



ACTIVITY REPORT

IRAQ 2024



ICRC



OPERATIONAL CONTEXT IN 2024

Present in Iraq since the Iraq–Iran war in 1980, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) focuses on addressing the consequences of armed conflicts and other situations of violence across the country. As large-scale military operations are over, more attention has been given to transfer of knowledge, recovery and reconstruction efforts, with many people across Iraq still in need of some form of humanitarian assistance and support.

As part of its operations in the country, the ICRC delegation in Iraq seeks to ensure that:

- **People deprived of freedom** benefit from adequate living conditions, access to services and protection against ill-treatment. Their whereabouts are ascertained.
- **Missing persons** are searched for, their fate and whereabouts are clarified, and the most vulnerable families of missing persons improve their capacity to cope with difficulties related to the disappearance.
- The rights of the **victims of new episodes of violence** in terms of protection and access to essential services are preserved as a result of the efforts of the ICRC and the Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC/RC) Movement partners.
- **Persons with physical disabilities** have access to services and programmes that help them reach their full potential in society.
- The **Iraqi Red Crescent Society (IRCS)** institutional and operational capacities are strengthened to respond to emerging needs as a result of the coordinated support of the ICRC and RC/RC Movement partners.

To achieve these objectives, the delegation engaged in dialogue with relevant authorities, concerned parties and affected populations and worked in partnership within and beyond the RC/RC Movement to increase its impact and relevance.

In 2024, the ICRC continued its activities in support of humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence in Iraq. It also undertook activities to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening the international humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Many of our activities were carried out in close coordination and collaboration with the IRCS.

The ICRC, as an impartial and independent organization, acts according to its mandate and mission, derived from the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols, its Statutes – and those of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – and the resolutions of the International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. As an independent, neutral organization, it ensures humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence. It takes action in response to emergencies and at the same time promotes respect for international humanitarian law and its implementation in national law.



PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF FREEDOM

The ICRC remains steadfast in its humanitarian commitment to upholding the rights and dignity of detainees in Iraq, guided by the principles of the international humanitarian law. Through our regular visits conducted with the utmost confidentiality, we strive to create a space for open and bilateral dialogue with the detaining authorities, aiming to identify and address any humanitarian concerns that may arise. By engaging in interviews with detainees, we endeavour to ensure that their fundamental rights are upheld, including access to fair judicial processes and adequate living conditions.

Additionally, we work closely with all stakeholders involved in the detaining process, contributing to the development of policies and legal frameworks aimed at safeguarding the rights and well-being of detainees.

We also seek to alleviate the suffering of their families, particularly by restoring communication between detainees and their relatives through Red Cross messages.

Detention Visits

- **69** detention visits were conducted in **36** places of detention, for a detained population of over **64,466** individuals.
- Over **7,200** detainees were individually followed up by the ICRC delegates across the country.
- More than **4,400** Red Cross messages were collected from detainees and over **4,100** were distributed to them. Additionally, more than **400** Salamats (oral messages to family members) were exchanged in favour of visited detainees.

Healthcare in Detention

- **47,000** detainees gained improved health care access through technical support and medical equipment donations in **14** detention facilities across Iraq.
- Technical support and feedback were provided to the newly established Department of Health Services in Places of Detention at the Ministry of Health.

Water and Sanitation in Detention

- **9,500** detainees gained improved access to water, sanitation, and hygiene, enhancing living conditions, promoting a healthier environment, and ensuring compliance with ICRC standards while assisting detention authorities in managing disease transmission.

Economic Assistance in Detention

- **40,682** detainees benefited from ICRC assistance, receiving hygiene items, clothing, and blankets to improve living conditions and ensure safer access to basic hygiene.

Advocacy and Engagement

- The ICRC engaged with the National Security Advisory to develop a comprehensive National Policy on Correctional File Management in Iraq, enhanced stakeholder dialogue on health services in detention and conducted workshops on management of penitentiary facilities and procedural safeguards.
- **Three** roundtables on international and national standards on treatment of detainees were organised with security agencies and the judiciary in Kurdistan Region.
- Proactive dialogue with Iraqi authorities and embassies regarding the situation of foreigners detained in Iraq and their children was maintained. **Eight** children were repatriated by the ICRC to their home country.



MISSING PERSONS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Many people go missing in war, causing anguish and uncertainty for their families and loved ones. As part of the global efforts of the Central Tracing Agency, one of ICRC's oldest institutions enshrined in the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC seeks to protect and restore contact between separated families, search for and identify missing persons, protect the dignity of the dead, and ensure that the needs of their families are provided for in Iraq.

The delegation does so through direct engagement with and accompaniment of families of missing persons, as well as support to medico-legal actors and other authorities and concerned parties. From daily operational support to policy and legal development, the ICRC seeks to ensure that obligations under the international humanitarian law are met, including the right of families to know the fate and whereabouts of their missing loved ones.

In this vein, the delegation coordinates closely with other delegations and RC/RC Movement partners in Iraq and beyond, to provide a comprehensive response to a significant number of missing cases resulting from decades of conflicts and violence in Iraq. This also includes the chairmanship of the Tripartite Commissions to clarify the fate and whereabouts of persons who went missing during the two Gulf wars, namely Iran–Iraq and Iraq–Kuwait wars.

Clarifying the Fate of the Missing

- Over **1,500** new cases of missing persons were reported to the ICRC in Iraq, while **343** cases were clarified. Additionally, **79** human remains from the Gulf wars were identified by the medico-legal authorities, bringing much needed closure to missing persons' relatives and loved ones.

Support to Authorities, Advocacy, and Engagement

- **320** participants from state agencies attended **23** thematic trainings, enhancing their technical skills for resolving missing persons cases and responding effectively to mass fatalities during emergencies.
- To ensure sustainable long-term impact, the ICRC cemented its collaboration with key medico-legal actors to enhance Iraq's capacity to search for and identify missing persons' remains.
- The ICRC provided specialized assistance and technical advice to relevant national authorities aiming at establishing a unified registry for all missing persons and facilitating coordination amongst entities.
- Representatives from the Iraqi relevant authorities and medico-legal actors visited Colombia and met with several Colombian authorities working on missing persons, to exchange experience and best practices.
- The ICRC successfully completed key infrastructure projects in Iraq, including rehabilitating **two** cemeteries to ensure dignified treatment of the deceased, renovating the Medico-Legal Unit in Ninawa and the Missing persons Department in Baghdad for improved efficiency and privacy, and expanding the Martyrs Foundation warehouse in Baghdad to enhance security and accessibility.
- **163** sets of human remains from the Iran–Iraq War were exchanged under the auspices of the ICRC.
- The ICRC provided comprehensive training to joint field teams searching for missing persons from the Iran–Iraq War, covering blast trauma care, GPS navigation, and forensic methods. To enhance safety and effectiveness, individual first aid kits and blast trauma kits were also supplied.

Support to families of missing persons

- **471** families received support through the ICRC's extended multi-disciplinary accompaniment program, addressing their psychosocial, economic, legal, and administrative needs across areas including Saqlawiya, North Babel, Sinjar, Tal Afar, Abu Maria and Khanke.
- **70** accompaniers, including families of missing persons, were trained in Mental Health, Psychosocial Support, Protection, Legal and Forensic processes to better assist families.
- **1,071** persons benefited from mental health and psychosocial support activities that included sensitization/information sessions and trainings.
- **231** families received tailored economic assistance to alleviate the hardships resulting from the disappearances of their loved ones.
- **43** relatives of missing persons national identification documents, death declarations, and curatorship with the support of the Iraq Bar Association and the ICRC. Additionally, **379** document requests remain in process.
- A Youth Centre in North Babel was rehabilitated and its access for people with physical disabilities improved, so to carry out activities with the families of missing persons.



VICTIMS OF HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

Protecting civilians during armed conflict, including vulnerable groups such as women, children, and displaced persons, is a cornerstone of the IHL. Similarly, healthcare personnel and first responders and humanitarian workers must be protected and able to carry out their work, unimpeded at all times. As promoter and guardian of the international humanitarian law, the ICRC seeks to ensure that States Parties to the Geneva Conventions adhere to and ensure respect of the Geneva Conventions in all circumstances.

Throughout 2024, the ICRC continued its engagement with various stakeholders and actors of influence across Iraq to galvanize respect for and support of the international humanitarian law. It also continued to assist vulnerable groups, including displaced persons and returnees, and maintained its support to the authorities to address the consequences of conflict in urban areas. Collaborating with Movement partners and authorities, it also promoted emergency preparedness and response, particularly focusing on managing mass casualty incidents and more broadly on the organisation for the delivery of emergency healthcare services.

Healthcare Support

- **Eight** hospitals were provided with material support as part of the emergency preparedness framework.
- Nearly **386** people were trained in first aid and pre-hospital emergency care.

Emergency Assistance and Livelihood Support

- **144** conflict-affected households received urgent financial assistance, enabling them to purchase food, secure safer shelter, and meet their immediate basic needs. Additionally, **39** families impacted by a sudden violent incident received emergency cash assistance to enhance their resilience and reduce exposure to further risks.

In collaboration with communities and local partners, the ICRC also worked to sustainably enhance the livelihoods of families affected by conflict and violence, while reinforcing the systems and services needed for these families to earn a safe living..

- **138** households received cash assistance to support crop cultivation, encouraging the adoption of climate-smart farming methods, including improved access to irrigation. Among these families, **88** participated in specialized training on Good Agricultural Practices, conducted in collaboration with the Directorate of Agriculture, focusing on climate-smart techniques.
- **746** livestock-dependent families benefited from cash assistance to purchase breeding stock and secure feed, even in remote areas. To enhance the services provided by local partners to these herders, **seven** veterinary clinics across Iraq were equipped to deliver essential animal health services to surrounding communities.
- **277** families received cash assistance to restore their income-generating capabilities and feed their families. Each family participated in basic business skills training designed to enhance their financial literacy, enabling them to make informed business decisions and manage their finances more effectively.
- **446** families received multipurpose cash assistance as initial support, with additional assistance planned for 2025.

Water Supply and Infrastructure Development

- A Water Services Plan for the city of Tal Afar was developed, in collaboration with Ninawa Directorate of Water.
- The IRCS was supported by the ICRC in procuring **1,800** hygiene kits for emergency response and the purchase and donation of a mobile reverse osmosis unit, which is stored and ready for deployment during emergencies.

Emergency Care Support Program

- The ICRC conducted **22** meetings to enhance and strengthen Emergency Care in Iraq, in close collaboration with the Head of the Emergency Medicine Department at Ministry of Health's Directorate of Operational and Emergency Medical Services.
- The ICRC supported the Emergency Medical Services Directorate at Ministry of Health in organizing key meetings, including the Emergency Medicine Steering Committee, Ministry of Health Emergency Working Group, the Parliamentary Health Committee, the Directorate of Health Emergency Services Working Group and the inaugural Emergency Medicine Higher Steering Committee.

Supporting Returnees and Helping Rebuild Lives

- The ICRC supported the reconstruction of homes for **283** returnee households in Qaraghoul through its Durable Returns Program.
- The ICRC improved access to educational facilities for **360** students in Basma, following the school's reconstruction.

Advocacy and Engagement

- The ICRC **engaged regularly** with weapon bearers and influential actors on civilian treatment, hostilities, medical personnel safety, law enforcement, dignified returns, and durable solutions.

Weapon Contamination

- Through Risk Awareness and Safe Behavior (RASB), **8,990** people living in weapon-contaminated areas were sensitized about risks and adopted safer practices to reduce vulnerability.



PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

In 2024, the ICRC maintained its engagement to make sure that people with physical disabilities have effective access to quality and sustainable physical rehabilitation services and assistive devices. Beyond physical rehabilitation services, the ICRC also supported civil society organizations in promoting the social and economic inclusion of people with physical disabilities within their communities – through adaptive sports, education and (self-) employment initiatives. Additionally, it sought to prevent and mitigate risks related to explosive remnants of war and mines, including through awareness-raising sessions in communities at risk.

Support to Operations of Physical Rehabilitation Centres

- **13,795** women, men, and children benefited from physical rehabilitation services at the ICRC-supported governmental centres or at Erbil Physical Rehabilitation Centre (PRC).
- **394** disabled family breadwinners were referred by the PRCs and received cash assistance to start small businesses. Prior to receiving the financial aid, **326** of them participated in external training sessions to enhance their financial literacy and equip them with knowledge to make informed business decisions.
- The ICRC supported a total of **two** governmental PRCs and the PRC in Erbil. **Sadr Al Qanat** in Baghdad and **Nasiriyah PRCs** underwent rehabilitation and expansion works, both completed and inaugurated during 2024.
- The ICRC rehabilitated the PRC in Nasiriyah by expanding the building, increasing storage, and adding three workshops, now totalling **seven**. The PRC has become a referral facility for persons with disabilities in Thi Qar, providing services to communities in southern Iraq.

Trainings

- **30** technicians from various PRCs across the country are currently undergoing training in orthotics and prosthetics at Erbil Polytechnic University, as part of a bachelor's program developed in partnership with the ICRC. The first cohort of **15** students graduated successfully in June 2024. The training program has been recognized and accredited by the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics for two years, extending until summer 2026.

Financial Support

- **639** individuals received financial support to cover transportation costs to and from the PRCs.

Disability and Social Inclusion

- The ICRC organized and supported the **2nd Iraqi amputee football tournament** in Baghdad, featuring **five** teams with a total of **85** players from across Iraq, as part of its social inclusion program.
- The ICRC conducted a market assessment in Mosul to promote economic inclusion and recovery for persons with disabilities. This initiative aims to better understand the barriers they face in accessing employment, entrepreneurship, and education.

Reducing the Impact of Weapon Contamination

- Nearly **6,000** individuals in at-risk or affected communities were supported with face-to-face risk awareness and safe behaviour sessions.
- Over **230** ICRC and RC/RC Movement staff members were trained in the field of weapon contamination hazards.



COOPERATION WITH THE IRAQI RED CRESCENT SOCIETY

In 2024, the ICRC continued its collaboration with the IRCS to deliver principled and effective humanitarian responses to key needs in Iraq. The focus was on enhancing coordination with other Movement partners to prepare for emergencies and strengthen programmatic responses in areas, such as disaster risk reduction, relief, health, water access, family reunification, and climate change. Additionally, the ICRC promoted national society development to bolster the IRCS's capacity for safe, principled humanitarian action and improve the sustainability of its core operations.

Partnering for Humanitarian Action

- In 2024, **nine** Operational Cooperation Agreements were signed with the IRCS in the areas of Cooperation, including Safer Access, National Society Development, Health Care in Danger, Health, Water and Habitat, Economic Security, Protection of Family Links, Communication, and Weapon Contamination.
- To promote the IRCS volunteers' roles and acknowledge their efforts, the ICRC supported the IRCS in celebrating the International Volunteer Day with a large event at the IRCS HQ and in the field.
- **1,829** documents attesting to the detention of former prisoners of war or individuals who were detained during past conflicts and met by the ICRC while in detention, were provided in partnership with the IRCS.

Healthcare, Water and Habitat Services

- The ICRC assisted the IRCS in delivering health services by supporting **ten** mobile clinics deployed across **seven** governorates, effectively responding to floods and emergency during mass gatherings, and displacements. Additionally, the ICRC established Community Emergency Response Teams in Nasiriya, training **39 IRCS volunteers** who conducted **110** sensitization sessions on Mass Casualty Incidents for local communities.
- With support from the ICRC, IRCS mobile clinics conducted **12,707** free-of-charge medical consultations.
- **Four** state-of-the-art solar-powered reverse osmosis units were installed, providing drinking water to **6,300** residents in the governorates of Diwaniyah, Muthanna, and Missan.
- **Three** villages in Thi Qar, Wassit, and Babil governorates received enhancements to their solar-powered water supply, benefiting **5,400** residents.
- In collaboration with the IRCS and Norwegian Red Cross, **50** sessions were conducted for **1,007** health workers on managing hostile behaviours in hospital settings. Additionally, **77** awareness sessions focusing on the detrimental effects of attacks on healthcare personnel and institutions, as well as the importance of ensuring safe access to health services were delivered at **five** sites, reaching **1,068** community members.
- In collaboration with the IRCS, **48** orientation sessions on gender-based violence were conducted in selected communities, reaching **3,006** beneficiaries in **six** governorates.

Infrastructure Support

- The IRCS branch in Babil was upgraded with a **65KW** solar energy system. Phase one of the component provision was completed in 2024, with installation planned for 2025. Additionally, **13 out of 18 IRCS branches** were jointly assessed to identify key priorities and urgent needs..

Emergency Response

- The ICRC donated a **mobile desalination treatment plant** with full required accessories, to the IRCS for emergency response.
- To enhance IRCS's contingency planning and emergency response, the ICRC provided financial support for the procurement of **12,250** food parcels, **1,800** hygiene kits, and **5,294** blankets. This assistance enabled IRCS to support up to **5,500** families to meet their urgent needs.
- As part of the IRCS branch development initiative, **five** branches were provided with sets of protective gear to support the operations of the IRCS Emergency Response Team in the field.
- The ICRC supported the IRCS in organizing a **workshop** to draft the IRCS Contingency Plan, with the participation of all Movement partners in Iraq.

Capacity building

- **20** IRCS staff and volunteers were trained on Restoring Family Links Standard Operating Procedures and Emergency Response. Additionally, **35** IRCS participants attended two workshops on Restoring Family Links response to religious occasions.
- **23** IRCS volunteers and staff were trained on Emergency Response and Climate Change.
- **18** IRCS volunteers were involved in various ICRC livelihood activities, including data collection, business skills training and monitoring, to support projects aimed at enhancing the livelihoods of vulnerable families across Iraq.
- Capacity-strengthening trainings on Victim Data Collection were conducted for **25** IRCS volunteers in Salah Al-Din, Ninawa and Kirkuk; Risk Awareness and Safe Behaviour Training of Trainers (ToT) for **18** team leaders from **four** branches; and Project Management Training for **four** participants at IRCS HQ in Baghdad.
- The ICRC supported the ToT in Health Care in Danger for **10** IRCS staff members and volunteers, equipping them with the necessary skills to implement Health Care in Danger activities in their respective governorates.
- **Four** small libraries/shelving units with personal computers were installed at the IRCS HQ and **three** branches to promote self-learning about the Movement.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

ACCESS AND ACCEPTANCE

ICRC continued its engagement with all relevant actors to ensure unimpeded access to vulnerable populations in Iraq. In its sixth year, the Community Contact Centre (CCC) remained the first point of contact for beneficiaries, allowing affected individuals to share inquiries, requests, and complaints. The CCC also provided information on ICRC activities, eligibility criteria for programmes, and follow-up on specific cases.

Engagement and dialogue

- Through social media, the ICRC reached over **621,000** fans or subscribers on its main platforms.
- It held over **50** high-level meetings with military personnel and security authorities.
- Over **40** training sessions for armed and security forces were conducted with participants from the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior.
- **Five** interlocutors from the armed and security forces were sent abroad by the ICRC for training and development.

Community Feedback





- The ICRC Community Contact Centre (CCC) received over **16,355** calls – this includes inquiries from families of missing and detained persons, requests for inclusion in ICRC programmes and complaints against selection criteria.
- The CCC processed and resolved around **2,453** inquiries and requests, received from affected people.





The ICRC helps people around the world affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence, doing everything it can to protect their lives and dignity and to relieve their suffering, often with its Red Cross and Red Crescent partners. The organization also seeks to prevent hardship by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and championing universal humanitarian principles.

People know they can count on the ICRC to carry out a range of life-saving activities in conflict zones and to work closely with the communities there to understand and meet their needs. The organization's experience and expertise enables it to respond quickly and effectively, without taking sides.

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