



iraq

The ICRC has been present in Iraq since the outbreak of the Iran–Iraq war in 1980. In the current context, priority is given to protection activities, with a particular focus on persons detained/interned by the multinational forces in Iraq and by the Iraqi authorities, and to providing emergency assistance to the civilian population affected by the conflict either directly, or through the Iraqi Red Crescent Society or other partners. Assistance activities include the provision of emergency relief, support to hospitals, emergency repair work on health, water and sanitation infrastructure and restoring family links.

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	12,575
Assistance	23,123
Prevention	4,071
Cooperation with National Societies	2,529
General	1

► **42,299**

of which: *Overheads* 2,576

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	110%
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PERSONNEL

42 expatriates
339 national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2006, the ICRC:

- stepped up visits to thousands of detainees/internees held by the multinational forces in Iraq and by the Kurdish regional authorities in northern Iraq to monitor their treatment and detention conditions and to make recommendations for corrective action whenever necessary;
- initiated a dialogue with the new Iraqi authorities and the multinational forces in Iraq with a view to ensuring access to all places of detention in the country whenever the security situation permitted;
- restored and maintained contact between detainees/internees in Iraq and family members in Iraq and abroad; pursued efforts to clarify the fate of people unaccounted for in relation to the 1980–88 Iran–Iraq war, the 1990–91 Gulf War, the recent international armed conflict and occupation and the current non-international armed conflict in Iraq;
- provided emergency relief to people displaced by the hostilities and supplied surgical kits directly to hospitals dealing with mass-casualty emergencies;
- carried out emergency repair and rehabilitation work on health, water and sanitation facilities and provided emergency water supplies to offset acute shortages in hospitals and in communities affected by the fighting;
- established or intensified contacts with State actors, arms carriers and key sectors of Iraqi civil society aimed at raising awareness of IHL and ensuring acceptance of and support for the ICRC’s humanitarian mandate and activities in Iraq.

CONTEXT

The new Iraqi government formed in April 2006 stepped up efforts to impose its authority and improve security in the country against a backdrop of increasing sectarian violence, continuing armed conflict between multinational/government forces and armed insurgents, a growing civilian death toll and large-scale population displacement.

The sectarian violence increased sharply after a bomb attack in February on a major Shiite shrine in Samarra, resulting in spiralling casualties and undermining government efforts to promote national reconciliation and restore law and order. Lawlessness also appeared to be on the rise, with large numbers of kidnappings for ransom reported.

Armed confrontations increased between the multinational/government forces and armed insurgent groups, mainly in central Iraq, although the relatively stable southern part of the country, especially Basra, witnessed an unprecedented wave of sectarian violence, Shia militia infighting and repeated attacks on multinational forces. Kurdish governorates in northern Iraq remained relatively calm and stable.

Increased security constraints severely restricted the population’s mobility and access to the basic necessities of life, such as markets, medical facilities, schools, jobs, social services and extended family, and access of providers of public services and humanitarian aid to those most in need.

The persistent violence also severely hindered national reconstruction programmes to restore essential public health infrastructure, which remained far from adequate to meet the needs of the Iraqi population.

Unemployment and poverty levels remained high, and much of the population continued to depend on government food distributions that had replaced the UN oil-for-food programme.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		CIVILIANS		
Detainees visited ¹	32,992	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>		
Detainees visited and monitored individually	8,925	Food	Beneficiaries	227,385
Number of visits carried out	109	Essential household items	Beneficiaries	161,538
Number of places of detention visited	28	Water supply schemes and sanitation systems (completed projects)	Beneficiaries	4,258,370
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS		WOUNDED AND SICK ²		
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>		Hospitals supported	Structures	20
RCMs collected	36,918	<i>Physical rehabilitation</i>		
RCMs distributed	30,574	Patients receiving services	Patients	20,872
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>		Prostheses delivered	Pieces	2,211
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	28	Orthoses delivered	Pieces	5,100
Tracing requests closed positively (persons located)	94			
Tracing requests still being handled at 31 December 2006	2,002			
DOCUMENTS ISSUED				
People to whom travel documents were issued	13			
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	584			

1. All detainees known through notifications by the authorities and followed up by the ICRC

2. Together with the Iraqi health authorities, the ICRC identified structures with acute needs, which were supplied with surgical equipment and medical supplies for a total value of over CHF 450,000

ICRC ACTION

Despite severe security constraints, the ICRC was able to carry out a wide range of activities, albeit at a level far below the needs of those it sought to serve and its own emergency response capacity and overall objectives. It focused primarily on protection activities – mainly visits to people deprived of their freedom – on the provision of emergency relief to the destitute and on ensuring that hospitals had the medical supplies to deal with mass-casualty emergencies.

The ICRC pursued its emergency work to repair or prevent the breakdown of health, water and sanitation infrastructure serving millions of people across Iraq. Working through the local authorities and the Iraqi Red Crescent, the organization was able to respond to a number of emergencies arising from the displacement of families by the hostilities, mass-casualty situations and water shortages in poorly served urban communities.

The growing number of detainees/internees held under the authority of the multinational forces and the regional Kurdish authorities in Iraq resulted in an increased workload for the ICRC in the field of detention, thus requiring additional staff. The frequency of ICRC visits was stepped up to all detention/internment facilities under the authority of the multinational forces, as well as to places of detention in the north controlled by the Kurdish regional authorities.

A sustained dialogue was kept up with the multinational forces on a range of protection issues and with the Iraqi authorities

aimed at ensuring ICRC access to all people deprived of their freedom throughout the country whenever security conditions permitted. A programme initiated in October 2005 to enable families to visit close relatives held at Camp Bucca in southern Iraq by covering part of the travel and accommodation expenses involved was extended to the Shaiba internment facility located near Basra.

Measures were taken to enhance the effectiveness of the ICRC's tracing and family-links services for which demand remained high. This enabled people held by the various detaining authorities and visited by the ICRC to restore or maintain contact with their families in Iraq or abroad through RCMs collected and distributed with the assistance of the Iraqi Red Crescent.

The ICRC continued to chair meetings of the Tripartite Commission and its Technical Sub-committee set up to resolve cases of persons missing from the 1990–91 Gulf War. It also held discussions with the parties concerned on the creation of a joint mechanism to tackle the issue of people unaccounted for in relation to the 1980–88 Iran-Iraq war.

Support to the Iraqi Medico-Legal Institute was stepped up to help it deal with the increasing daily influx of dead bodies and to bolster its capacity to identify human remains.

Medical supplies to treat the wounded were pre-positioned and distributed to health facilities nationwide, and support to physical rehabilitation centres caring for the disabled was strengthened.

Contacts were established or reinforced with State actors, arms carriers and Iraqi civil society, including religious leaders, NGOs and media and academic circles, to raise awareness of IHL and ensure acceptance of and support for the ICRC's humanitarian mandate and activities in Iraq.

CIVILIANS

The security situation continued to severely limit access of humanitarian organizations to the victims of the conflict. It also undermined efforts to establish a sustainable network of contacts on the ground with the potential to influence the protection of the civilian population. Despite the difficulties, a considerable effort was made to forge contacts with both State and non-State parties in this regard, with varying degrees of success. The ICRC further strengthened its capacity to respond to the most urgent needs of the population affected by the conflict and called upon all parties involved to spare civilian life and property.

At the start of the year, being caught up in military operations was the principal security threat faced by the civilian population, often causing temporary population displacements. This early security threat was rapidly superseded by the onset of widespread sectarian violence that erupted following the February bombing of a holy shrine in Samarra. Within days, sectarian violence spread across central and southern regions of the country and continued unabated until the end of the year. This prompted thousands of civilians to flee their homes and seek refuge in other regions

populated mainly by people of the same religious sect. The majority were accommodated by the host community, while others took shelter in abandoned buildings, schools or tented camps. An increasing number of families had fled to neighbouring countries.

Assisting IDPs and flood victims

The primary needs of displaced families were water, food, cooking facilities, fuel, basic household essentials and, at a later stage, more permanent shelter. Given the complexities of the re-registration process for government food support, displaced families often required food aid from other sources during their first month of displacement.

In February and October, heavy rainfall flooded large areas of northern and southern Iraq. Hundreds of families living in already precarious conditions were forced to leave the flooded areas.

Assistance was distributed mainly through the Iraqi Red Crescent or directly by the ICRC:

- ▶ 227,385 people (38,559 households) in various locations, mostly displaced families, received food aid; they included several hundred people affected by the floods in the Safwan area
- ▶ 161,538 people (26,923 households), including 350 Palestinians from Iraq blocked in a camp close to the border with the Syrian Arab Republic, received household essentials, comprising hygiene kits, blankets, jerrycans, kerosene heaters, mattresses and tents

83,770 people, mainly IDPs, had their water supply ensured through emergency ICRC water and sanitation projects:

- ▶ 3,000 IDPs in Sadr City received drinking water delivered by tanker
- ▶ 6,500 displaced people who had fled Talafar in July 2005 and found refuge in 3 villages not connected to a water supply system provided with 130,000 litres of water a day until January 2006
- ▶ 50,000 inhabitants and hundreds of IDPs benefited from the repair of the water supply system serving Talafar and surrounding villages
- ▶ 10,700 IDPs in camps in Zubair (Basra governorate), Heet city (Anbar governorate) and Batova (Dohuk governorate) had access to sanitation facilities after their installation or repair
- ▶ 13,000 refugees in Makmoor refugee camp had access to improved sanitation after rehabilitation of the local sewage system

- ▶ 570 families benefited from the drainage of the flooded area of Safwan

In addition 310,000 one-litre water bags were produced and delivered for local distribution during the major holy processions of Najaf and Karbala in February and March 2006.

Water infrastructure rehabilitation and development

More than 4 million people benefited from water and sanitation infrastructure projects, which included the repair, rehabilitation and sometimes the upgrading of water storage systems and distribution networks. Projects were completed at around 30 water supply and sewage stations in Anbar, Arbil, Babil, Baghdad, Basra, Diwaniya, Diyala, Najaf, Ninawa, Ta'mim and Wasit governorates. They included the refurbishment of water supply systems in Qandil Mountain villages and rehabilitation of the water supply systems of Jesma village in Ta'mim governorate and the town of Khailik on the Turkish border.

More than 1 million people will benefit from ongoing projects.

Primary health care

Emergency interventions were initiated at the beginning of the year and continued throughout 2006 in various parts of the country to repair or upgrade health facilities that had or were on the point of breaking down. These operations focused primarily on governorates affected by military operations or sectarian violence and those hosting large numbers of displaced families.

- ▶ 67 primary health care centres in Anbar, Babel, Baghdad, Diwaniya, Karbala, Salah Al Deen and Wasit governorates serving an average of more than 9,000 patients per day had their sanitation facilities and vital electro-mechanical components repaired or upgraded
- ▶ 2 primary health care centres in Basra (270 patients/day) extended or rebuilt, and reconstruction work started on 2 others in the same city

Restoring family links and clarifying the fate of the missing

The ICRC continued to chair meetings of the Tripartite Commission and its Technical Sub-committee set up to clarify cases of persons missing from the 1990–91 Gulf War. The security situation in Iraq had slowed down the process, and no exhumation operations took place in Iraq during the year. Nevertheless, a number of Iraqi and Kuwaiti cases were elucidated.

- ▶ 9 cases of Iraqi and 3 of Kuwaiti people unaccounted for resolved in the framework of the Tripartite Commission, bringing to 281 the number of cases clarified since 2003

ICRC action also focused on supporting and encouraging the creation of a mechanism to tackle the issue of people unaccounted for in relation to the 1980–88 Iran-Iraq war, in conjunction with the Iraqi and Iranian authorities concerned. A preliminary bilateral meeting between the two countries on this issue was planned to take place under ICRC auspices in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2007.

The Medico-Legal Institute (MLI) under the authority of the Ministry of Health struggled to cope with the rising influx of dead bodies, notably owing to insufficient capacity to store them properly or to systematically document data on unidentified bodies. From January onwards, rehabilitation work started on MLI mortuaries in Baghdad, Basra and Arbil. The ICRC also rehabilitated a unit for unidentified bodies at the MLI in Baghdad and completed rehabilitation work at the mortuaries of 11 hospitals in Baghdad. To enhance the MLI's capacity to deal with the daily caseload, and to increase the rate of identification of human remains, the ICRC also provided forensic equipment and data collection/management training to the MLI in Baghdad and its branches in other locations.

- ▶ 12,651 RCMs collected from and 12,553 distributed mainly to families of detainees, through the Iraqi Red Crescent
- ▶ 9,278 names of people and their present whereabouts or requests for information on the whereabouts of relatives published on the website www.familylinks.icrc.org.
- ▶ new tracing requests registered for 28 people (3 females); 94 persons located; 2,002 cases (38 females, 54 minors at the time of disappearance) still being processed, including 1,172 cases (9 females, 9 minors at the time of disappearance) from the 1990–91 Gulf War and 830 cases (29 females, 54 minors at the time of disappearance) related to the present conflict
- ▶ 13 people were issued ICRC travel documents

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Internment facilities controlled by the multinational forces in Iraq

The ICRC continued to visit thousands of people held in various places of internment controlled by the multinational forces in Iraq in order to monitor their treatment and internment conditions and to make recommendations to the detaining authorities for corrective action where necessary.

The internment facilities visited and under the authority of the US contingent of the multinational forces in Iraq were Camp Cropper and Remembrance II, both located near Baghdad Airport, and Camp Bucca near the southern town of Um Qasr. Regular visits were also made to Shaiba internment facility near Basra controlled by the UK contingent of the multinational forces in Iraq.

- 27,870 detainees/internees visited, 7,377 of them monitored individually (8 females, 59 minors), including 5,562 (6 females, 59 minors) newly registered, during 16 visits to 5 places of detention/internment controlled by the US and UK contingents of the multinational forces in Iraq

Detention/internment facilities controlled by the Iraqi authorities

The lack of an agreement regulating procedures for ICRC detention visits and security-related travel restrictions prevented ICRC delegates from visiting people deprived of their freedom held by the Iraqi authorities in most parts of the country. Visits were nevertheless carried out to people held under the legal authority of the central Iraqi government but in the physical custody of the US contingent of the multinational forces at Camp Cropper.

- 86 detainees under the legal authority of the central Iraqi government but in the physical custody of the US multinational forces in Iraq visited and monitored individually, including 6 newly registered, during 12 visits to 2 places of detention

Detainees were also visited in the three northern governorates in detention centres under the authority of the Kurdish regional authorities.

- 5,036 detainees visited, 1,462 of them monitored individually (2 females, 37 minors), including 613 newly registered (1 female, 33 minors), during 81 visits to 21 places of detention controlled by the Kurdish regional authorities in northern Iraq
- 12 released detainees transferred or repatriated under ICRC auspices after being interviewed to ensure they wished to go home of their own free will

Restoring family links

People deprived of their freedom and visited by the ICRC were able to restore and maintain contact with their families in Iraq or abroad through RCMs collected and distributed with the assistance of the Iraqi Red Crescent. The ICRC also made thousands of phone calls following visits to internment facilities, in order to inform families of the whereabouts and well-being of their detained/interned relatives.

In response to requests collected by the Iraqi Red Crescent, the ICRC issued certificates of detention to former Iraqi POWs previously held by Kuwait in relation to the 1990–91 Gulf War. The certificates enabled them to qualify for social welfare benefits.

- 21,409 RCMs collected from and 17,034 distributed to detainees/internees held by the multinational forces in Iraq
- 2,858 RCMs collected from and 987 distributed to detainees held under the control of the Kurdish regional authorities in northern Iraq
- 6,356 people held in Camp Bucca and in the Shaiba facility benefited from the ICRC family visits programme
- 584 detention certificates issued to former Iraqi POWs and to people held in connection with the current conflict after their release, or to their families

WOUNDED AND SICK

Assistance to hospitals

Despite security constraints limiting access to many conflict areas in Iraq, the ICRC was able to deliver emergency medical supplies to many hospitals and other health facilities directly or through the Iraqi health authorities.

- 20 main hospitals in Al Hilla, Baghdad, Diwaniya, Karbala, Najaf and Talafar received medical and surgical kits for the treatment of wounded patients

- 135,000 litres of fresh water and 120,000 water bags delivered to hospitals in Baghdad inundated with patients following a series of bomb explosions in February
- equipment for 12 hospital emergency rooms distributed during the last three months of 2006
- 10 hospitals in Akra, Arbil, Baghdad (5), Basra, Missan and Sheikhan, with a combined capacity to treat around 5,000 inpatients, had their water and/or sanitation systems restored
- 18 hospitals had their mortuary fridges repaired/rehabilitated
- 56 Iraqi surgeons participated in war surgery and trauma treatment seminars in Amman (see *Jordan*)
- 10 Ministry of Health and 10 Iraqi Red Crescent staff attended a first-aid seminar in Amman

Assistance to the physically disabled

Eight centres caring for the physically disabled in Arbil, Baghdad (3), Basra, Hilla, Mosul and Najaf and producing artificial limbs and other orthopaedic appliances using polypropylene technology continued to receive ICRC material and financial support. The ICRC retained sole management of the Arbil physical rehabilitation centre. In Baghdad, the ICRC also actively supported the work of the Ministry of Health's Al-Salam crutches production unit and the Ministry of Higher Education's training school in prosthetics and orthotics.

In addition, the ICRC promoted quality services and long-term functioning through the organization of four technical seminars in Amman and Arbil for staff from all limb-fitting centres, sponsored one technician from Arbil to attend further education at Amman University and organized a meeting of centre directors on managerial issues.

- 20,872 patients (3,342 women and 4,577 children) received services at ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centres
- 1,352 new patients (200 women and 84 children) fitted with prostheses and 3,821 (580 women and 2,237 children) with orthoses
- 2,211 prostheses delivered (including 346 for women, 115 for children and 898 for mine victims) and 5,100 orthoses delivered (including 826 for women, 2,836 for children and 113 for mine victims)
- 920 crutches and 14 wheelchairs delivered
- Iraqi physical rehabilitation staff attended ICRC-organized seminars to upgrade their skills

AUTHORITIES

In June 2006, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Human Rights, the High Judicial Council and the Council of Ministers attended an ICRC workshop on IHL in Amman (see *Jordan*), the first event of its kind organized by the ICRC for the Iraqi political authorities.

The Iraqi parliament, Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Judicial Council received publications on IHL.

Two senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials attended a regional course on IHL in Beirut (see *Lebanon*).

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Contacts were reinforced or expanded with high-ranking Iraqi military authorities, the multinational forces and leaders of armed militias and groups in order to address IHL-related issues. Initial meetings were held with private military/security companies with a view to conducting dissemination sessions for their personnel.

US forces in Germany about to be deployed in Iraq attended IHL sessions.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Networking with key sectors of Iraqi civil society was intensified with the aim of raising awareness of IHL and ensuring acceptance of and support for the ICRC's humanitarian mandate and activities in Iraq.

Prominent members of the Union of Arab Jurists (UAJ), previously based in Baghdad and currently headquartered in Amman, attended an ICRC seminar on IHL in the Jordanian capital after which the ICRC and the UAJ signed a cooperation agreement which, *inter alia*, provided for the creation of an IHL documentation centre within the UAJ.

- ▶ 12 prominent scholars of Islam attended a workshop on IHL and Islamic law
- ▶ 18 NGO representatives attended a workshop on IHL and independent humanitarian action, and 2 NGO officials participated in a regional meeting on IHL in Cairo (see *Egypt*)
- ▶ 16 members of women's associations attended a workshop on the plight of women in war

- ▶ 17 university law lecturers attended a seminar on IHL teaching in law curricula
- ▶ the Iraqi, pan-Arab and international media briefed on ICRC activities and humanitarian and other IHL-related issues in Iraq; 18 Iraqi journalists attended 2 workshops on IHL in media reporting and another 2 participated in the ICRC yearly regional seminar for Arab media

Iraqi writers and Red Crescent volunteers contributed articles to the ICRC's *Al-Insani* (The Humanitarian) magazine, which provides a forum for information and discussion on the Movement's action and IHL-related issues.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Iraqi Red Crescent Society continued to play a pivotal role in the distribution of ICRC food and non-food aid to IDP families across the country and in the collection and distribution of RCMs between people deprived of their freedom in Iraq and their families in the country or abroad.

A new assistance agreement was signed with the Iraqi Red Crescent addressing operational strategies to provide a stronger platform for ICRC support to conflict victims while strengthening the operational capacities of the National Society. This strengthened partnership increased the efficiency of ICRC action to provide food and non-food aid to those most in need through the National Society. It also brought into this collaborative effort the ICRC's expertise in the fields of economic security, water and habitat and in the medical sector.

Iraqi Red Crescent staff received further training to increase their capacities to assess and respond to emergency needs and to monitor the impact of humanitarian action. The National Society's logistics capacity was also strengthened through the provision of four trucks, warehouse equipment and logistics and warehouse management training.

National Society staff and volunteers also received further training in the fields of restoring family links, mine action, dissemination and the Safer Access approach.

Various National Society branch offices were upgraded through ICRC material support.

A Movement coordination meeting for Iraq was held in Istanbul in July, hosted by the Turkish Red Crescent and organized by the Iraqi Red Crescent, the International Federation and the ICRC (see *Ankara*).