

TASHKENT (regional)

COVERING: Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan



Opened in 1992, the delegation in Central Asia combines operational functions in Tajikistan with regional functions. With the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan, it works to protect and assist vulnerable populations affected by past conflicts and current violence. It helps build the capacities of the region's National Societies, particularly in the fields of emergency preparedness and restoring family links. In all 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.

YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

MEDIUM

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

In 2013:

- ▶ visits to detainees in Uzbekistan were terminated owing to the ICRC's inability to work according to its standard procedures and the lack of constructive dialogue with the authorities
- ▶ medical professionals from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan enhanced their emergency response skills by participating in emergency room trauma courses, conducted by National Society/ICRC teams for the first time in those countries
- ▶ families of victims of mines/explosive remnants of war and of people killed during past violence in Tajikistan began to recover through ICRC grants enabling them to engage in income-generating activities
- ▶ Tajikistan's National Legislative Centre finalized a compatibility study between domestic law and internationally recognized norms on missing persons and their families, with a view to addressing the latter's needs
- ▶ the Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan consolidated its legal base after a related law adopted by the Turkmenistan parliament entered into force

EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)

Protection	1,758
Assistance	812
Prevention	3,586
Cooperation with National Societies	1,792
General	-

7,948

of which: Overheads **485**

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	99%
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PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	17
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	98

PROTECTION	Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)	
Red Cross messages (RCMs)	
RCMs collected	4
RCMs distributed	1
Phone calls facilitated between family members	12
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)	
Restoring family links	
RCMs distributed	3

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	639
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	143
Cash	Beneficiaries	1,800
		1,484
Health		
Health centres supported	Structures	8
		9
WOUNDED AND SICK		
Hospitals		
Hospitals supported	Structures	4
		12
Water and habitat		
Water and habitat activities	Number of beds	400

CONTEXT

Central Asia continued to be of vital geopolitical interest, not least because of the impending withdrawal of international military forces from Afghanistan in 2014. The risks associated with this included the possibility of a spillover from the Afghan conflict and of an influx of refugees.

Moreover, the countries covered faced border demarcation issues, competition for natural resources and interethnic discord, in addition to economic problems, social unrest and organized crime, which remained sources of tension and triggers for violence. Regional flashpoints included border areas, particularly around enclaves and the Ferghana Valley.

High levels of unemployment and poverty, especially in Tajikistan, continued to cause large-scale migration, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation being the main destinations. Living conditions were often difficult both for the migrants and their families back home; some of them struggled to maintain family contact.

Russian-led frameworks such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Customs Union remained influential forces in the region.

Presidential elections were held in Tajikistan in November. Kazakhstan continued to pursue an influential role in regional and global affairs.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC focused on helping strengthen the region's emergency preparedness and response and, in Tajikistan, on addressing the humanitarian consequences of past violence. It continued to encourage IHL promotion and integration in all the countries covered.

Having suspended its visits to places of detention in Uzbekistan in October 2012, the ICRC decided to formally terminate its detention activities in the country in April. Inability to work according to its standard procedures and lack of constructive dialogue with the authorities were insuperable constraints: they prevented the ICRC from providing the authorities with substantial, objective and comprehensive analyses of the treatment and living conditions of detainees, and thus from addressing humanitarian issues faced by the detainees and having a meaningful impact on their situation. The ICRC communicated its decision to the authorities and the public; however, it remained committed to helping detainees stay in touch with their families through financial assistance for family visits.

In Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, the ICRC continued its dialogue with the authorities, with a view to receiving authorization to visit detainees in accordance with its standard procedures.

In Tajikistan, families of people killed during violence in the Rasht Valley in 2010 and in Khorog in 2012, and victims of mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW) and their families, started income-generating projects with support from the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan and the ICRC. Assessments of these families' needs continued, with a view to providing them with suitable assistance. People living in weapon-contaminated areas learnt about risk-reduction measures, including safe practices, during National Society/ICRC-facilitated educational activities.

In view of addressing the needs of families of missing persons, the Tajik authorities finalized a compatibility study on domestic legislation and internationally recognized standards governing the rights of these families and the missing. The Tajikistan Red Crescent and the ICRC prepared a comprehensive assessment of the families' needs, conducting preliminary interviews with the families and preparatory training for National Society volunteers.

Strengthening regional capacities to respond to and prepare for emergencies remained a priority. The Kazakh Red Crescent Society, the Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan and the ICRC helped medical professionals and ministry representatives in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan bolster their capacities to treat wounded people through emergency room trauma courses held by the ICRC for the first time in those countries. In Tajikistan, health facilities in emergency-prone areas improved their services following provision by the ICRC of equipment and supplies, as well as training for medical staff, particularly in treating the weapon-wounded. The region's armed/security forces and National Societies also received training in emergency preparedness and first aid. The National Societies learnt more about the Safer Access Framework and replenished emergency stocks at selected branches.

Dialogue with the authorities aimed to encourage ratification and implementation of IHL treaties and adoption of legislation strengthening the legal bases of the National Societies. The Uzbek government concluded a study that compared its existing legislation with the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, with a view to improving domestic implementation of the latter; in Turkmenistan, a law consolidating the legal status of the Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan entered into force.

Dissemination sessions supported the efforts of the region's Defence Ministries to incorporate IHL in military doctrine, training and operations. In Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, law enforcement officers, including police instructors, enhanced their knowledge of applicable international norms through seminars and pertinent publications.

Academics in the region helped advance discussion of IHL through workshops and research initiatives, such as a forthcoming publication with regional IHL experts. Cooperation with the region's National Societies helped draw attention to humanitarian issues and raise awareness of the Movement's work among decision-makers and the general public.

CIVILIANS

Families affected by past violence/weapon contamination in Tajikistan begin economic recovery

Vulnerable families in Tajikistan improved their circumstances after improving/restoring their livelihoods through ICRC grants or other types of support. In particular, 80 families (645 individuals) of people killed during the violence in the Rasht Valley (2010) and Khorog (2012) and 93 families (758 individuals) of mine/ERW victims in Dushanbe, Khatlon, Rasht and Soghd provinces, and in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (hereafter GBAO), launched income-generating projects using ICRC grants. Three other families affected by the violence in 2010 and 2012 repaired their homes with ICRC support, as did three families of mine/ERW victims. The family of one victim gained access to government benefits after obtaining passports following National Society/ICRC referrals to State services.

Three especially vulnerable people who needed further medical treatment for injuries suffered during the violence in Khorog had their transport and medical expenses covered by the ICRC; one mine victim's injuries were treated through ICRC-funded surgery.

Such support was given on the basis of needs assessments. The assessments on those affected by past violence covered families in a list provided by the authorities. The needs of mine/ERW victims and their families were assessed by ICRC-trained staff using context-specific interviews and questionnaires. However, to ensure the quality of data collected in the latter set of assessments and the timely delivery of assistance, fewer families than originally planned were assessed.

Weapon-affected communities reduced their exposure to risk through National Society/ICRC information sessions and activities, such as events organized for World Mine Action Day, advocating safe practices. Partly owing to such efforts, no mine/ERW-related deaths were reported in 2013.

Families of missing persons stand to benefit from a review of pertinent legislation and assessment of their needs

Thousands of families in Tajikistan still lived with the anguish of not knowing the fate of relatives who went missing during the country's 1992–97 non-international armed conflict, the 1979–89 Soviet-Afghan armed conflict and the Second World War.

To address the complex needs of these families, the Tajik authorities took steps to improve legislation in this regard. Cooperation between the National Legislative Centre and the ICRC resulted in the completion of a study comparing Tajikistan's existing laws with internationally recognized standards on the rights of missing persons and their families; the findings and recommendations of this study were discussed at a series of meetings set to continue in 2014. At year's end, the National Society/ICRC, in coordination with the authorities, got ready to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the families' needs, with a view to developing a suitable response. Preliminary interviews with selected families took place, and some 15 National Society volunteers were trained by the ICRC in assessment methods.

Families of people detained in Afghanistan and of migrant workers in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan contacted their relatives through Movement family-links services. Migrants held at a retention centre in Kazakhstan obtained legal assistance through Kazakhstan Red Crescent support.

Planned initiatives to improve human remains management in Tajikistan were cancelled, owing to the more pressing needs of health facilities in the region.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Visits to places of detention in Uzbekistan terminated

The ICRC decided to formally terminate its visits to detainees in Uzbekistan after having suspended them in October 2012. It informed the authorities, as well as the public, of its decision in April, but maintained contact with them regarding its concerns. The decision was taken because the ICRC was unable to work according to its standard procedures in places of detention in Uzbekistan, which prevented it from providing the authorities with substantial, objective and comprehensive analyses of the treatment and living conditions of detainees. Together with the lack of constructive dialogue with the authorities, this prevented the ICRC from addressing humanitarian issues faced by the detainees and having a meaningful impact on their situation.

Dialogue on ICRC visits to detainees in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan continues

Securing permission to visit people deprived of their freedom, in accordance with its standard procedures, remained on the ICRC's agenda in its discussions with authorities in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Following their tour of Azerbaijan in 2012 to observe best practices in prison TB management, the Turkmen authorities received a proposed ICRC action plan, which included consultations and round-tables/seminars with key stakeholders to familiarize them with the organization's activities for detainees, its standard working procedures and the humanitarian objectives of its visits.

Follow-up on the cases of 206 detainees previously registered by the ICRC in Tajikistan was found to be unnecessary and thus not pursued.

CIVILIANS	TAJIKISTAN	UZBEKISTAN
Red Cross messages (RCMs)		
RCMs collected	4	
RCMs distributed	1	
Phone calls facilitated between family members	12	
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons		
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		2
		<i>of whom women</i> 1

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	TAJIKISTAN	UZBEKISTAN
Restoring family links		
RCMs distributed	3	
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support	56	61

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	TAJIKISTAN	UZBEKISTAN
Economic security, water and habitat¹		
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	59
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	60
Cash	Beneficiaries	119

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

Detainees maintain contact with their families

As a result of the termination of ICRC visits, detainees in Uzbekistan could not exchange RCMs with relatives; 96 RCMs were therefore returned to their senders. However, detainees remained in touch with relatives through family visits. With financial support from the ICRC, 61 detainees received visits; of these, 36 adults and 3 minors met their families at least twice. Through the visits, the detainees received hygiene items and food for themselves and their families; one detainee received a wheelchair. With ICRC support, one Ukrainian former detainee returned to Ukraine after being released by Uzbek authorities.

In Tajikistan, through financial support from the ICRC, 56 detainees, including minors, female detainees and detainees formerly held at the US internment facility at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba, received visits (including repeat visits within the year for 37 of them) and food parcels from family members. A review of the programme's pilot implementation phase in 2012 and the subsequent refinement of criteria for selecting beneficiaries enabled the most vulnerable detainees and their families to be reached.

WOUNDED AND SICK

Medical personnel enhance emergency room trauma management capacities

People wounded in emergencies stood to receive lifesaving care through the enhanced first-aid skills of armed/security forces personnel in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (see *Authorities, armed forces and other bearers of weapons, and civil society*) and National Society volunteers (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*).

Those needing advanced care also benefited from improved treatment standards, as more than 75 medical professionals, including military doctors, and ministry representatives from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan had, at emergency room trauma courses, built up their capacities to treat the injured. The courses, organized by the ICRC in cooperation with the respective Health Ministry and National Society, were held in those countries for the first time. The course in Kazakhstan prompted stakeholders to request that the course be extended to other regions of the country and led to discussions about further cooperation. An attendee from the Tajikistan Health Ministry considered organizing similar courses in Tajikistan. Course participants also learnt about the Health Care in Danger project and the ICRC's mandate and activities.

At an ICRC seminar, 31 surgeons from hospitals in emergency-prone or weapon-contaminated areas of Tajikistan enhanced their skills in treating weapon-wounded people. Various ministry representatives also attended the seminar.

Health facilities in Tajikistan boost emergency preparedness with donated supplies and equipment

Thanks to regular ICRC donations, Tajik hospitals helped ensure that people wounded in emergencies received adequate treatment and care: 5 hospitals in GBAO and 7 in Dushanbe and the Rasht Valley acquired medical equipment and/or consumables. The Health Ministry's airborne medical service and one other Dushanbe hospital received ad hoc donations of supplies and equipment.

Residents of five districts in the Rasht Valley accessed basic care at nine health centres that received ICRC donations of medicines, consumables and equipment; the ICRC also trained the staff in the use of the equipment. Donation of haemoglobin meters, for

instance, meant that patients no longer had to be sent to health centres far from their villages for simple blood tests.

Three health centres and one hospital in the Rasht Valley and two hospitals in GBAO provided better services to patients following ICRC-supported repair/construction work on their roofing and on electricity, water and sanitation systems.

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

Authorities take steps to integrate IHL into national legislation

The Kazakh national IHL committee and the ICRC discussed the latter's recommendations on incorporating, in the draft of the new criminal code, measures to prosecute perpetrators of acts considered crimes under international law. Kazakh authorities discussed cooperation with the ICRC on humanitarian issues connected to the use of nuclear, radiological, biological and chemical weapons.

The Foreign Affairs Ministry of Uzbekistan completed a study comparing domestic legislation with the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. Various State bodies reviewed the study's conclusions and recommendations. The authorities also drew on ICRC input on the process of forming a national IHL committee.

Tajik and Uzbek government representatives and the national IHL committee of Turkmenistan shared their experiences in implementing IHL at a round-table in Turkmenistan.

Armed/security forces learn more about IHL and the ICRC

Members of the region's armed forces and law enforcement authorities learnt more about IHL/other international norms and the Movement's work at information sessions and events, some organized with the National Societies (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*). Tajik Defence Ministry officers discussed standards applicable to military personnel with law enforcement responsibilities and formalized their cooperation with the ICRC (see below). Some 30 cadets of the Kazakh Defence Ministry tackled similar topics at a Kazakhstan Red Crescent/ICRC presentation. Senior military officers from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and other CSTO member States learnt more at an ICRC session held within a CSTO regional exercise in Tajikistan. Military officers from all four countries furthered their understanding of IHL at an advanced course in San Remo.

Representatives from Tajikistan's Internal Affairs Ministry, police stations, places of temporary detention and, for the first time since 2005, the State Committee for National Security (GKNB), enhanced their knowledge of internationally recognized law enforcement standards at ICRC seminars. Officers of Uzbekistan's Internal Affairs Ministry were given 1,500 copies of ICRC publications on that and other subjects.

The region's armed/security forces took steps to learn more about incorporating IHL and other relevant standards in their training and operations; for instance, Tajikistan's Defence Ministry and the ICRC signed a one-year cooperation agreement in this regard, and Tajikistan police instructors, with ICRC support, improved their teaching of international human rights law. Ten representatives/military lawyers from the Kazakh, Tajik and Turkmen Defence Ministries enhanced their knowledge of IHL at an ICRC seminar in Kazakhstan.

Military/police personnel learn to provide lifesaving first aid

Some 470 officials from Tajikistan's Defence and Internal Affairs Ministries and the GKNB, and 100 from the Uzbek Internal Affairs Ministry, bolstered their ability to administer first aid with kits and training sessions from the National Society/ICRC, often coupled with IHL briefings (see above); another 30 officials from the Uzbek Internal Affairs Ministry attended emergency preparedness training.

IHL specialists stimulate discussion of humanitarian issues

Over 30 Kazakh government representatives and academics developed recommendations for the authorities on humanitarian action and on addressing IHL concerns at a workshop organized with the Eurasian National University. Five IHL experts from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan participated in the Martens Readings International Conference (see *Moscow*); two representatives from Tajikistan contributed to a meeting of the "Strengthening IHL" process in Malaysia (see *Kuala Lumpur*).

Throughout the region, members of civil society, professors, students, and local authorities, including aspiring civil servants in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, debated IHL-related matters, such as weapon use and new technologies, and other humanitarian issues during ICRC briefings and through joint initiatives. Turkmenistan's Academy of State Service and the ICRC committed to joint research in IHL.

Some 20 experts from Central Asian countries, and from Armenia, Estonia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, worked on a monograph on IHL issues, set for publication in 2014.

Various events and the media made the public more aware of the Movement's work. In Uzbekistan, journalists attended a National Society/ICRC seminar where they saw a practical exercise carried out by a National Society disaster response team.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Law on the Turkmenistan Red Crescent enters into force

Following its adoption by Turkmenistan's parliament, a law consolidating the legal status of the Turkmenistan Red Crescent entered into force. The National Societies of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, with International Federation/ICRC support, continued to strengthen their legal bases, by organizing working groups with local lawyers to finalize draft laws and, in Uzbekistan, obtaining pledges from parliamentarians to support the adoption of a law recognizing the status of the National Society.

The region's National Societies promoted IHL and humanitarian issues and helped foster understanding of the Movement's work, through conferences and other activities, among key decision-makers, weapon bearers and the general public. At a round-table in Tajikistan, National Society staff/volunteers furthered the local authorities' understanding of the use of the emblem; and National Society staff enhanced their approach to communicating with weapon bearers by discussing these concerns at a regional seminar.

National Societies reinforce their emergency response capacities

The National Societies worked with the ICRC to assist vulnerable people: migrants, detainees and mine/ERW-affected communities (see *Civilians*). The National Societies of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan strengthened their emergency preparedness and

response capacities, particularly in restoring family links and applying the Safer Access Framework; to this end, they conducted joint evaluations of their programmes and implemented recommendations, replenished emergency stocks at selected branches, expanded contacts among local authorities and trained staff/volunteers, including in coordination with their Central Asian peers. Over 40 National Society representatives from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as from Kyrgyzstan, tested/improved their responses to emergencies during a joint simulation exercise in Tajikistan. In Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the National Societies supported the first ICRC emergency room trauma courses held in their countries (see *Wounded and sick*). A Tajikistan Red Crescent representative learnt more about human remains management in emergencies at a workshop in Switzerland.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total		
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Red Cross messages (RCMs)				
			UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected		4		
RCMs distributed		1		
Phone calls facilitated between family members		12		
UAMs/SCs*, including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers				
			Girls	Demobilized children
UAM/SC cases still being handled by the ICRC/National Society at the end of the reporting period		2	1	
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)¹				
Restoring family links				
RCMs distributed		3		
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		117		

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

1. Tajikistan, Uzbekistan

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)¹				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	639	40%	37%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	500		
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	143	39%	28%
Cash	Beneficiaries	1,484	29%	44%
Health				
Health centres supported	Structures	9		
Average catchment population		80,437		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)^{2,3}				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection programme)				
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	59		
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	60		
Cash	Beneficiaries	119		
WOUNDED AND SICK¹				
Hospitals				
Hospitals supported	Structures	12		
Water and habitat				
Water and habitat activities	Number of beds	400		

1. Tajikistan

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

3. Tajikistan, Uzbekistan