

liberia



✚ ICRC delegation ✚ ICRC sub-delegation

The ICRC has worked in Liberia since 1970 and opened its operational delegation in Monrovia in 1990. Following intense fighting early in 2003 and the subsequent signing of a peace agreement, the ICRC stepped up its operations in Liberia. Since 2005, assistance and protection activities have focused on returnees (former IDPs and refugees) and residents, the wounded and sick, detainees, and children separated from their families. The ICRC supports the Liberian Red Cross Society and runs programmes to promote IHL among armed forces present in Liberia.

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	5,306
Assistance	10,920
Prevention	1,061
Cooperation with National Societies	2,369
General	-

► **19,657**

of which: Overheads 1,201

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	89%
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PERSONNEL

43 expatriates
311 national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2007, the ICRC:

- ▶ provided some 130,200 people with food, 124,000 with seed and tools, and 28,000 with essential household items
- ▶ improved some 109,000 people's access to water and sanitation in Lofa, Grand Kru and Montserrado counties
- ▶ facilitated 140,200 outpatient consultations and the administration of 44,000 vaccine doses by 13 health facilities in Lofa and Grand Kru counties
- ▶ supported children previously reunited with their families in readjusting to family and community life
- ▶ visited some 1,400 detainees in 29 detention places

CONTEXT

January 2007 marked the first anniversary of Liberia's new government under President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. Despite progress towards recovery, the country still depended heavily on support from the international community. In July, three individuals were arrested on charges of plotting a coup d'état.

The UN Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for one year, until September 2008. Thus, UNMIL civilian personnel and over 14,000 troops continued to assist different branches of government and maintain security. NGOs and other organizations remained the principal providers of basic services. Most government institutions were still weak, and the lack of progress in re-establishing the rule of law and the judicial system remained of particular concern.

After a difficult start, the new army achieved its recruitment and training goals, with 1,125 recruits out of the projected 2,000-strong army trained.

Little progress was made in the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the reintegration of demobilized fighters. Two years after the end of the disarmament and demobilization process, several thousand people still awaited implementation of the promised programmes to help them readjust to family and community life.

The government's Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, focusing on economic recovery, national security, governance and the rule of law, and essential services, was well received by donors. The UN Security Council lifted its ban on Liberian diamonds, satisfied that Liberia complied with the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme designed to ensure that diamonds originated from sources free of conflict. Several countries cancelled USD 3.7 billion of foreign debt owed to them by Liberia.

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare developed a national health policy and began defining guidelines for health facilities on the Basic Package of Health Services and developing county action plans. Nevertheless, the health situation remained fragile as county health teams and the majority of health facilities suffered the consequences of a chronic shortage of qualified staff.

Since 2005, some 150,000 Liberian refugees had returned to their places of origin, two-thirds of them with the assistance of UNHCR, which concluded its repatriation of refugees in the region at the end of June.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

	Total		Total	Women	Children			
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)			CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM					
Detainees visited	1,387		<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>					
Detainees visited and monitored individually	3		Food	Beneficiaries	130,212	30%	50%	
Number of visits carried out	81		Essential household items	Beneficiaries	27,651	20%	75%	
Number of places of detention visited	29		Agricultural inputs and micro-economic initiatives	Beneficiaries	124,106	30%	50%	
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS			Water, sanitation and habitat projects	Beneficiaries	109,019	25%	50%	
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>			Health					
RCMs collected	216		Health centres supported	Structures	13			
RCMs distributed	89		Consultations	Patients	140,252			
People reunited with their families	8			of which curative	Patients		55,040	47,669
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>				of which ante/post-natal	Patients		11,176	840
Tracing cases closed positively (persons located)	27		Immunizations	Doses	43,890			
Tracing cases still being handled at 31 December 2007 (people)	13							
		of which for females						
		of which for minors at the time of disappearance						
<i>Unaccompanied minors (UAMs) and separated children (SCs), including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers</i>								
UAMs/SCs newly registered by the ICRC	2							
UAMs/SCs reunited with their families by the ICRC	7							
UAM/SC cases still being handled at 31 December 2007	28							
DOCUMENTS ISSUED								
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	3							

ICRC ACTION

With the transition from conflict to peace and development, and greater involvement of other organizations in Liberia, the ICRC scaled back its operations. It remained focused on meeting the residual needs of the most vulnerable victims of the past conflict, particularly communities in Lofa and Grand Kru counties.

The ICRC continued its water and sanitation programmes in Monrovia and its environs by rehabilitating wells and improving community sanitation facilities. In Lofa and Grand Kru, the ICRC concentrated on medium-term assistance programmes notably for recent returnees and vulnerable people, combining material and technical support to primary health care facilities with the promotion of basic health and hygiene. It constructed and rehabilitated wells and latrines and implemented income-generating community-based agricultural programmes. Recent returnees and vulnerable families in Lofa, especially those headed by an elderly person or a widow, were provided with tools, food and essential household items to assist them in rebuilding their livelihoods. To help the recipients reconstruct their homes, the ICRC enlisted the support of other community members, providing them with food and/or cash in return for their work.

Given the improved communications in the sub-region, the ICRC restricted its RCM service to helping vulnerable adults and children restore contact with their families. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and several child-protection agencies, the ICRC also sought lasting solutions for children whose families had not been located despite years of tracing efforts. For children reunited with their families but experiencing problems in readjusting to life in their communities, the organization looked for solutions tailored to individual cases.

The ICRC continued visiting ordinary detainees in various places of detention throughout Liberia, sharing its findings and

recommendations with the authorities. It offered support to the Ministry of Justice and improved water and sanitation facilities in Harper and Zwedru prisons. The ICRC also continued providing technical advice to UNMIL's Corrections Advisory Unit.

The ICRC maintained technical support to the national authorities in their efforts to incorporate the provisions of IHL treaties into national legislation and to integrate IHL and humanitarian principles into police and military training, doctrine and practice. It also kept up efforts to promote the inclusion of IHL in the law curriculum of the University of Liberia. Dissemination sessions were organized to raise awareness of IHL and the Red Cross among various sectors of civil society.

The Liberian Red Cross Society continued to receive ICRC support in adapting its programmes as it shifted its focus from emergency response to structural development.

The ICRC pursued dialogue with other humanitarian actors present in Liberia to share information on the humanitarian situation and to coordinate activities.

CIVILIANS

Restoring family links

Given the improved communications in the sub-region, only vulnerable adults and children still separated from their families by past conflicts in the sub-region were assisted in restoring contact with their relatives through the RCM service. Working together, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, several child-protection agencies and the ICRC sought lasting solutions for children whose families had not been located despite strenuous tracing efforts. With ICRC support, scores of children and vulnerable adults got back in touch with their families. A number of them were subsequently reunited with their relatives.

The search continued for the families of a number of children in Liberia. For four children whose families could not be located, the quest turned to finding lasting solutions, including integration into local communities, reintegration into their communities of origin or placement in children's institutions.

Some 160 children previously reunited with their families, including 64 children formerly associated with fighting forces, were visited to monitor how they had readjusted to family and community life. Children encountering difficulties benefited from tailor-made solutions, including support for their education or vocational training, referral to other organizations for counselling, or medical assistance. The children's families were given material support and involved in income-generating projects.

- 52 RCMs collected from and 40 RCMs distributed to civilians, including 28 from and 16 to unaccompanied/separated children
- new tracing requests registered for 1 person (a female and minor at the time of disappearance); 27 people located; 13 people (including 8 females and 10 minors at the time of disappearance) still being sought
- 8 people reunited with their families
- 2 unaccompanied/separated children registered; 7 reunited with their families; 28 cases of unaccompanied/separated children still being handled
- 3 people issued with an ICRC travel document

Assisting civilians

Some 150,000 Liberian refugees had returned home since 2005, and with that UNHCR concluded the voluntary repatriation of refugees in West Africa. With fewer refugees returning to Liberia, there was less pressure on the communities absorbing them. Even so, infrastructure remained run-down and resources scarce.

Economic security

In Voinjama and Kolahun districts of Lofa County, recent returnees and single-parent households received farm tools and vegetable and rice seed, as well as food to prevent the consumption of the seeds. They resumed farming, produced their own food, sold the surplus and built a seed stock for the next planting season. This helped ease pressure on communities and reduced dependence on external assistance.

With ICRC support, families in Lofa cleared their plantations and began reviving cash-crop farming. Working in groups supervised by community representatives, farmers cleared plantations overgrown by bush and received food and/or cash in return. A local cooperative society and the ICRC signed a deal to cooperate in easing farmers' access to markets for their produce. Thanks to a pilot project launched to guarantee farmers the sale of a portion of their yield through the cooperative, they sold 23 tonnes of cocoa beans.

In Lofa County, vulnerable people, mainly recent returnees, widowed mothers and other lone heads of families, benefited from a new shelter programme. Building materials were provided, as well as rice for community members doing the construction. Local traders also gained by supplying traditional roofing materials. In light of the dwindling number of returnees, the ICRC concluded its assistance to people to rebuild their homes. Rice paddies left fallow were cleared for indigent families by workers, who received food and/or cash in return.

In Grand Kru, households revived traditional economic activities after receiving technical support, vegetable and cash-crop

seed, farm tools and other implements. A further 14 families who received fingerlings started breeding fish for household consumption and sale.

In Monrovia and Nimba County, women affected by conflict benefited from projects run by ICRC-supported associations. Through tailoring courses and other vocational training, the women learned new skills and gained social and psychological benefits that helped them recover from their traumatic experiences. On completing training, they were hired by ICRC-supported workshops or given starter kits to set up their own income-generating activities.

For 185 vulnerable young people affected by conflict, a youth centre in Bong County set up by the ICRC in collaboration with the National Society offered a safe environment where they could participate in various activities and enhance their chances of integrating into the community.

- 130,212 people (15,359 households) received food
- 27,534 people (3,251 households) received essential household items
- 124,106 people (19,134 households) benefited from agricultural/micro-economic initiatives, including:
 - 60,870 people (10,145 households) from distributions of seed, tools and fertilizer
 - 46,032 people (16,720 households) from cash-crop seed
 - 8,822 people benefited from a shelter programme (the supply of building materials)
 - 8,244 people (1,374 households) benefited from community projects

Water and sanitation

Some 100,000 vulnerable people in Grand Kru and Lofa counties, Monrovia and Harper benefited from an ICRC programme to improve their water supply and sanitation facilities. Through the programme, 120 wells and 367 latrines in homes and institutions were constructed or rehabilitated and communities learned good hygiene practices and how to maintain and manage the facilities.

Nearly 340 mechanics affiliated with 96 committees created to maintain and manage water and sanitation facilities underwent training. Through radio and other outreach activities, including drama, thousands of people in five counties heard key messages on basic hygiene and the importance of maintaining water and sanitation facilities built or restored by the ICRC. Community members in Grand Kru actively participated in clean-up competitions organized between villages and school clubs.

- 108,959 people benefited from water/sanitation projects, including:
 - 52,736 people from the construction of latrines
 - 61,118 people from the construction of wells
 - 21,872 people from hygiene information sessions

Primary health care

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare continued to receive direct support in overhauling the health system. County authorities and the ICRC defined their respective roles and responsibilities. County health teams consolidated their capacities to meet their responsibilities but still needed support in managing, supervising and organizing their activities and staff. A national laboratory supervisor, appointed at the ICRC's suggestion, regularly conducted supervisory visits and trained staff in the company of ICRC delegates. This enabled the person to take over full responsibility for supervising laboratories from the ICRC, as planned.

A new health post in Kpotomai raised to 13 the number of ICRC-supported facilities (including 4 laboratories) in Lofa and Grand Kru counties. The facilities received drugs, medical and laboratory equipment, technical support and incentives for around 200 staff. Additionally, 11 incinerators and pits for burning waste were constructed. This enhanced the quality of much-needed health services in remote areas with high concentrations of recent returnees.

Student nurses and midwives were offered internships in ICRC-supported health facilities so as to attract qualified personnel to remote areas, where a shortage of such staff frustrated efforts to improve public health services. These efforts paid off, as some of the 26 students thus deployed stayed on after their internships ended.

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare certified 180 traditional midwives, after they had completed a six-month course. Sixty others started a similar course. Refresher courses were also conducted regularly.

In coordination with the National Aids Control Program, the ICRC organized a workshop on sexually transmitted infections. The ministry and the ICRC organized a workshop for all laboratory technicians on bacteriology and microscopy. Ministry personnel attended refresher and on-the-job training courses organized by ICRC staff.

Ministry staff attended courses on vaccination and the treatment of malaria, organized by various actors with ICRC support. The ministry received support in carrying out mass vaccination campaigns and other initiatives to immunize people in the two counties. Over 18,500 mosquito nets were distributed in areas served by ICRC-supported clinics, preceded by health education sessions. This helped reduce the number of cases of malaria and other preventable diseases.

Over 390 patients (including 109 obstetric patients) were referred by the ICRC to a second level of care, and 65 were airlifted to tertiary health facilities in Monrovia. Pregnant women could deliver their babies more safely thanks to these activities and to trained traditional midwives deployed in communities served by ICRC-supported facilities.

In the 13 ICRC-supported health centres (catchment population: 120,000):

- ▶ 140,252 people given consultations, including 12,016 attending ante/post-natal consultations and 128,236 attending curative consultations
- ▶ 43,890 vaccine doses administered (30,406 to children aged five or under)
- ▶ 2,584 health education sessions held

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

The ICRC continued to visit prisons and share with the relevant authorities its findings and recommendations on the inmates' treatment and detention conditions. Detainees were offered the opportunity to communicate with their families through the RCM service and provided with hygiene products as needed. The embassies concerned were notified of the detention of their nationals, if the detainees in question so wished.

Detainees in Harper and Zwedru prisons had improved access to water following the completion of a well with a water supply back-up system and repairs to pumps.

The Corrections Advisory Unit of UNMIL was provided with technical advice on the construction of prison facilities and wells in three towns to support the rehabilitation of prisons. The judicial authorities received office supplies and equipment to support UN-led judicial reforms.

- ▶ 1,387 detainees visited, of whom 3 monitored individually and 3 newly registered, during 81 visits to 29 places of detention
- ▶ 164 RCMs collected from and 49 RCMs distributed to detainees and 41 phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative
- ▶ 60 detainees benefited from water/sanitation projects
- ▶ 117 detainees received hygiene products

AUTHORITIES

The national authorities and the ICRC continued discussing the need to ratify IHL treaties and incorporate their provisions into national legislation. A bill on the Ottawa Convention, prepared with ICRC support, awaited adoption by the legislature.

- ▶ a government representative attended the Council of Delegates and the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Geneva, Switzerland
- ▶ over 100 civil servants attended sessions on IHL and the ICRC

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Still undergoing reforms, including recruitment and training, the armed forces benefited from the training of 20 instructors in IHL and the briefing of 123 recruits on IHL and the ICRC.

Police training by UNMIL neared completion, and recruitment continued. The police hierarchy, UN Civilian Police instructors and the ICRC coordinated their activities. Nearly 600 police and correctional recruits attended sessions on humanitarian values and the ICRC. Some 30 Bangladeshi and new UNMIL contingents were briefed on IHL and the ICRC, while over 560 UN military observers and high-ranking UNMIL officers from 24 countries attended sessions on similar topics and the application of IHL to UN peace-support operations and civil-military cooperation.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The local and international media, academics and other civil society members continued to benefit from efforts to promote IHL and the ICRC's mandate and activities.

Following the participation of a dean and a lecturer from the University of Liberia in an IHL moot court competition in Sierra Leone, the academic authorities obtained an IHL curriculum from the ICRC for adaptation to local needs.

The screening of the ICRC film *Liberia: hope at last*, portraying ICRC activities in post-conflict Liberia reached over 3,680 people. Four local journalists visited an ICRC sub-delegation to gain a better understanding of ICRC operations.

- 55 staff of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission briefed on IHL
- 20 journalists trained in IHL
- over 40 international and local journalists attended press conferences on ICRC activities
- articles on IHL published in a local military publication
- a survey on the effectiveness of ICRC activities conducted in 5 counties
- 22 students briefed on the Movement by the National Society and the ICRC
- over 940 elders, religious leaders, youths and midwives attended sessions on the ICRC and the Movement

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Liberian Red Cross continued receiving ICRC logistics back-up and technical and financial support as the focus of its operations shifted from relief to development. It drew up a five-year strategic plan – adopted by its general assembly in February – and revised and printed its statutes. It reviewed its branches' performance and enhanced their participation in planning activities. It completed construction of two branch offices and renovated another.

Assistance

With ICRC support, the National Society:

- provided 1,885 households with agricultural tools, rice seed and food
- provided 100 women with gardening tools and vegetable seed
- provided 196 families affected by floods with material assistance
- chlorinated 100 wells, rehabilitated 8 water pumps and promoted ownership of water points in 58 communities
- trained 1,649 of its staff members and staff of the ICRC, Africare and Plan International, in first aid and hygiene promotion
- trained 15 staff in motorbike maintenance to strengthen its logistical capacity
- revised and printed its first-aid manual
- distributed some 30 tonnes of clothes to vulnerable people

Restoring family links

The National Society reduced the number of staff involved in tracing activities, the need for which decreased as refugees regionwide returned to their home countries and communications improved. It received ICRC support in further developing its tracing criteria and revising its tracing handbook and conducted a nationwide campaign to promote the programme on restoring family links. It improved its mobility thanks to a donation of 14 motorcycles from the ICRC.

Promoting IHL and the Movement

With ICRC support, the National Society:

- promoted the Movement through 93 Red Cross school clubs
- produced and distributed its newsletter and brochures to government ministries and other stakeholders
- distributed 3,000 copies of the comic book *The Battle of the Villages*, sports equipment and other items to youth clubs
- printed 5,000 copies of its new statutes and conducted IHL sessions for 339 of its members
- together with the International Federation and the ICRC, held a press conference to launch celebrations in May, which the government had declared Red Cross Month
- issued press releases on Red Cross activities

Coordination of Movement activities

Four meetings held by Movement partners to coordinate their activities resulted in more cohesive support to the Liberian Red Cross. The National Society's five-year strategic plan was well received by eight supporting National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation. Its water and sanitation, disaster response and organizational development initiatives were supported by the ICRC, the International Federation and other Movement partners.