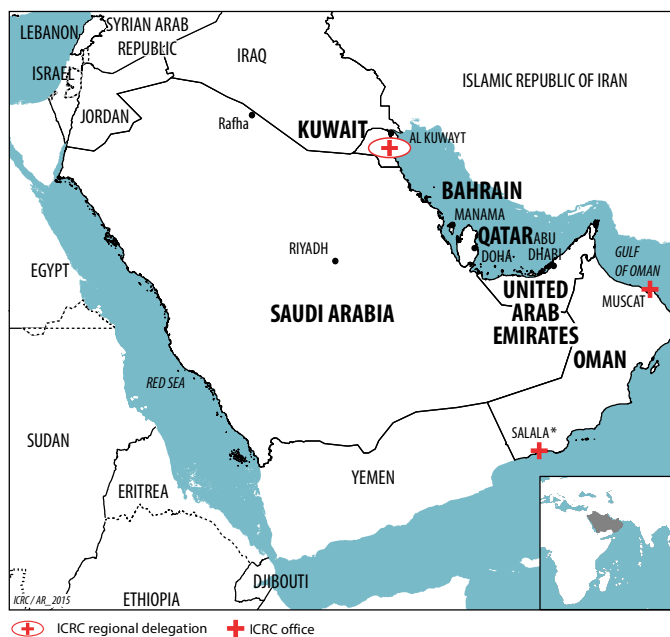


KUWAIT (regional)

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



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 influential 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 2015

- ▶ Families separated by armed conflict, detention, and migration maintained/restored contact through family-links services provided with National Societies, though progress in regional coordination remained limited.
- ▶ Bahraini, Kuwaiti and Qatari authorities took steps to improve prison services, drawing on ICRC feedback from visits to detainees. Security/health personnel learnt more about international norms applicable to their duties.
- ▶ Contact at regional fora and at ICRC-organized events raised support for the Movement and IHL. Kuwait and other States committed aid to the Movement, after a pledging conference for assisting conflict-affected Syrians.
- ▶ After talks with the ICRC president: at Oman's invitation, the ICRC opened a logistics facility in the country, to facilitate aid for conflict-affected people in Yemen; some States expressed support for ICRC action in Yemen.
- ▶ In relation to the 1990–91 Gulf War: over 3,200 Iraqi former POWs received attestations of captivity for processing assistance/legal claims; the ICRC-chaired Tripartite Commission found no remains of missing persons.

EXPENDITURE IN KCHF

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Protection | 2,107 |
| Assistance | 241 |
| Prevention | 1,848 |
| Cooperation with National Societies | 523 |
| General | 27 |
| Total | 4,746 |
| <i>Of which: Overheads</i> | 290 |

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

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

PERSONNEL

| | |
|---|----|
| Mobile staff | 12 |
| Resident staff (daily workers not included) | 30 |

YEARLY RESULTS

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

MEDIUM

| PROTECTION | Total |
|---|--------|
| CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.) | |
| Restoring family links | |
| RCMs collected | 17 |
| RCMs distributed | 32 |
| Phone calls facilitated between family members | 101 |
| People located (tracing cases closed positively) | 13 |
| PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses) | |
| ICRC visits | |
| Detainees visited | 12,110 |
| Detainees visited and monitored individually | 151 |
| Number of visits carried out | 52 |
| Number of places of detention visited | 23 |
| Restoring family links | |
| RCMs collected | 231 |
| RCMs distributed | 164 |
| Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative | 220 |

CONTEXT

The Member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) continued to exert influence in the region and beyond. Saudi Arabia led a military coalition that conducted airstrikes in Yemen; Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (hereafter UAE) participated. Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE are also members of international coalitions fighting the Islamic State group (see *Syrian Arab Republic* and *Yemen*).

Most GCC governments and National Societies undertook to assist conflict-affected people in the region, including those who had fled to other countries. For the third consecutive year, Kuwait held an international pledging conference to help victims of the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic (hereafter Syria). Saudi Arabia hosted the secretariat of the GCC and the secretariat and Humanitarian Affairs Department of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Saudi Arabia created the King Salman Center in 2015, and coordinated its humanitarian aid for Yemen through it.

Bomb and suicide attacks claimed lives in Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Arrests on grounds of “terrorism” were made throughout the GCC, and policies on economic migration were tightened, which contributed to an increase in the number of detainees.

In Bahrain, fewer demonstrations took place than in past years; operations to quell them still led to arrests.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC’s regional delegation in Kuwait worked to raise awareness among GCC States and GCC-based organizations, including Islamic charities, of the plight of conflict-affected people in the region and foster support for the Movement’s neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action for these people, and IHL implementation. Events organized by the ICRC with National Societies, national IHL committees and others, and high-level contact – with the ICRC president for example – contributed to States and organizations renewing/pledging support for Movement action in the region. Following the Third International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria, States, in particular Kuwait, renewed pledges of support for the Movement. High-level talks with the ICRC president contributed to Oman inviting the ICRC to open a logistics facility in the country, which served as a conduit for aid to Yemen. UAE and Saudi Arabian authorities pledged to contribute to the ICRC’s activities in Yemen for 2016.

The ICRC – together with national IHL committees, National Societies, judicial institutes and others – provided support for implementing IHL in the region. Through advanced courses, workshops and briefings, State officials, legal professionals and academics added to their knowledge of IHL and were encouraged to facilitate the implementation process. States that were part of the military coalition in Yemen were reminded of their obligations under IHL. Kuwaiti and Qatari military officers supplemented their IHL training, and Bahraini penitentiary officers learnt more about international human rights law and IHL.

Detainees in Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar – including migrants – received ICRC visits in accordance with the organization’s standard procedures; particularly vulnerable inmates were followed up individually. Following visits, the authorities were advised and encouraged in improving living conditions, and treatment, for example, in line with judicial guarantees, the principle of

non-refoulement and the need of detainees, particularly migrants, for family contact. At local training initiatives and events abroad, prison officials and health staff learnt more, from their peers and the ICRC, about issues related to their work and the norms governing it.

Families in the region used Movement family-links services to maintain/restore contact with relatives separated from them by armed conflict, detention and other circumstances. National Societies were helped to improve and promote family-links services through training support and other means, though efforts to strengthen regional coordination and cooperation progressed little. National Societies also drew on ICRC help to strengthen their emergency response and their capacity to work in violence-prone areas. At statutory meetings in Switzerland and other events, GCC National Societies discussed their activities abroad and coordination, with other Movement components.

In Saudi Arabia, forensic professionals in the region shared experiences and best practices in managing human remains at an ICRC-organized event, with a view to facilitating increased coordination and cooperation among them. In relation to the 1990–91 Gulf War: Iraqi former POWs received attestations of captivity for use in processing State assistance and legal claims; the ICRC-chaired Tripartite Commission found no remains of missing persons.

CIVILIANS

In Bahrain, dialogue with the authorities on protection concerns relating to people arrested during demonstrations continued. The Interior Ministry, with ICRC support, trained security/penitentiary officials in norms applicable to their work (see *People deprived of their freedom*).

Dispersed families keep in touch through Movement family-links services

People maintained/restored contact with relatives separated from them by armed conflict, detention and other circumstances through RCMs, phone/video calls, short oral messages and other services offered by National Societies and the ICRC. In Kuwait, beneficiaries included a growing number of migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees, affected by crises in Nepal (see *Nepal*), Syria and Yemen. In Kuwait, some 130 families contacted/received news of relatives at Syria’s eastern border with Jordan (see *Jordan*).

People phoned or sent RCMs and/or parcels containing food/recreational items to relatives detained in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere. Most notably, people called relatives held at the US internment facility at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba. Calls were made monthly, more frequently than in past years, and some families, making use of video calls for the first time, were able to see their relatives. Two families spent time with their relatives detained abroad during an ICRC-organized visit.

GCC National Societies strove to improve regional family-links capacities. The Bahrain Red Crescent Society and the Qatar Red Crescent Society began drafting action plans on training and operations, and the focal point of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society gained more practical experience by participating in ICRC activities for migrants. Staff from these three National Societies honed their skills at ICRC training sessions.

The Qatari Red Crescent also integrated family-links services into their emergency response; however, no other National Society did so.

Efforts to strengthen regional coordination and conduct joint needs assessments progressed little; National Societies/ICRC instead focused on promoting family-links services, including the ICRC's Arabic family-links website, to potential beneficiaries, notably migrants.

Forensic professionals from the region shared experiences and best practices in managing human remains at an ICRC-organized event in Saudi Arabia that sought to further coordination and cooperation among them.

Efforts to clarify the fate of persons missing in relation to the 1990–91 Gulf War continue, amid constraints

With the ICRC chairing and acting as a neutral intermediary within the tripartite committee 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) and with the UN Mission in Iraq as an observer, the parties involved continued working to clarify the fate of persons missing in relation to the 1990–91 Gulf War.

Several missions were made to Iraq and Kuwait – for purposes of excavation/exploration – but no human remains were recovered. At one ICRC-chaired meeting of the tripartite committee, and at three meetings of its technical sub-committee, the parties concerned discussed obstacles, such as prevailing conditions in Iraq (see *Iraq*), and agreed to review their approach.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Over 12,100 people detained in facilities in Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar, including a Doha city deportation centre, received visits conducted according to standard ICRC procedures. Particularly vulnerable people, such as migrants, women, people arrested in connection with demonstrations in Bahrain, and security detainees in Kuwait, were followed up individually.

After visits, the authorities received confidential feedback and, where appropriate, recommendations for improving detainees' treatment and living conditions, particularly during arrest and the initial stages of detention. Dialogue also focused on improving penitentiary services to better address issues related to overcrowding, judicial guarantees, and detainee health care.

Overall progress on these areas remained limited, notably in Bahrain, though, some training initiatives did take place.

Officials and health staff learn more about norms/issues related to their work from their peers and the ICRC

At briefings in Bahrain, about 40 officials from the interior ministry offices and 25 others from various government bodies added to their knowledge of international human rights law and IHL, and internationally recognized detention standards, respectively; all of them learnt more about the ICRC's work for detainees. The authorities requested further training support.

The Kuwaiti penitentiary authorities were advised in improving training programmes for police and penitentiary staff, and were helped to organize a study trip abroad. Thus, Kuwaiti penitentiary officials exchanged best practices with their counterparts in the Netherlands; in the same vein, Qatari penitentiary officials went on a study trip to Switzerland.

GCC penitentiary authorities gained insights on providing health in detention – in relation to ill-treatment, hunger strikes, and the benefits of involving health ministries – at two seminars organized with the Kuwaiti authorities and the GCC secretariat; Bahrain sent health staff to a conference abroad (see *Jordan*). The Bahraini authorities, assisted by the ICRC, dealt with health/medical emergencies: after a scabies epidemic in one prison, detainees were provided with hygiene items for reducing the risk of contagion; detainees injured during a riot were transferred to medical facilities for treatment. In Kuwait, Algerian officials and Kuwaiti interior ministry staff discussed health care for detainees (see *Algeria*).

Detainees in Kuwait restore/maintain contact with their relatives

Where appropriate, the authorities were reminded of the need to facilitate family contact and respect the principle of *non-refoulement*, particularly with regard to detained migrants.

In Kuwait, this issue was taken up at a round-table discussion that involved the foreign/interior ministries and UNHCR, and at other meetings. Syrian consular officials were requested to facilitate the issuance of passports for Syrian deportees; foreigners whose

| PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM | Bahrain | Kuwait | Qatar |
|---|---------|--------|-------|
| ICRC visits | | | |
| Detainees visited | 3,587 | 5,697 | 2,826 |
| <i>of whom women</i> | | 894 | 339 |
| <i>of whom minors</i> | 148 | 5 | |
| Detainees visited and monitored individually | 14 | 126 | 11 |
| <i>of whom women</i> | | 75 | 1 |
| <i>of whom girls</i> | | 3 | |
| <i>of whom boys</i> | 3 | 2 | |
| Detainees newly registered | 14 | 111 | 8 |
| <i>of whom women</i> | | 62 | 8 |
| <i>of whom girls</i> | | 3 | |
| <i>of whom boys</i> | 3 | 2 | |
| Number of visits carried out | 6 | 42 | 4 |
| Number of places of detention visited | 3 | 16 | 4 |
| Restoring family links | | | |
| RCMs collected | | 231 | |
| RCMs distributed | | 164 | |
| Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative | | 220 | |
| People to whom a detention attestation was issued | | 3,327 | |

countries did not have embassies in Kuwait were helped to obtain travel documents from their embassies in Saudi Arabia. Kuwaiti authorities were encouraged to purchase return airplane tickets for deportees with limited means, thereby helping avoid delays in the deportation process.

With help from the Kuwaiti Red Crescent/ICRC, some detainees reconnected with their relatives. Migrants from Sri Lanka and Nepal availed themselves of video calls, and women at the deportation centre called relatives abroad using phone cards provided to them. Thanks partly to ICRC encouragement, a Nepalese baby with cerebral palsy and her mother were transferred to the custody of Nepalese authorities, after the baby had received some medical attention from Kuwaiti health staff.

Over 3,300 ex-POWs receive attestations of captivity

A total of 3,327 Iraqi ex-POWs, held in Saudi Arabia during the 1990–1991 Gulf War, received attestations of captivity; this helped them apply for financial assistance in Iraq or facilitated legal procedures in third countries where they had resettled.

ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

Governments, civil society – international/intergovernmental organizations, Islamic charities and UN agencies – and others learnt more about humanitarian issues in the region and IHL at events organized with/for them by the ICRC.

GCC States/organizations pledge support for ICRC action for conflict-affected people in Syria and Yemen

Dialogue at regional fora and other events raised support for Movement activities for conflict-affected people among governments and organizations.

After the Third International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria, held in Kuwait and attended by the ICRC president, States, including Kuwait, renewed their pledges of support for the Movement. With the agreement of the authorities concerned, the ICRC opened a logistics facility in Oman; through it, assistance – from the ICRC, UN agencies and the Bahraini and Kuwaiti National Societies – was delivered more easily into Yemen (see *Yemen*). In addition, following intensive dialogue and high-level meetings with the organization's president, the UAE and Saudi Arabian authorities responded favourably to endorsing the ICRC's activities in Yemen for 2016, and to allowing the ICRC to increase its presence in the respective countries.

Governments, organizations and the ICRC discussed their shared principles and challenges in humanitarian work – for example, safety risks and water scarcity, at conferences in Qatar and the UAE – and the role of youth and the government in it, at an event in Kuwait. This fostered respect for neutrality, impartiality and independence, and facilitated cooperation/coordination; some Islamic organizations, including the OIC, signed/renewed cooperation/training agreements with the ICRC.

The media helped build support for IHL and the Movement among the public; UAE-based journalists were briefed on the protection due to them under IHL and accurate reporting on humanitarian issues.

GCC National IHL committees and State officials boost their ability to advance/promote IHL implementation

National IHL committees were advised in promoting IHL in line with a regional plan, adopted during a League of Arab States

conference in Algeria in 2014. Bahrain's committee more easily assumed its duties with ICRC technical support.

At events organized with national IHL committees, National Societies and others, government officials – including judges and newly appointed Kuwaiti diplomats – and humanitarian workers were urged to support IHL implementation. Various topics were discussed at these events: the similarities between IHL and Islamic jurisprudence, at a Kuwaiti Red Crescent briefing; and the goals of the Health Care in Danger project at an event with Bahrain's National Institute for Human Rights.

Kuwaiti, Qatari and Saudi Arabian officials attended courses abroad (see *Lebanon* and *Nairobi*), and the region's magistrates and prosecutors honed their knowledge of IHL at a workshop at the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies. The heads of a Kuwaiti and an Emirati judicial institute, and that of a Qatari university's law faculty joined an expert meeting and an advanced course in Switzerland.

Bahraini, Emirati, Kuwaiti, Omani and Qatari universities were encouraged to incorporate IHL into their curricula. Hundreds of academics were briefed on IHL and consulted ICRC-provided references.

Military officers supplement their training in IHL

States part of the military coalition in Yemen (see *Context*) were reminded of their obligations under IHL. Efforts were made, particularly with the Saudi Arabian forces, to deepen dialogue on the conduct of hostilities; some Saudi Arabian officers attended IHL training at ICRC headquarters in Switzerland.

During briefings at military colleges, more than 130 Kuwaiti and Qatari officers furthered their understanding of IHL – particularly the ICRC's mandate and the importance of providing unimpeded access to health/medical care. Because of administrative constraints and the shift of priorities towards Yemen, some training initiatives did not push through.

Bahraini security officers and officials attended ICRC-organized training (see *People deprived of their freedom*).

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

GCC National Societies enhance their emergency response capacities

GCC National Society volunteers learnt to better mitigate the risks of violence while working in volatile areas, with training on the Safer Access Framework. At a HELP workshop organized with the Qatari Red Crescent, over 150 GCC National Society personnel and health/medical professionals practiced responding to large-scale health emergencies. The Saudi Arabian Red Crescent's emergency-response team drew on ICRC advice to develop its contingency planning, and the Qatari Red Crescent integrated family-links services into its emergency response (see also *Civilians*).

At statutory meetings in Switzerland and other events, GCC National Societies discussed their activities abroad and coordination with other Movement components. Moreover, some 60 staff/volunteers of the Bahraini, Kuwaiti and Qatari National Societies familiarized themselves with conducting humanitarian action in line with the Fundamental Principles, at a workshop.

With the ICRC, GCC National Societies promoted IHL, the protection of Movement emblems and the Health Care in Danger project among their volunteers and others (see *Actors of influence*). With the International Federation and ICRC, they strengthened their legal bases, management and organizational structure.

| MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION | | Total | | | |
|---|--|--------|----------|--------|------|
| CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.) | | | | | |
| Red Cross messages (RCMs) | | | UAMs/SC* | | |
| RCMs collected | | 17 | | | |
| RCMs distributed | | 32 | | | |
| Phone calls facilitated between family members | | 101 | | | |
| Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons | | | Women | Girls | Boys |
| People for whom a tracing request was newly registered | | 28 | 8 | | |
| <i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i> | | 1 | | | |
| People located (tracing cases closed positively) | | 13 | | | |
| <i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i> | | 2 | | | |
| Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people) | | 1,505 | 13 | 1 | 44 |
| <i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i> | | 1,392 | | | |
| Documents | | | | | |
| Official documents relayed between family members across borders/front lines | | 12 | | | |
| PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses) | | | | | |
| ICRC visits | | | Women | Minors | |
| Detainees visited | | 12,110 | 1,233 | 153 | |
| | | | Women | Girls | Boys |
| Detainees visited and monitored individually | | 151 | 76 | 3 | 5 |
| Detainees newly registered | | 133 | 70 | 3 | 5 |
| Number of visits carried out | | 52 | | | |
| Number of places of detention visited | | 23 | | | |
| Restoring family links | | | | | |
| RCMs collected | | 231 | | | |
| RCMs distributed | | 164 | | | |
| Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative | | 220 | | | |
| People to whom a detention attestation was issued | | 3,327 | | | |

*Unaccompanied minors/separated children

| MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE | | Total | Women | Children |
|---|--|-------|-------|----------|
| PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses) | | | | |
| Health | | | | |
| Number of visits carried out by health staff | | 19 | | |
| Number of places of detention visited by health staff | | 5 | | |