



Lebanon

The ICRC has been present in Lebanon since 1967. It monitors the impact of hostilities on the civilian population in southern Lebanon and the situation of Lebanese refugees returning from Israel where they had fled following Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon. The ICRC is pursuing a dialogue with the Lebanese authorities to gain access to places of detention in the country. Restoring and maintaining contact between members of dispersed families is also an ICRC priority. Other important aspects of the ICRC's work include promoting IHL and supporting the Lebanese Red Cross Society, in particular in the areas of first aid and emergency response.

EXPENDITURE (IN CHF ,000)

Protection	398
Assistance	89
Prevention	599
Cooperation with National Societies	254
General	-

► **1,341**

of which: *Overheads* **82**

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	86.5%
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PERSONNEL

1 expatriate
10 national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2005, the ICRC:

- carried out activities to integrate IHL into the training programmes of the Lebanese armed forces and to disseminate its basic principles among other arms bearers in Lebanon; promoted the integration of IHL into Lebanese legislation and into university and secondary-school curricula;
- maintained a standby capacity to respond to the emergency needs of the civilian population in southern Lebanon in the event of a sudden intensification of cross-border violence between Hezbollah militants and Israeli forces;
- enabled families in Lebanon to maintain contact and exchange official documents with relatives either resident or detained in Israel, and repatriated the remains of people killed during skirmishes with Israeli forces;
- offered technical expertise to help identify human remains discovered in mass graves found in Lebanon in support of efforts to clarify the fate of people unaccounted for from past conflicts in the region;
- continued to support the first-aid, ambulance and communications services of the Lebanese Red Cross Society and a physical rehabilitation centre caring for disabled Palestinian refugees;
- pursued dialogue with the Lebanese authorities with a view to starting visits to all people detained in Lebanon.

CONTEXT

Lebanon experienced a period of political turmoil and social unrest following the assassination in February of former prime minister Rafik Hariri in a car-bomb attack in Beirut. The killing triggered mass demonstrations calling on the government to resign and Syrian troops to withdraw from Lebanon.

At the end of April, in compliance with UN Security Council resolution 1559, Syria withdrew all of its troops from Lebanon where they had been stationed since entering the country as a peace-keeping force in 1976 during Lebanon's civil war.

The preliminary findings of an ongoing UN investigation implicated both the Lebanese and Syrian security services in the killing of Rafik Hariri. As the investigation progressed, four Lebanese generals were arrested by the Lebanese authorities in connection with the murder.

After legislative elections in April/May, a new government was formed in July headed by Fuad Siniora, a former close ally of Rafik Hariri, and for the first time included Hezbollah cabinet ministers. It faced several major challenges, including the disbanding and disarming of militias on Lebanese soil, as demanded by the UN Security Council, reforming Lebanon's economy, electoral system and public and security services and, controversially, granting a more liberal legal status to Palestinian refugees.

Following the assassination in December of Gibran Tueni, a key political figure, the cabinet called for an international investigation into a string of killings of Lebanese political and media personalities who had been critical of Syrian involvement in Lebanon, spurring five ministers to suspend participation in the government.

In other violence, several bomb explosions occurred between March and May in areas populated mainly by Christians, and sporadic skirmishes persisted between Hezbollah militants in southern Lebanon and Israeli forces, inflicting casualties and material damage on both sides of the Israeli-Lebanese border. The hostilities centred on or near the Israeli-occupied Shebaa Farms region, which Lebanon claims as sovereign territory but which the UN considers to be part of the Syrian Golan Heights occupied by Israel during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Intermittent armed violence between rival Palestinian factions continued to disrupt the lives of Palestinian refugees living in precarious conditions in 12 camps scattered throughout the country.

The discovery of mass graves dating from Lebanon's 1975–91 civil war prompted the family associations concerned to increase pressure on the authorities to take more concerted and immediate action to clarify the fate of people unaccounted for, including those presumed to be detained or missing in Syria. Several joint meetings of commissions established by the Lebanese and Syrian authorities to exchange infor-

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

RESTORING FAMILY LINKS		WOUNDED AND SICK	
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>		<i>Physical rehabilitation</i>	
RCMs collected	60	Patients receiving services	Patients 120
RCMs distributed	90	Prostheses delivered	Pieces 25
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>		Orthoses delivered	Pieces 21
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	8		
Tracing requests closed positively (persons located)	3		
Tracing requests still being handled at 31 December 2005	4		
DOCUMENTS ISSUED			
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	58		

mation on the missing had not resulted in any tangible progress being made to resolve these cases by the end of 2005.

Commercial traffic between Lebanon and Syria was severely disrupted at the end of the summer by what Lebanon claimed to be deliberate Syrian administrative obstacles to trade with and beyond Syria, its main gateway to the wider Arab world.

ICRC ACTION

In 2005, the ICRC continued to address humanitarian issues stemming from past conflicts in the region and the current situation in Lebanon.

A standby capacity was maintained to respond to any major intensification of the recurrent cross-border hostilities between Hezbollah militants and Israeli forces. The ICRC also documented alleged violations of IHL in this context and made representations to the parties concerned.

The ICRC followed developments in Lebanon related to UN resolution 1559, which demanded the disbanding and disarming of all armed militant groups in the country.

Further steps were taken to promote the integration of IHL and its basic principles into domestic legislation, university and school curricula and the teaching and training programmes of the national armed forces. The ICRC also sought to spread knowledge of IHL among other arms bearers in Lebanon.

The bodies of Lebanese refugees who died in Israel and those of Hezbollah fighters killed by Israeli forces and kept in Israel were repatriated under ICRC auspices.

ICRC tracing and RCM services enabled contact to be restored or maintained and the exchange of official documents between people in Lebanon and their family members resident in Israel since Israeli troops pulled out of southern Lebanon in September 2000.

The ICRC continued to support the Lebanese Red Cross Society in providing efficient ambulance and first-aid services.

CIVILIANS

Protecting the civilian population

One of the ICRC's main concerns was to ensure that the civilian population of southern Lebanon was protected from the effects of recurrent hostilities between Hezbollah and Israeli forces. When necessary, it documented incidents involving alleged violations of IHL in this context and made timely representations to the relevant authorities/armed groups.

The ICRC also stood ready to respond, in cooperation with the Lebanese Red Cross, to emergency needs should there be any major deterioration in the cross-border hostilities.

Families in Lebanon, both Lebanese and Palestinian, were able to maintain contact and exchange official documents with relatives either resident or detained in Israel through the ICRC's tracing and RCM services.

The ICRC continued to raise awareness among the Lebanese authorities and the international community of the basic needs of the Palestinian refugee population in Lebanon. It also documented cases where civilian lives were allegedly endangered by intra-Palestinian violence and made representations to the relevant parties.

At the request of the families concerned and in coordination with the Lebanese and Israeli authorities, the remains of Lebanese exiles who died in Israel and those of Lebanese and other Arab combatants killed in conflict and buried in Israel, were repatriated under ICRC auspices.

The ICRC also sought to persuade the Lebanese authorities to allow the registration in Lebanon of marriage and birth certificates of Lebanese refugees living in Israel, although no progress was made on this question in 2005. Upon request, the ICRC issued certificates of detention to former detainees released by Israel and repatriated to Lebanon.

- ▶ the remains of 2 Lebanese nationals and 3 Hezbollah militants repatriated under ICRC auspices
- ▶ 60 RCMs collected and 90 distributed

Resolving cases of people unaccounted for

The ICRC maintained a dialogue with the Lebanese authorities and armed groups to resolve the cases of people unaccounted for in the context of past conflicts in Lebanon. It endeavoured to maintain interest among key sectors of Lebanese political and civil society about this issue amidst mounting pressure from the families concerned to address it as a matter of urgency.

In support of efforts to provide information to Lebanese and Palestinian families who have remained without news of their missing relatives for many years, the ICRC also offered technical guidance to the Lebanese authorities in the exhumation and identification of human remains found in gravesites in Lebanon.

- ▶ 8 new tracing requests registered
- ▶ 3 tracing requests resolved and 4 previously registered cases pending
- ▶ 55 various certificates delivered

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Political developments in Lebanon during the year prevented any further progress in ICRC discussions with the Lebanese authorities regarding ICRC access to places of detention in the country.

The ICRC nevertheless continued to issue certificates of detention to former detainees it had visited in the past.

- 58 certificates of detention issued to former detainees

WOUNDED AND SICK

Disabled Palestinians not assisted by the Lebanese social welfare services were fitted free of charge with artificial limbs at a physical rehabilitation centre run by the Sidon Orphan Welfare Society located close to the main Palestinian refugee camp of Ein El-Helwe and supported by the ICRC.

The ICRC continued to provide the centre with materials, components for orthopaedic appliances and financial support. An ICRC prosthetic/orthotic technician based in Damascus regularly monitored and evaluated the quality of the limb-fitting service and helped to assess the centre's needs. This ICRC programme was scheduled to run until the end of 2006.

- 120 patients received at ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centre
- 2 new patients fitted with prostheses and 6 with orthoses
- 25 prostheses and 21 orthoses delivered

AUTHORITIES

The ICRC established contacts with members of the new Lebanese government with a view to ensuring continuity of the ICRC's traditional activities in Lebanon, carried out in conjunction with the Lebanese authorities.

In order to promote IHL among various authorities, the ICRC:

- contributed to an ongoing study on the compatibility of current Lebanese domestic legislation with the provisions of IHL;
- trained a number of Lebanese judges to teach IHL to their colleagues;
- organized, in conjunction with the League of Arab States, a second regional

seminar on IHL at the Arab Centre for Legal and Judicial Studies in Beirut attended by 55 government officials from 15 Arab countries.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The ICRC pursued activities aimed at ensuring that members of the armed and security forces were familiar with the ICRC and were trained to apply the rules of IHL. These included:

- giving presentations on IHL and the ICRC's mandate to trainee officers at the Institute for Internal Security, as well as to senior staff of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, which continued to facilitate ICRC activities in southern Lebanon;
- holding regular meetings with all armed groups present in the country to promote greater understanding of the ICRC's mandate and to facilitate its activities in Lebanon.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Closer contacts were developed with key media outlets in Lebanon, which gave significant coverage to ICRC activities in the country and worldwide.

Regular meetings were held with the leaders of Islamic groups with a view to increasing their understanding of IHL and the ICRC's mandate in Lebanon and in other contexts in the region where the ICRC is operational.

To promote the study of IHL at university level, the ICRC:

- organized courses on IHL for Arab law lecturers and university officials;
- selected 3 students from 3 universities to participate in the Jean Pictet moot-court competition on IHL.

A mixed commission composed of representatives of the Lebanese Pedagogical Centre and ICRC experts was entrusted with the task of overseeing implementation of the Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL) programme, in coordination with the Ministry of Education. Following training in the programme, teachers began giving classes in the subject. Impact assessments showed strong student interest in the syllabus.

- 8 teachers trained in the EHL programme.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The ICRC worked to enhance the operational capacities of the Lebanese Red Cross Society's first-aid, ambulance and communication services. It also helped the National Society to promote knowledge and understanding of IHL principles among the authorities and key sectors of civil society, as well as among its own staff and volunteers.

The Lebanese Red Cross responded effectively to emergency situations resulting from mass street demonstrations, explosions and killings that occurred during the year. In support of these and other National Society activities, the ICRC:

- funded ambulance facilities for emergency interventions and the installation of appropriate telecommunications facilities in first-aid centres;
- trained a further 25 Lebanese Red Cross dissemination experts to teach the EHL programme; previously trained staff gave several presentations on the subject to National Society colleagues.