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Middle East & North Africa

An upsurge of violence in the Middle East mobilizes the ICRC and staff and volunteers of the Palestine Red Crescent and the Israeli Magen David Adom.



MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

The Near East

ICRC delegations:

Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria

The Gulf

ICRC delegations:

Iraq, Yemen

ICRC regional delegation:

Kuwait

North Africa

ICRC delegation:

Egypt

ICRC regional delegation:

Tunis

Staff

ICRC expatriates¹: 84

National Societies¹: 5

Local employees²: 539

Total expenditure: Sfr 51,469,921.72

Expenditure breakdown:

Protection:	15,535,149.16
Assistance:	20,547,880.52
Preventive action:	5,955,269.92
Cooperation with National Societies:	4,668,075.38
Overheads:	3,101,793.54
General:	1,661,753.20



ICRC regional delegation

ICRC delegation

The year 2000 was a troubled period marked by renewed divisions in the Middle East and North Africa. Hopes for greater stability and peace in the Near East were dashed after the outbreak of violence on 28 September, the worst witnessed since 1996 in the occupied and autonomous territories. During the first three months of the unrest 305 Palestinians, 43 Israeli Jews and 13 Israeli Arabs were killed and thousands were wounded, fuelling fears that the peace process would break down altogether. The border between Israel and Lebanon remained tense despite Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May.

In the Gulf region, the situation also remained volatile. The Iraqi population continued to suffer the consequences of the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq since the 1990 Gulf war. The United States and British governments, as in previous years, used military air strikes to enforce the "no-fly zones" in 2000. The suicide bombing of a US destroyer in Yemen's port of Aden deepened apprehensions of growing regional instability.

¹ Average figures calculated on an annual basis.

² Under ICRC contract, as at December 2000.

In North Africa, Algeria's efforts to achieve reconciliation did not bring the hoped-for reduction in the violence still affecting thousands of people. There was also little progress towards settling the dispute over the Western Sahara. Furthermore, the sharp rise in oil prices widened the economic gap between the less developed and the major oil-producing countries in the region. Many countries in the area were in the grip of financial hardship, with political leaders concentrating on introducing reforms to boost economic growth.

The ICRC focused on responding to the evolving challenges in the Arab world and consolidating its long-term action in line with its traditional mandate.

Beginning in October, the ICRC adapted its activities in the Israeli-occupied and autonomous territories to the mounting violence in the West Bank and Gaza. Delegates were constantly present in the field, monitoring the situation and facilitating medical evacuations. The ICRC addressed several appeals to all involved in the violence and made frequent representations to the relevant authorities. In particular, it reminded the Israeli authorities that Israel remains fully bound by the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention until the conclusion of a final agreement on the status of the occupied territories consistent with international law. The ICRC set up a logistic base in Amman, Jordan, to facilitate implementation of its "protection-driven assistance" programme for the territories. This programme targeted villages most severely affected by closures and families whose houses had been destroyed. The ICRC made a special effort to strengthen operational cooperation between the Palestine Red Crescent Society and the Israeli Magen David Adom, with the aim of improving access to medical facilities for the wounded and sick and ensuring freedom of movement for the medical services.

In Iraq, the ICRC pursued its integrated assistance programme combining repair of water and sanitation infrastructure and renovation of health facilities with training and capacity-building in the health sector. Its position vis-à-vis the economic embargo imposed on Iraq remained unchanged: while abstaining from comment on the political aspects of the issue, the ICRC maintained that the "oil-for-food" mechanism, exemptions and humanitarian aid, despite their positive effects, could do no more than address the most pressing humanitarian needs of the civilian population, while vital infrastructure continued to deteriorate.

Activities for prisoners of war (POWs) and other detainees were pursued throughout the year in Algeria, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel and the occupied and autonomous territories, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, the Western Sahara and Yemen.

With the repatriation of 4,117 Iraqi POWs under ICRC auspices, substantial progress was made in resolving the issue of POWs still detained 12 years after the end of the Iran-Iraq war. The ICRC continued to urge a general repatriation of all Moroccan prisoners held by the Polisario Front. During the year 387 prisoners were released and repatriated, 201 of them in December following the ICRC President's separate meetings with the Secretary-General of the Polisario Front and the President of Algeria. However, the Polisario Front remained firm in its position that the fate of the remaining 1,481 Moroccan prisoners was linked to implementation of the United Nations settlement plan providing for a referendum on the future of the Western Sahara and the fate of Sahrawi refugees. The Polisario Front allowed regular visits to the Moroccan prisoners.

The ICRC also acted as a humanitarian intermediary with a view to ascertaining the fate of persons still unaccounted for in connection with the Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf war, and the Western Sahara conflict. But very little progress was made in this respect.

Cooperation with National Societies was a cornerstone of the ICRC's action in the region. In Algeria, the ICRC stepped up its support for the National Society's psychological rehabilitation programme in aid of women and children traumatized by the violence. Volunteers of the Yemeni Red Crescent worked on a daily basis with delegates from the Netherlands Red Cross and the ICRC to assist mentally ill detainees in several central prisons in Yemen.

Another of the ICRC's priorities was to continue the diversification of dissemination programmes aimed at promoting acceptance of the principles of international humanitarian law in the Arab world. The Regional Promotion Office in Cairo produced television series, radio programmes and a bi-monthly magazine in Arabic intended to present humanitarian law issues from a local perspective. The ICRC also pursued its efforts to see humanitarian law incorporated into operational training programmes for the armed forces.

ISRAEL, THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND THE AUTONOMOUS TERRITORIES

PROTECTION

8,164,374

ASSISTANCE

617,137

PREVENTIVE ACTION

1,754,558

COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL SOCIETIES

2,989,083

OVERHEADS

875,053

GENERAL

575,420

TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 14,975,625



⊕ ICRC delegation ⊕ ICRC sub-delegation ⊕ ICRC presence ⊕ ICRC mission

The year 2000 started on a positive note with new rounds of talks leading to the redeployment of Israeli troops in the West Bank. In May, the Israeli government decided to withdraw unilaterally from southern Lebanon ending 22 years of occupation.³ By midyear, however, hopes for achieving a sustainable peace in the region were dashed as negotiations between Israel and Syria stalled and talks during the Israeli-Palestinian summit in July in the United States failed to bring about an agreement. In September violence erupted in the West Bank, Gaza and northern Israel. At the end of the year, 305 Palestinians, 43 Israeli Jews and

13 Israeli Arabs had been killed, and more than 10,000 were injured.

Restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities on the occupied and autonomous territories severely affected the daily life of Palestinians, particularly following the upsurge in clashes. The territories were completely sealed off, with strict closures or curfews placed on certain localities. Numerous problems were encountered in transport, education and health care. The movements of emergency medical services were limited causing difficulties in accessing and evacuating the wounded and sick. The economic ramifications of the restrictions were catastrophic. The United Nations (UN) estimated that the poverty rate in

³ See p. 190.

the territories increased from 21% to 32% between September and the end of December as Palestinians were prevented from travelling to jobs and severe trade restrictions curtailed many commercial activities.

The ICRC, extremely concerned by the upsurge in violence, strengthened its presence in the area by increasing the number of expatriates and basing some of them permanently in Nablus, Ramallah and Hebron, in order to respond to the humanitarian needs arising from the events and to make regular representations to the relevant authorities regarding respect for the rules of the Fourth Geneva Convention, in particular those regarding the protection of the medical mission and the use of force. Although the Israeli authorities declared their support for and willingness to facilitate the ICRC's work, there were repeated restrictions on the movements of ICRC staff in the occupied territories.

On 21 November, the ICRC appealed to all involved in the violence to observe the restraints imposed by international humanitarian law and its underlying principles. Grave concern was expressed regarding the consequences in humanitarian terms of the presence of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, which is contrary to the Fourth Geneva Convention. It was recalled that the ICRC had consistently reminded Israel of its responsibility under the Fourth Geneva Convention for any acts committed towards Palestinian civilians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip – regardless of the status of the areas established within the framework of the Oslo agreement and the various subsequent interim agreements. The appeal also stressed the absolute and unconditional prohibition of terrorist acts, reprisals against the civilian population, indiscriminate attacks, or attacks directed against the civilian population.

Visits to detainees in Israel

The ICRC delegation pursued its traditional activities in favour of all detainees protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention. These comprised not just Palestinians but also other persons detained by the Israeli authorities, including Lebanese and Syrian nationals, among them people from the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights, and nationals of States that are at war with Israel or have no diplomatic relations with the country.

In April 2000, 13 of the 15 remaining Lebanese administrative detainees were released and repatriated under ICRC auspices. This followed the decision of the Supreme Court on 12 April to the effect that Israeli law does not authorize the holding of individuals in administrative detention in instances where the individuals in question do not pose a threat to Israeli security.⁴ The ICRC was still denied access to one of the two remaining administrative detainees, who had been held in Israel since 1994. These two detainees, respectively held since 1989 and 1994, should have been released at the latest following the Israeli withdrawal from the south of Lebanon, according to the Fourth Geneva Convention.

In addition, the ICRC continued to visit 22 Lebanese nationals still held in Israel after having been arrested in southern Lebanon and sentenced by a court in Israel. Their transfer to Israel was in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Moreover, they should have been handed over to their country of origin after the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon. The ICRC regularly reminded the State of Israel of its obligations in this regard.

⁴ Six had already been released and repatriated prior to that date.

Over the year, the ICRC visited 26 detention centres in Israel. It reported on its findings to the authorities, and made representations with a view to improving the treatment and conditions of detention. In March, the ICRC started its annual general visits to all prisons in Israel in order to evaluate the conditions of detention and treatment of detainees. Particular attention continued to be paid to detainees under interrogation, who were visited on a regular basis. In addition, a number of visits to individual detainees with special humanitarian needs were organized.

Throughout the year, the ICRC provided the detainees in the Meggido Military Detention Centre with educational and recreational materials. The delegation also distributed sets of clothing to foreign detainees held in Israeli prisons.

The ICRC continued to fund and organize, in cooperation with the Palestine Red Crescent Society, family visits for Palestinian detainees held in Israeli prisons. A total of 65,775 family visits from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem took place under the programme in 2000. Unfortunately, it was suspended as a consequence of the upsurge in violence which began in September.

Despite the provisions set forth in the Fourth Geneva Convention concerning the right of detainees to receive visits and despite long negotiations, unacceptable restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities remained the main obstacle to resumption of the programme. These restrictions consisted notably of prohibiting certain close family members from visiting detainees and reducing the duration of the permits enabling family members to travel to and from the prison. In the meantime, the ICRC forwarded some 600 parcels (clothes) from families to detainees from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Visits to detainees in Gaza and the West Bank

At the request of the Palestinian Authority, the ICRC visited civilian and military places of detention in the autonomous territories. In February, it handed over a summary report on the situation of detainees between January 1998 and June 1999 to the President of the Palestinian Authority.

ICRC delegates continued to make regular visits to detainees in 40 places of detention in Gaza and the West Bank under the responsibility of the Palestinian Police, General Intelligence, Preventive Security Service, Military Intelligence, National Security Forces and Force 17 respectively. The delegation also pursued negotiations with the Palestinian Authority regarding access to one place of detention under the responsibility of the Preventive Security Service, two places under the Military Intelligence and one run by the Police. In all four of these cases the authorities in charge had failed to guarantee respect for the ICRC's standard visiting procedures.

Helping to maintain family ties

For over 30 years, a major problem for the 20,000 Syrian nationals living on the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights has been separation from other family members.⁵ Through its delegations in Israel and Syria, the ICRC continued to provide assistance, in its capacity as a neutral intermediary, to civilians protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention. In particular, it facilitated the passage of people who had to cross the demarcation line for humanitarian reasons.

From the end of May, the ICRC conducted humanitarian activities for Lebanese nationals who fled to Israel after the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon. Under its auspices, nine people returned to Lebanon and the mortal remains of eight others who had died in Israel were handed over to their families in Lebanon.

A hot line was opened at the ICRC's delegation for Lebanese wanting to send news to their families in Lebanon. The ICRC forwarded to Lebanon and distributed in Israel more than 800 documents as well as handling Red Cross messages exchanged between family members separated by the Israeli-Lebanese border. It also participated in the transfer to Lebanon of a two-month-old baby, and the repatriation of a medical patient and a detainee who had completed his sentence.

In its capacity as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC made representations on behalf of the three Israeli soldiers captured on Israel's northern border and the Israeli citizen held by the Hezbollah.⁶

Promoting humanitarian law

Throughout the year, the ICRC continued to support the pilot project for teaching humanitarian law in universities in Gaza and the West Bank in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education. Its activities in this regard included training professors to become local experts on the subject, providing support for students taking part in the course and the supplying of educational materials and publications relating to humanitarian law.

Dissemination sessions were carried out in both Israel and the occupied and autonomous territories for various groups, among them cadets of the Israeli armed forces and 30 Palestinian prison officials.

The delegation also took part in the "Exploring Humanitarian Law" project in cooperation with the Israeli and Palestinian education authorities, and produced a film on the social reintegration of Palestinian ex-detainees.

Urging respect for the Geneva Conventions

Parallel to its appeal of 21 November 2000 calling upon all those involved in the violence to ensure respect for civilians, the wounded, medical personnel and for those who are no longer taking part in the hostilities, the ICRC strengthened its efforts to disseminate the rules of international humanitarian law to arms bearers, political and humanitarian organizations and individuals present in the field.

⁵ See p. 193.

⁶ See p. 190.

As a larger number of delegates were present in the field monitoring the situation, the delegation organized several meetings with high-ranking representatives of the Israel Defense Forces in order to explain the ICRC's specific role and the Palestine Red Crescent Society's medical activities. In addition, a meeting with an Israeli military spokesperson and the Israel Defense Forces' head of doctrine was organized to discuss a more systematic dissemination approach and the extension of the ICRC's dissemination efforts to different units of the armed forces. To increase awareness of and respect for the rules of humanitarian law, the delegation organized a presentation on the ICRC's mandate and activities for 15 non-commissioned officers in Tel Aviv.

Protection-driven assistance strategy

At the end of the year, the ICRC devised a protection-driven assistance strategy targeting the direct victims of violence and closures. The objectives of this strategy were to facilitate access to sealed-off areas and provide emergency assistance to the villages most affected by the closures as well as to families whose homes were destroyed. Overall, 50,000 families were expected to benefit from this programme. The ICRC, as lead agency for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's activities in the occupied and autonomous territories and Israel, and in coordination with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, issued several information and appeal documents.

Cooperation with the Magen David Adom

Throughout the year, regular contact was maintained with the Magen David Adom. Two meetings were held bringing together the leadership of the Magen David Adom and the Palestine Red Crescent Society, with representatives of the International Federation and the ICRC to define possible areas of cooperation between the Magen David Adom and the Palestine Red Crescent Society.

A dissemination session was organized for Magen David Adom volunteer leaders, and was attended by about 45 volunteers and their instructors from around the country. The Magen David Adom also asked the ICRC, jointly with the American Red Cross, to help with the restructuring and development of its tracing unit.

Cooperation with the Palestine Red Crescent Society

The ICRC made particular efforts to strengthen the operational cooperation between the Palestine Red Crescent Society and the Magen David Adom. The Presidents of the two Societies met in Geneva on 20 and 21 December at the invitation of the ICRC and in the presence of representatives of the International Federation. They discussed difficulties faced by their respective organizations in rescue operations and agreed on practical steps to increase cooperation. Their aim was to ensure that the wounded and sick received prompt assistance and that medical services and personnel were adequately protected.

Throughout the year the ICRC continued to strengthen the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) of the Palestine Red Crescent Society. This support has greatly contributed to the Society's ability to respond effectively to past and present crises. Today the EMS has all the equipment and expertise needed to run an effective and stable service. In 2000, ICRC support included the donation of five new ambulances and 20 second-hand computers.

A massive effort to train ambulance staff was made with ICRC support. During the year this training included refresher courses for emergency medical technicians, sponsorship for the participation of two Red Crescent Society staff in the Medical Emergency Unit course organized by the German Red Cross in cooperation with the ICRC and the International Federation, and in a comprehensive Pre-hospital Trauma Life Support course. Two Palestine Red Crescent leaders attended an Emergency Response Unit team leader training course in Geneva, while eight social workers and *kindergarten* teachers from different branches took part in a training course.

In response to the outbreak of violence at the end of September, the ongoing EMS programme adapted rapidly to the overwhelming needs facing the Palestine Red Crescent. The 13 mobile first-aid stations (field hospitals) which the ICRC had deployed in 1997 were constantly restocked with locally purchased medical equipment and supplies. The ICRC in Geneva sent in several tonnes of medical equipment and supplies. In order to reinforce the EMS vehicle fleet, six fully equipped ambulances were ordered.

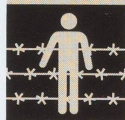
Owing to severe restrictions on freedom of movement, the ICRC ensured the regular transport of medical supplies from the Palestine Red Crescent central warehouse to all branches throughout the West Bank and Gaza. In addition, action had to be taken on many occasions to help Red Crescent ambulances which were blocked at army checkpoints.

The delegation facilitated various visits to the occupied and autonomous territories by the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of a number of countries, among them Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Arab Emirates.

A logistics base, including a bonded warehouse and three trucks, was set up in Amman⁷ to coordinate the Movement's relief operations, to organize the arrival of international assistance donated by National Societies, and to transport the goods to the West Bank and Gaza.

⁷ See p. 188.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- visited 3,384 detainees, including 2,024 monitored individually, in 26 places of detention in Israel;
- issued 18,370

certificates of detention;

- supervised the repatriation of 17 Lebanese and 2 Syrian detainees released by the Israeli authorities, after establishing in private interviews that they were returning of their own free will;

- visited 921 persons detained by the Palestinian security services in 40 places of detention;



- collected 1,386 and distributed 1,421 Red Cross messages exchanged between residents of the occupied

and the autonomous territories and their relatives living in countries without official relations with Israel, and between civilians and detainees;

- supervised 21 handover operations (including 1 family reunion) enabling 830 people to cross the demarcation line to/from the Golan Heights (428 to Syria and 402 to Golan) in conjunction with the ICRC's delegation in Syria;
- organized 65,775 family visits from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem;

- supervised the repatriation of 6 civilians, including 1 baby, and the mortal remains of 4 people from Israel to southern Lebanon;

- forwarded over 82 documents for separated family members;



- gave extensive support to the Palestine Red Crescent Society's Emergency Medical Services programme,

including equipment and several training courses;

- provided support for the production and distribution of 30,000 promotional brochures about the structure and activities of the Palestine Red Crescent;



- in cooperation with Bir Zeit University, organized 2 workshops for 26 Palestinian university professors involved in

setting up humanitarian law courses, and provided documentation;

- held lectures for 50 Israeli university students;

- participated in the "Exploring Humanitarian Law" project.

JORDAN

A disintegrating peace process, a stagnant economy, and chronic water shortages were just some of the challenges facing Jordan's King Abdullah II during his first year on the throne. In 2000, to begin addressing some of the country's problems, the King moved to consolidate his position and initiated a number of measures of internal reform. In addition, with a good part of its population being of Palestinian origin, Jordan was a crucial partner in the Middle East peace effort during the year. The collapse of this process had serious repercussions in the country.

The ICRC, present in the region since 1948, has a long-standing relationship with Jordan. Today the delegation in Amman plays a vital role in maintaining contacts between families in the West Bank and their relatives in Jordan, as well as visiting places of detention, disseminating humanitarian law and cooperating with the Jordan National Red Crescent Society.

An important development for the delegation in 2000 was the opening of a new regional training unit tailored to the needs of expatriate and national staff from 23 ICRC delegations in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. This unit expanded rapidly, with plans to set up a sub-unit for the Balkans already well advanced at the end of the year.

A centre of support

The violence in Israel and the occupied and the autonomous territories that erupted in September 2000 presented the Amman delegation with a number of challenges – a sudden increase in tracing requests, a sharp rise in ambulance transfers and a mounting demand for administrative assistance from family members and patients trying to cross borders, particularly following the repeated closure of the bridge over the Jordan river.

The delegation also served as the logistics base for assistance donated by different Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in response to an ICRC appeal. The purpose of the appeal was to provide supplementary support for the Palestine Red Crescent Society to enable it to cope with its increasing responsibilities, in particular rescue and first-aid operations in the occupied territories and the transport of material to the West Bank and Gaza.

Within the framework of enhanced cooperation within the Movement, the ICRC's delegations in Amman, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Kuwait worked together to enable a United Arab Emirates Red Crescent team to take part in the relief operation in the occupied and the autonomous territories.

Away from the media spotlight, the plight of the civilian population in Iraq remained a major concern for the ICRC.⁸ The delegation in Amman continued to provide logistic support for ICRC activities in Iraq during the year.

Incorporating humanitarian law into military and police training

Over the past two years the delegation has greatly expanded its activities in the area of dissemination for the armed forces, as part of its long-term objectives. The presence in the delegation of a national consultant had an extremely positive impact. In 2000, the Jordanian armed forces took the first steps towards incorporating humanitarian law into the training programmes of various military schools and units, and began preparing qualified trainers.

Several "train-the-trainers" courses took place in 2000 with military and police units from several Arab and other countries.

In November 2000, the Public Security Directorate and the ICRC's delegation organized a training course entitled *To Serve and to Protect* for 30 police officers. An ICRC dissemination team,

including a former Dutch police commander, helped prepare the course, which was the first of its kind given in Jordan. The goal was to train police trainers who could share their knowledge with other police officers and officials dealing with persons deprived of their freedom.

A regional conference on the law of armed conflict was held at the Royal War College in 2000. High-ranking military representatives from 16 Arab countries met to evaluate the level of training in the law of armed conflict in their respective armed forces and to review teaching methods.

The ICRC also played an active role in the annual law of armed conflict day at the Staff and Command College. Over 135 high-ranking officers from 12 countries took part in briefings and practical exercises on the fundamental rules and the code of conduct for combatants. The courses were conducted by trainers from the college who had attended the "train-the-trainers" course in 1999.⁹

Maintaining contact with civil society

Throughout the year, the ICRC maintained and broadened its contacts with the different stakeholders in Jordan's civil society. The delegation responded to numerous requests from the local, Arab and foreign media for information on ICRC activities in the region, particularly in Iraq, southern Lebanon and the Israeli-occupied and the autonomous territories.

Following the outbreak of violence in the occupied territories in September 2000, the media closely followed the activities conducted by the ICRC and various National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to assist the Palestine Red Crescent and Palestinians affected by the events.

⁸ See p. 196.

⁹ See the ICRC's 1999 *Annual Report*, p. 305.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development and the Public Security Directorate, the ICRC organized a regional seminar in January 2000 on the protection of juveniles in detention. The seminar, the first of its kind in the Middle East, was attended by police officers and social workers from nine Arab countries.

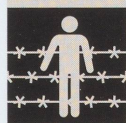
The Amman delegation also took part in the 103rd Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union held in Jordan's capital in May 2000. The meeting provided the opportunity to launch the Arabic and Russian versions of the ICRC's handbook for parliamentarians entitled *Respect for International Humanitarian Law*. In addition, the delegation cooperated with the University of Jordan, the Jordanian armed forces and the Jordan chapter of the Landmines Survivors Network in organizing a "train-the-trainers" seminar for a group of 25 student volunteers.

Cooperation with the National Society

At the national level, the Jordan Red Crescent played a lead role in disseminating and promoting implementation of humanitarian law. Since 1999, it has hosted the secretariat of the National Committee for the Implementation of Humanitarian Law.

In November 2000, the Jordan Red Crescent released the first issue of its Red Crescent bulletin, a project financed by the ICRC. This bi-monthly bulletin aims at consolidating interaction and links between the National Society, its branches and the local community.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- carried out visits to 8 places of detention, individually monitored 462 detainees, and issued 26 certificates of detention for former detainees;



- issued travel documents to facilitate the resettlement of 487 refugees, in particular Iraqis, in third countries by UNHCR* or embassies;
- facilitated medical transfers between the West and East Banks carried out by the Jordan National Red Crescent Society and the Palestine Red Crescent Society;



- collected 191 Red Cross messages and distributed 629 between members of separated Jordanian and Palestinian families, such as those with relatives detained in Israel or Kuwait;

* UNHCR: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



- held training sessions on humanitarian law and its applicability to UN peace-keeping operations and on the Movement's Fundamental Principles for around 1,000 members of the armed and police forces preparing to take part in UN peace-keeping operations;
- held 4 "train-the-trainers" sessions for 73 officers from the Jordanian armed forces and distributed some 100 copies of the teaching files on the law of armed conflict;
- in cooperation with the Royal Police Academy, organized training courses for 161 police officers, prison directors and junior officers;
- organized a regional conference on the law of armed conflict for high-ranking military officers from 16 Arab countries;
- gave a talk on humanitarian law issues, the role of civil defence and possible cooperation with various components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to 40 directors and officers from the Civil Defence Directorate;
- held a regional seminar on juveniles in detention, which was attended by police officers and social workers from 9 Arab countries.

LEBANON

The 22-year Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon came to an end in May 2000, when the Israeli forces handed over military facilities in southern Lebanon to the South Lebanon Army (SLA), in pursuance of the Israeli decision to leave the occupied zone by the beginning of July. The final stage of the withdrawal took place earlier than expected, and was more or less over in three days. By 24 May the Israeli forces were gone.

Immediately after the withdrawal, some 5,000 people fled the area and entered Israel. The detainees held in Khiam prison in the former occupied zone were freed by the local population when the prison was abandoned by guards. Over 2,000 former members of the SLA militia and civilians living in the south surrendered or were arrested by the Lebanese police or by armed groups.

In August the Lebanese armed forces (Police and Army Special Forces) deployed 1,000 men in southern Lebanon, after UNIFIL* had set up 18 control posts along the border between Lebanon and Israel. These new security measures helped reduce tension and facilitated a gradual resumption of normal life in the south, as well as encouraging people who had fled to Israel to return. By the end of the year, around 2,000 had done so.

ICRC response to the Israeli withdrawal

Having long been the only international humanitarian organization with a permanent presence in southern Lebanon and along the front line, and with unlimited access to all villages, the ICRC was able, during the Israeli withdrawal, to monitor the situation of the civilian population and respond to emergency needs. Extra medical coverage was provided through the Lebanese mobile clinics,

which dealt with emergencies and subsequently had to meet an increased demand when former inhabitants of villages in the south began to return home from other parts of the country.

To help forestall an administrative and security vacuum in the transition period, the ICRC carried out an evaluation of the two referral hospitals in southern Lebanon before the withdrawal, and on 26 May signed an agreement with the Lebanese Ministry of Health concerning ICRC financial and logistic support for the hospitals over a three-month period. By November 2000, the agreement was being implemented in one of the hospitals.

With the occupation of southern Lebanon over, the ICRC had to adapt to the new situation and redefine its role in Lebanon. Thanks to its long presence it quickly established a range of new contacts and initiated a dialogue with the new political authorities.

The ICRC continued its activities on behalf of Lebanese citizens who had fled to Israel, sending to Israel and distributing in Lebanon over 800 official documents (powers of attorney, identity cards, driving licences, etc.), and handing over 500 Red Cross messages exchanged between family members separated by the Israeli-Lebanese border. The situation of Lebanese citizens returning from Israel was also monitored by the delegation.

A stable presence for detainees

Before the Israeli withdrawal, the ICRC continued its weekly visits to detainees in Khiam detention centre. As well as monitoring conditions of detention, it provided the detainees with medical care and recreational material and organized family visits on a regular basis. The day of their liberation the ICRC ensured that all ex-detainees of the Khiam detention centre were able to safely rejoin their families.

In October, immediately after the capture of three Israeli soldiers and one civilian, the delegation approached the Hezbollah to request access to them in accordance with the ICRC's standard procedures, and asked for permission to forward news to their families, but received no positive reply.¹⁰ The ICRC also continued discussions with the new government with a view to gaining access to all detainees within its mandate who were held under the responsibility of the Lebanese civilian and military authorities. In December, the Prime Minister confirmed that, in principle, access to all prisoners and to all places of detention was granted, and that implementation should be discussed with the relevant ministries.

Ongoing medical assistance

Until the Israeli withdrawal the ICRC, in cooperation with the Lebanese Red Cross Society, carried out over 1,400 medical consultations in mobile clinics covering villages along the front line, and distributed regular medical supplies to hospitals, emergency centres and dispensaries in the same area.

After the withdrawal, the ICRC continued to supply basic medical material to 18 dispensaries and eight hospitals in the Palestinian camps and to the Marjayoun hospital, under an agreement reached with the government.

Promoting humanitarian law

Throughout the year the ICRC worked to promote the incorporation of humanitarian law into Lebanese legislation. Discussions were held with the Ministers of Justice and Defence and the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a view to nominating representatives to an interministerial committee. Once formed, this committee was to hold a round-table discussion on the issue.

¹⁰ See p. 185.

* UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

The delegation sponsored the participation of high-ranking officials from the Lebanese army in courses on the law of armed conflict at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo and in a regional conference in Amman, Jordan. It also arranged for an officer from the Internal Security Forces and the head of a juvenile detention centre to attend a regional conference in Amman on the treatment of juveniles in detention.¹¹

In cooperation with the Lebanese army's Directorate of Training, the ICRC organized a five-day workshop at the Command and Staff College. Lebanese army officers from military academies and all brigades took part in the workshop which was aimed at training instructors in the law of armed conflict. Subsequently, the ICRC held several meetings with the Lebanese army's Director of Training and instructors at the Command and Staff College and the Military School to promote training in humanitarian law at all levels of the army. It also provided teaching material for instructors.

A lecture on humanitarian law and human rights was given to 300 army officers from the Ministry of Defence.

The delegation provided Radio Lebanon (run by the Ministry of Information) with the ICRC-produced radio series "Peace and security through history". The 30 episodes on humanitarian themes were broadcast twice a day during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Throughout the year, numerous presentations on humanitarian law were given to students and professors at several universities in the country. The delegation also distributed various ICRC publications and multimedia tools to libraries, schools and research institutes.

Mine awareness

Following the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon, the problem of civilians being injured by landmines became a major ICRC concern. Within one week of the withdrawal, there were seven mine/UXO* accidents in which five people were killed and 13 injured. The ICRC carried out field surveys of infested areas in order to plan an appropriate mine-awareness strategy to protect the population. It distributed public information spots on mines to Lebanese television channels. In addition, in coordination with the Lebanese army's National Demining Office, the ICRC financed production of 220 metallic billboards with short messages about the danger of landmines and UXO. The billboards were put up in mine-infested areas in southern Lebanon. The ICRC also designed and produced, in coordination with the National Demining Office and in cooperation with the Lebanese Red Cross, 5,000 mine-awareness posters and 100,000 leaflets in comic strip form. It also financed the design and production of 50,000 Lebanese Red Cross pocket calendars with similar messages. These materials were distributed in schools and villages in the south.

Cooperation with the National Society

Early in 2000, the ICRC financed and helped organize three training camps for 37 new Lebanese Red Cross first-aiders. Throughout the year, it provided 14 National Society first-aid centres, 13 medical dispensaries and two mobile clinics in southern Lebanon and along the former front line with basic medicines, dressing materials and other support. The maintenance of 47 Lebanese Red Cross ambulances operating in southern Lebanon was also covered by the ICRC. Prior to, during, and in the immediate aftermath of, the Israeli withdrawal, the medical and paramedical

services of the Lebanese Red Cross were virtually the only ones able to operate freely to care for the wounded and sick, which testifies to the confidence the National Society enjoyed not only among all sectors of Lebanese society but also among armed and security forces (including those of the Israelis).

Following the Israeli pull-out in May, the ICRC held several meetings with the Lebanese Red Cross to discuss future cooperation between the two institutions. As a result, the ICRC began helping the Lebanese Red Cross in its activities to meet the new needs of the population, gradually moving away from operational support localized in the south towards structural support for all of the Society's activities, in coordination with the International Federation.

In addition, the delegation initiated a new programme of cooperation with the Lebanese Red Cross in an area particularly relevant to post-conflict situations: mine awareness.

A two-day workshop to train instructors on mine awareness and mine action in general was organized at National Society headquarters. Twelve Red Cross members, social workers and first-aiders took part. The aim of the workshop was to develop the knowledge and skills needed by the participants to carry out mine-awareness programmes among the population and in schools.

Finally, preparatory activities for the "Exploring Humanitarian Law" programme were initiated in 2000 with the development and testing of educational materials, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the youth section of the Lebanese Red Cross.

¹¹ See p. 189.

* UXO: unexploded ordnance

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- visited 152 detainees, including 100 monitored individually, during its weekly visits to the Khiam detention centre;
- transferred 25 detainees out of the Israeli-occupied zone;*
- arranged for 468 family members from within and outside the occupied zone to visit their detained relatives in Khiam;
- provided food parcels for families whose breadwinners were in detention;*
- participated in the repatriation to Lebanon of 17 detainees released from prison in Israel and the mortal remains of 4 people;*
- helped 140 former detainees from Khiam detention centre to return to their homes, including 105 to Beirut;**
- issued 2,812 detention certificates for Lebanese nationals and Palestinians previously held in Israel;**
- collected 1,152 and distributed 1,910 Red Cross messages for Lebanese and Palestinian detainees held in Khiam and in Israel;
- visited 5 former SLA members detained by Hezbollah and organized visits to them by 48 family members;



- exchanged over 2,600 Red Cross messages between Lebanese who had fled to Israel and their families in southern

Lebanon and forwarded 800 official documents;**

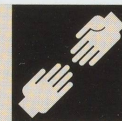
- facilitated the repatriation of 9 people from Israel to Lebanon for humanitarian reasons and the mortal remains of 8 others, in coordination with the delegation in Tel Aviv and the Lebanese Red Cross;*



- distributed 478 food parcels to exposed or remote villages along the front line and in the occupied zone;
- obtained security guarantees for repairs and maintenance to be carried out on vital infrastructure;*
- supplied 72 illegal immigrants stranded in southern Lebanon with relief supplies for 5 months;



- distributed medical supplies to 7 hospitals and 34 dispensaries along the front line;*
- in cooperation with the Lebanese Red Cross, carried out over 1,400 consultations in mobile clinics in and near the occupied zone;*
- provided 4 first-aid centres, 13 dispensaries and 6 mobile clinics run by the National Society in the occupied zone and along the front line with material support;
- helped cover the running costs of 47 ambulances;*
- supported a referral hospital in southern Lebanon;
- increased support to Lebanese Red Cross first-aid centres and mobile clinics covering 35 villages;**
- provided medical assistance for health centres in Palestinian refugee camps and fitted 25 Palestinians with prostheses;



- helped organize 3 camps for 37 new Lebanese Red Cross first-aiders;



- organized a 5-day workshop for instructors from various military institutions to help reactivate training in humanitarian law in their programmes;
- introduced the "Exploring Humanitarian Law" project (trial phase) in the Education Ministry's research and development centre, 2 schools and the youth section of the National Society.

* before the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon

** during/after the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon

SYRIA

The year 2000 was marked by the death of Syria's President Hafez al-Assad and the transfer of power to his son, Bashar al-Assad. The reform of the country's economic system and a stalled Arab-Israeli peace process presented the new President with daunting challenges.

Most of the estimated 20,000 Syrian nationals living on the Golan Heights occupied by Israel and protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention were still not allowed to cross the demarcation line into Syria proper to join their families, from whom they had been separated since 1967.

Crossing the divide

The ICRC's delegation in Syria continued to act as a neutral intermediary for the Syrian inhabitants of the Syrian Golan Heights occupied by Israel, who are protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention. The ICRC maintained relations with UNDOF* and UNTSO,* both of which monitor observance of the cease-fire agreement between Israel and Syria and provide logistic support for ICRC-supervised operations across the demilitarized zone.

Throughout the year, the ICRC's delegation in Damascus supervised operations enabling students, pilgrims and brides to cross the demarcation line to or from the occupied Golan Heights, in conjunction with the delegation in Israel. As in previous years, the ICRC restored and maintained links between family members separated as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict, both Syrian nationals and Palestinian refugees, by forwarding Red Cross messages to relatives in Israeli-occupied territories or third countries. The Golanese population in the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights and in Syria also relied on the ICRC's services to send and receive official documents.

Following the outbreak of violence in late September in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories and autonomous territories, there was a sharp rise in the number of letters and Red Cross messages handled by the Damascus delegation for Palestinian refugees in Syria.

The ICRC continued to cooperate with UNHCR in issuing travel documents for refugees accepted for resettlement in third countries.

Raising awareness of humanitarian law

Various groups in Syria showed increasing interest in learning about and receiving ICRC information on humanitarian law and the activities of the Movement in 2000.

In February, the ICRC's Cairo-based delegate to the armed forces gave a two-day seminar on the law of armed conflict for UNDOF members in Syria. The seminar, which was attended by junior and senior officers, covered the history, development and aims of the law of war.

Following discussions with the Universities of Damascus and Aleppo regarding the establishment of a humanitarian law library, reading material was delivered to both institutions. Students from the universities regularly requested ICRC assistance in researching the available literature and case histories on humanitarian law.

An ICRC photo exhibition entitled "Golan weddings" was inaugurated on ICRC premises on 6 June under the patronage of the Minister of Culture. Over 40 pictures covering five themes told the story of two people wanting to get married but who were separated by barbed wire. A joint project of the ICRC's delegations in Damascus and Tel Aviv, the exhibition was shown in Aleppo in September at the annual international photography festival.

"International humanitarian law – reality and ambition", an international colloquium organized jointly by the ICRC and the University of Damascus Faculty of Law, took place in November. Syrian, Egyptian, Jordanian, Lebanese, Swiss and ICRC specialists addressed a large audience of law professors from the Universities of Damascus and Aleppo, journalists, experts in military affairs and students. The conference, the first of its kind in Syria, received wide coverage in the local and regional press. An average of 200 people took an active part in discussions.

* UNDOF: United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

* UNTSO: United Nations Truce Supervision Organization

Cooperation with the National Society

Joint ICRC and Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society workshops were held throughout the year for volunteers from local branches of the National Society. One workshop, entitled "Workshop 2000: spreading international humanitarian law", covered the origin and mission of the Movement and the basic principles and mechanisms of humanitarian law. The participants went on to implement projects aimed at raising awareness of humanitarian principles in their own communities.

The ICRC-financed bi-monthly newsletter of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society underwent a design and editorial change. The newsletter is now in magazine format and contains information on the activities of the local branches.

Working with Movement partners

In November, a regional Basic Training Course organized by the International Federation took place in the Syrian desert near Palmyra and was attended by potential expatriate delegates from 10 different National Societies. During the course, the ICRC in Damascus held workshops on the security risks involved in a Red Cross/Red Crescent mission, relations with the media, and the basics of humanitarian law.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- issued 44 certificates of detention;



- supervised 21 handover operations, including 1 family reunification, enabling 830 people (402 to Golan and 428 to

Syria) to cross the demarcation line to/from the Golan Heights, in conjunction with the ICRC's delegation in Israel;

- restored and maintained contact between family members separated by the Arab-Israeli conflict by forwarding 118 Red Cross messages on their behalf;
- issued travel documents to facilitate the resettlement of 724 refugees in third countries;



- continued to support the Palestine Red Crescent Society's prosthetic/orthotic workshop in Damascus by providing technical and material assistance in order to allow Palestinian refugees and/or needy individuals to be fitted with prostheses;



- gave a 2-day seminar on humanitarian law for UNDOF officers in Syria;
- organized 2 showings of the photo exhibition

"Golan weddings" on ICRC activities for people separated by the demilitarized zone.

IRAN

The legislative elections held in 2000 saw the victory of the reformists, opening the way for Iran to continue developing its relations with other countries, including the Gulf States and the European Union. Economic reforms were also introduced throughout the year.

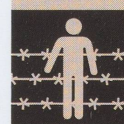
In September the ICRC President met the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran in New York during the UN Millennium Summit. This meeting came in the wake of the substantial progress made since 1998 on the issue of prisoners of war (POWs) from the Iran-Iraq war.

The ICRC maintained a small office in Tehran staffed by national employees. Its headquarters in Geneva pursued contacts with the Iranian authorities on humanitarian issues still outstanding since the Iran-Iraq war.¹²

Cooperation with the National Society

Following the closure of its delegation in 1992, the ICRC had virtually no dealings with the Iranian Red Crescent Society apart from tracing activities. In 2000, contact between the ICRC and the National Society was renewed and developed. The National Society set up a dissemination office and expressed an interest in cooperating with the ICRC in this field. In addition, as chair of the National Committee for the Implementation of Humanitarian Law, established in 1999, it invited the ICRC to assist the Committee in its work.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- supervised the repatriation of 4,117 Iraqi POWs held in Iran, after ensuring that they were returning home of their own free will;
- interviewed 3,557 other POWs still in Iran but no longer interned, who had expressed their wish not to be repatriated.

¹² See p. 201.

IRAQ

PROTECTION

2,512,721

ASSISTANCE

17,061,443

PREVENTIVE ACTION

626,762

COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL SOCIETIES

228,497

OVERHEADS

1,282,455

GENERAL

149,462

TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 21,861,340

Ten years after the Gulf war and the imposition of international trade sanctions, daily life for ordinary Iraqis was a struggle for survival. The tragic effects of the embargo were seen in the steady deterioration of the health system and the breakdown of public infrastructure. Despite the increased availability of food, medicines and medical equipment, following a rise in oil prices and the extension of the UN's "oil-for-food" programme,¹³ suffering remained widespread.

The United States and United Kingdom carried out repeated air strikes

¹³ UN Security Council resolution 1284 adopted in December 1999, renewing SC resolution 986 of 1995.

THE GULF IRAQ



⊕ ICRC delegation ⊕ ICRC sub-delegation + ICRC presence ⊕ Prosthetic/orthotic centre/workshop

over the "no-fly zones" imposed by the two nations in the north and south of the country.

In northern Iraq there was a significant increase in military activity during the year, mainly along the border with Turkey, and renewed political and military tension between the main Kurdish factions. Apart from the release of 26 detainees at the beginning of March, there was no further progress in the implementation of the 1998 Washington Agreement between the KDP* and the PUK.* Displaced families could not return to their homes because of the unstable conditions.

* KDP: Kurdish Democratic Party
* PUK: Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

The ICRC remained concerned about the humanitarian implications of the sanctions on Iraq. To alleviate the plight of the civilian population, it continued to focus its activities on needs not covered by the oil-for-food programme. In particular, it concentrated on the implementation of an integrated health-care programme and extension of its existing water and sanitation projects, partly in response to the worst drought in 40 years.

An important development in 2000 was the reopening of an office in the southern city of Basra. The Basra office's main task was to closely coordinate and further develop ICRC activities already under way in southern Iraq, primarily in the health and water sectors.

Visits to detainees

The ICRC continued throughout the year to visit detainees in northern Iraq arrested for security reasons or in connection with the inter-Kurdish conflict, in order to assess their psychological and material conditions of detention. Whenever improvements were deemed necessary, the ICRC made representations to the leaders of the Kurdish factions.

At the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad, the ICRC continued its visits to foreign nationals without consular representation, who are protected by humanitarian law.

Persons still unaccounted for as a result of the Iran-Iraq and Gulf wars continued to be a source of concern for the ICRC,¹⁴ which again acted as a neutral intermediary between the parties involved.

Repair of basic infrastructure

The lack of spare parts and a shortage of funds to pay trained staff to maintain the system were the most severe problems facing Iraq's water and sanitation infrastructure. In addition, low water levels due to drought brought some purification plants to a standstill, and resulted in high concentrations of pollutants in the water.

In 2000 the ICRC completed 34 major water-supply projects and 6 evacuation projects, benefiting 6 million people. These projects included the construction of a new water-treatment plant using the roughing filtration method in the Wasit governorate, 100 kilometres south-east of Baghdad. This method, introduced to Iraq by ICRC engineers, has the advantage that plants can be built with local resources and require relatively little maintenance. It treats the raw water without the addition of chemicals for the sedimentation process. The Jassan plant is the third such facility built by the ICRC in Iraq.

In Basra, the poor condition of the sewage system constituted a major public health hazard. The ICRC undertook the emergency rehabilitation of two sewage-lifting stations pumping waste to the city's treatment plant. As a consequence, the drainage of waste significantly improved, benefiting some 300,000 people.

In northern Iraq, the water situation improved in a camp for 5,000 displaced persons in Arbil following work by ICRC engineers to extend the internal network and increase the number of water distribution points. In addition, sewage systems were installed in disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Sulaymaniyah, with a high incidence of water-borne diseases.

The ICRC remained concerned about the effects of extremely low water levels in Iraq's rivers and reservoirs. Although rainfall returned to almost normal during the 1999/2000 rainy season, this was not nearly enough to make up for the drought over the previous three years. In response to this situation, the ICRC implemented seven drought-related emergency water and sanitation projects.

One of the most important, begun in December 1999, concerned the water treatment plant supplying the town of Najaf. The town's population swells from 400,000 to as many as two million at certain times of the year owing to the influx of Shiite pilgrims.

A major health threat in some districts of Baghdad was averted by the emergency rehabilitation of the Al-Dora sewage-lifting station in the capital, which evacuates the waste water of some 2.5 million people.

The drought also had a negative impact on Iraq's electricity supply. A sufficient energy supply is essential in a flat country like Iraq, where the surface raw water has to be treated, pumped and drained. The ICRC therefore repaired 46 generators in key pumping stations, giving a total backup capacity of 19,000 kVA and enabling water and sewage plants to increase their production.

Rehabilitation of hospitals

The deterioration in the Iraqi health system continued, with medical facilities unable to provide proper treatment for the wounded and sick. In response to this situation the ICRC set up a three-pronged medical emergency programme in 1999 comprising repairs to hospitals and health centres, deliveries of medical material and a training programme for medical professionals.

In 2000, implementation of this programme began with the completion of renovation projects in four major hospitals in Basra, Mosul and Baghdad. Work on three others was well under way by the end of the year. Plans were drawn up for the rehabilitation work of two additional hospitals.

Rehabilitation work at the Ibn Al-Khatib Infectious Disease Hospital in Baghdad, the only facility of its kind in Iraq, was also completed. This included the construction of two new isolation wards, the upgrading of the sewage system and the renovation of the laboratory. The ICRC also renovated the Al-Batool Maternity Hospital in Mosul by constructing a new emergency admission building, rehabilitating the main building and repairing existing water and sewage systems. At the Basra Teaching Hospital, hygiene conditions for the patients improved considerably with the comprehensive renovation of the sanitary facilities. The operating theatres were also entirely rehabilitated.

The first stage in the rehabilitation of the Al-Karama General Hospital in Baghdad was carried out with the comprehensive renovation of buildings for emergency admissions and outpatient consultations and of the operating theatres and paediatric wards. The second stage of the rehabilitation programme was launched in October. Once the work is completed, the hospital will have the capacity to serve 500,000 people.

¹⁴ See pp. 201-202.

In northern Iraq, a comprehensive rehabilitation programme in two smaller hospitals in Rania (Sulaymaniyah governorate) and Soran (Arbil governorate) was continued. The programme includes renovation of the kitchens and of the water-supply and sanitation systems and extension of operating theatres and maternity wards. Each hospital will cover the medical needs of an estimated 200,000 people.

During the year air-conditioning systems were repaired in several hospitals, and construction work began on a sewage-treatment plant serving three hospitals in Mosul.

Enhancing basic health care

To improve primary health-care services, the ICRC launched a pilot project in Diyala governorate, 80 kilometres north of Baghdad. The project adopts an integrated approach combining rehabilitation work, water and sanitation activities, training and continued technical support in a comprehensive programme to improve primary health care.

The project is being carried out in close cooperation with the Ministry of Health through the involvement of local medical authorities. The first phase concentrated on repairing infrastructure, and the second comprised on-the-job training by expatriate ICRC staff.

The ICRC rehabilitated six health centres, four in Diyala governorate and two in Basra governorate, renovating the buildings and supplying equipment and furniture. Medical staff from two centres took part in a nine-day training course.

Rehabilitation work also began in four primary health-care centres, in close cooperation with ICRC medical staff and Ministry of Health representatives.

Ensuring quality medical services

On-the-job training for medical and paramedical staff was a high priority in the ICRC's health programme. In 2000, a programme was launched for the staff of Iraq's main psychiatric facility, the Al-Rashad Hospital for the chronically mentally ill in Baghdad, to improve the quality of care available for over 1,200 inpatients by improving drug treatment and occupational therapy services. It completed repairs on the hospital's water supply and started renovating the kitchen, the laundry, the wards and the occupational therapy workshops. A nine-day training course was held for five social workers assigned to occupational therapists in the hospital.

The ICRC provided financial support for the first conference devoted to psychiatry in Iraq, and donated numerous medical journals and periodicals to hospitals with psychiatric departments.

Funds were also provided for workshops on "District Team Problem Solving", a concept developed by the WHO* to promote district-based problem-solving in public health.

Prosthetic/orthotic activities

Iraq has a high number of military and civilian amputees, mainly war-disabled from the Iran-Iraq and Gulf conflicts but also casualties of the fighting in northern Iraq and people injured by landmines. An estimated 3,000 patients per year receive ICRC prostheses. Of these, over 50% are mine victims.

The ICRC gave support to five prosthetic/orthotic centres, three belonging to the Ministry of Health, one to the Ministry of Defence and the other to the Iraqi Red Crescent Society. The support included supplies of raw materials and components, technical follow-up and staff training.

Early in the year, an ICRC physiotherapist joined the prosthetic/orthotic team with a view to improving physical rehabilitation services for amputees. Physiotherapy equipment was distributed to all centres to support the gait-training programme and the rehabilitation of the patients.

At the Al-Wasity hospital in Baghdad, the ICRC carried out an assessment with a view to becoming involved in developing the physical rehabilitation service for poliomyelitis patients under the age of 12.

The ICRC prosthetic/orthotic centre in the northern Iraqi city of Arbil continued to be run and financed entirely by the Norwegian Red Cross.¹⁵ The number of amputees fitted averaged 60 people per month. In 2000, a dormitory was completed, providing accommodation for patients during treatment.

At the end of the year an agreement was reached between the ICRC and the Norwegian Red Cross on the extension of the delegated project to include both Arbil and Mosul from the beginning of 2001, with one expatriate taking responsibility for both centres.

* WHO: World Health Organization

¹⁵ See the ICRC's 1999 *Annual Report*, p. 320.

Relief for the displaced

In Iraq thousands of people have been driven from their homes, in particular in northern Iraq where, according to the authorities, fighting between rival Kurdish factions has displaced some 120,000 people. Many of the displaced are living in tents, open spaces, or unheated public buildings. In northern Iraq, the ICRC continued to carry out individual surveys of displaced families, and pursued its cooperation with the Iraqi Red Crescent for the distribution of non-food items.

In 2000 the ICRC carried out a survey, in cooperation with the Iraqi Red Crescent and local authorities, of the internally displaced population in southern Iraq. A group of 400 families (2,334 people) was identified as the most vulnerable and received an ad hoc supply of non-food items.

Promotion of humanitarian law and principles

The ICRC pursued its efforts to make the rules of humanitarian law and its own mandate more widely known. To this end, regular contact was maintained with the deans of law faculties in Iraqi universities in order to discuss means of cooperation and support for the teaching of humanitarian law.

In cooperation with the Iraqi Children's Cultural House, the ICRC produced seven issues of the children's magazine *Sindibad of Baghdad*. Over 30,000 copies of the magazine were distributed throughout the country.

In northern Iraq, courses and seminars were organized for officers responsible for raising awareness of humanitarian law. An average of 35 officers took part in each course.

The ICRC organized a mobile poster competition on the theme "Together for humanity" to illustrate the spirit of the Geneva Conventions and ICRC activities in northern Iraq. The works of 50 Kurdish artists were displayed in the exhibition. Local newspapers, television and radio gave frequent coverage to the ICRC's poster competition and other activities.

Building the capacity of the National Society

The ICRC continued to provide the Iraqi Red Crescent Society with financial and technical support for capacity-building initiatives, particularly in dissemination and tracing. About 20 of the National Society's dissemination officers conducted sessions on humanitarian law and the fundamental principles of the Red Cross and Crescent Movement in 18 governorates. Each dissemination officer gave at least three sessions per month, reaching over 100 people monthly in their respective governorates.

Besides tracing and dissemination activities, the Iraqi Red Crescent and the ICRC agreed to extend their cooperation in the future into the fields of emergency response and health services, including first aid.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- at the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad, continued its visits to 64 foreign detainees without diplomatic representation in Iraq, who are protected by humanitarian law, and distributed hygiene kits and personal items and blankets to all foreign detainees;
- carried out 123 visits to 32 places of detention in northern Iraq, where it visited 792 people detained for security reasons or in connection with the fighting between the various Kurdish factions, and issued 296 detention certificates;
- gave financial assistance to 50 released detainees to cover the cost of their travel home;



- collected 6,855 and distributed 8,565 Red Cross messages in cooperation with the Iraqi Red Crescent Society;
- exchanged 2,353 Red Cross messages in northern Iraq;
- issued travel documents to facilitate the resettlement of 494 asylum-seekers in a third country;



- provided emergency medical assistance for a hospital in a densely populated residential area in eastern Baghdad after 6 civilians were killed and 38 injured by mortar shells;

- launched a pilot primary health-care project in Diyala governorate, adopting an integrated approach involving repairs to health centres, provision of basic equipment, and training programmes;
- renovated 6 primary health-care centres, 4 in Diyala governorate and 2 in Basra governorate;
- renovated 4 major hospitals, including the main psychiatric facility in Iraq;
- covered the running costs of 2 vehicles belonging to mobile preventive health-care teams in Sulaymaniyah;
- provided 1-year subscriptions to 29 different international medical journals for the central Ministry of Health library;
- donated a photocopier and a computer to the library for use by medical staff carrying out research;
- distributed medical journals to 14 directorates of health;
- carried out repairs and maintenance work on 7 major hospitals, renovating operating theatres;



- manufactured 2,807 prostheses, including 1,487 for mine victims, and fitted 538 new amputees with artificial limbs at the 5 ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic centres, one of which is run by the Iraqi Red Crescent;
- gave 2 week-long seminars on cast techniques and physiotherapy at the Ministry of Higher Education's prosthetic/orthotic school in Baghdad;
- financed and organized a trip by the director of one of the ICRC-supported centres and a local ICRC employee to attend a conference in Moshi, Tanzania, organized by the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics;



- rehabilitated 34 water-treatment plants and 6 sewage-evacuation plants, and provided 22 other plants with the necessary materials for maintenance and repairs, thus covering the needs of over 6 million people;
- built a new water-treatment plant;
- repaired 46 electricity generators in water and sewage plants, enabling them to increase their production;
- completed 7 water and sanitation projects to deal with problems caused by the drought and electricity shortages;
- began building a new sewage-treatment plant and drainage system serving 3 hospitals in Mosul;



- held a total of 8 courses on humanitarian law for 340 members of KDP and PUK forces, and dissemination sessions for around 600 members of public associations active in northern Iraq;
- produced 7 more issues of a children's magazine and a newsletter;
- held a dissemination session for Iraqi journalists.

AFTERMATH OF THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR

A visit by the Iranian Foreign Minister to Baghdad in October 2000 was a first step in the process of renewing relations between Iran and Iraq. During his trip he held high-level talks with the Iraqi authorities, including President Saddam Hussein. This visit, following a year of strained relations, could pave the way to progress on a series of issues linked to the Iran-Iraq war which remain unresolved 12 years after the end of the conflict.

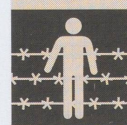
In September, the ICRC President met the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran in New York during the UN Millennium Summit. This meeting came in the wake of the substantial progress which had been made since 1998 on the issue of prisoners from the Iran-Iraq war.

Prisoners of war in Iran

ICRC headquarters maintained contact with the Iranian authorities on humanitarian issues still outstanding since the Iran-Iraq war. The ICRC continued to concentrate its efforts on bringing the issue of prisoners of war (POWs) closer to resolution, holding four high-level meetings with the Iranian authorities between January and September to continue a constructive dialogue on the subject.

Between February and September, two ICRC expatriates were based in Iran to carry out interviews with Iraqi POWs. They saw in private some 7,600 Iraqi POWs, of whom 4,117 agreed to return to Iraq. Their repatriation took place in five operations between April and August. This brought to 10,000 the number of prisoners able to return home since April 1998, when the process began to repatriate all remaining POWs whose names had been submitted to the ICRC by the two countries. The ICRC kept UNHCR informed on the issue of Iraqi POWs who did not wish to be repatriated.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- supervised the repatriation of 4,117 Iraqi POWs held in Iran, after ensuring that they were returning home of their own free will;
- interviewed 3,557 other POWs still in Iran but no longer interned, who had expressed the wish not to be repatriated.

AFTERMATH OF THE GULF WAR

While there was a perceptible improvement in relations between the Gulf countries in 2000, with Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates re-establishing relations with Iraq, unresolved issues from the Gulf war continued to affect the overall stability of the region.

Since December 1998 Iraq has refused to take part in meetings of the ICRC-chaired Tripartite Commission – made up of representatives of Iraq and the Coalition States (France, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and the United States) – and its Technical Sub-Committee.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the ICRC hosted three consultation meetings during the year under review with coalition members of the Tripartite Commission. The purpose of these meetings was to pursue ongoing efforts to ascertain the fate of persons still unaccounted for in connection with the Gulf war and to restore the dialogue between the parties. The ICRC also held discussions with the Iraqi authorities in Baghdad to seek ways out of the impasse.

Maintaining an ongoing dialogue

In June, the parties agreed to the ICRC's proposal to hold bilateral discussions with members of the Tripartite Commission on relatively well-documented cases of persons unaccounted for following the Gulf war. This dialogue was initiated by the regional delegation in Kuwait with Kuwaiti and Saudi Arabian members, and by the ICRC's delegation in Baghdad¹⁷ with the Iraqi authorities. The discussions also resulted in progress in the case of a Saudi Arabian pilot whose plane had crashed over Iraq in 1991. Iraq and Saudi Arabia agreed to implement an ICRC-proposed plan of

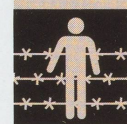
action to search for and retrieve the mortal remains of the pilot in a joint operation under ICRC auspices. The joint operation took place in Iraq near the Saudi border on 19-24 October and involved the delegations of Saudi Arabia and Iraq, and independent experts appointed by the ICRC. The crash site and the mortal remains found were examined by both countries' delegations and by the independent experts, whose conclusions were transmitted to the authorities of Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

Throughout the year, the ICRC handled numerous tracing requests concerning persons unaccounted for as a result of the Gulf war.

Visits to detainees

In Kuwait and Iraq, the ICRC continued to monitor the treatment and conditions of detention of persons detained in connection with the Gulf war. Delegates visited detainees in Kuwait with no diplomatic protection, including Iraqi crew members held by the Kuwaiti authorities on board cargo vessels caught breaking the United Nations economic sanctions against their country. A proposal to allow Iraqi prisoners at the Central Prison in Kuwait to receive a one-day visit from family members living in Iraq was submitted to the Kuwaiti authorities. In March, the ICRC organized the repatriation from Kuwait to Iraq of a nine-year-old girl, and in April the delegation arranged for an elderly woman to return to Iraq. The ICRC also visited those without diplomatic representation in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- visited 199 civilian nationals of countries without diplomatic representation in Kuwait since the Gulf war in

12 places of detention, including Iraqi crew members held on board 8 cargo vessels caught breaking the UN economic embargo;



- collected 6,608 and distributed 7,124 Red Cross messages exchanged between civilians living in Kuwait,

Iraq, Saudi Arabia and other countries who were separated as a result of the Gulf war;

- repatriated from Kuwait to Iraq a 9-year-old girl and an elderly woman;
- issued travel documents to facilitate the resettlement of 53 refugees, and 213 certificates of detention to persons previously imprisoned in Kuwait;
- implemented a plan of action to search for and retrieve the mortal remains of a Saudi pilot in a joint operation with authorities from Iraq and Saudi Arabia;
- held 3 consultation meetings with the coalition members of the Tripartite Commission to help ascertain the fate and whereabouts of persons unaccounted for since the Gulf war, and to reactivate talks within the Commission.

¹⁶ See the ICRC's 1999 *Annual Report*, p. 326.

¹⁷ See p. 197.

YEMEN

Yemen became the focus of international attention following the suicide bombing of the American destroyer USS Cole in the port city of Aden on 12 October 2000. The attack killed 17 sailors and seriously injured 39. The suicide bombing occurred as Yemen struggled to deal with potential internal violence and the lasting effects of three conflicts: the 1994 conflict between northern and southern forces, the Gulf war and the conflicts in the Horn of Africa. The volatile situation led to increased economic hardship and a growing sense of insecurity among the population, despite the resolution of a border dispute with Saudi Arabia in an agreement signed in June.

Active in the country since 1962, the ICRC continued to strengthen the delegation's operational activities throughout the year. Priorities included ongoing support for refugees from the Horn of Africa, visits to detainees, and promoting humanitarian law.

Helping families stay in touch

An estimated 100,000 Somalis and Ethiopians who had sought refuge in Yemen as a result of conflict continued to require help in restoring and maintaining links with family members at home. The ICRC forwarded Red Cross messages and processed cases of missing persons throughout the year. It cooperated with UNHCR, the Ethiopian Embassy in Yemen and local authorities in preparing for the repatriation of 177 Ethiopians. The delegation also regularly assisted minors and disabled and elderly people from Ethiopia or Eritrea during their transit through Yemen for family reunifications organized by the ICRC's offices in Addis Ababa and Asmara.

Visits to detainees

The ICRC continued its efforts to ensure adequate conditions of detention for detainees.

A series of complete and follow-up visits to prisons under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior was undertaken in 2000. During its visits, the ICRC repaired sanitary facilities and provided material assistance, including hygiene articles and recreational and educational materials. In November 2000, the ICRC handed over its annual report on conditions of detention and treatment to the relevant authorities.

An estimated 250 mentally ill detainees in the central prisons of Sana'a, Taiz and Ibb continued to receive care under the psychiatric project delegated to the Netherlands Red Cross, with assistance from volunteers of the Yemen Red Crescent Society, who visited the detainees on a daily basis. The project team in Sana'a prison had to cope with a 150% increase in the number of inmates in May, shortly before and after the celebrations marking the 10th anniversary of Yemen's unification. A great effort was required to deal with the extremely poor health of those temporarily detained.

A mission by an ICRC psychiatrist and the arrival of a new project director in midyear provided an opportunity to redefine project priorities. Attention was also given to improving the organization of the project teams working in different sections of the prison and of the assistance given to them by various partners, in particular the ICRC, the Netherlands Red Cross, the Yemen Red Crescent Society, and the Ministries of Health and the Interior.

Stepping up dissemination activities

The ICRC intensified its efforts within the country to promote humanitarian law among national authorities and to strengthen mechanisms supporting the implementation of the Geneva Conventions. Following the establishment of a National Committee for the Implementation of Humanitarian Law in 1999,¹⁸ the ICRC assisted in the setting up of a permanent office on the premises of the Yemen Red Crescent Society by providing funds for the purchase of equipment. During a training seminar for the members of the National Committee, the ICRC helped draft a plan of action.

The delegation took a variety of initiatives to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and the ICRC's mandate within the country. A one-day training course on humanitarian law, the ICRC's mandate and activities, and minimum standards of treatment of persons deprived of their freedom, was organized for 50 security officers from Aden governorate. Representatives of the national media attended a conference on the role of the media in humanitarian action. In the academic world, the ICRC maintained its dialogue with the university authorities in Aden and Taiz on the incorporation of humanitarian law and principles into the curriculum of public international law courses. Lastly, the ICRC, in cooperation with the French Centre of Yemeni Studies, commissioned an analysis of customary law applied by local tribes in time of conflict.

The main goal of the study is to gain more thorough understanding of the cultural context and to make the rules of humanitarian law better known, understood and accepted.

¹⁸ See the ICRC's 1999 *Annual Report*, p. 329.

Involving young people

In line with its policy of disseminating humanitarian law more systematically among young people, the ICRC organized workshops in 10 schools with the support of the Ministry of Education. Some 800 children took part in the programme in 2000.

Raising the profile regionally

A special issue of the ICRC's regional magazine *Al-Insani* (The Humanitarian) was produced with a focus on Yemen. The delegation worked closely with the Regional Promotion Office in Cairo on the production of this issue, whose main focus was on the ICRC's mandate and activities in Yemen since 1962. It also featured articles on Yemen's civil society, history and culture. Over 5,000 copies were distributed.

Supporting the National Society's dissemination efforts

The ICRC supported a variety of dissemination initiatives of the Yemen Red Crescent Society. These included holding a four-day training workshop for 15 volunteers from six branches, co-producing and financing a quarterly magazine *Al-Ithar*, and organizing a number of conferences for National Society staff and volunteers in Sana'a and Hodeida on the practical application of the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and of humanitarian law. The overriding objective in all dissemination activities was to enhance the ability of the Yemen Red Crescent Society to promote humanitarian values within the community.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- carried out complete visits to 12 central prisons, holding approximately 4,000 detainees including

243 monitored individually, and conducted 15 follow-up visits;

- distributed hygiene articles and recreational material to 8,700 prisoners;
- continued the psychiatric-care project for mentally ill detainees in 3 central prisons, in partnership with the Netherlands Red Cross and the Yemen Red Crescent Society;
- maintained sanitary facilities in the prisons of Sana'a, Hodeida, Ad Dali, Lahej and Dhamar;



- collected 1,280 and distributed 1,185 Red Cross messages, primarily on behalf of Somalis and Ethiopians;



- financed and co-chaired a training seminar for the members of the National Committee for the Implementation of

International Humanitarian Law, which was attended by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Legal Affairs, during which a plan of action was drafted;

- organized painting workshops on humanitarian themes for 800 children in 10 schools across the country, in preparation for the introduction of "Exploring Humanitarian Law" modules;
- organized a conference for 30 journalists on the role of the media in humanitarian action;
- provided humanitarian law training for volunteers from 6 branches of the Yemen Red Crescent Society;
- co-produced and financed 3 issues (5,000 copies each) of the National Society's quarterly magazine *Al-Ithar*.

KUWAIT

Regional delegation

(Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates)

In 2000 the regional delegation concentrated its efforts on resolving the outstanding humanitarian issues arising from the Gulf war, particularly the fate of persons still unaccounted for, and on detention-related activities in Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar. It also pursued initiatives to promote humanitarian law and strengthen relations with National Societies in the region.

ICRC action took place in a climate of increasing tension in the Arabian Peninsula due to the events in Israel and the occupied and autonomous territories, and also to a sharp rise in oil prices which, while boosting the economies of the countries of the region, also brought them under considerable international pressure to reduce the cost. Regional relations improved with Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates re-establishing diplomatic ties with Iraq, and Saudi Arabia ending a border dispute with Yemen. But contacts between Bahrain and Qatar remained tense as a result of an ongoing border disagreement.

Visits to places of detention

In Kuwait, ICRC delegates continued to pay regular visits to detainees without diplomatic representation as a consequence of the 1990-1991 Gulf war, namely Iraqis, Palestinians and stateless persons. An ICRC physician carried out a complete visit to three prisons to assess the detainees' health and hygiene conditions.

Thanks to the presence of a female delegate in December, the delegation was able to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the conditions of detention and treatment at the Central Prison for Women.

A summary report on places of detention in Kuwait was drawn up during the year and was to be handed over to the Kuwaiti authorities in early 2001.

A proposal to allow Iraqi detainees at the Central Prison to receive a one-day visit from family members living in Iraq was submitted to the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs in November. In Kuwait, the ICRC also monitored the situation of Iraqi crew members detained on board cargo vessels caught breaking the UN economic embargo against Iraq. Delegates visited eight vessels and 22 Iraqi nationals among the crew members of various nationalities.

In Bahrain, ICRC delegates conducted a series of visits to security detainees in various places of detention. An ICRC physician took part in one series of visits, assessing the health of the security detainees and hygiene conditions on the premises.

Agreement was reached between the ICRC and the Qatari authorities on a follow-up visit in January 2001 to persons held under the authority of the Ministries of the Interior and Defence detained in connection with the attempted *coup d'état* in February 1996.

Disseminating humanitarian law

The ICRC organized a number of seminars, workshops and courses on international humanitarian law during the year. The purpose of these initiatives was not only to teach and promote humanitarian law, but also to encourage governments, and in particular the military authorities, to introduce national measures implementing its provisions. Whenever possible, the ICRC welcomed the participation of local experts as lecturers during the seminars.

For the first time, the ICRC organized a two-day seminar on humanitarian law in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kuwait for around 30 participants from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, the Interior and Defence. The Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Justice gave a presentation on Islam and humanitarian law. In April, a lecture on the law of armed conflict was held at the Mubarak Al-Abdullah Command and Staff College in Kuwait. It was attended by 67 participants from Kuwait and other countries in the Gulf region.

Following its participation, along with representatives of four other Gulf countries, in an ICRC regional seminar for armed forces held in Jordan, the Kuwaiti government formally requested ICRC support in training military officers in the law of armed conflict. At a 10-day workshop organized in September with the participation of officials from the Command and Staff College in Kuwait, 16 instructors received training. Two further sessions were held for 24 senior officers and 29 junior officers of UNIKOM.* Proposals to organize similar seminars on the law of armed conflict were made to other countries in the Gulf.

A seven-day basic course and instructors' workshop were held in Oman by a delegate specialized in dissemination to the armed forces. Twenty-seven officers from all services of the Sultan's armed forces attended.

* UNIKOM : United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission

Working with the National Societies

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman informed the ICRC at the beginning of the year of the decision by the Council of Ministers to create a National Red Crescent Society. The ICRC, together with the International Federation, actively assisted the fledgling Society in its efforts to fulfil the 10 conditions necessary for official recognition by the ICRC and admission to the International Federation.

The ICRC continued to strengthen its cooperation with the other National Societies in the region, in particular in the field of dissemination of humanitarian law and principles. At the invitation of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society it gave a presentation entitled "The future of humanitarian action in the new century". The talk was open to the general public. The Kuwaiti National Society also mounted an exhibition of ICRC photos on landmines with the aim of raising awareness of the issue and encouraging the government to adhere to the Ottawa treaty banning landmines.

On 8 May, the ICRC took part in a seminar in Bahrain on the dissemination of humanitarian law and Red Cross/Red Crescent principles in schools. Seminars on humanitarian law and the functioning of the Movement were given in the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait in October and November.

The ICRC also facilitated various international relief operations conducted by Red Crescent Societies in the region. In February, the Kuwaiti Red Crescent pledged to make a contribution of US\$ 150,000 towards the ICRC's assistance activities in southern Sudan.

As for the events in the Israeli-occupied and autonomous territories, the ICRC and the Gulf National Societies found ways of cooperating in order to maximize the impact of the Movement's activities. The situation in the territories was the subject of extensive discussion with the leadership of the Gulf National Societies. Members of the Kuwait regional delegation accompanied some of their

representatives to the conflict areas, and also provided assistance in transporting and distributing relief supplies. Of special note was the joint ICRC/Palestine Red Crescent Society distribution of food parcels donated by the Kuwait Red Crescent to 2,500 families and to orphanages and health centres in Hebron to mark the end of Ramadan (28 December 2000-2 January 2001).

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- visited a total of 199 detainees in Kuwait in the course of 55 series of visits in a total of 12 places of detention;
- issued 53 travel documents and 213 certificates of detention to persons previously imprisoned in Kuwait;
- visited 525 detainees in Bahrain in the course of 23 series of visits to 17 places of detention;



- as lead agency for the Movement's activities in the occupied and autonomous territories, coordinated the assistance work of the Gulf National Societies, including the transport and distribution of food parcels from the Kuwait Red Crescent Society to 2,500 needy families in Hebron, in close cooperation with the Palestine Red Crescent Society;
- organized a 2-day workshop on the "Exploring Humanitarian Law" project in Bahrain;
- in Kuwait, took part in a seminar on humanitarian law for Red Crescent officials from the Gulf States;
- in the United Arab Emirates, organized a 2-day seminar on humanitarian law and the functioning of the Movement for National Society staff and members of the Board of Directors;



- in Oman, organized a 7-day seminar on humanitarian law, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for 27 representatives of all services of the Sultan's armed forces;
- arranged for high-ranking military officers from 5 Gulf countries to attend the regional seminar on the law of armed conflict organized by the Jordanian armed forces in cooperation with the ICRC in Amman;
- organized a 10-day workshop to train 16 instructors from the Kuwaiti armed forces in humanitarian law.

EGYPT

Situated at the crossroads between Africa and the Middle East, Egypt is a key player in the Arab world. Throughout the year, the Egyptians were instrumental in the effort to finalize an agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Despite the deterioration of the situation in the occupied and autonomous territories at the end of September 2000, the Egyptian authorities tried to contribute, together with other partners, to finding a way to bring about a just and lasting peace.

Over the years, the ICRC delegation in Cairo has consolidated its role as a focal point in Egypt and the Arab world for the promotion of humanitarian law and the organization's activities. Cooperation with the Egyptian Red Crescent Society continued to be a priority, along with efforts to incorporate humanitarian law into national legislation and promote it in legal circles.

National measures to implement humanitarian law

On 23 January 2000, the Egyptian Prime Minister signed a decree establishing a National Committee for International Humanitarian Law. Chaired by the Minister of Justice or his representative, the Committee comprises representatives of five Ministries (Justice, Foreign Affairs, Defence, the Interior and Higher Education), and of the Egyptian Red Crescent Society, which played a key role in setting up the Committee. The ICRC's Cairo delegation is also represented. This decree was a concrete result of the regional conference held in Cairo in November 1999 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions and is in line with the "Cairo Declaration" adopted on that occasion.¹⁹

The Committee held regular meetings throughout the year, undertaking such tasks as drawing up a plan of action for 2001 and identifying areas for cooperation with the ICRC. An ICRC legal adviser took an active part in its proceedings and provided technical support as necessary.

Working with partners to promote humanitarian law

Another development in the area of national measures was the establishment of a cooperation programme with the Ministry of the Interior, focusing on training police and security forces in humanitarian law.

In April, the Egyptian Society for International Law and the Cairo delegation held a course for 35 Egyptian professors with a view to promoting the teaching of humanitarian law in university law faculties. For the first time, the Law and Sharia Faculty at the University of El-Azhar, together with the ICRC, organized two presentations on humanitarian law for students and faculty professors.

The study on measures for the implementation of humanitarian law taken by States members of the Arab League was completed in cooperation with the League in 2000. States' replies to requests for information on national programmes from the ICRC and the Arab League were reviewed and analysed, and a draft programme for a round-table discussion between experts to be held in 2001 was prepared.

The ICRC delegation also took part in a regional seminar entitled "Landmines and their impact on development" held in Cairo in April 2000 under the auspices of the Arab League. The event was organized mainly by the National Centre for Middle East Studies, in cooperation with the ICRC.

Enhancing the ICRC's image

The Regional Promotion Office at the Cairo delegation continued to spread awareness of humanitarian law and the ICRC's activities in the Arab world.²⁰

In 2000, the office produced six issues of the magazine *Al-Insani* (The Humanitarian), which was circulated in all Arab countries and at the ICRC's delegations in Khartoum, Kabul, Paris and New York. The magazine promotes Red Cross and Red Crescent values and reviews current trends in humanitarian action. It is regularly quoted in numerous Arab newspapers. An additional issue of *Al-Insani* was published to focus attention on the ICRC's activities in Yemen.

A second album of cartoons for teenagers was produced with the aim of raising awareness among young people of the dangers of landmines and the basic rights of the individual in times of conflict.

The delegation also published a series of essays written by Arab and international authors entitled *Studies in International Humanitarian Law*, with a preface written by the Minister of Higher Education. In cooperation with the University of El-Azhar, the delegation published a study comparing humanitarian law and Sharia, with a preface by the Grand Imam of El-Azhar.

The Regional Promotion Office continued to diversify its activities in the audiovisual field. A radio programme produced in Morocco for Ramadan in 1998 was so successful that National Moroccan Radio broadcast it twice during the year 2000. These serialized dramas of 30 episodes are aimed at fostering awareness of the principles enshrined in humanitarian law. National Lebanese Radio also aired several episodes.

¹⁹ See the ICRC's 1999 *Annual Report*, pp. 334-335.

²⁰ See the ICRC's 1998 *Annual Report*, p. 296, and the 1999 *Annual Report*, p. 335.

Production of five television programmes called "A Century on Trial" was completed in 2000 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, with the sponsorship of the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs. The Promotion Office was responsible for all areas of production including writing the script, filming interviews and obtaining contributions from a large number of prominent public figures in the Middle East. Two of the five programmes were broadcast on Arab satellite television channels in 2000, and all five will be broadcast on the same channels in 2001. A version with English subtitles was also completed in 2000.

Cooperation with the National Society

Cooperation with the Egyptian Red Crescent Society continued to be a priority. ICRC staff took part in several seminars and workshops organized by the National Society. These included a three-day course to train first-aid specialists and recently graduated doctors as qualified first-aid trainers; and a workshop for 17 young volunteers aimed at developing dissemination material and enhancing their leadership skills.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- restored and maintained contact between separated family members by handling 361 Red Cross messages and issuing 1,386 travel documents for 2,633 refugees, displaced or stateless people, in cooperation with the Egyptian Red Crescent Society;



- cooperated with the Egyptian Red Crescent by providing training in the fields of dissemination and conflict preparedness for the Society's senior personnel, nurses, heads of relief units and youth leaders;



- gave lectures on humanitarian law for 750 future civilian and military magistrates at the National Centre for Judiciary Studies and for 50 newly recruited diplomats at the Foreign Ministry's Diplomatic Institute;
- organized seminars on humanitarian law at 2 universities;

- brought out 6 issues of *Al-Insani* (The Humanitarian), the ICRC's regional magazine on humanitarian issues in Arabic, plus a special issue on the ICRC's activities in Yemen;
- produced 6 documentary films and 2 radio programmes on humanitarian issues;
- translated and printed ICRC brochures and booklets ("Exploring Humanitarian Law" teaching kit and an armed forces training manual);
- produced a comic book with a humanitarian message for teenagers;
- produced, in cooperation with the delegation in Khartoum, a flip chart, a poster, a newsletter, and wall and pocket calendars;



- in cooperation with the National Centre for Middle East Studies, helped organize a regional seminar on landmines held under the auspices of the Arab League for 162 participants, including representatives of Arab and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

TUNIS

Regional delegation

(Algeria, Libya, Mauritania,
Morocco/Western Sahara, Tunisia)

In 2000, the Tunis regional delegation saw a further broadening of the scope of its activities in the Maghreb as a result of a number of significant developments. The implementation of an agreement concluded with the Algerian authorities in June 1999 led to further visits to detainees,²¹ as well as increased cooperation with the Algerian Red Crescent Society in providing assistance for victims of violence. In the Western Sahara, although there was still no global repatriation of all Moroccan prisoners nine years after the cease-fire agreement, the ICRC repatriated 387 prisoners in two operations. It also pursued its humanitarian diplomacy in the countries of the Maghreb and worked to promote humanitarian law and raise awareness of ICRC activities.

The situation in Algeria, which since 1992 had been the scene of unspeakable acts of violence, continued to be a cause for humanitarian concern. There was no breakthrough in the implementation of the Western Sahara settlement plan, despite intense efforts by the UN. At the year's end, 1,481 Moroccan prisoners were still detained by the Polisario Front, and about 150,000 Sahrawi refugees, according to official figures, are still living in precarious conditions in camps in the Algerian Sahara. Libya continued its gradual reintegration into the international community as the trial under Scottish law of the two Libyans suspected of involvement in the 1988 Lockerbie bombing got under way in the Netherlands.

**Legacy of the Morocco/
Western Sahara conflict**

Thousands of people continued to suffer the repercussions of the conflict in the Western Sahara. Throughout the year, the ICRC supplied regular assistance to the Moroccan prisoners still held by the Polisario Front and supported efforts to secure their release. On 26 February the ICRC repatriated 186 Moroccan prisoners, including 83 who had been officially declared free by the Polisario Front in April 1997. At the time Morocco had not agreed to their return home unless all the other prisoners were released. A second repatriation operation took place under ICRC auspices on 14 December 2000 for 201 Moroccan prisoners. In both cases, the freed prisoners were flown aboard an ICRC-chartered plane from Tindouf to a Moroccan military base close to Agadir.

Hundreds of Red Cross messages and thousands of kilogrammes of family parcels were sent via the Algerian Red Crescent to the Moroccan prisoners, and an ICRC team including a doctor visited them in April and November. A dental prosthetist and an eye surgeon joined the team for the first visit.

The ICRC welcomed the UN Secretary-General's report of 25 October 2000 on the Western Sahara issue, in which he wrote: "I once again join ICRC in urging the early repatriation of all remaining prisoners of war, especially those who meet the humanitarian criteria of the ICRC on the basis of age, health or length of detention".

On 19 November 2000, in a further attempt to make progress in this direction, the ICRC President met the Secretary General of the Polisario Front and visited camps holding the Moroccan prisoners. The ICRC President expressed his disappointment at their continued detention and reiterated the organization's commitment to securing the unconditional release and repatriation of all detainees in accordance with humanitarian law.

**Reporting on the situation of
detainees in Algeria**

A second and third series of visits to places of detention under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice in Algeria were carried out in March-May and September-October 2000. In the third series of visits, the ICRC also monitored the treatment and conditions of detainees since their arrest. In total, ICRC delegates visited 23 places of detention and talked in private with 1,183 detainees during the year.

On 21 November 2000, during his first official visit to Algeria, the ICRC President presented to the Algerian President the first summary report on the organization's visits to penitentiary establishments within the country. The report gave the ICRC's initial conclusions and recommendations, and outlined perspectives for the continuation and expansion of the organization's detention-related activities in Algeria.

**Expanded support for victims
of violence in Algeria**

In Algeria, there were no other major international humanitarian organizations providing assistance for victims of violence. The absence of other agencies and the extent of the needs lent added weight to the activities of the ICRC, which worked in partnership with the Algerian Red Crescent.

²¹ See the ICRC's 1999 *Annual Report*, p. 338.

The ICRC increased its support for the National Society's psychological rehabilitation programmes for women and children affected by the violence. It provided financial and technical support for seven new Red Crescent centres set up to help women victims of the violence. In each of the new centres, an average of 80 to 100 women receive professional training in sewing, weaving and embroidery. They also have access to psycho-social services, staffed by psychologists who receive technical assistance from an ICRC psychiatrist. The Algerian Red Crescent manages the centres in cooperation with the Ministries of Health and Labour. In addition, recreational and educational items were distributed to 70 social centres under the authority of the Ministry of Labour, 27 centres managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and 30 run by the Ministry of Health, in cooperation with the Algerian Red Crescent. A total of 5,300 children benefited from this material.

The ICRC also gave technical and financial assistance for the first national and regional seminars on care for children traumatized by violence, organized by the Algerian Red Crescent. The two seminars gave the 100 participants, mostly psychologists and other specialists working in this sphere and representatives of various associations, an opportunity to exchange experiences and identify areas for further development of such programmes. To ensure follow-up, the ICRC financed the production of an information brochure for professionals caring for child victims of violence.

Cooperation with the Algerian Red Crescent

The ICRC helped the Algerian Red Crescent strengthen its operational capacity, in particular its national first-aid network, with special emphasis on violence-affected areas. Through the ICRC, the Swedish Red Cross provided basic materials for trainers and first-aid teams, which were distributed to 48 local branches. The ICRC sponsored study trips for eight Algerian Red Crescent first-aid trainers to three participating National Societies, namely the French, Belgian and Swiss.

The year's highlight was the first national training seminar for 144 Algerian Red Crescent trainers organized with the support of the ICRC and the participation of the International Federation, the Belgian Red Cross and representatives of the relevant Ministries. As a result of this meeting, the Algerian Red Crescent now has a nationally recognized training programme and clearly defined service delivery standards.

The ICRC continued to upgrade the National Society's capacity to spread knowledge of humanitarian law by contributing to the running costs of the information service and equipping its documentation centre. The ICRC also provided written and audiovisual material, supported the production of a monthly bulletin on the activities of the Algerian Red Crescent and assisted in editing the National Society's Website.

The Movement's support for the development of the National Societies in the region received a boost with the opening of the International Federation's regional delegation in Tunis in January 2000. Cooperation between the various partners is based on the spirit of the Seville Agreement.

Promoting humanitarian law

The need to increase awareness of humanitarian law was a priority for the Tunis delegation and for National Red Crescent Societies throughout the region. A new bi-annual magazine, *L'Humanitaire/Maghreb* (The Humanitarian), was launched by the delegation in 2000 as a way of meeting this objective and fostering debate on humanitarian issues in the Maghreb. This publication targets National Society leaders and prominent figures in the political, social and economic fields.

The ICRC also contributed to a number of seminars during the year in areas related to its mandate. In particular, two ICRC specialists gave keynote presentations to a gathering of some 60 jurists, lawyers and NGO representatives from the Arab world at the Arab Institute of Human Rights in Tunis. ICRC representatives also presented the results of the "People on War" campaign for around 20 journalism students at the Press and Information Institute in Tunisia. In Morocco, a conference organized by the ICRC and the Moroccan Red Crescent prompted the government to envisage the creation of an interministerial committee for the implementation of international humanitarian law. ICRC legal assistance was formally requested in this matter.

The ICRC pursued its efforts to promote humanitarian law within Moroccan academic circles, in cooperation with the Moroccan Red Crescent, by taking part in a round-table conference organized by the Casablanca University Law Faculty and giving lectures at the Institute for Information and Communication Science and at the Rabat University Law Faculty.

Pilot project launched in Morocco

To further efforts to introduce humanitarian law to young people, Morocco agreed to join Thailand and South Africa as a pilot site for the "Exploring Humanitarian Law" project. Nationwide reform of the education system made it possible to test the project materials in two schools in 2000 and to begin considering options for including the resource material in the development of the Moroccan human rights education programme.

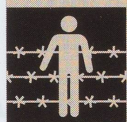
Training trainers in Mauritania

In March 2000, an ICRC representative held a seminar for 20 instructors of the Mauritanian National Guard in the border town of Rosso, 180 kilometres south of Nouakchott on the River Senegal. The aim of the seminar was to enable these officers to teach the rules of armed conflict to their subordinates. A member of the ICRC regional delegation travelled to Mauritania in June to discuss dissemination activities and to evaluate the situation following tension with Senegal. The Mauritanian Red Crescent prepared a contingency plan that ultimately was not implemented because of the normalization of relations between the two countries.

Joint programmes with the Libyan Red Crescent

Following an agreement with the Libyan Red Crescent in 1999, joint activities got under way in 2000 with two National Society staff participating in an ICRC training course on tracing procedures.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- carried out 2 series of visits in Algeria to 23 places of detention run by the Ministry of Justice, and held 726 interviews in private with detainees;
- supervised the repatriation of 387 Moroccan prisoners released by the Polisario Front;
- pursued negotiations with the Polisario Front with a view to repatriating the 1,481 remaining prisoners;
- organized 9 visits to 1,498 Moroccan prisoners being held by the Polisario Front in the Tindouf region (south-western Algeria), and 2 medical visits during which 1,440 prisoners were examined by an ICRC doctor and during the first visit by an eye surgeon and a dental prosthetist;
- in Morocco, visited 1 condemned Sahrawi, whose statute is debated;



- handled the exchange of 22,221 Red Cross messages between Moroccan prisoners and their families;



- sent 1,245 kg of family parcels to the Moroccan prisoners via the Algerian Red Crescent and provided them with 19,000 kg of hygiene items in individual parcels, a supply of insulin, 93 pairs of glasses, 998 pairs of sunglasses and 1,500 notebooks;



- provided financial and technical support for 7 new Algerian Red Crescent centres for women directly affected by the violence;
- supplied recreational and educational materials for children affected by violence to 70 social centres run by the Algerian Ministry of Labour, 27 administered by the Ministry of Social Affairs and 30 managed by the Ministry of Health, benefiting a total of 5,300 children;
- financed and coordinated training abroad (with the National Societies of Belgium, France and Switzerland) for 8 Algerian Red Crescent first-aiders who subsequently helped train another 144 National Society instructors in 100 centres throughout Algeria;



- in Morocco, helped set up a national network of university professors teaching humanitarian law by organizing a training workshop to promote inclusion of the subject in the curricula of law faculties;
- held a training session for 10 educators who will take part in the "Exploring Humanitarian Law" project in Morocco;
- conducted a seminar on humanitarian law for 20 instructors of the Mauritanian National Guard.