



# israel, the occupied and autonomous territories

The ICRC has been present in Israel and the occupied territories and the autonomous territories since the 1967 Arab–Israeli war. It strives to ensure respect for IHL, in particular its provisions relative to the protection of civilians living under occupation. It monitors the treatment and living conditions of detainees held by the Israeli and Palestinian authorities and provides assistance to the Palestinian population. As the lead agency for the Movement in this context, the ICRC coordinates the work of its Movement partners and supports the activities of the Palestine Red Crescent Society and the Magen David Adom.

## EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	<b>16,280</b>
Assistance	<b>23,358</b>
Prevention	<b>2,739</b>
Cooperation with National Societies	<b>7,156</b>
General	-
	<b>► 49,533</b>
	<i>of which: Overheads 2,974</i>

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	<b>94%</b>
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## PERSONNEL

<b>68</b> expatriates
<b>202</b> national staff (daily workers not included)

## KEY POINTS

### In 2006, the ICRC:

- ▶ actively sought compliance by Israel with its obligations under IHL towards the Palestinian population living under its occupation and intensified oral representations to Palestinian groups and to Palestinian security forces regarding respect for civilians and the medical mission;
- ▶ followed up 20,061 Palestinian detainees held in Israel and 1,837 detained by the Palestinian authorities to assess their treatment and living conditions and enabled around 17,000 family members to visit relatives detained in Israel each month;
- ▶ stepped up support to Palestinian medical facilities affected by the financial crisis and mobility restrictions and provided monthly food parcels to 11,545 Palestinians in Hebron's Old City and regular or ad hoc food aid to 18,138 others in the West Bank and Gaza Strip;
- ▶ implemented cash-for-work and livelihood-support projects in impoverished Palestinian communities, rehabilitated or established Palestinian water and sanitation infrastructure and ensured minimum water supply in the Gaza Strip during Israeli military operations there;
- ▶ supported implementation of an agreement between the Magen David Adom and the Palestine Red Crescent Society aimed at enhancing operational cooperation;
- ▶ liaised with the Israel Defense Force to obtain safe access to the wounded and stranded civilians in Southern Lebanon and made representations to the Israeli authorities regarding the conduct of hostilities there.

## CONTEXT

The year 2006 was a turbulent one in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, heralded by fundamental changes in the political landscape on both sides.

Israel responded to the Hamas election by severing all relations with the Palestinian Authority and halting the transfer of monthly revenues and taxes collected on the Palestinians' behalf. Similarly, major Western donors froze aid to the Palestinian Authority on the grounds that it refused to recognize Israel's right to exist, renounce violence and honour previous agreements. As a result, the Palestinian Authority – the largest single employer in the occupied territories and the main provider of public services – was on the verge of bankruptcy and unable to provide essential services to the Palestinian population, notably in the health, water and sanitation sectors.

Over the following months, the non-payment of public sector salaries, a prolonged strike by health workers and the temporary closure of schools caused the Palestinian population even greater hardship. Tighter mobility restrictions imposed by Israel, continued construction of the West Bank barrier, land confiscation, house demolitions and the effects of military operations further exacerbated the situation.

The capture of Israeli soldiers, one by Palestinian militants operating from the Gaza Strip on 24 June and two by the Lebanon-based Hezbollah group on 12 July, plunged the region into the worst crisis in years, triggering large-scale Israeli military offensives in the Gaza Strip and in Lebanon. A UN-brokered ceasefire ended hostilities between Israeli and Hezbollah forces on 14 August. Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip, including its first ground incursions there since disengagement in August 2005, continued for much of the second half of 2006, as did frequent rocket attacks fired into Israel by Palestinian militants.

Five months of on-off negotiations between Hamas and Fatah on the formation of a unity government collapsed in early December leading to serious factional fighting between Palestinian groups.

## MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM		
Detainees visited <sup>1</sup>	21,898	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>		
Detainees visited and monitored individually	9,309	Food	Beneficiaries	29,683
Number of visits carried out	601	Essential household items	Beneficiaries	24,506
Number of places of detention visited	96	Agricultural inputs and micro-economic initiatives	Beneficiaries	10,536
<b>RESTORING FAMILY LINKS</b>		Water supply schemes and sanitation systems (completed projects)		
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>		Beneficiaries		
RCMs collected	12,928	1,135,700		
RCMs distributed	12,240	<b>WOUNDED AND SICK <sup>2</sup></b>		
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>				
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	10			
Tracing requests closed positively (persons located)	6			
Tracing requests still being handled at 31 December 2006	19			
<b>DOCUMENTS ISSUED</b>				
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	16,633			

1. All detainees known through the authorities' notifications and followed up by the ICRC

2. Financial and material support was provided to the Magen David Adom for its emergency medical service and blood transfusion service. Financial and material assistance was provided to the Palestine Red Crescent Society in support of primary health care centres, the central medical store, emergency medical technicians and the ambulance fleet consisting of 80 well-maintained and equipped ambulances. (See *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*.)

## ICRC ACTION

The ICRC continued actively to seek compliance by Israel with its obligations under IHL towards the Palestinian population living under its occupation and publicly expressed its concern at the marked worsening of the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories and the concurrent increase in violence affecting civilians both in Israel and in the territories. It renewed calls on Israel to ensure that the basic needs of the civilian population in the occupied territories were met, reminding it that, while humanitarian agencies could alleviate some of the effects resulting from the suspension of funds to the Palestinian Authority, they could not and should not replace the latter in providing services to the population.

Protection and assistance activities were stepped up in response to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, and a budget extension appeal was launched on 12 June to cover new or expanded programmes.

The Palestinian health sector received substantially increased ICRC aid to help it to continue operating despite reduced funding from the cash-strapped Palestinian Authority, a prolonged strike by health workers and more stringent mobility restrictions imposed by Israel. Ambulance movements were facilitated to evacuate the wounded during hostilities or to transfer patients between the West Bank and Jordan.

Planned and ad hoc emergency food aid was provided to thousands of utterly destitute

Palestinians, and several livelihood-support and cash-for-work projects were implemented in impoverished Palestinian communities for whom restrictions on movement had severely impeded access to their land. ICRC household kits were issued to Palestinians whose homes had been levelled or confiscated to clear land for the construction of the West Bank barrier or for settlement expansion or because they had been built without construction permits.

The ICRC worked with the Palestinian water authority to rehabilitate or establish water and sanitation infrastructure in poorly served communities and responded to water shortages during Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip.

The treatment and living conditions of 20,061 people detained by Israel and 1,837 detainees held by the Palestinian Authority were closely monitored, and more than 17,000 Palestinians were able each month to visit relatives detained by the Israeli authorities. Particularly vulnerable detainees were given ad hoc assistance.

During the war in Lebanon, the ICRC liaised extensively with the Israel Defense Force (IDF) to ensure access to the victims of the hostilities in the south of the country, and representations were made to the Israeli authorities regarding the conduct of the hostilities.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society and the Magen David Adom received substantial support to strengthen their capacities to deliver humanitarian services. The ICRC also proactively promoted implementation

of the cooperation agreement concluded between the two National Societies in November 2005.

Persistent efforts were made to gain access to the three Israeli soldiers captured in June and July 2006, and contact was maintained with their families. Work also continued with the aim of clarifying the fate of people unaccounted for or missing in action from previous conflicts in the region.

The ICRC remained committed to pursuing the construction of an emergency medical clinic in the occupied Golan. Efforts were made to ensure full support for the project by all parties concerned and to provide them with any necessary clarifications.

## CIVILIANS

### Protecting the civilian population living under occupation

The ICRC repeatedly expressed its concern at the marked worsening of the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories and the concurrent increase in violence affecting civilians in both Israel and the territories.

Numerous ICRC representations were made to the Israeli authorities concerning the humanitarian consequences of the more stringent restrictions of movement, settlement expansion and settler violence, the conduct of military operations, house demolitions, land confiscation and the West Bank barrier.

Ensuring access by Palestinian farmers to their land located on the Israeli side of the

barrier was a particular concern, especially during the olive harvest season so crucial to their livelihoods.

- 66 written and 1,085 oral representations made to the Israeli authorities

Dialogue was intensified with the Palestinian authorities and Palestinian militant groups with whom the ICRC raised its concerns regarding the protection of the civilian population, both Israelis and Palestinians, and the impact on civilians of increased intra-Palestinian violence and non-respect for the medical mission.

- 39 oral representations made to Palestinian militant groups or to the Palestinian security services regarding 149 alleged violations of customary IHL and basic human rights standards

#### Access to safe water

In close cooperation with the Palestinian water authority, the ICRC initiated or completed several projects to construct or rehabilitate water and sanitation infrastructure in poorly served West Bank communities.

A total of 1,135,700 people benefited from completed water projects:

- 67,700 people benefited from completed water supply projects, including: the rehabilitation of pumping stations (e.g. in Falamia for 700 people), the construction of a booster station and distribution network (e.g. in Kufr Tulth for 5,000 people) and equipment for a pumping station (e.g. in Tammoun for 20,000 people)
- 3 water trucks provided to communities (68,000 people) not connected to water networks
- emergency aid of 120,000 litres of fuel provided to the water board in Gaza to run 150 pumping stations serving 1 million people, and 14 generators plus generator fuel, spare parts and tools provided to increase its capacity to respond to needs arising from Israeli military operations in Gaza from late June onwards

An additional 41,750 people were benefiting from ongoing projects, e.g. in Kufr Al-Labad, Qualquilia and Taquoa.

#### Economic security

ICRC assessments showed a significant increase in poverty, exacerbated by the

almost total non-payment of public sector salaries by the Palestinian Authority from March onwards.

The Karni crossing point, the main passage for goods into and out of the Gaza Strip, was partially or totally closed for 47% of the year, resulting in shortages of basic goods and sharp increases in prices of staple products.

- 10,536 Palestinians benefited from agricultural inputs and livelihood-support initiatives in impoverished West Bank and Gaza City communities; this included 39,490 man-days paid to 4,626 daily workers engaged in cash-for-work projects and 5,910 people benefiting from livelihood-support initiatives
- 29,683 Palestinians (4,810 households) received regular or ad hoc food aid, including 11,545 individuals (1,921 households) affected by closures in Hebron Old City who received monthly food parcels
- 24,506 Palestinians (3,984 households) received household relief kits, including 5,519 Palestinians (855 households) whose homes had been destroyed by Israeli forces and 10,862 Palestinians (1,808 households) affected by closures in Hebron Old City who received hygiene kits

#### Restoring family links

Travel to the Syrian Arab Republic for Syrian nationals living in the occupied Golan remained subject to Israeli restrictions, and tightened mobility restrictions made travel extremely difficult for Palestinians wishing to visit or be reunited with family members living in other parts of the occupied territories.

In one exceptional case, after 10 years of effort, the ICRC reunited three orphaned minors from Jordan with their grandmother in Nablus. The ICRC also succeeded in reuniting a 14-year-old girl from an orphanage in the West Bank with her mother in Jordan after eight years of separation.

- 899 Druze students and clerics from the occupied Golan travelled under ICRC auspices between the occupied Golan and Damascus for study or religious purposes
- 4,153 RCMs collected from and 3,995 distributed to civilians, including families in the occupied Golan and Lebanese nationals in Israel

- new tracing requests registered for 10 people (4 females), including cases related to the capture of 3 Israeli soldiers – 1 by Gaza militants and 2 by Hezbollah; 6 people located; 19 people (5 females) still being sought
- 100 official documents relayed between family members in the occupied Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic and between Lebanese nationals in Israel and their families in Lebanon

#### Clarifying the fate of the missing

Families of Palestinian militants believed to have died in Israel or during military operations continued to approach the ICRC for help in determining the fate of their loved ones. Unfortunately, only very few requests for information on missing individuals received a response from the Israeli authorities over the year, despite official ICRC representations made at the highest levels to address this issue.

- the remains of 3 Palestinian militants wounded in IDF operations and who later died in hospital repatriated to the West Bank, facilitated by the ICRC

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

### Israel

The ICRC continued to carry out visits to people held in interrogation centres, provisional detention centres, prisons and police stations to assess detainee treatment, living conditions and medical care and to enable them to restore or maintain contact with their families.

Lebanese nationals known to be detained by the Israeli authorities in connection with the war in Lebanon were visited by the ICRC until access was suspended at the end of September. The ICRC continued to press for renewed access and engaged in a constructive dialogue with the Israeli authorities on this issue.

Recommendations for corrective action, based on the observations of ICRC delegates during visits, were conveyed to the Israeli detaining authorities whenever necessary.

- 20,061 Palestinian detainees visited, 8,826 of them monitored individually (152 females, 782 minors), including 5,891 newly registered (63 females, 694 minors), during 411 visits to 41 Israeli detention centres; 4 Lebanese detainees captured during the conflict in Lebanon visited before access was suspended

- ▶ 8,627 RCMs collected from and 8,204 distributed to Palestinian detainees and 3,303 phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative
- ▶ around 17,000 family members visited an average of 6,900 relatives detained in Israel each month by means of some 4,800 bus trips organized by the ICRC to and from 23 Israeli prisons; in total 8,313 detainees received family visits
- ▶ around 64,000 official documents forwarded to Palestinian detainees or their families, including some 3,000 power of attorney documents
- ▶ destitute detainees received regular allowances of 100 Shekels (approximately USD 22); sets of clothes, medical items, books, newspapers, magazines and recreational materials provided to inmates of detention centres
- ▶ 16,468 detention certificates issued to former detainees or their families

#### **Palestinian Authority**

The ICRC kept up visits to detainees held by the Palestinian Authority. Representations regarding respect for judicial guarantees were regularly made to different levels of the judiciary.

An information day for donors at a Palestinian prison was organized by the ICRC in Ramallah. Members of the Judicial Reform Support Group (an international forum on the reform of the judicial sector) had an opportunity to see how a Palestinian prison functioned and the difficulties it faced.

Military medical personnel working in detention centres attended a seminar on medical ethics, and more than 80 senior prison staff from the Gaza Strip and West Bank attended workshops on the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

Following IDF incursions targeting prisons in Jericho and Nablus, the ICRC distributed emergency assistance to some 150 detainees and entirely rebuilt the family visiting room in Nablus prison destroyed during military operations.

- ▶ 1,837 Palestinian detainees visited, 483 of them monitored individually (12 females, 40 minors), including 220 newly registered (6 females, 28 minors), during 190 visits to 55 Palestinian detention centres

- ▶ 148 RCMs collected from and 41 distributed to detainees and 147 phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative
- ▶ a monthly hygiene-kit distribution programme covering all places of detention holding more than 5 detainees launched to alleviate the consequences of the lack of funds in detention places
- ▶ 165 detention certificates issued to former detainees or their families

#### **WOUNDED AND SICK**

Access to adequate health services was increasingly difficult for the Palestinian population because of the mobility restrictions imposed by Israel and the financial crisis afflicting the Palestinian Ministry of Health, which caused shortages of medical supplies and staff and undermined basic health programmes. On the basis of field surveys and monitoring, the ICRC conveyed its concerns to the Israeli authorities, urging them to take measures to ensure that the civilian population had access to proper health care.

#### **Highlights of ICRC support in 2006:**

- ▶ 30 Palestine Red Crescent primary health care centres supported; central medical stores serving 8 public surgical hospitals supplied with life-saving medicines and disposables;
- ▶ medical supplies for weapon-wounded pre-positioned in Gaza and transported between Gaza and Ramallah;
- ▶ public health sector staff attended emergency-room trauma courses in Gaza and Ramallah and Palestine Red Crescent staff attended a workshop on emergency medical services; public hospitals provided with medical and nursing textbooks and journals;
- ▶ operating costs and salaries of the Palestine Red Crescent emergency medical service and secondary health care service covered by the ICRC;
- ▶ 2 ambulances donated to the Palestine Red Crescent by the ICRC.

The ICRC prepared the ground for the establishment of an emergency medical clinic and diagnostic centre in the part of the Golan occupied by Israel. Full support for the project was sought from all parties concerned.

#### **AUTHORITIES**

The ICRC renewed calls on Israel to ensure that the basic needs of the civilian population in the occupied territories were met, in accordance with its obligations under IHL as the occupying power.

Humanitarian concerns in the Israeli-Palestinian context were shared with diplomatic missions, donors and international organizations, including UN agencies and the EU Coordination Group.

- ▶ a Palestinian High Court judge and a lawyer from the Ministry of Justice attended a regional workshop on IHL in Cairo (see *Egypt*)
- ▶ a draft Palestinian law on the emblem completed with ICRC support

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

Dialogue with military training institutions and high-ranking officers was strengthened in order to enhance cooperation with the armed forces, notably with respect to the integration of IHL into their teaching and training curricula.

- ▶ various Israeli armed and security services, but mainly the IDF, attended more than 20 sessions on the ICRC and IHL
- ▶ members of the Palestinian security services attended over 30 ICRC seminars on the ICRC and IHL

#### **CIVIL SOCIETY**

##### **Media relations**

The media was kept regularly abreast of the ICRC's main humanitarian concerns and activities in the Israeli-Palestinian context and during the conflict in Lebanon through press briefings, interviews, news releases, monthly activity updates, information posted on the ICRC website and articles published in *Al Insani* (The Humanitarian), the Arabic-language magazine produced by the ICRC in Cairo, Egypt.

##### **Promoting IHL in civil society**

Contacts were maintained with key sectors of civil society both in Israel and in the Palestinian territories.

- ▶ Palestinian religious leaders and members of Islamic NGOs in Gaza attended seminars on IHL and the ICRC



- ▶ influential personalities from Palestinian civil society attended over 80 dissemination sessions to reinforce acceptance of and respect for ICRC field activities
- ▶ key NGOs in Gaza and the West Bank attended 15 seminars on ICRC priorities and IHL issues in the Israeli-Palestinian context
- ▶ contacts were maintained with Israeli NGOs

### IHL in schools and universities

In January, the Palestinian Ministry of Education and the ICRC renewed an agreement for the implementation of the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme in 270 schools in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

- ▶ Exploring Humanitarian Law sessions held in summer youth camps in the West Bank, and selected students attended forums on the programme in Jericho and the Gaza Strip
- ▶ the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme pilot-tested in an Israeli high school
- ▶ students from various Palestinian universities attended ICRC sessions on IHL; the Islamic University in Gaza agreed to integrate IHL into its law curriculum
- ▶ prominent international and Israeli scholars attended a conference on the parallel application of IHL and human rights law co-organized by the ICRC and the Hebrew University

### RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The focus of the ICRC's cooperation activities during 2006 was on advancing the implementation of an operational agreement concluded between the Magen David Adom and the Palestine Red Crescent Society in November 2005 under the auspices of the Swiss government.

On 22 June 2006, both of these National Societies were formally recognized by the ICRC and admitted to the Movement. This followed the 29th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, at which the Statutes of the Movement were amended to incorporate the additional emblem of the red crystal.

The Palestine Red Crescent continued to help the ICRC implement its programme of family visits to Palestinian detainees and to distribute ICRC food aid and other essentials to destitute Palestinian families.

Support to the Palestine Red Crescent Society included:

- ▶ ambulance fleet maintenance and contributions towards operating costs (e.g. communication system, emergency medical stations, staff salaries and training), and support to promote effective management practices;

- ▶ financial and technical support to develop training in trauma management and treatment for staff of the emergency medical service (EMS);
- ▶ sponsoring the participation of the EMS director in an international conference on EMS and to observe EMS operations in Ontario, Canada; help in the design and implementation of a five-day management training programme for EMS station directors;
- ▶ funding of the IHL dissemination programme, website and publications;
- ▶ assistance in the creation of a sustainable programme aimed at raising children's awareness of the danger of mines and other explosive remnants of war, in coordination with other agencies working in this field;
- ▶ a train-the-trainer course on tracing for disaster management unit volunteers.

Support to the Magen David Adom included:

- ▶ financial and technical support for blood transfusion and tracing services;
- ▶ assistance in developing a strategy to promote humanitarian values and Movement activities and the transfer of technical expertise to partner National Societies;
- ▶ financial support to cover increased operational costs incurred in running a clinic for civilians displaced from northern Israel during the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, and for the purchase of first-aid material and health care equipment;
- ▶ technical and financial support provided jointly with the International Federation to conduct a first national disaster-response team training session for 19 staff and volunteers;
- ▶ technical and financial support to conduct the first ever train-the-trainer course on dissemination for EMS staff.