



About The ICRC

IN EGYPT



ICRC

IN BRIEF



THE ICRC IN EGYPT

The ICRC has been in Egypt, with some interruptions, since the beginning of the Second World War. Its legal presence and activities are based on a formal Headquarters Agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The ICRC fulfilled its duties under the Geneva Conventions by visiting and assisting the Prisoners of War of the of the Israeli-Arab wars, as well as the 1956 conflict over the Suez canal. Moreover, it carried out many other humanitarian interventions in Egypt in favor of the military and civilian victims of those conflicts, namely in the field medical assistance, food relief, restoring family links, the transfer of persons across the demarcation lines, as well as the repatriation of prisoners of war and mortal remains.

Nowadays, the Cairo delegation works primarily as a regional centre to promote the national implementation of IHL and its incorporation into military training and academic curricula in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world. The Cairo-based regional legal advisory, communication and documentation centre, working in close cooperation with the League of Arab States, plays an important role in this process. The ICRC supports the work of the Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC).



ABOUT THE ICRC

The International Committee of the Red Cross is a neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian organization. Its mission is to protect and assist the civilian and military victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence, and to work towards the development and dissemination of International Humanitarian Law. In the event of internal disturbances and tensions and in any other situation that warrants humanitarian action, the ICRC has a right of humanitarian initiative, that allows it to offer its services to Governments.

ITS TASKS INCLUDE

- Visits to prisoners of war and civilian detainees
- Searching for missing persons and reunification of dispersed families
- Transmission of messages between family members separated by conflict
- Provision of food, water and medical assistance to civilians without access to these basic necessities, in situations of armed conflict
- Spreading knowledge of IHL and monitoring compliance with that law
- Drawing attention to violations, and contributing to the development of humanitarian law.

With its Headquarter in Geneva (Switzerland), the ICRC has delegations and missions in some 80 countries around the world and employs a staff of over 13'000 people.

The ICRC is at the origin of the worldwide International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which is active in almost every country and comprises around 100 million members and volunteers.



REGIONAL ADVISORY SERVICE ON IHL

Egypt is an important base of ICRC activities to support the promotion of neutral and independent humanitarian action, as well as the national implementation of IHL in the 22 member countries of the League of Arab States (LAS).

The League of Arab States and the ICRC co-organize on a regular basis regional seminars and trainings on IHL for government officials and academics (in Beirut), judges and prosecutors (in Kuwait) as well as diplomats (in Dubai). A similar cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union aims at promoting the ratification and implementation of IHL treaties and provisions by the national parliaments.

In parallel, the Cairo-based regional unit of the Advisory Service on IHL supports governments and ICRC delegations in the region to establish national commissions of IHL, the enactment of legislative measures to align domestic legislation with IHL provisions and the adoption of special procedures to disseminate provisions of IHL.

The results of these efforts is documented in the periodic report on Implementation of IHL in Arab States, published jointly by the Arab League and the ICRC.

DISSEMINATION OF IHL FOR ARMED FORCES

In cooperation with the Military Affairs Department of the League of Arab States, the Cairo-based regional delegate to the Armed Forces conducts specialized training courses to spread the awareness of IHL, and to encourage the integration of IHL in the regular training of Arab Armed Forces in the region.

In Egypt, ICRC Cairo conducts regular workshops for Egyptian Armed Forces, including for troops to be deployed within peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, ICRC provides relevant publications and other support for IHL training.



INTERACTION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND AUTHORITIES

Cooperation with Higher Education Institutes has resulted in the incorporation of IHL into the curricula of more than 100 faculties concerned with teaching IHL within the Arab World. The ICRC provides relevant documentation to those universities, and encourages students, professors and researchers interested in IHL to consult its comprehensive IHL library at its delegation in Cairo.

In Egypt, the ICRC established cooperation with the Ministry of Education, resulting in the integration of the humanitarian principles of IHL into the standard secondary school curricula.

The Cairo delegation also regularly interacts with other stakeholders of the civil society in Egypt interested or involved in humanitarian or international law issues, namely the media and NGOs.

Moreover, ICRC Cairo maintains a regular dialogue with the Egyptian authorities, the League of Arab States and relevant embassies based in Cairo, about its institutional positions and humanitarian concerns related to its operations in the region.

COMMUNICATION SUPPORT CENTRE FOR MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (CSC)

The CSC helps the ICRC delegations in the Arabic-speaking world to improve its foothold and positioning through a better understanding of its media environment, and by providing regional communication activities, products and support. The Head of the CSC acts as the Regional Spokesperson for the ICRC.

CSC Cairo is the ICRC's main producer of Arabic-language publications and audio-visual material which are translated and printed in Egypt. This includes its quarterly magazine "Al Insani".

CSC Cairo is also in charge of the up-dating and servicing of the ICRC website in arabic (www.icrc.org/ara). Furthermore, it provides technical advice and training to ICRC communication staff in the region.



RESTORING FAMILY LINKS (RFL)

Restoring family links is a long-standing ICRC service, rooted in the experience that many families are separated during conflict and other emergency situations.

ICRC Cairo provides RFL services mostly for asylum seekers and refugees who have lost contact with their families in their home country. Amongst them, particular attention is paid to unaccompanied minors in view of a possible family reunification, in close coordination with other relevant organizations. Upon request of the concerned embassies, ICRC Cairo also issues travel documents for those refugees or asylum seekers who are accepted for resettlement to a third country.



Families of Egyptian nationals detained or interned abroad are offered the possibility to send Red Cross messages or to make phone calls in order to maintain the contact with their beloved ones.



COOPERATION WITH THE EGYPTIAN RED CRESCENT

The Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC) is a well-established society with 27 branches in 26 governorates, and a very active member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It is ICRC's main partner in Egypt.

In close coordination with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the ICRC works towards strengthening the operational capacity of ERC namely in the field of emergency preparedness and response. The partnership extends also to IHL promotion and communication, as well as to the restoring of family links.

ERC and ICRC have maintained a close cooperation in order to respond to certain consequences of the conflict situation in Gaza, namely the support provided to Palestinians stranded on the Egyptian side of the border, as well as the joint coordination activities in view of channeling relief material from Egypt to Gaza.



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