

# UGANDA



ICRC delegation

The ICRC has been present in Uganda since 1979. Given the progress towards peace in the north of the country, ICRC assistance activities have been adapted to decreasing humanitarian needs. The ICRC continues to monitor the treatment of detainees and strives to raise awareness of IHL and humanitarian principles among the armed and police forces. Whenever possible, the ICRC supports the Uganda Red Cross Society in its efforts to improve its capacities.

## YEARLY RESULTS

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

**MEDIUM**

## KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS IN 2015

- ▶ Elderly detainees, those seriously ill and those who had been sentenced to death spent time with their families, who visited them in prison with ICRC assistance.
- ▶ Over 700 families of persons missing in connection with past conflict in northern Uganda found comfort amid their grief through psychosocial services provided by ICRC-trained community volunteers.
- ▶ Refugees from violence-affected countries kept in touch with their relatives through RCMs and phone calls; unaccompanied minors, including some formerly associated with armed groups, rejoined their families.
- ▶ Over 6,000 soldiers bound for the African Union Mission in Somalia learnt more about IHL at ICRC briefings during their pre-deployment training, and from reference materials distributed to them.
- ▶ The Uganda Red Cross Society and the ICRC gradually resumed cooperation, starting with the joint delivery of some family-links services and efforts to boost emergency preparedness ahead of the 2016 elections.

## EXPENDITURE IN KCHF

Protection	2,146
Assistance	-
Prevention	744
Cooperation with National Societies	534
General	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,458</b>

Of which: Overheads **211**

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	82%
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## PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	10
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	35

PROTECTION	Total
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>	
<b>Restoring family links</b>	
RCMs collected	1,843
RCMs distributed	1,558
Phone calls facilitated between family members	9,398
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	143
People reunited with their families	27
<i>of whom unaccompanied minors/separated children</i>	23
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>	
<b>ICRC visits</b>	
Detainees visited	15,141
Detainees visited and monitored individually	224
Number of visits carried out	71
Number of places of detention visited	30
<b>Restoring family links</b>	
RCMs collected	146
RCMs distributed	166
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	109

ASSISTANCE	2015 Targets (up to)	Achieved
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>		
<b>Economic security</b> (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	18
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	18

## CONTEXT

Uganda continued to host hundreds of thousands of refugees who had fled armed conflict and other situations of violence in neighbouring countries, mainly Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (hereafter DRC), Rwanda and South Sudan. This posed a significant strain on Uganda's resources.

Isolated episodes of violence were reported in the run-up to the 2016 elections. Several people were allegedly arrested in connection with these incidents and with the killings of religious/government officials.

The Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) withdrew from South Sudan, but continued to contribute troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and to military operations against various armed groups, including the Lord's Resistance Army.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC continued its efforts to help ensure the protection and well-being of vulnerable people, particularly refugees, detainees and the families of missing persons. The Movement-wide suspension of cooperation with the Uganda Red Cross Society in October 2014, however, hampered the delivery of family-links services and livelihood assistance to the families of the missing, among other activities.

Thousands of detainees – among them people alleged to be members of armed groups or those held on charges of "terrorism" or armed rebellion – received ICRC visits conducted in accordance with the organization's standard working procedures. Delegates assessed the detainees' treatment and living conditions, and confidentially shared their findings and, where necessary, recommendations with the authorities afterwards. The authorities and the ICRC also discussed ways to improve the management and processing of detainees' cases; the ICRC donated hardware/software to help administrators at the Luzira Upper Prison to improve their information-management system. Detainees used family-links services to contact their families; those who had been sentenced to death and other particularly vulnerable inmates spent time with their families during ICRC-arranged visits. Distribution of hygiene/recreational items and improvements to prison facilities helped ease detainees' conditions.

ICRC family-links services enabled thousands of people, mainly refugees from Burundi, the DRC and South Sudan, to restore contact with relatives from whom they had become separated. The ICRC paid particular attention to unaccompanied minors, including those previously associated with armed groups; several of them were reunited with their families with the ICRC's assistance. Families of persons missing in connection with the 1986–2006 non-international armed conflict in northern Uganda found some comfort amid their grief through a psychosocial-support programme staffed by community-based volunteers.

The ICRC kept up its efforts to foster understanding of and support for IHL and humanitarian principles among the authorities and weapon bearers. Government officials, UPDF officers deployed within the country or abroad and other key figures learnt more about IHL and other norms/standards applicable to their duties at regional/international events and via dissemination sessions held by the ICRC, sometimes in combination with first-aid training. Police officers increased their familiarity with international human

rights law and other rules applicable to law enforcement at an ICRC-conducted training; other sessions planned for the police did not take place, owing to the authorities' other priorities.

University students added to their knowledge of IHL during ICRC presentations and competitions, while lecturers attended regional conferences, helping them hone their capacity to teach IHL. Media coverage of ICRC events helped promote the organization's work among the general public. Activities for religious leaders, civil society figures and others could not be undertaken because of the suspension of cooperation with the National Society.

The ICRC provided technical, material and financial assistance to the Ugandan Red Cross, in support of its efforts to overcome institutional challenges. In May, the two organizations began a process for resuming their operational partnership, starting with family-links services and expanding, in October, to cover emergency preparedness and response in connection with the elections in 2016.

The Uganda delegation set up a warehouse to support ICRC food distributions in South Sudan (see *South Sudan*).

## CIVILIANS

### Refugees, mainly from the DRC and South Sudan, restore contact with their relatives

People who had fled armed conflict and other situations of violence in Burundi, the DRC and South Sudan (see *Burundi*, *Congo, Democratic Republic of the*, and *South Sudan*), among other countries, restored/maintained contact with relatives from whom they had become separated, through phone calls (9,398 made) and RCMs (1,843 collected; 1,558 distributed). Some of these services were provided in partnership with the National Society, with whom the ICRC had gradually resumed cooperation in restoring family links (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*).

Refugees and other vulnerable foreign nationals also approached the ICRC to express concerns regarding their security or to seek advice on third-country resettlement. They were referred to the appropriate organizations, including providers of psychosocial support, UNHCR and other ICRC delegations.

### Unaccompanied minors reunite with their families

Particular attention was paid to unaccompanied minors, including those who were formerly associated with armed groups or had fled violence within the country or abroad. Ugandan officials were apprised of their concerns and urged to address their specific needs. Some of these minors contacted their relatives in Uganda or overseas; 23 were reunited with their families, with help from the ICRC.

### Families of missing people cope with their grief through psychosocial support from local volunteers

Hundreds of families remained without news of their relatives who went missing during the 1986–2006 non-international armed conflict in northern Uganda. Over 700 of them had help in handling their situations through psychosocial counselling sessions from locally recruited volunteers under an ICRC-initiated programme. An ICRC-trained psychologist supervised the volunteers and helped them provide care in an appropriate manner. The families shared their stories and difficulties during an ICRC-hosted event marking the International Day of the Disappeared, which was also attended by the general public.

A livelihood-assistance project for the families, to be implemented by several Movement partners, was postponed following the suspension of cooperation with the National Society.

The ICRC maintained dialogue, albeit limited in scope, with the Uganda Police Force (UPF) to ascertain the fate of people missing in connection with tribal clashes in north-western Uganda in 2014.

### **Authorities learn more about human remains management**

The authorities developed their capacity to manage human remains by participating in various events with ICRC help. A forensic pathologist from the UPF, for instance, took part in discussions on best practices at a regional workshop (see *Nairobi*). National Society staff members and representatives from the UPF, the health ministry and other government institutions learnt more about the subject at a three-day session organized by the ICRC.

### **PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM**

#### **Detainees' treatment and living conditions are monitored through ICRC visits**

Over 15,000 detainees – some of whom were alleged members of armed groups or were held on charges of “terrorism” or armed rebellion – in 30 places of detention received visits conducted in accordance with standard ICRC procedures; 224 detainees were individually monitored. Afterwards, delegates shared their assessment of the detainees' treatment and living conditions with the authorities concerned. They drew particular attention to the need to ensure that detention conditions were in line with internationally recognized standards, as well as to the importance of respecting judicial guarantees and, for foreign detainees, the principle of *non-refoulement*.

The ICRC continued to seek dialogue with the authorities on access to all detainees.

#### **Elderly and other particularly vulnerable inmates are visited by their families**

Detainees stayed in touch with their relatives through family-links services. For example, several inmates held at a maximum security prison – including the elderly, the seriously ill and those sentenced to death – spent time with their relatives during ICRC-arranged prison visits. Other detainees sent/received RCMs or had their families informed of their whereabouts by ICRC delegates. Foreign inmates notified their diplomatic representatives or UNHCR of their situation through the ICRC.

Inmates held at three prisons had better access to water following repairs undertaken by the ICRC. Donations of hygiene and recreational items helped ease the circumstances of over 14,000 detainees.

Some newly released detainees had their transport costs home covered by the ICRC; where necessary, they were referred to other organizations for specific support.

#### **Penitentiary officials learn more about managing detainees' case files**

The authorities and the ICRC continued to discuss how to manage and process detainees' case files more efficiently, as well as the sort of support the ICRC could provide in this regard. Administrators at the Luzira Upper Prison received donations of hardware and software, to help them improve their information-management system. Two representatives of the Uganda Prisons Service learnt more about managing information related to detainees' cases at a regional seminar (see *Nairobi*).

Several missing case files of detainees, including those of inmates sentenced to death, were located and followed up through the efforts of the ICRC and two NGOs, with a view to helping expedite judicial processes.

### **ACTORS OF INFLUENCE**

#### **UPDF officers further their understanding of IHL and other rules applicable to their duties**

Over 6,000 UPDF officers bound for a mission with AMISOM learnt more about IHL and the work of the Movement during pre-deployment briefings with the ICRC, which were sometimes combined with first-aid training sessions. At the request of the UPDF, these officers received copies of an ICRC-produced code of conduct containing basic principles of IHL and first-aid instructions. Eighty UPDF commanders broadened their knowledge of IHL at an ICRC-organized course, while some 400 senior officers from other countries benefited from dissemination sessions on the subject conducted during a military exercise they were attending in Uganda.

Following discussions with the ICRC, the UPDF approved the development of a reference material on international human rights law and internationally recognized standards applicable to law enforcement operations, for distribution to military officers involved in police operations. Some 100 members of the UPF learnt about these matters at a training session conducted by the ICRC; similar sessions, including first-aid simulation activities, did not push through as planned, as the authorities had other priorities.

Defence ministry officials and military students had access to more IHL reference materials at two UPDF libraries that received ICRC-donated publications, which were also handed out during various dissemination sessions.

#### **Authorities work towards incorporating IHL in military education and domestic legislation**

Discussions with the UPDF, on the systematic inclusion of IHL in the curricula of its legal advisers, continued. In line with this, some 100 legal advisers attended IHL training sessions at an ICRC-backed training centre. Senior military officers learnt more about incorporating IHL in the military's training, doctrine and operations at workshops and other events abroad, including an advanced course in San Remo; a meeting on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas; and a workshop on the rules governing military operations (see *International law and policy*).

Government authorities also continued to draw on ICRC guidance for the ratification of IHL-related treaties and the incorporation of provisions of IHL and other applicable norms in domestic legislation. For example, two officials – one each from the defence and justice ministries – and two national IHL committee members discussed IHL implementation with their regional counterparts at a workshop in Kenya (see *Nairobi*). A defence ministry official attended a seminar on the Convention on Cluster Munitions at a conference in Zambia (see *Harare*), with ICRC support.

#### **Students demonstrate their grasp of IHL at a moot court competition**

University students gained keener insight into IHL through ICRC presentations and dissemination sessions at six universities. Students from five universities tested their proficiency in the subject at a national moot court competition; 14 students joined a regional essay competition on IHL. Lecturers honed their skills in teaching the law at two regional courses for instructors (see *Nairobi* and *Pretoria*).

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Media stories about ICRC activities – for example, a family reunification covered by journalists who accompanied the ICRC team – helped raise awareness of the organization's mandate and work.

Planned activities aimed at promoting IHL and the ICRC among religious and community leaders were not carried out, owing to the suspension of cooperation with the National Society (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*).

## **RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

### **The National Society and the ICRC gradually resume their cooperation**

The Ugandan Red Cross continued its efforts to implement structural reforms and carry out its activities with integrity. It implemented several changes at its headquarters, including the election of a new governing board. It received material and financial assistance from the ICRC, particularly to enhance its communication/dissemination capacities and help it manage its reputation and reinforce its legal basis.

Resumption of operational cooperation with the National Society – which the ICRC, along with other components of the Movement, had suspended in 2014 – got under way gradually. In May 2015, the National Society and the ICRC began a multi-step process to restart cooperation in restoring family links among vulnerable people, with the ICRC providing the National Society with technical and material assistance. In October, cooperation between the two organizations was expanded to include emergency preparedness, in light of the elections in 2016.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total			
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>					
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>			UAMs/SC*		
RCMs collected		1,843	104		
RCMs distributed		1,558	64		
Phone calls facilitated between family members		9,398			
<b>Reunifications, transfers and repatriations</b>					
People reunited with their families		27			
	<i>including people registered by another delegation</i>	9			
<b>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</b>			Women	Girls	Boys
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		69	11	15	18
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	13			
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		143			
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	35			
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		38	6	6	11
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	16			
<b>UAMs/SC*, including demobilized child soldiers</b>			Girls		Demobilized children
UAMs/SC newly registered by the ICRC/National Society		133	44		
UAMs/SC reunited with their families by the ICRC/National Society		23	4		14
	<i>including UAMs/SC registered by another delegation</i>	5			
UAM/SC cases still being handled by the ICRC/National Society at the end of the reporting period		182	50		24
<b>Documents</b>					
People to whom travel documents were issued		10			
Official documents relayed between family members across borders/front lines		1			
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>					
<b>ICRC visits</b>			Women	Minors	
Detainees visited		15,141	694	33	
			Women	Girls	Boys
Detainees visited and monitored individually		224	7	3	6
Detainees newly registered		148	7	3	6
Number of visits carried out		71			
Number of places of detention visited		30			
<b>Restoring family links</b>					
RCMs collected		146			
RCMs distributed		166			
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		109			
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		55			
Detainees released and transferred/repatriated by/via the ICRC		16			
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		23			

\*Unaccompanied minors/separated children

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>				
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	18		
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	18		
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>				
<b>Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection programme)</b>				
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	19		
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	14,416		
Cash	Beneficiaries	26		
<b>Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>				
Water and habitat activities <sup>1</sup>	Beneficiaries			

1. Owing to operational and management constraints, figures presented in this table and in the narrative part of this report may not reflect the extent of the activities carried out during the reporting period.