7		
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		2,445	91	94
Documents				
People to whom travel documents were issued		34		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
Restoring family links				
RCMs collected		4		
RCMs distributed		12		
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		348		
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		5		

* 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		Beneficiaries	2	
Essential household items		Beneficiaries	33	5% 4%
Productive inputs		Beneficiaries	1,788	33% 41%
		<i>of whom IDPs</i>	1,073	
Cash		Beneficiaries	337	40% 40%
		<i>of whom IDPs</i>	134	
Work, services and training		Beneficiaries	13	15% 77%
		<i>of whom IDPs</i>	5	
Water and habitat activities		Beneficiaries	6,172	40% 20%
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection programme)				
Food commodities		Beneficiaries	459	
Essential household items		Beneficiaries	260	
WOUNDED AND SICK				
Hospitals				
Hospitals supported		Structures	4	
		<i>of which provided data</i>	4	
Admissions		Patients	3,835	1,819 1,239
		<i>of whom weapon-wounded</i>	182	20
		<i>(including by mines or explosive remnants of war)</i>	122	
		<i>of whom other surgical cases</i>	962	
		<i>of whom medical cases</i>	1,603	
		<i>of whom gynaecological/obstetric cases</i>	1,088	
Operations performed			1,074	