



haiti

The ICRC's involvement in Haiti began in 1994, visiting detainees falling within its mandate. Previously covered by the regional delegation in Mexico City, Haiti became a fully fledged delegation in February 2004, when internal strife threatened to degenerate into armed conflict. Given the persisting violence, the ICRC is maintaining a presence in Haiti. It focuses on protection activities for detainees and civilians, ensures that people wounded as a result of violence have access to medical services and improves water and sanitation in violence-prone shantytowns. It contributes, along with other Movement partners, to strengthening the emergency-response capacity of the Haitian National Red Cross Society.

EXPENDITURE (IN CHF ,000)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Protection | 1,007 |
| Assistance | 1,271 |
| Prevention | 1,159 |
| Cooperation with National Societies | 1,439 |
| General | - |

► **4,875**

of which: *Overheads* 298

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Expenditure/yearly budget | 96.9% |
|---------------------------|--------------|

PERSONNEL

| | |
|----|---|
| 12 | expatriates |
| 41 | national staff (daily workers not included) |

KEY POINTS

In 2005, the ICRC:

- monitored conditions in 38 places of detention, including some 20 police stations, upgraded water and sanitation facilities in 3 detention centres and provided technical, logistical and material support to the prison authorities in dealing with a countrywide beriberi outbreak;
- helped the Cité Soleil branch of the Haitian Red Cross evacuate wounded and sick people;
- completed a project to repair communal latrines in Cité Soleil, organized local residents to clean open-air waste-water drains and persuaded the local authorities to resume rubbish collection and improve the supply of drinking water in the shantytown;
- worked closely with the International Federation and partner National Societies to support the restructuring of the Haitian Red Cross and strengthen its emergency-response capacity;
- held information sessions on the ICRC's activities in Haiti and the Fundamental Principles for members of the Haitian police and the UN civilian police, as well as for staff of the UN peace-keeping mission in Haiti;
- maintained regular contact with all the different weapon bearers, including UN peace-keepers, to ensure safe access for Red Cross workers to victims of armed violence and to promote the Fundamental Principles and basic humanitarian norms.

CONTEXT

General elections initially planned for 9 October were postponed several times owing to technical delays in voter registration, difficulties in distributing voter identification cards and discussions on the total number of presidential candidates allowed to participate in the race and on the location of over 800 voting centres and the need to train the staff manning them. Voter registration, extended five times, closed on 23 October, with some 3.3 million people registered out of an estimated 3.5 to 4.5 million potential voters.

Armed violence, which increased significantly in and around Port-au-Prince in the first half of the year, somewhat abated as of August. There were fewer reported kidnappings and a return to a semblance of normal life in the shantytowns, with the exception of Cité Soleil, where, according to Médecins sans Frontières (MSF-France), an average of 115 people a month were being treated for gunshot wounds in a nearby hospital supported by the French NGO. The number of people treated for knife wounds also increased in the second half of the year. Although violence remained concentrated in and around the capital, armed groups continued to be active country-wide. The largest such group, made up of members of Haiti's former armed forces, kept a low profile in the second half of the year. A formal disarmament programme was abandoned in favour of a "violence-reduction" programme.

In 2005, the Haitian police and the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), whose mandate was extended until 15 February 2006, adopted a more active stance vis-à-vis armed groups, leading to numerous armed clashes in several of Port-au-Prince's neighbourhoods.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

| PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses) | | CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM | |
|--|-------|--|---------------|
| Detainees visited | 4,288 | <i>Water and habitat</i> | |
| Detainees visited and monitored individually | 107 | Water-supply schemes and sanitation systems (completed projects) | Beneficiaries |
| Number of visits carried out | 125 | | |
| Number of places of detention visited | 38 | | |
| RESTORING FAMILY LINKS | | | |
| <i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i> | | | |
| RCMs collected | 21 | | |
| RCMs distributed | 12 | | |

ICRC ACTION

The ICRC continued to focus on protecting victims of armed violence by intensifying its dialogue with all groups involved in the violence and helping the local branch of the Haitian Red Cross evacuate hundreds of wounded people in Cité Soleil, one of the metropolitan shantytowns most affected by armed gangs. The ICRC also placed more emphasis on monitoring the proportionality of the use of force by members of the Haitian police and MINUSTAH, after a number of clashes left a disproportionately high number of innocent bystanders injured or killed, mainly in Cité Soleil.

A water and sanitation project initiated with the Haitian Red Cross in 2005 reversed to some extent the increasing marginalization of the shantytown's residents as communal latrines were rehabilitated, rubbish collection and the supply of water were partially restored and open-air sewage drains were cleaned.

Although largely recovered from a complete collapse in February and March 2004, the Haitian penitentiary system remained vulnerable in 2005. In the second half of the year, a sizeable increase in the prison population, coupled with a countrywide outbreak of beriberi, further strained the system. To alleviate overcrowding, the ICRC refurbished some prison blocks. It also provided the penitentiary authorities with technical and logistical support, including a countrywide screening of detainees, to address the beriberi epidemic. It continued to follow up on individual detainees arrested in connection with ongoing political disturbances in the country and to monitor the detention conditions of all detainees in order to determine the structural support it should provide, in partnership with other organizations, to the national prison authorities.

The ICRC retained its role of lead agency within the Movement in Haiti. Together with the International Federation and

partner National Societies, it continued to pursue a comprehensive programme to strengthen the organizational structure and technical capacities of the Haitian Red Cross, with special emphasis on the "Safer Access" approach.

CIVILIANS

Haitians continued to suffer the effects of all kinds of violence: politically motivated attacks, common criminality, extortion, revenge killings, summary executions and kidnapping for ransom. Civilians were also increasingly victims of heavy-handed methods on the part of law-enforcement agents or were caught in the crossfire between armed groups and such agents. The ICRC maintained an ongoing dialogue with all armed groups, particularly with MINUSTAH and the national police, underlining once more the importance of allowing wounded people to be transported to hospital and the need to distinguish between civilians and fighters.

Improving water supply and sanitation

The chronic lack of water exacerbated tensions in Cité Soleil. By addressing some of the community's basic needs, maintaining a presence in the shantytown, alongside the Haitian Red Cross, and liaising with local authorities in charge of providing basic services, the ICRC contributed to easing the worst effects of the violence.

In cooperation with the government service responsible for water supply, the ICRC carried out repairs to the water-distribution system and delivered fuel for the generator of a water-pumping station as well as hydraulic equipment to repair it. Local residents trained by the ICRC repaired 15 communal water fountains out of 45, kept them in working order and supervised the sale of water.

The ICRC and the Haitian Red Cross set up teams drawn from the community to clean up rubbish dumps and open-air sewage drains in eight areas of Cité Soleil and to refurbish and maintain communal latrines. The ICRC provided wheelbarrows, boots, picks and shovels. It also obtained the collaboration of the government service responsible for solid-waste collection to repair 12 rubbish skips and empty their contents on a regular basis. These improvements benefited some 208,800 residents of Cité Soleil in 2005.

Missing persons

After initial discussions with the ICRC, the minister of justice had agreed to set up a structure within the ministry to deal with the issue of persons unaccounted for in connection with the political and security situation. Unfortunately, the removal of the minister and consequent changes in the ministry precluded any progress on this issue until a new government had been elected.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

The prison population kept rising in 2005, particularly in the second half of the year. Despite efforts by the ministry of justice, an exceptionally low delivery of sentences by the justice system compounded the problem (88% of detainees nationwide and 96% in the main prison in Port-au-Prince were in pre-trial detention), resulting in renewed overcrowding in prisons and police stations.

In 2005, the ICRC visited 38 places of detention, monitoring the material conditions of detention and the treatment of detainees.

The ICRC helped the prison authorities carry out repairs to water and sanitation facilities in selected prisons and supplied detention centres with hygiene products and recreational items as needed. It maintained close contact with other organizations

working with detainees, such as UNDP, the Organization of American States (OAS) and MINUSTAH, as well as a constructive dialogue with the national bodies in charge of detention centres (the prison authorities and the Haitian police). The prison authorities took into account the ICRC's recommendations when drafting their 2005–10 strategic development plan.

Access to basic health care remained difficult for detainees. Detention centres had not yet been included in the national programme to combat tuberculosis; no provisions were made to care for detainees suffering from HIV/AIDS; and no secure hospital existed to which detainees in need of medical treatment could be transferred. The ICRC continued to encourage prison authorities, government ministries and international partners to address basic health-care issues and the problem of tuberculosis in prisons.

An outbreak of beriberi, a micronutrient deficiency, at the main prison of Port-au-Prince in October further illustrated the poor detention conditions in Haiti's prisons. Upon the request of the prison authorities, the ICRC provided technical and logistical support, helping to screen 3,282 detainees in 17 prisons, 160 of whom were diagnosed with the illness and treated accordingly. The beriberi crisis prompted the prison authorities to set up a taskforce comprising the ICRC, UNDP, MINUSTAH and the OAS to deal with issues such as nutrition, health care and hygiene in prisons.

- 4,288 detainees visited, of whom 107 followed up on individually and 80 newly registered
- 20 RCMs collected from and 1 delivered to detainees

WOUNDED AND SICK

According to MSF-France, the number of people the NGO had treated for bullet wounds jumped from 46 in January to 204 in May, followed by a sharp drop in October and another sharp rise in the last two months of the year. The number of people treated for knife wounds doubled in the second half of the year. A significant proportion of patients treated for bullet wounds were residents of Cité Soleil, almost all of whom had been evacuated by the Haitian Red Cross, with ICRC support.

The ICRC positioned stocks of medicine and surgical equipment in hospitals in Port-au-Prince and the provinces, as well as

stretchers and medical kits in Red Cross branches in the capital and Cap-Haïtien for use in the event of internal disturbances during the election period.

The ICRC purchased raw materials to help the Healing Hands for Haiti Foundation produce 50 prosthetic limbs using the low-cost technology pioneered by the ICRC.

AUTHORITIES

The ICRC kept up its dialogue with the interim government on matters as diverse as security, the role and training of the police force, the need to involve the Ministries of Health and Social Protection in health care for detainees, the status of the Haitian Red Cross and the mandate of the ICRC. It also pursued a dialogue with the main parties participating in the elections.

A presidential decree affording the ICRC and its staff the same privileges and immunities granted to the UN and the diplomatic community was published in the official journal in April, followed a month later by the publication in the same journal of the new statutes of the Haitian Red Cross. On 1 September, Haiti ratified the Ottawa Convention. The ICRC continued to press the interim government to complete the ratification of the 1977 Additional Protocol II.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The UN Security Council approved additional military and police contingents in Haiti, bringing the number of MINUSTAH troops to 7,200 and of UN civilian police to 1,600 by the end of the year. In the second half of the year, MINUSTAH and the Haitian police stepped up their presence in Port-au-Prince's violence-prone neighbourhoods, restoring order in some areas but also contributing to the increase in civilians killed and injured in the crossfire in heavily populated communities. The ICRC maintained a dialogue on operational matters with MINUSTAH staff officers in Port-au-Prince and with officers and troops throughout the country, underlining the mandate of the ICRC and the importance of respecting the emblem and medical facilities.

In the absence of an army (disbanded by former President Aristide in 1995), the Haitian police was tasked with duties of a military nature, in addition to its traditional policing duties. With only 6,000 men

for a country of 8 million people, the force remained overstretched and undertrained. The ICRC conducted dissemination sessions on its mandate and activities and on pertinent human rights principles for police and prison guards throughout the country, including trainees graduating from the police academy. It insisted on the need to respect the emblem during medical evacuations from Cité Soleil carried out by the Haitian Red Cross.

Armed groups still roamed the countryside, the largest being the former armed forces, estimated by MINUSTAH at some 2,500 individuals. The greatest threat to civilians, however, came from urban armed groups, estimated by MINUSTAH at some 4,000 individuals, operating in Port-au-Prince's shantytowns. In informal contacts with these groups, the ICRC emphasized, as it did with other weapon bearers, the need to respect the civilian population, medical facilities and the red cross emblem. It also promoted these core messages on radio stations (see *Civil Society*) and adapted and translated the *Soldier's Handbook* into Creole.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The ICRC maintained close relations with some 30 media outlets, especially the country's burgeoning network of local radio stations, to explain the work of the ICRC and the Movement and raise awareness among weapon bearers and the general population of the need to respect medical facilities and the emblem. It briefed national and international media on various aspects of its work in Haiti.

The delegation continued to develop its contacts with local humanitarian NGOs and associations, organizing in December a briefing session on IHL and the ICRC's protection work for members of the Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains in Port-au-Prince, one of the foremost local human rights organizations. The ICRC distributed a quarterly newsletter on the activities of the ICRC and the Movement in Haiti to the main NGOs.

Information sessions on IHL, planned with the University of Quisqueya, had to be postponed for security reasons.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The ICRC refurbished the office of the Haitian Red Cross in Cité Soleil, provided it with first-aid kits and trained its volunteers in first aid. It also continued to finance the rental of local taxis to transport 620 wounded people to hospital. Together with the International Federation, the ICRC upgraded the Haitian Red Cross's VHF radio system.

- ▶ 80 Haitian Red Cross volunteers working in Cité Soleil trained in first aid
- ▶ 490 first-aid kits distributed to 13 regional and 89 local branches of the Haitian Red Cross
- ▶ 2 workshops on the "Safer Access" approach held for 56 participants from 13 regional and 2 local Red Cross branches

The ICRC put together guidelines and a training module to standardize the teaching of the Fundamental Principles by Haitian Red Cross staff and volunteers. It also organized training courses for 58 disseminators from 13 regional and 3 local branches and supported the volunteers of the Haitian

Red Cross branch in Cité Soleil in their efforts to raise awareness among residents of the role and activities of the Movement.

To contribute to the restructuring of the Haitian Red Cross's tracing department, the ICRC conducted two advanced training courses on efficient management of RCMs for 56 Haitian Red Cross volunteers.

The ICRC conducted bi-monthly coordination meetings for all Movement partners and gave security briefings to all new staff of the International Federation and partner National Societies. A memorandum of understanding between the Haitian Red Cross, the ICRC, the International Federation and Movement partners, outlining each organization's role and responsibilities in Haiti, was renewed for a year in July.

The ICRC and Movement partners supported the Haitian Red Cross in implementing its plan of action for 2005–08. Included in this ambitious plan were capacity-building objectives and reforms aimed at responding more efficiently to Haiti's vast needs for humanitarian assistance, particularly in emergency situations stemming from natural disasters or armed violence. Such a plan would be achieved through the strengthening of programme management at headquarters level, together with a coordinated branch-development approach.

The ICRC rehabilitated the offices of two regional branches of the Haitian Red Cross and contributed to the rental of another.