

# **THE CAUCASUS: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**

29 May 1997

*appeal no. 01.32/97*

*situation report no. 2*

*period covered: March - April 1997*

---

*The International Federation's long-running operation in the poverty-stricken Caucasus region continued to consolidate during the review period. ECHO is the major donor in the region while the Federation funds the Visiting Nurses Programme, renovation of institutions and supply of food to the vulnerable in hospitals in Armenia. In Azerbaijan, Netherlands Red Cross provides food parcels to elderly living alone. Support to the Southern Camps, financed by Swedish Red Cross, will be followed by support from Finnish Red Cross in June and July. In Georgia, British Red Cross provides assistance to elderly living alone, Belgian Red Cross supports institutions and USAID gives bulk food for IDPs. Campaigns against malaria in Azerbaijan and Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Georgia and Armenia are about to start. Institutional development of the National Societies in Azerbaijan and Georgia is being implemented with the support of American Red Cross.*

---

## ***The context***

The break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, economic collapse and war have combined to place hundreds of thousands of Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Georgians in extreme poverty. Since 1993, the Federation has been working alongside National Societies, governments, local authorities, NGOs and international agencies to supply food, shelter, clothing, medicines and other relief items to the most vulnerable. Signs of recovery following privatisation and the transition to a market economy can be observed, but the rich are getting richer while 80 - 90 per cent of people have to struggle hard for their daily bread. Unresolved conflicts in and between the three countries deter international donor organisations from supporting long term development programmes.



## *Latest events*

In South Ossetia, Georgia, attempts to settle the political problems with negotiations, using the newly opened OSCE office in Tskinali, give hope for peace and repatriation of IDPs. No such accord exists for Abkhazia, and the stalemate continues, causing 3,000 IDPs to rally in Tbilisi.

The appointment of Robert Kocharian, president of the autonomous republic of Nagorno Karabakh as Armenia's new prime minister prompted protests from the Azeri government. The Azeris also complained about the smuggling of large quantities of former Soviet weapons to Armenia.

Azeri troops and Karabakh separatist forces clashed at the beginning of April. Fighting continued for more than two weeks, leaving 75 dead on both sides, according to the ICRC (which facilitated the exchange of 26 prisoners of war during April).

Preparations for the return of refugees and IDPs to the Gali region in Georgia and the Fizuli region in Azerbaijan are underway pending the settlement of the conflicts. Restoration of houses and infrastructure will be financed by the EU, the World Bank and UNDP.

## *Red Cross/Red Crescent action*

### **Armenia •**

**Food and Non-Food:** The third phase of distributions covered 66 institutions with a total of 110 mt of ECHO-donated food and of 171 mt food donated by USAID. The third phase of the distribution of winter kits for 10,000 elderly, a donation from the Danish Red Cross, was concluded in March.

**Medical:** The Centre for Prevention of AIDS reported in April that the number of persons with HIV grew by 27 per cent over the last four months. The final Memorandum of Understanding and budget for the prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases programme have been approved.

The Visiting Nurses Programme currently employs 137 nurses serving 1,644 beneficiaries. Armenian Red Cross Society is working on a database to improve the identification of eligible elderly living alone. Monitoring is satisfactory and new stocks of medicines arrived in April.

The health authorities of a number of CIS countries have expressed interest in treating patients with spinal cord injuries on a commercial basis at the International Post-Trauma Rehabilitation Centre.

### **Armenia Distribution details: March-April**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Beneficiaries</b>
Rice	24,120 kg	Institutions	Patients, Orphans	9,500
Beans	23,190 kg	“	“	“
Sugar	12,580 kg	“	“	“
Salt	2, 900 kg	“	“	“

Tinned meat	18,520 kg	“	“	“
Oil	1,430 litres	“	“	“
Pasta	27,320 kg	“	“	“
Used clothes	4 bales	“	“	107
Winter kits	1,413 boxes	Nation wide	Elderly persons	1,413

**Azerbaijan •**

**Food and Non - Food Distributions:** Delays in March caused tension in the Southern camps for displaced persons but meetings with local community leaders restored calm. Kerosene was distributed on the second round. Food and kerosene supplies are financed by ECHO/Swedish Red Cross.

Further development of the income generation programme came to a halt due to lack of funds. In the Southern Camps, 168 people are running small businesses. A bakery in the National Narimanov Red Crescent branch was opened on 1 May.

The agricultural programme has produced 455,528 kg of vegetables since April 1996, contributing to a more balanced diet as well as income for the workers and their families in the camps. Kitchen gardens are cultivated by 1,761 families in the camps, and 300 hectares are under preparation in eight branches.

Under the Socially Vulnerable Programme, food parcels will be distributed in May to 30,000 elderly living alone. The last soap remaining from a German Red Cross donation was distributed to 1,900 families in five ECHO settlements.

**Medical:** The Anti-Malaria Programme started on 25 April with the signing of an agreement with the Ministry of Health and a successful press conference on 30 April. Information and medicines to cure and prevent malaria are planned for 200,000 inhabitants in the southern region, including the seven camps.

**Southern Camps Health Care and Education Programme:** Primary Health Care is provided free in the clinics. Approximately 7,000 consultations took place in March and April, with most patients suffering from upper respiratory tract diseases. The national polio campaign reached only 47% of children under five in the Southern Camps. Lack of information from the local authorities together with difficulties in reaching families living outside the camps were the two principal factors behind the low rate.

The Visiting Nurses Programme employs 338 nurses and seven regional doctors. Home care is provided for 7,000 beneficiaries who receive medicines and basic health care. Monitoring in 51 branches showed a need for further staff training. A First Aid training centre opened in Baku and the centre in Guba is again functioning. The National Society HQ received 300 first aid kits for distribution country-wide.

The Institutional Development Delegate has been working since January '97 to strengthen the National Society's management and its ability to generate its own funding.

**Azerbaijan Distribution details: March-April**

Item	Quantity	Location	Category	Beneficiaries/ Month
------	----------	----------	----------	-------------------------

Wheat flour	452,924 kg	Southern Camps	IDPs	43,500
Sugar	147,059 kg	“	“	“
Salt	29,448 kg	“	“	“
Oil	82,638 litres	“	“	“
Tea	26,039 kg	“	“	“
Beans	42,965 kg	“	“	42,965
Detergent	21,528 kg	“	“	43,500
Plastic sheets	8,624 pieces	“	“	8,624
Stoves	9,348 pieces	“	“	9,348
Used clothes	194 bales	“	“	1,600 families
Jerry cans	20 pieces	“	“	20
Rice	23,642 kg	Nation-wide	Elderly persons	30,000
Winter kits	26,815 boxes	“	“	26,815
Laundry soap	15,144 kg	ECHO settlements	IDPs	10,390
Soap	9,465 kg	“	“	“

**Georgia •**

**Food and Non-Food Distributions:** In April two villages were still cut off by snow. The 26 beneficiaries there will receive a double ration when the follow on programme starts. Financed by ECHO/British Red Cross it will continue regular food parcel delivery to 50,000 pensioners. Close monitoring revealed fraudulent attempts to collect parcels; using local expertise in the villages may be a way to avoid these problems. Authorities analysed the French tinned beef for BSE, delaying production of food parcels. Clearance arrived on 2 May; hence distribution will be somewhat delayed.

The Hospital Rehabilitation programme will start with the arrival of the Construction Delegate, who will also work with the Federation office in Yerevan. A seed and tool pilot programme for 13 institutions started in March. If successful, a nation-wide programme may be implemented.

USAID's bulk food programme for 108,299 IDPs throughout Georgia came to an end in April. Monitoring of Swedish Red Cross clothes distributions ensured that the clothing reached the intended beneficiaries.

**Medical:** Visiting Nurses provide basic medical and social care to 3,000 pensioners via 43 medical doctors, 133 nurses and 186 social assistants. The doctors made 5,724 consultations at polyclinics and a similar number of home visits. Nearly 1,000 laboratory examinations were carried out.

Two pharmaceutical assistance programmes run smoothly with distributions of medicines to psycho-neurological dispensaries and for treatment of patients with chronic psychiatric and neurological disorders. The fifth regular distribution took place in the beginning of April.

Netherlands Red Cross medicines for the Caucasus medical programmes arrived in Georgia on 24 April and after long negotiations with the customs office (despite having the correct

paperwork), trucks were loaded and sent to Azerbaijan and Armenia on 1 May.

### **Georgia Distribution details: March - April**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Beneficiaries</b>
Wheat flour	102,097 kg	Hospitals	Patients	9,258
Sugar	21,571 kg	“	“	8,788
Rice	41,143 kg	“	“	“
Oil	14,745 litres	“	“	“
Beans	53,270 kg	“	“	“
Tinned beef	93,547 cans	“	“	“
Detergent	13,050 kg	“	“	“
Soap	58,458 kg	“	“	“
Oil	42,964 litres	Nation-wide	Elderly persons	18,866
Food parcel	21,482 units	“	“	“
Wheat flour	10,349 kg	Samegrelo	IDPs	1,185
Rice	12,257 kg	“	“	5,312
Beans	16,972 kg	“	“	“
Sugar	13,953 kg	“	“	“
Oil	6,545 litres	“	“	“

## ***Contributions***

See Annex 1 for details.

## ***Conclusion***

With the arrival of Spring in the Caucasus conditions are significantly improved for the hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries served by this multifaceted programme. For more information contact Evgeni Parfenov, Desk Officer, on ++ 4122-7304325.

Ann Naef  
Acting Head  
Appeals & Reports Service

Renny Nancholas  
Director  
Europe Department