

LIBERIA



ICRC delegation ICRC sub-delegation

The ICRC has worked in Liberia since 1970, opening its delegation in 1990. Following intense fighting early in 2003 and the subsequent signing of a peace agreement, the ICRC stepped up its operations. Since 2005, it has focused on protecting and assisting returnees (former IDPs and refugees) and residents, the wounded and sick, detainees, and children separated from their families, winding down these activities as the situation has become more stable. The ICRC supports the Liberia National Red Cross Society and runs programmes to promote IHL among armed forces present in the country.

YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

MEDIUM

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

In 2013:

- ▶ in eastern Liberia and in Monrovia, some Ivorian refugees, their hosts and others had a reliable supply of safe water because of communities' efforts to help upgrade water/sanitation infrastructure and promote its proper use
- ▶ nearly 80 Ivorian children, including 20 whose relatives or legal guardians had been found through a cross-border photo tracing campaign, rejoined their families through ICRC/National Society family-links services
- ▶ the Liberia National Red Cross Society gradually stepped up its humanitarian activities, as the ICRC scaled down its operations in Liberia, owing to the steady departure of Ivorian refugees and the changing humanitarian environment
- ▶ detainees at the Monrovia Central Prison benefited from enhanced disease monitoring and control, after the ICRC had helped link the prison health system with national AIDS and TB programmes
- ▶ Liberian authorities, with ICRC help, took steps – notably by creating a national IHL committee – to ensure their capacity to implement IHL treaties that Liberia had already signed, the Arms Trade Treaty being the most recent

EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)

Protection	1,141
Assistance	1,444
Prevention	1,136
Cooperation with National Societies	1,499
General	-

5,220

of which: Overheads 319

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	89%
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PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	10
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	82

PROTECTION	Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)	
Red Cross messages (RCMs)	
RCMs collected	235
RCMs distributed	417
Phone calls facilitated between family members	367
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	28
People reunited with their families	88
of whom unaccompanied minors/separated children	76
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)	
ICRC visits	
Detainees visited	2,101
Detainees visited and monitored individually	32
Number of visits carried out	74
Number of places of detention visited	22
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	63
RCMs distributed	30
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	41

ASSISTANCE	Targets	Achieved
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)		
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries 50,000	57,215

CONTEXT

Liberia was largely peaceful despite public frustration stemming from inadequate government services and youth unemployment. Rainstorms and fires throughout the year affected thousands of people and caused widespread damage to property.

In the east, 18,000 Ivorian refugees returned home with help from the authorities/UNHCR. However, an estimated 53,000 Ivorian refugees remained, in refugee camps and host communities, straining limited water/sanitation infrastructure. Incidents of violence in Côte d'Ivoire (see *Abidjan*) and the cross-border activities of weapon bearers along the porous Ivorian-Liberian border continued to obstruct the return of these refugees and cause further displacement; the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and UN peacekeeping missions in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia tightened their monitoring of the border.

As the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) gradually withdrew, Liberian armed/security forces prepared to assume sole responsibility for security in the country, stepping up training and recruitment efforts. The authorities pursued efforts to cope with the tripling of the prison population and its effects on detainees.

Liberia contributed troops to peacekeeping missions in Mali.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

After concluding its agricultural projects, and after it had handed over health-related activities to the authorities, the ICRC delegation in Liberia concentrated on addressing the needs of detainees and, with its main partner in the country – the Liberia National Red Cross Society – the needs of Ivorian refugees/their host communities. Accordingly, the ICRC helped the National Society strengthen its ability to carry out family-links and water/sanitation activities. Movement components in the region met regularly to coordinate their activities, which helped ensure a coherent approach.

In accordance with its standard procedures, the ICRC monitored detainees' treatment and living conditions: this included people held in connection with the 2011 post-electoral conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. Findings and recommendations were shared confidentially with the authorities, which, together with technical/material support, helped them ensure the well-being of inmates. Both the penitentiary and the health authorities drew on ICRC expertise to plan their budgets, which helped them raise funds for detainees' health care from national authorities or other actors and maximize limited resources. Prison health workers, with some support from district health teams, continued monitoring detainees' health and providing treatment accordingly; the ICRC helped them with training, supervision and medical supplies/equipment. Repairs to water/sanitation infrastructure and the regular provision of soap-making materials created a healthier environment for detainees.

As more Ivorian refugees returned home, the ICRC cut back on direct support for them and their host communities and focused on working with and helping build the capacities of local actors. National Society volunteers, local authorities and the communities themselves assumed more responsibility for upgrading, maintaining and promoting the proper use of water and sanitation facilities. Coupled with information sessions on good hygiene practices, such efforts helped the aforementioned communities improve their access to clean water and safeguard its long-term availability.

Families separated by conflict – notably the 2011 post-electoral crisis in Côte d'Ivoire – and by detention, migration or other circumstances restored/maintained contact through ICRC/National Society family-links services. Coordination between the Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire, the authorities, UN agencies and other humanitarian actors enabled Ivorian refugees, including unaccompanied children, to rejoin their families or receive news of them.

The authorities, armed/security forces and members of civil society were encouraged – through meetings, workshops and National Society communication activities – to continue supporting IHL and Movement activities in Liberia. The authorities drew on technical support from the ICRC as they took steps – for instance, the creation of a national IHL committee – to ratify/implement IHL treaties already signed, like the Arms Trade Treaty. The armed forces moved to incorporate IHL modules in their training and operations; they also drafted an IHL training manual with expert guidance from the ICRC.

CIVILIANS

As its economic security/health initiatives for civilians had been concluded or handed over to other actors, the ICRC focused on restoring family links and improving access to safe water for Ivorian refugees and host communities. Some 150 women affected by or at risk of sexual violence established small businesses with help from Movement components in Liberia.

Ivorian refugees contact family members across the border

Ivorian refugees/Liberians restored/maintained contact with relatives through RCMs, telephone calls and other Movement family-links services. Some 30 people received word of their relatives, including children whose relatives or legal guardians were found through a cross-border photo tracing campaign (see *Abidjan*), which led to their reunion in some cases: nearly 80 Ivorian children and three vulnerable adults rejoined their families across the border. As necessary, people were issued ICRC travel documents to facilitate travel to their country of destination, and vulnerable children referred to child-protection actors and UNHCR-established or State-run health centres for additional assistance.

The Liberian Red Cross, the Ivorian Red Cross and other actors coordinated their family-links activities – for example, by cross-checking information – which reduced caseloads and made for clearly defined roles in cross-border tracing. An assessment conducted earlier in the year found that family-links needs had decreased; the ICRC therefore scaled back its operations in this regard.

Communities safeguard their access to clean water

Some 57,000 people had a more reliable supply of safe water and a reduced risk of contracting water-borne diseases, owing to efforts by their communities, the water authorities and the National Society/ICRC. In eastern Liberia, Ivorian refugees and their hosts accessed clean water from 200 upgraded or newly constructed wells/hand pumps and 450 chlorinated wells; people in the Monrovia area did so from water kiosks that had either been repaired or connected to the water system. Over 40 community water committees and 18 water/sanitation supervisors were in charge of maintaining these water points and promoting their correct use; all of them had benefited from ICRC training. Coupled with the National Society's own promotion

of good hygiene practices, these efforts helped ensure that communities used and maintained previously installed/upgraded facilities, particularly latrines.

Monitoring revealed that most communities, in addition to successfully maintaining such facilities, made upgrades of their own. For example, some communities built fences to protect their pumps and set up bathhouses, clotheslines, dish racks and so on. Most latrines were kept in good condition.

Disaster-affected people receive prompt National Society aid

Approximately 200 households (1,200 people) who lost their homes because of storms or fires withstood their difficult conditions using household essentials provided by National Society volunteers. These items were part of the 4,500 kits pre-positioned by the ICRC at National Society branches, in keeping with the Movement's approach to emergency preparedness (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*).

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Over 2,100 people held by the Justice Ministry, police/*gendarmerie* and other authorities at 22 places of detention – including women, minors and those needing specialized health care – received ICRC visits, conducted according to the organization's standard procedures. Delegates monitored detention conditions and followed up 32 detainees – nine of whom were alleged former combatants from Côte d'Ivoire – individually. Afterwards, the authorities received confidential feedback and recommendations, which helped them improve treatment and living conditions for detainees and ensure respect for judicial guarantees.

During visits, detainees communicated with their families through RCMs or telephone calls facilitated by the National Societies concerned and the ICRC.

Detainees benefit from authorities' efforts to address their limited access to health care

The Justice and Health Ministries pursued efforts to develop penitentiary health care and apply the national health policy for detainees. The Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation, under the Justice Ministry, and the Health Ministry planned their 2013–14 budgets and drafted proposals for national authorities, based on the findings and recommendations of UNMIL, the ICRC and other actors. The Health Ministry also included prison health facilities in its accreditation process, raised funds to maintain a focal point for prison health care and asked district health teams to continue visiting prisons to monitor detainees' health/nutritional status and support prison health workers in providing health care. However, district health teams had to adjust to their altered workloads; consequently, not all detainees benefited from such visits.

Prison health workers, aided by ICRC nutrition courses/supervision/equipment, continued monitoring detainees' health and nutrition. They conducted body mass index surveys, which helped identify and treat malnourished detainees; in this way, 150 malnourished detainees at Monrovia Central Prison and three other prisons prevented their condition from worsening. As penitentiary authorities did not receive additional funding for medicines, health workers treated detainees with ICRC-provided medical supplies meant for use during outbreaks of disease or other emergencies.

At the Monrovia Central Prison, where over half of Liberia's prison population were housed, detainees benefited from better disease monitoring and control after the ICRC helped link the prison health system with national AIDS and TB programmes; this linkage led to the building of an on-site laboratory and training for prison health staff and selected correctional officers in counselling and testing. Detainees attended HIV education sessions at the prison clinic in small groups, which allowed them to be discreetly tested for HIV if they so wished, and gave them some time away from their cells as well. In the second half of the year, the local district health team and the ICRC stepped up support, to ensure that these sessions would continue.

Detainees see improvements in their living conditions

Owing to upgrades to water/sanitation infrastructure, almost 1,500 detainees in eight prisons had enough water, improved living conditions and reduced risks of hygiene-related illnesses; resources originally intended for infrastructural upgrades at police stations were reallocated for this purpose. In some prisons, inmates also received soap-making materials, among other things.

At the Monrovia Central Prison, detainees stood to gain from better maintenance of water and sanitation facilities, after the penitentiary authorities created a pilot prison maintenance team, who were supported by ICRC training and on-the-job supervision. Inmates also stood to benefit from access to open air and sunlight, after the completion of a pilot project by the authorities, UNMIL and the ICRC to revise procedures and further upgrade infrastructure in outdoor areas. This project, along with repairs to walls/fencing already carried out by the ICRC, aimed to help penitentiary authorities find a way to grant detainees access to outdoor areas without compromising security.

Independent monitoring body surveys detainees' treatment

Liberia's Independent National Commission on Human Rights created a prison-monitoring tool, using skills learnt in an UNMIL workshop for which the ICRC provided input. Contributing to the workshop not only helped in the development of the aforementioned local inspecting body, it also cemented relationships with State officials and humanitarian actors working on detention issues.

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

The AFL adapts IHL manuals for its troops

Nearly 90 AFL troops bound for Mali or the Ivorian-Liberian border, and some 300 UNMIL troops, learnt more about IHL and the ICRC's mandate during briefings conducted by ICRC-trained AFL instructors and the ICRC. In the same way, 136 security forces personnel and 300 police recruits furthered their understanding of international human rights law, internationally recognized standards on arrest and detention and the ICRC's activities for detainees. The importance of protecting those seeking or providing medical care was impressed upon all weapon bearers briefed.

The AFL created an IHL manual for its troops, part of the effort to incorporate IHL modules in training and operations. Some 20 instructors and officers, who had attended two joint AFL/ICRC workshops on teaching IHL, adapted this manual for various military ranks. One officer attended an advanced IHL course in San Remo.

Liberia establishes a national IHL committee with ICRC support

The authorities continued to work on integrating IHL into domestic legislation, notably by taking steps to ensure their capacity to ratify/implement and incorporate in domestic legislation IHL treaties that Liberia had already signed, the Arms Trade Treaty being the most recent. Parliamentarians and other State officials continued adding to their knowledge of IHL through ICRC information sessions or by participating in regional meetings, including on arms control treaties (see *Abidjan* and *Nigeria*). With technical support from the ICRC, the authorities created a national IHL committee; the ten committee members – representing the Justice/Foreign Affairs Ministries and the human rights, law reform and small arms commissions – assumed their new duties already knowledgeable about the status of IHL implementation in Liberia and the implementation process, owing to a workshop and an exercise in drafting a law in connection with the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. During an ICRC-backed study trip, committee members shared experiences/best practices and discussed cooperation on IHL implementation with their counterparts in Sierra Leone.

Journalists report on Movement activities after learning about IHL and the ICRC's mandate

Some 70 journalists furthered their understanding of IHL through two information sessions; others learnt about ICRC activities throughout the world via news articles given to them. A competition on humanitarian reporting, organized with the Press Union of Liberia, and National Society-facilitated field trips encouraged and helped journalists produce more in-depth features on humanitarian issues and draw attention to the Movement's activities. Thus, local authorities, members of civil society and the public learnt about humanitarian issues and Movement activities from journalists who already had a basic knowledge of IHL and the ICRC's mandate, as well as through ICRC briefings and National Society communication efforts (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*).

The ICRC sought to encourage universities to introduce IHL courses into their curricula, for example, by helping them explore ways to overcome the scarcity of resources and other obstacles. The national moot court competition did not take place, owing to administrative constraints.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

National Society steps up activities with ICRC help

The National Society, acknowledging the changing humanitarian environment, gradually assumed more responsibility for humanitarian action in the country, with ICRC support. It took active part in water/sanitation, economic security and family-links activities (see *Civilians*), gaining practical experience for undertaking such endeavours independently. However, the National Society could not develop monitoring systems for its previous livelihood support projects with the ICRC, owing to administrative constraints. Volunteers were better prepared to respond to emergencies and access violence-prone areas, following training in the Safer Access Framework/first aid, and the provision of financial support for the National Society's emergency response team and of emergency stocks to branches. With ICRC help, the National Society resumed its weekly radio programme, through which it raised awareness of and support for IHL and Movement activities in Liberia.

The National Society, with support from the Movement, strengthened its statutes, organizational structure and management, by attending the Council of Delegates, implementing financial reforms and earning money by conducting first-aid courses for NGOs. Movement components in Liberia avoided duplication by regularly coordinating their activities.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total		
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Red Cross messages (RCMs)			UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected		235	92	
RCMs distributed		417	80	
Phone calls facilitated between family members		367		
Names published in the media		41		
Reunifications, transfers and repatriations				
People reunited with their families		88		
	<i>including people registered by another delegation</i>	5		
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons			Women	Minors
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		28	2	7
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		28		
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	11		
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		15	3	7
UAMs/SCs*, including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers			Girls	Demobilized children
UAMs/SCs newly registered by the ICRC/National Society		48	21	
UAMs/SCs reunited with their families by the ICRC/National Society		76	34	
	<i>including UAMs/SCs registered by another delegation</i>	4		
UAM/SC cases still being handled by the ICRC/National Society at the end of the reporting period		21	11	
Documents				
People to whom travel documents were issued		83		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
ICRC visits			Women	Minors
Detainees visited		2,101	57	68
Detainees visited and monitored individually		32		
Detainees newly registered		7		
Number of visits carried out		74		
Number of places of detention visited		22		
Restoring family links				
RCMs collected		63		
RCMs distributed		30		
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		41		

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	4,562	44%	36%
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	57,215	39%	34%
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection programme)				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	15		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	1,469		
Health				
Number of visits carried out by health staff		61		
Number of places of detention visited by health staff		16		