

## AZERBAIJAN

## OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

## JANUARY - DECEMBER 2024

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is a neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian organization working to safeguard the lives and dignity of people suffering from the consequences of conflict and other violence. We have been present in the region since 1992, working alongside national authorities to address humanitarian needs stemming from conflict.

In 2024, taking note of the change in the context, the ICRC realigned its activities. By midyear, all assistance programs were phased out, and support for further development and capacity building of the local specialists as well as institutions continued and deepened. Together with the Azerbaijani institutions, we continued supporting those affected by conflict, focusing on missing people, raising awareness of the risk of weapon contamination, providing mental health and psychosocial support, conducting detention visits, and promoting international humanitarian law (IHL).

In particular, in partnership with the State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and

Missing Persons of the Azerbaijan Republic (State Commission), we continued to support forensic efforts related to the exhumation and identification of human remains, to assist authorities in clarifying the fate of approximately 4000 missing people. We also contributed to Landmines and Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE), reaching tens of thousands through awareness sessions in partnership with the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society (AzRCS) and Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA). The 17th meeting of the Senior Workshop on International Rules governing Military Operations was conducted jointly with the Ministry of Defense hosting almost 100 high-ranking military officials representing 71 countries. During the year, we also contributed to the capacity development of AzRCS staff and volunteers and some of its field units for the continuity of their humanitarian services to the communities.

In line with our mandate under the Geneva Conventions, we continued our work on behalf of people deprived of freedom and protected civilians.

## MISSING IN RELATION TO THE CONFLICT



**3,342** families of missing people were contacted by accompaniers trained by ICRC specialists and **73** received basic psychosocial support.

**319** home visits were carried out by accompaniers to the families of missing people during the funerals of identified missing persons and the funerals of their relatives.

**500** family members of missing people attended **23** ICRC-funded commemoration events organized by accompaniers.

**30** accompaniers participated in **3** training sessions, strengthening their knowledge of addressing issues related to missing people and helping their family members.

**44** families of missing people who received the mortal remains of their loved ones were visited by ICRC staff as a post funeral visit and their names were removed from the list of missing persons.

**19** representatives of organizations involved in exhumation and identification work took part in conferences and training programmes abroad with the ICRC's support.

**69** representatives of various national organizations, involved in efforts to clarify the fate and whereabouts of missing people, joined various training sessions.

**5** field trips were conducted to **4** districts to provide technical support during exhumation work carried out by the State Commission.

Various items like vehicles, IT equipment, laboratory equipment etc. were donated to the Azerbaijani authorities to support exhumation and identification work.

## RESPONSE TO WEAPON CONTAMINATION



**44,231** people enhanced their knowledge of the risk associated with weapon contamination and information on adopting safer behaviour through risk awareness and safer behaviour sessions conducted by ICRC-trained volunteers of the Azerbaijan Red Crescent.

**222** AzRCS volunteers joined Risk Awareness and Safer Behaviour training of trainers conducted by ANAMA and ICRC.

More than **30,000** risk education materials, including comic books, booklets, notebooks and activity books were distributed to students living in affected communities.

**1,500** mine warning signs were donated to ANAMA to mark mined areas.

**50** mine awareness billboards were handed over to ANAMA for installation in areas contaminated with mines and explosive ordnance.

**30** paramedics from ANAMA, **23** personnel from Ministry of Defense (MoD) as well as **30** volunteers from AzRCS participated in blast trauma care course to provide effective medical support during operations to clear landmines and explosive remnants of war.

## RESTORING FAMILY LINKS



**20** Red Cross messages (containing brief family news) were exchanged between people stranded abroad and their relatives in Azerbaijan.

## DETENTION



**788** family contacts (phone calls, Red Cross Messages and video messages) were facilitated between people detained in relation to the armed conflict and their families.

**55** visits were conducted across **12** places of detention to assess the treatment of detainees and condition of the facilities, and to support detained individuals to maintain contact with their loved ones.

## MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT



**2,044** psychological support sessions were conducted for **101** repatriated children and caretakers by ICRC-supported national mental health professionals.

**18** mental health assessments were conducted for repatriated children and women in three districts.

**34** individual psychological support sessions and **11** mental health and psychosocial support assessments were conducted for mine survivors by mental health professionals.

**32** national mental health professionals benefited from a five-day training session on clinical case management skills in the context of repatriated children and adolescents.

**38** individual and group supervision sessions were provided to **40** mental health professionals working with people with varying mental health needs.

**27** accompaniers joined three-day workshops on providing psychosocial support to family members following the identification and handover of the mortal remains of their loved ones. This was part of the multidisciplinary training for accompaniers.

## COOPERATION AND SUPPORT TO CAPACITY-BUILDING OF AzRCS



**2,875** community members increased their awareness on first aid through Mobile first-aid posts and two-day first-aid sessions by seven AzRCS branches with Emergency Mobile Volunteer Teams (EMVT) with the ICRC's support.

**1,757** people took part in awareness sessions about the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement conducted by AzRCS district branches with EMVTs.

**97** AzRCS volunteers enhanced their understanding of the Movement and strengthened their skills in conducting community awareness sessions.

**36** volunteers and **9** AzRCS staff members attended ICRC-supported English language course to develop their language skills.

**7** AzRCS branches were supported for the continuation of their humanitarian services, as part of the ICRC's contribution to the AzRCS capacity-building.

## PROMOTION OF IHL AND ICRC MANDATE



**695** military personnel of different ranks from the MoD participated in IHL seminars, strengthening their understanding of humanitarian principles in armed conflict.

**97** students took part in ICRC-organized extracurricular activities, including study trips, moot-court sessions and guest lectures to enhance their legal knowledge.

**65** representatives of government entities attended IHL training programmes to build on their expertise in IHL.

**22** instructors from the police academy participated in a seminar on law enforcement operations.

**15** senior instructors of the internal troops participated in a seminar to enhance their capacities in applying legal frameworks in operations.

## ECONOMIC SECURITY



**1,126** people benefited from a beekeeping project, which provided beneficiaries with relevant training and financial assistance to upscale their activities.

**706** people – including affected by mine incidents, families of mine victims and children repatriated from the Middle East – received cash assistance to meet their needs.

**401** people benefited from a Smart Gardening project, which provided beneficiaries with tools and seed to produce food for their families.

**383** people saw their livelihood improve through the microeconomic initiative project.

**300** people received support through a poultry support project.