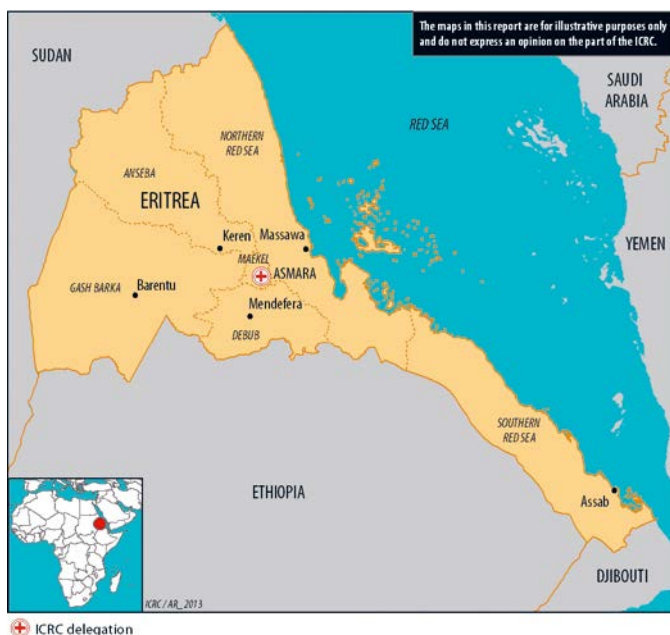


# ERITREA



The ICRC opened a delegation in Eritrea in 1998 in the context of the international armed conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia and continues to respond to the needs remaining from that two-year war. Its priorities are to help improve the resilience of the population concerned and to ensure compliance with IHL with regard to any persons still protected by the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions. The ICRC supports the “Red Cross Society of Eritrea”.

## YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

**MEDIUM**

## KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

### In 2013:

- ▶ vulnerable communities increased their economic security through livelihood-support initiatives implemented in border regions – including, for the first time since 2004, Northern Red Sea – despite travel and import restrictions
- ▶ border communities in Debub, Gash Barka and Southern Red Sea accessed clean water from solar-powered water supply systems installed/repared in cooperation with local water authorities
- ▶ vulnerable Ethiopians benefited from ICRC assistance to contact their relatives and cover the costs of repatriation, resident permits and medical care, and/or other needs
- ▶ the ICRC remained without access to people detained in Eritrea, with government-imposed restrictions limiting its humanitarian efforts, notably, to monitor the welfare of vulnerable people and help them restore family links

PROTECTION	Total
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>	
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>	
RCMs collected	913
RCMs distributed	2,479
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	13

ASSISTANCE	Targets	Achieved	
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>			
<b>Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>			
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	10,000	5,971
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	141,500	371,235
Cash	Beneficiaries	4,800	13,311
Work, services and training	Beneficiaries	25,000	
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	15,000	40,159

## EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)

Protection	768
Assistance	1,897
Prevention	283
Cooperation with National Societies	29
General	-

**2,978**

of which: Overheads 182

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	<b>96%</b>
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## PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	4
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	37

## CONTEXT

Tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia persisted, but no clashes took place in border regions. Physical demarcation of the Eritrea-Ethiopia border remained stalled; both countries maintained a military presence in the disputed areas.

No progress was made in the demarcation of the Djibouti-Eritrea border; thus, implementation of the mediation agreement between the two countries, signed in 2010, did not move forward. Acting as a mediator, Qatar maintained troops in the disputed region.

The effects of past conflicts on livelihoods and public services continued to be felt. Although the government instructed national and foreign/international NGOs to reduce or terminate their activities in Eritrea in 2011, it signed framework agreements with the UN and the European Union on the resumption of cooperation with these organizations. However, the implementation of these agreements proceeded slowly.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

Despite the restrictions on the operations of foreign/international agencies in Eritrea, the ICRC endeavoured to regain the authorities' acceptance for its humanitarian mandate and activities in behalf of vulnerable populations, including detainees and civilians affected by past armed conflicts.

Difficulties in implementing the ICRC's planned activities persisted, particularly because of the unavailability of travel permits for expatriate ICRC staff. In addition, the organization could not work as it wished with the "Red Cross Society of Eritrea," which had received government instructions, in place since January 2012, not to accept support from international organizations. Nevertheless, the ICRC carried out assistance operations in areas where it had access and focused on aiding people in border regions most affected by past armed conflict and border tensions; meanwhile, it sought to persuade the authorities that it was in their interest to recognize the applicability of the 1949 Geneva Conventions to the Eritrean context. It also held dissemination sessions for local authorities and beneficiary communities, and participated in public events organized by the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS), to generate wider support for IHL and the Movement.

The ICRC pursued dialogue on resuming visits to detainees of Ethiopian origin, including POWs and former POWs. The authorities had withdrawn authorization for such visits in 2009. The ICRC also continued to appeal to the authorities for any information they had on 17 Djiboutian soldiers reported by their government as missing after the Djibouti-Eritrea hostilities in June 2008.

In 2009, the Eritrean authorities withdrew permission for the ICRC to assist in the voluntary repatriation of civilians. Hence, the ICRC did its best to monitor the situation of the Ethiopian community in Eritrea, with a view to ensuring that their rights under the 1949 Geneva Conventions were respected, including in connection with voluntary repatriation. It provided financial aid for people of Ethiopian origin to obtain residence permits if they wished to stay in Eritrea, or to cover transport and other expenses if they wished to be repatriated. In areas accessible to it, the ICRC helped separated family members restore contact using RCMs. It pursued dialogue with the authorities to follow up requests for

information from families of people reported as missing in relation to the 1998–2000 international armed conflict with Ethiopia, and sought to reunite unaccompanied Eritrean minors in Ethiopia with their families or find suitable alternatives for them.

Vulnerable people in areas accessible to the ICRC received some support to rebuild their livelihoods. The ICRC helped the Ministry of Agriculture protect the livelihoods of border communities in Debub, Gash Barka, Southern Red Sea and, for the first time since 2004, in Northern Red Sea. For example, pastoralists had their herds treated against parasites, while farmers increased their food production with the help of ICRC-distributed seed, tools and irrigation pumps. Communities accessed clean water from solar-powered water supply systems built and maintained by the ICRC in cooperation with local authorities. At the request of Southern Red Sea authorities, and in consultation with the "Red Cross Society of Eritrea", the ICRC helped people displaced by the eruption of the Nabro volcano in 2011 to rebuild their homes, by providing them with mats and ropes bought from local artisan households. Other displaced families improved their living conditions with ICRC-provided household items.

## CIVILIANS

The ICRC pursued dialogue with the Eritrean authorities to gain acceptance for its mandate and activities in the country. Although several of the ICRC's programmes were delayed or put on hold because of government-imposed restrictions, civilians in areas accessible to it benefited from some support.

### Border communities rebuild their livelihoods

Vulnerable families in Debub, Gash Barka, Southern Red Sea, and, for the first time since 2004, in Northern Red Sea benefited from ICRC support to restore their livelihoods. Over 72,000 pastoralist households (360,150 people) with limited access to veterinary services had their herds (some 2.3 million head of livestock) treated against parasites by the Ministry of Agriculture and the ICRC. At the request of the local authorities, several ad hoc treatment campaigns were organized to curb livestock mortality. Some 1,900 households (9,585 people) in Gash Barka benefited from the construction of two ponds, which provided water for roughly 25,000 animals. The construction of a third pond was under way.

In Anseba and Debub, over 300 farming households (1,500 people) resumed or increased production with ICRC-distributed vegetable seed, tools and jerrycans. Farmers reported that they irrigated their crops more efficiently after the installation of 75 foot-operated pumps. Under a new memorandum of understanding, the Ministry of Agriculture agreed to work with the ICRC until 2014 to help farmers increase production.

In the Southern Red Sea region, people displaced by the eruption of the Nabro volcano in 2011 resettled in their villages with logistical/financial assistance provided by the ICRC at the request of the region's authorities and in consultation with the "Red Cross Society of Eritrea". Some 1,000 households (5,445 people) rebuilt their homes with palm mats and rope produced by 1,910 artisan households (9,730 people) and transported with ICRC support. These artisan households supplemented their incomes, as the ICRC bought these shelter materials from them. In addition, nearly 6,000 people improved their living conditions with ICRC-supplied household items.

## Households access clean water from solar-powered infrastructure

Local authorities worked with the ICRC to repair damaged water points and install new ones for some 40,000 people. However, owing to restrictions on cooperation with foreign organizations, training sessions planned for local technicians did not take place.

In Gash Barka, after the authorities and the ICRC had resolved difficulties in importing the necessary materials, the construction/rehabilitation of three solar-powered water supply systems, begun in 2011, was completed. People in the Debub and Southern Red Sea regions benefited from newly repaired/installed water infrastructure as well. These activities were planned on the basis of an assessment of the condition of 15 solar-powered systems installed by the ICRC from 2004 to 2009. These environment-friendly systems kept running costs to a minimum, as fuel was scarce and expensive in Eritrea.

## People of Ethiopian origin cope with their situation

People of Ethiopian origin continued to be repatriated through Sudan by the Eritrean authorities. In March 2009, the government withdrew permission for the ICRC to assist in the voluntary repatriation of civilians across the Eritrea-Ethiopia border. Given these constraints, the ICRC did all it could to monitor the situation of the Ethiopian community in Eritrea, to ensure that their rights under the 1949 Geneva Conventions were respected, including with regard to voluntary repatriation in humane conditions.

Particularly vulnerable Ethiopians – women, minors, former detainees and elderly people – coped with their difficult situation with the help of ICRC financial assistance. Among them were 2,176 people who renewed their resident permits; 452 people who covered transport expenses for their repatriation; some former detainees who covered food and accommodation costs; and others who covered medical and other expenses.

To enable them to apply for further studies or jobs, 30 people, comprising both Eritrean and Ethiopian nationals who had lived or studied in Eritrea, had important documents such as school transcripts sent across the sealed border or elsewhere in the world. Seventeen Ethiopians registered by the IOM received identification documents.

## Family-links services remain limited by access constraints

Tracing services, which used to be run by the “Red Cross Society of Eritrea” (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*), remained suspended since January 2012. Through dialogue with the authorities, the ICRC continued to follow up requests from families for news of their relatives missing in relation to the 1998–2000 international armed conflict with Ethiopia; it also sought to reunite unaccompanied Eritrean minors – including those who had crossed the border to Ethiopia (see *Ethiopia*) – with their families or find appropriate alternatives for them.

In areas of Eritrea accessible to the ICRC, people used RCMs to restore or maintain contact with relatives separated from them by conflict. Through the ICRC’s efforts in their behalf, with the authorities and other organizations, and its subsequent issuance of travel documents, 88 Somali refugees resettled in the United States of America.

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

### Dialogue pursued with authorities to regain access to detainees

Despite requests from the ICRC, the authorities did not permit delegates to resume visits to detainees of Ethiopian origin, including POWs or former POWs. The authorities had withdrawn permission for such visits in 2009.

Requests to the Eritrean government for any information it had about the 17 Djiboutian soldiers reported by their government as missing after the Djibouti-Eritrea hostilities in June 2008 remained unanswered, as did a request for the authorities’ response to a proposal to repatriate an ailing Eritrean POW in Djibouti.

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

### Local authorities allow the resumption of some ICRC activities

Because of the restrictions imposed on the ICRC, dialogue with the authorities continued to focus on strengthening trust and on persuading them that it was in their interest to recognize the applicability of the 1949 Geneva Conventions to the Eritrean context. Meetings with government officials, including the heads of various ministries, enabled the ICRC to discuss humanitarian concerns with them and appeal for wider access to the population, including to detainees (see *People deprived of their freedom*). The planning and implementation of ICRC assistance activities also provided opportunities for briefing local and national officials on the nature of the organization and its neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action. These efforts resulted in the resumption of livelihood-support activities in some border communities (see *Civilians*) and IHL promotion at institutions of higher education (see below).

### Cooperation with Eritrean youth organization facilitates IHL promotion

Thousands of people – local authorities, police/security forces, community leaders, teachers and young people – learnt about IHL and the Movement through dissemination sessions organized by the NUEYS and the ICRC, and held in Anseba and Northern and Southern Red Sea. About 600 students and lecturers attended an IHL dissemination session, organized for four institutions of higher education for the first time since their establishment in 2004. In addition to the Eritrean Book Fair in Asmara, book fairs in three other regions welcomed the ICRC’s presence. At each of these events, which were attended by some 140,000 people, government officials and civil society members received IHL briefings and leaflets at an ICRC information booth.

Articles in local languages published in the NUEYS magazine and the donation of reference materials to academic institutions and three public libraries provided people with more access to IHL-related information. The Asmara Law School and the ICRC maintained contact, with a view to reinforcing local capacities for providing adequate IHL instruction for law students. However, the unavailability of visas for ICRC experts in this field resulted in the cancellation of training sessions planned for law instructors and students.

## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Because of government restrictions imposed in January 2012, the “Red Cross Society of Eritrea” was not able to accept support from the ICRC for building its capacities or conduct any joint activities with it. Dialogue on resuming cooperation continued.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total		
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>				
			UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected		913	120	
RCMs distributed		2,479	220	
<b>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</b>				
			Women	Minors
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		31	7	7
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		13		
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	3		
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		80		10
<b>Documents</b>				
People to whom travel documents were issued		88		
Official documents relayed between family members across border/front lines		47		
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>				
<b>Restoring family links</b>				
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		9		

\* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	5,971	60%	
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	371,235	75%	
Cash	Beneficiaries	13,311	85%	2%
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	40,159	40%	35%