

TUNIS (regional)

COVERING: Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco/Western Sahara, Tunisia



EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	2,738
Assistance	645
Prevention	1,431
Cooperation with National Societies	510
General	-

▶ **5,323**

of which: Overheads 325

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	99%
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PERSONNEL

Expatriates	16
National staff (daily workers not included)	36

KEY POINTS

In 2010, the ICRC:

- ▶ in support of the Mauritanian authorities, initiated an emergency health programme in Nouakchott's main prison, providing detainees with life-saving nutritional and medical attention and hygiene items
- ▶ helped the Tunisian authorities develop 2 pilot projects aimed at alleviating overcrowding in prisons
- ▶ with the Moroccan Red Crescent and a Sahrawi NGO, launched a pilot initiative to familiarize communities in Western Sahara with the dangers posed by mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW)
- ▶ provided prosthetic/orthotic and physiotherapy services to 272 Sahrawi victims of mines/ERW and other disabled people
- ▶ welcomed the ratification by Tunisia of the Convention on Cluster Munitions
- ▶ enhanced understanding of IHL and the ICRC among more than 800 members of the armed and security forces during training events organized together with local institutions in Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia

The regional delegation based in Tunisia, which has been operating since 1987, regularly visits people deprived of their freedom in Mauritania and Tunisia to monitor their treatment and conditions of detention. Acting as a neutral intermediary, it is also involved in efforts to resolve issues of humanitarian concern arising from the aftermath of the Western Sahara conflict. It promotes implementation of IHL by the authorities, including its integration into national legislation and into training programmes for the armed forces. National Societies and the media in the region are essential partners in this process.

CONTEXT

The stability of parts of the region continued to be threatened by violence and political and social tensions.

Violent activity, including kidnappings, persisted in remote regions near the Mali-Mauritania frontier, attributed by some sources to members of the self-styled Al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb. Security operations targeting armed groups and individuals suspected of endangering State security reportedly led to arrests.

Mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) scattered throughout the region during the Western Sahara and previous conflicts continued to pose a danger to the population.

The final status of Western Sahara remained contentious between Morocco and the Polisario Front. Informal talks between the parties, organized by the UN special envoy in February and December, failed to move things forward. On 30 April, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for another year.

Families on both sides remained without news of relatives unaccounted for from the 1975–91 Western Sahara conflict.

In October, some 15,000 Sahrawis gathered outside Laayoune, in the part of Western Sahara under Moroccan administration, to protest against difficult living conditions. Confrontations ensued when the Moroccan security forces intervened to disperse the protesters, resulting in casualties on both sides.

In November, Mauritanian media drew attention to a rise in mortality rates in Nouakchott's main prison, prompting the authorities to launch an investigation.

In late December, Tunisian youth took to the streets to protest against high unemployment and poverty, triggering clashes with security forces. Demonstrations were still in progress at year-end.

The region as a whole continued to serve as a transit route for irregular migrants seeking entry into Europe. Their numbers decreased, however, as tighter restrictions on entry, border controls and greater cooperation between the States concerned saw many forcibly returned to North Africa.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

PROTECTION

CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)			
Red Cross messages	Total	UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected	185		
RCMs distributed	130		
Phone calls facilitated between family members	26		
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons¹	Total	Women	Minors
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	48	14	19
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	9		
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	1		
Tracing cases still being handled at 31 December 2010 (people)	66	17	25
Documents			
People to whom travel documents were issued	30		
Official documents relayed between family members across borders/front lines	1		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)²			
ICRC visits	Total	Women	Minors
Detainees visited	28,599		
Detainees visited and monitored individually	706	6	3
Detainees newly registered	318	4	2
Number of visits carried out	67		
Number of places of detention visited	38		
Restoring family links	Total		
RCMs collected	42		
RCMs distributed	11		
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	13		
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	30		

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

1. Not including people missing as a consequence of the Western Sahara armed conflict

2. Mauritania and Tunisia

ASSISTANCE

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
Economic security, water and habitat ³				
	Beneficiaries	Total	Women	Children
Essential household items		1,700		

3. Mauritania only

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

ASSISTANCE

WOUNDED AND SICK				
Physical rehabilitation ⁴		Total	Women	Children
Centres supported	Structures	1		
Patients receiving services	Patients	272	67	29
New patients fitted with prostheses	Patients	18	3	
Prostheses delivered	Units	21	3	
	<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	Units	18	
New patients fitted with orthoses	Patients	36	12	6
Orthoses delivered	Units	45	17	11
Crutches delivered	Units	99		
Wheelchairs delivered	Units	2		

4. Physical rehabilitation centre in Rabouni (south-western Algeria) for disabled Sahrawis

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC maintained its focus on protection activities related to people detained in Mauritania and Tunisia and those missing from the Western Sahara conflict. It also stepped up efforts to foster understanding of IHL and humanitarian principles among all those with potential influence in situations of violence, including authorities, armed and security forces and religious institutions.

During visits to detainees in Mauritania and Tunisia, delegates monitored their treatment and living conditions, while supporting the authorities in both countries in implementing fundamental penal and penitentiary reforms. In Tunisia, efforts centred on developing two pilot projects to address overcrowding; these explored the potential impact of alternative custody regimes and social rehabilitation initiatives on reducing the prison population. In Mauritania, the ICRC responded swiftly to deteriorating conditions in Nouakchott's Dar Naïm prison, increasing its support to meet detainees' urgent nutritional, medical and hygiene needs. In discussion with delegates, the authorities began developing a plan of action to reorganize the penitentiary health system.

In its capacity as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC pursued efforts to encourage the Moroccan authorities and the Polisario Front to clarify the fate of people unaccounted for from the 1975–91 Western Sahara conflict. With both parties having appointed specific bodies to address the issue, the ICRC offered to support these bodies in resolving outstanding cases to alleviate the distress of the families concerned.

The ICRC prosthetic/orthotic workshop and physical rehabilitation centre in Rabouni, in south-western Algeria, continued to provide limb-fitting and physiotherapy services to disabled Sahrawi refugees, including mine/ERW victims. With a view to reducing such injuries, the ICRC lent its support to a pilot mine-risk education initiative co-organized by the Moroccan Red Crescent and a Sahrawi NGO in Moroccan- and Polisario Front-administered parts of Western Sahara respectively.

Seminars, round-tables and bilateral contacts with national authorities, armed and security forces and civil society contributed to mutual understanding and helped foster their support for IHL and the Movement's neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian work. To encourage national IHL implementation, the ICRC sponsored government representatives to enhance their knowledge at regional IHL events, and provided legal expertise to national IHL committees in Morocco and Tunisia. Libyan and Tunisian military training units began integrating IHL into curricula using IHL manuals revised with ICRC input. Leading media representatives, religious institutions and NGOs also strengthened cooperation with the ICRC, helping encourage widespread respect for humanitarian principles.

With the National Societies, the ICRC helped provide family-links services for people separated from their families, including migrants. These allowed several families to enjoy direct contact with relatives detained/interned abroad.

The organization continued to offer guidance and financial support to the region's National Societies to develop their family-links activities and to build their capacities to provide a full range of humanitarian services. It worked with the Mauritanian Red Crescent on revising its statutes and strategy.

Coordination with Movement partners and other humanitarian actors helped ensure needs were covered while avoiding duplication.

CIVILIANS

Families regionwide were able to locate or make contact with relatives detained/interned abroad, or present in violence-affected countries where communications were difficult, using family-links services provided by the National Societies/ICRC. Among them, 11 families enjoyed telephone or video contact with relatives detained/interned in the US internment facility at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba, in Afghanistan or in Iraq. Migrants, refugees and former detainees/internees released and repatriated, or resettled in third countries, also had access to such services,

enabling them to maintain family contact and obtain travel or other official documents where necessary.

In the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, such services were provided by the Libyan Red Crescent, which worked closely with an expert ICRC tracing delegate to boost its family-links capacities. Together they identified ways to accelerate outstanding cases, notably by refining record-keeping procedures. Within the framework of the Restoring Family Links Strategy for the Movement, they conducted a workshop for family-links personnel and reviewed Movement guidelines regarding activities for migrants. Moroccan Red Crescent management staff received an introductory ICRC briefing on the strategy, prompting discussion as to how family-links activities might be incorporated into disaster-preparedness training.

Efforts pursued to provide answers to the families of persons missing from the Western Sahara conflict

With the ICRC acting as a neutral intermediary, the Moroccan authorities and the Polisario Front were encouraged to take concrete action to clarify the fate of people missing in connection with the Western Sahara conflict, and to inform the families accordingly. Both parties having appointed specific bodies to address the issue, the ICRC continued to offer its support to the Consultative Council on Human Rights (CCDH, for Morocco) and the “Sahrawi Red Crescent” (for the Polisario Front) in gathering additional information to that end by sharing its expertise in this field.

On meeting delegates, the CCDH agreed, in principle, to resume efforts to resolve an initial caseload in order to relieve the anguish of the families concerned. Preliminary discussions also took place with the “Sahrawi Red Crescent”, which expressed interest in ICRC help to build staff capacities, for example through advice on data-collection techniques. Both bodies agreed to pursue discussions with the ICRC in 2011 to formalize terms of cooperation.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Detainees in Mauritania and Tunisia received visits from the ICRC, according to its standard procedures, to monitor their treatment and living conditions. The ICRC shared feedback from such visits with the authorities confidentially.

During visits, detainees were able to exchange news with relatives by telephone/RCM using Movement family-links services.

In both countries, the authorities responded positively to ICRC recommendations and welcomed its support in their efforts to implement comprehensive reforms aimed at bringing detainees’ treatment and living conditions in line with international standards. They worked to improve respect for detainees’ physical and psychological well-being, taking action where necessary to remind prison personnel of their responsibilities to respect detainees’ legal rights.

Dialogue with Polisario Front representatives continued with a view to resuming visits to detainees under their responsibility, as agreed in principle in 2009. Formal authorization to proceed was awaited at year-end.

Discussions with the Moroccan authorities secured agreement in principle to visit Moroccans detained following their transfer from internment abroad.

Mauritanian detainees receive life-saving support

In Mauritania, the authorities acknowledged the need to improve prison infrastructure, organization and financial management to secure detainees’ health and general well-being, but generally lacked the resources to address such issues.

When, in November, it emerged that nutritional and hygiene conditions in Nouakchott’s Dar Naïm prison had deteriorated to life-threatening levels, the authorities welcomed the ICRC’s proposal to conduct an emergency health assessment. Accordingly, over 900 detainees had their nutritional health monitored by an ICRC medical team, accompanied by Health Ministry nurses, enabling them to identify those requiring immediate treatment as well as recurrent health issues such as skin and respiratory complaints. Based on the findings, the ICRC sharply increased its support to help bring the situation under control.

With ICRC materials and supervision, the authorities initiated a comprehensive clean-up operation and introduced measures to ensure detainees’ accommodation and sanitation facilities would be regularly cleaned in future. Detainees in Dar Naïm and, as necessary, in other facilities, received ICRC hygiene items to help them maintain a healthy living environment.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	MAURITANIA	TUNISIA
ICRC visits		
Detainees visited	1,451	27,148
Detainees visited and monitored individually	108	598
	<i>of whom women</i>	6
	<i>of whom minors</i>	2
Detainees newly registered	40	278
	<i>of whom women</i>	4
	<i>of whom minors</i>	2
Number of visits carried out	19	48
Number of places of detention visited	7	31
Restoring family links		
RCMs collected	21	21
RCMs distributed	5	6
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	8	5

On ICRC advice, prison medical personnel increased their hours to ensure detainees in Dar Naïm had access to 24-hour medical services. Inmates requiring medical attention received adequate treatment thanks to essential medical supplies provided by the ICRC in cooperation with WHO.

In parallel, the authorities and prison health personnel, with ICRC support, embarked on efforts to reorganize the penitentiary health system, developing a plan of action to bring sustainable improvements to detainees' general health and nutrition.

Tunisian authorities work to improve detainees' treatment and address overcrowding

In response to an ICRC written representation concerning the treatment of people held in police custody, the Tunisian authorities confirmed the utility of such communications and proposed meeting delegates quarterly to follow up any new issues. They took note of the ICRC's readiness to help them train prison medical personnel to document inmates' health issues systematically. Such dialogue also drew the authorities' attention to the needs of potentially isolated groups such as migrants, inmates in solitary confinement and those sentenced to death, and reminded them of the importance of family contact in contributing to such inmates' psychological well-being.

Given Tunisia's prison population, numbering some 27,000 detainees in 31 facilities visited by the ICRC, overcrowding continued to put a severe strain on prison resources and infrastructure.

With the ICRC, the Justice Ministry and the prison administration launched pilot projects in Sousse and Mahdia prisons. These aimed to reduce the prison population and improve day-to-day conditions for detainees by introducing a variety of custody regimes and activity programmes to suit different categories of offender. During two ICRC-organized visits to Switzerland, magistrates and other relevant officials examined the Swiss penal and penitentiary model at first-hand. They saw how prisoner numbers might be reduced by introducing alternatives to imprisonment, and by engaging detainees in social rehabilitation initiatives to minimize repeat offences. Back in Tunisia, magistrates were encouraged to consider prison-population growth when handing down sentences, while prison directors and social workers learnt about different custody regimes at a prison administration/ICRC seminar. Based on these activities, the project steering committees developed plans of action, with ICRC guidance, to alleviate overcrowding in the targeted prisons. These were well advanced by year-end ahead of their submission for Justice Ministry approval in 2011.

WOUNDED AND SICK

People in the region remained at risk from mines/ERW remaining from the Western Sahara and previous conflicts.

During the year, 272 Sahrawi refugees benefited from services provided by the ICRC prosthetic/orthotic workshop and physical rehabilitation centre in Rabouni, in south-western Algeria's

Tindouf region. Serving victims of mines/ERW and other disabled people living in nearby refugee camps, the centre produced prostheses, orthoses, crutches and wheelchairs and offered limb-fitting and physiotherapy services. Having access to these facilities prevented patients from having to travel long distances for treatment, and minimized the turnaround time for repairs to their mobility aids. Six physiotherapists and prosthetic/orthotic technicians reinforced their skills with ICRC training, helping ensure the quality and sustainability of services.

In efforts to prevent mine/ERW accidents in Western Sahara, local Moroccan Red Crescent branches and the Sahrawi Campaign to Ban Landmines launched a pilot mine-risk education initiative, with ICRC support (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*), in Moroccan- and Polisario Front-administered areas of Western Sahara respectively. Local rural and nomadic communities, including schoolchildren, learnt about the dangers posed by such devices at presentations, and received leaflets, t-shirts and educational games to help promote such messages more widely.

AUTHORITIES

During briefings and round-tables, government officials, diplomats and parliamentarians in Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia discussed topical IHL and humanitarian and security issues with the ICRC and learnt more about its activities. Such contact deepened their understanding of the ICRC's neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian work, contributing particularly to cooperation in Mauritania and Tunisia on detention-related matters (see *People deprived of their freedom*).

In Morocco, dialogue continued aimed at formalizing the ICRC's presence in the country and strengthening its operations there. The authorities were informed that, from 2011, activities would be managed from the ICRC's Tunis office. In June, they formally acknowledged the ICRC's 2009 position paper regarding humanitarian needs linked to the 1975–91 Western Sahara conflict (see *Civilians*). They encouraged the ICRC, as a neutral intermediary, to pursue cooperation with the CCDH in this regard.

To support the region's governments in mobilizing support for IHL, magistrates, government officials and representatives of IHL implementation bodies from Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia enhanced their IHL expertise at ICRC workshops abroad. No Libyan representatives were available to attend such events.

The Moroccan and Tunisian governments, in particular, took steps to accelerate national IHL implementation, with ICRC guidance and reference materials. Tunisia ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions and undertook to draft a bill governing use of the Movement's emblems. After examining legislative and constitutional obstacles to the ratification of the Rome Statute at an ICRC seminar, Morocco's IHL committee organized a workshop for legislators to advance the process, with ICRC guidance.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

National military and security forces, which were at various stages of integrating IHL/international human rights law into curricula, benefited from ICRC expertise to support their efforts.

In the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Tunisia, the armed forces pursued efforts to standardize national IHL instruction and to build instructors' capacities to teach the subject independently. The Libyan military IHL committee finalized its IHL training manual with ICRC input. There and in Tunisia, which undertook a similar exercise in 2009, military schools countrywide began using the new manuals to conduct forces' training.

Some 350 Mauritanian military and security personnel, including National Guard members, learnt about IHL and international human rights law at ICRC seminars organized with national training academies. In Morocco, over 500 officers from the armed and security forces and the Royal Gendarmerie deepened their understanding of existing mechanisms designed to ensure adherence to IHL, and of the role of the International Criminal Court, at courses arranged with the national IHL committee. In Tunisia, military magistrates joined their civilian counterparts at an IHL committee/ICRC seminar to discuss the repression of IHL violations.

Additionally, Libyan and Mauritanian armed forces' magazines published ICRC articles on IHL-related issues, helping broaden understanding of IHL among their respective readerships.

Moroccan peacekeepers due for deployment to other African countries learnt about Movement operations in those countries at preparatory ICRC briefings. In the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, limited contact with security forces prevented the ICRC from conducting briefings for police officers.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Efforts continued to expand contacts among influential civil society members and to foster their support for IHL and the Movement's distinctive humanitarian work.

In the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania and Morocco, NGOs working in fields of common interest, such as the protection of detainees and children, enhanced their understanding of IHL and Movement operations at National Society/ICRC seminars. Similarly, respected religious groups and cultural associations examined parallels between IHL and Islamic law and the distinctive nature of the Movement's emblems. Members of these groups contributed to the ICRC's Arab-language magazine, *Al-Insani*, helping raise awareness of regional humanitarian concerns such as migration.

To enhance humanitarian reporting, the ICRC sponsored journalists' attendance at a regional media workshop and developed partnerships with media trade unions and magazines in Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. Together they organized seminars at which

journalists deepened their understanding of ICRC operations and discussed practical aspects of IHL. These events generated coverage in leading newspapers and radio/television broadcasts, particularly in Tunisia, contributing to greater public awareness of such topics.

In pursuit of efforts to promote IHL in academic circles, religious universities, especially in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Tunisia, strengthened their cooperation with the National Societies/ICRC. They hosted several well-attended study days enabling students and lecturers to discuss current challenges facing IHL. With ICRC support, Tunisia's Ez-Zitouna University organized a second seminar on "IHL and the Muslim World", attracting some 50 lecturers and students from across the region. Ez-Zitouna University later organized a similar course for doctoral students, marking the formal introduction of IHL in its curricula.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

In coordination with the International Federation and National Societies working internationally, the ICRC provided expertise and financial support to the region's National Societies to strengthen their capacities to provide a full range of humanitarian services. Regular contact with each Society's leadership ensured Movement components knew of each other's activities and could identify scope for partnership.

The National Societies in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Morocco received advice from tracing delegates on developing their family-links activities in line with the Restoring Family Links Strategy for the Movement (see *Civilians*). The Libyan Red Crescent, in particular, consolidated its cooperation with the ICRC, identifying common objectives and developing a plan of action for the coming year. In efforts to develop a coherent approach to the regional trend of migration, the International Federation/ICRC arranged for all four National Societies to share their experiences at a Movement meeting in Senegal (see *Dakar*).

Having acquired skills to raise awareness of weapon contamination at ICRC courses in 2009, five Moroccan Red Crescent branches produced supporting materials with ICRC funds and, thus equipped, launched a mine-risk education initiative (see *Wounded and sick*). The National Society's Laayoune branch independently mobilized ambulances and first-aiders to attend to people wounded during protests outside Laayoune in October.

Throughout the year, the Mauritanian Red Crescent pursued a comprehensive revision of its statutes and strategy with sustained encouragement and guidance from the ICRC and other Movement partners active in the country.