



✦ ICRC mission ✦ ICRC office

iran, islamic republic of

The ICRC has been in the Islamic Republic of Iran, with some interruptions, since 1977. It continues work to clarify the fate of POWs registered during the 1980–88 Iran-Iraq war or identified through RCMs. It works to strengthen its partnership with the Iranian Red Crescent Society, particularly in the fields of tracing, the promotion of IHL, the implementation of the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme and mine-risk education. The Iranian committee for the implementation of IHL is an important partner in this process. The ICRC maintains two logistical supply bases in the Islamic Republic of Iran in support of ICRC operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	1,102
Assistance	-
Prevention	1,228
Cooperation with National Societies	266
General	-2

► **2,594**

of which: *Overheads* 158

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	83%
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PERSONNEL

5 expatriates
36 national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2006, the ICRC:

- ▶ worked with the Iranian authorities in the framework of a joint mechanism to clarify the fate of former POWs still unaccounted for in connection with the Iran-Iraq war; assessed forensic needs to enable thousands of human remains from the same conflict to be identified;
- ▶ organized the voluntary repatriation of Iranian nationals, including people released from detention/internment in Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba, and Iraq;
- ▶ held a conference for prominent Islamic scholars from the Islamic Republic of Iran and the region on the protection of war victims under Islamic law and IHL;
- ▶ supported the Iranian IHL committee in its work to promote the integration of IHL and its basic principles into national legislation, academic curricula and the teaching and training programmes of the Iranian armed forces;
- ▶ further consolidated its partnership with the Iranian Red Crescent Society, particularly in relation to Movement coordination, tracing missing persons, restoring family links and mine-risk education;
- ▶ increased logistical support capacity in the Islamic Republic of Iran for ICRC operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

CONTEXT

Political debate was dominated mainly by the Islamic Republic of Iran's standoff with the international community over its nuclear programme, with Tehran re-emphasizing that it was being developed for civilian purposes only. In December, the UN Security Council imposed sanctions on the country's trade in nuclear materials and technology after it failed to respect a 31 August 2006 deadline set by the Council to suspend uranium enrichment. The Iranian government condemned the resolution and vowed to continue uranium enrichment.

Nationwide elections for local councils were held in December in which former Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani polled the most votes in Tehran to win re-election to a key assembly post.

The year was marked by further violence in the south-eastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan where a number of policemen, soldiers and civilians were reportedly killed or kidnapped by armed groups. In further unrest, at least 8 people were reportedly killed and 46 injured when two bombs exploded in the western province of Khuzestan.

UNHCR continued to work on the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees in the framework of a tripartite agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan, although the number of Afghan returnees declined considerably in 2006, owing in part to the poor security situation in Afghanistan.

The Islamic Republic of Iran further consolidated relations with neighbouring countries, including Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as with China, India and the Russian Federation. In October, the Islamic Republic of Iran hosted a meeting in Tehran of interior ministers from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to discuss economic, social and security issues in the region.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

RESTORING FAMILY LINKS	
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>	
RCMs collected	213
RCMs distributed	168
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>	
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	43
Tracing requests closed positively (persons located)	10
Tracing requests still being handled at 31 December 2006	120
DOCUMENTS ISSUED	
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	1,713

ICRC ACTION

Addressing the humanitarian consequences of the 1980–88 Iran-Iraq war, promoting the ratification and implementation of IHL, providing support to ICRC operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and enhancing cooperation with the Iranian Red Crescent Society remained the main operational priorities for the ICRC in the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2006.

Working in the framework of a joint mechanism agreed upon in February 2004, the ICRC and the Iranian authorities made marked progress towards resolving cases of POWs unaccounted for in connection with the Iran-Iraq war. Since the mechanism was activated, several hundred such cases have been clarified through research activities carried out by the Iranian authorities and information collected by the ICRC from families both in the Islamic Republic of Iran and in Iraq.

In the same context, the ICRC encouraged the creation of a joint mechanism between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq to address the issue of persons missing from the conflict and offered its services as a neutral intermediary to facilitate the establishment of such a body. A preliminary bilateral meeting between the two countries on this issue was planned to take place under ICRC auspices in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2007.

Former members of the Mojahedin-e Khalq movement were repatriated from Iraq under ICRC auspices, as were a number of other Iranian nationals following their release from places of detention in Afghanistan, Iraq and the US detention facility at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba.

Efforts to promote the implementation of IHL resulted in the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the judicial

authorities to translate into Farsi the ICRC's study on customary international humanitarian law, to hold training workshops for judges, prosecutors, and military tribunal and judiciary administrative staff and to organize a conference in the Islamic Republic of Iran on the International Criminal Court.

The pilot phase of the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme progressed, with some 160 teachers introducing the subject in their classes in four provinces. Dialogue was also pursued with the authorities with the aim of integrating IHL into military instruction and training.

As discussions continued with the Iranian Red Crescent Society to finalize a cooperation agreement on a mine-risk education programme, the ICRC reinforced its partnership with the Iranian Mine Action Centre and the Janbazan Medical Research and Engineering Center. Within this partnership framework, the ICRC planned to support the creation of a mine victim database, help develop a national mine-risk education programme and design a study to assess the situation of survivors of accidents involving mines or other explosive remnants of war in the country.

Storage capacity was expanded at the ICRC office in Kermanshah, in the north-west of the country, for the warehousing of relief supplies dispatched overland to various destinations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

CIVILIANS

Restoring family links

People in the Islamic Republic of Iran and family members detained/interned abroad (Afghanistan, Iraq and Guantanamo Bay in Cuba) were able to restore or maintain links through the ICRC's tracing and RCM services, with the support of the Iranian Red Crescent.

- ▶ 213 RCMs collected from and 168 distributed to people in the Islamic Republic of Iran
- ▶ new tracing requests registered for 43 people; 10 people located; 120 people still being sought
- ▶ 11 former members of the Mojahedin-e Khalq movement repatriated from Iraq in 4 operations under ICRC auspices

Tracing people unaccounted for from the Iran-Iraq war

Acting as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC pursued its consultations with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq with a view to clarifying the fate of Iranians and Iraqis who went missing during the Iran-Iraq war. To this end, the ICRC held several meetings with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Iranian POW commission. Similar discussions were held with the Iraqi authorities. A bilateral meeting between the two parties was planned to take place in Geneva under ICRC auspices in 2007.

From 17 to 20 May, an ICRC forensic expert carried out a preliminary assessment of the technical skills and training needed in the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to identify the remains of some 6,000 Iranians from the Iran-Iraq war already recovered and buried. The Iranian authorities involved in the process of clarifying the fate or identifying the remains of Iranian nationals who died in the Iran-Iraq war and staff of the National Society were provided with a Farsi version of ICRC guidelines on the exhumation and identification of human remains.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Four meetings were held in 2006 with the Iranian authorities in the framework of the joint mechanism to clarify the fate of for-

mer POWs still unaccounted for from the Iran-Iraq war and to keep their families informed of any progress made.

The number of pending cases of Iraqi POWs previously unaccounted for was reduced through ICRC release checks carried out in Iraq and interviews conducted during the issue of detention certificates to former Iraqi POWs. Information provided by the Islamic Republic of Iran also led to a reduction in the number of cases of Iranians previously unaccounted for from the same conflict.

- 1,713 detention certificates issued to former Iraqi POWs or their families

AUTHORITIES

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ICRC pursued dialogue with a view to concluding a headquarters agreement.

A partnership agreement was concluded with the Iranian Committee on Humanitarian Law (ICHL) for the establishment of an IHL reference centre open to the public in general and the academic community in particular. Under the agreement, the ICRC was to furnish the centre with reference documentation on IHL, while the ICHL was to provide the premises and a specialized librarian and to ensure the indexation of all reference material in an accessible database.

The ICHL set up a multidisciplinary research group to assess the compatibility of Iranian legislation with IHL in general and the Geneva Conventions in particular.

In November, the Qom Institute of Theology, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Iranian Red Crescent and other prominent local partners, in conjunction with the ICRC, organized a regional conference on the protection of victims of armed conflict under Islamic law and IHL.

Contact was maintained with the Tehran-based secretariat of the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Conference (PUOICM) to discuss future projects to raise awareness of IHL among its member States, and a standard IHL library was donated to the organization. The PUOICM requested ICRC assistance in preparing model IHL implementing legislation for inclusion in draft resolutions discussed at a PUOICM summit held in Istanbul, Turkey, in April.

An agreement was concluded with the International Bureau of the Iranian Judiciary aimed at promoting the teaching of IHL among judges and judiciary administrative staff. IHL workshops were planned for 2007, while work started on the translation into Farsi of the ICRC's study on customary international humanitarian law.

- 3 Iranian judges participated in the 9th South-East Asian Teaching Session on IHL and Refugee Law held in New Delhi, India (see *New Delhi*)

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Dialogue was pursued with members of the Iranian armed and security forces on the integration of IHL into military doctrine, operational procedures and theoretical and practical training programmes.

The Ministry of Defence and members of the armed forces requested and were provided with IHL training manuals which were to be translated into Farsi by the ICHL.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The faculty of law and political science of Tehran University concluded an agreement with the ICRC to conduct research on the provisions of IHL and Islamic law regarding the participation of children in armed conflicts.

- 50 Iranian journalists attended information sessions on mine-risk education and IHL and 1 Iranian journalist attended an ICRC regional seminar on IHL in Casablanca, Morocco (see *Tunis*)
- ICRC documentaries on IHL-related issues and ICRC activities worldwide dubbed into Farsi and broadcast on Iranian TV channels
- photo exhibition featuring Iranian Red Crescent/ICRC activities during the Iran-Iraq war shown in 5 provinces
- 14 Iranian NGOs and charity organizations attended an ICRC seminar on IHL in Tehran
- the pilot phase of the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme launched in 4 provinces and 16 master instructors selected to train 160 teachers in the programme after attending a refresher course

- 2 law students attended the 8th South-East Asian Teaching Session on IHL and Refugee Law in Bangalore, India, and 3 students and their professor participated in an international IHL moot court competition organized in New Delhi (see *New Delhi*)
- 2 universities in Tehran started developing PhD courses in IHL

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Iranian Red Crescent Society and the ICRC further consolidated their partnership, particularly in relation to Movement coordination, tracing missing persons, restoring family links and mine-risk education.

Further training in tracing strengthened the National Society's capacity to enable Iranians and Afghan and Iraqi refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran to restore contact with family members detained/interned abroad, or dispersed following natural disasters.

Cooperation was reinforced with the Iranian Mine Action Centre and the Iranian Red Crescent on mine action programmes and the development of a mine victim database.

- 39 participants from 27 Red Crescent branches and headquarters attended a workshop on tracing organized by the Iranian Red Crescent and the ICRC
- 19 Red Crescent relief and rescue staff from 9 Tehran sub-branches attended a session on tracing and the proper management of human remains organized by the ICRC
- 50,000 leaflets on mine risks produced by the Iranian Red Crescent and the ICRC in Dari and Pashto distributed during mine-risk education sessions organized by the Red Crescent branch in Khorasan for Afghan refugees returning home
- 120,000 copies of three different leaflets containing mine-risk messages in Farsi provided to the Iranian Red Crescent

Iranian Red Crescent mine-action programme managers attended an ICRC session in Amman, Jordan to learn about ICRC-supported programmes in Iraq and Jordan and to discuss current and future activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran.