

MAURITANIA



KRC/AR_2016
 ⊕ ICRC delegation + ICRC office

The ICRC has worked in Mauritania since 1970, opening a delegation there in 2013. It visits detainees and helps improve their living conditions, particularly their access to health care. It offers them and other people in need, including refugees, family-links services. In a subsidiary role, it works to meet the basic needs of refugees who have fled conflict elsewhere in the region. It promotes IHL and humanitarian principles among the armed and security forces, authorities and civil society, and supports the development of the Mauritanian Red Crescent.

YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

MEDIUM

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS IN 2016

- ▶ Prison health staff diagnosed detainees' health problems with the help of the ICRC. Afterwards, some detainees benefited from consultations, hospital care or, for the malnourished, ICRC-provided food supplements.
- ▶ Families dispersed by armed conflict, particularly in Mali, or other circumstances reconnected via Mauritanian Red Crescent and/or ICRC family-links services. An unaccompanied minor rejoined his family in Mali.
- ▶ Military and security forces personnel, including peacekeepers, learnt about IHL/international human rights law at ICRC briefings. The military and security forces sought to improve education in these norms with the ICRC's help.
- ▶ In Bassikounou, infrastructural projects to improve access to water for thousands of Malian refugees and people hosting them got underway. However, administrative delays pushed the completion dates to 2017.

PROTECTION	Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)	
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	122
RCMs distributed	87
Phone calls facilitated between family members	104
Tracing cases closed positively (subject located or fate established)	21
People reunited with their families	1
<i>of whom unaccompanied minors/separated children</i>	1
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)	
ICRC visits	
Detainees visited	2,677
Detainees visited and monitored individually	96
Number of visits carried out	34
Number of places of detention visited	18
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	9
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	31

EXPENDITURE IN KCHF

Protection	1,161
Assistance	1,501
Prevention	614
Cooperation with National Societies	457
General	29
Total	3,762
<i>Of which: Overheads</i>	<i>230</i>

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	79%
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PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	8
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	35

ASSISTANCE

	2016 Targets (up to)	Achieved
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)		
Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	7,000
		16

CONTEXT

Regional instability created socio-political tensions and gave rise, occasionally, to unrest in Mauritania. Military and security forces personnel reportedly arrested people during security operations. Mauritania participated in discussions on joint military training and coordination with other States in the Sahel region.

About 45,000 people who had fled violence in Mali (see *Mali*) remained in the Bassikounou region. Another 3,000 people from Mali arrived towards the end of the year. Obtaining access to sufficient quantities of water continued to be difficult for Malian refugees living outside the UNHCR camp there, and for the residents of communities hosting them.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

In Mauritania, the ICRC visited detainees in accordance with its standard procedures; it paid particular attention to foreigners, women, security detainees and other vulnerable inmates. Based on these visits, the ICRC provided technical and other support for the authorities to improve detainees' treatment and living conditions, in line with their efforts to reform prison services and mitigate the consequences of overcrowding. The authorities used ICRC material and technical assistance to address priority issues identified in 2015: food-supply management, detainees' access to health care and maintenance of prison infrastructure. ICRC-supported health staff conducted thousands of consultations and monitored detainees' body mass indices. Ailing or wounded inmates were given treatment or referred to nearby hospitals, and malnourished detainees, provided with food supplements. The authorities also drew on ICRC support to maintain sanitation systems, conduct fumigation campaigns, provide hygiene items and renovate infrastructure in State prisons, which helped protect detainees against the spread of disease and eased their living conditions.

In Bassikounou, infrastructural projects to improve access to water for thousands of Malian refugees and the people hosting them were delayed. The ICRC covered treatment costs for two weapon bearers from Mali, whose medical evacuation it had helped arrange in 2015.

The Mauritanian Red Crescent continued, with ICRC support, to develop its capacities, particularly in first aid and restoring family links. The National Society, the ICRC and other Movement components provided members of families dispersed by armed conflict, particularly in Mali, or by detention or other circumstances, with the means to restore and maintain contact. One unaccompanied minor was reunited with his family in Mali. In Melga, on the Mali-Mauritania border, residents reported cases of missing relatives and submitted pre-disappearance data to the ICRC.

The ICRC maintained its support for the Mauritanian military and security forces to complete training activities for their units in IHL and international human rights law, respectively – as set out in the four-year plan it developed with them in 2012. To this end, it trained military instructors to teach IHL and gave security forces the guidance necessary for finalizing their draft training manual on international human rights law. Through ICRC-facilitated training in Mauritania or elsewhere: officers of the armed forces, on active duty or undergoing further training at a military school, bolstered their knowledge of IHL; and an official of the foreign ministry and professors of Islamic studies strengthened their grasp of IHL.

CIVILIANS

Families request the ICRC to clarify the fate of relatives missing at sea

In Melga, on the Mali-Mauritania border, residents reported missing relatives and submitted pre-disappearance data to the ICRC, for comparison with the remains of drowned migrants recovered in Italy (see *Paris*). This was part of a regional effort to ascertain the fate of missing migrants (see *Mali* and *Senegal*). During the year, 20 tracing cases were resolved, and the families who had lodged the requests received news of their missing relatives.

Malian refugees in Bassikounou restored or maintained contact with their families through the regional family-links network managed by the Mauritanian Red Crescent, the Mali Red Cross, National Societies in other countries hosting Malian refugees, and the ICRC. One unaccompanied minor at the UNHCR refugee camp was reunited with his family in Mali (see *Mali*). Members of families dispersed by detention or other circumstances used RCMs and other means provided by the Mauritanian Red Crescent and/or the ICRC to reconnect; until his release in October 2016, one family made monthly video calls to a relative held at the US internment facility at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba.

In Bassikounou, infrastructural projects to improve access to water for thousands of Malian refugees and people hosting them got underway. However, administrative delays pushed the completion dates to 2017. National Society volunteers trained to promote good hygiene practices.

Two wounded Malian weapon bearers, whom the ICRC had helped evacuate to Mauritania for medical care in 2015, continued to obtain treatment; costs were covered by the ICRC.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Some 2,200 detainees in several places of detention received visits from the ICRC, conducted in accordance with its standard procedures. Vulnerable inmates, including foreigners, women and security detainees, were paid special attention. The ICRC also monitored the transfer of 450 detainees from the Dar Naim prison to three prisons in the country's interior. The ICRC took steps to engage the authorities concerned in dialogue, with a view to visiting all detainees within its purview.

Vulnerable detainees contacted their families through RCMs or phone calls facilitated by the Mauritanian Red Crescent and the ICRC. Around 43 detained foreigners requested the ICRC to notify their consular representatives of their situation.

The penitentiary authorities pursued reforms – and thus also sought to mitigate the consequences of overcrowding in prisons; they drew on ICRC recommendations based on prison visits to monitor and effect improvements to detainees' treatment and living conditions. Aided by the ICRC, they focused on issues prioritized in 2015 – food-supply management, detainees' access to health care and maintenance of prison infrastructure – at the six largest prisons in the country (see below). A senior penitentiary official attended a course abroad (see *Abidjan*), where he learnt more about tackling these issues through discussions with foreign counterparts. At the authorities' request, the ICRC covered gaps in the supplies needed to address detainees' health needs.

Detainees receive adequate health care within prisons and at nearby health facilities

Health personnel in the six largest prisons in the country continued to provide adequate care for detainees. They were guided by an ICRC team, and benefited from ICRC support (medicines, supplies and furniture necessary for their work). In addition, they also learnt how to treat detainees with HIV/AIDS, and to diagnose mental illness and provide the necessary psychological care. The ICRC also provided salary incentives for prison nurses and other clinic staff, who thus maintained regular working hours.

ICRC-supported staff promoted disease-prevention methods, gave more than 11,200 consultations and measured detainees' body mass index. Over 110 detainees needing hospitalization were referred to nearby facilities, in line with agreements previously signed by the penitentiary authorities and these facilities, with the ICRC's help. Almost 350 severely malnourished inmates were enrolled in a therapeutic feeding programme jointly implemented by the authorities and the ICRC, and over 2,000 malnourished inmates received high-calorie supplements with their regular meals. Some 27 inmates who tested positive for TB were given follow-up care and food supplements to hasten their recovery.

The authorities also drew on ICRC technical and material support to maintain sanitation systems, conduct fumigation campaigns, provide hygiene items and renovate infrastructure in the prisons mentioned above, which helped protect detainees against the spread of disease and eased their living conditions. In one prison, the authorities restored access to safe drinking water for some 300 detainees by carrying out emergency repairs; in another, the ICRC built and equipped an isolation ward, mainly for detainees with TB. The justice ministry acquired a building for use as a prison for female detainees and, with ICRC support, the infrastructure (capacity: 30 detainees) was adapted to fit its purpose.

ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

Military instructors develop their ability to teach IHL

The ICRC maintained its support for the Mauritanian military and security forces to complete training activities for their units in IHL and international human rights law, respectively – as set out in the four-year plan it developed with them in 2012.

While the authorities were reviewing the military's instructional manual on IHL – completed with ICRC support in 2015 – eight military instructors strengthened their ability to teach IHL at an ICRC seminar. Around 340 military officers, on active duty or undergoing further training at a military school, reviewed the basic principles of IHL during ICRC information sessions, and senior officers, with ICRC support, attended an advanced IHL course abroad (see *International law and policy*).

The security forces continued to work on the final draft of their training manual on international human rights law. ICRC briefings helped over 200 police cadets and instructors learn more about international standards for the use of force and firearms, and helped 151 national guards bound for peacekeeping missions in the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire and elsewhere review their knowledge of international human rights law.

Influential actors in Bassikounou are urged to support ICRC activities

To increase support for IHL and its activities in Bassikounou and elsewhere in Mauritania, the ICRC sought to broaden awareness of its mandate and mission. Briefings were held for representatives of humanitarian and international organizations and local community leaders. First-aid courses were organized by the Mauritanian Red Crescent and the ICRC for 20 Koranic teachers, who were also briefed on the Movement and its activities.

The authorities continued to be advised and encouraged by the ICRC in implementing IHL-related treaties. Government officials and academics with political and religious influence learnt more about their role in implementing IHL; an official from the foreign ministry and three professors of Islamic studies attended courses abroad (see *Lebanon* and *Tunis*). Two seminars with a partner university were postponed for administrative reasons.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Mauritanian Red Crescent continued to develop its capacities with the ICRC's financial, material and technical assistance. In particular, it sought to improve its first-aid programme; for instance, instructors had further training at a regional workshop (see *Tunis*), where they were provided with manuals and other teaching materials. Trained first-aiders equipped themselves with ICRC-provided materials and handbooks, which taught them how to treat injuries sustained during religious and sporting events, for instance. The National Society began to raise funds through first-aid courses for external clients.

Volunteers gained valuable practical experience by participating in ICRC family-links activities for detainees and Malian refugees (see *Civilians* and *People deprived of their freedom*). At ICRC workshops, staff members and volunteers were trained to conduct economic-security activities.

The National Society kept the public informed of its activities through bulletins published with the ICRC's assistance.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total			
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)					
RCMs and other means of family contact			UAMs/SC		
RCMs collected		122	1		
RCMs distributed		87	1		
Phone calls facilitated between family members		104			
Reunifications, transfers and repatriations					
People reunited with their families		1			
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons			Women	Girls	Boys
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		55	1		5
Tracing cases closed positively (subject located or fate established)		21			
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>		1			
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		80	7	2	8
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>		5			
Unaccompanied minors (UAMs) /separated children (SC), including demobilized child soldiers			Girls		Demobilized children
UAMs/SC newly registered by the ICRC/National Society		1			
UAMs/SC reunited with their families by the ICRC/National Society		1			
UAM/SC cases still being handled by the ICRC/National Society at the end of the reporting period		1	1		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)					
ICRC visits			Women	Minors	
Detainees visited		2,677	36	89	
			Women	Girls	Boys
Detainees visited and monitored individually		96	2	1	
Detainees newly registered		65	2	1	
Number of visits carried out		34			
Number of places of detention visited		18			
RCMs and other means of family contact					
RCMs collected		9			
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		31			

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	16	2	3
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection programme)				
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	2,122		
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	3,814	42	
Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	2,100	42	210
Health				
Visits carried out by health staff		20		
Places of detention visited by health staff	Structures	15		
Health facilities supported in places of detention visited by health staff	Structures	10		