

## ARMENIA

## OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

JANUARY-DECEMBER 2022



The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence. 2022 has marked 30 years of the ICRC presence in the region in connection with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Since 1992, the ICRC has been carrying humanitarian work to assist people affected by the conflict, promoting the dissemination and implementation of the international humanitarian law (IHL) and acting as a neutral intermediary between the sides.

Through our delegation in Yerevan and sub-delegations in Goris and Ijevan we continued to support those affected by the conflict escalations in autumn 2020, 2021 and September 2022. Through our efforts and due to presence across the region, in our role of a neutral intermediary we addressed the pressing humanitarian needs occurred in relation to the situation along the Lachin corridor since December 2022. We continued facilitating resilience-building programs in communities situated along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. We cooperated closely and worked in complementarity with the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) supporting its activities as well as joined efforts in response to the needs of civilians affected by the escalations.

We continued working with the families of people unaccounted for following the escalations of hostilities, logged hundreds of tracing requests and assessed the needs of a number of families whose loved ones went missing during the escalation in autumn 2020. In addition, we provided technical and material support to relevant authorities in Armenia, including forensic expertise, to facilitate the issue of dignified management of human remains and clarification of fate of people missing in connection with conflict or other emergencies.

Across the region, the ICRC kept visiting those detained in connection with the conflict escalations in 2020 and 2021, whose detention had been confirmed by the respective authorities. During the visits, we assessed treatment of the detainees and conditions of their detention as well as facilitated the exchange of news with their families. With the consent of the authorities, the family contact was maintained by means of Red Cross messages, phone calls, oral greetings and pre-recorded video messages. This is always an important emotional lifeline for the detainees and their loved ones, and often the proof for families that their detained relatives are alive.

## Missing, Detained and the Dead

**More than 6,000 calls** and individual **visits** were received from families of the missing at the ICRC delegation in Yerevan.

**62 families** requested ICRC support to clarify the fate of their missing relatives by opening tracing requests with the ICRC.

**63 families** learned about the fate of their relatives. In total, **309 persons** from Armenia were registered as missing in relation to the escalations in 2020 - 2022.

**80 families** of the missing related to the 2020 escalation were visited as part of the needs assessment.

**6 sessions** with families of the missing related to the 2020 escalation were organized as part of the Accompaniment project which was piloted in Armavir region.

**18 information sessions** about the ICRC work and relevant developments in the region were attended by families of **141 missing persons** from the conflict in the 90s. In Armenia, **407 persons** are still reported missing from the conflict in the 90s by their families.

More than **1,550 oral, video and written Red Cross messages** were shared with the families of those detained in relation to the conflict escalations. The ICRC visited the detained individuals on a regular basis and helped them restore or maintain contacts with their relatives.

**19 DNA extraction kits**, one DNA quantification kit and **three** amplification kits for the DNA analysis of post-mortem and biological reference samples were provided to the Scientific Practical Center of Forensic Medicine (SPCFM).

**The DNA Lab in Yerevan** received **two** testing specialized tools - cryogenic mill instrument and A11 Basic Analytical Mill for processing of bone samples.

The SPCFM received **consumables** (scalpels, blades, body bags, aprons), **materials** (three medical shelves, four autopsy tables, 10 filing cabinets), and **equipment** (8 autopsy kits, 300 Buccal

Biological Sample Collector kits) for dignified and professional management of the dead as well as **1,000 personal protective items** for COVID-19 response in relation to the process of the management of the dead.

**1 cold chamber** and **one hydraulic trolley** was donated and installed in Yeghegnadzor morgue.

**1 refurbished Kamaz truck** for the refrigerated transportation of 12 human remains was donated to the Service of Emergency Situations.

**2 advisory visits** to the SPCFM's DNA laboratory were paid by ICRC's genetics specialists aiming to support the process of DNA testing and kinship matching through expert advice and delivery of training sessions on interpretation of DNA analysis results.

**5 SPCFM staff members** participated in the online 2nd DNA Forensic Symposium organized by DNAforAfrica and ICRC.

**2 SPCFM DNA Laboratory Genetic Experts** staff participated in the 1<sup>st</sup> ICRC International Symposium on DNA Supported Missing Person and Disaster Victim Identification in Tbilisi, Georgia.

**5 genetics experts of SPCFM's DNA Laboratory** attended an online training in Quantstudio5 Realtime PCR quantification delivered by a senior field application specialist.

**Roundtable for decision makers** was organized on Strengthening of the Investigative Medico-legal System in Armenia with an emphasis on the Management and Identification of Dead Bodies, and the Search for Missing Persons.

**Study tour** of high-level state officials was organized to Cyprus exposing them to a bicomunal humanitarian mechanism for the clarification of fate and whereabouts of missing persons.



## Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

**405 people** from various communities of Tavush, Gegharkunik and Syunik regions attended information sessions on mental health and psychosocial support conducted by the ARCS volunteers and counselors in cooperation with the ICRC.

**621 people** living in border communities received psychological support/psychoeducation, in group or individual settings provided by trained ARCS counsellors.

**26 MHPSS practitioners** and community actors were trained by the ARCS to provide basic psychological support in their communities.

**537 individual sessions** and **135 group sessions** were provided in Tavush, Gegharkunik and Syunik regions by ARCS psychologists and trained counselors.

**24 family members** of missing persons received psychological support during home visits or through support groups.

**31 MHPSS practitioners** from both public and private sector attended a three-day training on MHPSS organized by the Swedish Red Cross and the ICRC.

**24 psychologists** of the Republican Pedagogical-Psychological Center strengthened their capacity in working with children who witnessed hostilities during armed conflicts by participating in the ToT organized by the ICRC.



## Health Care

**3 emergency care units** were rehabilitated and equipped in Vayk hospital, Jermuk health center and Khachik medpoint, Vayots Dzor region.

**25 managers** from **six hospitals** and **one health center** in Vayots Dzor, Syunik and Gegharkunik regions were trained in mass casualty management. These **seven health facilities** were assisted in compiling contingency kits to organize emergency response in case of mass casualties.

**15 primary health facilities** in Vayots Dzor, Syunik and Gegharkunik regions received dressing materials to provide initial medical care to the injured.

**1 floor centrifuge**, **one blood analyzer** and **consumables** were procured to enhance the capacity of the Syunik Regional Blood Transfusion Station in Goris.

**1054 persons** in **89 communities**, including rescuers, health professionals and teachers were trained in basic first aid by the ARCS First Aid Department with the ICRC support.

**4 trainers** of the Emergency & Disaster Medicine Training Center participated in a four-week training on seven subjects in Harvard Medical Faculty Physicians at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston, MA, USA.

**7 national instructors** were trained for the Basic emergency care course developed by the World Health Organization and the ICRC.

**29 staff members** in **two hospitals** were trained in basic emergency care.

## Economic Assistance

### *Emergency/relief activities:*

**450 households** from nine border communities in Syunik region received emergency food and hygiene parcels, distributed by the ARCS.

**4,754 persons** displaced following the 2020 conflict escalation received multipurpose cash assistance from the ICRC in collaboration with the ARCS and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

**111 families** displaced from three communities along the Lachin corridor received multipurpose cash assistance through the ARCS.

**2,500 individual food parcels** and **2,500 individual hygiene kits** were donated to the ARCS, which started the distribution after the September 2022 escalation, covering the immediate needs of affected communities.

**1,580 individuals** of the most affected eight communities of Syunik and Gegharkunik regions received multipurpose cash assistance through the ARCS, following the September escalation.

**40 households** in border villages of Gegharkunik, Syunik and Tavush regions improved their housing conditions through **interest-free loans** provided jointly with the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia NGO.

**29 families** of the missing, detained and ex-detainees from the 2020 escalation were assisted with multipurpose cash assistance to cover pressing needs, and **19 families** received income generation grants.

### *Community resilience support programs:*

**170 tons** of elite winter wheat seeds were distributed to **208 households** in seven villages of Syunik region (Bardzravan, Kaghnut, Davit Bek, Agarak, Khdrants, Kaghnut, Uzhanis) and **78 households** in four villages of Gegharkunik region (Kut, Azat, Norabak, Verin Shorzha), aiming to provide the farmers with highly productive seeds and ensure a multiyear reproduction and sustainable improvement of livelihoods.

**70 ha of land** meliorated in Shikahogh, Uzhanis and Kaghnut villages, Syunik region was provided with **animal fodder seeds**, such as sainfoin and alfalfa, **a seeder** and **diesel fuel**, for cultivation and partial solving of the problem of fodder shortage emerged following the escalation in 2020.

**20 households** from border villages Aravus, Shurnukh and Kaghnut in Syunik region received cash grants to start income generation activities aimed at recovering livelihoods affected by the escalation.

**2 welding machines** and necessary fittings were donated to Tegh and Vorotan villages, Syunik region to enable completion of the water supply system rehabilitation launched by other actors. **270 households** will have seasonal irrigation and essentially increase the production from the lands.

**18 manholes** in Yeghvard village, Syunik region were rehabilitated and **one manhole** was constructed, as an integral



part of the water network system for ensuring improved drinking water supply.

**69 households** of border Shishkert, Tsav, Nerkin Hand, Srashen, Shikahogh, Chakaten, Yeghvard, Agarak, Khdrants, Kaghnut, Davit Bek communities in Syunik will benefit from the donation of spare agricultural machinery parts– **289 tyres** and **3 batteries**.

**The Women Resource Center** in Goris and **Taron Youth Development Association** in Nerkin Khndzoresk, Syunik received financial support to start hydroponic programs in their areas.

**1 harvester** was donated to Khnatsakh village, a tractor, two mowers, rake, reaper-binder, disc harrow, and a plough to Kapan enlarged community, **a seed cleaning machine** and **a seed treater** to Tegh enlarged community.

**60 residents** of Aygepar village, Tavush region participated in a vegetable and fruit-tree-growing training following the 1,500-meter-long irrigation channel cleaning to supply approximately 50 plots. **29 small-scale** producers received afterwards a conditional cash grant to obtain agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and tools.

**55 residents** of Chinari village, Tavush region participated in an agricultural training for strengthening capacity in fruit tree growing, with a focus on green agriculture.

**3 existing** and **one newly established** fruit collectors were provided with fruit driers, necessary equipment, and cold rooms (32 sqm) to achieve a higher quality and sales, and thus an increase of the community income.

**123 residents** of Azat, Kut and Norabak villages, Gegharkunik region and **three local experts** partook in a beekeeping training to develop and complement capacity in a new livelihood strategy for income increase. **Three** honey extractors, woodworking saws, electric honeycomb knives, and wax melting equipment were donated to the three beekeeping experts of these villages.

## Water and Habitat

**4 schools** in border communities of Tavush (one) and Gegharkunik (three) regions improved access to clean water and sanitary-hygiene conditions as follows,

- **6 sanitary facilities** in the schools of Vardenis city, and Artanish and Tsapatagh villages, Gegharkunik region were rehabilitated,
- **2 sanitary facilities** in the school of Voskevan village, Tavush region were rehabilitated.

**1 safer room** was launched in Mets Masrik village, Gegharkunik region, with capacity to shelter up to 120 people. The room was renovated and furnished jointly with the Jinishian Memorial Foundation and the community authorities.

**2 water catchments** structures and **a sanitary zone** around the drinking water reservoir of Mets Masrik village were rehabilitated to improve access to water services for the local population.





## Promotion of International Humanitarian Law (IHL)



**13 representatives** of the Human Rights Defender's Office and **three representatives** of the Office of the Representative on international legal matters participated in a workshop on IHL and human rights in armed conflict and post-conflict situations jointly organized with the Council of Europe Office in Yerevan.

**3 thematic workshops**, on the teaching and dissemination of IHL and on the concept of cultural genocide, were organized for Armenian students and members of academia.

**24 students** from seven Armenian universities participated in the ICRC's 2022 national moot court competition on IHL.

**3 students** representing the Yerevan State University participated, as a team, in the 37th edition of the Jean-Pictet Competition held in Albania with the ICRC support.

**3 students** representing a team of the Russian-Armenian University participated, got into the final round and won the second prize in 2022 Martens Moot court competition on IHL organized by the ICRC Regional Delegation in Moscow.

**42 participants** from eight countries, 13 universities, state bodies, NGOs and international organizations attended the 2022 Regional Summer School on IHL, jointly organized by the ICRC Delegation in Armenia and the American University of Armenia.

**52 officers** of the Border Guard Troops of the National Security Service learnt about the ICRC mandate and activities and IHL basics during workshops in Kapan, Syunik region, Bagratashen, Tavush region, Stepanavan, Lori region and Yerevan, as stipulated in the joint plan of action between the ICRC and the Border Guards of the National Security Service in Armenia.

**36 officers**, non-commission officers and sergeants of the Ministry of Emergency Situations learnt about the ICRC mandate, activities and IHL basics during two workshops in Gyumri, Shirak region and Gavar, Gegharkunik region.

**10 officers** of the Border Guard Troops of the National Security Service were briefed about the ICRC mandate and activities and IHL basics during a workshop in Kapan, Syunik region.

**12 representatives** of major media outlets participated in a workshop on ICRC and humanitarian coverage and press tour organized in border communities of Syunik region, which included an educational part on the essence of IHL, protection and status of journalists in conflict situations.

**1 journalist** won the ICRC's award for the best media report on the Emergency Coverage special nomination addressing the conflict-related humanitarian issues, as part of the Tvpatum local media contest organized by the Media Initiatives Center.



## Access to Education

**1 roundtable discussion** with stakeholders was co-organized with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MESCS) on the access to education and relevant issues in border schools across Armenia, and a **consolidated report** on the ICRC needs assessments in 49 border schools was shared with the MESCS aimed at helping the Ministry to streamline its efforts and mobilize other actors for addressing the identified needs.

**371 students** from **seven border schools** (villages of Pambak, Jil, David Bek, Nerkin Hand, Bardzruni, and Yeraskh) with shortage of teachers received IT devices, including PCs, laptops, projector and speakers, to ensure proper access to distance learning.

**23 schools** of border communities of Gegharkunik and Tavush regions with high number of students received disinfection and hygiene materials, such as liquid soap, alcohols and cleaning liquid.

**410 students** benefited from the donation of necessary school furniture to the schools of Geghanush and Tsav communities in Syunik region, and Geghamasar, Pambak, Tsapatagh and Getik communities in Gegharkunik region.

**5 border schools** in Tavush, Gegharkunik, and Vayots Dzor regions improved physical learning environment through renovation of classrooms and installation of new windows and heating system.

**25 schools** in border communities were equipped with alarms, anti-fire sets and other items for emergency preparedness in the scope of a joint project with the ARCS. In addition, teachers and administrative staff were trained in safe evacuation drills during emergencies.

**260 students** from seven schools along the border, where the ICRC improved sanitary-hygiene conditions, participated in promotional activities focusing on hygiene behavior organized jointly with the ARCS.

**24 psychologists** of the Republican Pedagogical-Psychological Center strengthened their capacities in working with children who witnessed armed hostilities by participating in an ICRC-organized training of trainers.



## Weapon Contamination

Over **6,970 civilians** living in or near weapon-contaminated areas in 46 border communities participated in door-to-door sessions and townhall meetings organized by the ARCS on risks of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) with the ICRC support.

**18 schools** staged theatrical performances on safer behavior in case of shooting and shelling with the participation of **1,694 students**, aged 10 to 18 years, and specialists of the ARCS and the ICRC.

**38 border communities** hosted puppet shows educating on safer behavior in relation to landmines and ERW for **2,406 pupils** aged 5 to 10 years, organized by the ARCS volunteers with the ICRC support.



## Cooperation with the Armenian Red Cross\*

**2 visits** were made by the ICRC team to communities of Mets Parni, Lori region and Garni, Kotayk region for attending **two simulation exercises** of the recently established Volunteer Fire Rescue Groups. The exercises were organized by the ARCS and the Austrian Red Cross, in cooperation with the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Armenia.

**570 children** continued attending psychosocial and extracurricular learning activities run by the ARCS volunteers in the Smiley Clubs of **five collective centers** in Yerevan, Masis, Metsamor, Tsakhkadzor and Hrazdan cities, which hosted displaced children, and in **five schools** of Vardenis, Mets Masrik, Tegh, Syunik and Geghanush border communities.

**24 community projects** were developed and implemented by the students of the Smiley Clubs in the scope of the Promotion of Human Values initiative.

**20 volunteers** responsible for education in the ARCS branches participated in a training on Education in Emergencies as part of the process of piloting and contextualization of the Movement Approach to Education.

**2 ARCS Disaster Response Teams (DRT)** were organized, trained and equipped with the ICRC support in Ararat and Syunik regions, bringing the number of existing DRTs to seven.

**19 staff members** of the ARCS headquarters and regional branches enhanced their skills in the assessment of economic security through a specialized course organized by the ICRC.

**2 ARCS staff members** participated in an advanced training on agricultural value chain development, to apply the knowledge further in relevant projects.

**30 ARCS volunteers** and **three staff** members participated in the implementation of joint risk awareness and safer behavior activities in 46 border communities.



\*For operational activities carried out in partnership with the ARCS please refer to other parts of this document.

We help people around the world affected by armed conflict and other violence, doing everything we can to protect their lives and dignity and to relieve their suffering, often with our Red Cross and Red Crescent partners. We also seek to prevent hardship by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and championing universal humanitarian principles.