

# ALGERIA



ICRC delegation    ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic centre    ICRC office/presence

## EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	1,000
Assistance	-
Prevention	576
Cooperation with National Societies	134
General	-

► **1,709**

of which: Overheads 104

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	89%
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## PERSONNEL

Expatriates	6
National staff (daily workers not included)	7

## KEY POINTS

### In 2012, the ICRC:

- ▶ visited detainees held in Justice Ministry prisons or in police/*gendarmerie* custody, confidentially sharing with the authorities its findings and recommendations on their treatment and living conditions
- ▶ at their request, assisted foreign detainees by notifying their consular representatives or UNHCR of their situation or, if needed, referring them to a local organization for legal advice
- ▶ trained magistrates from around the country in IHL and other international standards applicable to detention, thereby supporting them in their role of monitoring detainees' conditions
- ▶ with the Algerian Red Crescent, helped families contact their relatives detained/interned abroad, or living abroad after a period of detention, via RCMs or telephone/video calls
- ▶ together with local associations and NGOs working for migrants, established a network with clearly defined roles, thus facilitating assistance aimed at alleviating migrants' difficult living conditions
- ▶ lent guidance to National Society branches in the south of the country to help them develop contingency plans for their humanitarian assistance in view of the outbreak of armed conflict in Mali

The ICRC has been working in Algeria, with some interruptions, since the 1954–62 Algerian war of independence. It visits people held in places of detention run by the Ministry of Justice and people remanded in custody in police stations and *gendarmeries*. The ICRC also works to promote IHL among Algerian civil society, the authorities and the armed forces. It supports the Algerian Red Crescent's reform process and tracing activities.

## CONTEXT

Life for many Algerians continued against a backdrop of social unrest linked to high unemployment, rising living costs and, in some cases, desire for political reform. Protests occasionally led to confrontations with security forces and, reportedly, to arrests. New regulations governing press freedom and women's representation in parliament, as well as the adoption of a new electoral law and information code, paved the way for parliamentary and local elections; both saw the ruling party stay in power.

Despite a general decline in violence, localized clashes persisted between national security forces and armed groups in the north, east of Algiers. Security concerns in the Sahel region remained a priority for the authorities, more so given the armed conflict in Mali. The authorities coordinated with regional peers to combat criminal activity and to reduce the threat of armed groups in the area. There were fewer Malian refugees in Algeria than originally estimated – only a few thousand were reportedly living with Algerian host families and around 300 in a refugee camp at the end of the year.

Algeria continued to serve as a destination for migrants, some of whom intended to proceed to Europe. Unable to stay or reach their destination due to tighter regulations, many faced the risk of arrest or deportation.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The Algeria delegation continued to focus on visiting detainees held under Justice Ministry authority or in police/*gendarmerie* custody to assess their treatment and living conditions. Drawing on information gathered during visits, delegates engaged in confidential dialogue with the authorities, paying special attention to the needs of vulnerable detainees. An ICRC report submitted to the authorities in January served to complement earlier reports identifying key issues in the treatment of detainees and respect for their judicial guarantees.

To support them in their role in monitoring detainees, magistrates from around the country trained in IHL and other international standards applicable to detention. Instructors at the Algerian Magistrates' School received additional training to enhance their capacities to teach these subjects. Within prisons, the ICRC sought to familiarize detention officials and guards with and gain their support for its work, conducting dissemination sessions for prison guards on top of those for instructors and trainees at a penitentiary training facility.

Dialogue with the authorities also emphasized the psychological impact of isolation on foreigners, who contacted their consular

Main figures and indicators	PROTECTION	Total		
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>			<b>UAMs/SCs*</b>	
RCMs collected		3,618	165	
RCMs distributed		1,873	42	
Phone calls facilitated between family members		18,813		
<b>Reunifications, transfers and repatriations</b>				
People reunited with their families		25		
	<i>including people registered by another delegation</i>	11		
<b>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</b>			<b>Women</b>	<b>Minors</b>
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		10		5
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		16		
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	12		
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		8		5
<b>UAMs/SCs*, including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers</b>			<b>Girls</b>	<b>Demobilized children</b>
UAMs/SCs newly registered by the ICRC/National Society		131	25	
UAMs/SCs reunited with their families by the ICRC/National Society		15	4	2
	<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		89	21	
<b>Documents</b>				
People to whom travel documents were issued		1		
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>				
<b>ICRC visits</b>			<b>Women</b>	<b>Minors</b>
Detainees visited		5,443		
Detainees visited and monitored individually		259	1	10
Detainees newly registered		212	1	10
Number of visits carried out		142		
Number of places of detention visited		50		
<b>Restoring family links</b>				
RCMs collected		289		
RCMs distributed		181		
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		120		
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		5		

\* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

representatives or UNHCR through the ICRC and, in some cases, were referred by the ICRC to a local organization for legal advice. Detainees visited by the ICRC communicated with their families through RCMs or phone calls. Through the Algerian Red Crescent, families also communicated with their relatives detained/interned abroad or living abroad after a period of detention. In one instance, the ICRC helped repatriate a deceased detainee's remains from Iraq, enabling his family to mourn and carry out funeral rites.

Migrants and asylum seekers also had access to National Society/ICRC family-links services. Together with local associations and NGOs, the ICRC established a network with clearly defined roles to help ensure migrants received assistance from the appropriate organization. Information shared with the Tunis delegation supported the ICRC's efforts to help the authorities there in clarifying the whereabouts of people believed missing at sea.

The ICRC worked to promote interest in IHL among academic/religious institutions, some of which integrated/introduced the subject into their curricula. To support their efforts, the ICRC pursued discussions with the national IHL committee regarding the standardization of IHL instruction, provided faculties with reference material and sponsored one professor's participation in a course abroad. Planned dissemination activities in military and police institutions were postponed owing to the transition period following the elections and to logistic and administrative difficulties.

Contacts with the media and NGOs served to broaden awareness of and support for the Movement's work. To enhance reporting on humanitarian action, the ICRC organized a study day for journalists and sent one to a regional conference. Moreover, activities commemorating the 50th anniversary of Algeria's independence and of the creation of the Algerian Red Crescent increased public knowledge of the Movement's role in Algerian history. In line with these efforts, the ICRC worked in partnership with the Emir Abdelkader Foundation to promote awareness of Algeria's historical protection of war victims prior to IHL.

The Algerian Red Crescent organized emergency relief operations for Malian refugees in Algeria and worked towards bringing together the region's National Societies to coordinate their activities to address the humanitarian needs of Malian refugees in their respective countries. With ICRC support, the National Society made preparations to assess the capacities of two branches in the south of the country and to develop contingency plans accordingly. With Movement support, the National Society enhanced its management and other operational capacities, including in family-links services.

## CIVILIANS

Algerian families contacted relatives detained/interned abroad, including in the US internment facility at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba, through family-links services, notably RCMs and telephone/video calls, provided by the Algerian Red Crescent with ICRC support. Eleven families seeking news of relatives

received replies from the ICRC to their inquiries. In addition, some former internees living abroad, wishing to restore contact with their families in Algeria upon release, received help to communicate with or rejoin their families; one minor was able to visit his father. In one instance, a family mourned a deceased relative and carried out appropriate funeral rites after the ICRC helped repatriate his remains from Iraq, where he had been detained.

Asylum seekers referred to the ICRC by UNHCR, including 16 unaccompanied children, also benefited from family-links services; one person contacted his family in Côte d'Ivoire. Local associations, NGOs and the ICRC established a network with clearly defined roles for assisting vulnerable migrants, including unaccompanied minors, to help ensure they received assistance from the appropriate organization. Contacts with migrant communities, the authorities and charitable institutions in Algeria's south helped assess the extent of the repercussions of the Malian conflict on migrants there, in case assistance should be needed in the future. Cases of migrants missing at sea received special attention. A list of 87 people shared with the Tunis delegation (see *Tunis*) helped consolidate information for presentation to the authorities there with a view to helping ascertain their whereabouts.

The ICRC remained ready to share its expertise in responding to the needs of the families of people unaccounted for from the internal strife of the 1990s.

### PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Detainees held in prisons under the authority of the Justice Ministry or in the custody of the police or *gendarmérie* received visits from the ICRC, according to its standard procedures, to monitor their treatment and living conditions, including respect for their judicial guarantees. As efforts during the year focused on detainees to whom the ICRC already had access, the most vulnerable among them, including women, minors and foreigners, received special attention.

After visits, the authorities received confidential feedback and recommendations. The Justice Ministry, magistrates, prison administrators, police/*gendarmérie* officers and the ICRC discussed ways of improving detainees' treatment and living conditions, particularly while in police/*gendarmérie* custody. The authorities received written reports relating to detainees' treatment, including an updated summary report in January 2012 complementing earlier documents submitted in September 2010 and January 2011, both covering key issues identified from 2008 to 2010. In support of their specific role in places of detention, magistrates participated in training sessions tailored to their work (see *Authorities*). At the same time, prison guards and around 300 instructors and trainees at the central penitentiary institution familiarized themselves with the ICRC's work and standard procedures at dissemination sessions, thus helping foster their support for ICRC action on detainees' behalf.

Discussions also emphasized the importance of family contact, particularly for foreign detainees, who were especially vulnerable to isolation, to safeguard their psychological well-being and their ability to settle back into family life after being released. Detainees who wished to do so contacted their families through RCMs and phone calls or informed their consular representatives/UNHCR of their situation through the ICRC. One inmate re-established contact with his wife for the first time in seven years. Six foreign detainees needing legal assistance were referred to a local human rights organization.

With international partners, the authorities pursued efforts to reduce overcrowding in prisons and mitigate its effects. In so doing, they were advised by the ICRC to encourage judges' use of alternative sentencing options provided for in Algerian legislation. At their invitation, the ICRC participated in a national planning conference for penitentiary management. Plans were developed for potential ICRC support in this area in 2013. An ICRC assessment of prison health services and broadened contacts with Algerian doctors laid the groundwork for a future seminar on health in detention.

### AUTHORITIES

Discussions with the Algerian authorities centred on deepening mutual understanding and building support for ICRC activities in the country, particularly in places of detention (see *People deprived of their freedom*).

In support of their role in monitoring detainees' treatment and living conditions, Algerian magistrates enhanced their knowledge of IHL and international standards applicable to detention through ICRC training sessions conducted in partnership with the Algerian Magistrates' School. Nineteen instructors at the school attended a follow-up course on presentation techniques, complementing the knowledge they had acquired during a previous train-the-trainer course, thus boosting their capacities to teach their colleagues. Another 25 magistrates from different provinces attended an IHL seminar conducted jointly with ICRC-trained professors, including a national IHL committee member. Afterwards, they participated in an ICRC-organized IHL competition to hone their skills, the winners of which would be sent to a regional IHL course the following year.

Because of the transition period following national elections and the appointment of a new justice minister, several activities by the national IHL committee did not go ahead. Instead, the committee planned a comprehensive IHL training programme for government officials, weapon bearers and civil society, for implementation in 2013. In the meantime, with ICRC sponsorship, a diplomat, an acting member of parliament and four magistrates attended regional IHL training courses abroad aimed at building national IHL implementation capacities (see *Kuwait* and *Lebanon*).

### ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

As military training facilities countrywide had formally integrated IHL into their curricula, the Defence Ministry and the ICRC focused on supporting these institutions in enhancing IHL knowledge and teaching quality. To this end, the Defence Ministry's training unit received IHL teaching resources and reference materials for distribution.

Planned IHL activities with the Chercell Military Academy, including presentations for officers and overseas training for a senior officer, did not go ahead owing to logistic and administrative difficulties. A train-the-trainer event for police officers was similarly postponed to 2013.

### CIVIL SOCIETY

Media, religious and academic circles and NGOs cooperated with the ICRC to build mutual understanding and broaden support for the Movement's work through a wide-ranging network of contacts. National radio stations continued to raise public awareness of ICRC activities, including those in Mali and the Syrian Arab Republic. To enhance their reporting on humanitarian action,

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local journalists learnt more about armed conflict and IHL during an ICRC study day; one attended a regional journalism conference with ICRC sponsorship, enabling him to report regularly on ICRC activities.

Local associations, NGOs and the ICRC discussed topics of mutual interest, including migration (see *Civilians*). The Emir Abdelkader Foundation developed a partnership with the ICRC to continue its work raising awareness of the protection of war victims in Algerian history prior to IHL. With ICRC support, the Algerian Red Crescent embarked on activities commemorating the 50th anniversary of Algerian independence and of the creation of the National Society itself.

Two faculties of Islamic studies introduced the comparative study of IHL and Islamic law as a topic for graduate research. Supporting this initiative and continuing earlier progress in promoting IHL in religious circles, a professor of Islamic sciences attended an IHL course abroad with ICRC sponsorship (see *Lebanon*). By the end of the year, 14 Algerian law faculties had integrated IHL into their curricula, with one creating an independent IHL department. To support their efforts, the faculties received IHL reference materials and gained access to the delegation's library. Building on this progress, the national IHL committee initiated a discussion between six major law faculties and the ICRC on the standardization of IHL instruction in undergraduate and graduate studies.

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

Responding to the needs of conflict-affected neighbouring countries, the Algerian Red Crescent independently organized emergency relief operations for Malian refugees in Algeria. To help coordinate Movement operations in response to the conflict in Mali, it organized discussions with the National Societies in neighbouring countries. With the ICRC, the National Society's Adrar and Tamanrasset branches in the south of the country worked on contingency plans adapted to the situation in Mali.

In coordination with other Movement components, the Algerian Red Crescent received ICRC support in enhancing its family-links and tracing services (see *Civilians*) through branch visits and training activities. Additionally, the National Society's initiative to promote the Fundamental Principles and IHL benefited from ICRC expertise and financing. To improve the National Society's first-aid capacities, a coordinator attended a regional seminar abroad (see *Abidjan*) with ICRC support.

The Algerian Red Crescent and the ICRC maintained regular dialogue regarding the National Society's structural and management reforms according to Movement policies and commitments made in previous meetings. This included the continued revision of the National Society statutes based on feedback from the International Federation/ICRC Joint Statutes Commission. In light of the new financial framework governing National Society/ICRC relations from 2013, the Algerian Red Crescent assessed its financial management capacities jointly with the ICRC.