



tashkent (regional)

The regional delegation in Central Asia was opened in 1992. It assists governments in implementing IHL instruments and integrating IHL into secondary school and university curricula. It also supports the integration of IHL into armed forces' doctrine, training and sanctions, and promotes international human rights law among police and security forces dealing with law enforcement. The ICRC contributes to strengthening the capacities of the region's National Societies, in particular in the fields of promoting IHL and restoring family links. It also endeavours to protect and assist people detained for security reasons, focusing on access to health care.

COVERING

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	2,870
Assistance	2,120
Prevention	2,692
Cooperation with National Societies	916
General	-

► **8,598**

of which: Overheads 525

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	119%
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PERSONNEL

19	expatriates
88	national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2008, the ICRC:

- held high-level meetings with the authorities to share its findings and recommendations following completion of the six-month trial period for visits to detainees in Uzbekistan
- provided medical and laboratory expertise, equipment, drugs and consumables to help the authorities in Kyrgyzstan control tuberculosis in prisons
- discussed measures for integrating IHL into military doctrine and standard operating procedures with operational commanders in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan
- signed a trilateral framework agreement on the integration of IHL into university curricula with the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education and Science and the Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan
- signed a cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection in Tajikistan on the eventual phasing out of ICRC support to the Dushanbe physical rehabilitation centre
- signed new cooperation framework agreements with the Red Crescent Societies of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan on the basis of an external evaluation of National Society programmes supported by the ICRC in Central Asia

CONTEXT

Kazakhstan's government prepared for the country's presidency of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2010, and announced that it would be undertaking political and legal reforms to meet commitments made in this regard.

In Kyrgyzstan, the government carried out some judicial reforms. Alleged members of Islamist groups were arrested following public demonstrations in October.

An extremely cold winter and very dry spring caused problems for the region's populations, particularly in Tajikistan where the severe weather conditions led to power failures and food shortages.

President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov of Turkmenistan continued to undertake moderate economic and social reforms. The new constitution adopted in September did not represent a major change in the political system.

In Uzbekistan, some judicial reforms were announced. Relations between the Uzbek government and Western countries improved.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

	Total
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)¹	
Detainees visited	21,486
Detainees visited and monitored individually	598
<i>of whom females</i>	80
<i>of whom minors</i>	4
Number of visits carried out	140
Number of places of detention visited	42
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS	
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>	
RCMs collected	531
RCMs distributed	495
DOCUMENTS ISSUED	
People to whom travel documents were issued	90

1. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan
2. Kyrgyzstan
3. Tajikistan

	Total	Women	Children	
CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM²				
<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>				
Water, sanitation and habitat projects	Beneficiaries	2,495	30%	50%
WOUNDED AND SICK³				
<i>Physical rehabilitation</i>				
Patients receiving services	Patients	1,068	226	185
Prostheses delivered	Units	320	52	32
Orthoses delivered	Units	137	35	50

ICRC ACTION

Detention-related activities remained an important focus of the Tashkent regional delegation. In Uzbekistan, after more than three years of negotiations, the ICRC resumed its visits to places of detention for a six-month trial period beginning in March. Confidential discussions were held with the authorities on the ICRC’s findings and recommendations, and plans were made for visits to resume in 2009. In Kyrgyzstan, the ICRC continued to assess conditions of detention and the treatment of detainees and to inform the authorities of its observations and recommendations through confidential reports. In Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, no progress was made in gaining access to detainees.

The ICRC continued to support the Health and Justice ministries in Kyrgyzstan in their efforts to control tuberculosis (TB) in prisons, particularly in implementing the directly observed treatment, short course (DOTS)-plus strategy. ICRC teams renovated TB infrastructure in places of detention.

With a view to ensuring the sustainability of the only physical rehabilitation centre in Tajikistan, the ICRC and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection signed a cooperation agreement on the gradual phasing out of ICRC support. Specialized staff at the centre were trained by an ICRC physiotherapist, while the ICRC and the authorities continued to discuss ways to increase staff salaries in order to retain trained technical personnel.

The ICRC regularly met representatives of the region’s governments to discuss ways of making progress in the implementation of IHL treaties. To this end, it organized a regional seminar attended by representatives of the governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, who presented reports on the situation in each country and discussed ways of accelerating progress.

The ICRC maintained its dialogue with representatives of the region’s Defence ministries, and with operational commanders in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, on means of ensuring the permanent integration of IHL norms into the doctrine, standard operating procedures, training and sanctions of the armed forces. It also continued to raise awareness of relevant international norms among the authorities responsible for the training programmes

and standard operating procedures of police and security forces in the region. Discussions took place in all five countries between representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the ICRC to explore potential areas of collaboration, such as workshops for law enforcement officers on the use of force in crowd control.

The ICRC worked with the relevant authorities to ensure the sustainability of IHL teaching in universities, schools, military lyceums and in-service training institutions, organizing conferences and courses for officials and teachers. Representatives of the region’s media were also regularly briefed to enhance their understanding of the ICRC and its activities.

Central Asian National Societies received ICRC and International Federation assistance in developing stronger institutional capacities, strengthening their legal bases and harmonizing their programmes and procedures. With a view to improving its support to the region’s National Societies, the ICRC commissioned an external evaluation of the programmes it supported. On the basis of the results, it drafted new cooperation framework agreements with all five National Societies, each containing a strategy for sustainable implementation of the programmes. The National Societies of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan signed the agreements before year-end.

CIVILIANS

Families in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan benefited from the ICRC’s family-links service, in some cases being able to communicate with their detained relatives through RCMs. Travel documents were provided to refugees and asylum seekers to enable them to resettle in third countries, at the request of embassies or UNHCR.

- 202 RCMs collected from and 243 RCMs distributed to civilians
- 90 people issued with an ICRC travel document

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Uzbekistan

Visits to detainees in Uzbekistan, on hold since December 2004, resumed in March for a six-month trial period. People held in nine places of detention, including in the main pre-trial facility in Tashkent and in a prison for women, received visits from the ICRC according to its standard working procedures. Detainees in almost all of these places of detention were visited more than once. While security detainees were the main focus of attention during ICRC visits, the treatment and living conditions of all detainees, including women and minors, were also assessed. The authorities were informed of the ICRC's findings and recommendations through meetings and confidential reports. Some detainees were able to keep in touch with their relatives living abroad through RCMs.

After the trial period, high-level meetings between the authorities and the ICRC took place to discuss the ICRC's findings and recommendations and to draw up plans for visits to resume in 2009. Discussions included the ICRC's wish to gain access, according to its standard procedures, to detainees held in police stations and by the State security services.

- ▶ 12,595 detainees visited, of whom 511 monitored individually (76 females; 3 minors) and 401 newly registered (66 females; 3 minors), during 19 visits to 9 places of detention
- ▶ 90 RCMs collected from and 50 RCMs distributed to detainees

Kyrgyzstan

People held in 33 places of detention, including penal colonies and pre-trial facilities under the authority of the Ministry of Justice and police stations under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior were visited by the ICRC. The treatment and living conditions of detainees were assessed, particularly those of security detainees, women, minors, foreigners, detainees whose death sentences had been commuted, newly arrived detainees, and alleged members of an Islamist group arrested following public protests in October. The authorities were informed of the ICRC's observations and recommendations through confidential reports and regular meetings. When necessary, detainees received blankets and warm clothes from the ICRC to help them through the winter months, along with hygiene articles and mattresses.

Detainees held by the State security services had not received ICRC visits since mid-2007 after access to them was restricted. Following repeated representations during the year, the authorities gave the ICRC written authorization to undertake such visits, which were then planned for 2009.

The interministerial working group established in response to the ICRC report entitled *Treatment of Detainees, Their Conditions of Detention and Respect of Essential Judicial Guarantees in Police Detention* met only once, in February 2008, following which the authorities received numerous representations from the ICRC to reactivate it.

Detainees restored contact with family members through the exchange of RCMs, with the assistance of the Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan and the ICRC. Women deprived of freedom traced their children with ICRC support. On their release, refugees and asylum seekers received ICRC travel documents, following a

request from UNHCR, to allow them to return to their countries of origin or resettle in third countries.

- ▶ 8,891 detainees visited, of whom 87 monitored individually (4 females; 1 minor) and 52 newly registered (4 females; 1 minor), during 121 visits to 33 places of detention
- ▶ 125 RCMs collected from and 60 RCMs distributed to detainees
- ▶ 1 detainee visited by relatives with ICRC support

The prevalence of multi-drug resistant (MDR) TB in Kyrgyzstan was one of the highest in the world, posing a serious threat to the success of TB-control activities both within and outside prisons. The efforts of the Health and Justice ministries to bring TB under control in places of detention through the DOTS-plus programme received ICRC technical assistance.

With the support of the ICRC, including medical and laboratory expertise, equipment, drugs, consumables and sponsorship:

- ▶ the Ministry of Justice supervised diagnostic and treatment activities, drug management, staff training and the treatment of the side effects of TB medication in places of detention
- ▶ the authorities drafted applications for funding from the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria and UNITAID, with a view to obtaining sustainable extra-budgetary financing for TB-control activities
- ▶ detainees with MDR TB in Colony 27 began to receive ICRC food parcels to supplement their existing diet
- ▶ the national reference laboratory enhanced its ability to test for first- and second-line drug susceptibility
- ▶ medical staff of penitentiary institutions participated in national and international seminars and conferences on TB and HIV prevention and treatment, thereby updating their knowledge of these topics
- ▶ representatives of Central Asian governments discussed the positive steps taken in Kyrgyzstan to combat TB following ICRC presentations at an international conference held in Uzbekistan
- ▶ detainees and medical and custodial personnel in places of detention obtained information on TB, HIV/AIDS and drug use

Detainees benefited from ICRC support for TB-control efforts through renovation of TB infrastructure in places of detention, including patient rooms, treatment rooms and doctors' rooms. Two TB laboratories were also renovated by the ICRC. Detainees being treated in the TB hospital in Colony 27 were able to keep warm following the installation of a combined coal/electrical heating system by the ICRC. In order to enhance the treatment of detainees through improved collaboration between civilian TB services and places of detention, three TB laboratories within the civilian health care system were renovated and equipped by the ICRC.

The authorities were provided with a report on the conditions of detention and treatment of detainees under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior, based on ICRC visits to five temporary isolators, and renovation work began on sanitary facilities and TB cells in three police stations to identify and demonstrate low-cost solutions.

- ▶ 2,495 detainees benefited from water/sanitation/habitat projects

Turkmenistan

Meetings held with the Turkmen authorities, including the foreign minister and government officials with responsibility for detention matters, through which the ICRC hoped to obtain access to security detainees, failed to produce results.

Tajikistan

Despite efforts to discuss with the authorities the resumption of ICRC visits to detainees in Tajikistan according to its standard working procedures, no progress was made on this issue during the year. Nevertheless the ICRC enabled detainees to make contact with their relatives through RCMs.

- 114 RCMs collected from and 142 RCMs distributed to detainees

WOUNDED AND SICK

The Tajik Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, with limited ICRC management, technical and financial support, ran the physical rehabilitation centre in Dushanbe and outlying satellite workshops. The authorities signed a cooperation agreement with the ICRC outlining a plan of action for the eventual transfer of full responsibility for the centre to the ministry. Specialized staff at the centre underwent training provided by an ICRC physiotherapist, and new manufacturing guidelines for trans-tibial and trans-femoral prostheses were translated into Tajik as part of the effort to develop the sustainability of the centre's services. The authorities and the ICRC continued to discuss ways to increase staff salaries in order to retain trained technical personnel.

- 1,068 patients (including 226 women and 185 children) received services at the ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centre
- 99 new patients (including 16 women and 9 children) fitted with prostheses and 59 (including 17 women and 20 children) fitted with orthoses
- 320 prostheses (including 52 for women, 32 for children and 29 for mine victims), 137 orthoses (including 35 for women and 50 for children), 238 crutches and 2 wheelchairs delivered

AUTHORITIES

Although the States of the region were party to many IHL treaties, mechanisms for their integration into national legislation were often lacking. The authorities received advice from the ICRC on making progress in implementation, as well as on the ratification of further IHL treaties. Representatives of the governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan participated in a regional seminar on IHL implementation organized by the ICRC. They presented reports on the situation in each country and drafted plans of action on making further progress. The Kyrgyz IHL committee met for the first time, with the participation of the ICRC, and discussed ways of accelerating progress in national implementation of IHL.

- Kyrgyzstan acceded to the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture
- Uzbekistan acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

In Kazakhstan, the authorities and the ICRC discussed the need for a headquarters agreement formalizing the ICRC's presence in the country.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Building on a decade of IHL teaching and training in Central Asia, representatives of the region's Defence Ministries discussed with the ICRC the long-term integration of IHL norms into the doctrine, standard operating procedures, training and sanctions of the armed forces. Operational commanders in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan held meetings with the ICRC to examine specific steps to take in this regard. Based on a model IHL integration order provided by the ICRC, the operational command of the Kyrgyz armed forces began drafting such an order.

Teams from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan participated in the sixth Al-Farabi IHL competition organized by the Kazakh Ministry of Defence with ICRC support.

An evaluation to ascertain the extent to which international standards applicable to policing had been integrated into national legislation was under way. This provided an opportunity to raise awareness among the authorities concerned of the ICRC's mandate and activities. Discussions took place in all five countries between representatives of the Ministries of Internal Affairs and the ICRC to explore potential areas of collaboration, such as workshops for law enforcement officers on the use of force in crowd control.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Ministries of Education, National Societies and the ICRC discussed means of maintaining the level of integration of IHL teaching into secondary education, with a view to the eventual handover of long-term responsibility for IHL teaching to the authorities of each country. In December, a framework agreement detailing plans of action in this regard was signed in Kyrgyzstan. In order to keep up interest in IHL among pupils and teachers, the ICRC and the region's Ministries of Education and National Societies held IHL conferences, competitions and summer camps.

The authorities continued to integrate IHL into pre-military education in schools, military lyceums and in-service training institutes, with ICRC support in running training courses for teachers and students. In Kazakhstan, teachers participated in train-the-trainer courses run by the ICRC. Practical IHL lessons were introduced at military lyceums there.

Discussions between the region's Ministries of Education and National Societies, leading universities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and the ICRC focused on means of ensuring the sustainability of IHL teaching in universities. In December, the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education and Science, the Kyrgyz Red Crescent and the ICRC signed a trilateral framework agreement on the integration of IHL into State educational standards and law, international law and international relations curricula.

University students and lecturers took part in national and international IHL events with ICRC support.

- ▶ 100 students and teachers participated in IHL courses in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan run by the ICRC in collaboration with local universities
- ▶ more than 60 students and teachers participated in the ninth annual Central Asian IHL competition in Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan
- ▶ 8 IHL professors and lecturers from leading Central Asian universities participated in the Martens Readings conference in St Petersburg, Russian Federation
- ▶ 30 academics and civil servants took part in a regional IHL seminar co-organized with the Tashkent State Institute of Law
- ▶ a team of Kyrgyz students took part in the international Jean Pictet IHL competition in Schwarzenburg, Switzerland

Media professionals, including young journalists working for mass media outlets in Uzbekistan, were also regularly briefed by the ICRC, thereby increasing their ability to report more accurately on humanitarian issues.

In March, a BBC correspondent, with ICRC technical and logistic support, made a video story on efforts to combat TB in prisons in Kyrgyzstan, which was broadcast worldwide on television, radio and the Internet on world TB day.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The region's National Societies continued to build their institutional capacities and strengthen their legal bases with financial support and advice from the ICRC and the International Federation, which worked to harmonize their support activities. The National Societies remained ready to assist victims of armed conflict, other situations of violence and natural disaster, whilst working on national and regional contingency plans. They helped restore family links and contributed to the dissemination of IHL and humanitarian values. The Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan was involved in mine action.

The findings of an external evaluation of ICRC-supported programmes led the ICRC and each National Society to draft new cooperation framework agreements containing a strategy for sustainable implementation of the programmes, adapted to local needs and constraints. The ICRC and the National Societies of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan had signed such agreements by year-end.

With financial and technical support from the ICRC and the International Federation, representatives of the region's National Societies regularly met and planned common strategies, harmonized planning methods and exchanged information. For example, 50 volunteers from all five Central Asian National Societies participated in a regional seminar in Kyrgyzstan, updating their skills in restoring family links and their knowledge of the Movement and IHL.

In Tajikistan, an induction course for new staff members in management positions was organized by the International Federation, with the participation of the ICRC and National Societies working internationally.