

The ICRC, in its capacity as an official observer to the African Union (AU), works with Member States to draw attention to problems requiring humanitarian action and to promote greater recognition of IHL and its integration into AU decisions and policies, as well as wider implementation of IHL throughout Africa. It also aims to raise awareness of and acceptance for the ICRC's role and activities within the AU Commission and other AU bodies. It endeavours to build strong relations with AU-accredited intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and UN agencies in Addis Ababa.

## KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS IN 2016

- ▶ Drawing on ICRC expertise, the African Union (AU) drafted official documents for its missions and incorporated IHL provisions in its peace-support troops' training modules on the protection of civilians.
- ▶ The AU held a high-level panel at the World Humanitarian Summit and also presented the Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness. The ICRC delivered a keynote speech during the panel.
- ▶ During AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) open sessions, the ICRC drew attention to unlawful conduct against civilians during armed conflict, such as attacks on schools. The PSC included IHL-related concerns in its dispatches.
- ▶ AU Member States contributed to an ICRC stocktaking exercise on the implementation of the AU Convention on IDPs. The findings underscored the need to adopt domestic and regional frameworks on internal displacement.

## YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

HIGH

## EXPENDITURE IN KCHF

See under *Ethiopia*

## PERSONNEL

See under *Ethiopia*

## CONTEXT

The African Union (AU) continued to back diplomatic and military efforts to tackle the destabilizing effects of armed conflict and political unrest throughout Africa. AU-led international forces remained in Somalia and Sudan; the Multinational Joint Task Force's operations in the Lake Chad region continued. The AU held a summit for countries contributing troops to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

Having completed its training cycle, the African Standby Force (ASF) began developing its operational capabilities under the Maputo five-year work plan approved by the AU.

The AU adopted a Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness to address the humanitarian crisis in the continent.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

During various AU events and meetings, the ICRC strove to broaden awareness of humanitarian issues, foster support for its activities, and influence the design of AU policies and programmes. It drew attention to: the goals of the Health Care in Danger project; issues of concern such as attacks on schools during armed conflict; and the importance of incorporating, in policies for rehabilitating demobilized fighters, provisions requiring respect for IHL. As a result of these efforts, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) included IHL-related concerns in its dispatches. The ICRC engaged the AU in dialogue on its humanitarian policies, and other parties concerned in discussions about redefining the continent's humanitarian framework.

The ICRC supported the AU, primarily through legal and technical advice, in ensuring respect for IHL and international human rights law among members of peace-support operations it led or authorized. It helped the AU to draft mission documents and the AU Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD) to incorporate IHL provisions in troops' training modules on the protection of civilians. The AU's five-year plan for the development of the ASF included strengthening awareness of and support for IHL and international human rights law among ASF personnel during their training.

The AU and the ICRC continued to urge AU Member States to incorporate provisions of IHL-related treaties in their domestic laws and policies. AU Member States contributed to the ICRC's stocktaking exercise on the domestic implementation of the African Union Convention on IDPs. During a briefing at the PSC, the ICRC's president emphasized, based on the findings of the exercise, the importance of adopting legal frameworks on internal displacement at the domestic and regional levels.

## ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

The AU and its Member States, and organizations affiliated with the AU, strove to ensure that their laws and policies conformed to IHL and international human rights law. They drew on various kinds of ICRC guidance – in particular, through the secondment of a legal adviser to, and workshops organized with, the AU. ICRC financial support enabled a few AU representatives to participate in regional and international events (see *International law and cooperation* and *Pretoria*).

### **The AU hosts a high-level panel on humanitarian effectiveness during the World Humanitarian Summit**

ICRC presentations at AU events, and meetings with AU officials, diplomats and representatives of Member States and regional and

international organizations, broadened awareness of humanitarian issues and helped foster support for the Movement's neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action. On these occasions, the ICRC drew attention to its activities for people – especially children – affected by conflict and other situations of violence. ICRC delegates met with the PSC chairperson regularly to discuss activities being carried out in response to issues of humanitarian concern throughout the continent.

At an AU workshop aimed at reviewing procedures for rehabilitating demobilized fighters and people formerly held by the Lord's Resistance Army, participants learnt more about the ICRC's family-links activities, particularly for unaccompanied or separated minors, in the countries concerned. Briefings by the ICRC kept members of the AU Partners Group and others informed of the humanitarian situation in Somalia and South Sudan and of the ICRC's operational dialogue with AMISOM forces.

The AU and the ICRC held a number of joint workshops before the World Humanitarian Summit, which helped strengthen their dialogue on the AU's humanitarian policies, including the Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness. The AU hosted a high-level panel at the summit, where it presented the position and called for a plan of action to implement the outcomes of the summit. The ICRC's director-general delivered a keynote speech at the panel and reiterated the need for the action plan. Following the event, the ICRC lobbied, among the parties concerned, for the inclusion of IHL principles and neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian assistance in Africa's humanitarian framework.

### **AU Peace and Security Council includes humanitarian concerns in its dispatches**

At open sessions of the PSC, the ICRC delivered statements on: the protection of civilians; attacks against schools during armed conflict; the importance of incorporating provisions requiring respect for IHL in rehabilitation policies for people formerly associated with armed groups; and the management of camps for refugees and IDPs. As a result, communications issued by the PSC drew attention to IHL-related issues.

During a round-table organized by the AU, health experts from West African countries shared lessons learnt from the response to the 2014 Ebola outbreak. The ICRC's participation in the event helped those present become more aware of the goals of the Health Care in Danger project, particularly the necessity of protecting health-care providers and facilities in times of crisis. The AU urged these experts to incorporate pertinent provisions of the project in a regional policy framework.

### **AU Peace Support Operations Division integrates IHL provisions in its predeployment training**

The AU drew on ICRC expertise to continue to ensure respect for IHL and international human rights law in the multinational operations it led or authorized. It drafted and reviewed pertinent frameworks and mission documents – including those relating to police components of AU missions.

The PSOD incorporated IHL provisions in the predeployment training module on the protection of civilians that it developed for peace-support personnel. The AU drafted a five-year plan for the development of the ASF, which included strengthening awareness of and support for IHL and international human rights law among ASF instructors and troops during their training.

---

At ICRC workshops, analysts in the conflict prevention and early-warning division under the AU peace and security department familiarized themselves with the various ways of classifying situations of violence and with the applicability of IHL and international human rights law to these situations.

At events such as the launch of the updated commentary on the First Geneva Convention, the ICRC endeavoured to stimulate discussions on such matters as best practices and obstacles with regard to incorporating IHL provisions in multinational operations and to the applicability of these provisions in non-international armed conflict. Participants in these events included representatives from the AU, the diplomatic community, UN missions and troop-contributing countries.

**Member States contribute to an exercise evaluating the implementation of the AU Convention on IDPs**

Member States, as well as the AU Department of Political Affairs and AU liaison offices of regional economic communities, contributed to the ICRC's stocktaking exercise on the domestic implementation of the AU Convention on IDPs. During a briefing at the PSC, the ICRC's president emphasized, based on the findings of the exercise, the importance of adopting legal frameworks on internal displacement at the domestic and regional levels.