



+ ICRC delegation  
 + ICRC sub-delegation  
 + ICRC office

# liberia

The ICRC has worked in Liberia since 1970 and opened its operational delegation in Monrovia in 1990. Following intense fighting early in 2003 and the subsequent signing of a peace agreement, the ICRC stepped up its operations in Liberia. Since 2005, assistance and protection activities have focused on returnees (former IDPs and refugees) and residents, the wounded and sick, detainees, and children separated from their families. The ICRC supports the Liberian Red Cross Society and runs programmes to promote IHL among armed forces present in Liberia.

## EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	<b>4,421</b>
Assistance	<b>16,707</b>
Prevention	<b>1,041</b>
Cooperation with National Societies	<b>2,239</b>
General	-

► **24,407**

of which: *Overheads* **1,487**

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	<b>89%</b>
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## PERSONNEL

<b>45</b> expatriates
<b>330</b> national staff (daily workers not included)

## KEY POINTS

### In 2006, the ICRC:

- ▶ reunited 114 children, including 22 formerly associated with fighting forces, with their families in Liberia; revisited 258 children reunited with their families, including 19 formerly associated with fighting forces, to identify and address any problems they might face;
- ▶ implemented over 70 projects to address the protection and reintegration needs of children reunited with their families;
- ▶ collected 15,774 RCMs and distributed 14,038 RCMs;
- ▶ completed the distribution of seeds and food to 238,290 people (39,715 families) and the distribution of tools and essential household items to 193,824 people (32,304 families);
- ▶ supported 12 health centres and clinics in Lofa and Grand Kru counties and constructed 4 new clinics;
- ▶ built or renovated 355 wells and 276 latrines in Lofa and Grand Kru counties and greater Monrovia.

## CONTEXT

Following the peaceful general elections in late 2005, a new parliament was sworn in at the beginning of 2006. President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf appointed a new cabinet selected from a broad political spectrum. The new government enjoyed substantial support in Liberia and from the international community.

The government turned its attention to the many pressing needs of the population, such as the lack of basic services in Monrovia. It drafted an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and initiated reform of the public administration. Enormous challenges nonetheless lay ahead: the public administration barely functioned and lacked qualified Liberian personnel to restore it and provide public services. International advisers were deployed in key government sectors to help implement the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme, drawn up in 2005 by the International Contact Group for Liberia, primarily to fight corruption.

Some progress was made during the government's first year in office. The lifting of international sanctions on timber was expected to contribute to the country's economic recovery. The creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission gave the country an opportunity to come to terms with its recent past.

To consolidate Liberia's new-found stability, the UN maintained its 15,000-strong Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). UNMIL's continued presence was deemed necessary given that the fledgling national armed and security forces were not yet ready to assume their full duties.

The successful election process and the growing stability fuelled the steady return of IDPs to their areas of origin. This in turn paved the way for the official closure of the remaining IDP camps in May. Concurrently, Liberian refugees in neighbouring countries began returning home in greater numbers.

The influx of returnees in largely undeveloped rural communities put enormous strain on what was left of inadequate infrastructure and resources. The return also exacerbated ethnic tensions in certain areas, mainly over property. The dilapidated road network hindered the population's access to markets, schools and health care. Despite the international community's efforts, only a limited number of programmes were under way to rehabilitate former fighters and reintegrate them into their communities. Some former fighters continued to occupy and exploit regions rich in natural resources. Poverty and unemployment remained a serious problem for many Liberians and led to a rise in criminality in densely populated areas. This phenomenon highlighted the potential for former fighters to succumb to recruitment by armed groups in neighbouring countries.

## MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM		
Detainees visited	903	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>		
Detainees visited and monitored individually	2	Food	Beneficiaries	388,338
Number of visits carried out	76	Essential household items	Beneficiaries	214,596
Number of places of detention visited	23	Agricultural inputs and micro-economic initiatives	Beneficiaries	524,256
<b>RESTORING FAMILY LINKS</b>		Habitat structures	Beneficiaries	500
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>		<i>Health</i>		
RCMs collected	11,455	Health centres supported	Structures	12
RCMs distributed	9,701	Consultations	Patients	137,530
People reunited with their families	33	Immunizations	Activities	25,675
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>				
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	22			
Tracing requests closed positively (persons located)	21			
Tracing requests still being handled at 31 December 2006	128			
<i>Unaccompanied minors (UAMs) and separated children (SCs), including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers</i>				
UAMs/SCs newly registered by the ICRC	9			
UAMs/SCs reunited with their families by the ICRC	31			
UAMs/SCs cases still being handled at 31 December 2006	84			
<b>DOCUMENTS ISSUED</b>				
People to whom travel documents were issued	10			

## ICRC ACTION

More than two years after the end of the conflict, a number of people remained separated from their families. As the bulk of refugees and IDPs had returned home and a large number of lone children had been reunited with their families, it became increasingly unlikely that the families of the remaining children would be located, despite intensive tracing efforts. The ICRC therefore began to seek durable solutions for these children. For children who had encountered problems reintegrating into their families and communities, the ICRC developed a combination of protection and assistance programmes.

Another ICRC priority was to assist returnees in reviving their livelihoods. Although some had already made significant progress in this respect over the past year, the majority of those who had just returned to their places of origin still depended on international aid. The ICRC therefore distributed seeds, tools, food and essential household items to the communities hardest hit to help them rebuild their livelihoods. Special attention was paid to vulnerable families, especially those headed by an elderly person or a widow. The ICRC enlisted the support of their communities to help them reconstruct their homes, providing compensation in the form of food or cash for work. By the end of 2006, the ICRC had concluded its distribution of tools and seeds to 40,000 families and its shelter programme for vulnerable families.

In Lofa and Grand Kru counties, the ICRC's focus was on medium-term integrated assistance programmes, combining support to health facilities and the promotion of basic health and hygiene practices. Wells and latrines were built or renovated and income-generating agricultural projects developed. Local communities were increasingly encouraged to participate in rehabilitation projects. The aim was to foster a strong sense of community ownership, particularly of water and sanitation facilities, deemed crucial to the projects' sustainability.

The ICRC continued to visit people held in various places of detention throughout Liberia. While it coordinated its action with UNMIL, its main focus lay in the restoration of family links for detainees and hygiene projects in prisons.

The ICRC also concentrated on familiarizing Liberia's newly elected and appointed authorities with its operations in the country. Preliminary discussions focused on the promotion and implementation of IHL.

The formation of the new armed forces provided an opportunity for the ICRC to press for the inclusion of IHL in the training of all new military personnel.

With the shift from emergency response to structural development under way, the ICRC supported the Liberian Red Cross in adapting its programmes.

## CIVILIANS

## Protection and restoration of family links

The ICRC continued to monitor and identify the protection needs of the civilian population. The focus was on protection issues concerning people particularly affected by the past conflict, especially children separated from their families and women.

Instances of armed violence, primarily of a criminal nature, were reported. So, too, were allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and other human rights violations. Concerns lingered over the rise in ethnic tensions fuelled by property disputes involving returnees and over the risk of children being recruited to fight in neighbouring countries. The absence of a functioning judicial system created an environment of impunity, exacerbating the situation.

Fewer than 250 Liberian children remained separated from their families by past conflict. Many of the children registered by the ICRC were in refugee camps in neighbouring countries, and most had been put in contact with relatives. With the progressive closure of the camps, it became increasingly necessary to find durable solutions for children whose families could not be located. Moreover, some children who had been reunited with their families faced problems reintegrating into family and community life. Following up these children enabled the ICRC to respond to such problems through mediation, referral to appropriate services

and tailor-made projects. With IDPs and refugees returning home and with communications improving in Liberia, the need for the RCM service declined. The ICRC and the Liberian Red Cross therefore adapted the service to meet remaining needs and developed a plan to strengthen the National Society's tracing capacity.

- 11,368 RCMs collected from and 9,703 RCMS distributed by the ICRC and the Liberian Red Cross to civilians, including 104 from and 95 to children separated from their families
- new tracing requests opened for 22 people (11 females, 18 minors at the time of disappearance); 21 people located; 128 people (73 females, 92 minors at the time of disappearance) still being sought
- 33 people reunited with their families, including 19 unaccompanied/separated children and 12 demobilized children
- 9 unaccompanied/separated children (4 demobilized children) registered; 84 cases (including 44 concerning demobilized children) still being processed
- 10 people issued with ICRC travel documents

Children reunited with their families were supported by means of over 70 ongoing projects, including 8 micro-economic projects and 6 apprenticeships. Five children were referred to other child-protection agencies and three to medical institutions. In addition, 35 children received support to attend school and 6 received direct material assistance.

### Assistance to civilians

The official closure of all IDP camps and the accelerated return of refugees from neighbouring countries overstretched the limited resources and rundown infrastructure of communities absorbing returnees. A growing number of humanitarian organizations provided relief to these communities, but mainly in areas that were relatively easy to reach. Few water supply systems and sanitation and health facilities had been constructed or renovated. The shortage of qualified Liberian personnel adversely affected the quality of health services provided. Although most schools had reopened, many poor families could not afford to enrol all their children.

### Water and habitat

Some 150,000 people had access to safe water thanks to the ongoing construction or rehabilitation of 355 wells in rural and semi-urban areas in Montserrado (including Monrovia), Lofa and Grand Kru counties.

Furthermore, 70,000 people benefited from improved hygiene conditions as a result of the ongoing construction of institutional, communal or family latrines.

Local communities were encouraged to assume ownership of water supply and sanitation facilities constructed or renovated in their villages. One way of doing this was to create committees comprising community members to oversee the use and maintenance of the new facilities. A number of community members were trained in the management of wells and latrines, including cost recovery, and the operation, maintenance and repair of pumps. In addition, community workers were trained in raising public awareness of proper hygiene practices and then went on to conduct information sessions for members of the community.

- 220,000 people benefited from ongoing water and sanitation projects

### Health

In Lofa County, support to the primary health care service was extended to Kolahun district. The opening of three newly built facilities increased the number of ICRC-supported structures in Lofa County to seven. Construction work at one additional facility progressed. Voinjama health centre remained the largest health facility in Lofa and a referral centre for all medical cases. Two laboratories were built and equipped and provided with consumables, staff training and periodic supervision. Patients were also referred to secondary health care facilities in Phebe or Monrovia.

In Grand Kru County, five health facilities were supported and one built. In addition, two laboratories were built and supported. Patients were also referred to secondary health care facilities in Harper and Monrovia. In the 12 centres supported (catchment population: 1,368,770 people):

- 137,530 consultations (12,764 ante/postnatal, 124,766 curative, including 72,757 to women) were given;
- 25,675 vaccination doses were administered (5,647 to children under 5);
- around 200 staff working at ICRC-supported facilities received monthly incentives.

Support in the health sector also included training and information sessions on health issues.

- health staff in Lofa and Grand Kru participated in training and refresher courses organized by or with the ICRC
- 125 traditional midwives trained by the ICRC in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare; 124 traditional midwives attended refresher courses
- staff of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare supported to attend training sessions organized by other partners or the ministry
- 17 officers in charge of health facilities attended a workshop on health in Grand Kru
- 10 laboratory technicians/assistants given on-the-job training, 1 of whom attended a workshop organized by the Mother Pattern College in Monrovia
- 222 community health educators working in ICRC-supported facilities attended health promotion courses
- 1,070 mosquito nets distributed during awareness sessions on malaria to communities in Lofa and Grand Kru, mainly to children under 5 and pregnant women

### Economic security

While the situation of populations in accessible regions had improved with the support of humanitarian organizations, communities in remote areas still faced considerable hardships. Nevertheless, hundreds of thousands of Liberians managed to harvest a decent rice crop for the first time in years thanks to favourable climatic conditions and a massive ICRC relief effort. Vulnerable communities received substantial amounts of seeds and tools from the ICRC, making it the biggest provider of seeds and farming implements in the country. An increasing number of other actors began conducting similar activities in the same geographical areas, notably in Lofa County. Accordingly, the ICRC's distribution of seeds to 238,290 people (39,715 households) and tools to 193,824 people (32,304 households) was concluded in 2006.

Fields and plantations had become overgrown during years of disuse. Farmers in Lofa received ICRC support in clearing their coffee, cocoa and pineapple plantations as part of a food-for-work project to revive cash-crop farming. The cleared land was expected to become productive again by the beginning of 2007.

Vulnerable families that had recently returned to their places of origin were given essential household items, such as blankets, kitchen sets and soap, and occupied shelters built as part of a food-for-work project. Using traditional materials, villagers were supported in constructing shelters for 90,972 vulnerable members of their communities (15,162 households), such as widows and the elderly. This programme was completed in 2006.

The ICRC continued to assess the particular needs of conflict-affected children and women and implemented a micro-economic project in an area of Grand Gedeh hard-hit by the conflict. A group of women received support that included turning 1.5 hectares of swamp into irrigated rice fields and the installation of a mill to encourage cassava production. The project was instrumental in reviving social networks, community dialogue and support mechanisms for the most vulnerable. By working together, the women were better able to rebuild the social and economic fabric of their communities. A women's association was supported in establishing a tailoring training programme for people affected by conflict and for otherwise vulnerable women. By the end of the year, women were learning new skills, as well as gaining social and psychological benefits from the project, helping them recover from the trauma of conflict and giving them an alternative to life on the streets. In total, 1,170 people (195 households) benefited from micro-economic initiatives.

- ▶ 388,338 people (64,723 households) received food; these included 156,048 people (26,008 households) who received food in compensation for work and 232,290 people (38,715 households) who received food to prevent consumption of seeds
- ▶ 524,256 people (87,376 households) benefited from agricultural and micro-economic support
- ▶ 214,596 people (35,766 households) received essential household items

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Lack of infrastructure in places of detention remained a concern. Reform of the judicial system moved at a very slow pace and faced serious impediments, including lack of resources. Progress included the setting up of new circuit and magistrates' courts and the training of judicial authorities (including judges, police and correctional officers). The rehabilitation of prisons and police jails, managed by the UN, got under way.

The ICRC continued to have access to all detainees in all places of detention and took up with the authorities its findings on the treatment of inmates and their conditions of detention. This dialogue produced noticeable improvements in detention conditions in some cases.

- ▶ 889 detainees visited, 2 of them monitored individually, during 76 visits to 23 prisons
- ▶ 87 RCMs collected from and 26 RCMs distributed to detainees

Detainees received hygiene items and other basic necessities on an ad hoc basis. Three courts trying detainees visited by the ICRC received office equipment and supplies to help them process their cases. Meanwhile, the UN and the ICRC coordinated efforts concerning ICRC assistance to detainees and the UN's planning of rehabilitation projects in prisons, particularly with respect to water and sanitation.

- ▶ 500 detainees benefited from improved access to water

## AUTHORITIES

While some of the newly elected and appointed government officials were familiar with the ICRC, most were not. For its part, the international community present in Liberia knew and respected the organization. Efforts therefore concentrated on re-establishing contact with key national authorities, while keeping up the dialogue with the international authorities.

- ▶ regular coordination meetings with and briefings on the ICRC held for representatives of the government, UNMIL, the UN, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and NGOs
- ▶ regular contact maintained with key authorities including the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Justice and Health
- ▶ officials from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission attended 2 sessions on IHL and the ICRC
- ▶ 174 local authorities in 6 counties attended 15 sessions on IHL and the ICRC
- ▶ 2 representatives of the Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs attended a joint ICRC/ECOWAS IHL seminar

## ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Basic IHL training for the first batch of newly recruited members of the armed forces got under way in October 2006. The training covered topics such as IHL, the Red Cross, its activities and working methods, and the emblem.

- 106 army recruits attended IHL training sessions
- meetings regularly held with the Ministry of Defence, DynCorp (security sector reform officials), the military training commandant and instructors

The creation and training of the new police force progressed well. By the end of 2006, over 1,800 staff, the figure initially targeted for training, had been trained by UNMIL and the UN Civilian Police (CIVPOL). The police recruits were also familiarized with the ICRC's mandate and activities.

- 685 police recruits and correctional staff attended 23 information sessions; meetings held regularly with UNMIL's police training hierarchy and CIVPOL instructors
- dialogue maintained with the UNMIL military hierarchy and troops in the zones where the ICRC was operational
- 290 UN military observers and UNMIL officers attended 14 sessions on the ICRC and the UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on observance of IHL by UN forces
- Ethiopian, Pakistani, Chinese and Senegalese UNMIL battalions attended 6 IHL sessions in Lofa, Maryland, Grand-Gedeh and River Gee counties

## CIVIL SOCIETY

The ICRC was relatively well known among key civil society figures for its action in response to the years of conflict. Relations were maintained with the local and international media, which reported on some ICRC activities, such as protection, tracing and assistance.

The ICRC video "Liberia: Hope at last", covering the organization's activities in post-conflict Liberia, was completed and launched in four counties, where it was seen by 1,800 people.

- local authorities, teachers, religious leaders, women's groups and youth in Lofa County attended 11 sessions on the ICRC, the Movement, the Fundamental Principles and the additional emblem

## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Liberian Red Cross continued to receive support from the ICRC in enhancing its operational capacity and in reviewing its statutes. It reorganized its management structure at headquarters and chapter level to optimize operations. The Nimba chapter held its assembly in January and elected a seven-member board. The Liberian Red Cross assumed greater responsibility for managing and assessing its tracing network and adapting it to the evolving situation in Liberia.

- 20 Liberian Red Cross staff attended 2 workshops on governance organized by the National Society with the International Federation and the ICRC; the Liberian Red Cross participated in the National Society Leadership workshop in Geneva, Switzerland
- 35 senior Liberian Red Cross staff attended a working session to discuss the National Society's organizational development priorities and the strengthening of relations between chapters and headquarters
- 36 tracing officers attended a working session to assess the National Society's tracing networks leading to the streamlining of the tracing network, merging three units (tracing, dissemination and youth) into one called humanitarian values
- 15 newly recruited humanitarian values officers attended training in tracing, communication and various Movement policies
- the National Society participated in ICRC tracing activities and efforts to improve civilians' economic security (see *Civilians*)
- 450 wells assessed by the National Society for contamination and 42 chlorinated; 13 committees organized to promote community ownership of water facilities
- 55 new volunteers, 1,920 community members and 347 Firestone staff, teachers and WFP employees attended first-aid training and refresher courses offered by the Liberian Red Cross; production of the National Society first-aid training manual progressed

- 1,913 people and 12 media organizations participated in information sessions/briefings on IHL and the Movement; celebrations organized to mark World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day (8 May)
- 2 Red Cross drama clubs created in high schools; 69 Red Cross school clubs with 2,607 members received 1,110 copies of the comic "Battle of the villages"; 105 young people from the 15 counties participated in a week-long youth camp organized by the National Society
- with ICRC support, a chapter office built in Nimba and a youth centre in Gbanga and a chapter office in Grand Kru renovated; construction of a chapter office in Lofa interrupted for legal reasons