



haiti

The ICRC's involvement in Haiti began in 1994, when it started 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 implementing 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 KCHF)

Protection	1,043
Assistance	1,285
Prevention	1,093
Cooperation with National Societies	1,254
General	-

► **4,675**

of which: Overheads 285

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	95%
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PERSONNEL

13	expatriates
50	national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2006, the ICRC:

- monitored conditions in 29 places of detention, including police stations, taking appropriate measures to stem an outbreak of beriberi;
- completed the refurbishment of 53 water distribution points in Cité Soleil and continued to provide technical support to local authorities responsible for water distribution and rubbish collection to enable them to maintain those services in the shantytown;
- helped the Cité Soleil branch of the Haitian Red Cross evacuate wounded and sick people and continued to enhance the capacity of the National Society to respond to the humanitarian consequences of natural disasters and internal disturbances by providing it with, among other things, first-aid kits;
- maintained a regular dialogue with all the different weapon-bearers, including UN peacekeepers, the Haitian police and armed gangs to promote respect for basic humanitarian norms and ensure safe access for Red Cross workers to victims of armed violence;
- following a sustained dialogue with successive Haitian governments, welcomed Haiti's accession to Additional Protocols I and II.

CONTEXT

Presidential and parliamentary elections, postponed several times, finally took place in February, followed by municipal elections in December. President René Préval's priority was to achieve reasonable levels of security and stability, preconditions for boosting the economy and launching social programmes for marginalized sectors of the population. A poverty-alleviation programme designed by his government – the Social Appeasement Programme – was set up to attract international funding but was slow in getting off the ground. In 2006, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund classified Haiti as one of 11 countries eligible for debt relief under the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. More than two-thirds of Haiti's annual budget was being funded by foreign aid.

Violence and kidnappings decreased significantly after the elections, only to increase again in the second half of the year. Armed violence, usually limited to specific areas of the capital, such as Cité Soleil, the most violence-prone shantytown, started spreading to other neighbourhoods.

The mandate of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was extended until 15 February 2007. A remodelled version of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme failed to reach its objectives. The government and MINUSTAH agreed in August on a plan of action to reform the Haitian police.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		CIVILIANS	
Detainees visited	4,836	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>	
Detainees visited and monitored individually	29	Water supply schemes and sanitation systems (completed projects)	Beneficiaries
Number of visits carried out	96		172,500
Number of places of detention visited	29		

ICRC ACTION

The ICRC delegation continued to focus on assisting victims of armed violence by supporting the local branch of the Haitian Red Cross in Cité Soleil, one of the metropolitan shantytowns most affected by the activities of armed groups, and by intensifying its dialogue with all groups involved in the violence. The ICRC also monitored more closely the circumstances in which the Haitian police and MINUSTAH resorted to force. It reinforced contacts with political leaders and members of civil society to present ICRC activities and discuss the humanitarian situation.

A water and sanitation project initiated in 2005 reversed to some extent the increasing marginalization of the shantytown's residents as communal water fountains and pumping stations were repaired and rubbish collection resumed. The project also helped to protect lives, because when water was not available near their homes, children were sent out to fetch it, risking getting caught in the crossfire between rival groups. Furthermore, lack of water exacerbated tensions as it had become a scarce resource to be fought over.

The ICRC continued individual visits to detainees arrested in connection with internal disturbances and to monitor the detention conditions of all detainees. In collaboration with the authorities, the ICRC refurbished/upgraded water systems and kitchens and improved warehousing logistics and management to keep better track of food stocks in the prisons of Port-au-Prince, Cap Haïtien and Anse-à-Veau. It also trained local prison health staff.

Together with the International Federation and partner National Societies, the ICRC strengthened the organizational structure and technical capacities of the Haitian Red Cross. Volunteers from the National Society received training from the ICRC and the International Federation to prepare for the hurricane season (May to October), and a VHF radio system was installed to enhance communications during emergencies.

CIVILIANS

An ongoing dialogue was maintained with armed groups, as well as with the national police force and MINUSTAH, which conducted forceful operations in shantytowns such as Cité Soleil in July and in the last two months of the year. In its contacts with them, the ICRC reiterated the importance of allowing wounded people to be transported to hospital, the need to respect the population, and the principle of proportionality in the use of force.

Improving water supply and sanitation

By year-end, 53 communal water fountains in Cité Soleil had been repaired, as had a second pumping station which, once fully operational early in 2007, would increase by 60% the quantity of water available to 172,500 residents of the shantytown. The city water board was assisted in maintaining the system, and teams of residents were trained in the upkeep of the water fountains and supervision of the sale of water.

In view of the dire hygiene and sanitation conditions in the shantytown, the ICRC reached an agreement with the local refuse-collection service to participate in the refurbishment of 15 rubbish skips, the building of 5 new ones and the provision of spare parts to the sole rubbish-collection truck servicing the shantytown. This ongoing project was set to benefit some 25,000 people.

- 197,500 people benefited from completed (172,500) and ongoing (25,000) water and sanitation projects

Missing persons

Taking into account Haiti's cultural, social and religious traditions, the ICRC resumed discussions with the authorities on the technical support needed to ensure proper identification of people who died as a result of armed conflict, other situations of internal violence or natural disaster.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Although the number of detainees in pre-trial detention decreased slightly in 2006, the figure at the main prison of Port-au-Prince remained exceptionally high at 94%, and poor access to water, food, sanitation and basic health care remained a serious concern in spite of limited improvements in the second half of the year.

Detainees gained improved water supply and sanitation following repairs to the water distribution systems of three prisons (Anse-à-Veau, Cap Haïtien and the main prison in Port-au-Prince) and the refurbishment of sanitary facilities in the capital's main prison. Detainees also saw an improvement in the quantity and quality of food after warehouses attached to the prisons of Port-au-Prince and Anse-à-Veau were upgraded and penitentiary staff working at the central warehouse in Port-au-Prince were trained in better stock management techniques. Regular prison visits by ICRC delegates also ensured that better nutrition contributed to stemming an outbreak of beriberi, a potentially fatal illness brought on by a vitamin B1 deficiency. Nurses working in detention centres countrywide received basic medical training, medicines were provided to prison dispensaries, and seriously ill detainees were brought to hospital by the ICRC.

- 4,836 detainees visited, 29 of them monitored individually (2 females), including 4 newly registered, during 96 visits to 29 places of detention, including 8 police stations
- 2,400 detainees benefited from ongoing habitat/shelter projects

WOUNDED AND SICK

Following presidential elections in February, there was a lull in the violence that had been plaguing the capital's shantytowns. Average monthly evacuations of wounded and sick people from Cité Soleil by the Haitian Red Cross amounted to 86 in the months

preceding the elections. They decreased to 35 in the four months after the elections, but rose again to 46 in the second half of the year. In all, the Haitian Red Cross evacuated some 500 wounded and sick people from Cité Soleil in 2006.

AUTHORITIES

The Organization of American States and other stakeholders were kept informed of the ICRC's activities in Haiti. An ongoing dialogue with the interim government led to the publication of Additional Protocol II in the May issue of the official journal. By December, Haiti had acceded to both Additional Protocols I and II.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

MINUSTAH and the Haitian police had a better understanding of the roles and mandates of the Haitian Red Cross and the ICRC after the ICRC stepped up its dialogue with MINUSTAH staff officers in Port-au-Prince and with police officers, resulting in significantly higher levels of cooperation during medical evacuations from Cité Soleil.

- ▶ MINUSTAH battalion commanders based in Port-au-Prince briefed on the ICRC's mandate and activities and on the Fundamental Principles; MINUSTAH battalions based in the provinces attended 12 dissemination sessions on the ICRC's mandate and the Fundamental Principles
- ▶ coordination of dissemination activities put in place with ICRC delegations based in countries providing troops to MINUSTAH; pre-deployment briefings given to MINUSTAH troops in Brazil and Jordan, for example
- ▶ police cadets in Port-au-Prince, police officers in Cap-Haïtien and Ouanaminthe and the special unit in charge of enforcing law and order in the capital, attended 5 dissemination sessions on the ICRC's mandate and activities (particularly in connection with detention) and on basic humanitarian norms relevant to policing
- ▶ members of armed groups informed of the need to respect the population, medical staff and facilities and the red cross emblem

CIVIL SOCIETY

Contacts with the media were reinforced, particularly outside Port-au-Prince. Journalists in Cap Haïtien, Gonaïves and St Marc attended information sessions on the work of the ICRC and the Movement. Representatives of 40 community-based radio stations, covering 70% of the country, were briefed on the work of the ICRC and on basic humanitarian principles. Before and during the elections in February and December, some 15 radio stations around the country broadcast messages in Creole, calling upon the population, and armed groups in particular, to respect medical facilities and the red cross emblem. The ICRC placed special emphasis on building relations with radio stations with large audiences in the shantytowns.

To raise public awareness of the plight of Cité Soleil residents, the ICRC produced news footage of the activities carried out by the Haitian Red Cross and the ICRC to improve living conditions in the shantytown, which it offered to international and national media.

In May, some 100 students and lecturers attended a one-day IHL workshop organized by the ICRC at Quisqueya University. Local journalists covered the event. With a view to launching an IHL course at the university early in 2007, a law lecturer attended an IHL course organized by the ICRC in Sion, Switzerland in September.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Together with Movement partners, the ICRC continued to assist the Haitian National Red Cross Society in implementing its plan of action for 2005–08, including the restructuring of its tracing department. The vice-president of the Haitian Red Cross was able, with ICRC support, to attend a regional conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on restoring family links (see *Buenos Aires*).

With ICRC support, the Haitian Red Cross built a second first-aid post in Cité Soleil to provide victims of violence with better access to emergency medical care. Another first-aid post and the local office of the Haitian Red Cross were refurbished in the town of Belladères, on the border with the Dominican Republic, as were the offices of the regional branch in Mirebalais.

In preparation for potential incidents of violence during presidential elections in February and municipal elections in December, the National Society received communications equipment and first-aid kits from the ICRC. Haitian Red Cross teams were thus able to assist dozens of injured people in the capital and in several other towns during episodes of violence.

The Haitian Red Cross, with technical input from the International Federation and the ICRC, prepared a contingency plan for the hurricane season. The training of Red Cross volunteers in the restoration of family links was reinforced, as was the National Society's capacity to coordinate communications nationwide during emergencies.