

# EGYPT

COVERING: Egypt, League of Arab States



ICRC delegation

The ICRC has been in Egypt, with some interruptions, since the beginning of the Second World War. It works closely with the Egyptian Red Crescent Society to help it boost its preparedness to respond to emergency humanitarian needs arising from situations of violence, in particular focusing on first-aid care. It seeks to visit people detained in Egypt. The ICRC's regional legal advisory, communication and documentation centre works in close cooperation with the League of Arab States and other ICRC delegations to promote the incorporation of IHL into domestic legislation, military training and academic curricula throughout the Arab world.

## KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

### In 2013:

- ▶ over 1,600 injured people received first-aid treatment from emergency action teams of the Egyptian Red Crescent Society, consisting of 295 volunteers trained and equipped with International Federation and ICRC support
- ▶ local stakeholders enhanced their emergency preparedness, with journalists training to be first-responders and doctors honing their skills to manage potential influxes of weapon-wounded patients
- ▶ discussions with the authorities on the ICRC's offer of services to visit detainees in Egypt resumed in July, but failed to elicit the authorities' approval for such visits
- ▶ owing to insecurity and the political transition under way in the country, activities aimed at assisting migrants in the Sinai and promoting domestic IHL implementation were put on hold
- ▶ more than 2,600 foreign nationals without valid identification papers resettled in third countries with the help of ICRC-issued travel documents
- ▶ military and police officers learnt more about international human rights law and internationally recognized standards applicable to law enforcement and detention at ICRC-supported training/workshops

### EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)

Protection	497
Assistance	55
Prevention	989
Cooperation with National Societies	619
General	-

**2,160**

of which: Overheads 132

### IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	<b>100%</b>
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### PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	6
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	43

## YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

**MEDIUM**

PROTECTION	Total
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>	
Red Cross messages (RCMs)	
RCMs collected	29
RCMs distributed	38
Phone calls facilitated between family members	6,814
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	34
People reunited with their families	5

ASSISTANCE	Targets	Achieved
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>		
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Cash	Beneficiaries	121
Work, services and training	Beneficiaries	2

## CONTEXT

Egyptian politics remained in transition, led by a military-backed interim government that assumed office after Mohammed Morsi's ouster in July. A constitutional referendum and elections were scheduled for 2014 as part of a transition plan.

Tensions surrounded Morsi's removal from office, with separate large-scale demonstrations mounted by his supporters and by those who had expressed discontent. Clashes between the two groups and between protesters and the police resulted in thousands of casualties and arrests. Unrest persisted in Cairo and other major cities. In response, the interim government passed a law in November that placed restrictions on demonstrations, and declared the Muslim Brotherhood a "terrorist" organization.

The military carried out operations to suppress crime and "terrorism" in Sinai, where attacks on security forces were reported. Bombings and other attacks also occurred outside Sinai, including in Cairo. Efforts to shut down tunnels leading into the Gaza Strip continued.

Egypt remained a transit and destination country for migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, including people who had fled the armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic (hereafter Syria).

Cairo continued to host the headquarters of the League of Arab States (Arab League) and the Arab Inter-parliamentary Union.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

Given the continued instability in Egypt, the ICRC focused on working with the Egyptian Red Crescent Society to strengthen local emergency preparedness and response capacities. Together with the International Federation, it helped the National Society set up emergency action teams, which consisted of volunteers trained in first aid, the Safer Access Framework and the provision of family-links services. Using vehicles, protective equipment and medical supplies donated by the ICRC, these teams and others previously established provided first aid to people injured during clashes and evacuated those in need of more advanced care. To increase emergency treatment capacities outside the Movement, the National Society/ICRC trained journalists in first aid, as they were often at scenes of unrest. The ICRC also organized courses to help doctors hone their skills in managing potential influxes of weapon-wounded patients.

At the same time, the ICRC made family-links services available to refugees, migrants, asylum seekers and the families of Egyptians detained abroad, so that they could restore or maintain contact with their relatives. Third-country nationals stranded at a camp along the Egyptian-Libyan border since fleeing the 2011 armed conflict in Libya kept in touch with their families through the ICRC-supported National Society telephone service. ICRC travel documents helped foreigners without valid identification papers return home or resettle in third countries. Family reunifications were facilitated where appropriate.

Formal discussions with the authorities on the ICRC's offer of services to visit people deprived of their freedom resumed in July, but failed to elicit the authorities' approval for the ICRC to start such visits. Nevertheless, bilateral meetings with key decision-makers provided opportunities for helping to clarify their understanding of the humanitarian nature of the ICRC's activities for detainees.

Dialogue with the authorities regarding proposed activities to support health facilities in North Sinai remained suspended.

In view of the changes under way in Egypt, efforts to promote domestic implementation of IHL provisions were put on hold. Nonetheless, the ICRC continued its dialogue with the national IHL committee and the military's IHL integration review committee. Contacts with the Egyptian authorities and weapon bearers focused on increasing their awareness of humanitarian principles, internationally recognized standards applicable to law enforcement, IHL, and the ICRC's neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action. Civil society members – particularly journalists, university lecturers and students – broadened their knowledge of these matters through ICRC lectures and resource materials.

At the regional level, the ICRC pursued its partnerships with the Arab League and the Arab Inter-parliamentary Union to promote and monitor IHL implementation. Together, they provided support for national IHL committees in the region and organized IHL-related events for officials from Arab governments and members of armed forces. With a regional military training centre, the ICRC helped peacekeeping forces develop their understanding of IHL.

The delegation's regional resource and communication centre supported the ICRC's efforts to increase knowledge of and respect for IHL throughout the Arabic-speaking world. It organized IHL courses, produced written and audiovisual materials in Arabic, and kept the ICRC's Cairo-based, Arabic-language website up to date.

## CIVILIANS

Although no formal dialogue was established with the authorities and weapon bearers on the ICRC's potential contribution to their efforts to ensure the protection of the population, including medical personnel, during situations of violence, the subject was highlighted during dissemination sessions and international events attended by government officials, police officers and military staff (see *Authorities, armed forces and other bearers of weapons, and civil society*).

### Injured people receive treatment from National Society first-aiders

Over 1,600 people wounded during demonstrations in Cairo and elsewhere in Egypt received timely first-aid treatment from National Society emergency action teams, which also transported those requiring more advanced care to ambulance stations and donated dressing kits to field hospitals. The teams included 29 established in 2013, bringing the total number to 59 and expanding their coverage countrywide. The 295 National Society staff/volunteers making up the new teams were trained in emergency care, the Safer Access Framework and the provision of family-links services, and learnt about IHL and the Movement at International Federation/ICRC-supported sessions. Members of the older teams upgraded their skills through refresher courses. The teams used first-aid supplies, vehicles, protective equipment and wireless handsets donated by the ICRC, helping to facilitate their deployment and ensure the safety of their members.

Helping increase the availability of capable first-responders during emergencies, journalists were trained in first aid (see *Authorities, armed forces and other bearers of weapons, and civil society*). Additionally, 56 doctors/surgeons became better prepared to

handle influxes of patients after attending weapon-wound and emergency room trauma management courses jointly organized by the Arab Medical Union and the ICRC.

### **Separated family members keep in touch**

Using ICRC family-links services, people across Egypt – including asylum seekers, migrants and refugees – restored /maintained contact with relatives detained abroad or living in countries affected by armed conflict. Over a thousand third-country nationals who had fled the 2011 armed conflict in Libya and were stranded at a UNHCR camp on the Egyptian-Libyan border kept in touch with their families; they made some 6,540 phone calls through the Egyptian Red Crescent telephone service supported by the ICRC. Meanwhile, Egyptian families exchanged news with relatives held in the US internment facility at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba and the Parwan detention facility in Afghanistan, through video calls or messages relayed by ICRC delegates. One family visited a relative held in Parwan.

### **Vulnerable foreigners resettle abroad or return home**

Over 2,690 foreigners without valid identification papers resettled in third countries or were repatriated using ICRC travel documents issued in coordination with IOM, UNHCR and the embassies concerned.

Unaccompanied foreign minors, particularly those without valid papers or awaiting family reunification, received legal, psychological and vocational assistance through an ICRC-supported initiative of the Africa and Middle East Refugee Assistance. Notably, those close to or past the age of majority – at which support ends – acquired skills to boost their self-sufficiency. Some restored contact with their families using ICRC family-links services.

A victim of human trafficking in Sinai located and subsequently rejoined his family in Ethiopia with the help of ICRC tracing services.

### **Palestinian refugees from Syria receive ad hoc support**

Four unaccompanied Palestinian minors who had fled from the Syrian armed conflict were reunited with their uncle in Switzerland with ICRC support.

Following their release from prisons in Alexandria, 118 Palestinian refugees (33 households) from Syria endured the winter season with the help of clothes and other essentials bought with ICRC assistance provided in coordination with the authorities and the Palestinian embassy in Egypt.

### **Assistance planned for migrants in northern Sinai stalls**

Projects with the Health Ministry for supporting health facilities in North Sinai and training the pertinent authorities in managing human remains were put on hold pending the resumption of discussions with the authorities on the proposed activities.

## **PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM**

### **Detainees still not benefiting from ICRC visits**

The resumption in July of formal discussions on the ICRC's offer to visit detainees in Egypt enabled the organization to clarify among the pertinent authorities the humanitarian nature of its activities for people deprived of their freedom, and to raise their awareness of the ICRC's potential for contributing to their own efforts to ensure that inmates' treatment and living conditions were in line with internationally recognized standards. However,

these discussions had yet to elicit the authorities' approval for the ICRC to start visiting detainees.

At a workshop organized by the Interior Ministry, nine prison officers learnt more about international norms applicable to their duties and the ICRC's desired role in activities benefiting detainees.

### **Families seek news of relatives allegedly detained**

On their families' request, allegations of arrest of 16 individuals, including foreigners, were discussed with the authorities, with a view to ascertaining their whereabouts.

Two Egyptian nationals, repatriated after being held at the Guantanamo Bay internment facility, received ad hoc cash assistance to help ease their reintegration into society.

## **AUTHORITIES, ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS, AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

In view of the unrest in the country and the political transition in progress, contacts with the Egyptian authorities, weapon bearers and civil society members focused on enhancing their knowledge of international human rights law, IHL and the ICRC. Activities promoting the integration of IHL into domestic legislation and into the military's training, doctrine and operations were put on hold; but dialogue continued with the military's IHL integration review committee and with the national IHL committee, which sought the ICRC's advice in drafting its plan of action.

### **Weapon bearers enhance their awareness of international policing standards**

Through their participation in local and international events, members of the armed forces refreshed their knowledge of IHL and international legal norms applicable to law enforcement, including their obligation to respect medical services. For example, 30 members of the armed forces, which support/conduct law enforcement operations, discussed these subjects at a training session. Senior officers attended a Health Care in Danger workshop in Australia (see *International law and cooperation*) and a course in San Remo, with a view to briefing their colleagues afterwards.

Dialogue with the Ministry of Interior focused on ways to help increase the police's awareness of international human rights law and other norms applicable to law enforcement. During a round-table, 47 high-ranking police officers enriched their understanding of humanitarian principles, IHL and neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action. Over 50 security operatives and nine prison officers benefited from similar ICRC-hosted workshops conducted by previously trained Interior Ministry instructors. Police officers, together with civilian and military judges, also displayed their knowledge of IHL in essay competitions organized with the pertinent ministries.

National authorities received technical support on issues of mutual concern, such as on law enforcement, judicial guarantees, the Arms Trade Treaty and the protection of medical services during situations of violence.

### **Journalists hone first-aid skills**

The media remained a key partner in promoting humanitarian principles and the Movement and in boosting the availability of first-responders during emergencies. Accordingly, following workshops, 165 journalists from traditional/social media outlets broadened their understanding of the Movement and of IHL, including

the protection it affords them when covering situations of violence. Meanwhile, 175 journalists acquired first-aid skills at workshops conducted with a local journalist association and the National Society. Media outlets enhanced their reporting through briefings and information published on the ICRC's Arabic-language website.

### Doctors discuss protection of medical services during emergencies

Through media reports and ICRC briefings, representatives of human rights, legal, medical and official Islamic groups improved their awareness of IHL and its similarities with Islamic law. Doctors discussed these subjects and the protection due to patients and medical workers during situations of unrest at courses (see *Civilians*) and lectures organized with a local medical association.

During a round-table, law professors discussed integrating IHL into their institutions' curricula. University students and lecturers attended lectures on IHL and consulted informational material distributed by the ICRC. Two academics participated in a regional course on IHL (see *Lebanon*).

### Regional organizations promote IHL integration

The Arab League, the Arab Inter-parliamentary Union and the ICRC continued working with national IHL committees in the region to promote and monitor IHL implementation in line with regional action plans adopted by the two multilateral bodies. Egyptian military officers and diplomats and their counterparts from 10 Arab countries discussed IHL and humanitarian principles at a seminar hosted by the Arab League and the ICRC in Cairo – one of several regional events they co-organized (see *Kuwait* and *Lebanon*).

Peacekeeping troops from the across the region were reminded of the basic principles of IHL at sessions conducted with a Cairo-based regional military training centre.

## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Egyptian Red Crescent, with support from Movement partners, helped address medical needs during periods of unrest, provided family-links services to stranded foreigners and strengthened its emergency preparedness (see *Civilians*). With ICRC support, it also repaired its youth centre and blood bank, damaged during clashes in Cairo.

A project to help the National Society reinforce its logistical set-up near Egypt's border with the Gaza Strip was cancelled.

### Egyptian Red Crescent establishes communication department

The National Society, with ICRC support, improved its capacity to promote humanitarian principles, IHL, the Movement, and its own activities. It established a communication department and produced a newsletter describing its response to situations of violence.

The National Society supported the Health Care in Danger project, including by attending an experts' workshop in the Islamic Republic of Iran (see *Iran, Islamic Republic of*) and participating in Movement reference groups.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total		
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
Red Cross messages (RCMs)			UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected		29		
RCMs distributed		38		
Phone calls facilitated between family members		6,814		
Reunifications, transfers and repatriations				
People reunited with their families		5		
People transferred/repatriated		1		
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons			Women	Minors
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		110	30	26
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		34		
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	1		
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		177	54	42
UAMs/SCs*, including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers			Girls	Demobilized children
UAM/SC cases still being handled by the ICRC/National Society at the end of the reporting period		1		
Documents				
People to whom travel documents were issued		2,692		
Official documents relayed between family members across border/front lines		4		

\* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Cash	Beneficiaries	121	22%	53%
Work, services and training	Beneficiaries	2	50%	