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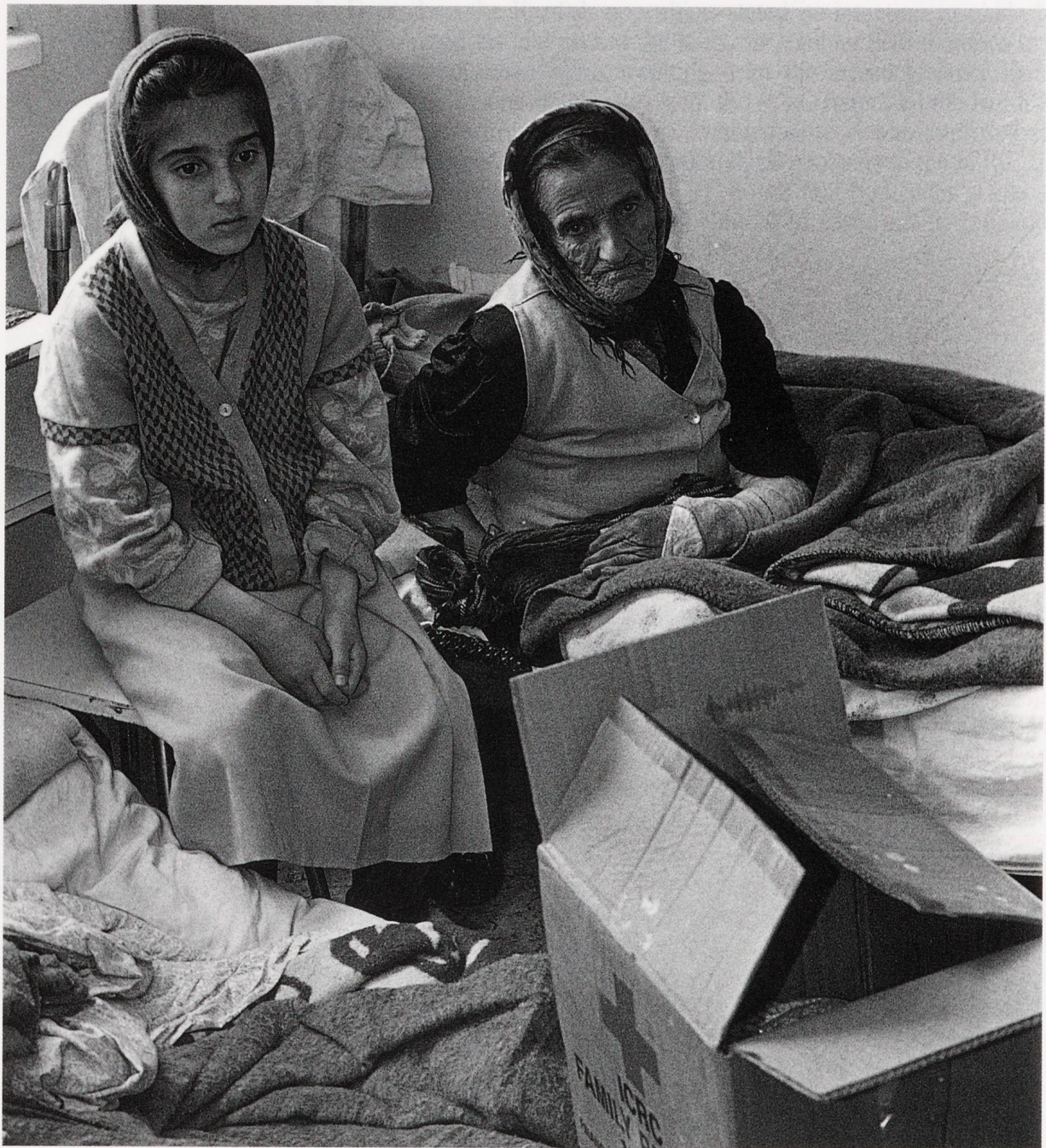
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An important part of the ICRC's work in the Caucasus is to protect and assist civilians held in detention.

ICRC/Z.Khachikian



**Eastern Europe**

**ICRC regional delegation:**

Moscow

**The Caucasus**

**ICRC delegations:**

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

**Central Asia**

**ICRC delegation:**

Tajikistan

**ICRC regional delegation:**

Tashkent

**Staff**

ICRC expatriates<sup>1</sup> : 65

National Societies<sup>1</sup> : 8

Local employees<sup>2</sup> : 257

**Total expenditure**

Sfr 33,131,760

**Expenditure breakdown**

**Sfr**

Protection/tracing: 4,860,214

Relief: 16,109,994

Medical assistance: 4,301,663

Cooperation with

National Societies: 271,212

Dissemination: 1,745,509

Operational support: 4,035,521

Overheads: 1,807,647



ICRC regional delegation ICRC delegation

ICRC / AR 12.94

# *EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA*

<sup>1</sup> Average figures calculated on an annual basis.

<sup>2</sup> Under ICRC contract, as at December 1994.



*Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus saw major developments in the political and military spheres during the year under review.*

*The conflict over Nagorny Karabakh flared up twice during the early months of 1994. A cease-fire was signed in May and was still holding at the end of the year, while Russian diplomacy and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe were seeking a permanent negotiated settlement. In Georgia, the conflict that had been raging in Mingrelia came to an end in early 1994. A cease-fire agreed between the Georgians and the Abkhaz in May resulted in the creation of a buffer zone along the Inguri river, monitored by peace-keeping forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States under the supervision of United Nations observers. In the southern part of the Russian Federation there was a major conflagration in Chechnya at the end of the year. Chechnya had been claiming independence since 1991 and had been the scene of clashes between the Chechen authorities and internal opposition groups. On 11 December 1994, forces of the Russian Federation launched a military operation in Chechnya and a battle was raging as the year drew to a close.*

*In Central Asia, there were periodic clashes on Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan, in the upper Garm valley, in the Tavildara district and in the Darwaz area. There were further population movements in Tajikistan, some displaced people returning to their homes in places where the situation had stabilized, and others fleeing areas affected by the fighting. Negotiations between the Tajik government and the opposition resulted in a temporary cease-fire, signed in Tehran in September and extended after a new series of negotiations in Islamabad from 20 October to 1 November. In Islamabad the parties also agreed to a simultaneous release of prisoners under ICRC auspices, which took place on 13 November.*

*During the year the ICRC increased its presence in several theatres of operations where it had been working for a number of years. In the Caucasus delegates continued their visits to prisoners taken in the Ingush-Ossetian conflict and the conflicts in Abkhazia and Nagorny Karabakh. It was sometimes difficult to obtain notification of capture, to gain access to all prisoners covered by the ICRC's mandate and to hold interviews with them in private. However, progress was made in other areas: medical care for detainees was improved in some prisons while a number of women and children taken hostage in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict were released.*

*In Eastern Europe, despite constant approaches the ICRC was not allowed to repeat its visits to detainees from the "Ilascu" group being held in Tiraspol in the self-proclaimed Dniestr Republic. Delegates in Chechnya were able to visit only a small number of prisoners taken by Chechen forces, while by the*



end of the year the authorities of the Russian Federation had not notified the ICRC of any prisoners. In Central Asia, delegates in Tajikistan had access only to those detainees eligible for release under the agreement resulting from the inter-Tajik talks.

Protecting civilians remained one of the ICRC's main concerns. The institution monitored the situation of a number of vulnerable communities, such as Georgians in Abkhazia and Ingush living in areas controlled by North Ossetia, and made recommendations, based on its delegates' observations, to the authorities for improving protection of those groups.

With regard to tracing and restoration of family links, much progress was made in connection with the Abkhaz conflict, with a sharp rise in the number of messages exchanged between relatives separated by the fighting (72,000 family messages for a displaced population of 250,000).

As for relief work, in the Caucasus the ICRC focused on winter relief programmes, emergency assistance and aid to vulnerable groups. In Central Asia, relief programmes centred on conflict areas in central Tajikistan and on the Dushanbe region.

Medical activities were developed, ranging from support for establishments treating war casualties to orthopaedic workshops (projects initiated in Baku, Tbilisi and Gagra in Abkhazia) and on to sanitation programmes.

In addition to its many activities aimed at relieving suffering due to armed conflict, the ICRC attached increasing importance to promoting knowledge of the basic rules of international humanitarian law and the working principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. A special effort was made to relate the ICRC's universal humanitarian message to local culture and to reach the most crucial target groups, above all the armed forces.

Finally, the ICRC benefited greatly in its work throughout the year from the support of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and itself endeavoured to support the activities of the various Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations in the region. For example the Tashkent delegation, which is responsible for ICRC activities not only in Uzbekistan but also in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, held a number of seminars in cooperation with the region's Red Crescent Societies to promote knowledge of international humanitarian law among their members and other audiences. The Societies received all the technical resources needed to take over this task with certain target groups, particularly at the local level. A further important area of cooperation was the training of National Society staff in tracing activities.

## Eastern Europe

### BALTIC STATES

At the end of February the regional delegate in charge of ICRC activities in the Baltic States, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova, who is based in Geneva, took part in a meeting organized by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Latvia. Other participants included the National Societies of the Baltic States, Canada, Finland, Germany, Norway and Sweden. They discussed problems currently facing the Baltic National Societies and possibilities of development and cooperation with the sister Societies in the West.

The regional delegate also had meetings with a senior official of the Latvian government, with whom he discussed plans for a seminar on international humanitarian law for the Latvian armed forces, and with leaders of the various Red Cross Societies present regarding training in tracing methods for the National Societies of the three countries. The seminar for the armed forces of Latvia, the first of its kind to be organized in the Baltic States, took place in March. In May, members of the three Baltic National Societies took part in a tracing course organized by the ICRC in Moscow (see *Russian Federation, Tracing activities*).

In August, the chief surgeon of the American forces in Europe organized a training course in war surgery for 24 surgeons of the armed forces of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania at a US military base in Germany. An ICRC delegate gave a presentation on international humanitarian law and distributed dissemination material, including the Baltic language versions of the *Code of Conduct for Combatants*.

### BELARUS

At the end of June the ICRC, together with the Belarus Red Cross, organized a regional seminar in Minsk aimed at encouraging governments to take appropriate implementation measures to give effect to international humanitarian law at the national level. More than 20 government experts and National Society representatives from Belarus, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine participated.

### MOLDOVA

In May the ICRC held its first course on international humanitarian law for the armed forces of Moldova. More than 30 officers took part.



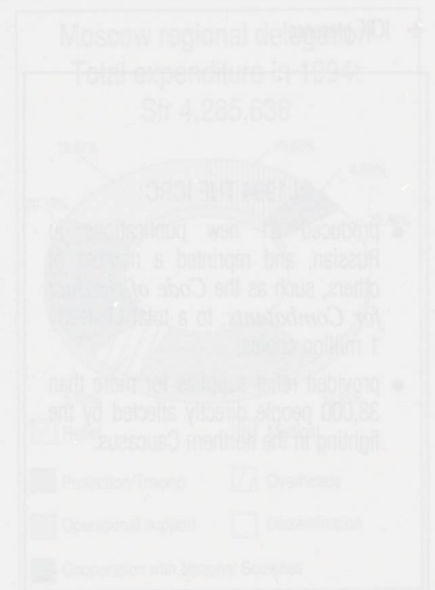
In March the ICRC regional delegate travelled to the self-proclaimed “Dniestr Republic” to negotiate renewed access to five detainees of the “Ilascu group”, last seen by the ICRC in October 1993. However, access was not granted. During a mission in October the Delegate General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, together with the regional delegate, made representations to the highest authorities in Tiraspol regarding the resumption of visits to these detainees, again to no avail. They also discussed dissemination projects with the officer in charge of military instruction for the 14th Russian Army stationed in the region.

In the Moldovan capital Chisinau the delegates met a representative of the Ministry of Defence and the Vice-Minister of the Interior, with whom they discussed plans for dissemination courses to be held in 1995, and made contact with the National Society with a view to organizing a joint ICRC/Federation seminar for the country’s Red Cross leadership.

## UKRAINE

At the end of February the regional delegate and an ICRC dissemination specialist organized a first seminar on the law of war for more than 30 high-ranking officers of the Ukrainian armed forces in Kiev. The regional delegate also discussed cooperation projects with the Red Cross Society of Ukraine and contacted officials of the Ministries of Education and of Foreign Affairs. Together with the representative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Kiev, he prepared a joint seminar on the Movement for young leaders of the National Society. The seminar took place at the end of September and in early October and was attended by some 50 regional Red Cross leaders, university students and the ICRC Delegate General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, who was carrying out a mission in the region. The Delegate General also had talks with representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice and Defence with a view to opening an ICRC regional delegation in Kiev. Accompanied by the regional delegate, he then visited the Crimea, where they met the Vice-President of parliament for an exchange of views and had contacts with the Red Cross.

As part of its tracing cooperation programme, the regional delegation in Moscow helped organize a seminar on tracing methods, which took place in Kiev in May (see *Moscow regional delegation, Tracing activities*).







+ ICRC presence

#### IN 1994 THE ICRC:

- produced 31 new publications in Russian, and reprinted a number of others, such as the *Code of conduct for Combatants*, to a total of nearly 1 million copies;
- provided relief supplies for more than 38,000 people directly affected by the fighting in the northern Caucasus.

## MOSCOW

### Regional delegation

(Covering the Russian Federation and, for certain activities, all newly independent States)

After the political power struggles that culminated in violent confrontation between government and parliament in Moscow in October 1993, the Russian Federation entered a phase of relative stabilization in 1994. However, with some ten million people unemployed and an estimated 20 million living below the poverty line, the country continued to pay a high price for the transition to a free market economy. The return of more than one million Russians from countries of the former Soviet Union put further pressure on the decaying social and economic fabric.

The northern Caucasus remained the Russian Federation's most troubled region. The state of emergency in North Ossetia and Ingushetia was again extended. Some 120,000 displaced Ingush people from

North Ossetia and Ossetians from Georgia were still not able to return home. In December, long-simmering tensions between the breakaway republic of Chechnya and the government of the Russian Federation flared up into open warfare.

As before, the Moscow regional delegation, opened in 1992, covered the Russian Federation while running specialized services for all the countries in the region. Thus it was responsible for dissemination programmes for the armed forces and information and training in ICRC tracing methods for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the entire former Soviet Union. The delegation continued to develop contacts with the Federal authorities which proved essential on several occasions when it was called upon to support the ICRC's action in connection with the conflicts in the Caucasus, Tajikistan and in the former Yugoslavia. When the Chechen crisis came to a head, the delegation shifted into emergency gear and played a vital role in coordinating and facilitating the ICRC's operation in that region.



In March the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation was received by the ICRC President at Geneva headquarters, where they discussed the follow-up to the 1993 Conference for the Protection of War Victims.

In May a member of the Committee, the ICRC's governing body, together with an ICRC legal specialist, carried out a mission to strengthen the dialogue with the Russian Red Cross and some of its branches. In the northern Caucasus and in Moscow they met leaders of the regional and local branches and the National Society's Central Committee, with whom they discussed possibilities for cooperation in the fields of tracing and disaster preparedness, as well as topics related to the Fundamental Red Cross and Red Crescent Principles and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

At the end of September a medical coordinator from Geneva headquarters took part in a seminar in Moscow on the consequences of torture and organized violence. Some 50 doctors and psychologists from 14 republics of the former Soviet Union, many of whom were treating patients from conflict zones on the periphery of the Russian Federation, attended the seminar.

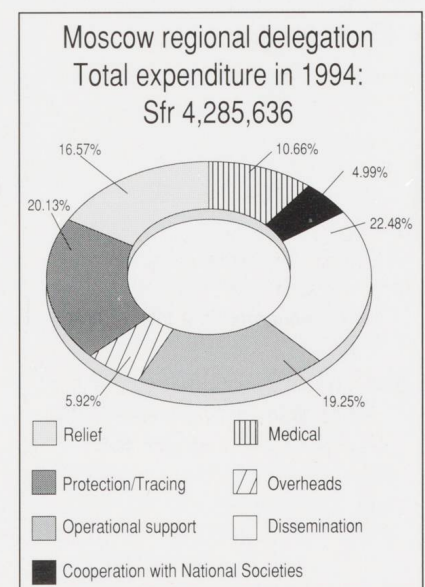
In December the ICRC Vice-President received the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation at Geneva headquarters. Their discussions centred on the situation in Chechnya.

## Activities for detainees

Following an amnesty in February 1994 for the people detained in connection with the events of October 1993 and the cessation of legal procedures against the participants in the 1991 coup attempt, the need for ICRC visits to detainees in the Russian Federation was greatly reduced. The ICRC submitted to the Federal authorities reports on visits conducted the previous year to places of detention in Moscow, North Ossetia and Ingushetia. In March the Chairman of the Presidential Human Rights Committee had talks with the ICRC President at the institution's headquarters in Geneva on possibilities for improving conditions of detention.

## Tracing activities

After the dissolution of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the former USSR, the National Societies of the newly independent States had to set up their own tracing services. Beginning in 1993, the ICRC launched a cooperation programme aimed at providing support for these services, according to their specific needs and levels of development. This involved furnishing substantial material and financial assistance for the National Society



tracing services of the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Belarus and material support and training for the others. As part of the programme, the ICRC systematically organized seminars providing the new tracing services with information about the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and giving technical assistance. In May the Moscow regional delegation organized a seminar on tracing methods for members of the National Societies of Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, which took place in Kiev. Another seminar, held in Moscow in June, was attended by leaders of the same National Societies, participants from the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian Red Cross Societies and representatives of the International Tracing Service in Arolsen. The seminar focused on issues of common interest.

At the ICRC's initiative, a number of National Societies interested in strengthening ties with sister Societies of the countries of the former Soviet Union met in Geneva in February to discuss current and future cooperation on tracing programmes and to decide on ways of ensuring the exchange of information.

## Dissemination

Dissemination remained the regional delegation's key activity within the Russian Federation, targeting mainly the military and the National Society and its branches.

In July the ICRC based a delegate in Moscow to develop special programmes for the armed forces throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia, focusing on training military instructors in the teaching of international humanitarian law and spreading awareness of the law of war. The Federal Ministry of Defence gave its agreement for such activities to be carried out among troops stationed outside Russia. In September in Moscow, the ICRC held a seminar for military instructors of the Ministry of the Interior. At the end of October delegates organized the first seminar on humanitarian law at the Frunze academy, the leading military training establishment of the former Soviet Union and the Russian Federation, for more than 30 senior officers from the main military academies in Moscow. A training course for future military instructors was also held. In all, 14 seminars were given for over 700 high-ranking officers under the jurisdiction of the Ministries of Defence and of the Interior.

ICRC delegates gave presentations and training courses for representatives of Russian Red Cross branches throughout the Russian Federation and for the National Societies of the countries of the former Soviet Union. At the end of the year they completed a series of eight seminars held to familiarize leaders of



nearly all Red Cross branches with the structure of the Movement, the Fundamental Red Cross and Red Crescent Principles, humanitarian law, the use of the emblem and dissemination activities. The seminars were designed to prepare the ground for further cooperation programmes.

The regional delegation also organized presentations on humanitarian law, and particularly the rules providing protection for the civilian population, for university circles and maintained contacts with officials, representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations and the media. At the end of the year the ICRC sent two additional delegates to Moscow to set up special dissemination programmes, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, for schoolchildren and teachers and for students at the main universities in the Russian Federation and countries of the former Soviet Union.

In addition, it continued its extensive Russian-language publications programme. At the end of the year the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols were published in Russian translation.

### *Northern Caucasus*

The ICRC had been present in the northern Caucasus since July 1993, when it opened a sub-delegation in Nalchik (Kabardino-Balkaria) to conduct activities for people who had been displaced or detained in connection with the outbreak of violence between the Ossetians and the Ingush people, with the Tbilisi delegation serving as logistics base. The move also facilitated closer monitoring of developments in Chechnya.

In February 1994 the Deputy Delegate General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia conducted a mission to the northern Caucasus, during which she discussed cooperation prospects with leaders of Russian Red Cross branches in the various republics.

In Chechnya the ICRC kept up negotiations regarding access to people detained by the authorities in connection with the conflict or for security reasons, and to those held by opposition groups. In February, the Deputy Delegate General held discussions with the Chechen authorities on the ICRC's detention-related activities, and more particularly on the question of access to security detainees held in the republic. No tangible progress resulted.

The events in the republic that marked the second half of 1994 are dealt with separately under the heading *Chechnya*.

As part of its dissemination activities, the ICRC started working on a project involving a study to be carried out by local intellectuals. The aim of the study was to limit violence by formulating general principles related to the traditions and cultures of the northern Caucasus and acceptable to all the area's communities.

## *Ingushetia and North Ossetia*

### Activities for the civilian population

The ICRC continued to keep a close watch on the situation of isolated population groups, in particular Ingush communities in areas controlled by North Ossetia, and where necessary urged the local and central authorities to ensure their protection. The institution provided medical assistance and relief supplies in the northern Caucasus, where the scarcity of resources made it increasingly difficult for local authorities to meet the needs of displaced people and vulnerable groups on a regular basis. The ICRC also pursued its goal of promoting the development of local Red Cross and Red Crescent branches by associating some of them with its relief work. In cooperation with these branches and aid committees, delegates completed distributions of food and other assistance to displaced civilians and vulnerable people in Ingushetia and North Ossetia, begun in November 1993.

In July, delegates assessed the situation of some 50,000 refugees from South Ossetia (Georgia) and 70,000 people displaced in connection with the Ossetian-Ingush conflict. On the basis of their findings they prepared a winter assistance programme aimed at providing supplementary food and other assistance for destitute and particularly vulnerable groups. Beginning in November, ICRC delegates, in cooperation with local committees of the Russian Red Cross, distributed blankets and family parcels to displaced people sheltering in public buildings and to other vulnerable groups of displaced people in Ingushetia and North Ossetia.

### Medical activities

An ICRC evaluation mission conducted in the four republics of the northern Caucasus in July/August revealed a severe shortage of basic medicines and surgical supplies. To increase the capacity of medical establishments to respond to emergencies, the ICRC distributed surgical assistance to hospitals in Ingushetia, where needs were most urgent, and to medical facilities in North Ossetia, including dispensaries in isolated Ingush villages. The ICRC also provided financial support for the running of first-aid courses by local Red Cross branches in the northern Caucasus.

### Activities for detainees

Delegates continued to visit people arrested in connection with the armed conflict between Ossetians and Ingush and held in places of detention in the



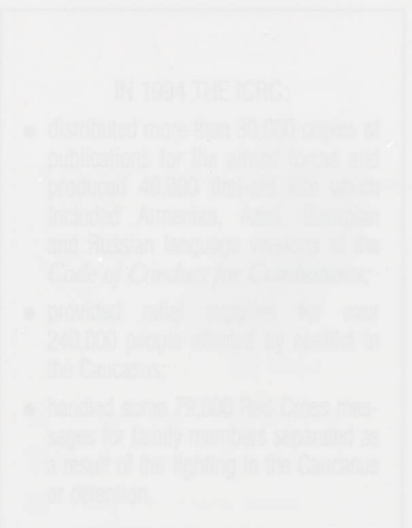
northern Caucasus. The ICRC paid the travel expenses of families wishing to visit their relatives in detention.

## *Chechnya*

In view of the growing rift between the Chechen authorities and opposition groups, the ICRC had for some time been planning to open an office in Grozny. However, when the crisis came to a head in September, the need for emergency action overrode all other concerns. The ICRC not only increased its staff numbers and brought in urgently needed medical aid for the war-wounded, but also endeavoured to take preventive action in case all-out combat should erupt. These measures included giving out video clips on the rules of behaviour in combat, which were televised by both the government and the opposition in October. On 28 November the ICRC launched a formal appeal to the warring parties to respect the basic rules of international humanitarian law. In particular, it urged them to spare civilians and their property, to ensure humane treatment of those who surrendered, captured combatants and civilians arrested in connection with the conflict, to refrain from taking hostages, and to respect the sick and wounded, medical personnel, establishments and vehicles and the red cross and red crescent emblems protecting them.

The involvement of Federal forces as of December prompted the ICRC to issue a memorandum reminding the Federal government and the Chechen authorities of their obligation to respect the provisions of international humanitarian law. The advance of Federal forces on Grozny met with fierce resistance from Chechen fighters, resulting in many casualties among combatants and civilians. Heavy fighting and aerial bombardments forced a large part of the population to flee from the capital and rendered access to the city and some of the neighbouring areas extremely hazardous. However, at the end of the year, ICRC delegates were working throughout Chechnya, with the exception of the embattled centre of Grozny. They carried out their activities from logistics bases in Nalchik, Nazran (Ingushetia) and Khasavyurt (Daghestan); this enabled them not only to operate within Chechnya but also to assist displaced people who had sought refuge in the neighbouring republics and the wounded who had been evacuated there.

While still striving to meet emergency-related needs, the ICRC began to draw up a plan of action outlining its humanitarian priorities for the next few months. Its objectives focused on gaining access to all detainees, both in Chechnya and elsewhere, who had been arrested in connection with the violence in Chechnya, and developing protection and tracing activities for civilians in order to help them restore contact with their families. In addition, the institution planned to rehabilitate medical facilities and to provide emergency relief



for civilians affected by the crisis and assistance for displaced people on their return. The evident lack of awareness of the basic humanitarian rules governing the conduct of hostilities confirmed the need for dissemination activities, particularly among those taking part in the fighting.

ICRC delegates at headquarters and in the field made every effort to obtain respect for the rules of international humanitarian law. Greatly concerned to ensure protection for civilians and captured combatants, the institution reported violations of the law to the authorities of both sides, urging them to take preventive action. At the same time the ICRC consistently requested access to all people held on either side.

### Activities for detainees

At the end of November, after the outbreak of fighting in Grozny, delegates visited 74 prisoners held by the Chechen authorities. The visits were carried out in accordance with standard ICRC procedures. In the early days of January 1995, delegates visited and registered three captured Russian servicemen in Grozny and one in the hospital in Saryi Atagi. The prisoners were also given the opportunity to send Red Cross messages to their families. In late 1994 the ICRC was still pursuing its efforts to gain access to all prisoners held in connection with the armed conflict.

### Activities for the civilian population

At the end of the year the numbers of people displaced in connection with the hostilities were estimated at about 200,000 within Chechnya, 80,000 in Ingushetia, 30,000 in Daghestan and 15,000 elsewhere. Most of them had been taken in by friends and relatives, as is customary in the region. However, the ICRC remained concerned that those offering shelter would themselves run short of food and basic necessities, should the situation persist throughout the winter months. On 31 December three ICRC trucks crossed from Azerbaijan into Daghestan, bringing family parcels and blankets for the most destitute displaced people in the Khasavyurt area and in the neighbouring republic of Ingushetia.

### Medical activities

The ICRC's medical involvement began as early as June, when an ICRC delegate based in Nalchik conducted an evaluation mission to Grozny and provided some limited assistance to hospitals treating people who had been wounded in armed clashes between forces loyal to the Chechen authorities and opposition groups. In August an ICRC team visited Grozny, as part of a survey



of medical facilities in the northern Caucasus, and provided seven hospitals with basic supplies. When renewed fighting broke out in September the ICRC again distributed first-aid materials to five hospitals in Chechnya. Beginning in October, against a backdrop of steadily escalating armed confrontation, an ICRC medical team stepped up assistance to hospitals treating the wounded throughout Chechnya, in both government-controlled areas and opposition strongholds. When fighting intensified in December after the arrival of Federal troops, lack of security severely restricted the ICRC's access to Grozny and seriously affected areas nearby. Delegates nonetheless managed to deliver medical supplies regularly to ten facilities treating the wounded, including two hospitals in Grozny, and provided *ad hoc* assistance to four other medical establishments in Chechnya. In all, 17 hospitals received ICRC assistance on a regular basis, including two centres in Ingushetia and five in Daghestan treating casualties evacuated from Chechnya.

## The Caucasus

### ARMENIA/AZERBAIJAN

The beginning of 1994 was marked by further bloodshed over the status of Nagorny Karabakh as the fierce fighting of December 1993 spilled over into the new year. A period of calm ensued as of mid-February but, in the absence of a political solution, hostilities flared up again in April to the north and east of the territory held by Karabakhi forces. The battle raged for about five weeks, leaving thousands more dead and wounded and forcing over 50,000 people from the districts of Agdam, Terter and Geramboy in Azerbaijan to seek refuge in safer areas. In May, the Armenian, Azeri and Karabakhi leaders, brought to the negotiating table by Russian and Kyrgyz mediators, at last agreed on a cease-fire which, although fragile, held for the rest of the year. However, despite increased efforts on the part of the Russian government and the CSCE to help resolve the issue, the parties did not reach a political settlement. By the end of 1994 the six-year armed conflict, the longest-running on the territory of the former Soviet Union, had left a daunting legacy of about one million displaced people and refugees, rapidly deteriorating economic conditions and a badly disrupted social and medical infrastructure in the region.

During the bitter fighting in the first part of the year the ICRC's priorities were the provision of emergency assistance to medical facilities and newly displaced people and the protection of captured combatants and civilians. On 20 January the Delegate General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, accom-

#### IN 1994 THE ICRC:

- distributed more than 30,000 copies of publications for the armed forces and produced 40,000 first-aid kits which included Armenian, Azeri, Georgian and Russian language versions of the *Code of Conduct for Combatants*;
- provided relief supplies for over 240,000 people affected by conflict in the Caucasus;
- handled some 79,000 Red Cross messages for family members separated as a result of the fighting in the Caucasus or detention.





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panied by the head of delegation in Baku, handed over to the President of Azerbaijan a report on the ICRC's protection activities for detainees held in connection with the Nagorno Karabakh conflict in 1993, including a number of recommendations based on the institution's findings. A similar report covering the first half of 1994 was submitted to the authorities of Armenia, Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan by the Deputy Delegate General at the beginning of September. Among other things, the reports reflected the ICRC's concern about the fact that relatively few captured prisoners had been notified to it despite the extent of military operations.

After the cease-fire agreement came into effect, the ICRC concentrated on protecting people in detention. Delegates visited them and, in selected cases, worked to obtain their release on humanitarian grounds. Providing protection and assistance for vulnerable groups and the displaced population in districts near the front line was another focal point of the delegates' activities. Spreading knowledge

of humanitarian law was also a major concern throughout the year as delegates continued to witness violations of international humanitarian law by the warring parties. To make Red Cross work and principles better known and accepted in the Caucasus, where they were virtually unknown, the ICRC devised a special approach to dissemination in the region, in cooperation with local specialists. In these programmes the emphasis was placed on drawing parallels between the basic principles of humanitarian law and the ideas, religious precepts and traditional standards of behaviour rooted in local culture.

## Activities for detainees

As in the past, the ICRC worked hard to obtain access to all combatants captured and civilians held in connection with the Nagorno Karabakh conflict or detained for security reasons, and to conduct visits to them in accordance



with its standard procedures. In all, ICRC delegates visited 412 people detained in connection with the conflict.

In Armenia delegates visited prisoners of war held under the jurisdiction of the National Security Department and in places of detention run by the military police. At the beginning of the year an incident in a prison camp run by the military police in Yerevan resulted in the death of one guard and eight prisoners of war. Having been informed of the deaths by the authorities, the ICRC, in accordance with the provisions of humanitarian law, notified the Azerbaijani authorities of the prisoners' identities, repatriated their mortal remains and requested the Armenian authorities to investigate the circumstances of these deaths.

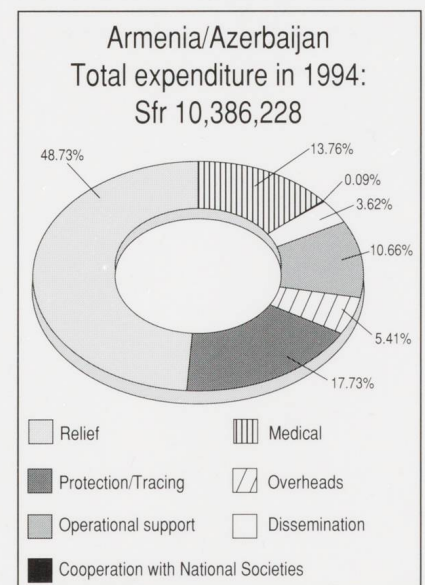
In Nagorny Karabakh ICRC delegates visited civilians and combatants held in 28 different places of detention.

In Azerbaijan visits were made to civilians and prisoners of war, including four Armenians who had been sentenced to death in 1992. At the repeated request of an ICRC doctor, the authorities gave permission for them to be transferred to a hospital for medical treatment at the end of the year. In July the General Chief of Staff of the Azeri armed forces gave a written authorization allowing ICRC delegates to visit a number of places of detention under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence.

At the beginning of October tensions between factions of the ruling party, particularly in Baku and the country's second largest city, Ganja, brought Azerbaijan close to civil strife and resulted in the arrest of over 100 people. On 30 November the Delegate General, together with the head of delegation, met the Minister for Foreign Affairs and other high-ranking government officials with whom the ICRC had had previous contacts. They initiated discussions regarding visits to detainees arrested in connection with the internal political situation in Azerbaijan; however, by the end of the year the ICRC's efforts had not yet borne fruit.

In Armenia, Nagorny Karabakh and Azerbaijan ICRC nurses and a doctor provided medical treatment for detainees and urged the authorities concerned to provide health care on a permanent basis for people in detention. They also distributed medicines and medical supplies to prisons and prison hospitals affected by the severe shortage of such products in the region. On a number of occasions, ICRC delegates handed out food supplements and other necessities to detainees in places of detention where basic needs were not being met by the authorities.

The ICRC remained greatly concerned about the situation of civilians who had been detained solely because of their ethnic origin and whose lives were endangered by such detention. It repeatedly demanded their unconditional release, visited them in detention and facilitated the return home across the





front lines of all those who were released. Following an agreement concluded under the auspices of a Russian special envoy to release women and children detained in connection with the conflict, in September the three parties freed 31 women and children, who were then escorted home by the ICRC.

## Tracing activities

During their visits ICRC delegates gave detainees the opportunity to restore contact with their families by means of Red Cross messages. The tracing services in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh handled about 7,000 such messages in 1994. The ICRC also helped former detainees in both Armenia and Azerbaijan to return to their families.

The institution offered the parties its services as a neutral intermediary with regard to people missing in action and continued its efforts to trace others who had been reported missing in connection with the conflict. It also reunited family members who had been separated by the conflict.

## Activities for the civilian population

The ICRC's presence in conflict zones enabled it to make representations to the authorities concerned whenever delegates observed or were informed of violations of the basic humanitarian rules protecting civilians and their property; the indiscriminate bombing of Stepanakert, Barda and Beilagan was a case in point. After the cease-fire, delegates continued to monitor the situation of civilians in potential conflict zones.

At the beginning of 1994 the ICRC completed a series of distributions begun the previous year for vulnerable population groups affected by the conflict in the north-eastern border region of Armenia. The relief project was then delegated to the American Red Cross, but remained under ICRC responsibility. Throughout the year the ICRC ran an assistance programme for vulnerable groups in Armenia, such as war-widows and their families and elderly people.

During the winter months, the ICRC was the principal organization assisting people affected by the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh, where the hostilities and the economic embargo were causing extreme hardship. The ICRC provided the neediest families and vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, with basic relief supplies including food parcels, blankets, winter clothes, candles and soap and furnished plastic sheeting for repairs to war-damaged private homes, public buildings and hospitals. The general scarcity of even the most basic necessities prompted the ICRC to carry out a distribution of cooking oil, sugar and soap for the population. Although the renewed hostilities in early 1994 slowed the homeward flow of returnees to Nagorny Karabakh, more than one thousand



families benefited from the ICRC's relief programme for returnees, initiated in 1993.

In addition to about 240,000 mostly Azeri refugees who had lived in Armenia until 1988, Azerbaijan's displaced population was estimated at around one million in 1994. Many of them were taken in by local families, while others were forced to survive yet another harsh winter in tents, public buildings and other makeshift accommodation. A number of humanitarian agencies ran aid programmes for these groups, including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies which focused on areas unaffected by conflict. The ICRC's assistance operation targeted some 75,000 displaced people in the front-line districts of Beilagan, Agdam and Terter, who were provided with food parcels and blankets in winter and spring; its aid programme for about 10,500 beneficiaries in the Barda district, begun at the end of 1993, ended in mid-February. In the wake of the fresh upsurge of fighting in April and May the ICRC delivered emergency relief in the form of family parcels, tents and reinforced plastic sheeting to some 55,000 newly displaced people.

After a mine-clearing operation had been carried out and the local infrastructure had begun functioning again, some 30,000 displaced people returned to their villages in the Fizuli district of south-eastern Azerbaijan, on the Iranian border. To help them through the winter months the ICRC provided reinforced plastic sheeting to repair war-damaged buildings and distributed food parcels.

Throughout the year the ICRC gave support to the Azeri Red Crescent programme to assist particularly vulnerable or destitute people in the districts bordering Armenia (Kasakh, Gedabekh, Tovuz and Agstafa) and those near the front line (Barda, Agdam and Terter). At the end of November an ICRC team conducted an evaluation mission in the Azeri autonomous republic of Nakhichevan, a region badly affected by economic isolation. Delegates handed out relief goods such as kitchen sets and reinforced plastic sheeting to the local Red Crescent for distribution to the neediest members of the population, and made preparations for further distributions of blankets and candles to several thousand displaced people and other vulnerable groups.

## Health activities

As the urgent medical needs arising from the fighting at the end of 1993 and in early 1994 could not be fully covered by the authorities and other organizations, the ICRC stepped in to provide medical supplies directly to Azeri and Karabakhi medical facilities and field hospitals near the battle zones. The fact that as much as 21.5 tonnes of medicines and medical supplies had to be supplied in less than three months confirmed the usefulness of maintaining

the ICRC's regional emergency stock in Tbilisi. Although the number of war-wounded dropped with the cessation of hostilities, landmines and sniper fire continued to claim casualties. Because of the general shortage of basic medical supplies, the ICRC kept up medical distributions to health facilities in the region.

The ICRC team that conducted a mission to Nakhichevan visited all the major medical facilities in the area and distributed much-needed medical supplies.

The ICRC ran a sanitation programme aimed at improving the water supply for medical facilities in Nagorny Karabakh. An ICRC water and sanitation engineer installed sanitary facilities (latrines, washbasins and showers) at the regional hospital in Cheldran and connected the hospital to a well to ensure a supply of drinking water. Water supply projects were also carried out at the maternity and children's hospitals in Stepanakert and at the hospital in Martuni.

In view of the general scarcity of materials for producing artificial limbs and orthopaedic appliances, the ICRC remained concerned about the situation of the thousands of war amputees in the Caucasus, both combatants who had lost limbs in recent or earlier hostilities and civilian victims of landmine explosions. While there was a sufficient number of operational workshops in Armenia, a survey carried out in February 1994 revealed the need for such facilities, as well as rehabilitation centres, in Azerbaijan. In September the ICRC began negotiations with the authorities on the setting-up of an orthopaedic programme in Baku. Following the signing of a cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection in December, the ICRC began construction work on the designated premises.

## Dissemination

Throughout the year ICRC dissemination delegates were based in Baku and Yerevan and travelled regularly to Nagorny Karabakh. As before, they focused on spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law among the armed forces, with special emphasis on the importance of respect for civilians, prisoners and the red cross and red crescent emblems, and the need to impose limits on violence in combat.

The delegation in Yerevan organized seminars on the rules of behaviour in combat for members of the Armenian armed forces, military police and officers of Russian border-guard units based in Armenia. On 26 April the Vice-President of the Republic inaugurated an ICRC photo exhibition on international humanitarian law in Yerevan. The exhibition, entitled *Humanity in the Midst of War*, illustrated international humanitarian law and the International Red



Cross and Red Crescent Movement. During the three-week event the ICRC delegation organized lectures on humanitarian law and the ICRC's work in the region which were attended by several hundred Armenian and Russian military personnel.

Dissemination work in Nagorny Karabakh was limited during the first part of the year by the intensity of the fighting and the ensuing disruption. Nonetheless, dissemination sessions for combatants took place whenever the situation permitted, and the local television regularly broadcast ICRC-produced TV spots drawing attention to humanitarian rules. Towards the end of the year the relatively calm military situation enabled ICRC delegates significantly to step up their dissemination activities for troops at the front line. In October and November alone some 3,000 military personnel attended 29 ICRC lectures on humanitarian law, of which 11 were held in Armenia and 18 in Nagorny Karabakh.

In Azerbaijan a breakthrough occurred with the introduction of compulsory instruction in international humanitarian law for the armed forces. ICRC delegates regularly organized dissemination sessions for some 5,000 officers and soldiers under the responsibility of the Ministries of Defence and of the Interior who were stationed in Baku, on the front line with Nagorny Karabakh or on the border with Armenia. Similar presentations were given for 500 members of the Republican Guard and prison camp guards. The Azeri media gave wide coverage to the ICRC and its work, and academic circles in particular showed keen interest in the ICRC's photo exhibition *Humanity in the Midst of War*, which was shown in Baku in March. The President of Azerbaijan, several cabinet ministers and members of the diplomatic corps attended the event. In his opening speech, the President reiterated his government's commitment to respect the provisions of humanitarian law and to support Red Cross and Red Crescent activities.

The ICRC continued to work closely with the Azeri Red Crescent on dissemination activities. Together they held 12 seminars countrywide on the history and principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; two of the seminars, attended by the national and regional Red Crescent leadership, were organized with the participation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The ICRC kept up its publications programme for the armed forces in the Azeri and Armenian languages and produced dissemination material for National Societies and the general public. New items included a wall calendar using examples from local literature to illustrate the ICRC's message, and first-aid kits comprising explanations of the basic rules of humanitarian law, intended for distribution to all active military personnel in the Caucasus. Several ICRC films were also dubbed in the local languages.





⊕ ICRC delegation      + ICRC presence

ICRC / AR 12.94

## GEORGIA

Despite the victory of government forces over the “Zviadist” opposition in early 1994, instability continued to threaten western Georgia.

On the Abkhaz/Georgian front, sporadic clashes occurred throughout the year. In January the situation in the district of Gali, in southern Abkhazia, deteriorated sharply following clashes between Abkhaz forces and Georgian troops near the Inguri river. This prompted several thousand inhabitants of Georgian origin to flee to Mingrelia, in western Georgia, joining tens of thousands of displaced people who had already sought refuge there. Several initiatives on the part of the international community, and Russia in particular, led to the signing of two agreements in Moscow in early April. One of these accords concerned the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons and the other contained proposals for a political solution to the conflict. In May Georgian and Abkhaz leaders signed a cease-fire

agreement establishing a buffer zone along the Inguri river, to be monitored by peace-keeping forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States under UNOMIG\* supervision. Peace-keeping troops were deployed on both sides of the Inguri river at the end of June. Further initiatives to bring about a political settlement yielded no tangible results. The quadripartite committee composed of Abkhaz, Georgian, Russian and UN representatives, established earlier to deal with issues related to the return of refugees under UNHCR auspices, at last reached an agreement providing for the official return process to begin in October. However, while in April and May several thousand displaced people had chosen to return from western Georgia to their villages in Gali province despite reports of sporadic fighting, following the official agreement the numbers of returnees remained low for the rest of the year.

\* UNOMIG: United Nations Monitoring and Observation Mission in Georgia



For the first time since 1992 Georgian officials and representatives from North and South Ossetia met in Vladikavkaz, the capital of North Ossetia, to discuss ways of improving their relations. They issued a joint statement expressing their wish to find a peaceful solution to the question of South Ossetia's status. Nonetheless, occasional tensions and hostage-taking incidents occurred later in the year. New negotiations in November with the participation of the CSCE\* led to the decision to reinstate a joint control commission in the region.

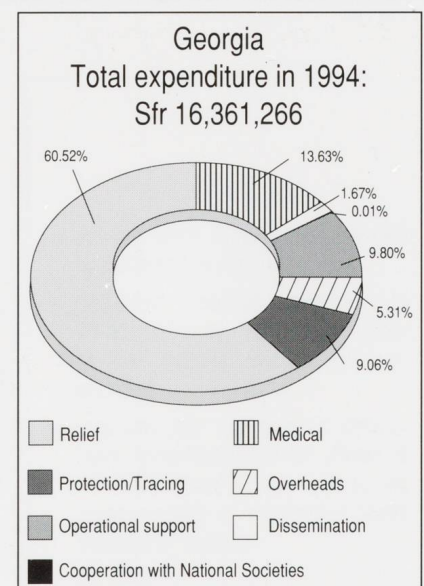
In addition to the destabilizing political factors, Georgia was plagued by a severe energy shortage and a huge foreign debt. The continued presence of some 250,000 refugees and displaced people from Abkhazia and South Ossetia, most of whom had been taken in by local families, put further economic pressure on the population. Displaced persons, elderly people who received virtually no aid from any source and other vulnerable groups in western Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, were particularly hard hit by the breakdown of the social infrastructure and poor material conditions, and ethnic minority groups living in hostile environments remained exposed to harassment and mistreatment. While developing all its traditional activities throughout the region, the ICRC gave top priority to protecting civilians in danger because of their ethnic origin; its extensive tracing services, assistance to the displaced, support for vulnerable groups through local Red Cross branches and dissemination programmes were thus directed, even more than elsewhere, to ensuring the safety of these groups. In early September the ICRC Deputy Delegate General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia handed over to the Abkhaz authorities an interim report on problems concerning the protection of civilians, listing delegates' findings and recommendations.

The ICRC maintained a permanent presence in Tbilisi, Zugdidi and Sukhumi. Tbilisi remained the logistics and supply base for ICRC medical and relief operations throughout the Caucasus and the coordinating centre for most ICRC activities carried out in Transcaucasia.

## Activities for the civilian population

### *Western Georgia*

The ICRC ran assistance programmes for displaced people in western Georgia, including the districts of Zugdidi and Tslenjika in the security zone monitored by Russian peace-keeping troops. Between January and April food parcels and blankets were distributed to 130,000 displaced people in ten



\* CSCE: Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe



districts of western Georgia. The improved situation in the local markets and massive food aid brought in by other humanitarian agencies eliminated the need for large-scale emergency distributions in the summer months. However, as winter approached, the ICRC again provided basic food and other assistance for 100,000 displaced people in the Zugdidi and Tslenjika districts. Through the local Red Cross branches it provided assistance for several hundred elderly people. Further distributions for the displaced were in preparation at the end of the year.

#### *South Ossetia*

In Tskhinvali in South Ossetia, delegates distributed food parcels to the most destitute displaced people and provided the local Red Cross with food for its social welfare programme for vulnerable groups.

#### *Abkhazia*

As of the beginning of the year ICRC delegates were present in the Gali district, where the situation of ethnic Georgians and other vulnerable groups was again giving rise to particular concern. Whenever it encountered security problems, which was frequently the case in Sukhumi and to the south-east of the town, the ICRC made representations to the authorities at all levels, urging them to ensure the protection of all civilians under their responsibility. Apart from their need for protection, these minorities were also the hardest hit by the general lack of basic resources affecting the entire population. The ICRC provided food parcels and staples such as sugar and oil for some 60,000 elderly and vulnerable people and civilians living in areas seriously affected by the conflict, mainly in Sukhumi and the Gali and Tkvarcheli districts. Public canteens in Sukhumi, Gulripsh, Tkvarcheli, Ochamchira and Gali received food supplements from the ICRC, and the local Red Cross distributed more than a hundred ICRC family parcels through its social welfare programmes each month. Displaced people living in public buildings or with host families received food parcels and blankets. At the end of the year the ICRC was preparing further winter relief distributions for vulnerable groups, particularly elderly people.

#### *Tracing activities*

Because of the large numbers of families split up by the conflict, tracing had been a key aspect of the ICRC's operation from the outset. Official communication channels between Georgia and Abkhazia having broken down, the exchange of Red Cross messages was often the only way for family members separated by conflict or detention to restore and maintain contact with one another. Since the start of its tracing programme, the ICRC had enabled several



thousand people from Abkhazia to have news from or about relatives with whom they had had no communication at all. In 1994 the tracing agency developed its activities considerably, setting up an efficient countrywide distribution network, and reunited 50 families separated by the conflict.

## Activities for detainees

At the end of January the Delegate General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia met the Georgian Head of State in Tbilisi to submit an ICRC offer of services regarding visits to all persons detained either in connection with the conflicts or for security reasons. Delegates subsequently carried out visits to detainees in accordance with the ICRC's standard procedures, regularly visiting more than a hundred people held in 20 places of detention in Georgia and Abkhazia.

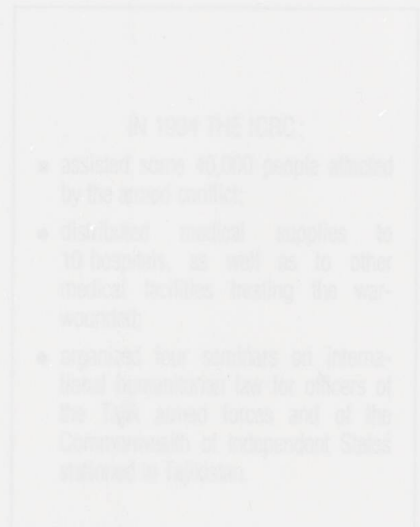
## Medical activities

Although there were fewer war-wounded in 1994, the risk of a new outbreak of fighting remained and the medical infrastructure continued to rely largely on outside assistance. The ICRC regularly toured hospitals treating the war-wounded in conflict areas in Abkhazia and western Georgia, including Mingrelia, and continued to provide them with emergency medical supplies. Because of the serious shortage of medicines for chronic illnesses, in April the ICRC launched an assistance programme for the main outpatient clinic in Sukhumi. A centre for tuberculosis patients and a psychiatric hospital also received assistance. On several occasions the ICRC transferred hardship cases from Abkhazia to Georgia for strictly medical reasons.

In view of the large numbers of war amputees and the presence of landmines which continued to claim victims among the civilian population, in July the ICRC launched two orthopaedic projects in cooperation with the authorities concerned. The project sites, located in Tbilisi and Gagra (northern Abkhazia), required extensive work before construction of the workshops could begin. The centres were ready to start producing artificial limbs and fitting amputees towards the end of the year.

## Dissemination

As in the whole of the Caucasus, the ICRC attached great importance to its dissemination programmes, which were adapted as closely as possible to the culture and traditions of the target audiences. Dissemination delegates organized sessions on international humanitarian law and ICRC activities for officers and soldiers of the Georgian armed forces, troops under the jurisdiction of



the Ministry of the Interior and Abkhaz defence forces and militia. Following an agreement concluded with the Ministry of Defence the ICRC held for the first time a course on the law of war at the military academy; 200 students attended. At the end of the year the first dissemination session was organized for Russian peace-keeping forces. The travelling exhibition on the theme *Humanity in the Midst of War*, shown in Tbilisi in May, attracted 2,000 civilian and military visitors, including Georgian government representatives. During the exhibition the ICRC organized lectures and seminars for university students, the Ministry of Defence and the Georgian Red Cross. Talks on humanitarian law were also given in cooperation with universities throughout the region. During the year the ICRC and its activities were given regular media coverage in Tbilisi and western Georgia; an ICRC spot entitled *Abkhazia 1994* was broadcast on Abkhaz TV regularly during a two-week period, and two videos were dubbed in Georgian for use by television. The distribution of publications, including 25,000 copies of the ICRC's manual on the rules of behaviour in combat, and of audiovisual material in Georgian and Abkhaz helped to make Red Cross and Red Crescent principles and work more widely known. Dissemination specialists produced a wall calendar drawing on Georgian literature to illustrate the basic principles of the Geneva Conventions, similar to the one published in Armenian and Azeri. Apart from working together with local Red Cross branches on social welfare programmes, the ICRC also initiated a cooperation programme for the production of Red Cross publications.

## Central Asia

### TAJIKISTAN

In 1994 the former communist government in Dushanbe gained control of most of the country, although true national reconciliation continued to elude Tajikistan. However, improved security conditions in many regions enabled thousands of internally displaced people and refugees who had sought haven in Afghanistan to return to their places of origin or settle in areas where the situation had stabilized, such as the Hatlon Oblast in the south-west.

Negotiations organized in Moscow in April and in Tehran in June under the aegis of the United Nations failed to bridge the deep rifts dividing the parties. During the summer months the southern border was the scene of violent clashes between opposition groups and Russian border guards. The armed opposition, among them combatants who had infiltrated from Afghanistan, penetrated into the heart of the country through the western reaches of the semi-autonomous region of Gorno-Badakhshan to launch renewed attacks in the



Garm valley, the Tavildara district and the Darwaz region. The offensive caused hundreds of casualties and forced thousands of civilians to flee from these regions, which were also made unsafe by the presence of numerous armed groups. On 17 September the parties met again in Tehran under UN auspices to sign a temporary cease-fire agreement providing for the deployment of UN observers. The cease-fire was extended for another three months during a further round of talks held under UN auspices in Islamabad (Pakistan) from 20 October to 1 November. Two ICRC delegates participated in the negotiations. They reiterated the institution's wish to have access to prisoners held by the parties and again outlined the services the ICRC could offer, in its capacity as a neutral intermediary, in the event of a release operation. The parties agreed to a simultaneous release of prisoners under ICRC supervision which took place on 13 November. Further talks between the parties were scheduled for the beginning of the following year. In the meantime, potentially destabilizing factors such as the wave of assassinations targeting politicians, Russian military personnel and civilians earlier in the year and growing general dissatisfaction with the plummeting economy continued to affect the political climate of Tajikistan.



✚ ICRC regional delegation    ✚ ICRC delegation

ICRC / AR 12.94

## Activities for the civilian population

In September 1993 the increased activity of other humanitarian agencies in the south-western Hatlon Oblast had prompted the ICRC to wind down its emergency relief operation for returning refugees, begun seven months earlier. While maintaining a presence in the region to monitor the situation of the returnees, the institution shifted the focus of its assistance to displaced people and refugees returning to their homes in western and central Tajikistan, mostly from Gorno-Badakhshan. These programmes, which also aimed to help the

### IN 1994 THE ICRC:

- assisted some 40,000 people affected by the armed conflict;
- distributed medical supplies to 10 hospitals, as well as to other medical facilities treating the war-wounded;
- organized four seminars on international humanitarian law for officers of the Tajik armed forces and of the Commonwealth of Independent States stationed in Tajikistan.



returnees resume a normal life, were carried out in cooperation with the Tajik Red Crescent.

In March 1993, as soon as displaced people started returning in large numbers, the ICRC made the first of many approaches to the central and local authorities, urging them to ensure the safety of the returnees. This dialogue continued throughout 1994. The ICRC provided food and other assistance for nearly 40,000 people affected by the strife, including families who had returned to Dushanbe from Gorno-Badakhshan and, beginning in June, people who had fled the hostilities in the Tavildara district, the Mionadu valley and the Darwaz region. At the end of the year the ICRC distributed more food and blankets to people who had been newly displaced by further fighting in these areas and had taken refuge with families or in public buildings in Dushanbe and Kalai-Khum. At the same time it launched assistance programmes for displaced people who had since chosen to return to the Tavildara district and the Mionadu valley, despite the ravages caused by the hostilities. In coordination with the Ministry of Labour, ICRC delegates escorted a number of people at their own request from their temporary accommodation in Dushanbe back to Tavildara and Mionadu and provided them with blankets and food parcels. Some ICRC assistance was made available to the relief programme for particularly vulnerable people run by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in non-conflict areas; as the Tavildara district had become a conflict zone, the ICRC agreed to carry out a Federation programme for hundreds of elderly people in the district.

At the end of the year an estimated 20,000 displaced people were still sheltering in public buildings or staying with host families throughout Gorno-Badakhshan, as military operations along the only direct route between Dushanbe and Khorog had prevented their return to southern and central Tajikistan.

### Activities for detainees

The ICRC had been requesting access to all those detained in connection with the conflict and the ensuing sporadic acts of violence since November 1992, and continued its efforts in 1994. Following a visit by the Delegate General at the end of June, the ICRC sent a letter to the Vice-Chairman of the Supreme Soviet requesting general access to detainees, in accordance with its standard procedures, and a note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding access to all detainees within the ICRC's purview. At the end of the year the matter was still pending.

Under the agreement reached in Islamabad, 23 members of the opposition held by the authorities in Dushanbe and 27 government soldiers detained by the



Tajik opposition were released simultaneously in November. ICRC delegates were allowed to visit these detainees and then oversaw their release at the Khorog airport, in Gorno-Badakhshan. In keeping with customary ICRC procedures, delegates interviewed each detainee in private in order to register his identity and ensure that he was going to the destination of his choice. The detainees were also given the opportunity to send Red Cross messages to their families.

## Tracing activities

Tracing activities remained limited as family members separated by the conflict were usually able to communicate through the regular postal and telecommunications service and via UNHCR, the organization in charge of refugee programmes in northern Afghanistan. The ICRC delegation in Dushanbe was concerned mainly with the cases of 80 unaccompanied minors of Afghan origin who had been placed in and around the Tajik capital for schooling and safe-keeping during the war in their home country.

## Medical activities

As was the case in many countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, civil war and economic decay had eroded the health system of Tajikistan. Military operations along the Tajik-Afghan border, internal violence and open armed confrontation between June and mid-September all took their toll of casualties. The ICRC concentrated on responding to urgent needs in trouble spots and kept a permanent stock of medical supplies readily available in Dushanbe. Following an extensive survey early in the year, medical facilities treating the war-wounded and victims of violence in Tavildara, the Garm valley, Khorog, Kalai-Khum and Vanch received urgently needed assistance. In October an ICRC surgical coordinator gave presentations at a conference on war surgery organized by the Ministry of Health in Tursunsade, and assessed medical needs at four referral hospitals in Dushanbe, to which hundreds of casualties wounded in the fighting in the Darwaz district had been evacuated. These hospitals, along with other medical establishments in the conflict areas, received medicines and medical supplies from the ICRC according to need, including antibiotics, anaesthetics, surgical gloves, suture sets, injection sets and paediatric kits.

## Dissemination

To continue its work in the precarious situation prevailing in Tajikistan, it was vital for the ICRC to be well known and accepted throughout the country.

The Tajik Red Crescent took part in efforts to spread knowledge of the Movement, its emblems and its ideals.

The ICRC organized four seminars on international humanitarian law for officers of the Ministries of Defence and of the Interior and forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States stationed in Tajikistan. Discussions on international humanitarian law were also held for doctors and officers at the Tajik armed forces' Central Hospital. In August and September a travelling exhibition on the history and development of the law, called *Humanity in Action*, was shown for two weeks in Dushanbe and subsequently in the northern city of Khojent. The ICRC also held a regional seminar on humanitarian law for 60 officials and members of the Red Crescent provincial branch.

## TASHKENT

### Regional delegation

(Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)

While in 1994 there was no armed conflict in the region covered by the delegation in Tashkent, the ICRC remained concerned about a number of existing and potential problems. The difficult economic situation prevailing in all four countries created a risk of social unrest, and ethnic tension gave rise to fears of renewed clashes in some areas.

In keeping with its main objective for the year, the ICRC worked, both from Geneva headquarters and from the regional delegation, to spread knowledge of the basic rules of international humanitarian law and of Red Cross/Red Crescent activities and their guiding principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence.

Apart from fostering contacts with political and military circles as well as the national and provincial Red Crescent and Red Cross organizations in all four republics, ICRC delegates gave talks on humanitarian law, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the ICRC's work, distributed essential dissemination material and organized events which were given extensive media coverage. This enabled the various National Societies, which are still awaiting recognition, to make their work better known among wide sectors of the population.

Throughout the year, the regional delegate had meetings with senior officials of the Ministries of Defence, the Interior, Justice and Foreign Affairs of the four republics and various ambassadors based there, and with the local authorities in 24 provinces and the autonomous republic of Karakalpakstan. The delegation arranged for three presentations on international humanitarian law and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to be given



for senior representatives of government and parliament in Ashgabat, Tashkent and Bishkek. High-ranking members of the armed forces of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan attended specialized dissemination courses in Bishkek, Almaty and Ashgabat. The ICRC also organized a series of 29 lectures for representatives of the local authorities and Red Crescent/Red Cross members and volunteers in provincial capitals throughout the four republics.

At the beginning of the year an ICRC surgeon visited military hospitals in the capitals of the countries covered by the regional delegation, and later participated in a course in war surgery organized by the Uzbek Ministry of Defence. A number of surgeons from the other three countries also took part in the course.

As part of its support programme for National Societies, the ICRC provided the Red Crescent/Red Cross national headquarters and provincial branches in the four republics with substantial technical assistance in the form of telecommunication, audiovisual and office equipment. In July the regional delegate, on the invitation of the Red Crescent and Red Cross of Kazakhstan, attended an extraordinary convention at which the Society elected a new honorary President and a new Director General.

The Deputy Delegate General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia carried out a mission to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in May. She gave presentations on humanitarian law and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in the two capitals, which were attended by representatives of the President's office and the various ministries, members of parliament and Red Crescent representatives. She gave similar presentations in the *oblasts* for representatives of the local authorities and the local Red Crescent. In June the Delegate General visited Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. He met high-ranking government officials including the Deputy Ministers of Defence and of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan and the Deputy Prime Minister and the first Deputy Foreign Minister of Kyrgyzstan. Their discussions centred on topics related to international humanitarian law and the ICRC's work in the region. The Delegate General also presided at the opening of the ICRC exhibition *Humanity in Action*, tracing the history and development of international humanitarian law and illustrating its working mechanisms, held in Bishkek in June. The exhibition was shown in Almaty and Ashgabat in October and December.