



## ICRC gears up to respond to needs as most violent conflict in decades hits Middle East

On June 12<sup>th</sup> 2006, the ICRC delegation in Israel and the Occupied and Autonomous Territories announced that it was increasing its 2006 budget by roughly a quarter bringing the overall figure to more than 52 million Swiss francs. This was a consequence of the worsening humanitarian conditions in the occupied territories, caused in large part by the decision of international donors earlier this year to withhold funds and other aid from the Palestinian Authority.

Once again, the ICRC pointed out that when territories are under occupation, it is the responsibility of the occupying power – in this case the State of Israel – to ensure that the civilian population has adequate access to basic goods such as sufficient food, medical supplies and means of shelter.

It was by then unpredictable that a crisis of much larger magnitude was going to engulf not only the Palestinian territories but as well Israel and Lebanon within days. At the time of writing, the ICRC finds itself engaged in the set up of a major relief operation to respond to the devastating consequences of military operations from Gaza, across Northern Israel right up to the entire territory of neighbouring Lebanon.

Gazans, known for their resilience, have braced themselves to cope with the difficulties of daily survival when the narrow stretch of land they live on came under daily artillery shelling and air raids whereas Qassam rockets were fired into neighbouring Israeli regions. The military operations called "Summer Rains" included several

incursions of Israeli troops in all parts of the Gaza strip and resulted in serious damage to infrastructure and the total destruction of the main Ministries of the Palestinian Authority. The bombing of a major electricity production plant reduced the supply of power by up to 47% and, as a consequence, water pumping stations had to rely on fuel operated generators.

The ICRC had to step in to negotiate the free passage of convoys of fuel and relief to cope with the crisis. Yet there was no way all the needs could be met when the crossing points closed down the movement of goods and travellers from either Egypt or Israel. Thousands of Gaza residents who had been visiting Egypt found themselves stranded at the Rafah terminal for weeks and some who had been abroad for medical treatment even died while they were waiting to re-enter Gaza on their way home.

Over seven million Swiss Francs are currently being allocated to supporting emergency and other essential medical services provided by the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), which is the second largest Palestinian provider of care in the occupied territories. The ICRC will fund the purchase of medical supplies and cover salaries and running costs to help the PRCS operate four hospitals, 30 primary health-care centres and ambulance services. This contribution will serve to ensure that the services of a member organisation in the Red Cross Movement should not be further jeopardized by the fact that the Palestinian Authority can no longer fund the PRCS.

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**ICRC**

Prior to the escalation of violence in Gaza, Israel and Lebanon, the ICRC had already stepped-up its aid to Palestinians and committed itself to continue its wide range of activities to protect and assist civilians. It launched “cash for work” and “livelihood support” projects designed to support Palestinian civilians severely affected by restrictions of movement, including those resulting from the West Bank Barrier.

As major military operations are causing widespread damage and destruction, the ICRC has urged all parties to abide by the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law with a view to limit the effects of armed hostilities on civilian persons and infrastructure.

At the same time the ICRC has informed all parties involved that it stands ready to provide its services, in accordance with its humanitarian mandate and the provisions of international humanitarian law to gain access to the Israeli captured soldiers and calls upon those who detain them to treat them humanely and with due respect to their lives and dignity. It is a fundamental right of persons detained to be able to inform their families of their whereabouts.

On the other hand the ICRC has been organizing visits for Palestinian families to their relatives in Israeli prisons on a regular basis for years. In June alone 18544 relatives could visit 7102 prisoners before the Israeli authorities announced that they were suspending the visits unilaterally after the capture of a soldier on June 25<sup>th</sup>. The ICRC

met with representatives of the families to explain the situation and to ensure that it was engaging in discussions to resume the programme.

As they are involved in these multifaceted activities throughout the region, the ICRC delegations operate in close partnership with the National Societies members of the international Movement. These are the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Gaza and the West Bank, the Lebanese Red Cross in Lebanon and in Israel the Magen David Adom.

Following reports from southern Lebanon of injuries to first-aid workers and severe damage to ambulances, the ICRC reminds the Israeli authorities that the emblems of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement must be respected at all times. Staff, installations and vehicles bearing these emblems are protected under international humanitarian law. All parties must respect the medical and humanitarian mission, and this includes granting access to people affected by military action.

The ICRC reminds the parties to the conflict that it is illegal to attack civilian persons and infrastructure. It further reminds the parties of their obligation to exercise caution and to respect the principle of proportionality in all military operations as well as to ensure that the wounded have access to medical facilities. The obligation to distinguish between civilians and civilian property on the one hand, and military objectives on the other, is at the core of international humanitarian law and must be complied with at all times. ■

## The ICRC's response to the crisis in Gaza

ICRC teams were immediately deployed on the ground, and sent to areas difficult to reach to monitor and assess the situation, and respond to the most immediate needs of the population. The ICRC has the operational advantage to go to areas which are under continuous shelling. The ICRC and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) work in close partnership to bring aid to people most affected by the escalating violence in the Gaza Strip.



113,000 liters of fuel were delivered by the ICRC to be dispatched to various water stations in the Gaza Strip.

### From 25 June to 20 July, the ICRC has:

- Provided 113,000 litres of fuel to water stations in the Gaza Strip. The fuel was given to 108 pumping stations throughout the Gaza Strip.
- Imported eleven ICRC truckloads full of relief items to distribute to families and hospitals and negotiated with Israeli Authorities the passage of these emergency humanitarian supplies.
- Provided food assistance (over 360 food parcels) to approximately 1,500 residents most affected by the military operation or who had restrictions to move: mainly families in Al-Shoka, Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahiya.
- Ten household kits were given to families whose houses had been totally destroyed, and almost 200 hygiene kits were distributed.
- Facilitated the transfer to Gaza of 9 ambulances donated by the ICRC to the Palestinian Red Crescent Society.
- Surgical and other medical supplies to treat 200 wounded were delivered to the Central Medical Stores in the Strip.
- Funded the Egyptian Red Crescent to distribute aid to hundreds of Palestinians who were stranded for weeks on the Egyptian side of Rafah terminal.
- Coordinated access to areas close to military positions or operations, either for medical evacuations or to allow repair of damaged infrastructure (power and water networks).
- Called for the respect of International Humanitarian Law, mainly the respect of civilians not taking or no longer taking part in hostilities, and the responsibility of the Israeli authorities to ensure that the basic needs of the population in Gaza are met. These include food, medical supplies and shelter. ■



# A GLANCE AT ICRC ECONOMIC PROJECTS IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

## Lost livelihoods in the Palestinian Territories

Imagine a fisherman whose movements are so restricted that he struggles to sell his catch, or maintain his boat, or even put to sea. Imagine a farmer who can only watch in frustration as a brush fire consumes his livelihood, a field of olive trees, because a fence blocks his way. Imagine a driver whose haul of grapes spoils in the back of

the truck because he has to wait too long at check-points to reach a market.

These scenarios have plagued the Palestinian territories, and serve as symbols of the destructive impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the economic welfare of tens of thousands of people. ■

## The ICRC is close to communities hard-hit by the occupation

The economic plight of the occupied Palestinian territories is dire. Last year, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) launched dozens of projects designed to help struggling people make ends meet.

These initiatives provided cash for work to nearly 1700 people or goods such as tools and livestock to over 500 households, and have already begun to yield benefits.

The primary aim of the ICRC is to seek compliance with International Humanitarian Law, including the law of occupation, by those engaged in hostilities. The projects led by the ICRC's Economic Security Department dovetail with this mission. The ICRC is concerned about the consequences of the occupation, namely the restrictions of movement of people and goods throughout the Palestinian territories, the closures, the West Bank barrier and the violence. The economic projects support the ICRC strategy by assisting communities that are especially hard-hit by these problems, and allow a better understanding of the causes of their hardship.

ICRC delegates who work on a market rehabilitation program in Hebron, or an agricultural canal in the Jordan Valley, or greenhouses in the Gaza Strip, learn about difficult conditions on the ground. They are better able to raise alleged violations of International Humanitarian Law with the Israeli authorities, or make interventions to ease the restrictions on Palestinian civilians. They can also appeal for greater access and freedom of movement for Palestinian workers for economic reasons. Delegates routinely communicate with Israeli military and political authorities, with Palestinians affected by Israeli security measures and visit Palestinian detainees.

ICRC "cash for work" and "livelihood support" projects are designed to support Palestinian civilians severely affected by restrictions of movement, including those resulting from the West Bank Barrier. But the primary responsibility to ensure that basic needs of civilians in occupied territories (such as access to food, health care, work, education) are met lies with the authorities of the occupying power. ■



## A Helping Hand

The ICRC's economic projects aim to revive the fortunes of Palestinian fishermen, farmers and other laborers who have been unable to make a living, largely because of the conflict. The projects provide temporary jobs or material assistance, but are not one-time handouts that lead to dependence on outside organisations. Instead, they require the beneficiaries to learn skills and commit their own time and resources in a way that supports their communities in the long-term, well after the initial help from the ICRC.



## Involving communities

"I remember vividly the many discussions we had within the ICRC and with numerous village councils in order to design a strategy and establish the best working procedures for the new economic projects. We wanted to put together a very transparent and open system whereby it would be the villagers themselves establishing the priorities of their communities, proposing the projects and implementing them with the support of the ICRC and in coordination with the Palestinian authorities. The programs had to provide income to the deprived but benefit the entire community, and give dispossessed families better chances of recovery and self-reliance. All without substituting the duty of the occupying power which, under international humanitarian law, has to ensure that the basic needs of the population are met.

The beginnings were not easy, but today a year has gone by and the new projects are a reality all over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Many lessons have been learnt to perform better, to better target the ICRC's assistance and obtain better results.

The ICRC's economic projects would have been impossible without the enthusiasm and work of hundreds of Palestinian men and women, and without the support of the village councils and the staff of the Ministry of Local Governance.

The situation in the Occupied Territories continues to deteriorate due to the withdrawal of international financial aid to the Palestinian

Authorities. In response, the ICRC is already reinforcing its assistance programs to continue its work for the most vulnerable victims of conflict." Said Jordi Raich - Curco, ICRC Head of Mission. ■



Jordi Raich - Curco, ICRC Head of Mission in Jerusalem from November 2004 till end of June 2006.

### ICRC Economic Projects in brief

- **Over 1.370 temporary jobs were created**
- **2.764 Palestinian households were helped directly**
- **25 Palestinian villages were served**
- **ICRC invested CHF 671.000 (Swiss francs) exclusively in the projects**
- **16.584 Palestinians benefited indirectly**



A Palestinian farmer from Akkaba explains how his olive trees are pruned. ICRC supported 175 people to rehabilitate around 500 dunums of land.

### Saving Olive Trees - Akkaba

In the village of Akkaba, construction of the West Bank Barrier cut off farmers from their olive trees except during the harvest season, which lasts three to four months. Brush fires in 2005 wiped out 70 percent of the village's arid lands, possibly because farmers could not reach their fields to weed out the high grass that went up in flames so easily. With the fields ablaze, the Palestinian farmers could only stand helpless on the other side of the fence. It took three hours for fire trucks to get Israeli permission to pass through the gates, too late to save the trees.

The ICRC stepped in with a plan to rehabilitate 500 dunums of olive tree fields that entails renovation of rainwater wells and the planting of new seedlings for olive trees. In addition, the ICRC has asked Israeli authorities to open the gates all year round instead of just during the harvest season so that farmers can prevent fires and tend to their crops more thoroughly. Still, Israeli permit procedures restrict the movements of some villagers even when the gates are open. ■



## “Cash for work” and “livelihood” projects: a few examples

### At Sea Again - Mawasi

One successful ICRC project provided funds to refurbish the derelict boats of fishermen who had been trapped behind a chain of Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip.

Fishing is a vital sector for the Gaza economy. The second Intifada, or uprising, started in 2000 and heavily affected fishermen who lost all or most of their access to the sea and external markets. The overall catch made by fishermen during the five years of the second Intifada dropped by about one-third.

Gaza has about 3,500 registered fishermen, and an estimated 1,500 people such as carpenters and traders benefit indirectly from the fishing sector. The fishermen are divided between four harbors in the Gaza Strip (Gaza, Deir El Balah, Rafah, and Khan Younis) with about 1,040 fishermen based in the especially vulnerable Mawasi area (Rafah and Khan Younis). Fishermen from Khan Younis were not allowed to fish for a single day of the second Intifada and were restricted from maintaining their boats for much of that period. Fishermen from Rafah could fish, but were also subject to restrictions on access to their boats, as well as difficulties in distributing their catch outside the enclave. Since the second Intifada the total revenue generated by the Mawasi fishing industry dropped by more than two-thirds, forcing many fishermen to rely heavily on food assistance.

Following the Israeli pullout from Gaza last year, the fishermen of coastal Al Mawasi are returning to sea once again. The sardine-fishing season started in April, and some of the fishermen's boats are back at sea with financial and material help from the ICRC.

The ICRC project that began in November 2005 focused on the rehabilitation of the Shanshullas, the biggest and most expensive fishing boats used by Mawasi fishermen. These boats are designed specifically for fishing sardines, and up to 90 percent of fishermen's revenue comes during the three-month sardine season. Furthermore, in the open sea, smaller fishing boats hover around the Shanshullas, which then catch fish that are attracted by the smaller boats' lights. The catch is shared so that much of the revenue made by smaller boats depends on the Shanshullas.



About 1,000 people are expected to benefit from this ICRC “cash for work” project.



Fishermen repairing one of 19 Shanshulla boats which were in unusable condition after five years exposed on the beach in Gaza without maintenance.

Most of the 19 Shanshulla boats in Mawasi were in an unusable condition after five years on a beach exposed to the sun and salt without maintenance. Their engines required an overhaul, and a lot of bodywork was needed. Each boat cost around US\$16,000 to renovate and repair. The boat owners, who comprise two to 12 families per boat, contributed up to 12 percent of the overall costs. For example, they were required to fix nets and winches and cover half of the labor costs. About 1,000 people are expected to benefit directly from the project. ■

### ICRC projects in Gaza



## A Revived Market - Beit Ummar

With help from the ICRC, the Palestinian village of Beit Ummar near the West Bank city of Hebron is proud of its newly rehabilitated vegetable market. After almost six years of closure, the “souk al khodar al markazi” (the central vegetable market) should reopen this summer and become a lively place for merchants and farmers.

When the market first opened in 1999, farmers and merchants expected the new source of income to improve the life of the whole community. Beit Ummar was famous for vegetables and fruit, mainly grapes, but also apples, pears, peaches and apricots grown in the farmlands. Business increased, and buyers came from as far as Gaza. Even Israeli customers came because the market was located at the entrance of the village, less than a hundred meters from a road linking nearby Israeli settlements. But hopes soon faded. At the outbreak of the second Intifada, the Israeli military closed the market. Earth mounds blocked access. The market was deserted, and produce spoiled. Intense military activity at the entrance of Beit Ummar kept civilians away. Residents had to sell their produce in Hebron or surrounding villages after long, risky trips past military checkpoints and roadblocks, or opened small shops in the center of Beit Ummar. The situation worsened when construction began on a stretch of the West Bank Barrier, only a few kilometers away. As a result, about 50% of the farmlands of Beit Ummar were rendered inaccessible even though 60% of the population rely on agriculture for their income. The village of 16,000 inhabitants was sealed off over a period of three years.

“Production was sinking, whereas the population was growing. Many people had to take up a second job”, said Mr. Alqam, the village mayor.

“Farmers had no other choice than to abandon their lands and workers lost their jobs in Israel,” said Karim, a local farmer.



The ICRC “cash for work” project to rehabilitate the market brought hope because it allowed residents to make a living after years of unemployment. A total of 150 residents were paid.



Preparing materials opposite the closed shops of Beit Ummar market, West Bank. Vegetables and fruit produced in the region will be sold in the shops by local producers. The season for fruit and vegetable is from June to December.

The ICRC’s “cash for work” project to rehabilitate the market brought renewed hope because it allowed residents to make a living once again. In late 2005, the ICRC obtained a permit from the Israeli authorities so that the project could start. The local municipality had tried in vain to get such a permit several times. The initiative employed 150 workers selected from families defined as the most vulnerable, a category based on family size, economic situation and length of unemployment. Some had not worked for five years since losing jobs in Israel.

“I have been unemployed during the last 5 years and I have 6 children,” said Muhammad, one of the workers employed by the ICRC to fix up the market. “I used to work in Israel before the Intifada but lost my job because of the closures. With this job, the ICRC is offering me an opportunity to improve the life of my family a little. At the same time, I am proud to do something for the community.”

The project lasted more than two months, and involved renovations to shops as well as the construction of a stonewall around a wide parking area. The ICRC tried to provide work to as many people as possible, said Munzer, an ICRC officer from the nearby Hebron office.

“Local stone is used for the wall rather than plain concrete, since more people are needed to build a stone wall than a concrete wall”, he said. An average of 20 workers worked six hours a day, six days a week.

The fruit and vegetable season lasts from June to December, so business will pick up soon at the market. Jobs will be generated in the long-term as buyers have access to a wider variety of produce in the same place. Israeli customers can also shop, and they don’t have to enter the village since the market stands at the entrance to Beit Ummar. ■

## Supporting Civilians

ICRC “cash for work” and “livelihood support” projects are designed to support Palestinian civilians severely affected by restrictions of movement, including those resulting from the West Bank Barrier and closures. The projects aim to revive the fortunes of Palestinian fishermen, farmers and other laborers who have been unable to make a living, largely because of the conflict. Projects are varied: grape syrup production, making of tomato paste, honey production, a water canal, rehabilitation of olive fields, construction of play grounds for children and the market rehabilitation are just a few examples.

## The Results

The ICRC's economic projects followed a 2004 study by its delegates in the Palestinian territories that showed how closures of civilian routes and restrictions on trade and marketing of products had led to a steady economic decline since the beginning of the second Intifada. For example, seasonal variations of prices for vegetables gave a good indication of whether farmers had access to markets. If the price of tomatoes or cucumbers in a village in Salfit was very low, that meant farmers were probably having difficulty in accessing Ramallah to sell their produce.

The economic projects are still in the early stages, but the ICRC seeks long-term results. While the initiatives have yielded benefits in the short term for many Palestinian villagers and workers, they remain vulnerable to the policies of the Israeli occupying power in effect in the Palestinian territories. The success of the Gaza projects depends on the Karni border crossing, which has been subject to prolonged and repeated closures.

Despite these obstacles, the ICRC believes its economic security programs offer vital assistance to the most affected Palestinian villagers under occupation as well as an opportunity for better communication with the communities and the Israeli authorities.

The ICRC conducted internal and external evaluations of the economic security projects in order to assess their impact and shed light on their strengths and weaknesses, as well as to see how they had contributed to the overall ICRC strategy of addressing the humanitarian consequences stemming from the West Bank barrier, the settlements and access restrictions for people and goods.

### Here are some of the conclusions:

- The average beneficiary of ICRC projects is a male in his early forties who is the only breadwinner of a household of more than 7 people. His income has decreased more than threefold since the beginning of the second Intifada and is about 825 NIS/month, which amounts to less than 120 NIS per dependent. His cost of living is beyond what he can afford because the average monthly expense per dependent is more than 160 NIS. He has a debt exceeding 8,800 NIS.
- On average, ICRC cash for work projects assist more than a quarter of unemployed households in targeted villages with the equivalent of two months' worth of income.

## ICRC projects in the West Bank

- In addition to short-term economic benefits, some 85% of projects that were implemented after the summer of 2005 are expected to have a significantly positive impact in the long term.

- Although many projects are successful, some are underperforming. The reason lies partly in the difficulty of access to areas closed by the military and consequent problems in following up on initiatives.

- Gaza farmers whose greenhouses have been rehabilitated now make 42% of their household monthly income from their greenhouses. The profit generated from

these projects is greatly dependent on the farmers' ability to access West Bank markets. This access has been restricted because of constant closures at Karni crossing. Therefore, while the impact of the greenhouses on the household economy is significant, it is lower than expected.

The studies highlighted the frustrating reality that the economic impact of any assistance in the current context remains, in part, subject to the policies of the Israeli occupying power. Food processing projects, for example, allow beneficiaries more time to get produce to the market. Yet the benefits mean little if farmers are barred from getting there. ■



## Not Only Milk and Honey

*A story by Andrea Barsony, ICRC delegate, Tulkarem*

Mohammed Ghanem, an ICRC agronomist, dressed in an astronaut-like suit, holds up a honeycomb in the sunshine, rejoicing at the abundance of the upcoming harvest.

Seventy-three year-old Abu Hatem watches from a distance and says he plans to try on the bee suit very soon. "I'm not afraid of bees," he asserts. His lean frame stands out against the gushes of pink bougainvillea that spill over the walls surrounding the well-kept garden, recalling the plentiful days of pre-Intifada times.

Back then, Abu Hatem's land used to flow with milk and honey. Some eighteen years ago, after his four children had grown up, he and his wife Shawqieh moved to this house near Jubara village. It was a quiet, rural area in the outskirts of Tulkarem city.

Today, the once pastoral view is marred by the West Bank Barrier that stands about thirty meters from their house. Behind it, a large checkpoint controls people and cars going in and out of the West Bank, and the passage between Tulkarem and Jubara. The entire village was thus isolated behind the Barrier. Day after day, its inhabitants have to cross the gate and the checkpoint to reach their work places, schools or grocery stores.

When he first came to the area, Abu Hatem started a small tile and ceramic workshop which quickly prospered. After a few years, he was supplying most of the West Bank, earning an average of 10,000 shekels a month (US \$1=4.5 shekels). When the Second Intifada broke out in the year 2000, markets plummeted and his clients stopped paying their bills. As the conflict dragged on, his earnings kept dropping gradually until they hit rock bottom. In early 2004, when the Barrier was completed and the village fully cut off, Abu Hatem's revenues were down to 600 shekels a month.



Abu Hatem then closed the workshop and started selling coffee to workers passing by his house. He managed to earn a mere 600 shekels a month until early May 2006, when the IDF closed the agricultural gate of Faru'n village, which dramatically reduced the traffic flow in front of his house. Nowadays, he can barely make ends meet with about 250 shekels a month.

The ICRC Livelihood Support Project should help increase the couple's earnings by about 300 shekels monthly. After the first harvest, each beehive can be divided in two and thus double the honey production. "Arab Israelis who pass by the Barrier already ordered several pots and they buy at a good price," declares a confident Abu Hatem.

Meanwhile, the ICRC's Mohammed Ghanem will help them bring this new honey project to fruition. Since the hives' delivery in April 2006, he visits the Al-Iraqis every 10 days to train Shawqieh and monitor the hives. He will be visiting the couple for another six months. "And then, whenever they need me... I'll be around to help," he states. ■

## Selling Tomatoes - Jayous

Farming has become increasingly difficult in Jayous, northeast of Qalqilia. Three-quarters of the village's agricultural lands, as well as all its water wells, are located on the other side of the West Bank Barrier. Access to fields and greenhouses is a problem because farmers and their trucks get a limited number of permits. As a result of increased production costs, several farmers were forced to abandon greenhouses where they once grew tomatoes and cucumbers.

In order to revitalize local farming and support vulnerable families, the ICRC launched a small tomato-processing project in Jayous. The village is known in the whole district for its tomatoes, which sell as

far away as Nablus. The village council proposed the project because processed tomatoes can last for months, while fresh ones might not reach the market on time due to restrictions on movement in the area. Unemployed women with large families got first priority in the selection process for this "cash for work" project. Ten women were hired to produce tomato paste by squeezing and cooking fresh tomatoes.

"This project helped me overcome my financial problems. I bought food and basic items for my children with the money I made," one of the women said.

The tomato-processing project is emblematic of the ICRC's bid to provide farmers with the production capacity to become self-sufficient, developing their industries without the need for permanent subsidies.

Another ICRC food-processing project assisted 26 farmers in the Beit Ummar village of Hebron and employed 30 vulnerable women for a month to produce grape syrup. Through the project, 30 metric tons of grape, that would have been lost because farmers had no access to markets, produced 6 metric tons of syrup. The grape syrup was then stocked, sold or exchanged against olive oil by farmers.

The ICRC has launched dozens of many types of cash for work and livelihood support projects in rural areas of the West Bank and Gaza. The focus is on economically vulnerable villages that face restrictions of movement or are located close to the West Bank Barrier or Israeli settlements, where often only the ICRC can facilitate access. ■





# HIGHLIGHTS ISRAEL, OCCUPIED & AUTONOMOUS TERRITORIES



## ICRC concerned about the humanitarian situation of Palestinians

Abu Dis, April 7<sup>th</sup> – During his visit to Israel, the Autonomous and the Occupied Territories, the ICRC's Director of Operations Pierre Krähenbühl witnessed at first hand the actual situation and concerns on the ground, by talking to Palestinians facing the adverse consequences of the West Bank Barrier. Following his visit and in light of the deteriorating humanitarian situation, the ICRC launched an appeal to increase its budget and set up aid to Palestinians. As a result, the overall budget was brought up to more than 52 million Swiss francs. The additional funding will provide the means to meet most acute needs of Palestinians affected by the current crisis, particularly in the faltering health-care sector.



## Promoting International Humanitarian Law

Hebrew University in Jerusalem, May 21, 22.- Dominik Stillhart, ICRC's Head of Delegation welcomes the participants to the international conference held at the Faculty of Law. With world renowned experts, including Prof. Theodor Meron, Appeals Judge and former President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the participants explored questions related to the interplay between International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law in situations of armed conflict.



## On the way to a family reunification

Allenby Bridge, May 23.- After 10 years of joint efforts with Ms. Hiyam Masri, a tenacious grandmother, the ICRC was able to reunite the siblings Jasmine (15), Nour (14) and Thaer (12) with their family in the West Bank. Accompanied by an ICRC team from Amman, the children set on a day long journey from Al Zarqa in Jordan. In Allenby bridge, the children met with another ICRC team from Jerusalem who helped them cross the border and then reunited the three children with their grandmother and family in Nablus city.



## ICRC facilitates transfer of 5.000 tons of apples

A Druze farmer at the Kuneitra crossing, April 19.- The ICRC facilitated the transfer of almost 5.000 metric tons of apples from the occupied Golan through the Kuneitra crossing. Around 2.500 Druze living in the occupied Golan benefited from this operation. The ICRC acted in its capacity as neutral intermediary, and at the request of the Druze farmers of the occupied Golan, the Syrian authorities and the Israeli authorities.

# ACTIVITIES

## ISRAEL, OCCUPIED & AUTONOMOUS TERRITORIES

### Protection

The ICRC works towards ensuring the faithful application of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilians in times of armed conflict and occupation. ICRC delegates continuously monitor events in areas where civilians are at risk and then submit confidential representations to the Israeli authorities. During the current crisis in Gaza, the ICRC raised its concerns about the mounting tension, the loss of life and the destruction of essential civilian infrastructure.

Special attention is paid to monitor measures imposed within the West Bank to restrict movements of Palestinians and access of farmers to their land. The ICRC continues to document cases of IHL violations in light of the increasing acts of violence committed by settlers against Palestinian farmers. By June, the ICRC submitted a total of 34 written interventions to the Israeli authorities.

### Detention

In Israel, the Occupied and Autonomous Territories, the ICRC regularly visits detainees in order to monitor their conditions of detention and the treatment they receive. The observations and recommendations of the ICRC are submitted confidentially to the authorities in charge.

Between January and June 2006, ICRC delegates carried out 185 visits to detainees in 35 Israeli places of detention. By the end of June 2006, there were approximately 12,000 Palestinians detained by Israel (including common law detainees), among them about 500 minors and 120 women.

In Gaza and the West Bank, ICRC delegates conducted 98 visits to 41 places of detention where 1,245 detainees were visited, among them 274 were individually followed by the ICRC.

### Family links between Detainees and their Families

The ICRC's Family Visit Program allows families from Gaza, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Occupied Golan to visit relatives held in

Israeli places of detention. Facilitating these contacts is of primary importance to the ICRC.

From January to June 2006, the ICRC facilitated the issuing of permits and arranged transport for more than 100,000 family members to visit their relatives. Each month, some 6,000 detainees receive visitors.

During the same period, more than 13,000 Red Cross Messages were exchanged through the ICRC between detainees in Israeli and Palestinian places of detention and their relatives.

### Assistance

In the city of Hebron (H2), the ICRC continued to distribute, on a monthly basis, food parcels and hygiene kits to some 1,750 families especially affected by strict closures.

In addition, 42 families in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem whose houses had been destroyed or damaged received ICRC relief kits and tents when needed. The ICRC also distributed 430 food and hygiene parcels to vulnerable families in the West Bank and Gaza.

### Water and Habitat

In Hebron district, a project to rehabilitate an extension of the Yatta water transmission network is under implementation. This project will directly benefit 10,000 people and indirectly 55,000 people.

In Qalqilia district, the rehabilitation of a pumping station in Falameya and the installation of a well pump in Tammoun, Tubas district were completed. The construction of a water network in Kufur Thulth was launched. The project will serve 5,000 people in Kufur Thulth village and it is expected to be completed in July 2006.

### Cooperation with the Palestine Red Crescent (PRCS) and Magen David Adom of Israel (MDA).

The ICRC agreed to support the PRCS Emergency Appeal and cover the costs (US\$3,927,341) of Emergency Medical Services, Primary & Secondary Health Care

and Management & Coordination at the PRCS HQ for 6 months.

The ICRC donated and handed over two fully equipped ambulances to the Red Crescent Maternity Hospital in East Jerusalem

The ICRC and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies provided technical and financial support to the MDA Disaster Management Unit to conduct its first National Disaster Response Team training.

MDA/PRCS Liaison Committee Meetings were convened at the ICRC delegation in Jerusalem to discuss issues of the Agreement on Operational Arrangements including the access and stationing of PRCS ambulances in Jerusalem.

### Presentations on the ICRC and International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

A two-day international conference was held on the relationship between IHL and Human Rights law, co-organized by the ICRC and the Hebrew University with legal experts of international renown.

In Israel, sessions on the ICRC and the basic principles of IHL were held for IDF soldiers, checkpoint commanders and soldiers, as well as Border Guard, Military Police, staff of the Civil Administration and Prison services. Similar sessions were carried out for university students and for participants of MDA's Natural Disaster Response Team Training.

In the West Bank and Gaza, presentations were carried out for PRCS volunteers and staff, members of the security forces, village councils, local women NGOs and students.

## ICRC Setup/Budget

The ICRC currently has 264 staff members, including 61 expatriates, working in Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

The ICRC's 2006 budget is now over 52 million Swiss Francs in this context.



# ICRC

ICRC Tel Aviv  
A 185 Hayarkon St. 63453  
T 03 524 5286 F 03 527 0370

ICRC Jerusalem  
A Nabi Shu'aib St. 8  
Sheikh Jarrah District PO Box 20253  
T 02 582 8445 F 02 581 1375

ICRC Gaza  
A Al Jala' St., 50/43 Rimal, PO Box 29  
T 08 282 2644 F 08 282 8884

E-mail: [com.jer@icrc.org](mailto:com.jer@icrc.org)  
[www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org)

ICRC West Bank  
Abu Dis: T 02 279 3313 F 02 279 3313  
Bethlehem: T 02 274 3225 F 02 274 0660  
Hebron: T 02 222 0054 F 02 222 0150  
Jenin: T 04 250 1251 F 04 250 3537  
Jericho: T 02 232 2848 F 02 232 2848  
Nablus: T 09 238 5077 F 09 237 8990  
Qalqilia: T 09 294 0722 F 09 294 6277  
Ramallah: T 02 295 8227 F 02 295 2535  
Salfit: T 09 251 5252 F 09 251 5253  
Tubas: T 09 257 3237 F 09 257 3237  
Tulkarem: T 09 267 2240 F 09 267 2241  
Majdal Shams: T 04 698 1468 F 04 698 4222  
Khan Younis: T 08 206 6499 F 08 206 6499

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 internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavors to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

**The ICRC has been continuously present in Israel and in the Occupied and Autonomous Territories since 1967.**