

# YAOUNDÉ (regional)

COVERING: Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe



## EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	904
Assistance	786
Prevention	1,855
Cooperation with National Societies	1,358
General	-

► **4,904**

of which: Overheads 299

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	88%
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## PERSONNEL

Expatriates	9
National staff (daily workers not included)	47

## KEY POINTS

In 2011, the ICRC:

- with the Congolese Red Cross, gave farming and fishing equipment and manioc cuttings to 17,914 families (89,570 residents) in Likouala, north-east Congo, to ease the strain on resources due to the presence of refugees
- in coordination with the authorities, assessed Gabon's penitentiary system, passing on recommendations for improvements in 3 detention places
- undertook a field trip to assess the needs of economic migrants being deported from Angola to the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- supported the National Societies in Cameroon and Sao Tome and Principe in revising their emergency-response plans in preparation for elections
- signed a headquarters agreement with the government of Equatorial Guinea
- welcomed Gabon's ratification of the African Union Convention on IDPs

The ICRC set up its Yaoundé regional delegation in 1992 but has been working in the region since 1972. It monitors the domestic situation in the countries covered, visits security detainees and restores contact between refugees, migrants and their families. It pursues long-standing programmes to spread knowledge of IHL among the authorities, armed forces and civil society, and supports the development of the National Societies.

## CONTEXT

The region's slow recovery from the 2008 global financial crisis was overshadowed by sharp increases in the prices of food and oil, occasionally triggering social discontent and demonstrations. Insecurity and tensions persisted in and around the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea.

The situation in Angola's Cabinda enclave remained volatile, with localized skirmishes between the Angolan armed forces and alleged members of the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda. Meanwhile, the government continued to deport a high number of migrants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) who had reportedly come to the country in search of economic opportunities in the diamond industry.

Cameroon remained generally stable, despite some localized inter-communal clashes. The incumbent president was re-elected for a seven-year term. A sizeable number of people who had fled violence in the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad and Nigeria continued to seek refuge in the country's northern and eastern regions.

Some 110,000 refugees remained in Congo's north-eastern region of Likouala, having fled intercommunal violence in the DRC in 2009.

Amidst an opposition boycott and relatively low voter turnout, Gabon's ruling party won legislative elections held in December. Meanwhile, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon were preparing to co-host the 2012 Africa Cup of Nations football tournament.

Sao Tome and Principe elected a new president in August 2011.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The Yaoundé regional delegation focused on visiting and monitoring security detainees in Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, on promoting widespread understanding of humanitarian principles and the Movement's work and on supporting the National Societies in assisting vulnerable communities.

With the relevant National Society, the ICRC provided immediate relief to victims of intercommunal clashes in Cameroon and, in Congo's Likouala region, distributed farming tools, fishing kits and disease-resistant manioc cuttings to resident families hosting refugees. The latter initiative boosted production of dietary staples in the area and alleviated some of the strain on local resources caused by the ongoing presence of refugees from the DRC. With a view to setting up appropriate programmes in 2012, the ICRC assessed the needs of economic migrants deported from Angola to the DRC.

With technical, material and financial support, the region's National Societies ran tracing and RCM services to enable

Main figures and indicators	PROTECTION	Total		
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>				
RCMs collected		349	UAMs/SCs*	4
RCMs distributed		628		9
<b>Reunifications, transfers and repatriations</b>				
People reunited with their families		25		
	<i>including people registered by another delegation</i>	21		
<b>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</b>				
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		26	Women	Minors
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		40		
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	20		
Tracing cases still being handled at 31 December 2011 (people)		33	5	10
<b>UAMs/SCs*, including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers</b>				
UAMs/SCs newly registered by the ICRC/National Society		7	Girls	Demobilized children
UAMs/SCs reunited with their families by the ICRC/National Society		25	15	
	<i>including UAMs/SCs registered by another delegation</i>	21		
UAM/SC cases still being handled by the ICRC/National Society at 31 December 2011		19	11	
<b>Documents</b>				
People to whom travel documents were issued		1		
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)<sup>1</sup></b>				
<b>ICRC visits</b>				
Detainees visited		106	Women	Minors
Detainees visited and monitored individually		98	6	6
Detainees newly registered		8	1	0
Number of visits carried out		18		
Number of places of detention visited		10		
<b>Restoring family links</b>				
RCMs collected		15		
RCMs distributed		32		

\* Unaccompanied minors/separated children 1. Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon

Main figures and indicators	ASSISTANCE	Total	Women	Children
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Economic security, water and habitat</b>				
Food <sup>2</sup>	Beneficiaries	37	0%	100%
Essential household items <sup>3</sup>	Beneficiaries	2,535	30%	40%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	2,498		
Agricultural, veterinary and other micro-economic initiatives <sup>2</sup>	Beneficiaries	89,570	34%	33%
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>				
<b>Economic security, water and habitat</b>				
Food <sup>2</sup>	Beneficiaries	6		
Essential household items <sup>4</sup>	Beneficiaries	26		

2. Congo 3. Cameroon, Congo 4. Congo, Equatorial Guinea

violence-affected family members to stay in touch. To improve all-round emergency preparedness, the National Societies in Cameroon and Sao Tome and Principe drew on ICRC technical guidance in revising their contingency plans, particularly surrounding the various elections. All elections in the region in 2011 (see *Context*) passed off relatively peacefully.

Following visits to security detainees in Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, ICRC delegates provided the relevant authorities with confidential feedback. Inmates received food kits, hygiene items and cleaning products, where needed, and some vulnerable inmates in Congo, including pregnant women, had the costs of vital health care covered by the ICRC. To boost the efforts of the Gabonese authorities to improve the penitentiary system, the ICRC carried out a comprehensive assessment of places of detention and shared the findings, along with recommendations, with the officials concerned.

The ICRC, whenever possible with the relevant National Society, continued to raise awareness of and garner support for humanitarian

principles, IHL and the Movement's activities among the region's political/military authorities and civil society. Dialogue with the government of Equatorial Guinea resulted, for example, in the signing of a headquarters agreement. To increase understanding of IHL among the region's armed, security and police forces, the delegation briefed hundreds of cadets and officers on basic humanitarian principles. It worked with the Gabon-based Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to identify ways of reinforcing the capacities of the ECCAS peacekeeping brigade to promote humanitarian norms. The region's media covered Movement initiatives with the help of press releases, radio spots, and field trips for journalists. Members of Cameroon Red Cross Society youth clubs attending a workshop drew up a plan to introduce more young people to humanitarian principles. The ICRC held bilateral talks with NGOs and traditional/religious leaders to exchange views on humanitarian concerns.

To ensure humanitarian needs were met without duplication, the ICRC coordinated its activities with other Movement partners and humanitarian actors.

## CIVILIANS

In north-west Cameroon, 2,498 people (293 households) who had lost their homes and belongings during localized armed clashes were better able to meet their immediate needs using essential household items provided by the Cameroonian Red Cross and the ICRC following an assessment mission. This operation enabled the two organizations to forge closer links with community leaders and influential members of society to promote humanitarian principles and raise their awareness of the Movement's neutral, impartial and independent action. The National Society received ICRC technical support in reinforcing its capacities to deal with future emergencies (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*).

Conflict, insecurity and poverty in neighbouring countries had driven a sizeable number of people to seek refuge, asylum or economic opportunities in countries covered by the Yaoundé delegation. In Congo's Likouala region, for example, the presence of refugees from the DRC continued to place additional economic pressure on the area's already impoverished host communities. To alleviate some of the strain on residents' resources and to enhance their self-sufficiency in line with the planned phase-out of ICRC support in 2012, 17,914 local families (89,570 people) received culturally tailored farming and fishing equipment, as well as disease-resistant manioc cuttings purchased from the Congolese Red Cross (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*). This helped boost food production and generate income. Such assistance was carried out by ICRC/Congolese Red Cross teams, with the added benefit of enabling the National Society to further build its operational capacities.

A post-assistance review carried out by an expert agronomist showed that 99% of the households who received agricultural tools and 85% who received fishing kits had improved crop maintenance and increased fish yields respectively. Additionally, 76% of all households who received disease-resistant manioc cuttings had planted them and could look forward to propagating them for planting the following year, thus regaining self-sufficiency and rebuilding food reserves in the region.

An orphanage in the Likouala region benefited from an ad hoc donation of food and essential household items.

### Separated family members maintain contact

Economic migrants reported abuses during deportation from Angola to the DRC. They were able to raise their concerns with the ICRC during field visits to border provinces in Angola and the DRC conducted in the second half of the year in cooperation with the relevant authorities and National Society (see *Democratic Republic of the Congo*). Plans were drawn up with the aim of providing such migrants, and in particular children separated from their parents, with the means to re-establish and/or maintain contact with relatives left behind.

In both Cameroon and Congo, including in Likouala, refugees and asylum seekers restored and/or maintained contact with family members back home through the tracing and RCM services provided by the region's National Societies with ICRC support. As children separated from their parents were especially vulnerable,

their relatives were sought as a priority, often in coordination with delegations in neighbouring countries such as the DRC and Rwanda. During 2011, 25 such children were reunited with their families, with 19 other cases being followed by the relevant National Societies/ICRC at year-end.

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

People held for security reasons in Angola (enclave of Cabinda), Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon received visits from ICRC delegates, who assessed their treatment and living conditions. Where needed, detainees used the RCM service to contact their relatives living within or across borders. Following visits, the authorities received confidential oral and written feedback, including, where relevant, recommendations. The ICRC continued to seek access to all detainees covered by its mandate.

To support the Gabonese authorities in enhancing the administrative and medical capacities of the penitentiary system, the ICRC presented officials with the findings of an assessment carried out with government approval. The needs of inmates were assessed in three detention places, any shortcomings identified and solutions proposed.

Meanwhile, some inmates benefited from supplementary food rations in Congo and from personal hygiene items, water filters and cleaning products to improve their living conditions and health there and in Equatorial Guinea. Some of the more vulnerable Congolese detainees, including pregnant women, also had vital health care paid for by the ICRC.

## AUTHORITIES

While all seven countries had ratified many major IHL treaties, national implementation was slow. In a bid to help accelerate the process, the region's governments accessed ICRC legal expertise during briefing sessions, meetings and workshops. The humanitarian instruments discussed in particular included Additional Protocol III, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Union (AU) Convention on IDPs. Thus, for example, Gabon ratified the AU Convention on IDPs and Cameroon's National Assembly adopted a law authorizing the ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

National authorities, including at presidential level, discussed humanitarian issues and the Movement's activities during bilateral meetings with the ICRC and, whenever possible, the relevant National Society. Such dialogue resulted, for example, in the signing of a headquarters agreement by Equatorial Guinea's Foreign Affairs Ministry and the ICRC.

Several organizations promoting awareness of and coordinating responses to humanitarian issues had offices in the region, including ECCAS and the UN. Officials from these bodies and diplomats pursued dialogue with the ICRC on issues of mutual concern.

Through bilateral meetings, local officials in Yaoundé and Douala were sensitized to the role of the National Society before Cameroon's presidential elections.

CIVILIANS		CAMEROON	CONGO
<b>Economic security, water and habitat</b>			
Food	Beneficiaries		37
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	2,498	37
Agricultural, veterinary and other micro-economic initiatives	Beneficiaries		89,570

## ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The region's armed and security forces were deployed to maintain or restore law and order during public demonstrations and unrest. Most military training institutions taught IHL and international human rights law, but the level of instruction varied. To help address this, hundreds of members of the armed, security and police forces from Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and/or Equatorial Guinea participated in ICRC briefings and workshops, and dialogue was fostered between the ICRC and the Angolan authorities, all aimed at improving respect for basic humanitarian principles and increasing knowledge of the Movement. Participants included military officers and instructors, elite military and police units (including Cameroon's Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR)). National Society personnel worked alongside delegates during such events whenever possible. One senior officer from Gabon participated in the Senior Workshop on International Rules Governing Military Operations, held in South Africa (see *Pretoria*).

The region's armed forces discussed with the ICRC how to integrate IHL into their doctrine, training and operations, receiving materials and model coursework for this purpose. For example, Congolese training committees drew on ICRC technical guidance to run their own sessions for military IHL instructors. In Cameroon, the BIR command met ICRC delegates to discuss future cooperation, particularly in integrating IHL into the training camp curriculum.

At regional level, ECCAS and the ICRC held bilateral talks on ways of reinforcing the capacities of the organization's peacekeeping brigade to respect and promote humanitarian norms, in line with their 2010 agreement. ECCAS drew on ICRC IHL expertise at the first meeting of training centres of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa. The AU and ECCAS welcomed the ICRC's input during a workshop to further develop the African Standby Force (see *African Union*).

## CIVIL SOCIETY

The region's media, academic and religious circles and NGOs influenced political and public opinion and helped promote humanitarian principles. Media coverage, and therefore public understanding, of humanitarian issues in the region, including the situation in Likouala (see above), improved with the help of ICRC/National Society press releases, radio spots, information sessions and workshops. Two Cameroonian radio and TV

journalists shared observations made during field trips to the DRC and the CAR through broadcasts and with journalism students, thus generating further awareness.

The region's youth, particularly in Cameroon, learnt about IHL and the Movement during interactive discussion groups and presentations, including at higher education institutions, and at information stands set up at popular events and places in Yaoundé. During their annual workshop, representatives of National Society youth clubs in universities and schools across Cameroon developed a plan to introduce more young people to humanitarian principles. Meanwhile, 180 Red Cross youth club members from Cameroon, Chad and Switzerland shared experiences at an annual forum, where they enhanced their IHL knowledge through ICRC presentations and films and some received first-aid kits. Students from Cameroon and Congo showcased their IHL knowledge at national and regional competitions.

Through discussion sessions and bilateral contacts, NGOs and traditional/religious leaders exchanged views with the ICRC on humanitarian concerns in the region. Such contacts helped build mutual understanding and expand the ICRC's network.

## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Backed by ICRC training, financial, material and technical support, the region's National Societies continued to strengthen their capacities to reconnect dispersed families, to respond to the needs of vulnerable people during emergencies, including in case of political violence, and to promote IHL and the Movement (see above).

In Congo, the National Society expanded its project among farmers, including those in Likouala (see *Civilians*), to propagate disease-resistant manioc varieties, with technical guidance from an external consultant. Vulnerable residents and refugees in Likouala also benefited from other economic security projects, implemented in partnership with Movement components and UNHCR. The National Society opened a regional office in Likouala, with technical and financial support from the ICRC and the Movement.

To boost their emergency response capacities in the run-up to elections, and in case of incoming migrants arriving by sea, the National Societies in Cameroon and Sao Tome and Principe revised their contingency plans and/or received new first-aid kits

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	ANGOLA	CAMEROON	CONGO	EQUATORIAL GUINEA	GABON
<b>ICRC visits</b>					
Detainees visited	13	7	59	24	3
Detainees visited and monitored individually	10	3	59	23	3
			6		
			6		
Detainees newly registered	1		7		
			1		
Number of visits carried out	2	2	11	2	1
Number of places of detention visited	2	2	3	2	1
<b>Restoring family links</b>					
RCMs collected			13	2	
RCMs distributed			32		

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	CONGO	EQUATORIAL GUINEA
<b>Economic security, water and habitat</b>		
Food	Beneficiaries	6
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	6
		20

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and stretchers. Cameroon's operational capacities were boosted during the joint operation to assist violence-affected families in the country's north-west (see *Civilians*).

The National Societies of Cameroon, Congo and Equatorial Guinea continued to raise awareness of humanitarian principles and the Movement's activities, for example through newsletters and radio/TV programmes. To boost these promotional activities, senior National Society personnel underwent training in communication skills.

Movement partners met regularly to coordinate their activities and support to the region's National Societies.