



# israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous palestinian territories

The ICRC has been present in Israel, 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 Movement partners and supports the activities of the Palestine Red Crescent Society and the Magen David Adom.

## EXPENDITURE (IN CHF ,000)

Protection	15,256
Assistance	15,270
Prevention	2,551
Cooperation with National Societies	4,776
General	-

► **37,853**

of which: *Overheads* 2,303

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	<b>80.7%</b>
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## PERSONNEL

**66** expatriates  
**194** national staff (daily workers not included)

## KEY POINTS

### In 2005, the ICRC:

- ▶ actively sought compliance by Israel with its obligations under IHL towards the Palestinian population living under its occupation;
- ▶ visited thousands of Palestinian detainees held by Israel and hundreds held by the Palestinian Authority to assess their treatment and living conditions and enable them to maintain contact with their families;
- ▶ assessed the impact of Israeli-imposed movement restrictions on the living conditions of the Palestinian population and provided emergency assistance to thousands of Palestinian families, including household kits for Palestinians whose homes had been destroyed or confiscated;
- ▶ implemented cash-for-work and food-production projects in communities worst affected by acute unemployment and poverty largely caused by mobility restrictions; rehabilitated or developed water and sanitation infrastructure in poorly served communities in coordination with the Palestinian authorities;
- ▶ gave presentations on IHL to high-ranking members of the Israeli armed forces and the Palestinian security services; continued to promote IHL in key sectors of the Israeli and Palestinian civil societies, such as NGOs, academics, clerics and youth;
- ▶ supported the Palestine Red Crescent and the Magen David Adom in enhancing their capacities to provide emergency medical services.

## CONTEXT

Despite a suspension of hostilities agreed at an Israeli-Palestinian summit in February and pledges by the main militant Palestinian groups to abide by an Egyptian-brokered truce, armed confrontations persisted throughout much of 2005, although to a lesser extent than in previous years.

Most of the hostilities related to ongoing Israeli search-and-arrest operations and raids, attacks on Israeli soldiers and settlers in the West Bank, rocket attacks launched from Gaza into Israel, and suicide bombings in Israel. The suicide attacks, which caused several Israeli civilian casualties, prompted Israel to reinstate its policy of targeting Palestinian militants through extrajudicial killings and to seek internal legal approval for its policy of demolishing their family homes.

Israel's landmark unilateral pullout from the Gaza Strip – along with its evacuation of four settlements in northern parts of the West Bank – was completed in September several weeks ahead of schedule with no fatalities reported, despite strong opposition to the move by many settlers.

At the end of November, Israel handed over control of the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt to the Palestinian Authority, and European Union monitors were deployed in the area to monitor compliance with the agreement reached.

Israel maintained an extensive military presence and stringent restrictions on the movement of people and goods in the West

Bank. Curfews, closures, roadblocks and the West Bank barrier currently under construction impeded the Palestinian population's access to the basic necessities of life such as the workplace and health and education facilities.

In January, Mahmoud Abbas succeeded the late Yasser Arafat as chairman of the Palestinian Authority. Hamas fared prominently in municipal elections held between March and May in Gaza and the West Bank, taking control of major cities such as Nablus and Jenin. Parliamentary elections were scheduled for January 2006.

In Israel, Amir Peretz defeated Shimon Perez in a vote for the Labour party leadership in November and withdrew from the governing coalition with the Likud party, triggering an early general election, scheduled for 28 March 2006. Days later, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon resigned from the Likud party and set up Kadima, a new centrist party that quickly took a lead in the polls.

Intra-Palestinian violence continued, with frequent shootouts reported between members of different security services, between the security services and Palestinian militants and between rival Palestinian families.

Sporadic skirmishes across the Israeli-Lebanese border persisted between Israeli forces and Hezbollah militants, particularly in the disputed Israeli-occupied Shebaa Farms region.

## MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		CIVILIANS		
Detainees visited	13,902	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>		
Detainees visited and monitored individually	8,046	Food	Beneficiaries	26,542
Number of visits carried out	617	Essential household items	Beneficiaries	1,500
Number of places of detention visited	99	Agricultural inputs and micro-economic initiatives	Beneficiaries	10,206
<b>RESTORING FAMILY LINKS</b>		Water-supply schemes and sanitation systems (completed projects)		
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>		Beneficiaries		
RCMs collected	15,759	<b>WOUNDED AND SICK<sup>1</sup></b>		
RCMs distributed	18,487			
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>				
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	21			
Tracing requests closed positively (persons located)	11			
Tracing requests still being handled at 31 December 2005	28			
<b>DOCUMENTS ISSUED</b>				
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	17,882			

1. Financial assistance was provided to the MDA in support of the Emergency Medical Service (EMS) and the Blood Transfusion Service (BTS). Financial assistance was provided to the Palestine Red Crescent Society in support of the Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) and the ambulance fleet consisting of 80 well-maintained and equipped ambulances. See *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement* heading.

## ICRC ACTION

The ICRC continued to monitor Israel's respect for its obligations under IHL towards the Palestinian population living under its occupation and to make prompt representations to the authorities concerned when corrective action was deemed necessary.

Regular ICRC field missions were undertaken to assess and, whenever possible, to respond to the most urgent needs of the Palestinian population living in areas worst affected by the restrictions imposed by Israel on the movement of people and goods.

Planned and ad hoc emergency assistance was distributed to thousands of destitute Palestinian families. New economic and food security programmes were developed for communities identified as having high levels of unemployment and poverty induced largely by the mobility restrictions which continued to severely undermine the Palestinian economy.

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. It also organized water-tanker deliveries to rural West Bank communities not connected to water-distribution networks.

Delegates regularly visited thousands of Palestinians detained by Israel and hundreds held by the Palestinian Authority to monitor their treatment and detention conditions and to enable them to remain in contact with their families. Recommendations for corrective action were made to the detaining authorities whenever appropriate.

One priority for the ICRC was to ensure access of the Palestinian population to medical facilities and of medical service providers to the sick and wounded with minimal security-clearance delays. The ICRC assessed the level of access of the Druze population living in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights to health care, and helped to train Palestinian medical staff in trauma management.

The ICRC kept up its activities to promote the integration of IHL into Israel's domestic legislation, into the doctrine, teaching and training programmes of the Israeli armed forces, as well as into university and school curricula.

As in past years, the ICRC gave substantial support to the Palestine Red Crescent Society and the Magen David Adom to strengthen their capacities to deliver humanitarian services. The delegation helped facilitate the first-ever operational agreement between the two National Societies, reached under the auspices of the Swiss government.

The ICRC pursued efforts to clarify the fate of people unaccounted for or missing in action from previous conflicts in the region.

## CIVILIANS

### Protection of the civilian population

The ICRC monitored the situation leading up to and during Israel's disengagement from Gaza and from four settlements in the northern West Bank. Prior to the pullout, the ICRC made recommendations for preventive measures to the authorities concerned and stood ready to respond to emergency needs.

Further ICRC representations were made to the Israeli authorities concerning the humanitarian consequences of the West Bank barrier, including, for example, problems of access to land during the olive harvest and the adverse impact of the barrier on the population of East Jerusalem. On a number of other occasions, the ICRC made representations regarding incidents arising from more stringent restrictions of movement or house demolitions in the West Bank.

The ICRC stepped up field surveys to assess the impact of Israeli curfews, closures and the West Bank barrier on Palestinians' access to health-care facilities and conveyed its concerns in this regard to the Israeli authorities. In addition, it carried out an assessment of the level of access to health care of the Druze population in the Golan Heights (20,000 inhabitants).

► 66 written and over 1,000 oral representations made by the ICRC to the Israeli authorities to improve respect for IHL and/or to alleviate the humanitarian consequences of the occupation

A constructive relationship was established with new members of Palestinian ministries, and contacts were reinforced with Palestinian militant groups, with whom the ICRC raised issues related to the protection of the civilian population, including the impact on civilians of increased intra-Palestinian violence.

The ICRC observed a further decrease in the incidence of extrajudicial killings of alleged collaborators by Palestinian militants, although a number of alleged collaborators were abducted and wounded.

### Access to clean water

Water and sanitation facilities remained inadequate to meet the needs of the Palestinian population, and existing infrastructure often functioned poorly owing to lack of maintenance. Working with the Palestinian water authority, ICRC experts identified villages most severely lacking these facilities. Eight projects in five West Bank villages were approved to rehabilitate and/or extend water networks, to construct reservoirs and a booster station and to overhaul water pumping equipment. The ICRC also continued to deliver water by tanker to rural West Bank communities not connected to water-distribution networks.

- ▶ 2 projects under way to improve water supply to 5,700 people
- ▶ 6 additional projects finalized to upgrade water facilities for another 61,200 people
- ▶ 102,200 cubic metres of water delivered by tanker to around 10,000 West Bank households not connected to water networks

### Economic security

The ICRC conducted regular field missions to monitor and assess the humanitarian and economic consequences of mobility restrictions, which had largely contributed to the unprecedented levels of poverty and unemployment in the West Bank and Gaza.

Planned and ad hoc ICRC food distributions were made to thousands of destitute Palestinians and communities where unemployment and poverty levels were found to be particularly high. The worst-affected communities were identified for the implementation of cash-for-work projects and further food-security interventions.

As in past years, the ICRC issued household relief kits to Palestinian families whose homes had been destroyed or confiscated.

- ▶ an average of 2,462 Palestinian families in Hebron Old City issued with monthly food and household essentials
- ▶ 1,643 needy families provided with ad hoc food aid in the West Bank
- ▶ emergency household kits issued to 250 Palestinian families whose homes had been demolished
- ▶ over 10,000 individuals benefited from cash-for-work or food-production schemes

### Restoring family links

Lebanese citizens resident in Israel since its withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000 were offered the opportunity to correspond and exchange official documents with their families in Lebanon via the RCM network. The ICRC also processed requests for the registration in the Lebanese Civil Registry of marriages and births involving Lebanese nationals in Israel.

Travel to Syria by Syrian nationals living in the occupied Golan remained subject to Israeli restrictions. In view of this, the ICRC helped Druze students and clerics from the Golan to obtain authorization to travel to Syria for educational or religious purposes, or arranged for Golan residents to wed their prospective partners from Syria proper in the UN-controlled separation zone in Kuneitra.

The ICRC made no headway in persuading the authorities concerned to allow residents of the occupied Golan to visit family members in Syria.

- ▶ visits to Syria were arranged for 1,755 students and pilgrims from the occupied Golan

The ICRC also facilitated travel for Palestinians who for specific family reasons needed to meet up with relatives living elsewhere in the Palestinian territories or in Jordan. For example, it enabled two minors from Gaza to be reunited with their parents in the West Bank.

### Clarifying the fate of the missing

The ICRC facilitated the repatriation of the remains of four Hezbollah fighters killed in two separate clashes between the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Hezbollah forces across the Israeli-Lebanese border. It pursued discussions with the Israeli authorities regarding repatriation of the remains of other Lebanese and Arab combatants killed in action by Israeli forces.

The ICRC followed up a request it had made previously to the Israeli authorities to

provide death certificates for 156 people whose remains had not been returned to their families by Israel.

It also pursued efforts to resolve the documented cases of five Israelis missing from past conflicts in the region and kept their families informed of developments.

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

### Israel

At the end of 2005, approximately 11,200 Palestinians were held by Israel in interrogation units, temporary detention centres, military detention camps, prisons and police stations. The ICRC continued to carry out visits to these detention facilities and to present confidential reports on its findings and recommendations to the Israeli authorities.

The ICRC distributed medical appliances such as eye-glasses, dentures and orthopaedic devices, when urgently required, to detainees in military detention camps and prisons. Standard sets of clothing and small stipends were also issued to particularly needy detainees, and many detention centres were supplied with books, newspapers, magazines and recreational items.

Particular attention was paid to the specific needs of detained women and minors and to the judicial rights of administrative detainees, who under Israeli law could be held for renewable six-month periods without charge.

Acting as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC monitored the release by Israel of 900 Palestinian detainees freed in two operations in January and May/June. Beforehand, the ICRC interviewed the detainees to confirm that they agreed to the location of their release. It was also present at release locations in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to monitor the process and alerted the Israeli authorities to cases involving detainees not released in the locations they had requested.

- ▶ 12,192 detainees visited, including 7,504 monitored individually (of whom 131 women and 565 minors), during 365 visits made to 51 Israeli detention facilities
- ▶ 3,548 telephone calls made to families to inform them about the detention of a relative
- ▶ 15,603 RCMs collected and 18,328 distributed from and to Palestinian detainees and their families

- ▶ 17,714 certificates of detention issued to former detainees
- ▶ destitute detainees given regular allowances of 100 Shekels (approximately 22 US dollars)
- ▶ sets of clothes issued to detainees in prisons and military detention camps
- ▶ medical items, such as eye-glasses, issued to detainees

The ICRC family visits programme grew considerably in 2005. It remained the only means for thousands of Palestinian families to visit their relatives detained by Israel. The ICRC forwarded visit requests to the Israeli authorities and provided transport to and from the places of detention for visiting family members. By the end of 2005, over 60% of Palestinian detainees were receiving monthly family visits, a marked increase on previous years.

- ▶ an average of over 17,300 family members per month were able to visit relatives detained by Israel (compared with 8,000 per month in 2004); 6,710 detainees benefited from these visits

### **Palestinian Authority**

ICRC visits continued to detention centres controlled by the Palestinian Authority. A constructive dialogue was maintained with the detaining authorities at the Palestinian Ministry of the Interior.

The number of detainees increased slightly in the second part of the year, causing overcrowding in the main prisons in the West Bank and Gaza.

Six confidential ICRC reports regarding various detention facilities (police stations, rehabilitation centres and interrogation centres) were transmitted to the Palestinian detaining authorities over the year.

Numerous seminars on the ICRC and IHL were held for members of the Palestinian security services involved in detention activities. Senior officers from the Ministry of the Interior and from the Joint Security Committee also attended the seminars.

- ▶ 1,710 detainees visited, including 542 monitored individually (of whom 17 women and 81 minors), during 252 visits made to 48 Palestinian places of detention
- ▶ 229 telephone calls made to families to inform them about the detention of a relative
- ▶ 156 RCMs collected and 159 distributed on behalf of Palestinian detainees and their families

- ▶ 168 certificates of detention issued to former detainees

### **WOUNDED AND SICK**

In December 2005, in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the ICRC held two four-day Emergency Room Trauma Courses for 50 surgeons, anaesthetists, emergency ward staff and nurses in the West Bank and Gaza to increase their capacities to respond to mass-casualty situations.

The ICRC facilitated the movement of Palestine Red Crescent ambulances and medical teams to ensure minimum delays caused by mobility restrictions. Persistent misuse of the emblem by certain other medical service providers nevertheless continued to create confusion at checkpoints, increasing the risk of delays for Red Crescent ambulances.

Subscriptions to medical journals were provided to 16 hospitals in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

### **AUTHORITIES**

The ICRC expanded its already extensive network of contacts with diplomatic missions, donors and international organizations in Israel and the Palestinian territories in order to convey to them its main humanitarian concerns related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Regular coordination meetings were held with UN agencies, NGOs and the European Union Coordination Group on topics such as judicial guarantees for detainees, the legal and humanitarian implications of the Israeli disengagement plan, Israeli mobility restrictions and access by West Bank residents to East Jerusalem.

The official launch of the Hebrew version of the Additional Protocols in December 2004, as well as the ICRC's recently published study on customary international humanitarian law, stimulated debate on IHL-related issues, in particular the rules governing the conduct of hostilities.

The drafting of a law on the protection of the emblem was discussed with the Palestinian IHL committee, the Ministry of Justice and the Palestine Red Crescent. However, preparations for Palestinian elections, initially scheduled for the end of 2005 and subsequently postponed until January 2006, held up progress on this project.

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

Discussions continued with the IDF Land Forces Doctrine and Training Division and the Staff and Command College with a view to integrating IHL into the training of IDF officers to enable them to teach the subject. The ICRC also sponsored the participation of two IDF officers in an IHL course in San Remo.

IHL remained an integral part of the checkpoint commanders' training programme at the Central Command Training Base. The ICRC worked towards obtaining similar results with the military police units in charge of detention and gave a number of presentations on IHL to their commanding officers.

- ▶ more than 50 seminars on IHL organized for members of the Israeli armed and security forces

Three generals from the Palestinian security forces participated in an ICRC regional seminar in Cairo on the application of IHL rules in the conduct of military operations.

### **CIVIL SOCIETY**

#### **Media relations**

The ICRC kept the media abreast of its activities through regular newsletters, updates and briefings, and ICRC news films were broadcast on Israeli television. Articles on ICRC activities and IHL issues were also published in *Al Insani (The Humanitarian)*, the Arabic-language quarterly produced by the ICRC in Cairo.

Three leading Palestinian television journalists were invited to take part in a regional media workshop on the protection of civilians in armed conflict organized by the ICRC in Dubai.

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

The ICRC reinforced its network of Palestinian clerics and academics, members of influential militant groups and representatives of other key sectors of Palestinian society to gain a better insight into their views and to increase their understanding of IHL and the ICRC's role and activities in the region.

Numerous presentations on IHL and the ICRC were given for prominent Israeli and Palestinian NGOs working, in particular, on IHL and human rights issues. The ICRC also gave around 50 presentations on

its role, the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values for young Palestinians taking part in summer camps.

A workshop on “Internment during international armed conflict under IHL and Human Rights Law” was co-organized with the Hebrew University, bringing together Israeli and foreign academics and experts on IHL.

New ICRC materials were produced in Hebrew, including the third edition of the booklet *Towards a comprehensive solution to the question of the emblem*.

### **IHL in schools and universities**

Israeli school teachers received training in the Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL) programme in support of efforts by the Israeli Ministry of Education to incorporate the subject into secondary-school curricula.

EHL supervisors from the Palestinian Ministry of Education, together with the Palestine Red Crescent and the ICRC, evaluated progress in 168 West Bank and Gaza schools where the programme was being taught and studied plans to extend it to another 95 Palestinian schools in 2006.

Three Israeli students from the College of Management were invited to participate in summer courses in IHL in Brussels and Warsaw. Two Palestinian teachers from the University of Bethlehem attended a regional course on IHL in Beirut.

Meetings were held with deans and professors of Palestinian law faculties to discuss the integration of IHL into university curricula.

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

Cooperation with the Magen David Adom and the Palestine Red Crescent Society remained a major component of ICRC activities in the region. The aim was to ensure that both possessed the means and expertise to carry out the full range of activities of a well-functioning National Society.

The ICRC continued to provide the Magen David Adom and the Palestine Red Crescent with various forms of technical, material and financial support to reinforce the capacities of their emergency medical and tracing services to respond effectively and promptly to needs arising in their

respective operational areas. The delegation also helped them draft an operational agreement to enhance cooperation between the two Societies. This agreement was concluded under the auspices of the Swiss government.

### **Palestine Red Crescent Society**

ICRC assistance helped to keep the Palestine Red Crescent’s fleet of 80 ambulances in good working order and covered some of the Society’s operating costs, including its communications system, emergency medical stations, staff salaries and staff training. The ICRC also worked to upgrade the management practices of the Palestine Red Crescent emergency medical services, including helping it to budget effectively, reduce expenses and recover costs.

Through ICRC training in fields such as the provision of care to people suffering trauma disorders, staff of the Palestine Red Crescent emergency medical and disaster management services were able to improve their skills. Further funding was provided for dissemination programmes on IHL and the Fundamental Principles, as well as for the Palestine Red Crescent website and publications. Material, training and funding support helped the Palestine Red Crescent to develop a sustainable mine-risk education programme, coordinated with other agencies working in this field.

For its part, the Palestine Red Crescent continued to help the ICRC to implement programmes such as family visits to Palestinians detained by the Israeli authorities and emergency food distributions to destitute Palestinian families in Hebron.

### **Magen David Adom**

The ICRC continued to provide financial assistance to the Magen David Adom’s emergency medical services, including its blood bank. ICRC support enabled the National Society’s tracing unit to continue its valuable work to trace Second World War victims and reunite family members separated by more recent conflicts. ICRC technical and financial assistance also helped the Magen David Adom develop a strategic emergency response to natural disasters such as earthquakes.

As the lead agency for the Movement in the region, the ICRC coordinated the activities of over 10 National Societies working with the Magen David Adom and the Palestine Red Crescent.