

# IRAN, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF



ICRC mission + ICRC office

## EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	1,119
Assistance	-
Prevention	1,971
Cooperation with National Societies	487
General	-

► **3,578**

of which: Overheads 218

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	94%
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## PERSONNEL

Expatriates	7
National staff (daily workers not included)	40

## KEY POINTS

### In 2012, the ICRC:

- chaired the meetings of the tripartite committees tasked with clarifying the fate of POWs and of people missing since the 1980–88 Iran-Iraq War, while facilitating 5 joint missions to exhume 527 sets of human remains
- helped strengthen Iranian forensic capacities through training support and the installation of ante/post-mortem data management software for the organizations involved in the identification of recovered remains
- with the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran, promoted IHL by supporting the production of related material and by co-organizing dedicated events, including the 20th South Asia Teaching Session on IHL
- signed a partnership agreement with the National Society on strengthening joint action in physical rehabilitation, addressing weapon contamination, IHL promotion, family-links services and the Health Care in Danger project

The ICRC has been in the Islamic Republic of Iran, with some interruptions, since 1977. It seeks to clarify the fate of POWs registered during the Iran-Iraq war or identified through RCMs. It works in partnership with the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the fields of tracing, physical rehabilitation, international relief efforts and IHL promotion, for which the national IHL committee is also an important partner. It is engaged in a dialogue about IHL and Islam. The ICRC supports mine-risk education.

## CONTEXT

While talks on the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear programme resumed in May 2012, with all parties signifying their interest in reaching an understanding, the negotiations produced no breakthrough. Alleged cyber-attacks were carried out against Iranian nuclear and oil facilities. Despite these, top International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors who visited the country in December were optimistic about resolving the issue.

In addition to tensions over its nuclear ambitions, the Islamic Republic of Iran's relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member States deteriorated further over the country's position on the violence in Bahrain and the armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Unprecedented financial sanctions imposed by Western countries took their toll on the economy, hampering imports of goods and causing a drop in living standards. These difficulties were a factor in the pre-election discourse on increased dialogue with the United States of America.

In August, Tehran hosted the 16th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), bringing together leaders of 120 countries, at which the Islamic Republic of Iran took over as chair of the movement for the period 2012–15.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

In 2012, the ICRC in the Islamic Republic of Iran continued to focus on: addressing the humanitarian consequences of the 1980–88 Iran-Iraq war, particularly regarding persons unaccounted for in relation to that conflict; strengthening its cooperation with the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran; restoring family links; and promoting IHL and acceptance of neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action.

During the year, the remains of hundreds of Iranian and Iraqi soldiers were recovered and, when appropriate, repatriated following excavation missions. The ICRC contributed to this process by acting as a neutral intermediary between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq and by chairing tripartite committee meetings, in line with agreements signed by the two countries. It also provided organizations involved in identification efforts with training support and ante/post-mortem data management software.

Cooperation with the Iranian Mine Action Centre (IRMAC) and the National Society helped raise awareness of the risks of weapon contamination and the safe behaviour people should

Main figures and indicators	PROTECTION	Total		
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>				
RCMs collected		310	UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs distributed		95		
Phone calls facilitated between family members		3		
<b>Reunifications, transfers and repatriations</b>				
Human remains transferred/repatriated		53		
<b>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons<sup>1</sup></b>				
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		175	Women	Minors
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		52		
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>		1		
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		282	51	99
<b>UAMs/SCs*, including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers</b>				
UAMs/SCs newly registered by the ICRC/National Society		5	Girls	Demobilized children
UAM/SC cases still being handled by the ICRC/National Society at the end of the reporting period		5	2	
<b>Documents</b>				
Official documents relayed between family members across borders/front lines		11		
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>				
<b>Restoring family links</b>				
RCMs collected		41		
RCMs distributed		66		
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		671		

\* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

1. not including people missing as a consequence of the 1980–88 Iran-Iraq war

adopt to minimize those risks. The ICRC supported several mine-risk awareness sessions and train-the-trainer courses in the most affected provinces bordering Afghanistan and Iraq.

National Society/ICRC-run tracing and RCM services enabled Iranian families, Afghan detainees and Afghan and Iraqi refugees to restore and/or maintain contact with relatives abroad.

The Iranian Red Crescent, the national IHL committee and the ICRC co-organized IHL-promotion events to build mutual understanding among different stakeholders, particularly from religious and academic circles. Events included round-tables organized by the national IHL committee, at which Iranian officials from various institutions reviewed the level of integration of IHL into national legislation. The 20th South Asia Teaching Session (SATS) held on Kish Island brought together officials from across the region to discuss IHL-related concerns. The National Society, the national IHL committee and the ICRC jointly helped the Centre for Comparative Studies on Islam and IHL in Qom (hereafter the Qom Centre) conduct its activities. They also encouraged and supported studies on the compatibility of Islam and IHL and the production of material related to the Health Care in Danger project. The Ministry of Education agreed to begin integrating the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme into the national curriculum and finalized an agreement to start adapting the content of several textbooks accordingly.

The National Society and the ICRC signed a broad partnership framework agreement, further strengthening cooperation in the fields of physical rehabilitation, addressing weapon contamination, promoting IHL and humanitarian values, restoring family links, and the Health Care in Danger project. They also renewed a specific agreement on physical rehabilitation.

## CIVILIANS

The Iranian and Iraqi governments continued implementing the joint memoranda of understanding that they signed in 2004 and 2008, which had the ICRC acting as a neutral intermediary and

chairing the two tripartite committees created by the agreements. In July, the authorities concerned agreed to merge the two committees into one which would cover both the cases of former and presumed POWs still unaccounted for and the cases of persons missing or killed in combat, issues previously tackled by separate committees.

Following five joint excavations in the Al-Fao Peninsula and the Majnoon oil fields in Iraq, 527 sets of human remains were recovered. In parallel, 201 sets of remains were repatriated to the Islamic Republic of Iran through the efforts of both States and under the auspices of the ICRC, while 53 sets of remains exhumed in the Islamic Republic of Iran were handed over to the Iraqi authorities. Based on their experiences during the recovery process and over the course of four technical meetings chaired by the ICRC, the Iranian and Iraqi authorities agreed to begin exchanging technical information. To help them implement formal working procedures, they also received reports detailing the observations and proposals of ICRC forensic experts who were present as technical advisers during joint excavations.

Institutions involved in identifying recovered remains continued to draw on ICRC support to improve their services. Training courses on forensic anthropology and DNA analysis for the Legal Medical Organization and the Kowsar Genetic Institute, as well as the installation of the ICRC's ante/post-mortem data management software, helped these organizations streamline procedures and manage data efficiently. The Islamic Countries Organization of Forensic Medicine featured an article in its journal about the ICRC's forensic activities.

Within the framework of a joint mechanism agreed on by the Iranian authorities and the ICRC in 2004, Iranian officials received an updated list of Iraqi POWs still unaccounted for. Meanwhile, 671 former Iraqi POWs received attestations of detention enabling them to claim State allowances.

An agreement was concluded with the Janbazan Medical and Engineering Research Centre for it to conduct an assessment of

the needs of the families of soldiers missing since the Iran-Iraq war, but the assessment was put on hold pending the authorities' final approval of the initiative.

### **Separated family members restore and maintain contact**

Families re-established and/or maintained contact with relatives detained in Afghanistan, Iraq or the US internment facility at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba (see *Afghanistan, Iraq and Washington*) through tracing and RCM services run jointly by the Iranian Red Crescent and the ICRC. Afghan and Iraqi refugees, including children, and Afghan nationals detained in the Islamic Republic of Iran, also benefited from these services. Tracing work carried out at the families' request helped clarify the cases of 14 out of 16 individuals allegedly held by Syrian armed groups and subsequently released.

Six Iranian nationals, who were former members of the People's Mujahedin of Iran, were voluntarily repatriated from Camp Liberty in Iraq, during operations facilitated by the ICRC. Once back in the country, they were given the option of receiving periodic follow-up visits from a local returnees' organization. They could also choose to participate in an assessment of their psychological and social needs, conducted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence and supported by the ICRC with the goal of engaging with the authorities concerned in discussions on meeting the returnees' specific needs and facilitating their social reintegration.

To help improve the coordination of Movement family-links services for migrants in the region, the National Society and the ICRC continued preparing for an international conference, which was initially scheduled to take place in 2012 but was postponed to 2013.

### **Affected communities cope with the consequences of weapon contamination**

In line with a partnership agreement concluded between IRMAC and the ICRC in 2011, efforts to protect civilians from the risks of weapon contamination through cooperation with and support to IRMAC and the National Society continued. Following consultations with the ICRC and the Iranian Red Crescent, IRMAC began discussions with the Ministry of Interior to design a plan of action aimed at better meeting the needs of civilian landmine victims.

Following training and technical advice received in 2011, the National Society, with the participation of IRMAC, organized a trainers' workshop in Ahwaz to ensure that five western provinces bordering Iraq and two eastern provinces, which a large number of Afghan refugees transit through, had volunteers capable of raising awareness of the risks of mines and of the requisite safe behaviour. National Society volunteers responsible for mine-risk education attended a similar course organized by the Kurdistan provincial branch. As a result of these sessions, some 90,000 Afghan returnees and over 75,000 civilians reduced their vulnerability to the effects of weapon contamination. Complementing these efforts, five animated productions broadcast on local TV channels conveyed the importance of adopting safe behaviour to a wider audience.

To help it conduct clearance activities, IRMAC received 70 medical kits from the ICRC.

On the International Day of Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, IRMAC hosted an international conference to increase understanding of the issue of weapon contamination. The conference, at which the ICRC delivered presentations on

weapon-related treaties and the challenges of implementing them and on assistance to victims, was the first of its kind in Tehran.

### **AUTHORITIES**

Progress was made in formalizing the ICRC's legal status in the country, with Iranian officials announcing their intention to facilitate the organization's local activities and affirming their support for its regional ones. Its participation in high-level events, including the 16th NAM Summit to which the ICRC president was invited by the Iranian minister of foreign affairs, helped the ICRC strengthen relations with Iranian and other authorities.

Local and regional events promoting IHL were organized in cooperation with the national IHL committee, the National Society and other institutions, such as the NAM Centre for Human Rights and Cultural Diversity, within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Qom Centre. Notably, high-level government representatives and experts discussed IHL and its incorporation into national legislation at two round-tables and learnt more about human rights at an international conference co-organized by the national IHL committee and the NAM Centre. To highlight the compatibility of Islam and IHL, the Qom Centre organized several dedicated events, including a regional conference during which Islamic scholars and students from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Pakistan exchanged views on Islam and IHL. It also contributed input during related activities on the provisions of Islamic law mandating the protection of medical facilities and the wounded and sick (see *Civil society*).

During the 20th SATS, held on Kish Island and co-organized with the National Society and the International Campus of Tehran University, representatives of the Ministry of Defence and experts from 10 other countries deepened their understanding of IHL, humanitarian issues and Movement action.

### **ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS**

Although direct contact with the Iranian armed forces remained limited, high-level representatives of the Ministry of Defence and the ICRC discussed possible ways to enhance bilateral contacts. Moreover, dialogue was maintained with the officers responsible for the recovery of the remains of soldiers killed during the 1980–88 Iran-Iraq war (see *Civilians*).

Officers learnt more about IHL during a round-table led by the national IHL committee and at the 20th SATS (see *Authorities*).

### **CIVIL SOCIETY**

Activities with religious and community leaders, academics, media representatives and other influential members of civil society increased public awareness of and support for IHL and the ICRC's activities, including those addressing issues covered by the Health Care in Danger project. These events included those organized with the National Society and the national IHL committee (see *Authorities*).

University students and lecturers attended IHL presentations delivered by the ICRC, while some students took part in local and regional moot court competitions (see *Bangladesh, Beijing and Pretoria*), IHL simulation sessions and other events within the country and abroad. Scholars and institutions conducted research and produced publications on IHL, highlighting its compatibility with Islam. Two books, including one on the protection of children during hostilities, were published in cooperation with Tehran University.

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The Ministry of Education approved a revision of the national curriculum to incorporate the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme; following meetings of the ICRC and the working group tasked with monitoring implementation of the programme, an agreement was finalized to adapt related modules and integrate them into selected textbooks. To aid this process, National Society and ministry representatives attended a regional seminar (see *Jakarta*) and participated in an expert round-table and an international conference in Tabriz on the benefits and challenges of integrating IHL and human rights concerns into the education curriculum.

Documents on the issues encompassed by the Health Care in Danger project and related promotional material were made available in Persian; and two representatives of the Iranian Medical Council attended a workshop on developing measures to protect the delivery of health care services (see *Egypt*).

Local media regularly reported on ICRC activities in the region and worldwide, highlighting the organization's neutral and humanitarian nature.

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

The Iranian Red Crescent and the ICRC signed a five-year partnership framework agreement, reinforcing cooperation in the fields of physical rehabilitation, addressing weapon contamination, promoting IHL and humanitarian values, restoring family links, and the Health Care in Danger project. Similarly, the two organizations renewed a specific physical rehabilitation agreement. Results of this collaboration included the co-organization of a regional workshop on making orthopaedic shoes (see *Ethiopia*) and a training course on new patient-management software. Preparations were ongoing for an international workshop in 2013 on National Societies' responses to health care insecurity.

National Society representatives benefited from learning opportunities on topics such as the responsibilities of the different Movement components, the handling of health emergencies, and nuclear, radioactive, biological and chemical risks. With Movement partners, the National Society held an International Mobilization and Preparedness for Action (IMPACT) course for personnel involved in its local and regional health, rehabilitation, relief and rescue operations.