



ICRC BAKU AND BARDA OFFICES IN AZERBAIJAN 2020

Operational continuity, response to escalation and COVID-19

Throughout 2020, the ICRC offices in Baku and Barda continued to deliver an effective humanitarian response to people affected by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

During the year, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic from March onwards, as well as the 44-day escalation of hostilities from 27 September to 10 November 2020 meant the ICRC had to adapt, update and expand planned operations significantly.

The ICRC has a close ongoing dialogue with government authorities, and was able to offer support where and when relevant, in particular related to the escalation of hostilities and resulting humanitarian consequences.

Strong cooperation is in place with the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society (AzRCS) to assess the needs, extend relevant support and strengthen capacity, in coordination with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

While ensuring business and operational continuity as much as possible, the ICRC is now continuing to enhance its capacity and programs to address the needs and challenges emerging from the significant developments of 2020.



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Response to the escalation



Neutral Intermediary in Humanitarian Transfers

- Over 80 search and retrieval operations for human remains were carried out in the areas affected by the recent fighting in the presence of the ICRC as a neutral intermediary.



Economic Security

- 11,002 households (49,514 individuals) received cash assistance.



Detention

- Detainees held in relation to the conflict were visited with the aim to facilitate exchange of family news between detainees and their families, deliver basic assistance, and monitor conditions of detention and treatment.



Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

- Over 950 adults received basic psychological support and over 1060 children received coloring books, pens and other stationery materials in 30 temporary shelters in areas affected by the fighting.
- 124 family members were involved in psychological support sessions to families during 40 home visits carried out in Barda, Terter and Agdam districts.
- 10,000 Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) leaflets on psychoeducation and how to better cope with the mental health impact of the conflict were printed and are currently being distributed.
- 6 mental health and psychosocial workers were trained on how to provide basic psychological support to adults and children in emergencies.
- 2 animated videos with key mental health messages on how to cope after experiencing a traumatic event were developed and broadcasted online.



Water and Habitat

- 1,150 persons benefited from the distribution of 24 tons of fire wool, 100 sets of fire stoves, 600 mattresses and 14 electrical ovens, and the installation of 14 washing points, 8 shower blocks, 11 latrines and pipelines, and electrical cables.
- Up to 2,000 people benefitted from repaired electrical networks. 47.3 km of aluminum cables were donated to the electrical departments in two districts.
- Up to 6,000 people benefitted from repaired boreholes for irrigation and drinking water. 32 submersible pumps, 18 control panels, 1900 meters of cables, 220 relays, 130 contactor switches were donated to relevant state bodies in 4 districts.



Cooperation with the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society

- 2 offices of the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society (AzRCS) district branches operating in conflict-affected districts were renovated and equipped with IT and furniture items.
- 11 vehicles were donated to the AzRCS HQ and district branches to ensure operational continuity and efficiency in reaching communities affected by the conflict.
- 20,000 hand sanitizers and masks were delivered to the AzRCS district branches to assist communities affected by conflict and ensure safety of staff and volunteers.
- 10 AzRCS district branches operating in conflict affected regions received emergency toolkits to be better prepared for emergencies.



Dead Body Management

- 28 military servicemen in the field received training on best practices on collection of information and recovery of human remains from ICRC experts.
- Body bags and protective equipment were distributed to relevant authorities involved in search and retrieval operations of fallen servicemen.



Weapon Contamination

- 34 villages were assessed for weapon contamination following the recent upsurge of hostilities in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.
- 867 people in frontline communities took part in sessions on risk awareness and safer behavior in case of shooting, shelling, mines or explosives remnants of war.



Health

- 15 war wounded kits were donated to the country's health system providing treatment for 750 severely wounded.
- 44 sets of emergency dressing consumables were donated to the Azerbaijani ambulance service.
- 4 wheelchairs and 30 First Aid kits were donated to beneficiaries in the communities exposed to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.



Restoring Family Links

- Tracing requests in relation to the conflict were collected based on information received from families of the persons unaccounted for.

Response to COVID-19



Economic Security

- 287 households (1,292 individuals) received hygiene kits. 32 households in one community received hygiene parcels.
- 407 vulnerable households received cash assistance to help cope with economic hardship exacerbated by COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4 farmers in one community benefitted from the establishment of market links to sell their products.



Water and Habitat

- 6,500 people benefitted from disinfection works in public buildings with materials and equipment donated by the ICRC to the sanitary epidemiological units of 8 districts.
- 750 people benefitted from repairing of water tanks in one community.



Detention

- In addition to monthly phone card distribution, 200 more cards were donated for vulnerable foreign detainees as part of a response to COVID-19 restrictions for family visits and parcels sent from abroad.
- A total of 116'265 various PPE and COVID-19 diagnostic equipment items were donated to the Main Medical Department under the Ministry of Justice for the benefit of all categories of detainees.
- 600 posters about COVID-19 and 600 leaflets on the coping mechanisms in times of COVID-19 were donated to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Penitentiary Service and the places of detention under the Ministry of Justice.
- 500 parcels with hygiene items were donated to internal detainees held in places of detention under the Ministry of Justice.



Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

- 5 videos sharing emotional regulation exercises and key psychosocial messages on how to better cope with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic were produced and broadcasted online.
- 1,588 psychosocial support sessions were performed remotely by 30 community workers/accompaniers to the most vulnerable families of missing persons from the 1990s (784 families).



Health

- 89 AzRCS volunteers received light PPE to support their operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 15 volunteers received online sessions on COVID-19 protection.
- The ambulance service received 5 video tutorials on using PPE for health professionals produced by the ICRC.

Operational continuity



Economic Security

- 10 households received 4,000 kg of mulberry leaves from plantations in Alikhanli, Fuzuli.
- 50 households in Shikheybat, Tovuz received 10 tons of fertilizers, 3 moto-cultivators, 480 liters of diesel, 36 liters of oil.
- 20 households from Goyamli, Gedabey received 4 tons of potato seeds, 4 tons of fertilizers, 1 moto-cultivator, 200 liters of diesel and 12 liters of oil. 19 households received training on potato cropping.
- 17 households from Munjuglu, Tovuz received 3.4 tons of potato. Among them 4 households received 2 tons of bio humus to test its efficiency on potato productivity.
- 1 hydroponic grow container for green fodder production was installed for 28 households of Bala Jafarli, Gazakh and 2 individuals were trained on its operation.
- 54 persons benefitted from Cash for Work activities linked to different agricultural projects.
- 15 households in Yukhari Aghjakend, Goranboy benefitted from a community project on artificial insemination of livestock.
- The beekeeping hotline offered services for 63 beekeepers of Mazam, Gushchu Ayrim and Shinikh villages of Gazakh and Gedebey.
- Beekeepers from Shinikh, Gedebey village received 2 honey separators.
- 14 cattle breeders from Yukhari Aghjakend, Goranboy received 1,170 alfalfa bales plus packs of vitamins as winter fodder support.



Water and Habitat

- 200 people benefitted from improved water access thanks to the replacement of earth canal with a pipeline in Tezekend, Aghdam.
- 122 people benefitted from the installation of water supply networks from natural springs to houses in Goyamli, Gedabey.



Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

- 39 mental health professionals and community actors were trained to provide basic or advanced psychological support to children who suffered psychological trauma.



Detention

- More than 20 places of detention were visited to monitor conditions of detention, treatment and judicial guarantees.
- Monthly phone cards were donated to foreign detainees in various places of detention in order to call their families in their respective home countries and 176 assistance parcels were delivered to the most vulnerable detainees.



Health

- 35 volunteers of AzRCS benefited from 6 basic First Aid (FA) and 7 Training of Trainers online session. 11 volunteers received face-to-face FA refresher session. 5 cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) manikins and 12 FA kits were donated to 4 AzRCS branches.
- 19 children from vulnerable families received health advisory support.



International Humanitarian Law

- Over 200 legal professionals received training on international humanitarian law by ICRC experts.
- 355 students benefitted from extra-curricular activities on international humanitarian law, organised by the ICRC.



Weapon Contamination

- 1 animated video with key messages on how to protect oneself from weapon contamination (mines, ERW, shooting, shelling) was disseminated on digital platforms.
- Two whatsapp groups were created for 40 persons living in frontline villages in order to transmit safety messages on weapon contamination.



Restoring Family Links

- 95 Red Cross Messages have been exchanged between persons stranded abroad and their relatives in Azerbaijan.



ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross
Baku Delegation
75 Fatalikhan Khoyski av.
AZ1110 Baku, Azerbaijan
T +99412 465 63 35/34 F +99412 465 65 19
E-mail: baku@icrc.org

www.facebook.com/ICRCBaku
www.icrc.org

International Committee of the Red Cross
Barda Sub Delegation
21 Bahadur Hajiyev str.
AZ0900 Barda, Azerbaijan
T: +9942020 5 26 03 / 5 29 28
E-mail: barda@icrc.org