

haiti



The ICRC's involvement in Haiti began in 1994, when it started visiting detainees falling within its mandate. Previously covered by the regional delegation in Mexico City, Haiti became a fully-fledged delegation in February 2004, when internal strife threatened to degenerate into armed conflict. Given the persisting violence, the ICRC continues its humanitarian endeavours there. It focuses on implementing protection activities for detainees and civilians, ensures that people wounded as a result of violence have access to medical services, and improves water and sanitation in violence-prone shantytowns. It contributes, along with other Movement partners, to strengthening the emergency response capacity of the Haitian Red Cross.

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	748
Assistance	1,857
Prevention	1,149
Cooperation with National Societies	1,017
General	-

► **4,771**

of which: *Overheads* 291

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	90%
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PERSONNEL

13	expatriates
43	national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2007, the ICRC:

- ▶ regularly monitored the conditions of detention and treatment of detainees in prisons and police stations throughout the country
- ▶ contributed to measures taken by the authorities and international stakeholders to initiate a reform of the penitentiary system and improve the situation in places of detention
- ▶ carried out emergency repairs to selected infrastructure and water and sanitation systems in prisons
- ▶ received security guarantees from all weapon bearers prior to starting a project with the Haitian National Red Cross Society, scheduled for 2008, whereby wounded and sick people from the violence-prone shantytown of Martissant could be safely evacuated
- ▶ completed, together with the local water board, the rehabilitation of water fountains in Cité Soleil to facilitate access to water for some 250,000 beneficiaries
- ▶ helped the Haitian Red Cross respond to the emergency needs of thousands of people affected by hurricanes and tropical storms

CONTEXT

The social and economic situation of most Haitians remained dire, prompting many to flee the country in makeshift boats. In 2007, hurricanes Dean and Olga and tropical storm Noel reportedly killed 136 people and destroyed close to 6,000 homes. Food security was affected when the already fragile agricultural sector was disrupted.

Although the level of violence remained high in Haiti, the general security situation in Cité Soleil, one of the most violence-affected neighbourhoods in Port-au-Prince, improved significantly following the arrest of many gang leaders allegedly responsible for violence and instability inside and outside the shantytown. The arrests were carried out during operations conducted in February by the Haitian police, in collaboration with the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), whose mandate was extended to 15 October 2008. The security situation in the capital, however, remained volatile, particularly in other deprived neighbourhoods, such as Carrefour and Martissant. Located in the city's southern outskirts on hilly terrain with difficult access, these shantytowns remained in the grip of armed gangs. Few of their residents had access to health care or water and some were killed as they tried to cross gang-controlled areas to reach health facilities or to fetch food and water.

The government of President René Préval focused on achieving political stability and institutional normalization. It also adopted a five-year plan on prison reform. The recommendations of a committee mandated to address the issue of prolonged detention without trial led to the release of a limited number of detainees whose preventive detention had gone beyond the time they would have served for their alleged crime.

A vetting process to weed out corrupt or violent elements within the ranks of the national police was under way. The number of police officers on the streets rose significantly as the pace of training increased, and special motorized brigades were created, contributing to lowering crime rates. Although the number of kidnappings was still high (227 cases reported in 2007), it was half the annual figure recorded in the previous two years.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

		Total			
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		Total	Total	Women	Children
Detainees visited		6,570	CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM		
Detainees visited and monitored individually		421	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>		
	<i>of whom females</i>	1	Water, sanitation and habitat projects	<i>Beneficiaries</i>	253,586
	<i>of whom minors</i>	22			59%
Number of visits carried out		61	WOUNDED AND SICK		
Number of places of detention visited		20	<i>Physical rehabilitation</i>		
			Patients receiving services	<i>Patients</i>	4,021
			Prostheses delivered	<i>Units</i>	21
			Orthoses delivered	<i>Units</i>	88
					1,732
					1,060
					6
					1
					48

ICRC ACTION

The ICRC continued to monitor conditions of detention in civilian prisons and police stations throughout the country and maintained a confidential dialogue on its findings and recommendations with the authorities at all levels. The delegation completed a comprehensive campaign to combat the most frequent skin diseases in the main prison of Port-au-Prince and continued to carry out ad hoc repairs to water and sanitation infrastructure to improve hygiene in the country's prisons. By raising awareness of detention conditions among the authorities, UN agencies and members of the international community, the ICRC contributed to the development by the government of a strategic plan to overhaul the penitentiary system.

Taking advantage of its role as a neutral and independent intermediary, the ICRC continued to focus on assisting victims of armed violence in urban settings by helping the local branch of the Haitian National Red Cross Society evacuate wounded and sick people from Cité Soleil. With the National Society, it laid the groundwork for carrying out similar activities in Martissant, obtaining support and security guarantees from the police and gang leaders, conducting community outreach sessions to explain the project to residents, and recruiting and training Red Cross volunteers. The ICRC also placed more emphasis on monitoring the use of force by members of the Haitian police and MINUSTAH and briefing them on IHL, international human rights law, the ICRC's mandate and the Fundamental Principles.

A water and sanitation project initiated in 2005 mitigated to some extent the increasing marginalization of Cité Soleil's residents as communal water fountains were rehabilitated and pumping stations repaired. Apart from carrying out repairs, the ICRC accompanied the city water board to Cité Soleil and was instrumental in persuading it to improve its services to the shantytown. The ICRC also helped a committee of residents improve its management of communal water fountains. A sanitation programme in support of the local rubbish collection service had to be cancelled owing to internal problems within the service.

The ICRC continued to strengthen the Haitian Red Cross's capacity to respond to emergencies, including natural disasters. Through training, material, technical and financial support, particularly to Red Cross branches, the ICRC increased the National Society's ability to support the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

The ICRC coordinated its activities with those of Movement partners, UN agencies and other humanitarian actors in areas of common interest in order to maximize impact, fill gaps and avoid duplication.

CIVILIANS

During operations conducted by the national police and MINUSTAH at the beginning of the year in Cité Soleil, civilians benefited from an ongoing dialogue between the ICRC and all weapon bearers, including armed gangs. In some instances, the ICRC negotiated a truce to facilitate the evacuation of wounded and sick people (see *Armed forces and other bearers of weapons*).

The general situation of Cité Soleil residents improved significantly, owing not only to the arrest of gang leaders but also to the presence of the ICRC, Haitian Red Cross volunteers trained in first aid (see *Wounded and sick*) and a medical facility run by Médecins Sans Frontières-Belgium (MSF-Belgium). Other humanitarian organizations, taking advantage of improved security as of April 2007, also started establishing programmes there. To avoid duplicating efforts, the ICRC coordinated closely with them.

Although many other deprived neighbourhoods in the capital were also affected by urban violence, government services and humanitarian and development organizations were generally able to access them. In Martissant, however, fighting between rival gangs for control of the shantytown severely limited access by government services, with adverse consequences for civilians, particularly regarding their access to health care and water. The ICRC, therefore, took advantage of its role of neutral and independent intermediary to lay the groundwork, together with the Haitian Red Cross, for activities in Martissant similar to the ones implemented in Cité Soleil (see *Wounded and sick*).

Improving water supply and sanitation

Residents of Cité Soleil enjoyed an increased supply of drinking water as the ICRC contributed to the repair of equipment and assisted the city water board in operating two pumping stations, the second of which started functioning in August after the ICRC rehabilitated it.

In order to get closer to the goal of supplying Cité Soleil residents with 20 litres of water per person per day, the city water board and the local water management committee were assisted in maintaining and repairing the water distribution system. Of 53 communal water fountains that had become operational by the end of 2006, 37 underwent further refurbishments in 2007, including works to protect their immediate environment. A water tower, which was damaged in February during clashes between MINUSTAH and armed groups, was partially repaired and resumed functioning.

The city water board and the ICRC helped the Cité Soleil water management committee improve its management and organizational structure. The ICRC also rehabilitated the committee's office.

In the first half of the year, the local waste collection service received ICRC assistance in repairing the first 9 rubbish skips out of a total of 20 that were to be repaired or constructed by the end of the year. However, the project had to be cancelled owing to internal problems within the service, prompting the ICRC to shift its strategy to persuading the relevant authorities to take responsibility for Cité Soleil's waste management.

- ▶ 250,000 people benefited from water and sanitation projects

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

By the end of the year, there were almost 6,500 detainees in the country's 17 prisons and 3 police stations serving as permanent places of detention, 84% of whom were awaiting trial. The average occupancy rate was between 400% and 600%.

In the second half of the year, prompted in part by the ICRC's work to raise awareness of the situation in Haiti's places of detention, the government, MINUSTAH, UN agencies and members of the international community showed an unprecedented willingness to tackle the necessary reform of the penitentiary system, including the construction of additional penitentiary space. In meetings with government representatives, the prison administration, UN representatives and potential donors, the ICRC contributed to the mobilization of resources and to the establishment of a strategic development plan for 2007–12. The plan envisaged an overhaul of the entire penitentiary system, the refurbishment of 10 prisons and the construction of another 13. In order to provide the penitentiary authorities and various stakeholders with clear recommendations, the ICRC started an assessment of prison infrastructure in all of the country's permanent places of detention.

Regular visits by ICRC delegates, including health and water and sanitation specialists, led to some improvements in detention conditions and ensured that better nutrition contributed to stemming an outbreak of beriberi, a potentially fatal illness brought on by vitamin B1 deficiency.

Health and hygiene in places of detention remained top priorities. At eight round-tables organized for the first time with representatives of the Ministries of Justice and Health in Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haïtien, the ICRC discussed ways of improving health in prisons and reducing mortality rates. As a result of the meetings in Cap-Haïtien, detainees in that city received bi-monthly visits from a doctor.

From March to September, all 3,156 inmates of the main prison of Port-au-Prince were treated for scabies, mycosis, other skin conditions and intestinal worms. Detainees saw an improvement in the quantity and quality of food they received after the food storage facilities in Port-au-Prince's main prison and the kitchen and food storage facilities in the Cap-Haïtien prison were refurbished. Inmates also faced fewer health risks following improvements to the water distribution systems of the prisons in Port-au-Prince, Anse-à-Veau, Cap-Haïtien and Petit-Goâve and following emergency repairs to prison infrastructure.

- ▶ 6,570 detainees visited, of whom 421 monitored individually (including 1 female and 22 minors) and 408 newly registered (including 1 female and 22 minors), during 61 visits to 20 places of detention
- ▶ 3,586 detainees benefited from ongoing water and sanitation projects

- ▶ 30 nurses working in prisons attended refresher courses on prison health care
- ▶ prison guards in Saint-Marc and in Port-au-Prince's main prison learned about the mandate and activities of the ICRC and its standard working procedures and were briefed on internationally recognized detention standards

WOUNDED AND SICK

Wounded and sick people in Cité Soleil continued to benefit from better access to health care thanks to the services provided by the Haitian Red Cross branch in the shantytown, with the support of the ICRC. As before, they were evacuated in local taxis fitted out as ambulances and marked with the red cross emblem and were taken to a medical facility inside Cité Soleil or to hospitals outside the shantytown. With the improvement of the security situation, the number of wounded and sick people evacuated dropped significantly, with a total of 284 for the year. In addition, some 600 people were treated for minor injuries in two first-aid posts run by some 30 Haitian Red Cross volunteers trained in first aid.

Health services in Martissant had improved thanks to a health centre and mobile clinics run by MSF-Belgium since the end of 2006. It remained dangerous, however, for residents to cross borderlines between neighbourhoods to reach health services. In response to this situation, and in coordination with the health authorities and MSF, the Haitian Red Cross and the ICRC started setting up a project to improve first-aid and medical evacuation services in the shantytown. Preparatory work included choosing appropriate locations for first-aid posts, pinpointing the areas to be covered by the medical evacuation services, initiating the recruitment and training of volunteers, informing the population about the project (see *Civil society*) and obtaining the necessary security guarantees to begin implementation (see *Armed forces and other bearers of weapons*).

The Healing Hands for Haiti International Foundation received polypropylene materials to produce prosthetic/orthotic components for patients; five of its technicians were trained for two months in the appropriate use of the polypropylene technology developed by the ICRC.

- ▶ 4,021 patients (including 1,732 women and 1,060 children) received services at 1 ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centre
- ▶ 45 new patients (including 18 women and 3 children) fitted with prostheses and 95 (including 21 women and 57 children) fitted with orthoses
- ▶ 21 prostheses (including 6 for women, 1 for a child and 1 for a mine victim), 88 orthoses (including 22 for women, 48 for children and 11 for mine victims), 64 crutches and 35 wheelchairs delivered

AUTHORITIES

The Haitian authorities were encouraged to ratify Additional Protocol III, which they had signed in December 2006, and to prepare a draft law on emblem protection. Additional Protocols I and II entered into force in June 2007.

The Haitian authorities and relevant international stakeholders responded to the ICRC's efforts to publicize the need to reform the

penitentiary system by convening high-level meetings resulting in the establishment of a 2007–12 strategic development plan for the penitentiary authorities.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

MINUSTAH and the Haitian police gained a better understanding of basic humanitarian principles and the role and mandate of the National Society and the ICRC through a regular dialogue with staff officers in Port-au-Prince and the provinces, resulting in higher levels of cooperation during medical evacuations from Cité Soleil and immediate commitments to support an ICRC/Haitian Red Cross project in Martissant.

During law enforcement operations conducted in Cité Soleil early in the year, members of the national police and MINUSTAH troops on the ground were in regular contact with the ICRC, which discussed with them the importance of allowing wounded people to be evacuated, the need to respect the population, and the principle of proportionality in the use of force. These contacts, and those with gang leaders, made several medical evacuations by the Haitian Red Cross possible.

Following information meetings to explain the ICRC/Haitian Red Cross medical evacuation/first-aid project, gang leaders in Martissant provided full security guarantees in support of the project.

- ▶ 633 police trainees, and police officers based in Martissant, briefed on the ICRC's mandate and activities and on basic humanitarian norms relevant to policing
- ▶ 21 cadres from special police units took part in training in IHL, international human rights law and the use of force in situations of internal violence
- ▶ MINUSTAH battalions, including those based in Cité Soleil and Martissant, briefed on the ICRC's mandate and the Fundamental Principles, as were troops from 8 countries prior to their deployment with MINUSTAH

CIVIL SOCIETY

The media, radio stations in particular, carried messages in Creole urging the population and armed gangs to respect medical facilities and the red cross emblem, proving especially useful when Cité Soleil was gripped by violence. Leaders and representatives from Martissant expressed their support for the ICRC/Haitian Red Cross medical evacuation and first-aid project during information sessions held by the ICRC and the National Society at the end of the year (see *Wounded and sick*).

The Haitian public learned more about the plight of Cité Soleil residents and the Red Cross role in alleviating it through an ICRC documentary aired on national television. Journalists attracted international attention to the plight of Cité Soleil residents in particular, following a visit to the shantytown facilitated by the ICRC. Media representatives attending a seminar organized by the European Union, as well as staff of 40 local human rights organizations attending a train-the-trainer course run by MINUSTAH, learned more about IHL, basic humanitarian principles, and the ICRC's mandate and activities in Haiti through the participation of the ICRC in both events.

From mid-March, law students at Quisqueya University followed a compulsory IHL course taught by a law lecturer who had participated in an IHL course organized in 2006 in Sion, Switzerland. In April, some 250 students from other universities attended a one-day IHL workshop held at the State University in Port-au-Prince.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Haitian Red Cross remained a key operational partner of the ICRC. The National Society received ICRC training, material, technical and financial support, particularly the Western Metropolitan Regional Branch, responsible for carrying out first-aid activities and medical evacuations from Cité Soleil and for establishing, through community liaison, a similar project in Martissant.

- ▶ volunteers working in Cité Soleil upgraded their first-aid techniques, and some 30 radio operators countrywide enhanced their radio-operating skills
- ▶ volunteers trained in community liaison carried out dissemination sessions in Martissant
- ▶ regional and local branches received some 200 first-aid kits
- ▶ regional branches received office materials/equipment and dissemination materials on the Fundamental Principles and the history of the Movement
- ▶ the branch office in Port-de-Paix was refurbished

Members of local and regional committees produced a guide to help Red Cross volunteers develop income-generating community projects in the provinces.

The Haitian Red Cross, with support from the ICRC, the International Federation and other Movement partners, assisted tens of thousands of people affected by hurricanes and tropical storms, evacuating people before the storms hit, administering first aid, taking wounded and sick people to hospital and distributing household essentials to vulnerable families and individuals.

At a meeting to discuss the implementation of the Seville Agreement and its Supplementary Measures, Movement partners agreed that the ICRC would keep its lead role in Haiti in relation to security matters.