

LIBERIA



+ ICRC delegation + ICRC sub-delegation

The ICRC has worked in Liberia since 1970, opening its delegation in 1990. Following intense fighting early in 2003 and the subsequent signing of a peace agreement, the ICRC stepped up its operations. Since 2005, it has focused on protecting and assisting returnees (former IDPs and refugees) and residents, the wounded and sick, detainees, and children separated from their families, winding down these activities as the situation has become more stable. The ICRC supports the Liberian Red Cross Society and runs programmes to promote IHL among armed forces present in the country.

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	294
Assistance	1,038
Prevention	1,512
Cooperation with National Societies	3,016
General	-

▶ **5,860**
of which: Overheads 358

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	100%
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PERSONNEL

Expatriates	8
National staff (daily workers not included)	99

KEY POINTS

In 2010, the ICRC:

- ▶ with Movement partners, strengthened the Liberia National Red Cross Society's autonomy and emergency response, family-links and communication capacities, particularly through training and its involvement in joint initiatives
- ▶ with the National Society, rapidly responded to the influx of refugees generated by post-electoral violence in Côte d'Ivoire, launching emergency family-links, water and sanitation activities for those affected
- ▶ at the authorities' request, began urgent improvements to water and sanitation infrastructure in 4 prisons housing 955 inmates and carried out a health care assessment in 14 prisons to reduce detainees' health risks
- ▶ with the National Society, provided 211,187 people with more reliable access to clean water and sanitation facilities, while promoting good hygiene practices to ensure sustainable benefits
- ▶ provided agricultural inputs and specialist training to 40,812 people in Lofa county, contributing to their long-term food and economic security
- ▶ marked 20 years of ICRC action in Liberia, organizing events across the country to raise awareness of the Movement and humanitarian principles among a broad cross-section of society

CONTEXT

Seven years after the end of the conflict in Liberia, the potential for localized unrest remained, owing mainly to persistent ethnic tensions, land-tenure disputes and limited resources. In February, an outbreak of ethnic violence in Voinjama caused several deaths, some 20 wounded and damage to property. The government called in peacekeepers from the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to restore order and appointed an interethnic committee to examine the root causes of the violence.

Meanwhile, the government pursued efforts to strengthen its institutions, restore public services and rebuild the country's infrastructure. Although the economy showed signs of recovery, poverty remained widespread. While some improvements began filtering down to the general population, many continued to

struggle for access to basic utilities such as water and sanitation and to health care. Unemployment, reportedly at 80%, particularly affected young Liberians, including former combatants.

In January, US contractors handed over responsibility for training the Liberian armed forces to the Defence Ministry, maintaining a mentoring role. UNMIL confirmed its intention to remain in the country until after elections scheduled for late 2011.

In December, when presidential elections in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire resulted in political deadlock, associated tensions and violence drove some 18,000 people to seek refuge in north-eastern Liberia. In this remote, impoverished area with minimal State infrastructure, the influx threatened to increase health risks and overwhelm host communities' already limited resources.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

ASSISTANCE

CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Economic security, water and habitat		Total	Women	Children
Agricultural, veterinary and other micro-economic initiatives	Beneficiaries	40,812	30%	50%
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	211,187	30%	44%
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
Economic security, water and habitat				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	1,412		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	955		

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

In coordination with other Movement partners, the ICRC focused on strengthening the Liberia National Red Cross Society as a major provider of humanitarian assistance in post-conflict Liberia. While pursuing its remaining assistance activities, the ICRC worked to develop structures and systems aimed at enabling the authorities, vulnerable communities and the National Society to cope in an emergency after the eventual withdrawal of ICRC support. To this end, the ICRC increased its involvement in National Society activities, at once building the latter's operational experience and helping raise its profile. The National Society also benefited from ICRC funding, training and expertise to reinforce its organizational development and emergency response, family-links and communication activities.

To ensure the National Society retained effective emergency response capacities, the ICRC helped it review its contingency plans and provide refresher training to personnel. Together they responded swiftly to humanitarian needs following violence in Voinjama and, with the arrival of refugees from Côte d'Ivoire, set about establishing a joint base in Sanniquellie with International Federation support. In coordination with relevant actors, National Society/ICRC teams helped refugees to contact relatives left behind in Côte d'Ivoire and, to benefit both refugees and residents, began working to increase local access to clean water.

Throughout the year, the ICRC and the National Society worked with the Liberian water board to improve public health in urban and rural areas. Together they constructed and repaired water infrastructure in vulnerable communities, providing readier access to clean water and reducing exposure to water-borne diseases. To help ensure sustainability, ICRC-trained National Society volunteers established community water committees to maintain the facilities and promote good hygiene practices locally.

The ICRC continued to assist vulnerable farming communities, providing agricultural inputs and specialist training to boost their food and economic security. It concentrated on equipping previously assisted plantation farmers with the tools and skills to maintain their livelihoods in the long term, resulting in 80% of beneficiary communities being able to cover their food needs. Delegates also supported the National Society in implementing its own agricultural initiatives, providing materials and expert back-up on the ground.

At the authorities' request, the ICRC visited several prisons to assess detainees' living conditions. It promptly began urgent repairs to water and sanitation infrastructure in four prisons to reduce health risks posed by poor hygiene. To complement this support, an ICRC prison-health specialist visited 14 prisons to assess inmates' access to health care. Delegates assisted the authorities in ensuring that detainees requiring urgent treatment

received appropriate care, and began exploring with them ways to improve conditions, particularly by stepping up infrastructure maintenance and enhancing preventive health care.

Through tailored presentations, public events and publicity, the National Society/ICRC worked to increase support for humanitarian principles and Movement activities among authorities, weapon bearers and other groups likely to have an influence during Liberia's fragile reconstruction phase. The 20th anniversary of the ICRC's presence in Liberia brought together a broad cross-section of society, from dignitaries to youth groups, at high-profile National Society/ICRC events organized to mark the occasion. Regular briefings increased understanding of IHL/international human rights law among UN peacekeepers and military/security personnel countrywide.

To ensure Liberian Red Cross family-links services remained relevant in peacetime, an ICRC expert tracing delegate worked with the National Society to draft a new policy. Together they undertook a nationwide assessment of current needs and developed a plan of action accordingly.

CIVILIANS

Following violence in Voinjama, local residents received visits from delegates to ensure they had sufficient food and basic household supplies and access to medical attention where required. National Society personnel provided first aid as needed.

In December, refugees from Côte d'Ivoire began arriving in Liberia, driven by fear in the face of mounting insecurity triggered by the post-election crisis. Their movements, needs and impact on host communities were monitored by the National Society, which, with International Federation and ICRC support, set about mobilizing the Movement's response from a base in Sanniquellie. Coordination with the authorities, UN agencies and other relevant actors helped ensure needs were covered, while avoiding duplication.

During visits to affected communities, specially trained National Society/ICRC teams (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*) gave refugees the opportunity to contact family and registered any children travelling without their parents.

To reduce health risks magnified by added strain on local resources, Movement engineers began work aimed at improving access to water for refugees and residents in 18 communities. Movement personnel also stood ready to distribute essential household items if the need arose.

Communities benefit from better access to clean water and hygiene-awareness training

During the year, 211,187 Liberians, divided roughly equally between urban and rural areas, benefited from ICRC water and hygiene-awareness initiatives.

Residents of Monrovia continued to experience difficulties obtaining safe water. Many in districts unconnected to the main supply travelled long distances to fetch costly supplies. During the year, the water board assumed responsibility for eight water storage/distribution points, known as kiosks, previously constructed and managed by the ICRC. With National Society/ICRC teams, it worked to extend the water supply more widely, constructing further kiosks and rehabilitating water points throughout flood-prone districts; such efforts enabled it to reduce water prices by two-thirds. Vulnerable residents therefore gained readier access to clean water, reducing their exposure to water-borne diseases. They established water committees and received ICRC training in facility maintenance, encouraging community ownership.

To support the Liberian Red Cross in maintaining water infrastructure in rural Liberia, 79 volunteers attended ICRC training, enabling them to undertake routine maintenance to water points and establish community committees to oversee the facilities and promote good hygiene locally. Consequently, they trained 200 committee members and repaired/rehabilitated 200 wells, contributing to healthier environmental conditions for the local population. Committee members benefited from ongoing National Society support, including advice and cleaning materials, to ensure the sustainability of the facilities. Following a cholera outbreak, 50 volunteers refreshed their skills on an ICRC course, then worked swiftly to chlorinate affected water points and advise local residents on ways to contain the disease.

Villages in Grand Kru and Lofa counties, where a spare-parts procurement network was established with ICRC support in 2009, received visits from National Society/ICRC teams to check that the system was functioning properly. Using the network, remote communities had the means to undertake routine repairs to local water infrastructure without external support, helping provide sustainable access to clean water.

Rural communities benefit from livelihood support

In Lofa county, where communities relied chiefly on cash-crop production to support themselves, 40,812 people benefited from ICRC support in rebuilding their livelihoods following years of conflict.

In March, an assessment exercise was launched to monitor the progress made by farmers in Kolahun and Voinjama districts who, through an ICRC cash-for-work initiative, rehabilitated coffee and palm-oil plantations with ICRC support in 2009. Having completed the rehabilitation phase, farmers received the last instalment of cash assistance mid-year, as ICRC activities refocused to encourage community ownership.

During 2010, 35,772 members of 53 communities (5,962 households), including members of local cooperatives and farmers' associations and 583 households headed by women, benefited from further ICRC training and equipment to help them maintain the plantations until the trees began fruiting in 2012. Besides acquiring brushing techniques to counter pests and weeds, they received fertilizer and insecticides and training on how to spray the crops to maximize yield. To complement their practical

experience, 2,134 farmers who demonstrated a commitment to managing their plantations independently were selected for specialist training facilitated by the Liberia National Federation of Cooperative Societies and ICRC agronomists. Courses focused on the importance of good governance and community participation in achieving lasting social and economic impact.

Owing partly to this initiative, which helped farmers recover self-sufficiency by boosting their productivity, marketing capacities and revenue, around 80% of ICRC-supported farming households were able to cover their food needs.

Twelve National Society volunteers were trained by the ICRC to supervise and support the communities in maintaining their activities after the withdrawal of ICRC support.

Through an ICRC-supported Liberian Red Cross/Ministry of Agriculture initiative, 1,000 lowland farmers in 36 communities across 5 counties and 1,000 farmers from upland areas in 3 counties received seed and tools to cultivate swamp and upland rice respectively. Regular monitoring by National Society/ICRC teams ensured they could seek expert advice where necessary. At harvest time, the farmers returned a proportion of their rice seed to ICRC-trained National Society personnel, who redistributed it to other vulnerable farmers in the same communities. This boosted farmers' productive capacities, thereby contributing to the wider community's food and economic security.

Liberians consulted regarding post-conflict family-links needs

A small number of Liberian family members separated by violence or other crises sought to exchange news through Movement family-links services. In efforts to ensure such services remained relevant in peacetime, separated relatives nationwide were invited to explain their needs through an ICRC-supported Liberian Red Cross assessment (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*).

Health authorities to benefit from renewed ICRC support

An ICRC assessment of health facilities handed over to the authorities in 2009 showed that while clinics continued efforts to adhere to ICRC-recommended guidelines, they were experiencing certain difficulties, for example in maintaining staffing levels and acquiring essential drugs. In this context, the health authorities welcomed an ICRC proposal to resume its support to four clinics in 2011 aimed at restoring community access to quality preventive and curative care.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

In February, people held in connection with violence in Voinjama met delegates, who monitored their well-being. Detainees received ICRC sleeping mats and blankets and, as the prison had sustained material damage, benefited from urgent repairs to their quarters.

During the year, it emerged that detainees in Liberia often suffered health problems owing to poor hygiene conditions. Despite previous ICRC renovations to sanitation infrastructure, many such facilities

had ceased functioning effectively. In light of conditions, the Liberian Bureau of Correction and Rehabilitation (BCR) requested ICRC support in improving detainees' environmental health.

After assessing conditions, the ICRC began urgent repairs to water and sanitation infrastructure in 4 prisons housing 955 detainees. In Monrovia, detainees gained improved access to water thanks to new storage facilities and renovated water points, which were connected to the national water network. Together with inmates in Robertsport, Voinjama and Zwedru, they also benefited from an overhaul of sanitation infrastructure, enabling safer waste disposal.

In parallel, personnel from three prisons examined recommended maintenance procedures at an ICRC-led workshop, as a first step towards establishing a national committee responsible for maintaining penitentiary infrastructure.

Detainees' access to health care improved

Inmates in 14 prisons were the focus of a comprehensive health assessment conducted by an ICRC prison-health specialist. Based on the findings, the authorities and the ICRC examined the pressing need to establish preventive health care mechanisms and an efficient referral system. Together they arranged for seriously ill detainees to be transferred to hospital, and for those with persistent skin complaints to be treated using ICRC anti-fungal remedies. Over 1,400 vulnerable inmates received ICRC blankets, antiseptic soap and other items to improve their comfort and avoid infection.

AUTHORITIES

Efforts continued to familiarize actors involved in Liberia's reconstruction with IHL and the Movement, to foster respect for civilians' rights and support for National Society/ICRC activities.

Local, national and regional authorities attended regular briefings on Movement activities organized with the Liberian Red Cross. At inaugural ceremonies marking 20 years of ICRC work in Liberia, over 500 high-ranking diplomats and representatives from government, UNMIL and UN agencies turned out to demonstrate their support. Their backing facilitated humanitarian coordination when Ivorian refugees began arriving in December.

Seeking to advance national IHL implementation, the Justice Ministry held talks with an ICRC legal expert, focusing on priority instruments such as the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. To contribute to government IHL capacity building, two officials received sponsorship to attend an Economic Community of West African States/ICRC seminar in Abuja (see *Nigeria*).

Meanwhile, the Defence Ministry and UNMIL strengthened their cooperation with the National Society/ICRC aimed at reminding weapon bearers countrywide of their responsibilities under IHL/international human rights law. Some 300 UNMIL troops, 75 Liberian armed forces members and 570 joint security personnel

examined the practical application of these laws during field briefings. Incoming personnel benefited from introductory briefings, reaching 375 UNMIL personnel and 225 police recruits. Senior police officers refreshed their first-aid skills at advanced National Society/ICRC courses and received teaching materials in order to train fellow officers.

Based on an ICRC assessment of IHL knowledge among the Liberian armed forces, the Defence Ministry accepted an ICRC proposal to support it in integrating IHL into the forces' training, doctrine and operations from 2011.

CIVIL SOCIETY

During the year, some 4,000 influential community members, including youth groups, traditional and religious leaders and NGOs, raised their awareness of IHL and the Movement's humanitarian work through National Society/ICRC presentations countrywide. These helped build understanding of the respective roles of the Liberian Red Cross and the ICRC in post-conflict Liberia.

Local and international media received National Society/ICRC publications and participated in press conferences, helping them to report accurately on Movement activities. With ICRC funding, two journalists enhanced their humanitarian reporting techniques at a workshop abroad. They then put their skills into practice on ICRC-run field trips, interviewing people who had previously benefited from Movement initiatives. Resulting articles, television and radio spots helped generate public support for Movement activities, particularly surrounding the 20th anniversary of ICRC presence in Liberia. Over 1,100 people learnt about the Movement through a touring photo exhibition and presentations organized by the National Society/ICRC to mark the occasion. Sports tournaments similarly organized in three cities attracted over 2,000 participants, encouraging active support for Movement activities among young people.

The dean of the University of Liberia's law faculty expressed interest in working with the ICRC to introduce IHL in curricula, welcoming its proposal to provide IHL presentations and publications to students. As an initial step in building IHL teaching capacities, one professor received ICRC funding to join IHL experts at a regional seminar.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Liberian Red Cross worked towards assuming its peacetime responsibilities while retaining emergency response capacities, benefiting from sustained ICRC support to strengthen its core structure, organizational development and assistance, family-links and communication activities. To facilitate coordination, it hosted regular meetings for Movement partners operating locally.

In discussion with an ICRC tracing expert, the National Society's tracing coordinator drafted a new family-links policy drawing on its assessment of family-links needs (see *Civilians*). Disaster-management coordinators reviewed contingency plans with delegates and organized workshops to enhance staff capacities to mobilize emergency operations. Partnering the ICRC, National Society personnel gained practical experience in planning and implementing assistance operations (see *Civilians*). To better prepare Liberians for potential crises, the National Society taught first aid to 1,375 members of Red Cross school clubs and community associations in nine counties.

To boost its visibility and better support its field operations, the National Society, with ICRC funds, constructed four branch offices, and a guesthouse to support its disaster-response fund. With ICRC back-up, it conducted branch-level meetings to guide field personnel on good governance and management practices and, at headquarters, adopted several institutional policies regarding human resources procedures.

Such efforts helped ensure that, with International Federation and ICRC back-up, the Liberian Red Cross was able to launch an effective response to the Ivorian refugee influx (see *Civilians*), rapidly mobilizing and training volunteers.

Incoming personnel learnt to promote the Movement and its emblems at courses organized with ICRC input, enabling them to relay such messages effectively to the public and the authorities via radio spots and promotional materials produced with ICRC funds. By teaming up with delegates, using ICRC transport to access remote areas, the National Society was able to conduct presentations reaching 17,945 people.