

Eastern Europe and Central Asia

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ICRC/P.Grabhorn

War not only injures countless combatants and civilians, it also severely disrupts local health services and jeopardizes their ability to treat the wounded. In times of conflict the ICRC helps to keep local medical facilities running by bringing in urgently needed medicines, surgical supplies and spare parts, not to mention food and fuel when they too are needed. In 1995 hospitals and dispensaries in the northern Caucasus received some 2,600,000 Swiss francs worth of ICRC medical supplies.

Eastern Europe

ICRC regional delegation:

Moscow

The Caucasus

ICRC delegations:

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

Central Asia

ICRC delegation:

Tajikistan

ICRC regional delegation:

Tashkent

Staff

ICRC expatriates¹ : 136

National Societies¹ : 80

Local employees² : 555

Total expenditure

Sfr 82,116,035

Expenditure breakdown

Sfr

Protection/tracing: 11,822,311

Relief: 50,187,736

Medical assistance: 8,119,132

Cooperation with

National Societies: 602,441

Dissemination: 3,152,271

Operational support: 4,347,166

Overheads: 3,884,978



✚ ICRC regional delegation

✚ ICRC delegation

ICRC / AR 12.95

EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

¹ Average figures calculated on an annual basis.

² Under ICRC contract, as at December 1995.

The situation in Eastern Europe and Central Asia was relatively calm in 1995, with the exception of Chechnya, in the southern part of the Russian Federation, where the first six months of the year were marked by an upsurge in hostilities. The ICRC mounted an extensive relief operation in southern Russia for conflict victims and displaced people in Chechnya and the neighbouring republics in early 1995. When conditions stabilized somewhat in June/July the ICRC shifted the focus of its assistance to the most vulnerable groups, but then had to resume its large-scale emergency relief, medical, water supply and sanitation activities following the outbreak of violence in the town of Gudermes, in eastern Chechnya, in December.

The ICRC also provided assistance for people affected by the Nagorny Karabakh and Abkhaz conflicts and sought to protect the different categories of people detained in these contexts, as well as security detainees, when and where it was given access to them, and ethnic minorities who were often subjected to harassment and discrimination. The Red Cross message service was particularly active across the front line between Georgia and Abkhazia, with more than 57,500 messages exchanged during the year.

In coordination with other organizations the ICRC concentrated a large part of its efforts on rehabilitating seriously damaged medical facilities in Chechnya. It continued providing emergency supplies to hospitals treating war-wounded and conflict-related injuries even after cease-fire agreements had put a stop to active hostilities. Programmes for the rehabilitation of the war-disabled were implemented or developed in Baku, Tbilisi and Gagra in Abkhazia to help cope with the increasing number of people injured by landmines. Throughout the year water supply and sanitation activities formed an important part of the ICRC's work, not only in Chechnya in southern Russia, but also in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Together with Médecins sans Frontières (Belgium), ICRC delegates in particular provided safe drinking water in Chechnya for some 300,000 inhabitants of Grozny, thus helping to prevent the outbreak and spread of epidemics in the city. In Georgia and Armenia, water supply and sanitation programmes were aimed mostly at improving conditions in the hospitals, and in Azerbaijan a survey was carried out to assess the need for further work on water installations.

The regional delegation in Moscow continued to develop its Russian-language publications programme and its dissemination activities for the armed forces, schools and universities. Its efforts largely concentrated on promoting the basic humanitarian rules in countries where there were no active hostilities or fighting had abated, thus paving the way to a better understanding of humanitarian concerns and contributing to the prevention of a resurgence in violence. The ICRC systematically adopted an inter-cultural approach in developing

school programmes and focused on the link between the institution's universal humanitarian message and traditional values grounded in local culture.

ICRC delegates provided information, training and material support for the tracing services of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and particularly in the Baltic States, Belarus and Ukraine.

A headquarters agreement for the establishment of a new ICRC regional delegation in Kyiv was signed in December. At year's end the regional delegate in charge of activities in the Baltic States, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine was still based at ICRC headquarters in Geneva.

In the self-proclaimed "Dniestr Republic", in Moldova, the ICRC continued to make representations to authorities to be allowed to carry out visits to the four detainees of the "Ilascu" group, whom delegates had last seen in October 1993.

The situation in Tajikistan remained at a stalemate and continual armed clashes between government troops and opposition forces were a major stumbling block in the inter-Tajik peace talks. The ICRC actively sought to gain access to detainees held on either side and also focused on protecting displaced people returning to their places of origin.

The Tashkent regional delegation, covering Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, concentrated on promoting knowledge of international humanitarian law and strengthening the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and organizations in the region through various cooperation programmes and the provision of financial assistance, particularly in the area of tracing activities.

Eastern Europe

The regional delegate in charge of ICRC activities in the Baltic States, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine was based at ICRC headquarters in Geneva. The institution's main concern over the course of the year was to build up and reinforce contacts with authorities and cooperation with the various National Red Cross Societies of the region, particularly in dissemination and in restoring family ties. The ICRC decided to set up a regional delegation for the above-mentioned countries in the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv in 1995. At the end of August the regional delegate for Eastern Europe and the future head of the Kyiv regional delegation travelled to Belarus, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania where they met representatives of the respective governments and National Societies to discuss the regional delegation's future activities. The headquarters agreement concerning the Kyiv delegation was signed on 5 December in Geneva by the government of Ukraine, represented by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the ICRC President, during the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Training, technical advice and material support for National Society tracing services were some of the key activities conducted by the ICRC in the region. Cooperation agreements concerning tracing work were signed with the National Societies of Belarus, Estonia, Moldova and Ukraine (see *Ukraine*), and the ICRC pledged to provide material and financial aid, as well as training, for their respective tracing services. Courses on the law of war were also organized for members of the armed forces of Belarus and for the Ukrainian armed forces.

A joint ICRC/OSCE* seminar on implementation measures of international humanitarian law was held in Riga, Latvia, in November. The Deputy Delegate General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia attended the seminar, which brought together, among other participants, representatives of National Societies and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Social Affairs and Health of the Baltic countries. This meeting was the third in a series of regional seminars; the first two were held in Minsk, Belarus, in July 1994 and in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in September 1995 (see *Tashkent*).

BELARUS

Courses on the law of war were organized for the first time in February for members of the armed forces of Belarus, and a delegate gave a presentation on the ICRC and its activities. At the end of October, 37 local Red Cross committee

* OSCE: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

leaders took part in a seminar on the ICRC and the Movement, set up jointly by the ICRC and the National Society. Those participating were given the opportunity to describe the activities conducted by their respective local committees.

The Red Cross Society of Belarus was recognized by the ICRC on 1 November and thus became part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

LITHUANIA

The regional delegate to be based in Kyiv and the former regional delegate based in Geneva visited Lithuania to examine the question of that country's accession to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their two 1977 Additional Protocols.

MOLDOVA

During the year the ICRC continued to make representations to the authorities of the self-proclaimed "Dniestr Republic" to be allowed access to the remaining four detainees of the "Ilascu group", last visited by ICRC delegates in October 1993. There had originally been five persons detained but the ICRC was informed that one had been released in July 1994.

UKRAINE

A regional preparatory conference in view of the 1996 International Conference on refugees, returnees and displaced persons and related migratory movements in the Commonwealth of Independent States and the neighbouring countries concerned was held in Kyiv at the end of September; it was organized by UNHCR, the OSCE and IOM* and attended by the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. An ICRC representative spoke about humanitarian law in relation to the problem of population movements and put forward the idea that respect for this law amounted to preventive action in this area. This preparatory conference was preceded by two similar meetings: in Tbilisi, Georgia, and in Ashkhabad, Turkmenistan, held in early and late July respectively.

A seminar on humanitarian law was conducted for the armed forces in September; this also gave the ICRC the opportunity to present its plans for future dissemination courses. The institution provided material and financial support for the National Society tracing activities and funded a traineeship position with the tracing service of the Russian Red Cross Society.

* IOM: International Organization for Migration



+ ICRC presence

MOSCOW

Regional delegation
(covering the Russian Federation
and, for certain activities, all
countries of Eastern Europe and
Central Asia)

As in previous years, the Moscow regional delegation, opened in 1992, was in charge of dissemination programmes for the armed forces, information and training for Red Cross and Red Crescent Society tracing services in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Throughout the year it continued to give priority to dissemination of international humanitarian law. The main target groups were the military, the National Societies and their local committees, and the academic and educational sectors. During the year a delegate in charge of dissemination to the armed forces and two delegates responsible for dissemination in schools and universities throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia were permanently based in Moscow.

A series of memoranda of understanding were signed between the ICRC and the Russian Red Cross Society in April, and the cooperation programme between the ICRC and the tracing and dissemination services of the Russian Red Cross, begun in 1993, was extended for another three years. In support of the work of neighbouring regional delegations, ICRC staff carried out a number of missions to the Baltic States, Belarus, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan to assess the needs of the various Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and especially the local committees working in conflict situations, for training and technical advice in tracing work.

The ICRC continued to develop its extensive Russian-language publications programme. By the end of the year over 50 ICRC publications were available, with a print-run of 83,000 copies. In addition, 80,000 booklets explaining the humanitarian rules and the work of the ICRC were to be included in first-aid

kits for combatants in areas of tension in Eastern Europe and Central Asia; 10,000 such kits were handed out to combatants at various checkpoints throughout the northern Caucasus during the year.

Another important component of the Moscow delegation's work is to maintain contacts with the Russian authorities, representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations, and the media; these contacts proved essential on a number of occasions in facilitating ICRC operations in the Caucasus, Tajikistan and the former Yugoslavia, and especially in connection with the conflict and mounting tension in Chechnya, in southern Russia.

Dissemination

In the light of the extremely tense situation in the Caucasus special emphasis was placed throughout the year on spreading awareness of the law of war, particularly those rules concerning respect for civilians and people detained in connection with conflict, among the armed forces in this region where there was little knowledge of humanitarian law. Dissemination efforts were largely geared to explaining the significance of the red cross and red crescent emblems and the protection they afforded to conflict victims and the humanitarian workers who came to their aid. In the course of their field work, delegates also regularly explained the ICRC's role as a neutral and impartial intermediary in the context of the Chechen armed conflict. Dissemination seminars organized for Russian Federation troops under the responsibility of the Ministries of Defence and the Interior and for border guard units stationed in the northern Caucasus proved to be particularly important.

Elsewhere in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), presentations and courses on the law of war were held for the armed forces, including in military academies in Moscow, as well as in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine. These courses were also aimed at training officers and military instructors so that they could in turn pass on their knowledge to troops in the field. At the end of October the President of the ICRC invited high-ranking officers from the Russian Federation, India, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States to a round-table discussion on humanitarian law and its implementation by the military; one of the objectives was to emphasize the crucial role of the armed forces in applying the rules of international humanitarian law.

An ICRC programme aimed at promoting universal humanitarian values among schoolchildren was launched in several newly independent States with a view to introducing the teaching of the humanitarian principles into secondary school curricula over a period of several years. The new ICRC textbooks introduce the humanitarian principles through the teaching of literature and

IN 1995 THE ICRC:

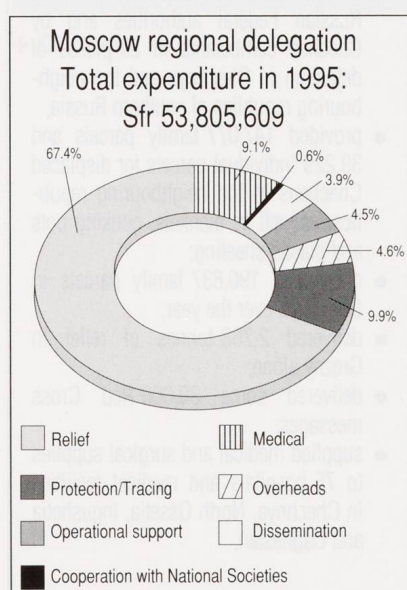
- produced 21 new publications in Russian, and printed 254,700 copies, including textbooks for schoolchildren;
- distributed 170,000 textbooks and teaching materials for the new ICRC dissemination in schools programme;
- visited some 700 detainees held by Russian Federal authorities and by Chechen combatants in 25 places of detention in Chechnya and the neighbouring republics of southern Russia;
- provided 147,077 family parcels and 39,229 individual parcels for displaced Chechens in the neighbouring republics, as well as blankets, cooking pots and plastic sheeting;
- distributed 190,837 family parcels in Chechnya over the year;
- delivered 2,753 tonnes of relief in Grozny alone;
- delivered some 30,000 Red Cross messages;
- supplied medical and surgical supplies to 75 hospitals and medical facilities in Chechnya, North Ossetia, Ingushetia and Daghestan.

contain exercises requiring active involvement of the pupils in the discussion of ethical issues. A teacher's manual is included and all teachers participating in the programme follow introductory seminars. Having distributed 20,000 textbooks and manuals based on materials produced in Geneva, the regional delegation in Moscow went on to draw up a completely new pilot manual with the help of local specialists, and 144,000 exercise books and 6,400 teachers' manuals were printed for distribution in Moscow, the northern Caucasus and eight other areas of the Russian Federation.

The ICRC maintained close links with universities and higher education institutions throughout the CIS, in particular with the Moscow State University and the Moscow Diplomatic Academy, among others. Its overall goal was to introduce courses on humanitarian law into the law and journalism faculties of those universities. To this end, sets of reference texts were translated by the ICRC and presented to university libraries. The institution also received special invitations to address several prestigious annual meetings, including those of the Russian Association of International Law and the Academic Vice-Deans of Russian Universities, and participated in Council of Europe and UNESCO conferences.

An information delegate kept in regular contact with the local and foreign press, both in Moscow and in the field, to increase public awareness and acceptance of the ICRC's humanitarian work in the northern Caucasus. Media representatives showed great interest in covering ICRC field activities, such as its water and sanitation and medical assistance programmes, and more general subjects, for example presentations on the Movement. ICRC films and interviews were broadcast on the occasion of Red Cross and Red Crescent Day on 8 May. The ICRC's travelling exhibition, *Humanity in the Midst of War*, gave delegates the opportunity to inform officials and members of the media about the ICRC's tasks as the show passed through Moscow, Nalchik, Nizhniy Novgorod and Yekaterinburg. Visitors to the exhibition included members of local government and locally based armed forces. Another booklet, entitled *Who are we, the delegates of the ICRC*, and a set of five pocket calendars with humanitarian law messages were also translated into Russian and distributed to soldiers at checkpoints and to field commanders in the conflict area in the northern Caucasus.

In 1995 the biggest challenge for the institution in the area of dissemination remained the huge distances involved when it came to contacting far-flung local committees of the Russian Red Cross. However, despite all the logistical problems, ICRC staff managed to hold seminars throughout the region covered by the delegation and to maintain links with district branches in order to promote cooperation in dissemination matters, give advice on questions of internal organization and discuss the basis of dissemination work and ways of



strengthening respect for the Fundamental Red Cross and Red Crescent Principles. The series of seminars begun in 1993 entered its second phase in 1995: a regional network of dissemination officers in charge of strengthening the image and identity of the Red Cross and giving it a higher public profile was set up during three seminars held in Siberia, the Urals and Moscow.

Chechen conflict

The escalation in hostilities in Chechnya in the second half of 1994 and the open advance of Federal troops on Grozny in December 1994 had marked the beginning of a large-scale ICRC humanitarian operation directed from the institution's sub-delegation in Nalchik (Kabardino-Balkaria) and its offices in Nazran (Ingushetia) and Khasavyurt (Daghestan). In relation to this conflict the ICRC emphasized the applicability of Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocol II thereto. In a meeting in Geneva with the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs in mid-January, the ICRC President stressed in particular the obligation of the parties under international humanitarian law to spare civilians and their property. The ICRC also presented a memorandum asking for a humanitarian truce to enable civilians, casualties and mortal remains to be evacuated from Grozny. The ICRC at that time also reiterated a request for access to all prisoners held on both sides in relation to the conflict and for the authorities to smooth out various administrative and customs problems that prevented the institution from providing humanitarian aid quickly where it was most needed. By the end of June Russian Federal troops held most of the territory, including Grozny and the towns of Argun, Shali and Gudermes. The mountainous regions and some villages in the southern plains remained under the control of the pro-Dudayev fighters.

Civilians fleeing hostilities early in the year sought refuge in the neighbouring republics: some 100,000 in Ingushetia and as many in Daghestan; others made their way towards North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and elsewhere in southern Russia; and another 200,000 or so fled to southern Chechnya. At the beginning of April these people started to return, although continued pressure from Federal troops driving the Chechen separatist fighters back into the mountains triggered successive new waves of displaced persons to Daghestan and Ingushetia. By early June the main separatist strongholds of Nozhayurt, Vedeno and Shatoi had been captured by Federal troops. The subsequent taking of some 1,500 hostages by Chechen separatist fighters in Budennovsk was followed by peace talks at the end of June. By late July a cease-fire agreement had been hammered out between the parties, at which point the situation stabilized somewhat. The ICRC was then able to begin repairs on hospitals and other medical facilities throughout the region and shift

the emphasis of its assistance programmes from relief for the general population affected by the hostilities to aid for the most vulnerable members of the displaced community and other needy people not only in Chechnya, but also in Daghestan and Ingushetia.

Negotiations between Russian authorities and Chechen separatist combatants reached a deadlock from early October, with a gradual but constant increase in security incidents which hampered the efforts of ICRC delegates, particularly in Grozny. The situation in Chechnya underwent a sudden deterioration in December. The decision to hold presidential elections, in conjunction with legislative elections to be held in the Russian Federation, caused an upsurge in the violence all over Chechnya; this in turn prompted all international humanitarian organizations, with the exception of the ICRC, temporarily to suspend their activities in Grozny from mid-December. The Chechen separatist forces launched an offensive on 14 December and took control of part of the Federal-held town of Gudermes. Federal troops reacted by unleashing a large-scale attack to recapture the town, causing 25% of the population to take flight. The ICRC gave whatever medical assistance it could for the wounded in the surrounding area, and distributed relief supplies to displaced people arriving in Daghestan. As soon as access to Gudermes became possible the ICRC provided the population with relief and medical supplies, and water and sanitation assistance.

Activities for the civilian population

Throughout the year the institution made repeated appeals to all the parties to respect the basic humanitarian rules and to ensure that civilians and people detained in connection with the hostilities were well treated. Following acceptance of an ICRC memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister in February, urging the authorities to facilitate a humanitarian truce so that wounded combatants and civilians and the dead could be evacuated from Grozny, the ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary in the removal of mortal remains. In view of the intensity of the fighting and the flagrant violations of international humanitarian law, delegates remained on the alert to prevent whatever acts of brutality they could from being committed against the population, as well as the indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas. ICRC delegates intervened on numerous occasions in the field during the hostilities and their aftermath to try and protect civilians from abuse on the part of the warring parties and made representations to this end at all levels.

A major relief operation was launched in the northern Caucasus at the beginning of the year to provide more than 250,000 displaced people in Chechnya, Daghestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia and

elsewhere in the region with family and individual food parcels and aid in the form of blankets, soap, warm clothes and plastic sheeting. Of Grozny's remaining 120,000 inhabitants, 70,000 depended on ICRC assistance as of February; this was provided at distribution points set up and manned by volunteers. In mid-April the inhabitants who had left began returning to the city as conditions improved in the north of Chechnya and by May the population had once more increased to over 200,000 (former population 400,000) and normal life began to resume. Between March and June displaced people fleeing the slowly southward-moving conflict also received food aid in Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia and other neighbouring regions in the Russian Federation. Consecutive waves of approximately 70,000 and 30,000 displaced people fled to Ingushetia in April and May respectively. The ICRC distributed three rounds of food parcels for the displaced in Ingushetia with the help of the local Red Crescent, and provided cooking pots, soap, blankets, plastic sheeting and clothing for those not staying with host families but sheltering in public buildings. Elsewhere the delivery of humanitarian aid was hampered by problems in obtaining the necessary permission for the passage of humanitarian convoys both in Daghestan and in southern Chechnya. Fierce fighting and poor security conditions in most of southern Chechnya prevented ICRC relief supplies from reaching much of this area, although by the end of May most regions became accessible again.

Over the year more than half a million people in Chechnya and in the neighbouring republics of Daghestan and Ingushetia, as well as in Grozny and surrounding areas, received family parcels. An increasing number of displaced people who were returning to Chechnya received non-food packages. Distributions of children's clothing were carried out in the south.

Towards the end of 1995 delegates had difficulty in carrying out relief distributions in Grozny and were at times physically threatened. In southern Chechnya, where access was not always guaranteed and the delivery of humanitarian aid also became increasingly difficult, some of the distributions had to be cancelled for security reasons. Following the large-scale military operation in Gudermes from 14 to 25 December, the number of displaced swelled rapidly to 20,000 to 25,000 individuals: of these 15,000 to 20,000 took refuge in Khasavyurt, Daghestan, with host families and some 6,000 people found shelter in empty public buildings, where they were provided with food and blankets. Although it did not succeed in persuading the Federal troops and Chechen separatist fighters to agree on a cease-fire for humanitarian reasons, on 26 December the ICRC finally managed to gain authorization for a convoy of 15 tonnes of relief supplies — including food, blankets, candles, plastic sheeting and children's clothing for 2,000 people — to have access to the town. This was followed by two further convoys, respectively carrying 50 tonnes and

32 tonnes of food and other aid for 11,000 people, on 30 December 1995 and 4 January 1996.

Activities for detainees

In the course of the year ICRC delegates visited 700 detainees in 25 places of detention in Chechnya and the neighbouring republics.

The ICRC found that authorization to carry out visits to detainees held by the Russian authorities was sporadically suspended, but over the year it did manage to visit some 530 people in permanent places of detention and transit detention centres. Delegates provided non-food assistance and forwarded Red Cross messages when the need arose.

The ICRC was able to visit Russian Federation detainees held by Chechen separatist forces early in the year, but between March and June military operations made such visits impossible. Contact was restored with the Chechen separatist fighters at the end of June and visits to detainees held by them were resumed in August. In 1995 the ICRC visited some 170 people held by Chechen separatist combatants.

Tracing activities

Following the battle for Grozny, which lasted from December 1994 to February 1995, the ICRC launched a large-scale operation to restore family ties between people separated as a result of the conflict. For the tens of thousands of people left behind in Grozny, and those who fled the city and other parts of Chechnya, the Red Cross tracing network was the only means of communicating with relatives with whom they had lost all contact. In Grozny itself delegates set up a Red Cross message network comprising 18 collection and distribution points throughout the city. Some 30,000 messages were exchanged until the postal services resumed between Chechnya and the outside world in early June. This in part obviated the need for the ICRC network and the number of messages declined. Delegates did, however, continue to deliver Red Cross messages for detainees.

Throughout 1995 the ICRC worked to increase its contacts with the parties concerned in order to obtain information about people reported missing in Chechnya.

Medical activities

In the summer of 1994, in anticipation of a further deterioration in the situation in Chechnya, the ICRC had begun supplying emergency medical assistance to hospitals in the region, to help them to cope with the in-

creasing numbers of war-wounded. Following the escalation in hostilities in December 1994, this aid was stepped up to cover overburdened facilities caring for displaced people in Daghestan, Ingushetia and the Stavropol region. Medicines to treat chronic diseases such as diabetes, asthma, thyroid and cardiovascular conditions were also distributed to various hospitals in the neighbouring republics and in Stavropol Krai. After the cease-fire agreement was reached in late July the ICRC carried out repairs to Hospital No. 4 in Grozny so that it could resume functioning; many other hospitals in the city had been damaged beyond repair. Some 20 hospitals and ten health facilities and first-aid posts regularly received emergency medicines and surgical supplies and basic drugs for primary health care, while a team of medical delegates continually monitored their needs. In neighbouring Daghestan the ICRC assisted nine outpatient clinics and four hospitals in the Khasavyurt area, where 60,000 displaced Chechens had sought refuge. Medical facilities caring for the displaced also received ICRC aid in Ingushetia and Stavropol Krai.

When the displaced began returning to their homes the ICRC wound down its activities in the neighbouring republics and focused on restoring the badly damaged medical infrastructure. Rehabilitation work was carried out in Hospital No. 4 in Grozny and other medical establishments in Argun, Gudermes, Shali, Urus Martan and Shatoi and the power supply and sanitation conditions were upgraded. The hospitals also received both specialized equipment and more general supplies, as well as urgently needed medicines for chronic diseases.

The ICRC provided assistance to the polyclinic in Budennovsk during the hostage crisis in June, to help care for inhabitants injured in the course of events. Following the outbreak of hostilities in Gudermes on 14 December, two tonnes of emergency medical supplies were delivered towards the end of the month, first to the area surrounding the city and, when access was restored, to the city itself.

During their visits to detention centres, ICRC medical personnel assessed the detainees' health and provided the centres' medical services with basic equipment and medicines.

Water and sanitation

The intense fighting, especially at the beginning of the year, caused serious damage to electricity supply lines, pumping stations and water pipes. The water distribution network for Grozny and an area within a 50-km radius of the city had almost completely broken down. The shortage of drinking water, in a region where cholera and diphtheria are endemic, became a source of serious concern, particularly with the return of warmer weather. The ICRC accordingly set up a water distribution network, which in the early stages used 12 tankers to transport 120,000 litres of drinking water daily from Goragorsk, 50 km west of Grozny, to

a dozen distribution points and reservoirs in the city. In July the distribution system was operating at peak output: more than 750,000 litres of water to meet the needs of 100,000 people were trucked in every day from a nearby station, chlorinated and delivered to 50 distribution points throughout the city by 15 ICRC tanker trucks. Chlorinated water was also supplied to *Médecins sans Frontières (Belgium)* and Merlin (a British medical relief agency) for distribution in places where those agencies were working. ICRC water and sanitation experts went to villages to the south of Grozny to assess the water supply situation there: wells were sunk and equipped to supply damaged schools and hospitals, and water distribution systems were set up in some of the villages.

When fighting erupted in Gudermes on 14 December, the ICRC immediately began trucking in 64,000 litres of drinking water a day, as the destruction of power lines had put the local pumping station out of operation. An ICRC water and sanitation engineer remained in the city to plan repairs to the water distribution system.

Cooperation with the National Society

A cooperation agreement was signed with the Russian Red Cross, whereby the National Society's tracing service was to forward family messages collected at ICRC offices in the northern Caucasus to addressees in the Russian Federation. Tracing activities and relief programmes were carried out in close cooperation with the local Red Cross and Red Crescent committees in Ingushetia (where there were more than 100,000 displaced people), North Ossetia and Kabardino-Balkaria (7,500 and 6,000 displaced people respectively). The Ingush Republic had already had to cope with people displaced as a result of the Ossetian-Ingush confrontation, and a memorandum of understanding between the ICRC and the local Ingush committee stipulated that the ICRC would provide the necessary financial, administrative and logistic support for it to carry out its share of relief work.

Under one of its most ambitious cooperation programmes with National Societies, the ICRC drafted a series of memoranda of understanding with local committees in the northern Caucasus, detailing the cooperation in relief, tracing and medical activities and the general assistance to be furnished by the institution. Ultimately, this programme aims to strengthen the operational capacities of these branches by helping them define and develop community relevant activities and thereby, in the longer term, find local financial support. The ICRC funded a local Chechen branch of the Russian Red Cross home nursing programme for 35 nurses who make regular visits to some 300 elderly and disabled people in Grozny. As of 25 December a community kitchen

programme providing people with one hot meal a day was implemented in Grozny in the parts of the city worst affected by the recent fighting.

Ingushetia and North Ossetia

The North Ossetian-Ingush conflict, while no longer active, was still not resolved in 1995. The ICRC therefore continued to monitor the situation in the region, particularly in the Prigorodny region. Delegates carried out visits to three Ingush detainees held in relation to this conflict.

The Caucasus

ARMENIA/AZERBAIJAN

The cease-fire agreed upon in May 1994 was generally respected in 1995 although clashes broke out almost weekly, with the worst occurring in March and in September, on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. A number of civilians and combatants were wounded or killed in the fighting and civilian buildings were damaged. Sporadic incidents also took place during the year on the front lines between Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh. The number of refugees and displaced people in Azerbaijan remained well in excess of 700,000 and became a major concern as winter approached. ICRC operations concentrated on the front-line districts and the Fizuli district in particular.




In February the Minsk Group, set up by the OSCE in 1992, met in Moscow to begin a new round of discussions aimed at reaching a peaceful settlement to the long-standing conflict, but once again no results were achieved on the political front. The ICRC was present on the final day of the meeting when humanitarian questions were on the agenda. A second series of talks held in June in Helsinki after the Minsk Group's visit to Yerevan and Stepanakert in April and June led to some progress in the drafting of a general security agreement designed to pave the way for official negotiations regarding the status of Nagorny Karabakh; and the ICRC also participated in November at another meeting of the Minsk Group when humanitarian issues were being discussed. In another encouraging development, Armenian and Azerbaijani officials held their first bilateral talks without mediators at the end of the year; both parties described their meeting as positive.

In early April the ICRC President paid an official visit to Armenia, during which he held talks with the Head of State, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. In Yerevan he also met the President of the Nagorny Karabakh parliament. He then went on to Azerbaijan where he had discussions

IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- visited some 220 people detained in relation to the conflict; 150 of them were subsequently released and transferred to their places of origin under ICRC auspices;
- produced 30,000 textbooks and 2,000 teachers' manuals for the ICRC schools programme aimed at promoting humanitarian values among school-children;
- distributed 9,500 food parcels and 28 tonnes of relief to families and the war-disabled in Armenia;
- provided 41,100 food parcels and 155 tonnes of supplies for the families in Azerbaijan and the population of Fizuli on the front line;
- distributed 679 tonnes of food and 50 tonnes of relief in Nagorny Karabakh;
- distributed some 6,000 blankets and 25,000 candles to the population in Nakhichevan.



 ICRC delegation
  ICRC presence
  Prosthetic/orthotic centre/workshop

with the President, the Foreign Minister and the Minister for Labour and Social Welfare.

The ICRC was one of a large number of international humanitarian organizations providing different types of assistance in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh. In keeping with its mandate, the institution focused on various issues, such as access to and the protection of prisoners held in relation to the conflict and people detained for security or ethnic reasons; the prevention of discrimination against civilian minorities; assistance to vulnerable groups on the front lines and efforts to restore family ties through the Red Cross message network.

Activities for detainees

The ICRC continued to visit both civilians and combatants held in relation to the hostilities, and requested that they be released at the end of active hostilities, as provided for under international humanitarian law. In both Armenia and Azerbaijan

delegates encountered some difficulties in carrying out their visits, as detaining authorities had not systematically notified them of people arrested and did not permit visits to be conducted in all places of detention. As a result of the numerous representations made by the institution, some 150 prisoners held by the three parties to the conflict, and previously visited by the ICRC, were released and repatriated in several operations carried out under ICRC auspices. The largest of these took place in May when some 90 prisoners were freed. Further prisoners were released without the ICRC's participation. However, at year's end, delegates were still visiting over 70 individuals detained in relation to the conflict and who should have been released, as active hostilities had ceased over a year and a half before.

The ICRC also visited Azerbaijani citizens of Armenian origin and Russian nationals detained in Azerbaijan and continued to seek authorization to carry out visits to detainees held for security reasons. In Armenia the ICRC reached

an agreement with the authorities concerning visits to detainees falling under the ICRC mandate and these were planned to start in February 1996.

Activities for the civilian population

The ICRC closely monitored the treatment of civilians, and minorities in particular, and stood ready to take action with the authorities to protect these people from discrimination. This included assisting ethnic Armenians living in Azerbaijan, mainly in Baku, in their efforts to obtain the same government benefits as Azeri citizens, in particular regarding pensions and official documents. In other cases the ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary in arranging for the repatriation of people or their transport between the different countries of the region.

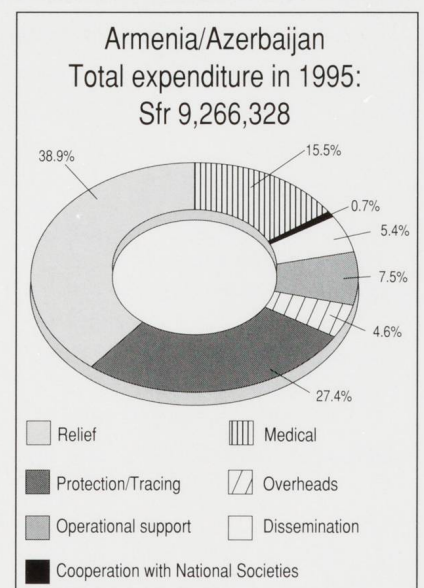
Armenia

In April and May the ICRC distributed food parcels, candles and shoes to 3,330 families (17,000 people) who had lost their breadwinners as a result of the hostilities. Another distribution to the same group took place in September, this time including 2,500 war disabled. The ICRC programme for vulnerable groups directly affected by the conflict — approximately 8,000 families living in the north-eastern border districts — went on through the winter of 1994/1995; it was carried out by the American Red Cross with the help of the Armenian Red Cross Society and provided food parcels, flour, cooking oil, soap and candles to these families.

Azerbaijan

The ICRC provided food parcels every two months to 3,500 vulnerable families living in the eight front-line districts of Barda, Terter, Agdam, Kasakh, Tovuz, Gedabek, Agstafa and Fizuli. This operation was taken over in October as an ICRC-delegated project by the American Red Cross, working in cooperation with the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society. The new programme was aimed at providing food and other items to some 8,000 resident families with members falling into the following five categories of vulnerable individuals: invalids, the elderly, widows and orphans and the destitute.

The ICRC continued to distribute food and other relief supplies for the entire population in the Fizuli district until May. The district was particularly hard hit by the fighting, which left part of the area under Azerbaijani control and the other part under Karabakhi control. As some of the population was gradually regaining self-sufficiency, the ICRC's activities targeted about 15,000 displaced people and 10,000 particularly vulnerable individuals among the returnee and local population.



Delegates conducted a survey in Nagorny Karabakh in the course of the year to assess needs in the enclave. Despite the cease-fire, the effects of the armed conflict and the consequences of recent economic reform had resulted in hardship for large segments of the population. Few humanitarian organizations were present in the region and poverty became a growing concern. The ICRC focused its assistance on vulnerable groups, and in June launched a relief programme for 27,000 elderly people throughout the territory. Over the summer a general distribution of supplies was carried out in Stepanakert for some 55,000 people, followed by another relief distribution for 18,000 elderly people in rural areas throughout Nagorny Karabakh; this also included large families in need. In addition, food aid was provided to a number of prisons.

The autonomous republic of Nakhichevan, which suffered considerable hardship under the blockade resulting from the conflict, received ICRC assistance in February and June in the form of 6,000 blankets and 25,000 candles to help the population through harsh winter months.

Tracing activities

Since the beginning of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict Red Cross messages have provided the only means of contact between detainees and their families. Large numbers of civilians with no other means of corresponding with family members have also benefited from this service. Over the year 8,866 Red Cross messages were exchanged.

As part of its efforts to trace missing persons and restore family ties, the ICRC continued to try and convince the parties of their responsibility to provide information on people unaccounted for, and in particular to shed some light on the fate of several hundred servicemen listed as missing after the final phase of hostilities between December 1993 and May 1994. In May 1995 it submitted a memorandum to the authorities concerned to remind them of their obligation to respect the relevant rules of international humanitarian law. Delegates gathered the names of missing persons from relatives and travelled to remote regions to contact people who were unable to come to ICRC offices to register their tracing requests. In August the names of 488 missing people were passed on to the Armenian, Azerbaijani and Nagorny Karabakh authorities.

Health activities

Apart from the two outbreaks of fighting in March and September the front lines remained quiet and the number of war casualties declined. Most of the people wounded during the year were victims of either landmine explosions or snipers' bullets.

Medical needs in Armenia were covered by the local health care system or other organizations, and ICRC medical activities were concerned solely with detainees. In Azerbaijan the number of war-wounded diminished noticeably. The ICRC continued its tours of hospitals on both sides of the front line but was able to reduce its medical assistance. ICRC distributions of medical supplies to prison dispensaries and to hospitals treating detainees, along with representations to the authorities to improve certain conditions, led to better health among the detainee population. An experimental programme to combat tuberculosis in the prison hospital run by the Ministry of Justice in Baku was launched in June, with 84 patients under treatment by year's end.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in Baku and the Azerbaijan Red Crescent, the ICRC set up a project aimed at providing hundreds of war amputees in the region with artificial limbs. Once the prosthetic/orthotic centre had been completed, ICRC specialists began producing orthopaedic appliances and holding training courses for local staff as of May. The first prostheses were ready in August and 108 people had received their artificial limbs by the end of 1995.

In Nagorny Karabakh the ICRC provided facilities treating the war-wounded with medical supplies when needed. There were considerably fewer requirements than in the previous year as a result of the cease-fire. A programme to restore water supply systems in the enclave had begun in October 1994. The facilities of several medical establishments were upgraded during 1995 and sanitary facilities were repaired or replaced by ICRC engineers. In Azerbaijan an assessment of the water distribution network was carried out in the Fizuli district late in the year with a view to possible ICRC involvement in the rehabilitation of installations.

Dissemination

Following the cease-fire in 1994 the ICRC had stepped up its activities on both sides of the front line to spread knowledge of humanitarian law, focusing on the link between this and traditional values rooted in local culture. Dissemination courses were organized regularly in 1995 for the military in Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh. In Azerbaijan humanitarian law was incorporated into army training programmes and ICRC presentations were given to members of the armed forces. During a mission to Nakhichevan in March delegates gave talks on humanitarian law and distributed dissemination brochures and first-aid kits, each containing a booklet on the basic humanitarian rules, to 1,700 troops and border guards under the responsibility of the Ministries of Defence and the Interior, respectively.

The ICRC continued to produce publications in Armenian and Azeri for use by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the two countries and for distribution to the general public. These publications took different and original forms: calendars, strip cartoons, and a puppet play based on a popular Armenian epic for children in Nagorny Karabakh; and a video clip highlighting the need to respect one's fellow human beings at all times was composed by an Armenian artist and sung by various well-known performers. First-aid kits containing booklets on the basic rules to be observed by combatants and triangular armbands illustrating the essential rules of behaviour in combat were distributed to the military in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Tajikistan and the Russian Federation, including the northern Caucasus.

The ICRC pilot programme for secondary schools, developed for the various newly independent States, was launched in both Armenia and Azerbaijan: the textbooks introduce humanitarian ethics and international humanitarian law through the teaching of literature. A first version was distributed to 30,000 students in both countries in 1995, and by the end of the year work was almost finished on a totally new textbook based on Armenian and Azeri literature, to be handed out in 1996.

The ICRC also used TV slots to remind combatants of the importance of respecting civilian lives and property, prisoners and the red cross and red crescent emblems.

Cooperation with National Societies

In November both the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society and the Armenian Red Cross Society were officially recognized as full members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Cooperation agreements were signed with the Azerbaijan Red Crescent to refurbish a local dormitory for those patients attending the rehabilitation centre for the war-disabled set up by the ICRC. In October the ICRC programme for the distribution of family parcels in districts on the front lines was taken over as an ICRC-delegated project by the American Red Cross, in cooperation with the local Red Crescent.

The Armenian Red Cross worked with the American Red Cross in another ICRC-delegated project to distribute sugar and jar lids for bottling fruit and vegetables. Local Red Cross staff also participated, with the ICRC delegation, in the schools programme and served as information officers.

Special projects were implemented by the ICRC to help develop the skills of the Armenian Red Cross and the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Societies in the fields of relief and dissemination work, and to provide training and material support for their respective tracing services. In September representatives of those services attended in a tracing seminar in Tbilisi.

GEORGIA

No major hostilities had broken out since the establishment of the cease-fire between Georgia and the Abkhaz separatists in May 1994 and the creation of a buffer zone along the Inguri river, monitored by CIS peace-keeping forces under UNOMIG* supervision. However, in 1995 sporadic armed clashes between Abkhaz and various Georgian para-military groups occurred along the dividing line, killing a number of civilians and combatants on or near the front lines. Hostages, mostly civilians, were also taken by both sides, though they were subsequently released. In May the mandate of the peace-keeping forces was extended to the end of the year.

The ongoing negotiations failed to remove the two main obstacles to resolving the conflict: first, the status of Abkhazia; and second, arrangements for the return of over 250,000 displaced people who had fled to western Georgia after the capture of Sukhumi by Abkhaz forces in September 1993.

One of the principal ICRC concerns over the course of the year was the situation of civilians in general and that of the non-Abkhaz communities living in Abkhazia, in particular Georgians and Russians. In view of the hazardous security conditions, the upsurge in violence and crime, and the fact that Abkhazia remained isolated as a result of the economic embargo imposed by Russia at the end of 1994, the ICRC largely focused its activities in this region on relief and medical assistance, water and sanitation programmes, and on the protection of non-Abkhaz communities.

Dissemination became an increasingly important component of the work of ICRC delegates throughout the Caucasus. Special efforts were made to draw parallels between the ICRC message and the values rooted in local culture in order to reach the institution's various target groups, including the military.

One of the most serious consequences of the past hostilities was the problem of landmines throughout the southern Caucasus. The ICRC's



ICRC / AR 12.95

IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- delivered 20,268 family parcels and 305,439 individual parcels to vulnerable people in western Georgia and Abkhazia;
- visited 180 detainees held in relation to the conflict and to the situation within Georgia;
- fitted some 206 people with artificial limbs.

* UNOMIG: United Nations Monitoring and Observation Mission in Georgia

database concerning landmine victims, and close cooperation with the Halo Trust mine-clearing agency and *Médecins sans Frontières (France)* in Abkhazia, served to identify mine-infested areas and the people most at risk. The ICRC also expanded its work and support for prosthetic/orthotic facilities to help them deal with the increasing number of war amputees.

The disbanding of the *Mkhedrioni* militia and the arrest of their leader following a failed assassination attempt against the Georgian President in late August, the entry into force of a new constitution in October, and the President's re-election in November all contributed to a return to greater stability, which became noticeable in Tbilisi by the end of 1995.

Over the year the ICRC maintained a permanent presence in Tbilisi, Zugdidi, Kutaisi, Sukhumi and Gagra. Tbilisi continued to serve as a logistics base for ICRC activities in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the delegation there occasionally provided additional staff for the northern Caucasus.

Activities for the civilian population

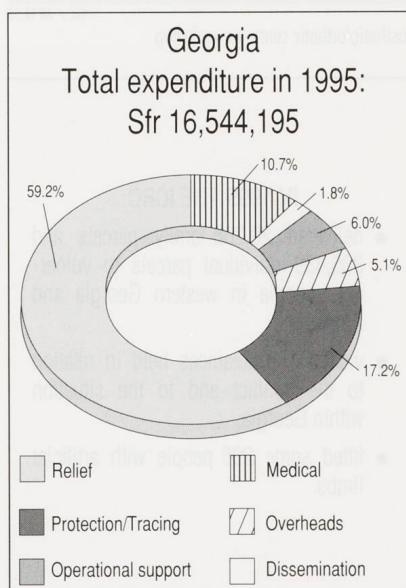
The protection of minority groups, in particular the situation of the non-Abkhaz communities living in Abkhazia, remained the ICRC's main priority. These groups included Georgians, Mingrelians and Russians, and the institution made every possible representation to the authorities to urge them to ensure the safety of these people. The 35,000 Mingrelians in the Gali area enjoyed some degree of protection as a result of the presence of UNOMIG military observers, CIS peace-keepers and UNHCR. However, more than 40,000 elderly Georgians and Russians living in other parts of Abkhazia relied solely on ICRC help.

The assistance programme for pensioners continued to reach 50,000 to 56,000 elderly people in Abkhazia. Four food-parcel distributions were carried out over the course of the year, while 13 community kitchens in Gulripsh, Sukhumi and Tkvarcheli provided meals for more than 5,000 vulnerable people each month.

In South Ossetia and western Georgia 5,826 food parcels and 141,891 individual parcels were distributed to internally displaced people and elderly pensioners living alone. Towards the end of the year, the gradual return to stability enabled the ICRC to phase out its food aid, which was taken over by other humanitarian agencies. The ICRC nevertheless continued to monitor the situation and maintained its contingency stocks in Tbilisi.

Activities for detainees

In 1995 ICRC delegates carried out visits to people detained in Tbilisi, Abkhazia and other parts of western Georgia. They saw some 180 detainees held in relation to the Georgian/Abkhaz internal armed conflict or as a result



of the fighting between government troops and supporters of the former Georgian President that had taken place in Tbilisi in early 1992 and in Mingrelia in the autumn of 1993.

As the ICRC was not always able to conduct visits to certain categories of detainees — particularly in Tbilisi — in accordance with its standard working procedures, it made representations to the highest authorities with a view to securing such guarantees.

During his visit to Georgia in April, the ICRC President received official authorization for delegates to visit almost all security detainees, and in May and July they were able to carry out the first complete visit to the main security prison in Tbilisi.

The attempt on the Georgian President's life at the end of August set off a new series of arrests, and the ICRC started negotiating access to the individuals concerned, although by the end of the year it had been able to visit and register only a very few of them.

Tracing activities

Over the year 114,784 Red Cross messages, (i.e. an average of 10,000 a month) were exchanged through the Red Cross message network. The demand was especially high on both sides of the front line between Georgia and Abkhazia because of the absence of postal services.

About 160 individuals were transferred, at their own request, to different parts of the country. As most of the requests were motivated by deteriorating living conditions among the minorities living in Abkhazia, the criteria governing eligibility for transfer had to be broadened to encompass these individuals. Many elderly people asked to be transferred so that they could stay with relatives in other parts of Georgia — some of them on medical grounds and others for reasons prompted by the prevailing insecurity, the fact of living alone or the lack of financial resources.

Health activities

Owing to Abkhazia's economic isolation, there was a general shortage of medicines in the region, especially drugs to treat chronic diseases. Delegates monitored the situation over the year and furnished two major health facilities and a dispensary in Sukhumi with medical supplies. The ICRC also provided fuel and financial support to help cover personnel costs, so that local medical staff could hold daily consultations and make home visits. Throughout Georgia the health situation was poor and outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as diphtheria and tuberculosis, were common.

The number of war-wounded — most of them civilians — as a result of clashes along the front line between Georgia and Abkhazia, rose slightly in early 1995, mainly in the Gali district. Starting in February the ICRC increased its stocks of medicines and medical supplies in Sukhumi in preparation for any renewed upsurge in the fighting. New contingency stocks were also set up in Gagra and Zugdidi, and an ICRC field nurse regularly went to facilities treating the war-wounded to deliver urgently needed medical and surgical supplies.

ICRC prosthetic/orthotic workshops launched in Tbilisi and Gagra in July 1994 were manufacturing artificial limbs by March 1995. Training courses for local staff were implemented, including patient management and physiotherapy programmes for those receiving prostheses. About two-thirds of the people requiring prosthetic/orthotic treatment for conflict-related injuries were landmine victims. In all, 206 people were fitted with artificial limbs over the year, with some 540 officially remaining on the waiting list.

By June an ICRC water and sanitation project aimed at improving conditions in four hospitals in Abkhazia had been completed: roofs were repaired, and water pipes and sanitary facilities were installed to step up the hospitals' working capacity.

Dissemination

The promotion of international humanitarian law remained an ICRC priority and special efforts were made to incorporate local culture and traditions in dissemination material. A 1995 calendar, with pictures and text drawn from local art and literature, was printed and distributed locally and 25,000 first-aid kits, each containing a booklet on the basic humanitarian rules, were distributed to the armed forces on both sides of the front line.

Fifty-two seminars were organized for civil and military authorities in Georgia and Abkhazia, CIS peace-keeping forces and United Nations observers. Publications on humanitarian law were translated into the local languages and films on ICRC activities were dubbed for use by local Red Cross committees.

A pilot programme, carried out in 84 schools in Tbilisi and reaching over 3,000 12-year-olds, aimed to teach solidarity, tolerance and respect for minorities in six hours of story-telling and practical exercises. The programme was later extended to Zugdidi in western Georgia. A new and greatly improved teaching cycle promoting humanitarian values through lessons based on Georgian history and literature was also in preparation.

In September, in cooperation with Georgian state television, the ICRC produced a 40-minute documentary on the work of its delegates in Georgia, entitled *A symbol of hope*. Video-clips on landmine awareness were also shown in Abkhazia and other parts of western Georgia.

Central Asia

TAJIKISTAN

As a result of the cease-fire concluded in September 1994 under United Nations auspices, the situation in Tajikistan remained relatively stable, although there was a noticeable increase in the violent clashes between Russian Border Guards and Tajik government forces on one side, and Tajik Islamic opposition fighters on the other. These broke out particularly in the Gorno-Badakhshan autonomous region, the Tavildara area, the Garm valley and on the southern border with Afghanistan, causing deaths and injuries on both sides. Civilians in northern Afghan areas were also reportedly affected by these hostilities.

In April the government forces responded by deploying additional troops along the Tavildara-Khorog road, and in the Tavildara region and the Garm valley; by August they had regained control of nearly all the road leading from Tavildara to Khorog. Opposition fighters remained concentrated in the Vanch and Yazgulum valleys. In May 1995 the cease-fire agreement was extended once again to the end of August 1995, and then to the end of February 1996. In June occasional skirmishes caused tension to rise in the Kurgan-Tyube region; these culminated in an outbreak of hostilities in September between two brigades formerly belonging to the opposition and then incorporated into the Tajik army. In late October there were violent confrontations in the Tavildara valley between government and opposition forces, following failed negotiations to demilitarize an area to the east of Tavildara. Sporadic fighting also took place in the Garm area.

High-level consultations between the Tajik government and representatives of the opposition were held in Moscow in April, with the participation of observers from Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakstan, Pakistan, the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan. These were followed by a fourth round of inter-Tajik talks on reconciliation, originally planned for December 1994, which took place under UN auspices in the Kazak capital of Almaty from 22 May to 1 June. In



⊕ ICRC regional delegation

⊕ ICRC delegation

⊕ ICRC presence

ICRC / AR 12.95

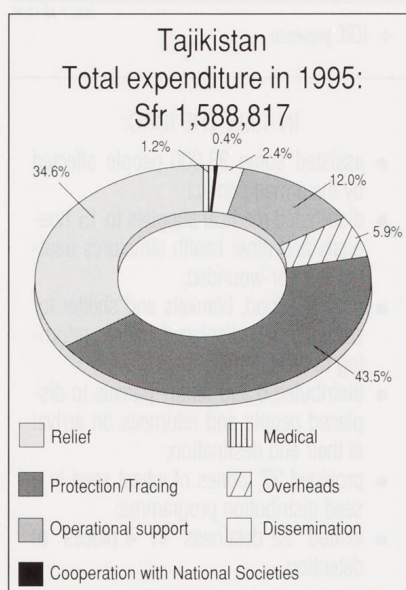
IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- assisted some 33,000 people affected by the armed conflict;
- distributed medical supplies to 15 hospitals and other health structures treating the war-wounded;
- provided food, blankets and shelter for some 27,300 displaced people returning to their homes;
- distributed 6,599 family parcels to displaced people and returnees on arrival at their end destination;
- provided 37 tonnes of wheat seed in a seed distribution programme;
- visited 22 detainees in 4 places of detention.

addition to the observers who attended the high-level consultations in Moscow, this series of inter-Tajik talks was attended by representatives from the OSCE, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the ICRC as observers. The ICRC used this forum to share its humanitarian concerns.

As a result of this fourth round of discussions the two sides “agreed, with a view to strengthening confidence-building measures, to exchange an equal number of detainees and prisoners of war by 29 July 1995 and to ensure unobstructed access of representatives of the ICRC and members of the Joint Commission to places where detainees and prisoners of war were being held”. By year’s end, the provisions of this accord had still not been implemented. However, following the second extension of the cease-fire agreement, the Tajik President and the opposition leader reached an understanding on principles for restoring peace in the country, and it was planned that a consultative forum of Tajik people would convene to debate political and social issues during the fifth round of inter-Tajik talks.

The ICRC Deputy Delegate General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia visited Tajikistan in May, followed by the Delegate General in September. Both representatives raised the issue of the institution’s access to all people arrested in connection with the 1992 hostilities and the subsequent violence in the country. The fifth round of inter-Tajik talks to be held at Ashkhabad, Turkmenistan, at the end of November were suspended pending an investigation into the ongoing government offensive in the Mionadu valley. On 13 December the warring parties committed themselves to respecting the cease-fire but it was decided that the talks would be postponed to the following year. The investigation committee underlined the adverse effects of the fighting on the local population, and the ICRC made representations to the Minister of Defence to be granted authorization to conduct a survey in this area and provide emergency relief for 1,200 people in need.



Activities for the civilian population

The ICRC’s main focus during the year was on programmes for displaced persons returning to their homes, mostly in the Hatlon Oblast. Delegates carried out regular missions to Gorno-Badakhshan, the Mionadu valley and the Tavildara area to monitor security conditions there and to endeavour to ensure that the rights of some 10,000 people displaced within Gorno-Badakhshan who wanted to return to their homes in the Hatlon Oblast were respected. Security conditions for returnees and displaced people were acceptable throughout the south of the Hatlon Oblast; even so the institution contacted local authorities to remind them of their obligations to ensure the

proper resettlement and safety of the returnees. ICRC offices were opened in Kolkhozabad, Khorog and Tavildara, and transit centres in Kalai-Khum, Khorog and Obi Garm provided shelter, blankets and hot meals for those awaiting transport to their places of origin. On arrival, these people were provided with family parcels to tide them over the initial re-integration period. Since March some 3,000 displaced had returned from Gorno-Badakhshan under a government resettlement programme, in which the ICRC cooperated with UNHCR and IOM by setting up the transit centres along the way.

Over the year 6,599 food parcels were distributed, mainly to displaced people returning from Gorno-Badakhshan and the Garm valley to the centre of the country. The hardship resulting from the hostilities there in October 1994 prompted the ICRC to organize a distribution of warm clothes for children in the Mionadu valley. It also delivered flour, sugar and cooking oil provided by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to elderly people in Tavildara, Chidara and the Mionadu valley due to the conflict situation prevailing in those areas.

Following the flare-up in the Tavildara valley in late October, several hundred people took to the hills in the Mionadu region. Despite the difficult working conditions the ICRC provided emergency food and medical assistance in the affected areas, namely the Tavildara region and the Garm and Mionadu valleys.

In late October, the ICRC launched the first phase of a seed distribution programme designed to help people regain some measure of self-sufficiency in these isolated and mountainous regions, which had been directly affected by hostilities during the summer and autumn of 1994. It began by distributing 37 tonnes of wheat seed to 1,660 families for immediate planting. A further 3.8 tonnes were placed at the disposal of the local authorities to help families that the ICRC could not reach because of hazardous security conditions.

Activities for detainees

Despite negotiations at the highest level the ICRC was unable to obtain regular access in accordance with its standard procedure to detainees arrested by the government in connection with the 1992 hostilities and subsequent violence in the country. Delegates were, however, able to carry out visits in accordance with the ICRC's standard working procedure, to 22 people held by opposition groups in the Vanch valley, Khorog and on Afghan territory.

Tracing activities

As refugees could communicate with their families through informal channels and the UNHCR programme for Tajik refugees, and since postal links

were functioning between Gorno-Badakhshan and other parts of the country, the demand for Red Cross messages remained low. Family messages were collected from and distributed to people living in areas not accessible to the tracing services of the Tajik Red Crescent, and ICRC delegates also arranged for the exchange of messages between detainees and their relatives.

Up until May the ICRC monitored the situation of more than 60 Afghan students sent to study in Tajikistan because of the conflict in their own country. UNHCR subsequently took over responsibility for these people when they were granted refugee status. The ICRC, nevertheless, continued to help maintain contact between them and their families through Red Cross messages.

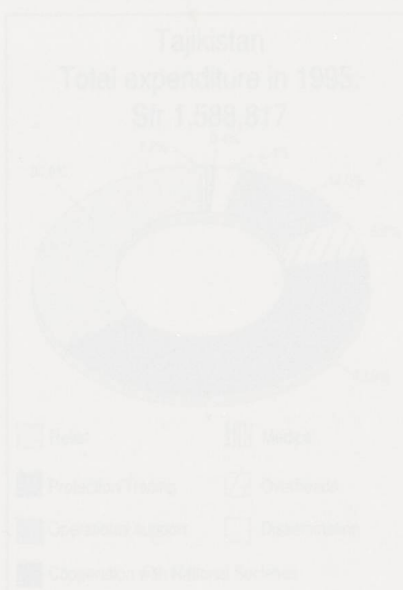
Medical activities

Throughout the year the ICRC carried out surveys in Tajikistan to monitor the situation from a medical standpoint and distribute urgently needed supplies to hospitals and health facilities treating the war-wounded. A permanent emergency stock enabled the institution to respond quickly to needs, especially in sensitive and remote areas, such as Darwaz, Tavildara, Vanch and Yazgulam. Following a survey concluded in December 1994, medical supplies were provided in early 1995 to the four hospitals treating war-wounded in Dushanbe and to a number of health facilities in Tavildara, Mionadu and Sagirdasht. After the violent clashes in the western districts of Gorno-Badakhshan towards the middle of the year and the flare-up in late October in the Tavildara area, the ICRC distributed emergency supplies to several facilities treating casualties and ensured that the referral hospitals in Dushanbe and health establishments in Darwaz, Tavildara, Vanch and Yazgulam had sufficient stocks of medicines and surgical materials.

Some medical assistance was also given to displaced people returning from Gorno-Badakhshan and making their way from Khorog to Dushanbe.

Dissemination

In order to afford better protection for the civilian population and to limit suffering caused by the conflict, the ICRC laid particular emphasis on promoting dissemination of international humanitarian law and knowledge of its delegates' activities throughout the country. It accordingly developed its contacts with the Ministry of the Interior and with commanders of the opposition forces in Gorno-Badakhshan, with a view to giving talks on humanitarian law and the Red Cross and Red Crescent principles. Delegates took part in various IOM-sponsored seminars on emergency management, where they were able to explain the ICRC's work to local community leaders and civil servants from various ministries. They also organized dissemination sessions



and presentations to increase awareness of humanitarian law among government officials from various parts of the country, officers and soldiers of the Russian Border Guards based in Dushanbe, members of the Islamic Renaissance movement and the self-defence forces of Badakhshan stationed in the Gorno-Badakhshan autonomous region. ICRC publications and dissemination material were also distributed in the course of the year.

Cooperation with the National Society

In April the ICRC conducted a regional seminar on dissemination of humanitarian law for members of the Tajik Red Crescent and representatives of government ministries concerned with ICRC activities in the country. The Red Crescent appointed a dissemination/information officer the following month, which considerably enhanced cooperation with the ICRC in the field of dissemination. A series of seminars were held for regional Red Crescent committees in Kurgan-Tyube, Kulyab and Gorno-Badakhshan. The ICRC supplied technical equipment for these three committees, as well as for the central committee's efforts at both national and regional levels. It also continued to support the tracing services of the Tajik Red Crescent, which included financing the tracing officer's post.

TASHKENT

Regional delegation

(Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)

The four republics covered by the regional delegation in Tashkent remained untroubled by armed conflict throughout 1995, even though they experienced serious economic and social problems due in part to the break-up of the Soviet system and in part to crime and drug trafficking.

The ICRC concentrated on preventive action, which included promoting knowledge of the basic tenets of international humanitarian law among the armed forces, the authorities, the National Societies of the region and academic circles, as well as explaining the activities of the ICRC and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to the general public. With the aim of introducing humanitarian law as a compulsory subject of military training, in February the ICRC organized a course for future military instructors at Turkmenistan's military training academy (the first course ever held in the country had taken place in December the previous year). Similar courses were given for members of the armed forces of Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan and for Russian armed forces stationed in the region. The President of Kazakstan visited

ICRC headquarters in Geneva in early June. Among the topics he discussed with the ICRC President were the importance of respect for humanitarian law and its dissemination to the armed forces, and the question of the double emblem used by the Kazak Red Crescent and Red Cross.

In April and May the ICRC regional delegate visited several regions of Kazakhstan to conduct courses on humanitarian law and the activities of the Movement for members of the local Kazak Red Crescent and Red Cross, which received TV and video sets, photocopiers and other equipment to help them in their dissemination work. These courses were also attended by the local authorities. The regional delegate and a dissemination delegate travelled to Kyrgyzstan in June and had talks with the Minister for Culture and Foreign Affairs and the Deputy Ministers for Defence and Justice. Jointly with representatives of the Kyrgyz Red Crescent, the delegates gave journalists detailed explanations on the role of the ICRC and the Red Crescent and Red Cross committees throughout the region. They then went on to Kazakhstan, where they met representatives of the Ministry of the Interior and the Presidential Guard to discuss the development of dissemination activities for their respective troops. This mission coincided with a five-day course on humanitarian law given for officers of the Russian Border Guards by the Moscow-based dissemination delegate and an ICRC-trained instructor. The development of dissemination work for the troops was also discussed during the course. A regional seminar for dissemination officers from the National Societies and Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations of Central Asia (including the Red Crescent of Tajikistan), was held at the end of November.

In the course of the year the ICRC tracing delegate based in Moscow travelled to each of the four republics and to Tajikistan to visit the various National Society tracing services. The ICRC provided financial assistance to cover the salary of one tracing officer in each of the services and other costs involved in tracing activities.

The institution maintained contacts with universities in the region to encourage the introduction of humanitarian law into the academic syllabus and organized several lectures for students and professors in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan over the year. With a view to gradually including Central Asian countries in the programme aimed at fostering respect for humanitarian values through the teaching of literature in secondary schools, specialists started work on an Uzbek-language textbook to be introduced in Uzbekistan in 1996.

A joint ICRC/UNESCO Regional Seminar on the implementation of international humanitarian law and cultural heritage law took place in Tashkent from 25 to 29 September. This provided the ICRC with a valuable opportunity to impress upon leading figures from the political, academic and scientific worlds the importance of incorporating humanitarian law in their

respective domestic legislation and of increasing efforts to include instruction in humanitarian law in the training of their countries' armed forces. The seminar was attended by government officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Justice, Education and Culture, the ICRC Deputy Director for Principles, Law and Relations with the Movement and a representative from the Legal Division, delegates in the field and Red Cross and Red Crescent representatives from the five countries of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan).

In November ICRC delegates carried out a survey mission in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to assess the capacity of the local Red Crescent committees to function in conflict situations. This was especially relevant in Kyrgyzstan, where tension was rising in the lead-up to Presidential elections. The National Society of Uzbekistan held its 70th anniversary celebrations on 14 November.

The Red Crescent Societies of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were recognized by the ICRC on 25 August 1995, thus becoming part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.