



ICRC ACTIVITIES IN IRAQ

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Mustafa Al Sumadai/ICRC

OUR RESPONSE IN 2020

The ICRC has been working in Iraq continuously since 1980 to address the humanitarian consequences of war and other situations of violence. While it continued to respond to needs generated by decades of conflict, the ICRC in 2020 dedicated much of its work and efforts to help prevent or slow down the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigate other risks arising from it. It expanded its support to hospitals, primary health centers, physical rehabilitation centers and places of detention where the ICRC has privileged access and could contribute to better protect detainees and prison staff from the disease. Moreover, the ICRC strived to boost the capacity

of vulnerable families to face the economic strain resulting from the pandemic, especially women-headed households, people with disabilities, Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and returnees, frequently in collaboration with the Iraqi Red Crescent Society (IRCS).

And in so doing, precautionary measures were duly integrated into our modus operandi, to protect both those we endeavor to support and our own staff.

The ICRC operates through its delegation in Baghdad and its offices located in Mosul, Erbil, Kirkuk, Najaf, Ramadi, Basra, Khanaqin, Sulaymaniyah, and Dohuk.

STRENGTHENING HEALTH CARE SERVICES & HELPING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Health services in Iraq have suffered from years of adversity and are often overburdened or insufficiently resourced. The ICRC regularly supports health-care facilities across the country to help them remain operational and cope with additional needs during emergencies, including those generated by COVID-19. Its contributions in 2020 ranged from monthly drug donations to Primary Health Care Centres

(PHCCs) and hospitals to material and technical support to Physical Rehabilitation Centres (PRCs). This was complemented by Covid-specific assistance to help limit exposure risks for both patients and medical staff. Moreover, and in order to improve the quality of care, the ICRC facilitated training and continuing education for health personnel in different areas.

IN 2020, THE ICRC:

- Supported a total of 147 health facilities (including those that are part of ICRC standard programs and others that benefitted from ad hoc support) with emergency or regular donations that included medication, equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE) and hygiene materials.
- Assisted hospitals to increase their COVID-19 bed capacity for moderate and severe cases, by donating 144 oxygenated beds in addition to 33 oxygen concentrators.
- Supported 5 hospitals with weapon wounded sets to help treat the wounded.
- Helped enhance Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS) services for victims of violence in 5 PHCCs and build capacities in this respect of 8 medical staff in 1 hospital in Najaf through a “helping the helpers” program. The program aimed to improve the psychosocial wellbeing, functionality, stress and coping mechanisms of the staff
- Provided physical rehabilitation services to 20,842 people with disabilities, including through the fitting of 2,380 prostheses, 17,164 orthoses and 500 wheelchairs at 15 state-run PRCs supported by the ICRC and one ICRC-managed PRC.
- Delivered training to 37 physiotherapists, 23 prosthetist/orthotists and other rehabilitation professionals in cerebral palsy management, the use of materials for modular technology, wheelchair service delivery, amputee rehabilitation and exercise prescription to physiotherapy students.
- Conducted an “Emergency Obstetric and New Born Care For Mothers and Baby Health” training in collaboration with the Nursing and Mid-

wiferies Department of the Ministry of Health (MoH) to improve the knowledge of 17 midwife lecturers.

- Organized 6 face-to-face training sessions for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in southern of Iraq, and distributed corresponding training material.
- Facilitated 230 COVID-19 awareness sessions for 6,398 beneficiaries, and distributed 880 awareness posters.
- Developed and disseminated safe procedures and guidelines for COVID response to all MoH PRCs.

IN ADDITION, TO HELP ENHANCE RESPECT FOR THE MEDICAL MISSION AND ACCESS TO HEALTH, THE ICRC:

- Continued to engage in dialogue with key civilian and security authorities, encouraging them to help protect medical personnel, vehicles and facilities and convey key messages to the public.
- Launched, together with the IRCS, ‘Health Care in Action’ and ‘Health Care in Danger’ digital campaigns, aiming to recognize the efforts of medical workers to combat the pandemic and raise awareness on how threats and violence affect the delivery of much needed health services to the population. Both campaigns reached more than a million and half Iraqis.
- Developed and distributed – together with the IRCS, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and the Danish Red Cross – a series of posters with key messages tackling stigma associated with COVID-19, and integrated this messaging into its public communication.

SUPPORTING RETURNEES AND HELPING THEM RE-BUILD THEIR LIVES

The ICRC continued to work on its Durable Returns Programme (DRP) to enable sustainable conditions for returnees in different areas in Iraq. The program aims to help families who have returned to their places of origin to rebuild their lives in a safe environment, with access to essential services as well as livelihood opportunities. To do so, it also addresses underlying

protection concerns, raises awareness on explosive hazards, facilitates repair of key public infrastructure and disburses cash grants for shelter reconstruction, a variety of livelihoods and basic needs while involving communities in decision-making. Cash transfers are prioritized to stimulate market recovery.



Mustafa Al Sumaidie/ICRC

IN 2020, THE ICRC:

- Rehabilitated, retrofitted or rebuilt 73 war damaged shelter units, while 278 shelter units are undergoing work and will be completed by the 1st quarter of 2021.
- Distributed unconditional multipurpose cash (to complement the cash for shelter grants) to approximately 600 households.
- Disbursed around 245 different livelihood grants (for livestock, agriculture, construction, and regular business related activities) to assist households restart their businesses and cover their minimum expenditure basket.
- Supported one settlement level project, involving debris removal and sub grading of roads.

ENSURING THE DIGNITY AND SAFETY OF PERSONS DEPRIVED OF FREEDOM

Throughout 2020, the ICRC's activities in favor of people deprived of liberty had to be adapted to the pandemic. The ICRC maintained a regular dialogue throughout the year with detaining and health authorities to support their efforts to prevent, prepare for and respond to COVID-19 outbreaks, and to this effect donated preventive material to some detention facilities. The ICRC

otherwise continued to visit places of detention (PoDs) and engage in confidential dialogue with the authorities on the treatment and living conditions of detainees, including to ensure alternatives to maintain family contacts during the suspension of family visits. The ICRC also provided Family Links services as well as material assistance according to need.



Mustafa Al Sumadiye/ICRC

IN 2020, THE ICRC:

- Conducted 182 visits to 64 PoDs holding 54,919 detainees in total.
- Provided COVID-19 preventive material (e.g. soap, disinfectant, PPE, non-touch thermometers, and awareness posters) to 32 PoDs holding almost 49,000 detainees.
- Donated 159 handwashing points to 24 PoDs across Iraq.
- Reinforced the authorities' capacity to provide COVID-19 medium care inside 6 PoDs, holding 18,297 detainees and already supported through regular health programs, by providing technical expertise and equipment.
- Held training sessions for 238 detention personnel and health staff on COVID-19-related matters, such as PPE donning and doffing, outbreak contingency planning and response, and infection prevention and control measures.
- Supported responses to other health needs in detention, including tuberculosis screening for 2,962 detainees in one PoD, and fungal skin treatment for 1,552 detainees in 3 PoDs. Burn and dressing kits for the benefit of 2,300 detainees were also provided in one PoD.
- Provided individual mobility aid to 161 detainees and nutritional support for 226 detainees.
- Distributed hygiene items, clothing and books to 52,082 detainees.
- Helped detainees and their relatives stay in touch by delivering 15,804 oral messages and 3,543 Red Cross messages.

ASSISTING VULNERABLE FAMILIES

Through a variety of economic security programs, the ICRC continued to support the most vulnerable affected populations across Iraq – whether internally displaced, host communities, or returnees from previous years and recent camp closures – including previously assisted households whose livelihoods became once again precarious as a result of the pandemic, to help protect their productive assets.

Its response included in-kind distributions, cash assistance, and livelihood support activities in order to help people meet their immediate needs and maintain or retrieve their income. In so doing, the ICRC also adjusted its way of working to mitigate COVID-19 risks, for instance by carrying out home-deliveries and minimizing physical gatherings.



Muyassar Mansour/ICRC

IN 2020, THE ICRC:

- Donated food and essential household items (EHI) to (24,162 individuals).
- Distributed cash assistance to (75,163 individuals), in the frame of its multipurpose cash,
- Provided food and EHI to 6,900 households (35,175 individuals).
- Distributed cash assistance to 8,811 households (52,957 individuals), which included
- cash for work, micro-economic initiative and vocational training programs.
- Provided livestock support (cows) to 100 women-headed households (600 individuals).

MOREOVER, TO HELP ADDRESS ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC HARDSHIP LINKED TO COVID-19, THE ICRC:

- Provided food and EHI to 6,900 households (35,175 individuals).
- Distributed cash assistance to 8,811 households (52,957 individuals), which included
- unconditional cash grants to beneficiaries previously assisted through micro-economic initiatives and vocational training in 2019.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION FOR AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

Following the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak, the ICRC supported water utilities to remain operational in the face of movement restrictions, exposure risks for workers and economic hardship induced by the pandemic. Upon the resumption of movements, it continued working closely with authorities and communities

across the country to restore access to safely managed water services. Throughout 2020, the ICRC also collaborated closely with the Ninawa water authorities to build a forward looking programme to address the multifaceted, long-standing vulnerabilities affecting the proper functioning of Mosul's water service.



Ali Khateel/ICRC

IN 2020, THE ICRC:

- Rehabilitated, reinforced and extended 7 water systems serving 186'616 persons, and initiated 4 other similar interventions that will benefit 84'600 persons.
- Donated various items, including water filters and jerrycans, to 10,229 vulnerable persons to help them cope with water scarcity.
- Supported 903 vulnerable water facility operators and their families (5,500 individuals in total) with food parcels as well as preventive items to enable them to overcome pandemic-

related constraints and risks and continue carrying out their crucial duties.

- Engaged in a 16-month-long exhaustive diagnosis of Mosul City's water service – which included a detailed inventory of assets, structural mapping, and organizational analysis – and elaborated a corresponding programme that will help authorities tackle systemic weaknesses and ensure more effective delivery of vital water resources to the population.

CLARIFYING THE FATE OF THE MISSING

Knowing the fate and whereabouts of a loved one is a fundamental need for the families of missing persons. The ICRC together with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies helps separated persons to locate and maintain contact with family members across Iraq and abroad. Over the past year, the fate of hundreds of persons arrested in connection with current

and past hostilities was clarified through confidential interventions with Iraqi authorities on behalf of families. The ICRC also continued to support efforts to locate people still unaccounted for in connection with the 1980–88 Iran–Iraq war and the 1990–91 Iraq–Kuwait war.



Ali Khateeb/ICRC

IN 2020, THE ICRC:

- Kept direct contact with families looking for their relatives, opening 2,736 new requests to search for missing persons.
- Helped clarify the fate of more than 960 persons through the Restoring Family Links programme.
- Oversaw, in its capacity as the chair of the Iran–Iraq and Iraq–Kuwait Tripartite Committees, the handover of 192 human remains from

Iraq to Iran and the transfer of 21 boxes containing human remains from Iraq to Kuwaiti.

- Organized a 10-day public campaign to mark the International Day of the Disappeared and raise awareness about the ongoing plight of all families whose loved ones remain unaccounted for.
- Provided six months' cash assistance to 166 families of missing persons.

PROMOTING DIGNIFIED TREATMENT OF THE DEAD

Proper management of the dead remains essential to the well-being of surviving relatives and to preventing the deceased from becoming missing persons. The ICRC thus continued to provide equipment and technical training to

Iraqi medicolegal authorities, forensic practitioners and first responders, to help strengthen their capacity in different forensic processes and better manage large fatality numbers.



IN 2020, THE ICRC:

- Supported the Medico-Legal Directorate (MLD) in conducting post-mortem analyses, through coaching on the use of standard operating procedures developed with ICRC support.
- Provided material in support of DNA sampling (2,000 FTA cards for the collection of Biological Reference Samples) and the proper storage of human remains (donation of 500 plastic boxes) at the MLD.
- Distributed protective equipment for practitioners and 4,485 body bags to health structures and IRCS.
- Built the admission and cleaning area for forensic anthropological analysis at the MLD anthropology laboratory.
- Donated books, computers and other material to the newly created MLD library and rehabilitated the family visit room.
- Promoted the safe and dignified treatment of those deceased due to COVID-19 as well as respect for the needs of their families in line with religious and cultural beliefs through its bilateral dialogue with concerned authorities.

REDUCING THE IMPACT OF WEAPON CONTAMINATION

Millions of people in Iraq are exposed to the risk of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERWs), such as unexploded bombs, shells, cluster-munitions and improvised explosive devices, from past conflicts and ongoing security operations.

In the framework of its weapon contamination

activities, the ICRC strives to introduce risk awareness and safe behavior to help people understand the dangers posed by weapons. It also provides assistance to victims, in terms of medical referrals but also socio-economic support of different types..



Ibrahim Sher Khan/ICRC

IN 2020, THE ICRC:

- Carried out risk awareness sessions on ERW and landmine-related hazards for 8,380 persons living in the most affected locations around Iraq.
- Conducted field surveys and risk analyses in 10 villages, to help ensure the safe implementation of ICRC activities and provide alternate solutions for the populations concerned to sustain their

daily income without risking their lives.

- Provided material and other support to authorities, to ensure the proper marking of hazardous areas.
- Developed, in partnership with the IRCS, a “Victims Data Collection” project in Ninawa and Salah al-Din, whereby the stories of 180 ERW and mine victims were documented..

PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL NORMS

The ICRC has an internationally-recognized mandate to develop and promote international humanitarian law (IHL) and maintains a dialogue with all parties to conflict to help ensure the protection of those not or no longer taking part in hostilities under IHL as well as the respect of other applicable norms, including international human rights law (IHRL). The

ICRC also works with different stakeholders, including arms carriers, to improve knowledge of IHL and IHRL through workshops and training activities, and provides technical advice to national authorities in their efforts to integrate international standards into domestic law and regulatory frameworks.



IN 2020, THE ICRC:

- Shared comments with the authorities on a number of draft laws, dealing among others with enforced disappearances and the use of force in law enforcement operations.
- Discussed with various authorities and other stakeholders the outcome of an ICRC-commissioned study on the legal framework governing the protection of health care in Iraq.
- Resumed IHRL training activities, after a long disruption due to Covid19 restrictions, with the Iraqi Police, with a special focus on units in charge of crowd control and investigations. Throughout the year, a total of 423 officers received training.
- Organized IHL sessions for 215 Iraqi Army officers and maintained engagement with the Ministry of Defence and Defence University for

Military Studies, including to plan for training activities to be carried out in 2021..

- Organized an online IHL seminar for 137 law students, in collaboration with the Mosul University-College of law.
- Held its annual academics programme online, with a focus on the thematic of Health Care in Danger, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. The workshops included 43 participants from public universities in Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.
- Engaged with the authorities, security actors and community leaders to draw attention to humanitarian and protection concerns of the civilian population affected by armed conflict, with a particular focus on vulnerable populations in protracted displacement.

COOPERATION WITH THE IRAQI RED CRESCENT SOCIETY (IRCS)

After the onset of the pandemic, some 900 IRCS staff and volunteers delivered regular awareness sessions and contributed to prevention efforts across Iraq, including through disinfection activities in IDP camps, PoDs, government institutions and public places. The IRCS also supported vulnerable families affected by

movement restrictions with food and hygiene kits. The ICRC redirected significant planned programme funds for 2020 to assist its partner in COVID-19-related endeavors, in addition to providing in-kind contributions – such as food parcels, hygiene kits, and PPE.



Muyassar Ma'sour/ICRC

IN 2020, THE ICRC SUPPORTED IRCS COVID-19 RELATED ACTIVITIES BY:

- Donating 1,250 food parcels, 27,300 hygiene kits, 75,000 surgical masks, and 75,000 gloves.
- Procuring 12,300 sanitation kits and delivering them to IRCS warehouses.
- Providing cash contributions to purchase 33,584 food parcels and oxygen equipment (100 cylinders, 100 regulators, 100 oximeters, 2500 masks), and support the IRCS “Your Doctor” program for 4 months, through

which consultation services on COVID-19 were provided to 4,073 people.

- Supporting the development and delivery of 3,500 copies of posters on COVID-19 stigma, in collaboration with the Danish Red Cross.
- Designing and launching joint Health Care in Action and Health Care in Danger digital campaigns and hygiene (WaSH) staff and volunteers from 5 branches.

IN ADDITION, THE ICRC ALSO:

- Supported a logistic assessment jointly with the Finnish Red Cross, which focused on 16 IRCS branches. The recommendations helped the IRCS improve their logistic setup and management of humanitarian assistance.
- Signed a memorandum of understanding with the IRCS and Norwegian Red Cross on Health Care in Danger, in the framework of

which 2 training of trainers were carried out for 36 IRCS staff on de-escalation of violence and Stress Management in Health Care Facilities.

- Continued to work with the IRCS on consolidating financial management procedures; completing the first phase of a corresponding development plan and currently working on the second.

“SAFE PROGRAMMING” AND STAFF HEALTH

To protect our beneficiaries, minimize the exposure risk of our staff and thus preserve our ability to continue working in support of the Iraqi people, the ICRC continued to implement a series of strict precautionary measures in its structures across the country and while carrying out activities in the field. These included internal awareness sessions, enhanced workplace hygiene, safe behaviors with colleagues and beneficiaries in line with social distancing

practices (favoring for instance remote rather than physical interactions where possible or amending assistance delivery methods), and quarantining of staff recently returned from abroad. They remained part of our commitment to operate in a way that does not create additional risks for the populations in need that we support within the framework of our humanitarian mission in Iraq, as well as our duty of care towards our employees.



COMMUNITY CONTACT CENTRE

The ICRC has established a community contact centre (CCC) to provide a communication channel through which affected people can formally share feedback and if necessary file complaints confidentially. The CCC receives questions and comments from callers from all around Iraq in connection with their humanitarian needs and ICRC activities. The CCC also shares information on ICRC programs and criteria for eligibility and carries out surveys on behalf of the ICRC.



Community Contact Centre
مركز التواصل المجتمعي

IN 2020, THE ICRC:

- Received 31,608 calls, which included inquiries from families of missing and detained persons, and requests for inclusion in ICRC projects.
- Delivered 1,000 oral messages ('Salamat') to families of detainees held in Nassiriya Central Prison.
- Delivered key messages to families of detainees regarding restrictions on family visits to places of detention, as a precautionary measure against COVID-19.
- Processed and resolved 27,287 inquiries and requests received from affected people
- Conducted post-distribution monitoring surveys to assess the impact of the ICRC's services on affected people.
- Conducted a satisfaction and perception survey across Iraq to understand how affected people perceive the ICRC, their level of satisfaction with the ICRC's services as well as their access to information on COVID-19.
- Conducted surveys across Iraq to assess the impact of COVID-19 on micro-economic initiative beneficiaries as well as on the food security and livelihood situation in the country.
- Supported field teams in the remote registration of beneficiaries and carried out over 23 field support missions.

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We help people around the world affected by armed conflict and other violence, doing everything we can to protect their lives and dignity and to relieve their suffering, often with our Red Cross and Red Crescent partners. We also seek to prevent hardship by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and championing universal humanitarian principles.

People know they can count on us 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. Our experience and expertise enable us to respond quickly and effectively, without taking sides.

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