

ICRC Activities in Afghanistan

Facts and Figures (September- October 2002)

Protection

Between January and October 2002, the ICRC visited some 6,490 security detainees and prisoners in 98 places of detention under the responsibility of Afghan authorities or United States forces.

Of these, some 2,528 were seen and registered for the first time. The total figure includes those prisoners transferred to the US military base at Guantanamo Bay.

Some 3,185 released detainees received assistance from the ICRC to return home.

In collaboration with the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS), the ICRC facilitated the exchange of 20'417 Red Cross messages (RCMs) between January and August, of which 11'044 were between detainees and their families.

Assistance

Since the beginning of 2002, the ICRC has distributed approximately 55,242 MT of food and 3,213 MT of seeds and fertilizer to around 1.5 million beneficiaries

Food

The second round of food distributions for 2002 started in September and is ongoing in Ghor province and the southern parts of Mazar. This assistance should help the population through the winter. It will also allow the beneficiaries to spend less on food and thus help them to avoid getting further into debt.

In Ghor, 11,630 tonnes of food were distributed to almost 490,000 people (69,978 households) during September and October. The food aid consisted of rice, split peas, ghee and salt.

In the Northern region 20,677 households in Samangan province, Balkh province and Sar-i-Pul province received a total of 2,239 tonnes of food during September and October (wheat, split peas, ghee and salt). They were also given more than 20,000 blankets.

Seeds

In the three districts in the Northern region more than 51,300 households were given seed. In Ghor, more than 7,000 farmers will receive wheat seed for planting in spring 2003.

Livestock protection

In Bamyan and Yakawlang districts, a total of 57,546 animals - sheep, goats and cattle - have now been treated against parasites, in order to improve their general health and to enhance their yield of meat, milk and wool.

Water conservation projects

ICRC provides material support and technical expertise for projects carried out by the community, at an average cost of 2,000 USD.

In Maqsood region (Balkh province) the first *kandah* (water storage) rehabilitation project has been completed and another is underway.

In Bamyan province the Cash for Work (CFW) programmes continue with the construction of a dam in Shaidan and the identification of a new dam project in the area of Lala Khail. These two dams should increase the water supply for irrigation by up to 30 per cent.

Work has started on the construction of a second dam in Fatmasti; this will provide irrigation to the whole valley as it will be connected to a 5 km-long canal. In Sang- Daw a CFW programme to rehabilitate a spring for irrigation has been completed.

Health

Overall, the facilities assisted by the health programme in August- September provided health services to almost 15,000 in-patients and around 37,000 out-patients, and performed 8,000 operations.

The ICRC continues to provide regular assistance to seven hospitals (in Kandahar, Ghazni, Gulbahar, Jalalabad, Bamyan and two in Kabul). This assistance consists of medicine, medical instruments and non-medical items such as fuel for generators, soap, small maintenance work as well as support for staff.

Four more hospitals now receive regular assistance including upgrading of infrastructure, provision of medical equipment, staff training and a regular supply of renewable medical and non-medical items. In August and September an additional 19 health facilities received assistance with medical supplies.

Some health projects are run by national Red Cross societies from various countries, including Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, Norway and Switzerland.

Water and Habitat

WatHab operations aim to improve access to safe water and upgrade sanitary installations. Some two-and-a-half million people currently benefit from projects around the country.

Urban water networks - various projects including:
Kabul

- Rehabilitation of the water systems at three major housing estates, in order to improve access to drinking water for an estimated 200,000 people.
- Complete rehabilitation of the water network at Qala-i-Qader area serving some 4,000 people.

Ghazni

- Rehabilitation of the existing water system including drilling of two new wells, repair of leaks in the distribution line, etc, benefitting some 60,000 people. Expected completion in January 2003.

Charikhar

- Rehabilitation of the existing water pumping station benefitting 40,000 people.

Mazar-I-Sharif

- Rehabilitation of four community water supply networks in Bedel area benefitting some 60,000 people.

Jalalabad

- Reconnection of the eastern part of the city network through the installation of 200m of piping at the underground bazaar.

Small-scale projects include:

Kabul

- 658 hand pumps repaired - estimated 280,000 beneficiaries.

Mazar-I-Sharif

- Nine hand pumps and two public wells repaired and protected.

Environmental sanitation activities include:

Kabul

- 1,120 new latrines built and 85 existing latrines rehabilitated since the beginning of the year - estimated 14,000 beneficiaries.

Mazar-I-Sharif

- 3'500 new latrines constructed since the beginning of the year - estimated 42,000 beneficiaries.

Since 1996 50,000 latrines have been built by ICRC.

Rehabilitation work in hospitals:

- Rehabilitation works completed in Bamyan (100 beds) and in progress in Wakb (250 beds), Kabul, Samangan (30 beds), Shiberghan (150 beds), Kunduz (120 beds) and Taloquan (70 beds)

Some WatHab projects are run by national Red Cross societies from various countries, including Australia, Britain, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland.

Orthopaedic Service

The ICRC runs six orthopaedic centres serving mine victims and other disabled people. Since 1988, some 53,000 patients (including more than 27,000 amputees) have been registered and assisted. Approximately 80 per cent of the amputees assisted are mine victims (70 per cent of them civilians).

Between January and October 2002, 5,454 new patients were registered and assisted.

Since 1999, some 1,650 patients have benefitted from micro credit support to start up small business. 138 patients have been granted this support in 2002.

Between January and October the ICRC home care made more than 2,000 visits to 325 house-bound paraplegic patients in Kabul.

Mine Action

1,041 mine awareness sessions were held by ICRC/ Afghan Red Crescent teams and community volunteer instructors in 423 different locations for around 11,600 adults and almost 35,000 children

Twelve ordnance clearance requests were transmitted to the UN mine action centre and the HALO Trust.

Promotion of humanitarian law

ICRC delegates provided courses on the law of armed conflict (LOAC) to 40 officers of an Afghan army battalion trained by the international security force ISAF.

Five Afghan officers were sponsored by ICRC to attend specialized training in LOAC at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy.

Cooperation with the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS)

With the International Federation, the ICRC - as lead agency for the Movement in Afghanistan - is making particular efforts to support and strengthen the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS).

Among the main projects is the vocational training programme, in which one teacher trains two people over several months in skills such as tailoring, weaving, carpentry and mechanics. Some 2,000 Afghan men and women are taking part in this training.

The ARCS also runs a food-for-work programme, with particular emphasis on community-based projects such as irrigation schemes. Hundreds of these projects are underway.