

FACTS & FIGURES

The ICRC's main activities in the DRC

July - September 2013

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence, and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC has been in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) for 35 years. It has a delegation in Kinshasa, sub-delegations in Bukavu, Goma, Kisangani and Lubumbashi, and offices in Beni, Dungu, Manono, Kananga and Uvira.

Preventing violence against civilians

In the third quarter of 2013, the ICRC continued its efforts to protect civilians in the DRC from the consequences of armed conflict and violence in some parts of the country. To this end, it maintained and stepped up its presence among the people in the affected areas and reinforced its confidential dialogue with State and non-State armed actors. In response to allegations of violations of international humanitarian law noted by its teams in the field, the ICRC made spoken and written representations to all parties on a virtually daily basis. The representations were subsequently followed up.

Visiting people deprived of their liberty

With a view to promoting humane treatment and conditions of detention that comply with Congolese law and international standards, the ICRC continued its visits to places of detention. In the third quarter of the year, ICRC staff:

- carried out 55 visits to 7,300 detainees in 39 places of detention and monitored 826 of them on an individual basis;
- offered detainees the chance to stay in touch with their loved ones through Red Cross messages – more than 650 Red Cross messages were collected and more than 500 delivered.

Reuniting families separated by conflict

When people are incessantly and repeatedly displaced by conflict and other violence, many become separated from their families, at times even beyond the borders of the DRC. Children especially are often separated from their parents. In cooperation with the Red Cross Society of the DRC, the ICRC did all it could to enable members of separated families to renew contact or to be reunited either in the DRC or in a neighbouring country. Thanks to their efforts:

- 241 children (including 98 formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups) were reunited with their relatives in the DRC;
- 46 children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups and already reunited with their families were visited by ICRC staff or volunteers from the National Red Cross Society to make sure they were settled back into family and community life, and – depending on their age – they received a set of school materials (a schoolbag, stationery and fabric for a uniform) or the means to start a small business and thereby forge local social ties;
- more than 12,200 Red Cross messages were collected and more than 10,300 delivered.

Meanwhile, 770 unaccompanied children, including 350 formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups, were still waiting to be reunited with their families at the end of September 2013. They are living in transit centres or with host families in different parts of the country.

Improving health care

In the third quarter of 2013, the ICRC continued to provide regular support for 19 prison infirmaries, as well as eight health centres and three hospitals that provide primary and secondary health care for the most needy people in North and South Kivu. In this part of the country, the ICRC also:

- evacuated 29 war casualties and eight sick people;
- provided medicines and equipment to 13 hospitals caring for over 800 war-wounded civilians and soldiers;
- ran more than 3,900 awareness-raising sessions about the psychological trauma of conflict and supported 36 counselling centres caring for 1,600 victims (men and women);
- provided physical rehabilitation services for 240 war-wounded civilians and soldiers, including fitting artificial limbs and orthotic devices and donating crutches;
- organized 36 training sessions on treating war wounds for medical staff from South Kivu's main referral hospital in Bukavu, and ran a first-aid course for 20 members of armed groups.

Meeting basic needs and preserving livelihoods

As part of its work to boost the economic security of victims of armed conflicts and other violence, the ICRC endeavours to preserve or restore their livelihoods, thereby enabling families affected by those conflicts to meet their own basic needs. In the third quarter of 2013:

- more than 78,000 people received essential household items in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Orientale.
- 88,200 people in North Kivu, South Kivu and Orientale received food supplies;
- 60,400 people in North Kivu, South Kivu and Orientale received seed to grow produce to feed themselves and earn a living;
- 360 people received support to build fishponds in North and South Kivu;
- 150 people in Orientale benefited from the cash-for-work project.

In addition, 3,050 detainees received daily food rations thanks to a nutritional assistance programme in the DRC's prisons and detention camps. A further 180 detainees suffering from severe malnutrition benefited from a therapeutic feeding programme, while others in Buluo prison in Katanga and Osio detention centre in Orientale saw their diet improve thanks to vegetables grown in the prison gardens.

Providing access to water and decent sanitation

The ICRC works with various specialist organizations in the DRC to make sure people have access to safe drinking water. These include the national water board, the national rural water service and the Red Cross Society of the DRC. In rural areas, the ICRC gets local water committees involved in the planning, implementation and maintenance stages. Some examples of ICRC projects are:

- continuing to improve urban water distribution networks in Goma and Walikale in North Kivu, benefiting 460,000 people;
- initiating or continuing repairs on rural water distribution systems in North Kivu, South Kivu and Orientale, benefiting 200,000 people;
- continuing the renovation and refurbishment of 11 health centres and two hospitals in North and South Kivu;
- continuing the renovation of the kitchens, water supply and sanitary facilities in 17 prisons, benefiting 11,400 detainees.

Cooperating with the National Red Cross Society

The Red Cross Society of the DRC is the ICRC's main operational partner when it comes to providing for the basic needs of people affected by armed conflict and violence. This extends to:

- providing financial support for the National Society's headquarters and five regional branches in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, Orientale, Katanga and West Kasai;
- providing first-aid kits and other supplies to the National Society's regional branches to boost their emergency-response capacity, and supporting the Uvira branch's cholera awareness-raising and treatment efforts;
- helping train instructors in first aid and disaster management in Katanga, North Kivu and Orientale.

Promoting international humanitarian law

The ICRC continued its efforts to raise awareness of the provisions of international humanitarian law and of its neutral and impartial humanitarian work. These information and training sessions are mainly targeted at members of the national armed forces, the police and armed groups. In the third quarter of 2013, sessions were organized with:

- 3,327 members of the armed and security forces in North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga, Orientale, West Kasai and Kinshasa;
- over 200 members of armed groups in North and South Kivu.

Awareness-raising efforts also focused on civilian authorities and 1,800 civil society representatives in North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga, Orientale and Kinshasa. A conference on customary law was organized for 35 postgraduate law students from the University of Kinshasa.

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