



ICRC

Iraq: ICRC Facts and Figures January – December 2009

Highlights in 2009

2009 was a year of hope coupled with uncertainty. Despite the common perception that the armed conflict was largely over, widespread violence and a lack of respect for human life continued to affect the Iraqi people in some parts of the country. Civilians remained the primary victims. Mass explosions and indiscriminate attacks claimed the lives of hundreds and left thousands more wounded, mainly in Baghdad, Ninewa and Diyala governorates. Safety remained a primary concern for most Iraqis but, for many, simply earning a living was also a constant struggle.

Throughout the year, the ICRC responded to the needs of people affected by the armed conflict, though security constraints still hampered access to some areas. Particularly vulnerable groups, such as internal displaced persons (IDPs), drought-stricken farmers, the disabled and women-headed households received various forms of basic assistance such as food, essential household items, agricultural inputs or help in obtaining State welfare benefits or ensuring economic self-sufficiency.

As a consequence of decades of conflict, access to clean water remained inadequate in many parts of the country. Drought and destroyed, poor or neglected infrastructure have all contributed to a reduction of water resources. The ICRC continued to renovate water and sanitation infrastructure and services in both rural and urban areas and in places of detention.

Medical supplies were provided to selected hospitals and health centres and in the aftermath of large-scale casualty events. Physical rehabilitation centres that mainly work with landmine victims and those who have lost limbs through explosions or during fighting received material and technical support.

Visits made to tens of thousands of people detained by the multinational forces, the Iraqi central authorities and the Kurdish Regional Government remained a top priority for the ICRC. In an effort to determine what happened to people missing in connection with the international conflicts during the 80s and 90s and to help families still waiting for news, the ICRC continued to provide support to the authorities and to forensic experts.

Visiting people deprived of their freedom

During 203 visits to people held by the Iraqi government, the Kurdish regional authorities and international forces (US/MNF-I), the ICRC assessed treatment and conditions of detention, with a particular emphasis on access to health and respect of fundamental judicial guarantees.

Between January and December 2009, the ICRC teams visited:

- more than 22,000 detainees held under the authority of the Iraqi ministries of Justice, Defence, Interior and Labour and Social Affairs, of whom about 1,000 were monitored individually;
- almost 4,000 detainees held under the Kurdistan Regional authorities, of whom nearly 700 were monitored individually;
- over 19,500 detainees/internees under the authority of the US/MNF-I, of whom about 1,400 were monitored individually;
- about 200 women in prisons under the Ministry of Justice and 700 minors in juvenile detention facilities, of whom 35 women and 20 minors were monitored individually.
- In addition, 2,400 detention certificates were issued to former detainees/internees, enabling them to qualify for social welfare benefits.

Efforts by prison authorities to fulfil their obligations towards detainees' basic rights and needs were supported through a joint ICRC/Iraqi Justice and Health ministries' workshop to discuss general services and health care provided in Iraqi correctional facilities.

The ICRC also monitors foreigners in detention and upon their approval can notify their respective embassy and carry out their repatriation upon their release.

- 21 released detainees were repatriated to their country of origin in 2009.

The ICRC has been present in Iraq since the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980. The ICRC works from its delegation in Baghdad and offices in Najaf, Basra, Amara, Erbil, Sulaimaniya, Dohuk, Kirkuk, Khanaqin and Ramadi. In 2009, ICRC's priority was to visit people detained and to provide the civilian population with emergency assistance, while supporting hospitals and repairing health, water and sanitation infrastructure. As 2009 progressed, the ICRC moved away from large-scale relief towards livelihood support and projects to train and build capacity amongst Iraqi professionals.

There are currently 650 staff members in Iraq and Amman (at the ICRC Iraq support set up), of whom 105 are expatriate staff. Some 549 are based in Iraq (64 expatriates and 485 national staff).

Helping families and detainees stay in contact

In 2009, thousands of people deprived of freedom and visited by the ICRC were able to restore and maintain contact with their relatives by receiving visits or exchanging news through Red Cross messages (RCM). Concerned relatives, seeking information on a family member in MNF-I custody, could also call a 'Helpline' (families outside Iraq could contact the nearest ICRC delegation or Red Cross/Crescent National Society).

- Over 200,000 messages were exchanged with the support of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society.
- 95,000 phone calls from families were processed through the helpline.

In September, with the closure of the American facility at Camp Bucca, the ICRC ended its 4-year family-visit programme that started in 2005. Over the years, it helped make the journey possible for thousands of families, not least by covering part of the costs.

- Almost 30,000 detainees received over 145,000 visits between 2005 and 2009.

The ICRC issued travel documents for refugees, who have been identified for resettlement but did not have a passport.

- 502 Palestinian refugees from Al Waleed camp re-settled in the USA used ICRC travel documents; two were issued for ex-detainees repatriated to their home country.



Supporting families clarify the fate of their missing relatives

The ICRC supports the efforts of the authorities to establish the whereabouts of thousands of people still unaccounted for as a result of past conflicts and facilitates the exchange of information between the countries concerned and the transfer of identified human remains from one country to another. In 2009, the ICRC:

- chaired one meeting of the Tripartite Commission and four of its Technical Sub-Committee, dealing with cases of people missing from the 1990-1991 Gulf war;
- held four meetings with the Ministry of Human Rights in Baghdad, within the 2008 framework agreement, dealing with cases of people missing from the 1980–1988 Iran–Iraq War.

Since 2003, the ICRC has been training local forensic experts in the identification and management of human remains,

while supplying equipment and repairing facilities to help Medico-Legal Institutes enhance their capacity.

- Seven DNA technicians from the Medico-Legal Institute (MLI) in Baghdad received specialized DNA training, one MLI official attended a Forensic Genetics course in the UK, and almost 30 forensic specialists were trained in Forensic Anthropology and Forensic Archaeology.
- Mortuary refrigerators and generators were installed or replaced in three hospitals in Baghdad and two Medico-Legal Units in Baghdad and Baquba, in order to upgrade their storage capacity. One incinerator in Baghdad Hospital was repaired.
- 20,000 body bags were delivered to the MLI in Baghdad and to other Medico-Legal Units in Iraq to help preserve bodies (including human remains) and allow easy retrieval in the mortuary for burial.

Assisting hospitals and primary health-care centres to deliver better health care

Iraqi health facilities benefited from ICRC's support through the provision of regular and emergency medical supplies and equipment to allow facilities cope with a large number of mass casualties.

The ICRC also began a joint training project, in coordination with the Iraqi Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Health of the Kurdistan Regional Government, in Sulaimaniya Emergency Hospital and Al Sadr Teaching Hospital in Najaf to strengthen and ensure the provision of essential emergency services and trauma management. In 2009:

- 250 doctors and nurses from six governorates were certified through the training project "Strengthening Emergency Services in Iraq" in trauma management, infection control and teamwork;
- 80 first-aid staff, doctors and surgeons were trained in advanced first aid, trauma management and war surgery;
- more than 47 tonnes of emergency medical supplies were delivered to health facilities in nine governorates in the aftermath of large-scale attacks;
- almost 80 primary health care centers and hospitals received medical supplies (over 550 tonnes) to maintain

their emergency services, complementing the Ministry of Health's assistance;

- 20 volunteers and managers from five branches of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society received advanced first-aid training;
- 1,200 patients of Al Rashad Psychiatric Hospital in Baghdad benefited from creative and recreational activities through occupational therapy support projects.



Providing physical rehabilitation and social integration for disabled people

The ICRC has been providing limb-fitting and physical rehabilitation services helping disabled people reintegrate into the community since 1993, through active support (equipment donation and sponsorship) and training.

The organisation runs one rehabilitation/limb-fitting centre in Erbil and supports 10 physical rehabilitation centres and crutch workshops run by the Iraqi Ministry of Health (MoH) in Baghdad, Tikrit, Hilla, Najaf, Falluja, Erbil and Basra and the prosthetic-orthotic department of the Institute of Technical Medicine in Baghdad. It has also begun construction of a new physical rehabilitation centre for the MoH in Nasiriya due to open in July 2010. In 2009, these centres:

- registered 10,400 new patients;
- delivered 16,000 prostheses and orthoses.

Nine Iraqi orthopaedic technicians were financed to follow an internationally recognised training in prosthetics and orthotics in Cambodia and Tanzania, which should enhance sustainable and qualified services once the students return to work in Iraq.

Disabled heads of households, who have lost their ability and means of production due to the armed conflict, were assisted with grants to start small businesses in various fields (agriculture, crafts and trades). This aimed to restore their dignity and allow them to feel useful and needed again.

- 300 micro-economic projects, such as grocery and coffee shops, barbershops, beekeeping and car repairs, benefited 300 families (2,000 people) in Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaimania and Kirkuk Governorates. Incomes were increased by a 45% average.



Improving access to clean drinking water and providing better sanitation



Rehabilitation, reconstruction and improvement of water supply and sanitation systems in destitute and conflict-affected areas continued. The ICRC also worked to improve general conditions in health facilities and detention places; repairing and upgrading buildings, water, electrical and sanitation systems. Emergency distribution and provision of safe drinking water to displaced people, residents and hospital patients was carried out when needed, i.e. to Baghdad hospitals after mass-casualty attacks. Between January and December 2009:

- 3.7 millions Iraqis benefited from countrywide repair, maintenance and reconstruction activities to avert/respond to emergencies in the water and sanitation sectors;
- more than 7,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) living in settlements received clean water by truck. Water was also provided to Baghdad hospitals during emergencies;
- 1,800 patients per day benefited from repair or construction of 16 primary health care centres;
- 19 hospitals (capacity of over 7,500 beds) were rehabilitated and/or extensions added;
- living conditions were improved for almost 4,000 detainees in Baghdad's Rusafa Prison and Basra's Maaqal Prison.

Bringing relief assistance to internally displaced people and vulnerable residents

Based on assessments carried out directly by ICRC staff:

- 4,000 people coping with hardship in the aftermath of emergencies (e.g. explosions or floods) in Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaimania and Kirkuk Governorates, were provided with food and non-food items.
- More than 68,000 residents affected by the 2008/9 drought received about 2.4 MT of fertiliser and monthly food rations until the next harvest.
- From January to May, 63,000 intra-governmental IDPs received monthly food, hygiene and other essential household items in complement to the national public distribution system of food.
- About 110,000 internally displaced people living in camps and group settlements received food and non-food items at the onset of winter.

- From August onwards, 2,600 female-headed households received monthly food and hygiene parcels after an assessment revealed them to be among the most vulnerable.
- 46,000 poor people received food and essential household items during the holy month of Ramadan.

Family food parcel	Hygiene parcel	Essential household items
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 kg rice • 4 kg white beans • 4 kg red split lentils • 2 kg chick peas • 4 l vegetable oil • 2 l olive oil • 1 kg iodised salt • 2 kg tomato paste • 2 kg sugar • 2 kg tea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 kg washing powder • 4 l dish washing liquid • 40 female hygiene pads • 10 disposable razors • 1 piece shaving cream • 1 shaving brush • 3 tooth brushes • 3 tooth paste tubes, 75 ml each • 8 pieces toilet soap, 200g each • 0.5 l shampoo • 2 bath towels, 40 x 90 cm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 blankets • 2 jerry cans • 1 bucket • 1 kitchen set • 1 thermos 20 l • 1 tea pot • 1 kettle • tarpaulins • tents

Boosting the productive capacity of communities and internally displaced people

Livelihood-support projects for vulnerable resident communities and IDPs who returned home were carried out in rural areas in Najaf, Wassit, Babil, Diyala, Ninewa, Dohuk, Erbil and Kirkuk. This included the supply of several thousand metric-tonnes (MT) of fertiliser, about 100 MT of seeds, small livestock such as goats and sheep in addition to livestock vaccines and fodder.

- 18,000 vulnerable farmers were able to support their families (almost 110,000 people) through these projects. This included 4,000 returnees in Wassit and Babil Governorates.
- New projects were initiated for almost 3,000 farmers.
- 196 km of irrigation canals were rehabilitated by community labourers as part of a cash for work scheme where they received USD \$116,000 in total.

Promoting international humanitarian law

The ICRC aims to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and prevent suffering by promoting compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL). In Iraq, ICRC staff regularly held IHL information sessions for different sectors of civil society, including local government, community leaders, religious circles, tribal leaders, journalists, university students and lecturers, hospital staff and Iraqi Red Crescent Society staff and volunteers. One such highlight was a seminar on Islam and IHL held under the auspices of Kufa University in Najaf, for clerics from the Shiite and Sunni Endowment and academics. A similar event was organised in Erbil.

IHL sessions were held for senior members of the Iraqi National Army, the Iraqi Police Services, the Peshmerga, the Assayesh and other security forces. Three members of Iraq security forces attended IHL courses in Italy, designed to help those responsible for the teaching and the planning of courses, integrate IHL into regular military training.

Academic institutions were supported in their efforts to develop IHL teaching. Two Iraqi law teachers participated in the annual IHL Arabic course held in Beirut in February 2009.

Assisting women-headed households



Women looking after their families alone are amongst the most vulnerable in Iraq and large numbers of families live in poverty or destitution after their male breadwinners were detained or killed, or went missing. Many women-headed households lack independent sources of income and depend mainly on relatives and charity in a society where women were not raised to be in charge of a family. Finding a job is difficult and the State's support mechanisms still fail to reach large numbers of families in need. Between January and December:

- Over 2,700 vulnerable families headed by women received food and hygiene or essential household items;
- 23 projects were initiated, in collaboration with local NGOs or directly by ICRC, to help women cover the basic needs of their families in Baghdad, Basra and Najaf by running small businesses such as beauty salons and grocery shops.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs welfare allowance can alleviate the plight of families, but it is often difficult and costly to apply for. In collaboration with local women's NGOs, the ICRC advised and supported women and reimbursed their transport costs, while maintaining a regular dialogue with the Ministry to monitor the delivery of the allowance.

- 100 women successfully registered their applications in 2009.

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Mission Statement

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 other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance.

The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.

Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.