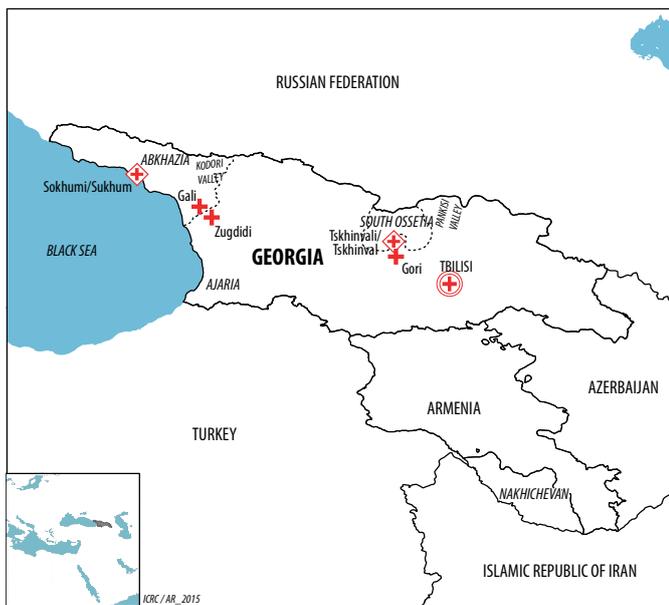


GEORGIA



ICRC/AR_2015

⊕ ICRC delegation ⬠ ICRC mission + ICRC office

The boundaries, names and designations used in this report do not imply official endorsement, nor express a political opinion on the part of the ICRC, and are without prejudice to claims of sovereignty over the territories mentioned.

The ICRC has been present in Georgia proper and in South Ossetia since 1992. Acting as a neutral intermediary, it contributes to efforts to clarify the fate and 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 vulnerable groups in conflict-affected regions. It visits detainees in Georgia proper and in 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.

YEARLY RESULTS

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action HIGH

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS IN 2015

- ▶ Families of missing persons obtained psychosocial, legal and administrative assistance from local providers supported by the ICRC. These families' plight was highlighted in a regional conference.
- ▶ Several families received the remains of relatives who had gone missing; the remains had been identified with ICRC forensic assistance. The families benefited from psychosocial support during the handover.
- ▶ People travelled across administrative boundary lines to obtain urgent medical treatment or rejoin their families; the ICRC facilitated their passage in coordination with the pertinent authorities.
- ▶ Families of missing persons, victims of mines and explosive remnants of war, and people affected by the demarcation of the administrative boundaries began/expanded livelihood activities with ICRC assistance.
- ▶ Detainees in Georgia proper and South Ossetia received ICRC visits. The ICRC remained without access to people detained in Abkhazia.

EXPENDITURE IN KCHF

Protection	2,040
Assistance	5,332
Prevention	946
Cooperation with National Societies	451
General	67
Total	8,836
<i>Of which: Overheads</i>	539

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	81%
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PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	19
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	163

PROTECTION

	Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)	
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	433
RCMs distributed	341
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	133
People reunited with their families	10
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)	
ICRC visits	
Detainees visited	12,236
Detainees visited and monitored individually	136
Number of visits carried out	106
Number of places of detention visited	21
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	97
RCMs distributed	67
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	38

ASSISTANCE

		2015 Targets (up to)	Achieved
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)			
Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)			
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	1,477	515
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	1,450	569
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	750	11
Cash	Beneficiaries	3,350	3,224
Services and training	Beneficiaries	3,350	212
Water and habitat			
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	2,520	6,125

CONTEXT

Civilians continued to feel the effects of past conflicts. More than 2,000 people remained unaccounted for. The demarcation of the Abkhaz and South Ossetian administrative boundary lines continued to hamper the movement of people and to disrupt livelihoods. Arrests of people attempting to cross the boundary lines without the necessary documents continued to be reported.

Peace negotiations (the “Geneva International Discussions”) – involving representatives of Georgia proper, 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 (IPRM), facilitated jointly by the EU Monitoring Mission and the OSCE, enabled Georgian and South Ossetian participants to exchange views on some matters. Restarting the IPRM in Abkhazia, where meetings had been suspended since April 2012, was still being discussed in the “Geneva International Discussions”.

South Ossetia signed an “alliance and integration agreement” with the Russian Federation in March.

Arrests of people on “terrorism”-related charges, and of foreigners entering Georgia illegally, were reported.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

In 2015, the ICRC delegation in Georgia assisted people affected by the demarcation of the administrative boundary lines, families of missing persons, and others coping with the effects of past conflicts. It cancelled, modified or concluded some of its activities, as needs had decreased.

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 people who remained unaccounted for.

The ICRC-chaired coordination mechanism with Georgian and Abkhaz participants, dealing with the issue of people missing in relation to the 1992–93 conflict, continued its work. The ICRC provided technical/financial assistance to Georgian and Abkhaz specialists conducting forensic analysis of human remains recovered in Abkhazia. Collection of DNA samples and ante-mortem data from relatives of missing persons continued, with ICRC support.

Following bilateral discussions with the ICRC, the Georgian, Russian, and South Ossetian participants to the coordination mechanism dealing with cases of people missing in connection with the conflicts of the 1990s and 2008, and other consequences of the conflicts, agreed to meet in 2016. They had last met in 2013.

With ICRC encouragement, Georgian government representatives gathered to discuss the creation of a State commission to safeguard the rights of missing persons and their families.

Families of missing persons obtained psychosocial/legal/administrative assistance from local providers backed by the ICRC. NGO representatives, academics and National Society personnel from Eastern Europe and Central Asia learnt more about the needs of the families of the missing at a regional conference on ambiguous loss organized by the ICRC in Tbilisi. Families set up committees for mutual support and organized commemorative events to raise awareness of their plight.

Conflict-affected households in Georgia proper and Abkhazia – including families of missing persons – started/expanded livelihood activities with ICRC cash grants and business training.

In South Ossetia, after an internal review, the ICRC shifted from substitution to support mode for some of its assistance activities; some activities were modified or cancelled. Nevertheless, people in need received some support. Conflict-affected households began/resumed income-generating activities with ICRC cash grants and productive inputs. Vulnerable people met their immediate needs with food and/or household/hygiene items.

People living near the administrative boundaries, IDPs in Georgia proper, and destitute people in South Ossetia benefited from ICRC initiatives to improve their water supply, sanitation and/or housing. The ICRC concluded its water and habitat activities in Georgia proper and South Ossetia at the end of 2015.

ICRC financial aid enabled victims of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) in Georgia proper and South Ossetia to obtain prostheses/orthoses and cover related costs. Such aid for people in Georgia proper was concluded at the end of 2015, as government assistance had become available.

People detained in Georgia proper and South Ossetia received ICRC visits conducted in accordance with the organization’s standard procedures. Following these visits, the authorities received confidential feedback and, where necessary, recommendations to improve detainees’ living conditions. The ICRC remained without access to people detained in Abkhazia. Detainees in Georgia proper, Abkhazia and South Ossetia stayed in touch with their relatives through ICRC family-links services.

The Georgian authorities worked to implement IHL, with ICRC support. The national IHL committee considered amendments to the law on the National Society and the use of the red cross emblem.

The Georgian armed forces continued to incorporate IHL in their doctrine/training/sanctions system. Military officers and peace-keeping troops learnt more about IHL through ICRC-organized training.

The Red Cross Society of Georgia developed its institutional/operational capacities, with ICRC assistance.

CIVILIANS

People obtain medical attention and reunite with their families across boundary lines

Dialogue with the Georgian authorities and the Abkhaz and South Ossetian *de facto* authorities emphasized the concerns of people living along the administrative boundary lines, particularly regarding their economic situation, their access to essential services, including health care, and their ability to restore/maintain contact with relatives.

People crossed the South Ossetian administrative boundary to obtain medical attention or rejoin their families; the ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary to facilitate their passage, in coordination with the pertinent authorities. The remains of 16 people were transferred across boundary lines by the ICRC, which also facilitated the handover of the remains of 6 others to their relatives. Families exchanged RCMs, and people had official documents relayed, across boundary lines.

The Georgian Red Cross, with technical/financial assistance from the ICRC, strengthened its capacities in restoring family links. A family-links specialist, whose salary was covered by the ICRC, visited branches to provide technical support/monitoring, and participated in emergency-preparedness workshops.

Local actors continue working to clarify the fate of missing persons

Georgian and Abkhaz participants in the ICRC-chaired coordination mechanism dealing with the issue of people missing in relation to the 1992–93 conflict, and its forensic working group, continued their work. With ICRC technical assistance, forensic specialists from Georgia proper and Abkhazia recovered and analysed the remains of 39 people from four gravesites in Georgia proper and three in Abkhazia. The participants in the coordination mechanism met in December – their fifth meeting in 2015 – to agree on sites to be excavated in 2016.

With ICRC assistance, which included the two-month deployment of a technical expert, the Georgian authorities and the Abkhaz *de facto* authorities continued to gather and manage data on possible gravesite locations.

The Georgian authorities handed over the remains of 17 people to their families, and the Abkhaz *de facto* authorities returned the remains of 16 people to their relatives.

Following bilateral discussions with the ICRC, the Georgian, Russian and South Ossetian participants in the coordination mechanism dealing with cases of persons missing in connection with the conflicts of the 1990s and 2008, and other consequences of the conflicts – which had last met in November 2013 – agreed to meet in February 2016.

With encouragement from the ICRC, representatives from several Georgian ministries and other government bodies gathered in May and December to discuss the creation of a State commission to safeguard the rights of missing persons and their families. The ICRC kept up efforts to mobilize the international community on this issue; for instance, in December, it organized a round-table for representatives of international stakeholders.

With ICRC technical assistance, forensic specialists from Georgia proper and Abkhazia continued the analysis of remains recovered from gravesites in Abkhazia from 2013–15. To aid identification efforts, local forensic professionals, with ICRC technical/financial support, collected DNA samples from relatives of missing persons in Georgia proper and Abkhazia. In Georgia proper, the ICRC collected ante-mortem data from the families of missing persons; in Abkhazia, ICRC-trained representatives of the Abkhaz commission on missing persons collected such data from the families of persons newly registered as missing.

In South Ossetia, the collection of ante-mortem data from relatives of people missing in relation to the 1990–92 conflict had not yet

begun, as discussions with the *de facto* authorities on pertinent procedures were still in progress.

Families of the missing benefit from psychosocial support

In Georgia proper, 352 families of missing persons obtained psychosocial/legal/administrative assistance through an accompaniment programme conducted, with technical/financial support from the ICRC, by partner NGOs, Georgian Red Cross branches and various individuals, including psychologists. Following ICRC training, two more NGOs and five more individuals joined the programme.

Families learnt more about the recovery/identification of human remains at information sessions. Relatives received psychosocial support during the identification/handover of their family members' remains and the subsequent reburial ceremonies.

With ICRC assistance, families of missing persons established committees for mutual support. More than 800 families marked the International Day of the Disappeared with activities organized by the family committees.

At an ICRC-organized regional conference in Tbilisi in May, NGO representatives, academics and National Society personnel from Eastern Europe and Central Asia learnt more about ambiguous loss and the needs of the families of the missing.

In South Ossetia, families of missing persons offered each other support during commemorative events organized as part of an accompaniment programme led by a partner NGO, which received ICRC financial assistance. These events were covered by local radio and television stations and newspapers/magazines.

Families of missing persons and mine/ERW victims rebuild their livelihoods

More than 2,160 people (600 households) in Georgia proper and 800 people (200 households) in Abkhazia worked towards economic self-sufficiency by starting/expanding income-generating activities using ICRC cash grants, supplemented in some cases by business training. In Georgia proper, the assistance was provided with the help of Georgian Red Cross volunteers. Families of missing persons, mine/ERW victims and households affected by the demarcation of the administrative boundaries were among those who received such support. A survey found afterwards that 80% of the households had developed sustainable livelihoods, and 63% had increased their income by more than 30%.

In South Ossetia, after an internal review, the ICRC shifted from substitution to support mode for some of its assistance activities. Some activities were modified or cancelled. Nevertheless, people in need benefited from some support. Some 250 people (60 households) began/resumed income-generating activities using cash grants or productive inputs. Ten people, representing the *de facto* agriculture ministry and district authorities, developed their capacities in agricultural work through a train-the-trainer workshop at a Russian university.

Vulnerable people met their basic needs with ICRC help. For instance, 20 elderly people in Abkhazia's remote Kodori Valley were provided with food supplies three times a year.

In South Ossetia, 490 destitute people (190 destitute households) benefited from the provision of food parcels and household/hygiene items; 220 of them (100 households) also received firewood for

heating. Ten elderly persons received material assistance during home visits. Vulnerable people received ICRC assistance for applying to the *de facto* authorities for social benefits.

People have increased water supply and improved sanitation

In Georgia proper, some 1,200 people in Mereti – a village in Gori, near the administrative boundary – had more water for their needs after the ICRC installed a water tank at an existing borehole. At two workshops, local technicians learnt to use equipment, donated by the ICRC, for maintaining the water-supply system. Some 4,000 people in Gori benefited from the ICRC's donation of pumps to the local authorities. Around 200 people in Shida Kartli, also near the boundary line, had readier access to water following the construction of a new water network. Several hundred IDPs at two temporary accommodation centres in western Georgia had cleaner surroundings after sewage infrastructure was set up.

In South Ossetia, 250 people in Upper Bol benefited from the completion of a water-supply system. Twenty-six people (11 households) stayed warm in winter following repairs to one room in each of their houses.

The ICRC concluded its water and habitat activities in Georgia proper and South Ossetia at the end of 2015.

Victims of mines/ERW have their needs assessed and covered

The ICRC continued to collect data on the needs of mine/ERW victims in Abkhazia and, in cooperation with the Georgian Red Cross, in Georgia proper.

People in Georgia proper who were found to be in need of prosthetic/orthotic devices were referred to the ICRC-supported Georgian Foundation for Prosthetic Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (GEFPOR). More than 100 people obtained assistive devices and covered their transport/food/accommodation costs with ICRC financial support. ICRC aid to people needing prostheses/orthoses in Georgia proper and to GEFPOR was concluded at the end of 2015, as government assistance had become available.

In South Ossetia, two people obtained assistive devices with ICRC help, and Tskhinvali/Tskhinval hospital received an ad hoc donation of supplies.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Detainees receive ICRC visits and restore/maintain contact with their families

More than 12,000 people detained in Georgia proper, and some 60 people in South Ossetia, received ICRC visits conducted in accordance with the organization's standard procedures. Following these visits, the detaining authorities received confidential feedback and, where necessary, recommendations to improve detainees' living conditions. The ICRC remained without access to people detained in Abkhazia.

Detainees in Georgia proper, Abkhazia and South Ossetia stayed in touch with their families through RCMs. Nine people held in Georgia proper, and one person held in South Ossetia, received visits from relatives who had crossed administrative boundary lines, with the ICRC acting as a neutral intermediary to facilitate their passage. Some detainees received parcels sent by relatives living across the administrative boundaries and unable to travel.

In Georgia proper, foreign detainees, including asylum seekers and stateless persons, notified their embassies/consulates or UNHCR of their detention, with ICRC assistance. Detaining authorities were reminded of the need to uphold the principle of *non-refoulement*.

Despite ongoing discussions with the Georgian authorities, an ICRC phone service, through which people detained in Georgia proper could speak with their families in Abkhazia, remained suspended.

In December, the ICRC conducted an evaluation of the authorities' primary-health-care project, carried out from June 2011 to December 2014, at 15 prisons in Georgia proper. Its findings and recommendations were shared with the authorities.

In South Ossetia, some detainees and staff at Tskhinvali/Tskhinval prison had warmer surroundings after repairs to the prison's heating system, begun in 2014, were completed. Several detainees benefited from the provision of hygiene items.

ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

Georgian authorities take steps to implement IHL

The Georgian authorities continued to work on implementing IHL, with ICRC support. The national IHL committee considered amendments to the law on the National Society's status and the use of the red cross emblem, and submitted the proposed amendments to the finance ministry for review. The ministry and the National Society were in the process of discussing the amendments.

The national IHL committee organized a workshop on the interplay between IHL and international human rights law during armed conflict; representatives of the committee's working group, and lawyers from various government agencies, participated in the workshop.

With ICRC sponsorship, national IHL committee members and government representatives attended a regional seminar on IHL implementation (see *Moscow*), and a senior official from the chief prosecutor's office participated in a conference on the Rome Statute (see *Armenia*).

Through briefings/meetings, the foreign-affairs and justice ministries, the National Society and the ICRC prepared for the 32nd International Conference.

The ICRC maintained dialogue with the Georgian authorities on the pending ratification of IHL-related treaties and on the humanitarian implications of proposed amendments to national legislation on data protection.

In South Ossetia, discussions with the *de facto* authorities focused on their responsibilities under IHL and other applicable norms – for instance, in relation to the issue of missing persons – and on the ICRC's role as a neutral intermediary. No progress was made in the drafting of a law on missing persons; the ICRC continued to offer technical assistance to the *de facto* authorities in this regard.

Military officers and peacekeeping troops learn more about IHL

The Georgian armed forces continued to take steps to incorporate IHL in their doctrine, training and sanctions system. Officials newly appointed to key positions in the defence ministry were briefed on the plans in place, facilitating the continuity of the process.

Senior military officers and other specialized military personnel strengthened their grasp of IHL through ICRC-organized advanced training. Troops preparing for overseas peacekeeping missions learnt about IHL and the ICRC's mandate/activities during pre-deployment briefings.

The ICRC worked to establish dialogue on issues of humanitarian concern with the *de facto* authorities in charge of defence and law enforcement in Abkhazia.

Customs/police officers in areas near the Abkhaz and South Ossetian administrative boundaries were briefed regularly on the ICRC's activities there.

Local media draw attention to ICRC activities

Media helped raise public awareness of the ICRC's activities, particularly in connection with the issue of missing persons. For instance, the ICRC-organized regional conference on ambiguous loss and the needs of the families of the missing (see *Civilians*) was featured in local newspapers. Progress made in the framework of the coordination mechanisms and related activities were highlighted through various articles in local newspapers/magazines.

In South Ossetia, the public learnt more about mine-related risks through activities marking Mine Awareness Day, including media interviews with community members who had benefited from the use of a mine-free play area built by the ICRC in 2010.

Students and professors enhance their knowledge of IHL

University students in Georgia proper learnt more about IHL through ICRC-sponsored participation in national/international conferences and competitions. With the ICRC, the justice ministry organized one such national competition for university students. Two researchers participated in an international conference on developments in IHL (see *Armenia*).

With ICRC sponsorship, IHL professors from Georgia proper and South Ossetia participated in the Martens Reading International Conference (see *Moscow*), and a professor from a university in Tbilisi attended a seminar in Switzerland.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Georgian Red Cross boosted its institutional/operational capacities with financial/technical support from the ICRC and other Movement partners. It drafted contingency plans for emergencies and, through an ICRC-supported train-the-trainer workshop, strengthened its first-aid capacities. The National Society office in Zugdidi was renovated with ICRC financial/technical assistance.

The National Society worked to refine its standard procedures for applying the Safer Access Framework and for reinforcing its role as an auxiliary to the authorities. With funding from the Austrian Red Cross and the ICRC, it participated in an emergency-simulation exercise with the health ministry and the government agency in charge of emergency response. Some planned activities, however, were not implemented owing to the National Society's human-resources constraints.

With funding from the ICRC and other Movement partners, the Georgian Red Cross provided aid to 280 households affected by floods in Tbilisi in June. It received assistance from the ICRC for exploring opportunities to obtain financial/technical support from other National Societies. Meetings helped the Georgian Red Cross and the ICRC coordinate their work with Movement partners.

Coordinating with the ICRC, the National Society continued to advocate the revision of the law governing its status and the use of the red cross emblem (see *Actors of influence*).

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total			
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)					
Red Cross messages (RCMs)			UAMs/SC*		
RCMs collected		433			
RCMs distributed		341			
Reunifications, transfers and repatriations					
People reunited with their families		10			
People transferred/repatriated		826			
Human remains transferred/repatriated		16			
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons			Women	Girls	Boys
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		489	62	12	6
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>		1			
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		133			
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>		1			
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		2,555	397	33	28
Documents					
Official documents relayed between family members across borders/front lines		39			
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)					
ICRC visits			Women	Minors	
Detainees visited		12,236	354	41	
			Women	Girls	Boys
Detainees visited and monitored individually		136	30	4	
Detainees newly registered		73	26	4	
Number of visits carried out		106			
Number of places of detention visited		21			
Restoring family links					
RCMs collected		97			
RCMs distributed		67			
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		38			
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		10			
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		4			

*Unaccompanied minors/separated children

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	515	37%	47%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	1		
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	569	36%	45%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	2		
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	11	36%	18%
Cash	Beneficiaries	3,224	44%	22%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	798		
Services and training	Beneficiaries	212	42%	23%
Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	6,928	39%	19%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	613		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection programme)				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	13		
Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	54		