



# algeria

The ICRC in Algeria carries out visits to people held in places of detention run by the Ministry of Justice and to people remanded in custody in police stations and *gendarmeries*. It cooperates closely with the Algerian Red Crescent, supporting in particular its efforts to assist women and child victims of violence and to strengthen its national first-aid network. The ICRC also works to promote IHL among Algerian civil society, the authorities and the armed forces.

## EXPENDITURE (IN CHF ,000)

Protection	743
Assistance	27
Prevention	284
Cooperation with National Societies	907
General	-

► **1,961**

of which: Overheads 120

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	75.5%
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## PERSONNEL

4	expatriates
5	national staff (daily workers not included)

## KEY POINTS

### In 2005, the ICRC:

- stepped up visits to prisons, police stations and *gendarmeries* to assess the treatment and living conditions of people detained by the Algerian authorities;
- continued to provide technical, training and financial assistance for Algerian Red Crescent programmes designed to help women and children overcome the trauma of violence and reintegrate into society;
- provided technical, material and financial support to a prosthetic/orthotic production unit using ICRC technology to fit Algerian amputees;
- gave material assistance and training to enhance the capacities of the Algerian Red Crescent's first-aid, dissemination and tracing and RCM services;
- working with the National Society, restored contact between people in Algeria and their family members detained/interned abroad or living in countries affected by conflict;
- reinforced contacts with Algerian universities to promote the inclusion of IHL in law curricula and helped lay the groundwork for the educational authorities to pilot-test the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme in a number of Algerian schools.

## CONTEXT

In September 2005, a national referendum endorsed the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, which proposed an amnesty for people allegedly implicated in the years of intense civil strife that followed Algerian general elections in 1991. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika presented the charter to the electorate as part of ongoing efforts by the authorities to promote national unity fractured by the violence of the 1990s, which left between 150,000 and 200,000 people dead. Sporadic clashes nevertheless persisted between Algerian security forces and armed militants.

Rising oil prices generated increased revenue for the government to finance social and economic reforms and development programmes initiated by the Algerian president following his re-election in 2004. The government also took steps to reform the country's judicial and penitentiary systems and to privatize certain business sectors with a view to boosting the economy and reducing unemployment.

The National Advisory Committee for the Promotion of Human Rights, officially mandated to set up an ad hoc mechanism to address the issue of people unaccounted for in Algeria, submitted its findings in a confidential report to the government at the end of March.

## MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		WOUNDED AND SICK		
Detainees visited	12,045	<i>Physical rehabilitation</i>		
Detainees visited and monitored individually	279	Patients receiving services	Patients	69
Number of visits carried out	64	Prostheses delivered	Pieces	30
Number of places of detention visited	57			
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS				
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>				
RCMs collected	36			
RCMs distributed	74			

## ICRC ACTION

The ICRC in Algeria focused mainly on visits to places of detention to assess the treatment and living conditions of detainees and on strengthening the capacity of the Algerian Red Crescent to deliver humanitarian services.

Visits to places of detention run by the Ministry of Justice and to people remanded in custody in police stations and *gendarmeries* were stepped up following a reinforcement of the ICRC's detention team in Algeria.

The ICRC maintained its assistance to Algerian Red Crescent programmes for women and children traumatized by violence. Emphasis was also placed on helping Red Crescent staff and volunteers at local and provincial level to develop multi-disciplinary skills to enhance their ability to respond to emergencies, particularly in the fields of first-aid, psychological support, tracing and communication.

Another priority for the ICRC was to develop contacts with the Algerian authorities and key civil society circles such as the media to promote IHL and boost support for the organization's mandate and humanitarian activities.

## CIVILIANS

The ICRC continued to support Algerian Red Crescent programmes for women and children suffering the effects of violence (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*).

In cooperation with the National Society, the ICRC provided tracing and RCM services to help Algerians locate and restore contact with family members detained/interned abroad or living in countries such as Iraq where communications remained difficult.

- ▶ 36 RCMs collected and 71 delivered

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

At the end of 2005, an estimated 40,000 people were being held in 127 penitentiary centres under the authority of the Ministry of Justice. The ICRC continued to visit detainees in a number of these centres under the terms of an access agreement concluded with the ministry in 1999. Visits were also made to people remanded in custody in police stations and *gendarmeries*.

During these visits, particular attention was paid to monitoring the treatment and detention conditions of women and minors.

After each visit, ICRC delegates conveyed their observations, together with recommendations for any necessary corrective action, to the authorities directly in charge of the detention facilities, as well as to the State prosecutors concerned. The ICRC also submitted to the detaining authorities a summary report of its visits carried out in 2004.

- ▶ 12,045 detainees visited, including 279 monitored individually, during 64 visits made to 57 places of detention, including prisons, police stations and *gendarmeries*
- ▶ 3 RCMs distributed on behalf of detainees and their families

## WOUNDED AND SICK

As part of an ongoing programme initiated in 2001, the ICRC provided technical and financial support to the Ben Aknoun physical rehabilitation centre in Algiers, which used low-cost polypropylene technology and ICRC materials to produce artificial limbs and other orthopaedic appliances for the disabled.

- ▶ 69 patients received services at ICRC-supported rehabilitation centre

- ▶ 24 new patients fitted with prostheses and 37 with orthoses
- ▶ 30 prostheses (4 for mine victims) delivered

## AUTHORITIES

The ICRC kept up a regular dialogue with the Algerian authorities with a view to accelerating the national implementation of IHL treaties to which Algeria had acceded. In addition, the ICRC:

- ▶ participated in an international symposium on the implementation of the Ottawa Convention held in Algiers in May, jointly organized by the Ministry of Employment and National Solidarity and the UNDP (in November, Algeria destroyed its remaining stocks of anti-personnel mines);
- ▶ participated in a regional symposium on the trafficking of small arms and light weapons, organized by the UN and the League of Arab States in Algiers in April;
- ▶ The Algerian authorities worked on legislation to repress crimes against humanity following the adoption by the Council of Arab Justice Ministers of a draft law related to the ratification and implementation of the Rome Statute. They also made moves to create a national IHL committee and to draft a law on the protection of the emblem.

## ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The ICRC remained at the disposal of the Algerian authorities to help them incorporate the systematic teaching of IHL into the theoretical and practical instruction programmes of the Algerian armed forces.

- 2 Algerian military officers participated in a regional seminar on IHL organized by the ICRC in Cairo (see *Egypt*)

## CIVIL SOCIETY

The ICRC broadened its network of contacts with the Algerian media to promote more widespread coverage of IHL-related issues.

Contacts were also reinforced with the Ministry of Higher Education and with six university law faculties and the national administration school to encourage the study of IHL at university level. The ICRC also:

- gave lectures on IHL at the Universities of Annaba and Sidi Bel Abbès and provided documentation on IHL to the library of the University of Algiers;
- sponsored the participation of 2 Algerian law students in a competition on the International Criminal Court organized by the Belgian Red Cross and that of 2 other law students in a course on IHL at the Arab Centre for Legal and Judicial Studies in Beirut;
- coached 3 students selected to participate in a moot-court competition on IHL in 2006;
- ran a second training seminar for teachers on the Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL) programme, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education;
- monitored initial pilot-testing of the EHL programme in a number of schools near Algiers;
- invited an Algerian journalist to participate in a seminar on the protection of civilians in times of conflict organized by the ICRC in Dubai.

## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

By the end of 2005, the Algerian Red Crescent, with ICRC assistance, had trained thousands of first-aid workers who could be mobilized at short notice to respond to emergencies regionally and nationwide.

Throughout the year, the ICRC continued to provide technical, training and material support for an Algerian Red Crescent programme to help women and children overcome the trauma of violence and to ease their reintegration into society through psychological support and vocational training. The programme was implemented in 15 selected regions (*wilayat*).

The ICRC, together with the National Society, also organized follow-up training courses in tracing, restoring family links and communication for Red Crescent volunteers in 46 of the country's 48 *wilayat*. For its part, the Algerian Red Crescent distributed and collected RCMs exchanged between people in Algeria and their family members detained/interned abroad and organized follow-up courses in communication and first aid across the country for staff previously trained in these fields with ICRC support.

With ICRC support, the National Society produced a regular newsletter, made a documentary film on its activities and maintained and updated its website.