

# GEORGIA



ICRC delegation ICRC mission ICRC office

The ICRC has been present in Georgia since 1992. Acting as a neutral intermediary, it contributes to efforts to clarify the fate/whereabouts of missing persons, including by offering its forensic expertise to the actors concerned. It supports the families of missing persons and works to protect and assist displaced people and other vulnerable groups in conflict-affected regions. It visits detainees throughout Georgia, including South Ossetia. It promotes the national implementation of IHL and its integration into armed and security forces' doctrine, training and sanctions and into academic curricula. The ICRC helps the Red Cross Society of Georgia strengthen its capacities.

## KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

### In 2014:

- ▶ through the bipartite coordination mechanism for persons missing in connection with the Georgia-Abkhazia conflict, the remains of 18 persons were identified and handed over to their families
- ▶ families of missing persons coped with their situation with psychosocial and legal support, and local actors strengthened their ability to aid these families, with financial and technical backing from the ICRC
- ▶ people crossed Abkhaz and South Ossetian administrative boundary lines to obtain medical attention or rejoin their families, with the ICRC acting as a neutral intermediary to facilitate their passage
- ▶ while visits to detainees in Abkhazia remained suspended, people held in Georgia proper and South Ossetia received ICRC visits and, in some instances, family visits as well
- ▶ thousands of vulnerable people began/expanded income-generating activities with ICRC support, but some relief and income support activities were cancelled/reduced after being found unsuitable
- ▶ with ICRC encouragement, Georgia signed/ratified two IHL-related instruments, and the *de facto* authorities in South Ossetia began the process of drafting a local law on missing persons

EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)	
Protection	2,686
Assistance	5,261
Prevention	1,481
Cooperation with National Societies	674
General	-
	<b>10,102</b>

of which: Overheads 617

IMPLEMENTATION RATE	
Expenditure/yearly budget	<b>93%</b>

PERSONNEL	
Mobile staff	18
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	177

## YEARLY RESULTS

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

**HIGH**

PROTECTION	Total
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>	
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>	
RCMs collected	323
RCMs distributed	279
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	43
People reunited with their families	21
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>	
<b>ICRC visits</b>	
Detainees visited	10,843
Detainees visited and monitored individually	96
Number of visits carried out	74
Number of places of detention visited	13
<b>Restoring family links</b>	
RCMs collected	84
RCMs distributed	26
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	33

ASSISTANCE		2014 Targets (up to)	Achieved
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>			
<b>Economic security, water and habitat</b> (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)			
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	435	522
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	1,112	495
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	3,120	
Cash	Beneficiaries		2,492
Work, services and training	Beneficiaries	10	1,120
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	2,370	10,586

## CONTEXT

Civilians continued to feel the effects of past conflicts, particularly on their economic security. The families of over 2,000 missing persons remained without news of their relatives.

The demarcation of the Abkhaz and South Ossetian administrative boundary lines continued, hampering the free movement of people and goods, and access to water. People attempting to cross the boundaries were reportedly arrested.

Following the election of a new *de facto* president in August, Abkhazia signed a strategic partnership agreement with the Russian Federation in October. South Ossetia made preparations for signing a similar agreement with the Russian Federation in 2015.

Peace negotiations – the “Geneva Talks” involving representatives of Georgia, the Russian Federation, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and mediated by the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the UN – continued, but made little progress. Monthly meetings of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism, facilitated jointly by the EU Monitoring Mission and the OSCE, helped maintain regular contacts between the parties, for example, on humanitarian issues related to the demarcation of the administrative boundaries.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC continued to assist people affected by the demarcation of the administrative boundary lines, families of missing persons, and others coping with the effects of past conflicts. Dialogue with the authorities in Georgia proper and the *de facto* authorities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia emphasized their obligation to facilitate civilians’ access to humanitarian aid and essential services. The ICRC remained the only international organization conducting humanitarian activities in South Ossetia.

Discussions with the parties involved in past conflicts emphasized the need to clarify the fate of persons who remained unaccounted for. The ICRC continued to support the bipartite coordination mechanism between Georgia and Abkhazia on the issue of persons missing in relation to the 1992–93 conflict, and the tripartite coordination mechanism between Georgia, the Russian Federation and South Ossetia on persons missing in connection with the 2008 and earlier conflicts. The ICRC provided financial and technical backing for efforts to identify human remains and facilitated their transfer across administrative boundaries. Within the framework of the bipartite coordination mechanism, 56 sets of human remains were recovered, and the remains of 18 persons identified and handed over to their families in Georgia proper and Abkhazia. Families of missing persons obtained psychosocial and legal assistance from local providers supported by the ICRC.

Conflict-affected households started/expanded food-production or income-generating activities with ICRC cash grants; however, some planned economic-assistance projects were cancelled or scaled down after they were found to be unsuitable. Households whose access to water was affected by the boundary demarcation benefited from efforts by the local authorities and the ICRC to improve the water supply. ICRC assistance enabled victims of mines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) to obtain prosthetic/orthotic devices and cover costs related to their treatment.

While visits to detainees in Abkhazia remained suspended, pending the *de facto* authorities’ acceptance of the ICRC’s standard procedures, the ICRC visited detainees in Georgia proper and South Ossetia. The authorities and *de facto* authorities received feedback on detainees’ treatment and conditions. The primary-health-care programme for prisons in Georgia proper was extended to 12 facilities and handed over to the Georgian authorities at end-2014.

Detainees in Georgia proper and South Ossetia benefited from ICRC-facilitated family visits and parcel deliveries. Detainees in Georgia proper, Abkhazia and South Ossetia restored/maintained contact with relatives through RCMs. In Georgia proper, the families of people held in Abkhazia and South Ossetia addressed administrative concerns using power-of-attorney documents drawn up by their detained relatives, supported by ICRC-issued letters. Earlier in the year, Abkhaz detainees in Georgia proper used phone calls to speak with their families; however, the service was suspended by the authorities, citing security concerns.

With ICRC encouragement, Georgia signed the Arms Trade Treaty and ratified the 2010 amendments to the Rome Statute; the *de facto* authorities in South Ossetia began the process of drafting a local law on missing persons.

The Georgian Ministry of Defence and the ICRC signed an agreement to cooperate in incorporating IHL in the armed forces’ doctrine, training and sanctions system; subsequently, at ICRC-organized workshops, military officers discussed the incorporation of IHL in military decision-making. The ICRC conducted IHL training for Georgian military personnel preparing for peace-support missions abroad, and dissemination sessions for Abkhaz militia personnel and security/customs officers; an offer to conduct similar sessions for the South Ossetian armed forces was not accepted.

The Red Cross Society of Georgia worked to strengthen the legal basis for its activities, for instance, by proposing to the parliament amendments to the law governing its status and the use of the red cross emblem. With ICRC backing, it strengthened its ability to provide humanitarian assistance by increasing the number of its branches, obtaining European certification for its first-aid programme and developing its family-links capacities.

## CIVILIANS

### People get medical treatment and rejoin relatives across boundary lines

Dialogue with the Georgian authorities and the *de facto* Abkhaz and South Ossetian authorities emphasized the concerns of people living along the administrative boundaries, particularly regarding the impact of movement restrictions.

People crossed boundary lines to obtain medical attention or rejoin their families; the ICRC, acting as a neutral intermediary, facilitated their passage. Some 200 people were transferred to medical facilities. The remains of nine people were handed over to their families by the ICRC, which also facilitated the return of five other sets of remains to relatives. Families on different sides of the boundaries exchanged RCMs, and 21 people rejoined their relatives. Fifty-six official documents were relayed across boundary lines, benefiting 44 people.

In South Ossetia, the Tskhinvali/Tskhinval hospital boosted its ability to treat patients using ICRC-supplied surgical equipment.

The *de facto* health authorities received medicines and supplies for distribution to various hospitals.

### **Local actors help clarify the fate of missing persons**

Georgian and Abkhaz representatives to the ICRC-chaired bipartite coordination mechanism dealing with the issue of persons missing in relation to the 1992–93 conflict, and the forensic working group attached to it, continued their work. Local forensic scientists, coached by Argentine forensic anthropologists, performed exhumations in Digomi, Georgia proper, and in Babushera, Ochamchira and three other sites in Abkhazia. The teams recovered 56 sets of human remains. All the remains exhumed in Babushera were transferred to the National Forensic Bureau in Georgia proper for forensic analysis; the ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary to facilitate passage across the Abkhaz administrative boundary.

The families of 18 persons found some closure after their missing relatives' remains were identified and handed over to them; 4 sets of remains had been recovered in Babushera earlier in the year, and the other 14 sets had been exhumed in Park Slavy, Abkhazia, in 2013.

In Georgia proper and Abkhazia, local forensic professionals, with ICRC technical assistance, collected DNA samples from relatives of missing persons for use in future identification efforts. National Society/ICRC personnel collected ante-mortem data from the families of missing persons in Georgia proper; ICRC-trained representatives of the Abkhaz commission on missing persons did the same in Abkhazia.

No meetings were convened by the Georgian, Russian and South Ossetian participants in the tripartite coordination mechanism dealing with persons missing in connection with the 2008 and earlier conflicts; the ICRC maintained dialogue with all three parties.

The South Ossetian *de facto* authorities participated in ICRC training in the collection of ante-mortem data, as they prepared to collect such data from relatives of people missing in relation to the 1990–92 conflict. However, at year's end, data collection had not begun, as the agreement between the *de facto* authorities and the ICRC on these activities awaited the approval of the former.

### **Families of the missing offer each other psychosocial support**

Through the accompaniment programme conducted by partner NGOs with financial and technical backing from the ICRC, families of missing persons met some of their needs with psychosocial and legal assistance. Some 300 families in Georgia proper joined the programme, bringing the total number of families assisted since 2010 to over 1,100. Relatives of missing persons had emotional support during difficult occasions, such as the collection of ante-mortem data and DNA samples or the identification/handover of remains. One additional NGO and several National Society branches joined those lending their support to the programme.

Families in South Ossetia participated in commemorative projects, which were presented to the public on the International Day of the Disappeared (see *Actors of influence*). With ICRC assistance, members of a South Ossetian family association visited their counterparts in Abkhazia to share experiences and offer support and encouragement. In July, the ICRC concluded its psychosocial-support sessions for families of missing persons in South Ossetia; 30 families participated in 76 sessions.

### **Conflict-affected households regain self-sufficiency**

Some 670 conflict-affected households (2,401 people) in Georgia proper and Abkhazia, including families of missing persons or mine/ERW victims and people living near the administrative boundaries, worked towards economic recovery by starting/expanding food-production or income-generating activities with the help of ICRC cash grants. When households were surveyed nine months after receiving such assistance, it was found that 80% had developed sustainable livelihoods and 63% had increased their income by 30%. In South Ossetia, 20 households (64 people) acquired basic business skills through ICRC training and used cash grants to start small enterprises.

The South Ossetian *de facto* authorities, supported by the ICRC, boosted local farmers' access to agricultural services. For instance, 17 government veterinarians treated livestock more effectively after attending refresher courses and receiving instruments and medicines. The *de facto* authorities and farmers' associations were supplied with tractors and other equipment to help farmers till their land during the next planting season (collectively benefiting over 1,000 people). Irrigation projects and initiatives to assist apple growers were cancelled, and fewer cash grants were given than initially planned, after these activities were found to be unsuitable.

Vulnerable people met their immediate needs with ICRC aid. In South Ossetia, 192 destitute households (484 people) coped with harsh weather conditions following the provision of household/hygiene items, and were able to eat three meals a day after receiving food parcels. Among the beneficiaries were 12 elderly people with physical disabilities, who received such assistance during home visits. Eleven children whose boarding school had burnt down also benefited from food and household/hygiene items. In Abkhazia's remote Kodori Gorge, 16 households (27 people) supplemented their diet with food supplies.

### **Relatives of detainees address administrative concerns**

In Georgia proper, families of people detained in Abkhazia and South Ossetia obtained social benefits, applied for passports for minors, or initiated other administrative procedures using power-of-attorney documents drawn up by their detained relatives; these documents were supported with letters from the ICRC.

Until July, when the authorities suspended the programme for security reasons, Abkhaz families spoke with their relatives detained in Georgia proper using a phone service at the ICRC office in Gali, Abkhazia (see *People deprived of their freedom*).

### **Mine/ERW victims recover mobility**

The ICRC collected data on the needs of mine/ERW victims in Abkhazia and, with the National Society, in Georgia proper. Following these efforts, people in need of prosthetic/orthotic devices were identified and referred to the Georgian Foundation for Prosthetic Orthopaedic Rehabilitation. Some 110 mine/ERW victims obtained such devices and had their transport, food and accommodation costs covered by the ICRC. With ICRC assistance, 350 mine/ERW victims started/resumed income-generating projects (see above), benefiting a total of 1,267 people. In South Ossetia, 11 people met their various prosthetic/orthotic needs with ICRC assistance.

## **Communities have more reliable water supply and improved housing**

Georgian water authorities boosted their ability to increase people's access to water after the ICRC provided them with pumps and technical support for maintaining their water-supply systems, benefiting 5,010 people; another 3,180 people in Georgian villages close to the South Ossetian administrative boundary had better access to water after the authorities installed some of these pumps with ICRC assistance. Local technicians learnt to operate the pumps with ICRC training.

In South Ossetia, some 1,310 people had more water after local authorities repaired/maintained existing water-supply systems with technical and material support from the ICRC. Twelve destitute families (34 people) stayed warm in winter after one room in each of their houses was repaired.

In western Georgia, around 1,050 IDPs had better living conditions after the authorities and the ICRC carried out infrastructure repairs and improvements at the collective centres housing them.

## **PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM**

### **People detained have their treatment and living conditions monitored**

Detainees in Georgia proper and South Ossetia – including people held in connection with past conflicts, for crossing administrative boundaries, or on security-related charges – received ICRC visits conducted in accordance with the organization's standard procedures. During visits, detainees' treatment and living conditions were monitored. The Georgian authorities and the South Ossetian *de facto* authorities received confidential feedback and, where necessary, recommendations for improvement.

However, visits to people held in Abkhazia remained suspended, pending the *de facto* authorities' acceptance of the ICRC's standard procedures.

With ICRC assistance, foreign detainees, including asylum seekers and stateless persons, notified their embassies or local UNHCR representatives of their detention. Detaining authorities were reminded of the need to uphold the principle of *non-refoulement*.

### **Detainees maintain family links across boundary lines**

Eight people from South Ossetia detained in Georgia proper benefited from family visits, some as long as 24 hours; acting as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC facilitated their relatives' safe passage across boundary lines. Three people held in South Ossetia also received family visits. Detainees in Georgia proper, Abkhazia and South Ossetia stayed in touch with their relatives through RCMs. Some detainees in Georgia proper also spoke to their families in Abkhazia, who used an ICRC phone service (see *Civilians*).

Several detainees benefited from the delivery across boundary lines of parcels from relatives who could not travel.

### **Authorities continue to ensure detainees' access to health care**

Georgian authorities began implementing an action plan for penitentiary health care reform, reaffirming their commitment to making health care accessible to detainees. The primary-health-care programme in Georgian prisons was extended to 12 facilities and handed over to the authorities at year's end. Through the programme, detainees benefited from, among others, health screening, medical treatment and a suicide-prevention initiative.

Health staff developed their capacities through training, for example, in mental-health care and medical documentation. Health facilities were repaired and equipped by the authorities and the ICRC.

Efforts to improve a South Ossetian prison's heating system progressed after some delays.

## **ACTORS OF INFLUENCE**

### **Authorities advance IHL implementation**

Discussions with the Georgian authorities and the Abkhaz and South Ossetian *de facto* authorities focused on their responsibility to assist people affected by the demarcation of the administrative boundaries, the issue of missing persons and their families' needs, and other consequences of past conflicts, and the ICRC's role as a neutral intermediary. The ICRC received the *de facto* authorities' approval to operate in South Ossetia until the end of the year, where it remained the only international organization conducting humanitarian activities.

In 2014, Georgia signed the Arms Trade Treaty and ratified the 2010 amendments to the Rome Statute. With ICRC support, members of the national IHL committee enriched their understanding of IHL implementation at a regional conference, and participated in consultations in Switzerland on the "Strengthening IHL" process (see *International law and policy*).

In South Ossetia, at an ICRC-organized round-table in August, representatives of the *de facto* authorities and members of civil society organizations discussed the possibility of establishing a local law on missing persons. The *de facto* authorities confirmed in December that they had begun the process of drafting such a law.

### **Ministry of Defence commits to integrating IHL into its doctrine, training and sanctions system**

The Georgian Ministry of Defence and the ICRC signed an agreement to work together to incorporate IHL in the doctrine, training and sanctions system of the armed forces. A working group, composed of defence officials and military officers, was created to oversee the implementation of the agreement. Commanding officers and legal advisers discussed the application of IHL in military decision-making during ICRC-organized workshops, which were conducted within the framework of the agreement.

Military personnel bound for Afghanistan and the Central African Republic on peace-support missions learnt more about IHL through training sessions and briefings on the ICRC's mandate and its work in those countries. With ICRC support, military instructors strengthened their IHL teaching skills through a train-the-trainer workshop, and IHL-related teaching materials were translated into Georgian. Sponsored by the ICRC, a senior officer of the armed forces participated in the Senior Workshop on International Rules Governing Military Operations (see *International law and policy*).

Militia personnel and security and customs officers in Abkhazia became more familiar with ICRC activities during dissemination sessions. The ICRC's offer to conduct such sessions for the armed forces of South Ossetia was not accepted.

### **Media highlight issues related to missing people and weapon contamination**

The media increased public awareness of humanitarian concerns and the ICRC's activities across Georgia, particularly in relation to missing persons, including efforts to recover and identify human

remains. In South Ossetia, families presented projects to commemorate their missing relatives. The public learnt more about mine/ERW risks through various awareness-raising activities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, including events marking the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.

### Students and teachers add to their knowledge of IHL

With support from the ICRC, a young IHL specialist attended an international conference (see *Armenia*). At an ICRC-organized meeting, IHL professors discussed their experiences and the challenges they faced. University students in Georgia proper participated in national and international IHL competitions, while law students and military cadets in western Georgia reinforced their knowledge of the ICRC's mandate and work during presentations. Through an essay-writing competition, 23 school-children were selected to participate in the third IHL Summer School in South Ossetia.

## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

### National Society works to strengthen the legal framework for its activities

The Georgian Red Cross continued to work with Movement partners to develop its institutional and operational capacities. It proposed to the parliament amendments to the law governing its status and the use of the red cross emblem. It also reviewed its management structure and improved communication between headquarters and branches.

The National Society increased the number of its branches, which helped strengthen its support for the families of missing persons (see *Civilians*). It obtained the European First Aid Certificate for its first-aid programme and created an emergency response plan based on the Safer Access Framework. It boosted its family-links services by developing new procedures and monitoring/evaluation tools, reinforcing these efforts through regular meetings with the ICRC.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total			
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>					
Red Cross messages (RCMs)			UAMs/SCs*		
RCMs collected		323			
RCMs distributed		279			
<b>Reunifications, transfers and repatriations</b>					
People reunited with their families		21			
	<i>including people registered by another delegation</i>	1			
People transferred/repatriated		695			
Human remains transferred/repatriated		9			
<b>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</b>			Women	Girls	Boys
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		610	93	8	21
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		43			
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		2,377	383	15	48
<b>Documents</b>					
Official documents relayed between family members across borders/front lines		56			
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>					
<b>ICRC visits</b>			Women	Minors	
Detainees visited		10,843	279	42	
			Women	Girls	Boys
Detainees visited and monitored individually		96	4		
Detainees newly registered		54	1		
Number of visits carried out		74			
Number of places of detention visited		13			
<b>Restoring family links</b>					
RCMs collected		84			
RCMs distributed		26			
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		33			
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		11			
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		3			

\* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>				
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	522	36%	45%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	6		
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	495	34%	45%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	6		
Cash	Beneficiaries	2,492	44%	22%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	1,394		
Work, services and training	Beneficiaries	1,120	5%	1%
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	10,586	37%	21%
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>				
<b>Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection programme)</b>				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	21		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	54		
<b>Health</b>				
Number of visits carried out by health staff		60		
Number of places of detention visited by health staff		12		