



guinea

The ICRC has been extensively involved in protection activities in Guinea since 2002, particularly restoring family links, visiting detainees and advising the penal authorities. At the same time, it promotes IHL among the armed and security forces, political authorities, the media and the public. It cooperates with the Red Cross Society of Guinea with the aim of strengthening its capacities to respond to emergencies, to restore family links and to promote IHL and the Fundamental Principles. The ICRC has worked in Guinea since 1970, initially through its regional delegations in Yaoundé and Abidjan. Its operational delegation was opened in Conakry in 2001.

EXPENDITURE IN CHF

Protection

3,797,697

Assistance

3,067,260

Preventive action

1,141,747

Cooperation with National Societies

1,278,084

General

2,157

► **9,286,946**

of which: Overheads **558,141**

PERSONNEL

28 expatriates

144 national staff

KEY POINTS IN 2004

- The ICRC registered hundreds of children separated from their parents in refugee camps and communities in Guinea; it monitored their welfare, as well as that of other vulnerable people, and on request reunited more than 1,000 children with family members in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.
- The ICRC collected more than 11,000 RCMs from refugees in Guinea and delivered a similar number.
- The organization improved sanitation/access to water for 300,000 people.
- The ICRC made 210 visits to some 70 prisons, followed up more than 2,900 detainees individually, improved sanitation/access to water for 1,200 inmates and administered a therapeutic feeding programme for 250 detainees.

CONTEXT

In February–March 2004, following his re-election the previous December, President Lansana Conté substantially reshuffled the cabinet. One of the new appointees, Prime Minister François Fall, resigned shortly afterwards and was replaced at the end of the year by Cellou Diallo, a long-serving member of President Conté's government.

The economic situation continued to deteriorate, with inflation hovering between 20% and 30% and basic public services such as electricity and water all but absent. In 2004 the escalating prices of basic commodities such as rice, the staple food, led to looting and unrest in the capital Conakry.

In Guinée Forestière, inter-ethnic rivalries, the proliferation of all types of weapons and the presence of fighters, including members of Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), remained a volatile mix. Twice in early 2004 tensions between the Guerzé and Konianké communities erupted into violence. In one incident, a personal dispute degenerated rapidly into intercommunal clashes during which two people were killed and 230 taken temporarily into custody. Civilians in this region were still the most disadvantaged in terms of access to water, health care and education.

Owing to the unpredictable situation in Côte d'Ivoire, its south-eastern neighbour, Guinea remained under the constant threat of a fresh influx of refugees and returnees. The situation in Liberia, however, had improved since

mid-2003, especially after the deployment of UN troops in Lofa County.

Relations between Sierra Leone and Guinea were almost back to normal. However, their dispute over the Yenga territory dragged on. This narrow strip of land on the Sierra Leonean side of the border, controlled by the Guinean armed forces since 1998 at the request of the then Sierra Leonean government, had been a sore point between the two countries but had never attracted public attention. However, in 2004 concerns arose over the security of civilians in the area.

ICRC ACTION

Because of the unstable situation along the border with Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, the ICRC maintained a heightened presence in Guinea and remained poised to respond to any developments in the humanitarian situation. The ICRC's tracing and Red Cross message (RCM) service helped restore family links for both newly arrived and established refugees, with priority given to reuniting children with their families. To respond to the needs of the resident population, the ICRC continued its water and sanitation programme in villages and areas where substantial numbers of Guineans had returned. The ICRC also pursued its other core programmes in Guinea, notably visiting detainees to monitor their treatment and living conditions.

Building on its well-established IHL programmes in Guinea, the ICRC worked with the Guinean authorities and armed and security forces to encourage IHL implementation, both nationally and regionally.

The ICRC maintained its status as lead agency for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's action in Guinea, working in coordination with the Red Cross Society of Guinea and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The National Society grappled with uncertainty over future support and funding for some of its programmes.

CIVILIANS

Protecting civilians and restoring family links

The past conflict in Liberia and the ongoing one in Côte d'Ivoire displaced hundreds of thousands of people, dispersing families across the region. In 2004 the ICRC registered children separated from their parents and living in refugee camps, continuously monitored their welfare and reunited Sierra Leonean, Liberian and Ivorian children with their families in their home countries. With the resumption of UNHCR's repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees, the ICRC helped screen them to ensure an optimal follow-up of children separated from their families. The organization often took direct charge of such children in transit camps, to offer them protection or material assistance prior to their reunification with their families. It regularly referred the children, both in and outside refugee camps, to organizations providing medical services (such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the International Federation).

In late 2004 the ICRC conducted a survey of children separated from their families and living in camps to assess the psychological and social impact of their predicament. The survey's findings were to be shared with other stakeholders, such as UNHCR, to help develop appropriate assistance and protection programmes. Logistic and human resource constraints, however, made it difficult for the ICRC to reach this and other vulnerable groups living outside refugee camps. In order to identify such children, who outside the confines of the camps were largely forced to fend for themselves, the ICRC enhanced its working relations with the International Rescue Committee.

- ▶ 1,235 children separated from their parents, including 451 registered in 2004, monitored, along with other vulnerable people in refugee camps and communities
- ▶ 1,032 children reunited with family members in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea
- ▶ 960 children separated from their parents still being monitored at end 2004
- ▶ 1,460 tracing requests received from relatives seeking to locate children

Throughout 2004 the ICRC enabled refugees living in camps to establish and/or maintain contact with their families in Guinea or elsewhere through the RCM network. While the network remained the preferred tool in the sub-region for locating the families of children separated from their parents, posters were increasingly used to the same end. The ICRC also trained tracing officers to ensure timely and optimal assistance to children.

- ▶ 11,393 RCMs collected and 11,247 delivered

Improving civilians' living conditions and access to clean water

Ongoing ICRC efforts ensured that civilians in troubled areas of Guinée Forestière had access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. An ICRC survey revealed that although the majority of returnees and refugees had left their host villages in the south-eastern border region, long-term isolation and limited benefit from international and national water-supply programmes had left the host communities prone to water-borne diseases. The ICRC therefore began gathering information from certain organizations on their programmes

in order to determine where and how it could act effectively.

- ▶ 250,000 people in and around Nzérékoré benefited from access to improved water supply and sanitation following repairs to Yalenzou water-treatment plant
- ▶ 30 boreholes constructed in rural villages of Guinée Forestière, providing 25,000 residents with access to clean water
- ▶ 60 fountains in disadvantaged urban areas of Guéckédou and Macenta completed
- ▶ 30 Red Cross volunteers trained in hygiene education

A mobile laboratory donated by the ICRC to Guinea's national water board (SEG) was used regularly in six major cities of Guinée Forestière to test the quality of the water. To ensure efficient functioning of the pumping stations in Nzérékoré, the ICRC developed a project, together with SEG, involving the repair of the stations' equipment, civil engineering work and the training of SEG personnel. Preparations got under way for the project to begin, including the acquisition of all the necessary materials.

Other ICRC activities included the installation of a generator for a water-pumping station, repairs to water reservoirs and the training of senior SEG engineers.

The ICRC pre-positioned an emergency water-supply kit to serve 5,000 people each in Nzérékoré and Kissidougou, ready to respond in the event of emergencies concerning water and sanitation.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

The ICRC stepped up visits to all civilian prisons to monitor detention conditions and the treatment of inmates. The quality of information gathered during visits improved greatly. The organization made representations to the prison authorities and continued to seek greater access to security detainees.

The ICRC registered six Ivorian fighters who had entered Guinea seeking asylum and were being held by the *gendarmérie* pending clarification of their status. In discussing their status with the authorities, the ICRC reiterated the need to respect the principle of *non-refoulement*.

Enhanced follow-up by the authorities of detention issues led to a slight improvement in the prison conditions in some of the major and temporary places of detention. Nevertheless, conditions remained worrying in most places of detention, the food situation worsened and malnutrition increased. The incidence of beriberi and severe malnutrition varied from one detention facility to the next. The ICRC met the relevant ministries to help find a solution, implemented a therapeutic feeding programme in three prisons for around 250 inmates and proposed to extend similar, ad hoc assistance to other prisons. In October the organization supported MSF in bringing under control cholera and dysentery epidemics which claimed a number of lives in a Conakry prison.

- 2,961 detainees followed up, 71 of them newly registered
- 210 visits carried out in 69 prisons
- 387 RCMs between detainees and family members collected and 289 delivered
- 1,200 inmates in 5 prisons benefited from water-supply and sanitation facilities built or repaired by the ICRC

WOUNDED AND SICK

Although there were no wounded people seeking treatment at ICRC-supported health facilities, the organization maintained sufficient emergency stocks to provide medical and surgical treatment for 1,000 people. In early 2004 assistance was distributed on an ad hoc basis to six hospitals in Conakry and its environs.

AUTHORITIES

The ICRC held regular meetings with the national and local authorities to keep them abreast of its activities and provide them with information on IHL and the Movement. A play illustrating National Society/ICRC activities was put on during information sessions for community and religious leaders.

- 1,600 government officials, including National Assembly members, attended information sessions

The ICRC began establishing contact with opposition leaders to explain its role and activities in Guinea and the role, activities and Fundamental Principles of the Movement.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Through regular field visits, the ICRC maintained contact with the Guinean army and participated in training and information activities aimed at enhancing knowledge of IHL and ICRC operations in Guinea. The organization worked closely with military academies and instructors, providing them with technical support and documents for use in IHL training.

Some 2,000 volunteers recruited by the Guinean armed forces in 2000–01 were integrated into the forces and received basic IHL training. The ICRC began preparations to train 4,000 more volunteers. It also initiated IHL information sessions for recruits at the Kissidougou military training centre.

The ICRC continued its dialogue with the authorities to resolve difficulties holding back systematic integration of IHL into military training and started a programme to support IHL instructors in their respective units. It also sponsored a military IHL trainer to attend a course at the International Institute for Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy.

Workshops and information sessions on IHL/human rights law were organized for anti-crime brigades and other police/security forces across the country. Participants expressed a keen interest in continuing to have regular workshops on these topics. During the workshops, organized in cooperation with the government's Human Rights and IHL Bureau, the ICRC gave presentations on its mandate and activities. Elsewhere, the National Police School included IHL/human rights law training in an eight-month refresher course for about 350 police officers.

- 2 train-the-trainer courses held for army officers in Kissidougou
- IHL sessions held for more than 700 officers, non-commissioned officers, army volunteers and *gendarmes*
- IHL sessions held for 350 demobilized fighters in Kissidougou
- 450 members of police and security forces briefed on IHL/human rights law

CIVIL SOCIETY

A play put on by the ICRC depicting Red Cross activities, notably tracing, continued to enjoy great success throughout the country and was watched by hundreds of people. The performances were widely covered by

radio in two local languages and French. Other events which elicited media interest were: an itinerant exhibition comprising 31 photographs portraying major ICRC activities in Guinea; the inauguration of 30 water points in Guinée Forestière; and workshops on IHL and human rights law organized for the armed and police forces.

In the Nzérékoré region, the ICRC used its water projects as a forum for information sessions on its mandate and activities, the Fundamental Principles and IHL. The sessions, organized in villages benefiting from recently installed water points, reached hundreds of people, including local military personnel, civil society and traditional leaders and young people. During a workshop organized by the Bishop of Nzérékoré for 137 Catholic youth representatives, the ICRC gave presentations on its mandate and activities, and the red cross emblem.

Through presentations on its specific mandate and role in the country, the ICRC maintained contacts with local non-governmental organizations, notably the Mano River Women's Peace Network, youth groups and former army volunteers, and established contacts with religious leaders.

During meetings aimed at facilitating coordination between international organizations working in similar fields, the ICRC presented its activities and working methods.

The ICRC gave a presentation for students of the University of Conakry on Red Cross relief for refugees and displaced people, and renewed ties with two universities with a view to reviving IHL studies there.

- 2 IHL libraries set up in 2 universities and IHL documentation donated to 1 university
- information sessions on IHL and the ICRC's mandate and activities conducted for 26 students of the Balandou College in Kankan

NATIONAL SOCIETY

Helping civilians restore family links

Through training and other assistance, the ICRC continued to support the tracing activities carried out regionally, nationally and locally by the Red Cross Society of Guinea. In late 2004 the ICRC and the National Society assessed their joint tracing and RCM activities with the aim of improving the service and management methods.

- ▶ 400 Red Cross tracing staff and volunteers trained/retrained in tracing techniques
- ▶ a meeting on the RCM service held for 80 presidents and heads of tracing units in 7 localities
- ▶ office equipment and bicycles provided for 42 local Red Cross committees for use in national and regional tracing activities

Assistance programmes

The ICRC and the Guinean Red Cross began to revise the National Society's contingency plan to determine whether it was still feasible to deploy 21 emergency-response teams in areas at risk of violence.

To strengthen the National Society's emergency-response capacities, the ICRC conducted first-aid training for 136 volunteers in conflict-prone border regions and areas at risk of industrial accidents. Meanwhile, the National Society organized first-aid courses for managerial staff at the Shell oil company and a conference on the same topic for 60 staff of Guinea's telecommunications company. The courses generated income for local committees to fund various projects, such as the construction of their headquarters, for which the ICRC also extended financial and technical support. To promote similar partnerships with the private sector, the National Society maintained contacts with companies interested in offering first-aid courses to their staff.

The ICRC trained 30 Red Cross volunteers to carry out the hygiene-education component of the ICRC's water and sanitation programme. The aim was to raise the local population's awareness of the proper use and maintenance of newly built water-supply and sanitation facilities.

- ▶ first-aid training conducted for 26 new Red Cross trainers and 270 volunteers
- ▶ a first-aid competition organized for 150 first-aid workers
- ▶ 6 Red Cross emergency-response units assessed
- ▶ 463 people repatriated from Angola given shelter by the Guinean Red Cross
- ▶ 10 VHF radios and a Land Cruiser donated to the National Society
- ▶ local Red Cross branches supported in creating committees on rural water-management and hygiene

Promoting IHL and the Fundamental Principles

To support the Red Cross school project, the ICRC trained teachers and lecturers

from schools and teacher-training colleges. The training focused on the Red Cross, its activities, Fundamental Principles and IHL. Elsewhere, activities to mark World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day (8 May) included awareness sessions on HIV/AIDS and a play on the work of the ICRC.

The Red Cross Society of Guinea held a series of sessions to promote IHL and Red Cross activities. The participants included political and local leaders, who commended the ICRC for the assistance it had provided in 2000–01 to people displaced by rebel attacks in Guéckédou and its environs.

- ▶ 52 new heads of district information/dissemination departments trained
- ▶ 200 primary- and secondary-school teachers trained
- ▶ 1,000 copies of the National Society's newsletter produced
- ▶ a writing course conducted for 10 members of the newsletter's editorial board

Round-tables, initiated by the ICRC as a means of revitalizing local Red Cross committees, enhanced relations between the committees and the National Society's headquarters. Three branches received land from their local authorities for the construction of their headquarters, for which the branches also contributed substantial quantities of building materials (sand, bricks, etc.).

During a training seminar for new heads of district information/dissemination departments, the Red Cross Society of Guinea devoted half a day to the importance of dissemination in fundraising for the National Society and for each of its committee's activities.