



2018

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

The ICRC is an independent, neutral organization ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence. Since 1992, the ICRC has been present in the region in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Through its delegations in Yerevan and Baku and the mission in Nagorno-Karabakh, the ICRC acts as a neutral intermediary between the parties to the conflict to address issues of primary humanitarian concern.

In Armenia, we focus on civilians living along the international border, missing persons and their families, mine victims and people deprived of their liberty. In addition, we promote the dissemination and implementation of the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) among national authorities, academics and military personnel. Our key partner in Armenia is the Armenian Red Cross Society with whom we coordinate activities aimed at assisting people affected by the conflict.

ASSISTING CIVILIANS ALONG THE INTERNATIONAL BORDER

We support the population of Tavush region, helping to mitigate the consequences of hostilities felt by civilians living along the international border.

We help village population find alternative income opportunities to farming in insecure areas along the border. Since 2016, we launched targeted assistance to most vulnerable households in Barekamavan, Dovegh and Aygepar communities, where socio-economic situations are particularly challenging. As a result, 145 most vulnerable families received financial assistance to start small-scale businesses, following the detailed household economic survey conducted together with local Red Cross volunteers. Additionally, we provided multipurpose cash assistance to 50 extremely vulnerable families who were unable to start business activities because of their age, health condition or other circumstances. In such cases, we work to build multilateral support from within the community, local authorities and organizations to accompany our effort in finding sustainable solutions to their problems. In 2019, we will start working in Berkaber.

For the last eight years, we have helped the border communities to increase the quality and quantity of water by improving the condition of infrastructure. In 2018, we supported Sarigyugh, Baghanis, Koti and Aygepar through construction of a pumping station and a water intake, installation of plastic reservoirs, water

meters, public taps, pipelines, concrete manholes and other technical components.

Since 2015, with our partner Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS), we have raised community awareness on safe behavior and danger of mines and unexploded devices, and organized training in first aid. In 2018, with instructors of the ARCS, we organized first-aid courses, provided life-saving skills and first aid boxes to around 200 members of civil protection rescue teams, in the scope of the two-year cooperation program between the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Armenia, the ARCS and the ICRC.

With the increased security risks in Tavush region, we supported 14 communities to set up passive protective measures, which reduced direct exposure of civilians to shooting and shrapnel, enabling the community to live, work and move outdoors in relative safety. In 2018, we continued to construct safer spaces, wall-in exposed windows, and build protective walls for kindergartens, schools and other public buildings, part of which were done thanks to a partnership with the ARCS and the German Red Cross.



ICRC

CLARIFYING THE FATE OF THE MISSING

We support efforts of the sides to the conflict to determine the fate of the missing and to bring answers to their families.

Since 1992, we have been working on the issue of missing people and the plight of their families. Under International Humanitarian Law (IHL), parties to a conflict must do all possible to clarify the fate and whereabouts of people who went missing. In line with its mandate, the ICRC offers expertise acting as a neutral intermediary. Through our delegations in Yerevan and Baku and our mission in Nagorno-Karabakh, we work closely with Commissions on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing People and with families of missing persons.

Clarification of the fate is a complex process which comprises several components. We gathered detailed data on each registered missing person from the family and handed it over for further processing to the Commissions. In 2015, the ICRC provided the parties to the conflict an updated list containing around 4,500 names of the missing people of all

ethnic origin registered by its delegations in Baku and Yerevan and the mission in Nagorno-Karabakh. This list is a necessary tool to help consolidate information and intensify their efforts towards bringing answers to the families.

During 2014-2018, we have been collecting biological reference samples in the form of buccal swabs from blood relatives of the missing. In the future, this data can serve as a complementary tool in identification of human remains when they are discovered or exhumed. Until now, in Armenia we have collected samples from 1122 blood relatives of 344 missing persons. We work on this in cooperation with the ARCS and jointly with the Ministry of Defense and the Armenian Scientific-Practical Centre of Forensic Medicine.

We also encourage the parties to the conflict to map and protect burial sites believed to contain the remains of people



who might have died during the conflict, with a view to their future possible recovery and identification. We advise members of the working group of the Armenian Commission on techniques and resources to gather and process information from witnesses, and to identify inhumation sites. We support the authorities concerned in terms of technical equipment and advice for fieldwork.

THE MISSING
end the silence

SUPPORTING FAMILIES OF MISSING PERSONS

We provide multidisciplinary support to families of the missing, by helping them become financially stable or navigate the legal system, and by offering psychosocial assistance.

In their daily lives, many of families of the missing face different economic, social, legal and other challenges. Most of all, they continue to search for answers, fight for recognition, and talk about their missing relative, not letting him or her disappear completely in ambiguity and silence.



Since 2011, in the framework of the seven-year Accompaniment program, we provided comprehensive support in collaboration with the Armenian Red

Cross and other local partners. As part of it, regular group meetings were organized for the families to address their health, social, legal and other issues with specialists and to have a chance for peer interaction. We accompanied families through the long period of uncertainty, as they waited for news about the fate of their missing relative. We organized commemoration events, tree planting and marking the International Day of the Disappeared, to address families' strong desire for public acknowledgement of their plight, their need for recognition and need to remember. These were designed to help them find meaning in their loss, and reaffirm that the family did not abandon their loved one, while keeping the memory alive.

Economic support to families of the missing goes hand-in-hand with psychosocial assistance. Since 2011, we



have carried out a housing assistance project for vulnerable households in cooperation with the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia. Through a revolving fund, 117 selected families received interest-free loans and significantly improved their housing conditions. From 2012 - 2018, we have implemented 141 income support projects and provided 88 multipurpose grants to the families of the missing.

ASSISTING MINE VICTIMS

We help mine victims in Armenia to deal with their wide-ranging challenges.

We provide support to mine victims and their families throughout Armenia, to help them deal with their multiple economic, legal, administrative and physical challenges. We address their issues working jointly with the Armenian Red

Cross and the Armenian Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise. In conjunction with the Fuller Center for Housing in Armenia, in 2018 we provided 22 interest-free loans for families of mine victims to renovate their houses.

Also in 2018, we provided grants to help 37 families of mine victims launch income-generating activities, 3 families to cover interest on business micro-credits and 2 highly vulnerable families to meet the most pressing needs.

ACTING AS A NEUTRAL INTERMEDIARY

We work to protect and assist people across the lines.

Being neutral and impartial, the ICRC is capable of offering its humanitarian assistance in conflict situations and to affected people, including prisoners of war and civilian internees. Based on its mandate enshrined in the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC has special prerogatives to access and assist these persons in times of armed conflicts. At the same time, this role does not involve negotiating the release of detainees of all sides of conflicts and may only be enacted at the request of the concerned parties.

Since 1992, we have visited prisoners of war and civilians deprived of their liberty

in connection with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We help to ensure that they are able to maintain contact with their families and we facilitate their transfer and repatriation on both sides of the international border and the Line of Contact.

The ICRC also monitors and documents alleged violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). These violations include incidents such as the killing or wounding of civilians, or significant property damages. To address such cases, the ICRC maintains its confidential dialogue with the parties to the conflict,



highlighting their IHL commitments to distinguish between military and civilian targets, and applying proportional use of force according to military necessity.

PROMOTING IHL LEARNING AND NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

We encourage efforts of state authorities to integrate IHL in the national legal framework and promote the knowledge among Armenian specialists and armed forces.

We continue to keep contemporary issues of IHL integration on the agenda and offer relevant authorities our expertise and technical assistance to promote national implementation. Representatives of the Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs attended the St. Petersburg International Conference dedicated to 150th Anniversary of St. Petersburg Declaration.

We continued the dialogue with the working group tasked with reforming the Criminal Code to harmonize it with IHL standards and requirements.

We introduced the rules of IHL to members of the Armenian Armed Forces, cooperating with the Ministry of Defense in the scope of the joint annual plan. We trained and briefed around 390 military instructors, commanders and deputy commanders of border units as well as troops departing for peace support missions abroad. In addition, we ran four sessions on ICRC mandate and IHL basics to troops stationed along the international border in Tavush region. We

supported the participation of representatives of the Armenian Armed Forces in training and exchange on the regional and international level. One senior officer from the General Staff updated his knowledge of IHL at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy.

We encouraged research and learning of IHL among young scholars. In 2018, we expanded the scope of our summer course and launched the first Regional Summer School on IHL in cooperation with the American University of Armenia. We also partnered with other academic institutions in Armenia such as the Yerevan State, French and Russian-Armenian universities. In November-December, we organized the national moot court competition and supported the 11th edition of the IHL International Conference for Young Researchers in Yerevan, thus engaging students and practitioners from Armenia and across the world.



A two-year memorandum of understanding was signed with the Media Initiatives Center NGO (MIC). We agreed to work jointly towards raising interest in and understanding of key humanitarian issues among Armenian media professionals, and by this support the development of their professional capacities. We took part in the MIC's annual media conference and supported the organization of the media contest that followed.

VISITING PERSONS DEPRIVED OF THEIR LIBERTY

We visit detainees to monitor conditions of their detention and their treatment, and to help them maintain contact with their families.

Based on its mission and the right to humanitarian initiative to protect and assist the victims of situations not amounting to armed conflict, established by the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the ICRC takes action whenever it can to improve the treatment and conditions of people deprived of their liberty. In Armenia, we work in internal detention to support people held in civilian places of detention, whose detention is not related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. ICRC work in Armenian detention places is based on a Memorandum of

Understanding signed in 1996 with the ministries of Interior and National Security, and the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Armenia. The document authorized the ICRC to visit all persons held in all places of detention in the country. With time, as the penitentiary service was transferred to the Ministry of Justice, the Government of Armenia renewed the Memorandum in 2001.

We cooperate closely with the Ministry of Justice, the Criminal Executive Department, prisons' administration and other related structures in Armenia. Our internal detention activities focus on visits to and follow-up with vulnerable categories of detainees, including those sentenced to life imprisonment, foreigners who lack family contact and

support, and detainees with individual health needs.

In 2018, we made 20 visits to 10 detention places in Armenia. The Government of Armenia approved a bill enabling Armenian and foreign detainees without possibility of short family visits to contact their families via a video call service. The ICRC provided technical support and guidance to the Ministry of Justice to implement the government bill. A working group was established with the Ministry. We supported the implementation of the video call service project through donation of 13 computers and necessary IT accessories to all places of detention and the central penitentiary hospital. This year, the project was piloted in selected places.

PARTNERING WITH THE ARMENIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY

For more than 20 years, the ARCS has been our primary partner in Armenia.

The ARCS is our key partner in Armenia and a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Many long-term cooperation programs were jointly developed to support people and communities affected by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. These programs have three dimensions aimed at working together, learning from each other and preparing jointly for emergencies.

In 2018, with our support, the ARCS organized activities in different regions of Armenia to assist families of missing people. These included commemoration and cultural events, and visits of Red Cross volunteers to vulnerable elderly relatives of the missing. The ICRC and the ARCS worked together to collect biological reference samples from blood relatives of missing people in Armenia.

We continued to help the ARCS strengthen its capacity in areas of communication, tracing service, response to conflict, provision of first aid and psychosocial assistance. We work jointly

to promote the image and reputation of the Red Cross in Armenia by means of regular dissemination sessions run by the ARCS in schools and other educational institutions across the country.

Together with Danish Red Cross, we continued supporting the ARCS in strengthening its branches in Tavush, Syunik and Gegharkunik regions and, starting from October, also in Vayots Dzor.

With funds provided by the German Red Cross, the partners constructed two safer rooms, a safe playground and a protective wall for children in schools and kindergartens of Paravakar, Berdavan and Nerkin Karmiraghbyur villages of Tavush region.

The ICRC and ARCS worked together on strengthening the medical emergency response chain through recruitment and training of volunteers from border communities of Tavush in administering first aid during emergencies. In addition, 55 civilians from these communities tested their knowledge in a first-aid competition organized by the partners.



The ICRC and the ARCS continued to cooperate with the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Armenia on strengthening the knowledge of and capacity in first aid, dead body management and IHL among Civil Protection Rescue Service teams deployed in 11 villages of Tavush region. The ARCS instructors organized first-aid courses and a competition for around 200 members of these teams.

In addition, eight ARCS instructors were briefed by the ICRC on the management of dead in emergencies, and they passed this knowledge on to the members of the Civil Protection Rescue Teams.

Mission

We help people around the world affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence, doing everything we can to protect their dignity and 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.

People know they can count on us to carry out a range of life-saving activities in conflict zones and to work closely with the communities there to understand and meet their needs. Our experience and expertise enable us to respond quickly, effectively and without taking sides.