

KUWAIT (regional)

COVERING: member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council, namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates



ICRC regional delegation

The ICRC has been in Kuwait since the 1990–91 Gulf War. It focuses on humanitarian needs remaining from that war or arising from current armed conflicts and other situations of violence in the wider region. Its work includes activities for people deprived of their freedom in the countries covered and the promotion of IHL and its own role as a neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian organization, among governments and other circles. Strengthening partnerships with the Red Crescent Societies of the region is another priority, along with resource mobilization and coordination with other actors.

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

In 2013:

- ▶ detainees in Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar had their treatment and living conditions monitored during ICRC visits, with the pertinent authorities confidentially receiving feedback and, where appropriate, recommendations afterwards
- ▶ penitentiary officers/health staff in Bahrain and Kuwait bolstered their knowledge of internationally recognized detention standards, particularly for health care provision, at seminars/dissemination sessions
- ▶ the region's National Societies enhanced their emergency preparedness and other operational capacities, including through a regional course in responding to large-scale emergencies hosted by the Qatar Red Crescent Society/ICRC
- ▶ the region's authorities and civil society, particularly Islamic groups, increased their understanding of humanitarian principles and IHL by participating in regional/local events and interacting with the ICRC
- ▶ senior military officers discussed ways to expand IHL instruction within their respective armed forces at a regional IHL integration workshop – the first of its kind – jointly organized by the Qatari authorities and the ICRC

YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

HIGH

PROTECTION	Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)	
Red Cross messages (RCMs)	
RCMs collected	229
RCMs distributed	219
Phone calls facilitated between family members	117
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	11
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)	
ICRC visits	
Detainees visited	7,507
Detainees visited and monitored individually	514
Number of visits carried out	28
Number of places of detention visited	20

EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)

Protection	1,581
Assistance	201
Prevention	1,287
Cooperation with National Societies	458
General	255

3,782

of which: Overheads 231

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	98%
---------------------------	------------

PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	10
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	23

CONTEXT

The member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) remained stable despite the growing tensions in the wider region. They pursued joint initiatives, particularly in connection with security. Bahrain, however, saw bouts of unrest linked to the pace and eventual suspension of negotiations between the government and those calling for reforms. Law enforcement operations to quell demonstrations in the country often led to arrests. Most GCC member States started implementing tighter policies on economic migration.

GCC member States continued to exert influence in the region and beyond. Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, for instance, reached out to countries experiencing armed conflict, other situations of violence or political transition. Most GCC governments and National Societies carried out joint and individual humanitarian responses to assist people affected by the armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic (hereafter Syria), including those who had fled to neighbouring countries. Relations between GCC member States and the Islamic Republic of Iran remained strained owing to diverging views on regional issues.

Saudi Arabia continued to host the secretariats of the GCC and of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and its Humanitarian Affairs Department (ICHAD).

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC regional delegation in Kuwait focused on building awareness of and support for IHL and the Fundamental Principles. It did so through contacts with and activities involving government officials, armed forces, National Societies and influential members of civil society in the region. It also continued helping authorities enhance the living conditions of detainees and address the issue of persons missing in relation to the 1990–91 Gulf War.

The ICRC developed its dialogue with the authorities – including at high-level meetings in Kuwait and Qatar – and with members of civil society, particularly Islamic circles, NGOs and the media. It organized and attended courses/events with these stakeholders to help reinforce their understanding of and secure their support for humanitarian principles, IHL and the ICRC's work in the region and beyond. To reach a wider audience and maximize its impact, it pursued coordination with the OIC, ICHAD and the Arab Red Cross and Red Crescent Organization (ARCO), as well as other regional bodies and humanitarian organizations. The ICRC continued to support the region's authorities in adopting measures to integrate IHL into domestic law and military doctrine, training and operations. Notably, it enabled senior military officers to discuss IHL integration at a regional seminar it co-organized with Qatar. Through dissemination sessions, it helped police officers in Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar to learn more about legal norms applicable to their duties.

Detainees in Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar received ICRC visits to monitor their treatment and living conditions. Expanded access to detainees in Bahrain and Qatar furthered the ICRC's understanding of the situation of detainees in these countries and helped enhance the quality of the feedback it provided to the authorities. The ICRC continued to work with the Bahraini and Kuwaiti authorities, with a view to helping them ensure that detainees' treatment and living conditions were in line with applicable norms and internationally recognized standards. In addition to receiving

confidential reports with the necessary recommendations, prison officials in both countries developed their knowledge and competencies in international law and internationally recognized standards for law enforcement, prison management and health care services in detention facilities, including with regard to medical ethics. Plans to hold a regional workshop on prison health care did not materialize.

The ICRC, together with the region's National Societies, organized and supported capacity-building initiatives to help them reinforce their capabilities to restore family links, disseminate IHL, respond to emergencies and raise awareness of the issues related to the Health Care in Danger project. The ICRC helped the Qatar Red Crescent Society to organize the third Health Emergencies in Large Populations (H.E.L.P.) course in the region, for instance. Contacts with the region's National Societies concentrated on strengthening cooperation and on the importance of conducting humanitarian action in accordance with the Fundamental Principles. They also focused on responding to the needs of migrants. The Kuwait Red Crescent Society, for instance, provided ad hoc assistance to migrants in embassy-run shelters and initiated a process to assist those in government-run deportation centres.

National Society/ICRC family-links services remained available, enabling families in GCC member States to keep in touch with relatives detained abroad or held at the US internment facility at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba.

The ICRC continued to chair and act as a neutral intermediary within the Tripartite Commission handling the issue of persons missing in connection with the 1990–91 Gulf War. Members of the Commission exchanged updates at ICRC-chaired meetings and facilitated exploratory missions.

CIVILIANS

Some separated family members keep in touch

People in the GCC member States, including migrants, restored/maintained contact with relatives detained abroad or living in countries affected by violence or natural disasters, through the family-links services offered jointly by the region's National Societies and the ICRC. Through RCMs, oral messages relayed by ICRC delegates and phone or video calls, families exchanged news with relatives held in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon or the Guantanamo Bay internment facility. Families also sent parcels containing food/recreational items to their relatives held at the Guantanamo Bay internment facility and the Parwan detention facility in Afghanistan.

One family in Saudi Arabia visited a relative detained in Afghanistan; another visited a relative in Spain, where he had resettled after his release from the Guantanamo Bay internment facility. A family based in Kuwait visited a relative held at the Parwan detention facility. Planned visits by families in Saudi Arabia to their relatives detained in Iraq did not take place, as Iraqi and Saudi authorities began direct talks on potential repatriations of detainees within the framework of a bilateral agreement. Six people traveled or were resettled abroad with the help of ICRC travel documents.

The National Societies maintained regular interaction with the ICRC and drew on its advice/support to improve their services, particularly family-links services for migrants (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*). Some migrants in Kuwait had their

situation monitored and assessed by the Kuwaiti Red Crescent and the ICRC, in line with the latter's efforts to find ways to address the needs of particularly vulnerable migrants in the region. Some 450 Sri Lankan migrants awaiting deportation and living in a shelter run by their embassy benefited from hygiene items provided by the National Society, which was also developing a system for distributing such items to migrants in Interior Ministry-run deportation centres.

Efforts to ascertain the fate of missing persons continue

With the ICRC chairing and acting as a neutral intermediary within the Tripartite Commission comprising Iraq, Kuwait and former coalition States (France, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America), the parties involved continued working to clarify the fate of persons missing in connection with the 1990–91 Gulf War. At one ICRC-chaired meeting of the Tripartite Commission and five meetings of the Technical Sub-Committee, the parties concerned discussed their work – progress made and obstacles encountered – particularly in light of new information on the location of potential gravesites in Iraq and Kuwait. No human remains were recovered during missions in the two countries in 2013. The member countries and the ICRC discussed the request of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq to join the Tripartite Commission as an observer.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Detainees in Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar receive ICRC visits

Over 7,500 detainees in Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar received visits conducted according to standard ICRC procedures to monitor their treatment and living conditions, with especially vulnerable inmates followed up individually. Among them were 855 inmates – including five held in connection with a failed coup attempt in 1996 – in a Qatari central prison, where the ICRC carried out a first complete visit in December, in line with its efforts to expand its activities for detainees in the region.

On the basis of observations made during visits, ICRC delegates gave the authorities confidential feedback and, where appropriate, made recommendations for improving detainees' treatment and living conditions, including during arrest and the initial stages of detention. In Kuwait, delegates paid particular attention to the situation of security detainees and migrants, and discussed with the authorities the importance of ensuring that detainees have contact with relatives. Expanded access to different categories of detainees in Bahrain and Qatar enabled the ICRC to further its understanding of their situation, and helped enhance the quality of feedback/recommendations it provided to the authorities.

Prison officers in Bahrain and Kuwait learn more about internationally recognized detention standards

Work with the pertinent authorities in Bahrain and Kuwait focused on detainees' treatment and living conditions, with a view to helping the authorities ensure that detention conditions were in line with applicable law and internationally recognized standards.

In this framework, four penitentiary officers – two each from Bahrain and Kuwait – shared their experiences and best practices in prison management at an international training course in Geneva, Switzerland. Fifty Bahraini prison officers improved their understanding of legal norms applicable to their duties at two dissemination sessions, which were organized as a first step of a process initiated with the Ministry of Interior to enhance training for all prison staff in these matters.

In Bahrain, dialogue with the authorities covered prison management and issues such as overcrowding. Dialogue with the authorities in Bahrain and Kuwait emphasized the importance of ensuring detainees' access to health care services. Although a planned regional workshop on the subject did not materialize, prison managers and health staff in both countries developed their knowledge of relevant norms and internationally recognized standards on the provision of health care to detainees,

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	BAHRAIN	KUWAIT	QATAR
ICRC visits			
Detainees visited	2,958	3,694	855
<i>of whom women</i>	229	638	95
<i>of whom minors</i>	160	15	
Detainees visited and monitored individually	466	44	4
<i>of whom women</i>	6	14	
<i>of whom minors</i>	60	5	
Detainees newly registered	222	44	2
<i>of whom women</i>	5	14	
<i>of whom minors</i>	39	5	
Number of visits carried out	21	6	1
Number of places of detention visited	16	3	1
Restoring family links			
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		1	
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		6,104	

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	BAHRAIN	KUWAIT	QATAR
Economic security, water and habitat			
Health			
Number of visits carried out by health staff	8	1	1
Number of places of detention visited by health staff	3	1	1

including with respect to medical ethics, at locally organized seminars on health in detention. Detainees in Bahrain and Kuwait learnt about hygiene and health practices through information campaigns organized by the authorities, as per ICRC recommendations. Bahrain and other countries in the region were encouraged to follow Kuwait's lead in transferring the responsibility for detainees' health care in Interior Ministry-run prisons to the Health Ministry.

Iraqi former POWs helped by attestations of captivity

Some 6,100 Iraqi former POWs who had been held in Saudi Arabia during the 1990–91 Gulf War received attestations of captivity, which enabled them to apply for financial assistance in Iraq or helped facilitate legal procedures in third countries where they had resettled.

AUTHORITIES, ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS, AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Throughout the region, awareness of humanitarian principles, IHL and the ICRC's activities grew through contact with government officials, armed forces and civil society. High-level officials in Kuwait and Qatar conferred with the ICRC president – during his visits to those countries – on armed conflict and other situations of violence around the world and on the need to ensure respect for IHL and safe access to victims. They also discussed ways to strengthen cooperation with ICRC in providing humanitarian assistance.

Authorities and civil society learn more about IHL and humanitarian issues

Government officials and members of civil society deepened their understanding of IHL and humanitarian principles by attending or organizing local/international events. Most GCC member States sent representatives from various fields, particularly Islamic scholars and academics, to discuss IHL at regional courses (see *Lebanon*). Judges learnt more about IHL at a regional course organized with the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies. In the United Arab Emirates, judges benefited from an IHL training session – one of several events for various audiences hosted by the national IHL committee, partner institutions and the ICRC. Kuwaiti diplomats participated in similar training sessions conducted at the request of their Foreign Ministry.

The media continued to help raise awareness of humanitarian issues. Journalists enhanced their coverage of these issues and ICRC activities with the help of ICRC briefings and reference materials. At an ICRC presentation in Qatar, media representatives learnt about the legal protection due them during armed conflict. Kuwaiti, Qatari and Saudi journalists attended regional IHL workshops.

Islamic organizations boost awareness of IHL, humanitarian principles and ICRC activities

Expanded networking with members of Islamic circles, particularly the OIC, helped introduce the ICRC and neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action to a wider audience and to secure their support for promoting humanitarian principles among the public. Although interaction with the GCC secretariat remained limited, contact with Islamic charities and NGOs in Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia focused on enhancing their awareness of the ICRC's mandate and on exploring possibilities for cooperation.

Islamic scholars and NGO representatives discussed challenges to humanitarian action around the world, points of similarity between IHL and Islamic law, and related subjects at a workshop organized in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, by the International Islamic Relief Organization, ICHAD and the ICRC. Saudi government officials, academic institutions and representatives of Arab National Societies attended an IHL dissemination event organized by ARCO in Jeddah.

Military officers discuss IHL integration at regional seminar

Military officers in Bahrain and Qatar, some trained by the ICRC, organized dissemination sessions for their colleagues and other audiences, in cooperation with National Societies on some occasions. Technical support for the two countries' efforts in this regard continued; armed forces in other countries were encouraged to expand IHL instruction within their ranks. To this end, high-ranking military officers took part in the first regional seminar on IHL integration, organized with Qatar. Military officers also learnt more about humanitarian principles and the ICRC during presentations at a Kuwaiti military college. Bahrain decided not to go through with its initial idea of hosting an IHL workshop for senior Gulf military officers.

Contact with the Bahraini authorities focused on international norms applicable to law enforcement (see *People deprived of their freedom*). Police forces in Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar bolstered their understanding of international human rights law at dissemination sessions.

Domestic IHL implementation continues

Contact continued with national IHL committees in the region, with a view to helping them implement action plans and promote the ratification of IHL treaties. Bahrain drew on ICRC expertise for establishing its own national IHL committee.

Promotion of the inclusion of IHL instruction in university curricula continued, primarily through dialogue with and IHL seminars involving academics and students from law faculties in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar. Key universities received IHL reference materials.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Coordination with the region's National Societies resulted in joint activities in areas of common interest, particularly family-links services (see *Civilians*), IHL dissemination and emergency preparedness. Contact with them, including at senior levels with the Saudi Arabian Red Crescent Society and the Red Crescent Society of the United Arab Emirates, focused on jointly identified priorities for further cooperation and on the importance of conducting humanitarian action in accordance with the Fundamental Principles. Some joint capacity-building initiatives, however, were delayed, partly because the National Societies were concentrating on their international humanitarian activities, particularly their response to the conflict in Syria.

Qatari Red Crescent hosts regional disaster preparedness workshops

Together with members of civil society, over 150 staff/volunteers from GCC and other National Societies in the wider region honed their capacities in IDP camp management and disaster preparedness/response at a Qatari Red Crescent/ICRC-organized workshop. They learnt more about the Safer Access Framework

and the Restoring Family Links Strategy for the Movement during ICRC presentations. The 36 participants at the H.E.L.P. course, hosted by the Qatari Red Crescent with support from a Canadian university and the ICRC, developed competence to respond to health emergencies and learnt about IHL, including the protection it extends to medical services during conflict. The National Societies discussed some of these subjects at a regional humanitarian partnership meeting attended by the ICRC.

National Societies enhance their family-links services

The region's National Societies pursued individual initiatives to enhance their operational capacities, with ICRC support. The Kuwaiti Red Crescent updated its disaster management plan

and the Saudi Red Crescent boosted its capacities in various areas, for instance. During ICRC-hosted training sessions, staff/volunteers from the Bahraini, Emirati, Kuwaiti and Qatari National Societies reinforced their capacities to restore family links, with the Kuwaiti Red Crescent focusing on assisting migrants (see *Civilians*). The Bahraini and Emirati National Societies benefited from IHL training sessions, which also covered the Health Care in Danger project.

The region's National Societies continued to endeavour to strengthen their legal bases and to become more capable in the area of public communication.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total		
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Red Cross messages (RCMs)			UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected		229		
RCMs distributed		219		
Phone calls facilitated between family members		117		
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons¹			Women	Minors
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		15	3	
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		11		
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	3		
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		113	9	6
Documents				
People to whom travel documents were issued		6		
Official documents relayed between family members across border/front lines		1		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)²				
ICRC visits			Women	Minors
Detainees visited		7,507	962	175
Detainees visited and monitored individually		514	20	65
Detainees newly registered		268	19	44
Number of visits carried out		28		
Number of places of detention visited		20		
Restoring family links				
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		1		
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		6,104		

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

1. Not including people missing as a consequence of the 1990–91 Gulf War
2. Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)¹				
Health				
Number of visits carried out by health staff		10		
Number of places of detention visited by health staff		5		

1. Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar