



burundi

For 37 years until 1999, the ICRC monitored the situation in Burundi and took action on an ad hoc basis. Since then, it has been continuously present in the country, focusing on helping people to overcome the worst consequences of conflict. It works with the prison authorities to ensure that detainees are treated according to internationally recognized standards. It improves health care for victims of sexual violence, benefiting mother and child health care, and rehabilitates water and sanitation systems for vulnerable groups. It reunites children separated from their parents with their families and restores family links. It supports training in IHL for the armed and security forces.

⊕ ICRC delegation ⊕ ICRC sub-delegation

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	2,066
Assistance	4,277
Prevention	1,066
Cooperation with National Societies	446
General	-

► **7,854**

of which: *Overheads* 475

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	85%
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PERSONNEL

19 expatriates
136 national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2006, the ICRC:

- ▶ visited 9,392 detainees, including 1,560 security detainees registered and monitored individually, during 223 visits to 76 places of detention;
- ▶ helped separated family members to restore and maintain contact through the RCM service, and reunited 5 unaccompanied children with their families;
- ▶ ensured access to safe water for 147,600 people in both rural and urban areas, with a further 68,000 people set to benefit from ongoing projects;
- ▶ enhanced the support and level of care available to victims of sexual violence and raised awareness of their plight;
- ▶ organized some 100 IHL sessions for over 6,300 members of the new armed and police forces.

CONTEXT

In September 2006, the government signed a ceasefire with the National Liberation Forces (FNL), following long-running negotiations in the United Republic of Tanzania. However, the terms of the agreement were vague, and controversy over the modalities of its implementation delayed the process whereby FNL members would be demobilized or integrated into the national security forces. Prior to the signing of the agreement, the government had stepped up military pressure on the armed opposition movement, and there were sporadic outbreaks of violence in Bubanza, Bujumbura rural and Cibitoke provinces. The population in conflict-affected areas had been subjected to numerous alleged IHL violations, such as pillaging, arbitrary arrests and summary executions, but these decreased drastically following the ceasefire.

International concern mounted over allegations of summary executions of FNL members in the province of Muyinga. The arrest of a number of leading figures suspected of involvement in a coup attempt, including the former president Domitien Ndayizeye and former vice-president Alphonse-Marie Kadege, also caused concern. Relations between the government, the political opposition and the local media became increasingly tense.

Following the complete withdrawal of UN peacekeeping forces at the end of 2006, the UN was set to be represented by an integrated office under a special representative of the secretary-general. A contingent of South African forces seconded to the African Union also remained to monitor the implementation of the ceasefire between the government and the FNL.

Whilst the integration of the newly formed security forces went smoothly, a large number of weapons remained in circulation and crime was rampant.

Calls for justice and reconciliation had yet to be satisfactorily answered. There was concern that the possible return of several hundred thousand refugees would increase tension and pressure on already scarce land.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM		
Detainees visited	9,392	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>		
Detainees visited and monitored individually	1,560	Water supply schemes and sanitation systems (completed projects)	Beneficiaries	147,600
Number of visits carried out	223	Habitat structures	Beneficiaries	25,500
Number of places of detention visited	76			
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS				
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>				
RCMs collected	5,657			
RCMs distributed	5,545			
People reunited with their families	5			
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>				
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	150			
Tracing requests closed positively (persons located)	54			
Tracing requests still being handled at 31 December 2006	108			
<i>Unaccompanied minors (UAMs) and separated children (SCs), including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers</i>				
UAMs/SCs newly registered by the ICRC	13			
UAMs/SCs reunited with their families by the ICRC	5			
UAMs/SCs cases still being handled at 31 December 2006	53			

ICRC ACTION

Owing to a marked increase in the number of arrests, ICRC delegates visited detainees and checked on their treatment and conditions of detention. Cooperation continued with the penitentiary authorities to improve conditions of detention in general. The ICRC strengthened its dialogue with the international community to encourage its members to support the Burundian government in its efforts to ensure that conditions of detention and treatment of women and children met internationally recognized minimum standards.

The ICRC developed its family-links network to enable hundreds of thousands of Burundian refugees, most of whom were in the United Republic of Tanzania and preferred to stay there for the time being, to keep in contact with their relatives. The delegation also worked to reunite unaccompanied children with their families.

Some projects to repair and improve the capacity of urban and rural water supply systems destroyed by conflict were completed, while others were still in progress.

Support to rekindle agricultural activity in two provinces focused on consolidating ongoing projects and training the beneficiaries to run the projects independently, in view of the scheduled cessation of ICRC assistance at the end of the year.

A programme for victims of sexual violence was initiated in Bururi province, based on the approach developed in Bujumbura

since 2003. The whole programme was stopped at the end of 2006, as the phenomenon was no longer principally linked with weapon bearers but had become a more general social or cultural problem.

The authorities showed an encouraging interest in IHL. The armed and security forces requested IHL familiarization and training sessions, and the Defence Ministry was in the process of incorporating IHL into army training regulations.

Having accompanied the National Society through a restructuring process in 2005, the ICRC focused on strengthening its disaster preparedness and dissemination capacities, to be followed by cooperation on activities to restore family links.

CIVILIANS

Restoring family links

After the RCM service was extended from Burundi to Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania in October 2005, there was a substantial increase in the volume of messages exchanged.

In Burundi, refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) had access to the RCM service to keep in touch with relatives back home, and had access to tracing posts in Gasorwe and Mwaro camps. Refugees started to return to the DRC during the year.

Where possible, unaccompanied children were reunited with their families, follow-

ing which the ICRC and the International Rescue Committee worked together to monitor their reintegration into their communities.

- 5,418 RCMs collected (145 from unaccompanied/separated children) and 5,367 RCMs distributed (113 to unaccompanied/separated children)
- new tracing requests registered for 150 people (73 females, 83 minors at the time of disappearance); 54 people located; 108 people (54 females, 51 minors at the time of disappearance) still being sought
- 13 unaccompanied/separated children newly registered, 5 reunited with their families and 53 cases still being processed
- 12 people issued with ICRC travel documents

Providing pregnant women and victims of sexual violence with access to care

Sixty-five traditional birth attendants and community health workers from five health centres received training facilitated by the ICRC in cooperation with the National Programme of Reproductive Health. They were trained in safe childbirth and in identifying victims of sexual violence and referring them to appropriate medical and psychosocial support services.

Thanks to this referral system, women who had suffered sexual violence had access to a care network set up by the ICRC in two communities in Bururi province, a rural region near conflict areas. Medical care and

psychological and social support were provided by MSF-Belgium and Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services, while the ICRC contributed by financing a shelter and the full-time services of a Burundian psychologist. In addition, 74 people in positions of influence learned how to familiarize their communities with ways to prevent sexual violence and give support to the victims.

The birth attendants' activities were monitored on a monthly basis by health delegates. The public learned more about topics such as nutrition, malaria, HIV/AIDS and family planning during health information sessions conducted by the ICRC.

Women and children attending ICRC-supported health centres for consultations were given insecticide-impregnated mosquito nets. This encouraged more women to seek out the centres for vaccinations and other treatment, which had a positive effect on women's and children's health in general. In total, 10,000 nets were distributed.

The whole programme was stopped at the end of 2006, as the phenomenon of sexual violence was no longer principally linked with weapon bearers but had become a more general social or cultural problem.

Ensuring clean water for residents and IDPs

Cooperation continued between the ICRC and Regideso, the urban water and electricity board. To enhance their capacities and refresh their skills, Regideso staff attended two technical training sessions on water network management.

The new water system in Rumonge was inaugurated in October, providing a catchment population of 45,000 people with at least 45 litres per person per day. The prison was also supplied by the new system. Engineering work on water projects in Gatumba and Mabanda was well under way. Feasibility studies were completed for a water project in Mutaho, work on which was scheduled to begin at the start of 2007.

People in Bugendana, Buyengero, Kabezi, Marangara, Mitakataka, Mwumba and Rwisabi had access to clean water following the completion of repairs to essential infrastructure damaged in the conflict. People in "Don Bosco", Mabanda, Mubone, Mwumba and Nyamugari were set to gain improved access to water supplies once repair work, carried out by the ICRC and the Direction Générale de l'Hydraulique et des Energies Rurales, Burundi's rural water board, had been completed.

- ▶ 1 water system in an urban area and 8 systems in rural areas completed, serving 147,600 people
- ▶ 4 projects to construct water systems in rural areas and 2 urban water projects ongoing, to serve 68,000 people

Economic assistance to residents and IDPs

In line with the decision taken in 2005, the ICRC worked to consolidate seed production and swamp drainage projects initiated in 2004 with a view to ending its assistance by the middle of June. The project beneficiaries received training in agricultural techniques and management. The Buraza swamp drainage project was the only activity requiring ICRC guidance and training until the end of the year to ensure its sustainability.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Members of the FNL held in places of temporary detention, central prisons and a centre for former FNL fighters continued to receive visits from ICRC delegates, who monitored their treatment and detention conditions. The Service National de Renseignement granted the ICRC access to its detention facilities as well. The number of arrests remained high, despite the signature of a ceasefire agreement between the government and the FNL in September.

The treatment and conditions of detention of the whole prison population were the subject of continuing confidential dialogue between the ICRC and the authorities. A number of written reports on the topic were submitted to the authorities, including a comprehensive assessment of the current situation observed in 11 prisons.

Particular attention was paid to the situation of incarcerated women and children, who were often being held in the same accommodation as male detainees. Two projects were carried out to set up separate areas for women. The ICRC also encouraged the international community to support the Burundian government's efforts to provide women and children with conditions of detention in line with internationally recognized minimum standards and to modify prison facilities accordingly. Donors approved financial support for infrastructure rehabilitation work within the framework of a government emergency appeal.

Cooperation continued with the Direction Générale des Affaires Pénitentiaires to improve water and hygiene facilities in prisons. A pest-control spraying campaign was carried out in all prisons, as part of which 7,500 detainees received insecticide-impregnated mosquito nets, straw mattresses, blankets and a monthly supply of soap. In Bujumbura's Mpimba prison, repairs were made to the water supply system.

Levels of mortality and morbidity in Burundi's prisons remained low by local standards. All the prisons had a small clinic staffed with a nurse and stocked with medical supplies to treat most diseases on the spot, thanks in part to ICRC projects. The prison population continued to benefit from the ICRC's financing of medicines and supplies and the monitoring of the quality of care and epidemiological figures.

The ICRC continued to advocate the introduction of programmes to fight tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and other diseases in prisons. Associations of seropositive detainees received ICRC support to help them improve their living conditions. War-wounded detainees had their hospital fees paid.

A dialogue was established with the Ministry of Interior and the police authorities to promote better conditions of detention in temporary detention facilities. To this end, confidential written reports were submitted to the local authorities. People held in places of temporary detention received soap and other hygiene items.

- ▶ 9,392 detainees visited, 1,560 of them monitored individually (40 females, 112 minors), including 1,344 newly registered (36 females, 100 minors), during 223 visits to 76 places of temporary detention and central prisons
- ▶ 239 RCMs collected from and 178 RCMs distributed to detainees
- ▶ 65 people held in relation to the conflict provided with financial assistance to return home upon their release
- ▶ 25,500 inmates benefited from a range of ICRC assistance initiatives
- ▶ a prison directors' workshop and a round-table between the penitentiary administration and donors, NGOs and international organizations facilitated by the ICRC

AUTHORITIES

Discussions with relevant national authorities regarding the ratification and implementation of IHL treaties yielded some results:

- the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared ratification instruments for Additional Protocol III and for the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols;
- the legal team from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared an implementing act for the 1993 Convention on Chemical Weapons which was then submitted for cabinet and parliamentary approval;
- the committee established by the Ministry of Justice to oversee the reform of the Criminal Code took note of some of the ICRC's suggestions and was set to incorporate articles on international crimes and protection of the emblem into the revised code.

In addition, provincial and communal authorities attending information sessions learned about ICRC operations in Burundi, and 130 members of parliament and 70 members of the executive participated in three workshops on IHL and the implementation of international conventions.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Regulations for the armed forces, which were drafted with ICRC support and provided for IHL to be integrated into all levels of military instruction, were still in the process of being approved by the Ministry of Defence. Soldiers from all ranks participated in ICRC-organized IHL sessions across the country, at the request of the army joint staff.

Members of the *gendarmerie* and new police recruits from former armed groups participated in several two-day IHL/human rights training sessions organized by the ICRC at the request of the police directorate.

All members of former armed movements were either demobilized, incorporated into the national army or police force or belonged to units in the process of being disbanded. The exception was the FNL, which was still waiting for the next phase of demobilization at the end of the year, after signing a ceasefire agreement in September.

- 600 army officers attended 20 IHL sessions, and more than 4,000 troops attended 60 IHL information sessions
- 30 officers from different military areas trained by ICRC and military instructors to become IHL trainers
- 4 officers sponsored to attend an IHL course in San Remo
- more than 1,500 police officers and non-commissioned officers briefed on IHL/human rights during 20 information sessions

CIVIL SOCIETY

The media continued to learn about the ICRC's mandate, activities and IHL through briefings, press releases and events. Media representatives participated in an information session on protection, water and habitat and health.

Education authorities were briefed on the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme so that secondary school students could continue to benefit from lessons in humanitarian principles and basic IHL rules. Experts from the Education Ministry were supported in their efforts to draw up a specialized teaching guide and an additional teacher's manual to accompany the programme. Private schools were also approached, and 30 principals and teachers attended an Exploring Humanitarian Law information day.

To gain a better understanding of IHL, students at higher education institutions countrywide attended conferences, and teams representing six of the country's seven universities took part in a public competition on IHL. Contacts were made with lecturers at the newly opened Hope Africa University to promote the integration of IHL into law courses in the coming academic year.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Burundi Red Cross completed the restructuring process begun in 2004. Of the four national programme coordinators, two (for disaster preparedness and dissemination) were financed by the ICRC, which also supplied some basic equipment.

Raising awareness of IHL and the Fundamental Principles

All Red Cross committee members at provincial and community level learned about the Movement and its Fundamental Principles through training sessions

financed by the International Federation, the German and Spanish Red Cross Societies and the ICRC.

The Burundi Red Cross and the ICRC jointly set up a dissemination programme to familiarize the authorities at provincial and community level with the Movement, its Fundamental Principles and activities and to facilitate the National Society's role as auxiliary to the public authorities.

- provincial and communal authorities attended 17 dissemination sessions in 17 provinces

Emergency preparedness

The National Society, with ICRC support, trained emergency response brigades and organized first-aid courses, including commercial ones to help improve its financial standing.

- 60 volunteers trained, who then formed 3 emergency response brigades
- 6 Red Cross trainers and 123 volunteers trained during 6 first-aid courses

Restoring family links

The delegation looked into the possibility of setting up an RCM network, with a view to developing National Society tracing activities.