

UGANDA



ICRC delegation

The ICRC has been present in Uganda since 1979. Given the progress towards peace in the north of the country, ICRC assistance activities, many of which are implemented in partnership with the Uganda Red Cross Society and State institutions, have been adapted to decreasing humanitarian needs. In parallel, the ICRC continues to monitor the treatment of detainees and strives to raise awareness of IHL and humanitarian principles among the armed and police forces.

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

In 2013:

- ▶ over 200 relatives of missing persons in northern Uganda coped with their distress after sharing their experiences at pilot community-support sessions conducted by facilitators trained by a local NGO and the ICRC
- ▶ in the Karamoja region, previously disputing communities jointly cultivated agricultural land, which brought them closer together and enabled the safer movement of people
- ▶ around 1,000 former fighters who crossed from the Democratic Republic of the Congo into Uganda received ICRC visits according to its standard procedures and household and recreational items to ease their living conditions
- ▶ while military troops involved in regional operations learnt more about IHL, army and police officials worked to enhance cooperation between their teams during joint law enforcement operations
- ▶ after a financial and governance crisis that led to the replacement of some of its senior officials, the Uganda Red Cross Society drew on support from Movement partners to strengthen its management and accountability

EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)

Protection	2,048
Assistance	388
Prevention	1,265
Cooperation with National Societies	669
General	-
Total	4,370

of which: Overheads 267

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	93%
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PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	9
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	37

YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

HIGH

PROTECTION	Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)	
Red Cross messages (RCMs)	
RCMs collected	3,122
RCMs distributed	1,908
Phone calls facilitated between family members	15,848
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	28
People reunited with their families	19
of whom unaccompanied minors/separated children	16
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)	
ICRC visits	
Detainees visited	5,800
Detainees visited and monitored individually	160
Number of visits carried out	103
Number of places of detention visited	43
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	178
RCMs distributed	165
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	81

ASSISTANCE	Targets	Achieved
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)		
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	19
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	8,491
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	2
Work, services and training	Beneficiaries	2
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	18,680
Total		27,744

CONTEXT

Violence in the Karamoja region reportedly decreased. Nevertheless, violent incidents related to cattle theft and the disarmament operations occurred from time to time.

Many people fleeing the violence in the Kivu provinces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (hereafter DRC) added to Uganda's already sizeable refugee population, majority of which came from the DRC and South Sudan.

The military defeat of the M23 in the DRC and the stalled implementation of a negotiated solution to the conflict in the Kivu provinces, resulted in over a thousand former fighters seeking sanctuary in Uganda.

The Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) continued its military operations against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and contributed troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

To address the needs of violence-affected populations in Uganda, the ICRC continued to integrate protection concerns into its assistance activities. It systematically reminded weapon bearers to respect civilians and strengthened community-based self-protection mechanisms through various initiatives.

In Karamoja, the joint efforts of weapon bearers and local leaders reportedly contributed to a decrease in violence related to the disarmament process. With the ICRC acting as an intermediary, representatives of previously disputing communities engaged in dialogue and cultivated agricultural land together, easing tensions and enabling the safe movement of people.

To continue assisting victims of conflict and disaster, the Uganda Red Cross Society, with support from Movement partners, strengthened its management and accountability, especially following an internal crisis. It received funds, training, materials and technical support from the ICRC specifically to build its emergency response capacities. Despite some delays in the implementation of National Society/ICRC projects, residents of Karamoja became less vulnerable to violence-related risks with the installation of water points close to their homes and by learning how to build energy-saving stoves that limited their need to collect firewood. In view of the decrease in violence in the region, the ICRC wrapped up its joint assistance activities with the National Society by year's end.

The National Society/ICRC continued to provide family-links services for refugees, notably through the provision of a phone service. Women and minors formerly associated with armed groups were reunited with their families, including through cross-border operations. In northern Uganda, an ICRC pilot project enabled the families of missing persons to cope with their distress by means of community-support groups and a commemorative event. Foreign nationals with security or other concerns were followed up and referred to UNHCR or other organizations providing the necessary support.

The ICRC sought to promote the humane treatment of detainees, in line with applicable domestic laws and internationally recognized standards. It visited, in accordance with its standard procedures, those detained under the authority of the Ministries of Defence and Internal Affairs, as well as an increased number of

former fighters from the DRC who arrived in Uganda. Delegates assessed inmates' treatment and living conditions, confidentially sharing their findings and recommendations with the authorities. A management course bolstered the ability of prison authorities to address the humanitarian issues faced by inmates, while a seminar facilitated dialogue among stakeholders on improving health care for detainees. Improvements to their water, sanitation or sleeping facilities reduced detainees' health risks. The ICRC supported the authorities in covering the needs of vulnerable detainees and in coping with the influx of former fighters from the DRC, by distributing household and recreational items. Inmates maintained contact with their relatives through family-links services, for instance, family visits were arranged for detainees serving life sentences or who had not received visits for several years. The ICRC's efforts to gain access to all other detainees within its purview had minimal progress.

The delegation, sometimes with the help of the National Society, continued to foster interest in and support for IHL among the authorities, weapon bearers and members of civil society. Training sessions for military personnel involved in local and regional operations encouraged respect for IHL; a workshop helped strengthen cooperation between the army and police during joint law enforcement operations. The national IHL committee worked with the ICRC to promote domestic IHL implementation by conducting various events, including for government officials and the academic community.

CIVILIANS

Communities involved in past disputes ease tensions by jointly cultivating land

Although Karamoja remained prone to intercommunal tensions, no major incidents occurred in 2013. Local security forces took into account the protection of the resident population while conducting disarmament operations; coupled with the reduced availability of weapons, this possibly contributed to the reported decrease in instances of violence. Dissemination sessions reminded weapon bearers and local leaders to respect people not/no longer involved in the fighting, as required by domestic and international norms. ICRC delegates made confidential representations to the parties concerned, urging them to prevent or end abuses.

Karamoja residents continued to strengthen their livelihoods and self-protection mechanisms through various activities. For example, they identified safe sites and other best practices during information sessions.

In the Kotido and Moroto districts, previously disputing communities eased tensions by jointly cultivating fertile agricultural land, inaccessible in the past owing to security concerns. During meetings facilitated by the ICRC, the local authorities and representatives of various villages discussed existing threats and possible solutions. In the presence of UPDF officers charged with ensuring their safety, villagers planted/harvested vegetables in 'group gardens', using seed and tools provided by the NGO Welthungerhilfe. At review meetings, participants said that the project had brought them closer together and enabled the safe movement of community members.

National Society/ICRC projects helped Karamoja residents, especially women and children, lessen their exposure to risks related to sexual violence while fetching water and firewood. However, the lack of National Society personnel led to the delayed

implementation or completion of projects, including water improvement works that began in 2012. Owing to the decrease in violence in the region, the ICRC wrapped up its joint assistance activities with the National Society by year's end.

Over 18,000 people in southern Karamoja accessed drinking water from 8 drilled and 16 rehabilitated boreholes close to their homes. In 26 villages, including those that benefited from the installed/rehabilitated boreholes, hygiene-promotion sessions conducted by ICRC-trained National Society volunteers enabled nearly 30,000 people to protect themselves from health hazards. A mechanics' association in the Moroto district and the water committees of 28 villages maintained water systems with ICRC technical/logistical support.

During training conducted by Welthungerhilfe and with ICRC financial support, 18 women from 8 villages learnt how to build energy-saving stoves, with a view to passing on this knowledge to their neighbours. These stoves, more weather-resistant and portable than those produced in 2011, reduced beneficiaries' need to walk long distances to collect firewood and provided a sustainable means for cooking.

In Old Lolelia, Kaabong district, ICRC-provided bicycle ambulances boosted the capacity of some 240 households (1,103 people) to transport injured or sick people to health centres.

Local support groups help families of missing persons cope with their distress

In northern Uganda, where minors had allegedly been recruited by armed groups, hundreds of families continued to live without news of their relatives. Pilot community-support sessions, conducted by facilitators trained by a local NGO, the Kitgum Concerned Women Association, and the ICRC helped over 200 residents of the Kitgum district cope with their distress. An evaluation showed that participants felt less lonely and stressed and became more engaged in their daily activities after attending the sessions. With ICRC financial support, families of the missing in one village commemorated their relatives through a prayer ceremony, which was attended by the local authorities and other community members.

In parts of Uganda, refugees living in settlements or urban areas communicated with their relatives through National Society/ICRC family-links services. RCMs – collected/distributed by delegates – and over 15,000 phone calls enabled refugees, most of them from the DRC, to re-establish contact with relatives in their home country or in other settlements in Uganda. All settlements hosting newly arrived refugees from the DRC and South Sudan were periodically visited by National Society/ICRC teams, with National Society personnel receiving on-the-job training.

Foreign nationals who had expressed concerns about their security were registered and followed up. Where appropriate, they were referred to UNHCR for registration as asylum seekers or to other organizations providing psychological and social support. Particular attention was paid to unaccompanied minors, who were also systematically registered and followed up. Nineteen people, including women and minors formerly associated with armed groups, were reunited with their families, some abroad, with the help of the National Society/ICRC and other humanitarian actors in the region; women and minors received food and essential items, thereby easing the financial/material burden on their relatives.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

More former fighters from the DRC receive ICRC visits

Over 5,500 detainees held by the Ministries of Defence and Internal Affairs in 43 places of detention in priority areas – Kampala, Karamoja and south-western Uganda – received visits from ICRC delegates. They included: in Kampala, people held on charges of armed rebellion, “terrorism” or political unrest; in Karamoja, people held in relation to the disarmament operations; and in south-western Uganda, people held in relation to their alleged connection with the Allied Democratic Forces and to the violence in the DRC. Around 1,000 former fighters who crossed over from the DRC into Uganda and surrendered to the authorities were also among those visited (see *Context*). Some 160 detainees were followed up individually.

During visits carried out according to the ICRC's standard procedures, delegates assessed detainees' treatment and living conditions, such as the accommodation for the massive influx of former fighters from the DRC; afterwards, they shared their findings and recommendations confidentially with the authorities. The authorities were reminded of their obligation to: hold detainees in gazetted (officially recognized) places of detention; ensure humane treatment and adequate living conditions; and uphold respect for judicial guarantees, including the principle of *non-refoulement*. ICRC efforts to gain access to all other detainees within its purview had minimal progress.

Vulnerable detainees, including foreigners, stayed in touch with their relatives through RCMs; the families of 81 detainees were informed by phone of their relatives' arrest or transfer to another place of detention. If they so wished, foreign detainees informed their embassies/consulates or UNHCR of their detention via the ICRC. In the Luzira Upper Prison, 52 detainees who were serving life sentences or who had not received visits for several years personally spoke with their relatives during ICRC-facilitated visits. Upon their release, 10 detainees had their transport costs home covered by the ICRC, enabling them to make the most of their meagre resources.

Detainees reduce health risks with the help of rehabilitated infrastructure

At an international management course, two Uganda Prisons Service (UPS) officers sharpened their skills in analysing the humanitarian issues affecting detainees and in providing creative solutions to the most urgent problems. At a two-day seminar, some 30 officers from the Uganda Police Force and the UPS exchanged ideas on improving health care for detainees. A review of the pilot project, aimed at providing treatment for HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria in detention facilities and turned over to the UPS in 2012, was moved to 2014.

In Luzira Upper Prison, some 3,000 inmates reduced their health risks following improvements to water supply/sanitation infrastructure, which included the construction of toilets and showers, replacement of old water pipes and installation of additional facilities for storing water for kitchen use. The authorities worked with the ICRC to enhance living conditions for detainees in police stations. For instance, women in Fort Portal had more privacy after the construction of cells specifically for them, while detainees in Kasese had 24-hour access to rehabilitated toilets and showers. ICRC-provided materials enabled the authorities to make renovations at three other police stations.

More than 5,500 vulnerable detainees eased their living conditions after being supplied with household and recreational items. They included former fighters from the DRC whose unexpected arrival into Uganda put a strain on the authorities' capabilities to cover their immediate needs.

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

Military troops involved in regional operations learn more about IHL

Dialogue with the authorities and weapon bearers helped bolster respect for the rights of the population, possibly leading to a reported decrease in allegations of abuse (see *Civilians*).

In view of the UPDF's involvement in operations against the LRA, in Somalia and in the Karamoja region, some 3,500 UPDF officers and troops – including military police, non-commissioned officers and personnel deployed to peacekeeping missions – attended training sessions, where they learnt more about IHL. Independently or with ICRC support, the UPDF trained officers to become future IHL instructors.

During a joint law enforcement workshop, 28 senior UPDF and police officers worked towards greater cooperation by discussing their respective rules of engagement, as well as ICRC-supported drafts of a code of conduct for joint operations and a soldier's card.

At a train-the-trainer course, 40 police officers learnt how to incorporate human rights law in their operations.

Some 30 Somali military officers learnt more about IHL and human rights law during an ICRC presentation at a course organized by the African Union's Department of Political Affairs.

National IHL committee promotes respect for IHL in Uganda and abroad

Various events, some co-organized by the national IHL committee and government ministries, encouraged support for IHL. Some 300 persons representing the government, military, media and academia discussed ways to advance the integration of IHL into domestic law during a workshop; another 40 of them participated in a meeting on the Toxic Chemicals Prohibition and Control Bill before its submission to the parliament. Around 70 officials, including newly appointed judges and prosecutors, learnt more about IHL-related protocols under the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region, and IHL and war crimes during workshops/seminars.

With ICRC support, the IHL committee further promoted IHL in the country by publishing a book on the subject and, with the UPDF, opening an IHL resource centre.

Two IHL committee members shared their expertise with the South Sudanese authorities at a seminar on implementing IHL (see *South Sudan*).

IHL committee members enhanced their knowledge and understanding of the law at seminars abroad (see *Caracas* and *Nairobi*). During its statutory meetings, the committee reviewed the status of pending domestic legislation on the use of mines, toxic chemicals and cluster munitions. The working group established to amend the Red Cross Act and the Geneva Conventions Act continued to receive technical support.

Academics improve IHL instruction at universities

To strengthen the quality of IHL teaching, some 30 academics exchanged views at a round-table and university lecturers attended training abroad (see *Nairobi* and *Pretoria*). Student teams participated in national and regional moot court competitions (see *Nairobi*); one student began an internship at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Around 70 students and lecturers from universities that had just included IHL in their curricula increased their knowledge of the subject during interactive sessions. An assessment of universities that began teaching or already taught IHL showed that there was a growing awareness of and interest in the subject.

Government officials and members of civil society and the international community continued to support the National Society/ICRC in fostering public awareness and acceptance of IHL and the Movement, including by participating in various events, such as pre-election dissemination sessions on the emblem. During a workshop, Christian and Islamic clerics/academics, the authorities and the media, explored common themes in religious teachings and IHL, and acknowledged the pertinence of IHL to ongoing conflicts in East Africa. At a seminar, over 30 journalists assigned to violence-prone areas familiarized themselves with IHL provisions that protected them and with humanitarian issues, especially those covered by the Health Care in Danger project.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

National Society responds to the needs of people affected by violence and disaster

The Ugandan Red Cross, with ICRC technical, financial, material and logistical support, continued to respond to emergencies, deliver assistance to returnees, restore family links (see *Civilians*) and promote the goals of the Health Care in Danger project, while working to enhance its capacities to carry out these activities.

National Society volunteers responded to the needs of those affected by natural disasters with first-aid supplies and non-food items provided by the ICRC. The training of 75 Red Cross Action Team members from three regions and 25 first-aid trainers from 18 districts helped sustain their emergency response activities.

Managers/staff of all National Society branches participated in a workshop on bolstering the capacities of dissemination teams.

The National Society and the ICRC incorporated their recommendations into their amended partnership agreement for 2013. Regular meetings among Movement partners aimed at strengthening coordination and at supporting the National Society in improving its management and accountability, which was particularly important owing to a financial/governance crisis that led to the replacement of senior officials at the National Society.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total		
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Red Cross messages (RCMs)			UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected		3,122	170	
RCMs distributed		1,908	132	
Phone calls facilitated between family members		15,848		
Reunifications, transfers and repatriations				
People reunited with their families		19		
	<i>including people registered by another delegation</i>	10		
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons			Women	Minors
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		12	1	11
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		28		
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	15		
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		5		4
UAMs/SCs*, including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers			Girls	Demobilized children
UAMs/SCs newly registered by the ICRC/National Society		187	17	97
UAMs/SCs reunited with their families by the ICRC/National Society		16	8	3
	<i>including UAMs/SCs registered by another delegation</i>	8		
UAM/SC cases still being handled by the ICRC/National Society at the end of the reporting period		188	25	95
Documents				
People to whom travel documents were issued		4		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
ICRC visits			Women	Minors
Detainees visited		5,800	156	22
Detainees visited and monitored individually		160	2	3
Detainees newly registered		100	2	3
Number of visits carried out		103		
Number of places of detention visited		43		
Restoring family links				
RCMs collected		178		
RCMs distributed		165		
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		81		
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		52		
Detainees released and transferred/repatriated by/via the ICRC		1		
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		3		

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	19	21%	79%
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	8,491	19%	29%
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	2		
Work, services and training	Beneficiaries	2		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	27,744	27%	36%
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection programme)				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	5,596		
Cash	Beneficiaries	10		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	3,379		