



ICRC

# Operational Overview

## ICRC activities in Lebanon from January 2009 to April 2010

*The ICRC in Lebanon remains focused on visiting detainees to assess their treatment and living conditions, improving medical care for Palestinian refugees, assisting the authorities in rehabilitating water infrastructure and maintaining an operational capacity to respond to emergencies alongside the Lebanese Red Cross and the Palestine Red Crescent Society- Lebanon branch.*

*As part of its effort to improve the quality of health care accessible to residents of Palestinian camps, the ICRC continued in 2009 to provide the five hospitals run by the Palestine Red Crescent Society with training for hospital staff, along with support to update theoretical knowledge and improve general practices.*

*In 2010, the ICRC will also help the Palestine Red Crescent Society to build a new community health centre in Nahr el-Bared camp.*

*For the past year and a half, more than 253,000 people benefited from ICRC emergency repair work on collapsed water schemes as well as from an upgrade of their water supply infrastructure in remote and marginalized rural areas. A large-scale project was also launched in 2009 to improve access to water for more than 4,000 inmates of Roumieh Central prison.*

*The ICRC continues to support its national operational partner, the Lebanese Red Cross, to improve its emergency preparedness and to enhance its ability to deliver services to beneficiaries.*

### Visiting detainees

The ICRC has been visiting detainees in Lebanon since March 2007- when the authorities answered positively to its offer of services. In line with the organization's strictly humanitarian mandate, ICRC delegates assess the detainees' treatment, living conditions and respect of their fundamental judicial guarantees, including during the interrogation period. They also provide detainees with a mean to stay in contact with their families, through the regular exchange of Red Cross Messages and transmission of oral greetings.

The ICRC puts a special emphasis on persons arrested in connection with armed conflict or state security, in accordance with its international mandate aimed at protecting and assisting people affected by war and internal violence. These persons are followed closely and individually throughout their detention term.

During the visits, the delegates share and discuss their findings, observations and recommendations with the detaining authorities. Oral and written confidential reports are subsequently addressed in a bilateral way to the concerned authority within the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Internal Security Forces, in addition to the highest judicial authorities.

In parallel to its regular detention visits, the ICRC worked on a comprehensive assessment of health care in prisons to help the authorities deliver better health services for inmates. Works are also ongoing to rehabilitate the water system in Roumieh Central Prison, the country's largest detention facility housing more than 4,000 detainees. Upon its completion, the project will considerably improve the water quantity, quality and distribution

inside the prison.

In-kind assistance was also delivered in 2009 to smaller prisons, such as the installation of bunk beds in Zahle prison and the fixing of water-heating solar panels to improve shower facilities in Tebnine prison.

#### **Between January 2009 and April 2010 the ICRC:**

- visited 6'204 detainees during 207 visits to 25 places of detention
- collected 199 Red Cross Messages from and distributed 111 Red Cross Messages to detainees
- made more than 800 phone calls to families to inform them of the whereabouts of their detained relatives



*A Palestinian woman dictates a Red Cross Message to be delivered to her daughter in Yemen*

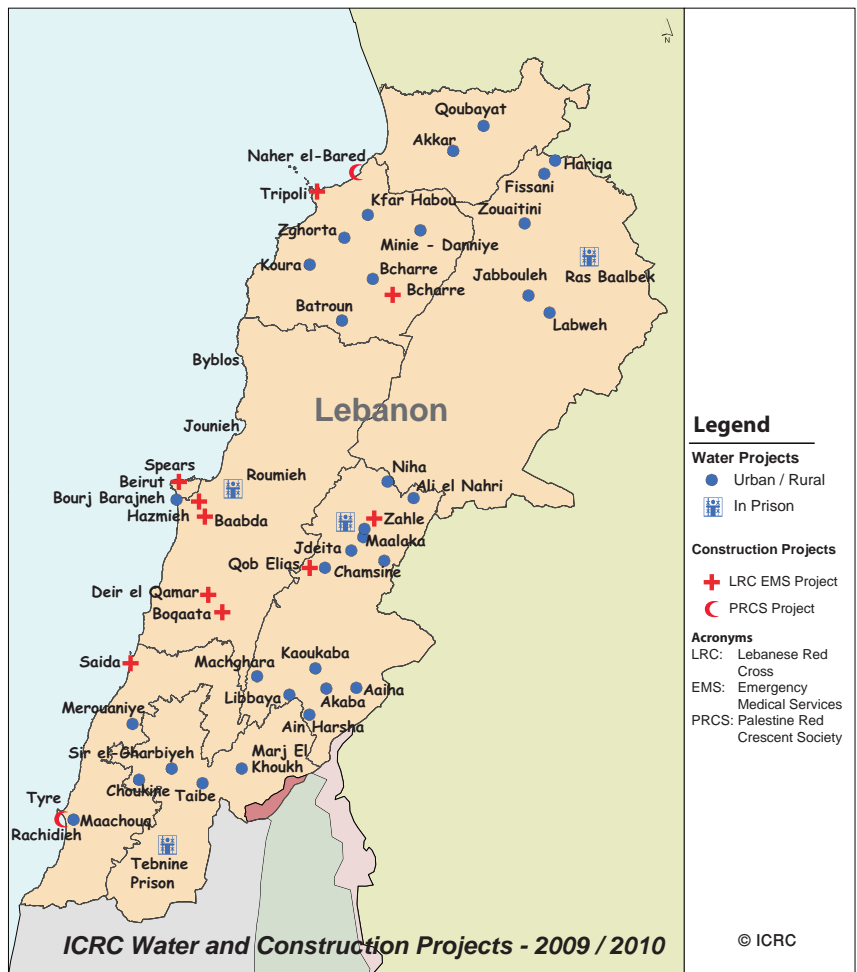
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## Restoring family links

Continuing to fulfill its role as a neutral intermediary between the Israeli and Lebanese authorities, the ICRC repatriated 17 Lebanese nationals living in Israel who wished to return home and repatriated the human remains of another seven Lebanese civilians during the past year and a half. The ICRC also facilitated contact between families in Lebanon and their relatives in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, via Red Cross Messages.

In parallel, the ICRC provided the associations of families of the missing, the Internal Security Forces and the Lebanese Armed Forces with the necessary training and equipment that would enable them to consolidate their compilation of data on the missing.

The ICRC sponsored training for two members of the «scientific laboratory» of the Internal Security Forces forensic department on the use of DNA for identification purposes, through a tailor-made course at Preston University in the UK in 2009.



In 2010, ICRC provided 15 Lebanese forensic doctors appointed by the Ministry of Justice with a training module on exhumation and identification of human remains.

Joint efforts with the concerned authorities led to the identification and confirmation of death of several persons who went missing during the Nahr el Bared conflict in 2007. The ICRC subsequently informed the concerned families and helped them obtain attestations of death.

### **Between January 2009 and April 2010 the ICRC:**

- collected 170 Red Cross Messages and distributed 144 others to civilians in Lebanon who have resorted to the ICRC Restoring Family Links (RFL) services to establish links with their kin abroad, including prisoners in Israel; made 3 phone calls to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a relative detained abroad.
- repatriated 17 Lebanese civilians and the remains of seven others from Israel to Lebanon.

## Providing water for vulnerable communities

As a consequence of many years of conflict, access to clean water remained inadequate in many parts of the country. The ICRC continues to assist the local authorities in renovating water infrastructure and services in

both rural and urban areas and in places of detention.

For the past year and a half, around 253,000 civilians benefited from improved access to clean water following the completion of 26 water projects achieved with ICRC support. Beneficiaries were living in neglected and marginalized areas where water facilities were inadequate, non-existent, or had collapsed due to lack of maintenance. Among the several water projects ICRC carried out in 2009 was the reconstruction of a 500-cubic-meter water reservoir in Kfarabou, North Lebanon, benefiting 4,000 residents. The reservoir had been damaged by an armed conflict in 2000.

In the remote villages of Hariqa and Fissani in the disadvantaged Hermel area of north Bekaa, running water was only available during the rainy season, and in insufficient amounts. In 2009, the ICRC equipped two wells of 400 meters depth with pumps which allowed the 3,000 inhabitants of those villages to have access to clean water throughout the year.

The ICRC carried out other similar emergency repairs for collapsed water schemes, including the rehabilitation of pumping stations and reservoirs and the laying of pipelines, targeting remote communities in the north and the Bekaa.

As part of its cooperation with the water authorities, the ICRC helped put in place a mapping and data collection system of existing water infrastructure in North Lebanon. The project essentially consisted of localizing the resources, including wells, reservoirs, springs, pumping stations and primary water networks, and creating a data bank of relevant information. It will allow the authorities to more efficiently manage their water resources.

**Between January 2009 and April 2010 the ICRC:**

- carried out 26 water rehabilitation projects mainly in the Bekaa valley, benefiting more than 253'000 residents in remote or marginalized communities.

## Supporting health services

Improving quality and access of health care in Palestinian camps remains one of ICRC's operational priorities. In 2009, the organization successfully completed a teaching programme in the five hospitals run by the Palestine Red Crescent Society in addition to another



Participants in a training on first aid in Ein el-Helweh camp learn how to use triangular bandages

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hospital run by Human Call organization in Ein el-Helweh camp. The project provided two years of theoretical and practical training for general, operating theatre and emergency room nurses, as well as for clinical care in the emergency room. It also included the training of Palestine Red Crescent personnel who will continue the teaching and coaching of hospital staff.

As part of this same project, the Palestine Red Crescent Society and the ICRC jointly selected adequate medical equipment for all five hospitals and hospital staff also benefited from ICRC expertise in terms of maintenance and safe use of new equipment.

Lebanese surgeons learned more about dealing with massive influx of injuries and patients' evacuation during armed conflicts, at ICRC War Surgery Seminars in Beirut and Zahle. Participants were introduced to

specific surgical procedures related to the various types of injuries (thoracic, abdominal, orthopedic) caused by different weapons (gunshots, bombs, blasts).

With an eye to the future and to ameliorate the response of the Palestinian community to emergency cases in times of peace and conflict, in 2010 the ICRC started training young people from Burj al-Barajneh, Beddawi and Ein el-Helweh camps on first aid techniques.

**Between January 2009 and April 2010 the ICRC:**

- organized 2 war surgery seminars for some 170 surgeons, including 22 participants from 8 other countries in the region
- 42 general practitioners and 28 nurses working in the emergency rooms of six Palestinian hospitals received specialized training in clinical management of emergencies
- provided medical assistance to 3 ambulance services, 42 hospitals and 6 dispensaries in several Lebanese regions
- rehabilitated the desalination plant of Haifa hospital of the Palestine Red Crescent Society and the sewage system in Balsam hospital.

## Together with the Lebanese Red Cross

Since early 2007, the ICRC has been committed to providing constant support aimed at strengthening the response capacities of the Lebanese Red Cross Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and consolidating its sustainability. For the last three years, the ICRC constructed and rehabilitated more than 11 EMS facilities in different parts of Lebanon.

Support was also provided to establish a staffed and well-functioning logistics department ready to offer its services to all the local branches and departments of the Lebanese Red Cross, especially during emergencies. In particular, the ICRC assisted the national society to rent a central warehouse and to establish a procurement department and a fleet management function.



Lebanese Red Cross volunteers in action

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Cooperation with national partners is a standing policy of the ICRC, which continues to closely collaborate with the Lebanese Red Cross in dealing with existing challenges, assessing achievements and planning for development. Such partnership is made in various domains, including operations and management. In 2010, the two joined hands in the international effort to assist the victims of the earthquake in Haiti by channelling public donations to the disaster-hit island through a bank account. The ICRC also continues to train the Youth department of the Lebanese Red Cross on carrying out assessments and relief distribution in the event of an emergency.

**Between January 2009 and April 2010 the ICRC:**

- *co-financed the organization of a first aid training of 87 trainers by 23 Emergency Medical Services instructors*
- *worked on the building and rehabilitation of ten Emergency Medical Services stations in various parts of the country*

**Promoting respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL)**

The ICRC has maintained dialogue with the Lebanese military and government authorities, as well as actors of the civil society, to promote knowledge and awareness

about International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and ICRC mandate.

In that regard, it regularly briefed the Lebanese Army, the Internal Security Forces and the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) on IHL and ICRC's activities in Lebanon and the region during sessions organized for both their troops and high-ranking officers.

Dissemination sessions of basic rules of IHL were also carried out for Palestinian factions inside Ein el-Helweh camp. In the meantime, the ICRC continued to support the implementation of IHL in the national legislation by sponsoring the participation of six Lebanese legal experts in a regional seminar on IHL, jointly organized by the ICRC and the League of Arab States

**Between January 2009 and April 2010 the ICRC:**

- *organized presentations on IHL and on ICRC's mandate and activities to about 3,500 troops of the Lebanese Armed Forces, 525 members of the Internal Security Forces and 550 UNIFIL personnel*
- *briefed 155 members of the Military Police, 120 police officers and 32 prison personnel on ICRC's standard modalities and procedures applied during visits of places of detention*

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On its website the ICRC shares the most recent information through news releases as well as other feature stories. The website also enables users to find out what the ICRC is, how it works and what it does, by type of activities and by country or region. It can be consulted for the full text of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols and for a list of the States party to those treaties.



*The ICRC has been present in Lebanon since 1967, giving priority to protection and assistance to civilians affected by armed conflict and violence, in partnership with the Lebanese Red Cross Society. Its main delegation is based in Beirut, with offices in Tyr, Tripoli and Ein el-Helweh Palestinian camp. Its current priorities include visiting prisons, supporting hospitals, extending assistance to improve health and water infrastructure in vulnerable communities, dissemination of International Humanitarian Law.*

*There are currently 58 ICRC staff members in Lebanon, including 18 expatriates. The Delegation's budget for 2010 is of 8.8 million US dollars.*