

PROGRAMME UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

THE CAUCASUS: ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA

7 September, 2001

Appeal No. 01.58/2001

Appeal Target CHF 16,851,009

Programme Update No. 3; Period covered: April - June 30, 2001

“At a Glance”

Appeal coverage: 34%

Related Appeals: 31/00; Georgia: Drought (launched on 10 October, 2000 for 10 months)

Outstanding needs: CHF 11,129,400

Update: While several projects have been or will be finalized shortly, the programme requires further support to ensure the continuation of the planned activities.

Operational Developments:

The dramatic economic decline in the early years of transition has not yet been reversed in the three countries of the South Caucasus. Vulnerable groups remain marginalized and with a continuing fiscal shortfall, little is being done to assist them. The situation in the region is dominated by crushing poverty, very high unemployment rates, rising prices and the collapse of the health and social services.

The most recent assessments of the situation with the most vulnerable conducted by the Federation in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia clearly confirm that the plight of the Federation's 'traditional' groups of beneficiaries (elderly living alone, IDPs, refugees, handicapped, patients with chronic diseases, female headed households) has not improved and, in many instances, has become even worse. All this dramatically increases the role of Red Cross/Red Crescent in the region.

Each country in the region has similar, but not identical, priorities and varying degrees of experience of trying to solve the problems. Thus, detail of Federation programmes in 2001 may vary but the general direction is similar, given the similarities between the needs identified. To support the three National Societies in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, the Federation's major objectives in 2001 are directed towards health and social care initiatives, the continuation of population movement activities, co-ordination and direct support for vulnerable communities and the development of disaster preparedness structures supported by legal framework and regional cooperation mechanisms.

Armenia

The continued territorial dispute with Azerbaijan over Nagorny Karabakh remains unresolved. The Armenian and Azeri presidents have held three rounds of peace talks regarding the status of Nagorny Karabakh since the beginning of the year - in Paris in January and March, and at Key West (USA) in April. The talks are being held under the auspices of the Minsk Group of eight countries operating under the umbrella of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The Minsk Group is jointly chaired by Russia, France and the US. Talks have so far failed to produce sufficient common ground, although the makings of a framework for an agreement are slowly emerging. Azerbaijan demands to include securing of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity while agreeing to substantial autonomy for the region's Armenian minority, and ensuring that Azerbaijani refugees can return to their homes in Nagorny Karabakh and the surrounding Azerbaijani territory currently controlled by Armenia. However, even if negotiations make progress, a lasting agreement will not be possible without firm domestic political support.

The country is coming under pressure from the Council of Europe to honour its commitment to abolish capital punishment. Yerevan pledged to outlaw the death penalty within six months of its membership of the council in January 1991, but its efforts to do so have been frustrated by widespread public support for state-sanctioned executions. In 1991 Armenia introduced a moratorium on capital punishment. A new draft of the penal code, prepared more than four years ago, provided for the replacement of the death penalty with a mandatory life sentence. Though no execution has taken place for the past ten years, courts still condemn defendants to death for particularly severe crimes. There are currently 32 people on the country's only death row in Nubarashen prison.

Armenia's continued refusal to close the nuclear power plant, which is considered to be structurally unsafe (the power plant lies on an earthquake-prone fault line) might aggravate its relations with the European Commission. The reluctance to close the plant stems from the fact that about 40% of the country's electricity derives from this plant and there are no alternatives, apart from purchasing on the world market - an option the Armenian government considers too expensive. In addition, Armenia exports some of the electricity produced by the plant to Georgia, and closing it would deprive the country of much-needed revenue.

The Armenian government is targeting real GDP growth of 6.5% in 2001, which, it is believed, is overoptimistic. Industrial growth has been hindered by a lack of restructuring and low investment. In addition, the after-effects of the drought in 2000 have continued to feed through into the economy causing headline inflation of consumer prices. Expectations of the agricultural sector's performance in 2001 are not optimistic either because the area sown to winter crops by December 2000 was only 80% of 1999 levels.

Poverty in Armenia is particularly prevalent among the uneducated, unemployed, disabled and families with several children, as well as in rural areas among the landless. A 1996 survey estimated that the poor constituted about 55% of the population (compared with 20% in 1988), while 28% were classified as extremely poor. A more recent survey, carried out in 1998-99 demonstrated that while there was no notable change in the share of the poor, the share of the extremely poor had decreased to 23%, which can be attributed to the introduction of a system of family allowances targeted at the poorest. As a result, the share of the population requiring social protection is about 68%, compared with an average poverty level of 31% in transition economies.

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan has weathered well the initial impact of the financial crisis in Turkey, which saw banking sector problems and a substantial devaluation. The economy has continued to grow with the oil sector, the key driver of growth, complemented by a rise in private consumption. GDP rose by 8% year on year in the first quarter of 2001, while industrial production increased by 6.1%. Fiscal policy is expected to improve further as the government continues to widen the tax base and better manage expenditure.

A major restructuring of the government and the public sector has started after International Monetary Fund (IMF) demands. The objective is to transform the archaic government system inherited from the Soviet times into a new system responding to the needs of the market economy and free society. A number of ministries are expected to be abolished and/or to merge. The number of employees of the governmental structures will also be considerably reduced. Renewed IMF financing in July 2001 is expected to moderately raise the pace of

structural reform, although vested interests might prevent implementation of deeper institutional and legal reforms.

In absence of an official procedure for granting a refugee status to the displaced from Chechnya, UNHCR has started the registration of persons who crossed from Chechnya to Azerbaijan to escape bombing and acts of violence against civilians on the territory of Chechnya. To date, 4,000 Chechens have been registered. The indications point that there are around 7,000 Chechens currently residing only in Baku.

The Parliament of Azerbaijan adopted a national law on the use and protection of the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblem in Azerbaijan. This was followed by a decree issued by President Aliev, which aims to bring the legislation of the country in conformity with this law. The adoption of the law demonstrates the commitment of Azerbaijan to international conventions and can be considered as a step towards creating good conditions for effective functioning of the entities of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in the country.

Georgia

The task of responding to social challenges is becoming the agenda of the day in Georgia. Despite promises of phenomenal growth, the Georgian economy remains sluggish. Living standards continue to plummet. Everyday life remains an unremitting struggle for the most vulnerable groups of the population. The politicians can claim even less success in tackling poverty and reforming the social support system. Corruption, smuggling and the inability to mobilise tax revenues have reached epidemic proportions. In May, the International Monetary Fund suspended any dealings with Georgia until such a time as the government is able to demonstrate improvements in tax collection and financial administration. As a result, the Georgian budget has been starved of a vital source of revenue.

Georgia continues to experience widespread food shortages as a result of a prolonged and severe drought since the winter of 2000, which has damaged 60 to 95 per cent of the cereal crops (including potatoes, vegetables, fruits, vineyards, oilseed, fodder and livestock production), as well as significant portion of pastureland in Georgia. Among the areas most severely affected are districts in Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Imereti and Samtskhe-Javakheti. The drought caused agricultural sector production to drop from 24.5% in 1999 to 21.1% of GDP in 2000. As a result of increase in food prices caused by the drought, annual consumer price inflation rose from 4.6 % in December 2000 to 5.8% in March 2001.

The situation in the Pankisi Valley continues to be tense. Access to the area remains restricted and entailed inevitable interruptions in the project implementation, including distribution of relief items to Federation beneficiaries. Efforts have been made to minimise difficulties encountered in implementation and to ensure smooth continuation of the programme through close cooperation with local health structures.

The Chamber of Control of Georgia has initiated an investigation at the Georgian Red Cross Society (GRCS). The Federation has temporarily suspended the transfer of funds to the GRCS. On 4 May 2001, 34 staff members of the GRCS have resigned from their positions due to disagreements with the National Society leadership. The resigned staff members formed the Committee for the Revival of the Georgian Red Cross Society and demanded the resignation of the current President. To prevent any delays in the programme implementation, short-term Federation contracts were offered to and signed with some of the above mentioned staff until the situation improves. There has been no interruption in the projects implementation.

Armenia

Disaster Response

Sixty Armenian Red Cross Society volunteers continued providing individual counseling to 330 elderly refugees making 660 visits every week under the *Social-Psychological Services to Elderly Refugees* component of the ***Population Movement (PM)*** programme. The services offered to the project beneficiaries include: social support (personal and domestic hygiene, cooking, shopping), nursing, distribution of medicines, medical supply, food and editorials. Over the quarter, various social activities were organized in Yerevan with participation of 75 elderly refugees, followed by a distribution of food parcels, each parcel consisting of vegetable oil, condensed milk and buckwheat. Within the framework of the operation, canned fish donated by the WFP was distributed to 330 elderly. Also, bedclothes (pillow cases and sheets) were procured locally for the project beneficiaries. To date, 180 elderly were provided with these items. The distribution will continue in the next quarter. 190 beneficiaries were provided with medicines and medical supplies according to doctor's prescriptions. The project implementation has been monitored by the RC youth leader and the ARCS PM Coordinator on a regular basis.

The quarter marked the end of the educational process, including office work and work ethics courses for 13 refugee women run under the *Skills Training for Refugee Women* component. The successful students (12) were provided with certificates. Skills acquired during the training, it is believed, will help the refugee women to adapt to their new environment and to compete with the non-displaced on an equal footing.

Distribution of medical and hygiene parcels within the *Basic Medical Care for Non-CIS Asylum Seekers* is ongoing. Preparations for the first aid training courses have been completed. The courses will start in July 2001 and will be provided by the ARCS first aid instructors. Within the framework of the operation, 14 refugees were supported in the form of legal consultations, while 3,212 refugee families (10,128 persons) were supplied with second-hand clothes and kitchen utilities, namely glasses, plates, cups, milk-jugs and sugar-basins. The distribution was carried out by ARCS volunteers in cooperation with the National Society Relief Department.

The ARCS has continued to maintain regular consultations with counterpart agency community, including US BPRM, UNHCR, and DMR under the ***Population Movement Networking Fund***. The issues discussed during these meetings included mechanisms of future cooperation and assistance to the displaced in Armenia. The ARCS PM Coordinator participated in a seminar on refugee issues organised by the Norwegian Refugee Council. Representatives of UNHCR, Government authorities and other NGOs operating in the country were present at the seminar. The ARCS PM Coordinator also attended a summer course at the York University Centre for Refugee Studies on 16-24 June 2001.

Disaster Preparedness

The ARCS has continued to pursue the Disaster Preparedness (DP) initiatives with the financial support of the Norwegian and Finnish Red Cross Societies. During this quarter, a number of general and technical DP training courses for the Red Cross staff and volunteers were carried out. The training was supplemented by simulation exercises in rescue and response operations in times of disasters. Such exercises were held in Yerevan, Masis City, Gegharkunik and Aragatsotn. The ARCS has continued to develop its relationships with all members of the national DP community. A number of meetings took place between the ARCS and the Emergency Management Administration (EMA)

on the further development of educational materials and joint activities. In order to further develop the National Society's capacity to respond to disasters, additional funding is urgently required.

Humanitarian Values

Thanks to the financial support of the Norwegian Red Cross, the ARSC continued to promote knowledge of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, its fundamental principles, and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) among the general public and other institutions. Aside from publishing its monthly newsletter and press-releases highlighting regional/community branch events, activities and projects, the information department finalised a video film on TB and First Aid. The National Society has been actively co-operating with media to deliver the Red Cross' message through TV, radio, newspapers and magazine reports. Regular meetings between the headquarters and regional/community branch offices have ensured exchanges of knowledge and experience.

Health and Care

Currently, the Federation has no funded health projects. The Health Departments of the Federation and the ARCS have worked out a programme, which aims to reduce the risks and suffering of the most vulnerable by providing public information, education and training for the prevention and treatment of common diseases, and disseminating First Aid skills and knowledge throughout Armenia. Funding is being sought.

Institutional and Resource Development

The *Institutional Development* programme has continued to make effort in strengthening capacities of the National Society by extending the grassroots capacity building process down to sub-regional, community branch office levels throughout Armenia. With a limited budget, this effort has been executed through an integration of efforts and funds from the Norwegian Red Cross. During the reported period, much of these efforts were keyed to enhancing the management and operational systems and controls needed to sustaining the development initiatives. Community branch evaluation is ongoing. The continued consultations have been held with regional and community branches to review their operational achievements and constrains. With the Federation's technical support, the ARCS has elaborated a ten year strategic work plan which establishes clear priority areas for the National Society. The work plan is based on the specific needs in the country as well as the Federation policy papers and lessons learned during the last decade. It will be reviewed at the General Assembly of the ARCS due to take place in mid July 2001.

Within the *Youth Development* project, attention has been directed towards increasing youth participation and their influence in Red Cross activities. Youth volunteers have been very enthusiastic in organising various cultural and other communal activities. A series of seminars were conducted for school children (40 schools, in total) on the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, principles and values. Volunteers have also visited various holiday resorts throughout the country to raise awareness of ecological problems and advocate for preventive measures. Within the framework of the project, 35 refugee children visited zoo and botanical garden. Youth volunteers were actively involved in celebrations of the International Day of Red Cross and Red Crescent. Work has continued within the Clean Sevan project, which has been initiated by the Youth RC and intends to organize an international summer camp on the coast of lake Sevan to raise public awareness of ecological problems of the lake. Applications are currently being collected. Progress has been made in producing youth educational materials.

Coordination and Management

In order to effectively execute its duties to help the most vulnerable and to assist the National Society in building its capacity, the Federation's Delegation in Armenia has been advising the ARCS in its relief operations, capacity building, institutional and resource development and other development programmes. Communication has been maintained with the Federation secretariat on the progress of relief operations, development programme and resource needs. Efforts were made to ensure that the Federation's human, material and financial resources are efficiently and properly managed. Relations were maintained with the other Red Cross and Red Crescent partners in-country, the UN, NGOs, as well as the embassies and missions of donor governments.

Azerbaijan

Disaster Response

With the financial support from the EXXON-Azerbaijan Operating Company LLC, the Federation has continued to support 314 kitchen garden holders under the *Southern Camps Agriculture* project, thus reducing their dependency on outside assistance. An additional 450 families living in the camps joined the project implementation this quarter, thus meeting the target number of the operation: there are currently 764 families who together with their family members (3,815 persons) are cultivating land in and around the camps. Agricultural committees have been formed for the new small holders, eight in total. Meetings have been set up for the forthcoming months to improve their skills and strengthen their role as coordinating body of the agricultural project; Two of them have already taken place. Over this quarter, the distribution of vegetable seeds, tools and fertiliser was carried out for the small holders including those who joined the project last year. Also, the cleaning of canals to assist irrigation was conducted where needed. The water pumps for irrigation have been purchased, repainted and are ready to be placed. Wheat has been harvested and list has been obtained from the small holders as to next crop to be planted. The vegetable seeds stock will be distributed already in July 2001. The funds saved on procurement of seeds and fertilisers, will be used to address the need for additional agricultural machinery/equipment. This, it is believed, will help IDPs to implement sound agricultural techniques that will improve yield and quality of crops. The *Credit Loan and Income Generation* component of the project is continuing to monitor repayment of loans. Out of 265 loan takers, 57 have been fully repaid leaving 208 to be monitored.

The *Southern Camps Community Development* project has continued to put an emphasis on psycho-social activities aimed primarily at strengthening the self-support mechanisms and social structures among IDPs. During the reported period, *women's committee* elections were held in all the seven camps. The newly established committees have been provided with training in needs assessment, programme planning and implementation. Further efforts were made to encourage and support the committees to play an active role in advocating issues important to displaced women. Within the framework of the operation, additional 60 baby parcels were distributed to pregnant women and newly-born babies through the women's committees. The Swedish Red Cross and Exxon have been instrumental in supporting the project.

The *Children's Support* component has been making efforts in keeping children physically and socially healthy and in increasing awareness of children's issues. Over this quarter, volunteers have continued to assist the National Society in organising various activities, such as drama, folklore, and fine arts for children to help them learn healthy lifestyles such as hygiene, and dental care. Children took an active participation in an anti-malaria campaign organised by health promoters with assistance of volunteers in the camps. 2,205 children have been reached through this project. Within the framework of the operation, two children's support centres were repaired. Construction material was provided by the Federation, while the actual work on the sites was carried out by volunteers. The centres were supplied with teaching materials. Few articles were published in children's newspaper "Shakar Villasi", which was then distributed to all IDP camps, 900 copies in total. The newspaper was prepared and published with financial support of the Norwegian Embassy in Azerbaijan.

The Federation has also been helping IDPs possess professional skills which are required by the emerging market economy and motivate them to share their skills within IDP communities. The educational process, including courses on sewing, knitting, hairdressing and tailoring, as well as TV repair, shoemaking, carpentry and mechanics, for 250 IDPs have progressed satisfactorily in four camps. To date, 222 students have graduated and received a diploma. The skills development component creates motivation within the IDP communities to take a more proactive role in the

development of individuals' futures. In August 2001, a basic survey for IDPs included in this component will be conducted to determine the level of education among the beneficiaries and the kinds of vocational training required.

Under the *Special Assistance to the Most Vulnerable IDPs* project, preparation works have started. The women committees are conducting needs assessment survey, which aims to identify the most vulnerable IDPs living in the camps. Assistance will be provided according to the identified needs. Special attention will be directed towards assisting the disabled with disability aids and encouraging their participation in community based activities.

The *Water Sanitation* component of the project focused on the water supply and maintenance of the facilities in three camps in Sabirabad. The efforts of the sanitation team managed to bring to the beneficiaries in the camps the most consistent amount of water (approximately 62 litres per person per day), despite some irregularities in the scheduled operation of water facilities caused by shortage of water in the canals. To prevent the bacteriological and chemical contamination of water, the water tanks, as well as the main and distributing water lines have been flushed through. Water quality has been also regularly checked by the Republican Centre for Hygiene and Epidemiology. Special efforts have been put on repairing water storage and distribution facilities, and replacement of old water pumps. Also, procurement of chlorine sufficient till the end of the year was arranged. This will ensure proper maintenance of water treatment after the water provision services have been handed-over to local authorities. Vandalisation of the water supply system remains a problem. The Federation together with the women's committees have continued education efforts to draw the IDP communities' attention to the use/abuse of treated water within the camps through its Community Development programme.

With the second round of distribution, the *Food Relief to IDPs* project, funded by ECHO through Finnish Red Cross, came to its end. Within the framework of the operation, 290.7 Mt. of wheat flour, 12.9 Mt. of salt, 64.6 Mt. of chick peas and 64,610 Lt. of vegetable oil were supplied to around 32,500 displaced. Each beneficiary received 9 kg. of wheat flour, 0.4 kg. of salt, 2 kg. of chick peas and 2 Lt. of oil per distribution round. Food assistance was complementary with 50% of required energy and 35% of protein level provided for by the Federation through monthly distributions. There were small amounts of foodstuffs still remaining from the operation. The food was distributed to the most vulnerable in the camps, particularly the lonely elderly and single-parent families. In addition, each of 160 IDP families living in the Southern Camps have received pieces of corrugated iron, timber and nails to construct proper roof. Construction materials were procured with financial assistance of EXXON. The *'meals on wheel'* project has continued to assist 100 lonely, elderly people in Sabirabad, Alibayramli, Fizuli and Agjabedi providing hot meals twice a week.

Construction work is proceeding according to plan in the Federation's innovative pilot project, the *Fizuli Repatriation Project (Shukurbeyli Pilot Project)*, which aims at repatriation of 160 families to areas lost and recaptured by Azeri forces during the fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh. To reporting date, 124 homes were built or rehabilitated with the co-operation and input of the homeowners. The Federation provided construction materials while government provided water, electricity and irrigation, and the returnees were responsible for the actual construction work. The Federation has hired teams of professional builders that are overseeing the house reconstruction/rehabilitation. In order to ensure a safe environment for returnees, the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) carried out clearance of mines or any unexploded devices. Mine awareness information was also distributed before the project began. The repatriation process is gaining its momentum. There are more and more families willing to return to their places of origin. Thanks to the Federation intervention, 124 families have resumed normal life.

The ***Community Mobilisation*** initiative undertaken within the framework of the operation has put a strain on developing a sense of community spirit and implementing a number of community based initiatives among the returnees. Over the quarter, the repatriated families were assisted to establish a women committee. A series of workshops will now be organised for the committee in community mobilisation, effectiveness and self-reliance. The attention will also be directed towards developing needs assessment skills and action planning. A number of community meetings have been held to identify main concerns in the village. The returning families also benefit from the loan/credit scheme for developing sources of income. So far, 112 small loans of USD 1,000 have been issued. Most of them are related to cattle breeding and agricultural projects along with some other creative businesses such as a mass transit vehicle connecting Shukurbeyli with the camps in Sabirabad, a fuelling station, and small retail shops. Eighty per cent of the loan will have to be repaid within one year of receiving the money in instalments as agreed with the Federation. The income generating projects have been closely monitored by a beneficiary committee to avoid misuse or failure. The repayment has been progressing satisfactorily.

The rehabilitation and repatriation project is seen as a natural extension of the capacity building measures undertaken by the Federation in the Southern Camps, as it ends years of displacement and reliance on outside assistance for the families involved. The Federation is seeking funding to facilitate repatriation of another 160 families from the camps by rehabilitation of another 160 houses in liberated villages. A suitable village has been already identified in consultation with relevant government bodies, the National Society and potential returnees. Subject to availability of funding, registration and interview with families willing to be repatriated or resettled to the selected village will be carried out.

The ***Population Movement (PM)*** programme has continued to develop a capacity within the AzRCS to implement projects aimed at providing assistance and social or legal counselling to the displaced. There are three components running under the programme: skills development courses for IDP women; psycho-social rehabilitation of IDPs; and AzRCS networking fund. The computer courses for 30 IDP women aged between 18-23 years old ended this quarter. Successful students, 21 in total, were awarded with certificates. The AzRCS is planning to continue to develop professional skills of refugee and IDP women accommodated in collective centres. This year, it is envisaged to provide a six-month skills development courses to another 30 IDP women subject to availability of required funding.

The AzRCS has continued to maintain an effective working relationship with their partners. Consultations were carried out with various NGOs operating in the country and government representatives. A number of meetings were held with the Committee of Refugee and IDP Affairs and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare as a part of a strategic planning exercise. Efforts have been made to extend PM activities to relevant repatriation/ resettlement areas and also through regional areas targeted through the Community Development programme. During the reported period, the PM programme hosted a number of visits from counterpart agencies wishing to see the projects run within the framework of the Population Movement programme. A possibility of implementing joint operations addressing the issues of the displaced was discussed in an NGO roundtable meeting organized by Danish Refugee Council.

The ***Psycho-Social Rehabilitation of IDPs*** project continued to provide material assistance to the development of community activities such as knitting, sewing and art exhibitions in a refurbished community room in six collective centres located in the regions of Binagadi, Azizbekov, Yasamal and Nsimi. The IDPs were supplied with required knitting materials. There are approximately 220 (185 children and 35 adults) IDPs involved in this project. IDP communities have been encouraged to organise cultural and other communal activities in conformity with the specific conditions of their areas. Within the framework of the project, IDP children visited the National Museum of Arts.

Medical consultations were provided to elderly women. An exhibition of the items produced by IDPs was organised by an NGO 'ISAR'. The exhibition was well received. It is hoped it will increase the self-reliance among IDPs and public awareness of IDP issues. A psychologist was invited to provide training workshops for IDP volunteers on basic knowledge of child development, age-related symptoms and child psychology. The analysis of psychological condition of IDP children show an improvement among 65% of them. Majority of IDPs involved in the project are female. The intention is to keep a balanced approach and to attract IDP boys as well. The idea is to involve them in preparing a simple knitting equipment for girls. This, it is believed, will contribute to psycho-social rehabilitation process of the children. In order to carry out the planned activities, however, further funding is required.

The AzRCS Population Movement department in close cooperation with the AzRCS Relief Department, the National Society branch organisation in Sabirabad and volunteers carried out the distribution of food parcels to 3,000 IDP families living in Southern Camps in Sabirabad and Saatli. The parcels were donated by the Red Crescent Society of Saudi Arabia. Also, second hand clothes donated by the Finnish Red Cross were distributed by AzrCS volunteers to Chechen refugees residing in Baku.

The quarter marked the end of the AzRCS operations within the Population Movement programme. Further support therefore is required to ensure the continuation of the planned activities.

Disaster Preparedness

Thanks to funding from EXXON and the Government of Norway through the Norwegian Red Cross, the AzRCS has been able to pursue the DP initiatives. Further efforts were made to support the National Society in finalising the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA). The follow up workshops aimed at improving understanding of the VCA were held in all regional centres of the AzRCS. The information gathered regarding disaster risks has been fed into the planning process to establish a blueprint for a clear regional resource and response system. Special attention has been put on the roles and responsibilities of the regional centres and local branches in local and national disasters, as well as the function of volunteers.

Progress has been achieved in building up a network of trained volunteers throughout the country that are ready to act in time of disasters. Further discussions were held on the role of the disaster response teams set up in all seven regional centres as part of the disaster response plan for the NS. Their training needs for local disaster intervention have been identified. The importance of National Society's future role in assisting vulnerable victims of disasters was once again demonstrated. The AzRCS was quick in responding to small-scale floods in Guba, which have effected 25 families (approximately 100 persons). Shortly after the disaster, a team of volunteers carried out needs assessment and arranged for distribution of relief items (mattresses, blankets, food) from the existing stock to the victims, 19 the most vulnerable families (approximately 76 persons) in total. Also, food, clothes and footwear, procured with the money collected through RC box-donations were supplied to an orphanage in Mardakyan sheltering 300 children.

Progress has been made in developing DP educational materials. A leaflet (100,000 copies) and a TV programme have been prepared to increase public awareness on coping mechanisms for the most frequent disaster in Azerbaijan -- earthquake. The materials have been distributed to general public through National Society volunteers.

The ***First Aid*** project is a central component of the nation-wide disaster preparedness programme of the AzRCS. Over the reported period, the project continued educational seminars for public at large. A total of 69 first aid training sessions were provided to 550 persons, including IDPs, volunteers, AzRCS

Disaster Response Team members, and youth. The National Society First Aid Co-ordinator provided assistance with the national and regional DP seminars. First aid knowledge and life saving skills have been disseminated through the distribution of first aid materials.

Humanitarian Values

AzRCS operations were extensively covered by the local media. Articles were published in several national newspapers about the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment carried out by the National Society as well as the National Society disaster response operation in Guba. Two posters on Red Cross volunteers have been printed and distributed through the AzRCS regional centres. Also, the AzRCS issued a booklet on the National Society activities in 2000. Both, English and Azeri versions of the booklet have been distributed to various NGOs operating in the country. Dissemination courses were conducted for students, 100 in total, in Mingechavir and Ganja in this quarter. On 8 May, the National Society convened a congress with participation of country celebrities, representatives of counterpart agencies and mass media. There were a lot of speeches and words of gratitude to the RC. Also, cleaning campaign of the RC park was organised with participation of youth volunteers. A broad reportage on RC/RC movement was shown on a national TV station.

Health and Care

The Federation's support for health activities in the camps has focused on strengthening the capacity of the AzRCS and on targeting those areas of public health, which are not addressed by the Government, namely that of health promotion and education focusing on endemic and seasonal illnesses. Under the ***Basic Health Care*** project funded by the Government of the Netherlands through the Netherlands Red Cross, training was provided to volunteer health promoters to implement community based activities. The training about making and using simple puppets in working with children, particularly to convey health and safety information, was a great success. Those who attended participated actively. Campaigns relating to water and sanitation, maternal and child health, family planning and immunisation, have been addressed. Anti-malaria measures were implemented by the Red Crescent health promoters with the assistance of volunteers (around 90 in each camp). A slogan and drawing on prevention of malaria, developed through a competition, was printed on Red Crescent T-shirts, which were then distributed to volunteers involved in a Malaria Clean Up Day in the camps. The AzRCS is also planning to develop a story book with participation of women and children to highlight issues of health and safety for children in the camps. Preparations have already started.

The AzRCS health promoters have continued to do surveillance, monitor sanitation condition and supervise treatment compliance for identified cases in the Southern Camps on a regular basis. Epidemiological analyses of morbidity data were used to alert staff and partners to developing health problems. Thus, for example, instances of intrax were observed. The information was immediately transferred to the Ministry of Health of Azerbaijan and adequate measures were carried out. Volunteer doctors and nurses (24 in total) have been providing medical and social assistance to the most vulnerable IDPs. Efforts have been made to extend these activities to relevant repatriation/resettlement areas and also through regional areas targeted through the Community Development programme. Also, focus group discussions were held with NS youth volunteers on sexual health with emphasis on STDs and HIV/AIDS. Preparation of a number of HIV/AIDS training materials has started.

AzRCS volunteers visited a boarding school in Baku and distributed summer clothes, toys and some sweets to children suffering from cerebral paralysis.

Institutional and Resource Development

The Federation has continued to pursue institutional and resource development initiatives under the ***Institutional Development*** programme funded by Swedish Red Cross. Over the reported period the Federation has been assisting the AzRCS in reviewing its strategic work plan. A number of meetings have been held with the governance members, counterpart agencies and government authorities as part of this process. The plan is expected to be finalised by the end of this summer. The above mentioned review will be used as the basis for assisting the National Society in updating its current statutes. Further efforts were made to create an awareness of good governance within the leadership of the National Society through consultation and discussion with the AzRCS leadership about governance issues, including division of roles and responsibilities between governance and management. In order to increase the number of volunteers actively taking part in service programmes as well as to improve the management of volunteers, introduction courses were conducted for the AzRCS regional centres on new guidelines and code of conduct for volunteers elaborated by the National Society with the Federation assistance. The course included such topics as recognition, development of attractive activities and other methods for retaining volunteers. Progress has been made in improving the system of human resource management by ensuring basic practices for contractual terms and job descriptions in the regional centres.

Under the ***Financial Management*** project funded by the British Red Cross, assessment of the AzRCS financial system has been carried out as the first step of a major restructuring to be compliant with European standards. The assessment specifies needs for future systems, including needs for staff training, and computer software. During the reported period, the assessment results were discussed with the National Society. Identification and purchase of adequate software programme has been ongoing. In the meantime, efforts were made to improve manual bookkeeping system at the regional centres by introducing the use of standard forms for cash order, cash receipt and expenditure authorisation.

Coordination and Management

The Federation delegation in Azerbaijan has continued to assist and advise the National Society in its relief operations, capacity building, institutional and resource development programmes and other development programmes. The delegation has recruited four new national staff to further strengthen the Federation team. With the food distribution coming to an end, the Sabirabad sub-delegation has been transformed into a field office responsible for community development and agricultural programmes in the camps as well as assistance to the regional Red Crescent centre so that in the future they can take over some of these activities. Recruitment of new national staff to match the need of the new field office has been done and other staff persons have been released. The head of sub-delegation and the health delegate have finished their contracts. A replacement for the latter has been identified.

Georgia

Disaster Response

Community Development for IDPs in Collective Accommodation project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has continued encouraging the IDP community of 30 collective centres (approximately 49,000 beneficiaries) to help itself by promoting socialization within the collective centres, motivating the beneficiary IDPs to take a more active part in their future and become less dependent on humanitarian assistance via relevant, productive training and kitchen garden supplies. Under the *Kitchen Garden* component, procurement of seeds, pesticides/fertilizers and agricultural equipment for Spring planting was carried out based on the results of the survey carried out among IDP families by the Federation. A standard agricultural package has been distributed to 4,985 kitchen garden holders; other beneficiaries (1,973 IDP households) have been provided with irrigation pipes, metal fence and metal bucket according to their request. There are currently 6,949 families who are cultivating approximately 556 ha. of land around the collective centres.

Under the *Skills Development* component, the educational process including courses in English language, computer, massage, hairdressing and cosmetology, as well as driving and accounting, has progressed satisfactorily for 347 IDPs living in collective centres. The Federation has continued monitoring of loans given to beneficiaries within the *Income Generation* component. There are currently three projects, which are continuing with varying degrees of repayment. Under the *Social Activities*' component, an unused room in Kazreti IDP collective centre was rehabilitated as a community room. Rehabilitation was carried out by volunteers living in the collective centre. Other community rooms, 30 in total, have continued to serve as centres for information, educational and recreational activities, and as meeting halls, nurseries and kindergartens. IDP communities have been encouraged to organise sports, cultural and other communal activities in conformity with the specific conditions of their areas. Thus, for example, with the support of a local NGO, a library was established in a collective centre in Bagebi. Another such library for IDPs is planned to be opened in Tskneti. In Tskaltubo-1 and Tskaltubo-2 centres a seminar on RC/RC Movement, its history and the fundamental principles was conducted by the Regional Dissemination Coordinator. The seminar was attended by 65 IDPs. A number of IDPs from Kvemo Kartli (Rustavi, Gardabani and Marneuli) participated in an arm-wrestling competition organized by the Arm-wrestling Federation of Kvemo Kartli Region. Also, a drawing competition was held among IDP children. Winners were awarded with small presents. Over the reported period, the Federation has carried out a community participatory appraisal among its beneficiaries. Results are being analysed and will be used as the basis for future planning. The preliminary analysis indicate a high interest of IDPs in gender related issues and basic health care. Consultations will be held with the Federation health department to coordinate workshops and internships on healthy lifestyles, reproductive health education and first aid.

Under the ***Emergency Rehabilitation of Collective Centres Accommodating Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)*** project funded by USAID, construction assessment has been carried out by the Federation in cooperation with the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia (MoRA) to select 27 medium or large IDP collective centres which are most urgently requiring repair in order to remedy significantly substandard living conditions as per the Sphere Project's minimum standards for shelter. The scope of work and bill of quantities have then been prepared for each of these collective centres specifying work according to priorities, volume of works, timetable and budget for each site. Repair works have been detailed by the Federation construction team in consultation with MoRA and the IDP committee representatives in the building. Following Federation standard procedures, a tender was launched and three general contractors were identified to carry out the repair work. To date, rehabilitation of 12 out of 27 sites, has been completed. The work is progressing satisfactorily on

another seven centres, thanks to a Swiss Government contribution. Rehabilitation work includes: improving insulation through roofing repair; replacement of windows and doors; adequate and safe electrical installations; and improvement of hygiene and sanitation facilities. At the same time, Community Development Coordinators have been organising community mobilisation meetings with IDPs. In the course of the discussions, IDPs have been prioritizing their concerns and identified their contribution to the project. The percentage of the IDP contribution varies from 8 to 20% and includes mainly skilled workmanship and general labour on site. The community participation will be further promoted in order to develop sense of ownership among the beneficiaries, which ultimately will have a more positive effect on maintenance and preservation of the implemented work.

June 2001 marked the end of current funding for *the Emergency Assistance Programme to Chechen Refugees, Other Displaced and Local Population in Pankisi Valley, Georgia*, implemented by the Federation in co-operation with the GRCS, the relevant government structures of Georgia and international organisations since December 1999. As a result of the activities undertaken by the Federation with financial support of ECHO, approximately 17,000 persons were provided with basic health care. The health and nutrition surveillance system enabled collection of information on specific topics and health problems, and enabled the Federation to take adequate measures in a timely manner. The Federation Health Department was successfully implementing evidence-based knowledge through clinical and health promotion activities. Also, the refugees and the vulnerable local population were provided with emergency medical service, transportation and intensive medical care in appropriate hospitals in Akhmeta, Telavi and Tbilisi. 50 home visits of an emergency nature were made by Pankisi Valley medical staff every month using the ambulance service supported by the Federation. 2,500 most vulnerable refugees and local population were provided with winter jackets and boots. 3,000 refugees and vulnerable local families (approximately 12,000 beneficiaries) received hygiene parcels on bimonthly basis for an eight-month period. Efforts were made to further improve the quality of clinical practice. By providing health education and health promotion activities for community at large, the Federation has helped the population to become more independent and self sufficient in regard to their health and in responding to day-to-day health problems and accidents. The need of assistance, however, persists. As the return of Chechen refugees to their homes in Chechnya is to be determined, both the Chechen refugees and the local population in the Pankisi Valley remain vulnerable to disease due to overcrowded living, poor diets and insanitary conditions. With full consideration of the humanitarian environment in Georgia, the Federation strongly believes it should continue to address the outstanding needs of this vulnerable group until the situation improves. Funding is urgently required to implement the planned activities.

The Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocation, in addition to other contributions from donors, have enabled the Federation to continue its response to the severe *Drought* of 2000. Please refer to separate Operations Updates on this Appeal.

Under *the Integration of Formerly Deported Meskhetians* component of the *Population Movement (PM)* programme supported by the US Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (US BPRM), all necessary equipment and teaching materials have been procured and delivered to the social rooms in Tbilisi and Akhaltsikhe. The educational process is progressing satisfactorily. There are 35 formerly deported Meskhetians and five local persons taking Georgian language classes within the framework of the operation. The language courses are being provided by IDP teachers living in the same collective centres. The involvement of local population in the educational process is a meaningful element of the operation which aims to facilitate the integration process. Along with the language courses, various cultural and social activities were organized for the formerly deported Meskhetians and IDP children.

Third grassroots PM seminar took place on 3-4 April 2001 in Tbilisi. The purpose of the seminar was to train the GRCS network on issues pertinent to displacement as well as to forge concrete cooperation mechanisms with the local authorities. Participants of the seminar (32 persons) included representatives of local authorities and GRCS branch organisations in Imereti and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti regions. Representatives of the MoRA, ICRC, UNHCR and IOM were also present.

This quarter marked the end of the *Mobile Technical Teams (MTTs)* operation supported by the US BPRM. During the reported period, the MTTs based in South Ossetia (Tskhinvali) and West Georgia (Zugdidi and Senaki) provided assistance to 102 IDP families in small collective centres and private accommodation, lone elderly, and other vulnerable groups in the form of minor construction and repairs. Additional funding is required to allow these teams to resume their activities, while the team in Ajara has continued its operation with financial support of the British Red Cross. Making 3-4 interventions per day, the team assisted 168 families in this quarter. Priority was given to destitute households headed by elderly people, female headed households with young children, lone elderly and disabled people without family support.

Disaster Preparedness

Due to the current situation in the Georgian Red Cross Society, no activities were undertaken under the programme in this quarter. As soon as the situation improves, the Federation will continue to pursue the DP initiatives subject to availability of the required funding.

Humanitarian Values

The Federation has continued provision of information coverage for the ongoing Red Cross operations in Georgia through local mass media. The information department of the Federation Delegation has been actively participated in preparation of the First Aid manual in Georgian language (based on manuals in Asia and Africa). The manual is expected to be published in August 2001. Over this quarter, public's attention was mainly keyed on the current situation at the National Society. The resigned staff of the GRCS has organised a press conference in this regard, which was followed by a number of articles in national newspapers. The Federation Head of Delegation was interviewed on several occasions to comment on the processes underway in the GRCS.

Health and Care

The project of *Basic Health Care for IDPs Accommodated in Collective Centres in Samegrelo* funded by the Netherlands Government through the Netherlands Red Cross, has continued to provide assistance to approximately 56,000 IDPs accommodated in collective centres in West Georgia by provision of medicines and medical supplies based on morbidity data and drug consumption; developing the current surveillance system so that there is a comprehensive registration system and a reliable record of the morbidity and mortality experienced by the population; conducting a series of technical workshops for the medical personnel (doctors, nurses, health educators) addressing rational drug use, prevalent health problems and ways of meeting the needs identified; providing health education and health promotion activities for the community at large; ensuring an appropriate Maternal and Child Health programme, and including reproductive health activities and antenatal care. The total number of consultations during the reported period was 8,524 including 1,220 for children aged 0-4 years, 1,373 for children aged 6-16 years and 5,931 for people aged over 16 years. The monthly tutorials for staff at polyclinics were attended by 68 doctors. The subjects covered were diagnosis and treatment of ischemic heart disease, stroke, upper and lower respiratory system diseases and acute abdominal conditions.

Institutional and Resource Development

Due to the current situation in the GRCS, no activities were undertaken under the programme in this quarter. As soon as the situation improves, the Federation will continue to pursue the ID initiatives subject to availability of the required funding.

Coordination and Management

The Federation's Delegation in Georgia has been supporting and ensuring the efficient implementation of its programmes in the country. Communication has been maintained with the Federation secretariat on the progress of ongoing operations, development programme and resource needs. Relations were maintained with the other Red Cross and Red Crescent partners in-country, the UN, NGOs, as well as the embassies and missions of donor governments in order to raise programme funds and coordinate Federation activities with programmes of other agencies, and to build the profile of the Federation to the international community, the media, the government and the people of Georgia.

Regional Cooperation

Within the *Regional Knowledge Sharing* project, supported by the Capacity Building Fund of the Federation, a cooperation meeting on the disaster preparedness programmes was held for the three southern Caucasus National Societies. The meeting aimed to share experiences, identify gaps within programmes and find solutions by learning from each other. Another cooperation meeting took place in May 2001. The workshop aimed to build up greater understanding of community development activities within a Red Cross and Red Crescent setting, and to identify entry points for introducing or developing a community development approach in Red Cross and Red Crescent programmes. Unfortunately, the regional information or dissemination seminar could not be held in Georgia during the reported period due to current developments in the GRCS. The possibility of holding the regional seminar in Armenia or Azerbaijan has been discussed. It is expected that once the situation in GRCS is resolved, the regional knowledge sharing programme will be able to continue in this field of work with renewed energy. Nevertheless, the impacts of regional cooperation are already tangible: the National Societies have established good contacts with their colleagues in the neighboring countries. The process of sharing the experience, procedures, skills and techniques that have been learnt and/or developed by other National Societies has successfully been launched. The National Societies begin to clearly see areas that require further development. There are concrete examples when the National Societies have learnt and been challenged by the success of their colleagues in the region; the first aid and disaster preparedness programmes are good models here. The regional health strategy adopted by the National Societies has provided a new pattern for regional cooperation and is being used in programme planning and implementation. Interest and understanding of the value to share and learn from each other have increased within each National Society.

Outstanding needs

Several projects have been or will be finalized shortly. The programme therefore requires further support to ensure the continuation of the planned activities.

For further details please contact: Sylvie Chevalley; Phone: 41 22 730 4276; Fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: chevalle@ifrc.org

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

Peter Rees-Gildea
Head a.i.
Relationship Management Department

Lynette Lowndes
Head
Europe Department

The Caucasus						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 01.58/2001		PLEDGES RECEIVED				03.09.2001
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						TOTAL COVERAGE
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				16'851'008		34.0%
CASH CARRIED FORWARD				533'537		
AMERICAN - GOVT		1'000'000	USD	1'628'000	20.02.01	IDP CENTER REHABILITATION & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
BRITISH - RC		53'932	GBP	129'976	30.01.01	MOBILE TECHNICAL TEAM
EXXON		12'000	USD	19'536	10.01.01	AZERBAIJAN,FINALISE ROOFING
EXXON		81'000	USD	131'868	10.01.01	AZERBAIJAN, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
EXXON		220'000	USD	358'160	10.01.01	AZERBAIJAN, AGRICULTURE
EXXON		20'000	USD	32'560	07.12.00	AZERBAIJAN, DPP
FINNISH - RC		3'017	EUR	4'582	26.02.01	AZERBAIJAN
FINNISH - RC		3'133	EUR	7'595	23.05.2001	IN KIND CLOTHES DISTRIBUTION COSTS
FINNISH - RC		5'698	EUR	8'612	31.05.2001	IN KIND CLOTHES DISTRIBUTION COSTS
FINNISH - RC		16'819	EUR	25'422	10.08.2001	PANKISI VALLEY
GERMAN - RC		42'073	DEM	32'350	27.12.00	ARMENIA, HOD
GERMAN - RC		18'420	DEM	14'163	12.01.01	ARMENIA, HOD
NETHERLANDS - GOVT				365'168	25.05.2001	HEALTH PROMOTION
NETHERLANDS - GOVT				291'220	25.05.2001	BASIC HEALTH CARE FOR IDP'S
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		1'616'667	NOK	309'275	13.06.2001	DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, HEALTH, COORDINATION & MGT
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		2'009'061	NOK	381'722	13.07.2001	AZERBAIJAN
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		801'281	NOK	152'243	18.07.2001	GEORGIA
SWEDISH - RC				61'500	11.01.01	COMM. DEVELOPMENT DELEGATE
SWEDISH - RC		125'000	SEK	21'713	05.02.01	AZERBAIJAN, IINSTITUTIONAL DEV.
SWEDISH - RC		125'000	SEK	21'713	05.02.01	AZERBAIJAN, DISASTER RESP. TIZULI REPATRIATION
SWEDISH - RC		50'000	SEK	8'685	05.02.01	AZERBAIJAN, COORDINATION & MGT
SWEDISH - RC		250'000	SEK	43'425	05.02.01	AZERBAIJAN: DISASTER RESP. COMMUNITY DEV.
SWEDISH - RC				7'600	07.05.2001	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.
SWEDISH - GOVT		375'000	SEK	63'188	23.05.2001	INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
SWEDISH - GOVT		375'000	SEK	63'188	23.05.2001	DISASTER RESPONSE FIZULI
SWEDISH - GOVT		150'000	SEK	26'275	23.05.2001	COORDINATION & MANAGEMENT
SWEDISH - GOVT		750'000	SEK	126'375	23.05.2001	DISASTER RESPONSE/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
SWISS - GOVT				253'000	29.06.2001	IDP'S COLLECTIVE CENTRES
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				5'122'651	CHF	30.4%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
Australia	Delegate(s)			27'269		
Japan	Delegate(s)			46'488		
Netherlands	Delegate(s)			17'577		
Norway	Delegate(s)			59'959		
Sweden	Delegate(s)			119'917		
Switzerland	Delegate(s)			5'092		
Great Britain	Delegate(s)			25'790		
FINNISH - RC		381'234	FIM	97'405	26.02.01	17'937 KG SECOND HAND CLOTHES, TRANSPORTATION & INSURANCE
FINNISH - RC		42'239	EUR	61'909	23.05.2001	10'857 KG SECOND HAND CLOTHES, TRANSPORT & INSURANCE
FINNISH - RC		61'893	EUR	93'551	31.05.2001	17'230.1 KG SECOND HAND CLOTHES, TRANSPORT & INSURANCE
SWITZERLAND GOVT	CONSULTANT			44'000	25.07.2001	GEORGIA COLLECTIVE CENTRES
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				598'957	CHF	3.6%