

YAOUNDÉ (regional)

COVERING: Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe



The ICRC set up its Yaoundé regional delegation in 1992 but has been working in the region since 1972. It monitors the domestic situation in the countries covered, visits security detainees and helps restore contact between refugees, migrants and their families. It pursues longstanding programmes to spread knowledge of IHL among the authorities, armed forces and civil society, and supports the development of the region's National Societies.

YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

HIGH

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

In 2013:

- ▶ security detainees, particularly in northern Cameroon and in Equatorial Guinea's largest civil prison, received ICRC visits to monitor their treatment and living conditions, with some benefiting from ad hoc direct assistance
- ▶ in Gabon, the Justice Ministry and the ICRC began the government-led implementation of an agreement to enhance health/hygiene conditions for detainees in 2 prisons, with a view to making similar improvements in other prisons
- ▶ insecurity in border areas and regional tensions lent urgency to the ICRC's dialogue with the authorities, armed/security/police forces on IHL, international human rights law and the proper use of force in law enforcement
- ▶ the governments of Cameroon, Congo and Gabon drew on ICRC expertise to advance domestic IHL implementation, with Cameroon and Congo also ratifying key weapon-related treaties
- ▶ the region's National Societies strengthened their capacities in emergency preparedness/response, including in providing and teaching first aid, and in restoring family links, particularly for vulnerable migrants and refugees

EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)

Protection	1,442
Assistance	376
Prevention	1,609
Cooperation with National Societies	1,324
General	-

4,751

of which: Overheads 290

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	92%
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PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	9
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	52

PROTECTION	Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)	
Red Cross messages (RCMs)	
RCMs collected	170
RCMs distributed	287
Phone calls facilitated between family members	5
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	16
People reunited with their families	5
of whom unaccompanied minors/separated children	3
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)	
ICRC visits	
Detainees visited	2,775
Detainees visited and monitored individually	59
Number of visits carried out	47
Number of places of detention visited	24
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	24
RCMs distributed	7
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	4

ASSISTANCE	Targets	Achieved
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)		
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	436
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	380

CONTEXT

The region remained generally stable and free of armed conflict. However, insecurity in neighbouring countries had an adverse impact on security conditions and the socio-political situation in the areas covered by the Yaoundé delegation, notably in northern Cameroon, where refugees from Nigeria had gathered. People fleeing violence in the Central African Republic (hereafter CAR) sought refuge in eastern Cameroon and in north-eastern Congo.

In Angola, tensions between the armed forces and alleged members of the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda persisted; negotiations between the Front and the government remained stalled. Angolan authorities continued to deport allegedly irregular migrants, mostly nationals of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (hereafter DRC), from Lunda Norte to Kasai Occidental, DRC. Border posts between the two countries officially reopened in July. In late 2013, popular protests against the government and an incursion of the Angolan army into Congolese territory led to arrests.

Economic and social issues – unequal distribution of wealth, high youth unemployment and rising food prices – created discontent and, in Congo, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe, led to recurring strikes.

Local, legislative and senatorial elections in Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon passed off largely without incident.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The Yaoundé regional delegation focused on visiting detainees, particularly those held on security charges; promoting understanding of humanitarian principles and the Movement; and helping the region's National Societies strengthen their operational capacities to assist people in need. The ICRC reacted to the security situation in northern Cameroon (see *Context*) by opening an office in Maroua in November, to get a better understanding of the situation and to develop a response to the needs of refugees and host communities in the area.

Detainees in Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon received ICRC visits to monitor their treatment and living conditions. Those visited included detainees in northern Cameroon and, following strengthened dialogue with the authorities, people in Equatorial Guinea's largest civil prison, as well as irregular migrants held in retention centres in Angola. Afterwards, the detaining authorities received confidential feedback on various issues, such as respect for norms and principles applicable to arrest and detention, and to deportation.

The Gabonese authorities, aided by ICRC expertise, worked on various penitentiary reforms. Despite a slow start early in the year, the Health Ministry, penitentiary officials, prison health staff and the ICRC tackled issues relating to health in detention at a seminar in April. The Justice Ministry and the ICRC, working within the framework of an agreement signed during the seminar, launched a pilot project to enhance detainees' health and hygiene conditions in two prisons, with a view to making broader structural improvements in the long term. Ad hoc distributions of essential household, hygiene and recreational items improved detainees' conditions in selected prisons.

In Angola, meetings with local/national authorities focused on the situation of irregular migrants in Lunda Norte: discussions were based on information directly collected by the ICRC, including during visits to those awaiting deportation at border posts or in retention centres. These migrants and other detainees visited by delegates, as well as dispersed family members (mainly in Congo), used family-links services to restore/maintain contact. In most cases, these services were carried out with the National Society concerned, and enabled unaccompanied minors to rejoin their families. Particularly vulnerable separated children and former CAR soldiers in eastern Cameroon covered their immediate needs with food rations and essential items distributed by National Society/ICRC teams.

In view of the insecurity in border areas and the tensions in the region (see *Context*), the ICRC sustained or expanded contact – through briefings/workshops and other means – with local/national/regional authorities and armed/security/police forces, including the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Multinational Force of Central Africa (FOMAC) and the International School for Security Forces (EIFORCES). All this, together with networking efforts among influential members of civil society – religious leaders and Islamic organizations in northern Cameroon, academics and the media – furthered understanding of and garnered support for humanitarian principles, IHL, international human rights law, internationally recognized standards applicable to law enforcement, and the Movement.

Meetings with the authorities in Cameroon, Congo and Gabon helped advance domestic IHL implementation, with the Cameroonian and Congolese governments ratifying key weapon-related treaties. To help the armed forces incorporate IHL in their doctrine, training and operations, officers/instructors – particularly at military academies in Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon – with the ICRC's technical guidance, refined curricula and developed their understanding of IHL.

Whenever possible, the delegation carried out activities with the National Societies. Given the potential for violence, particularly in relation to elections, it provided financial/material support and training to help them strengthen their capacities in emergency preparedness/response, restoring family links, and disseminating/promoting IHL. Movement components met regularly to coordinate their activities.

CIVILIANS

Angolan authorities and ICRC discuss humanitarian principles and human rights

Civilians – particularly irregular migrants awaiting deportation from Lunda Norte to the DRC, violence-affected people in Angola's Cabinda enclave and, when the security situation allowed, refugees in northern Cameroon fleeing hostilities in north-eastern Nigeria – reported abuses committed against them to the ICRC. These allegations, together with information collected at Angolan border posts during the deportation of migrants and in migrant retention centres (see *People deprived of their freedom*), served as the basis for dialogue with the relevant local/national authorities, who were encouraged to put an end to such abuses.

The dialogue yielded results, particularly in Angola. In Lunda Norte, the ICRC received fewer allegations of abuse than before its arrival. Meetings with the Foreign Affairs and Interior Ministries and the national foreign migration service confirmed the commitment of the Angolan authorities to improving respect for the law. For example, the authorities, acting on the basis of reports presented by the ICRC, instructed their troops to prevent such abuses. Moreover, police/security officers in Angola, and mining companies' private security personnel, added to their knowledge of the respect due to civilians under international human rights law and other applicable legal norms (see *Authorities, armed forces and other bearers of weapons, and civil society*).

Unaccompanied minors rejoin their families

Separated family members, mostly in Congo, restored/maintained contact through family-links services run by National Society/ICRC teams. These dispersed people included migrants and refugees and unaccompanied minors, three of whom were reunited with their families (one going from Congo to rejoin a grandmother in Rwanda). In Angola and Congo, particularly vulnerable separated children – among them, children from an orphanage – were enabled to cover their immediate needs or ease their return home with food parcels and essential household items.

With ICRC support and training, the Angolan, Cameroonian and Congolese National Societies sustained their capacities in restoring family links. The Congolese National Society strengthened coordination within its tracing service, enabling it to function more independently. At a training session in Brazzaville, Congo, authorities and National Society representatives learnt more about the proper handling of human remains. In Cameroon, training helped the National Society to systematize, in cooperation with UNHCR, the registration of unaccompanied minors in refugee camps, including those from the CAR; training also prepared National Society volunteers for assessing the family-links needs of Nigerian refugees.

Irregular migrants and refugees meet their basic needs

Communities consisting mainly of irregular migrants learnt good hygiene practices at hygiene-promotion sessions run by the Angola Red Cross with ICRC help, as part of a cholera-prevention project launched in 2012.

Around 150 former members of the CAR military who arrived in eastern Cameroon in March/April sustained themselves with food rations and essential household items distributed by National Society/ICRC teams, with some of them receiving up to three rounds of relief. The health-care needs of people who had arrived in Congo's Likoula region were brought up with the authorities concerned.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Detainees at Equatorial Guinea's largest civil prison receive first visit since 2011

Detainees in Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon received visits, conducted in accordance with the ICRC's standard procedures, during which delegates monitored their treatment and living conditions. The detainees included people held on security charges – among them, foreign detainees arrested in Cabinda in late 2012, inmates in northern Cameroon, and people arrested in relation to the 2012 Mpila explosion – and irregular migrants awaiting deportation in retention centres or police stations in Lunda Norte (see *Civilians*). Security detainees were monitored individually, and vulnerable inmates such as women, children and foreigners received special attention. Inmates, particularly foreigners, contacted their families through RCMs or informed their consular representatives of their situation via the ICRC. Following visits, the authorities concerned received confidential feedback and recommendations for improvements, including, in Angola, on respect for norms and principles applicable to arrest and detention.

CIVILIANS	ANGOLA	CAMEROON	CONGO	GABON
Red Cross messages (RCMs)				
RCMs collected	3	35	130	2
			1	
RCMs distributed	3	19	262	3
			9	
Phone calls facilitated between family members	5			
Reunifications, transfers and repatriations				
People reunited with their families	2		3	
			1	
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons				
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	4	12	30	
		1	9	
	3	4	10	
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		11	5	
		4	1	
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)	6	7	61	4
		1	14	1
	3	4	21	1
UAMs/SCs*, including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers				
UAMs/SCs newly registered by the ICRC/National Society	4	6	6	
	2	2	5	
UAMs/SCs reunited with their families by the ICRC/National Society	2		1	
	1			
UAM/SC cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period	6	6	11	
		2	9	
Documents				
People to whom travel documents were issued			1	

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

After its resumption in 2012, strengthened dialogue with the Defence, Justice and National Security Ministries in Equatorial Guinea paved the way for visits to inmates at 10 detention facilities, some of which held a number of foreigners. For the first time since 2011, the ICRC conducted a complete visit to inmates at the country's largest civil prison, where a number of security detainees were being held.

Gabonese authorities take steps to improve detainees' health and hygiene

Gabonese authorities, with ICRC encouragement, worked on various penitentiary reforms. At an ICRC-supported seminar in Libreville in April, officials from the Health Ministry and the penitentiary administration, nine prison directors, and prison health staff learnt about issues related to health care provision in the prison sector. The Justice Ministry and the ICRC signed an agreement at the seminar outlining cooperation on improving detainees' health, hygiene and nutrition at two pilot prisons, with a view to making similar improvements at other prisons in the long term. The agreement followed from an ICRC report submitted to the Justice Ministry in 2012, containing findings and recommendations on health and sanitation at the two prisons. Implementing it took time, as discussions with the authorities focused on clarifying the terms of the agreement and on establishing coordination mechanisms and working groups for the project. Following assessment visits to both prisons, the Ministry of Justice, with ICRC support, contracted private companies to carry out repairs at the prisons, which included renovating a ward for minors.

Detainees at 11 prisons in Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Angola's Cabinda enclave enhanced their hygiene/living conditions with household essentials, hygiene kits, ceiling fans and recreational items provided on an ad hoc basis.

AUTHORITIES, ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS, AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Authorities and armed/security forces learn more about IHL and other applicable law

Insecurity in border areas and the tensions in the region (see *Context*) made dialogue with the authorities and armed/security forces even more important: it furthered their understanding of – and gained support for – humanitarian principles, IHL, international human rights law, internationally recognized standards applicable to law enforcement, and the Movement.

Officers and officers-in-training of the armed/security forces, the police and the *gendarmerie* in Angola (as well as employees of private security companies in mining areas), Cameroon (including forces stationed in the north), Equatorial Guinea and Gabon participated in briefings/workshops concerning these matters as well as the ICRC's response to humanitarian needs in the region (see *Civilians* and *People deprived of their freedom*).

In Cameroon, contact with the command of EIFORCES, which conducts peacekeeping courses mainly for officers from ECCAS-member countries, resulted in senior police/*gendarmerie* officers and officers-in-training attending similar sessions. In addition, military officers discussed related subjects at two seminars associated with the Health Care in Danger project.

At the regional level, bilateral discussions with ECCAS/FOMAC, including the regional central command, led to plans for IHL briefings for its standby brigade and for ICRC involvement in future field exercises.

Military training institutions – in Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon – and the ICRC discussed the incorporation of IHL in military doctrine, training and operations. To this end, Rapid

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	ANGOLA	CAMEROON	CONGO	EQUATORIAL GUINEA	GABON
ICRC visits					
Detainees visited	17	18	22	815	1,903
<i>of whom women</i>		1	1	88	80
<i>of whom minors</i>				13	69
Detainees visited and monitored individually	17	18	22	2	
<i>of whom women</i>		1	1	1	
Detainees newly registered	10	10	17	2	
<i>of whom women</i>		1		1	
Number of visits carried out	9	9	5	21	3
Number of places of detention visited	3	6	3	10	2
UAMs/SCs*, including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers					
RCMs collected		19	5		
RCMs distributed		3	4		
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		4			
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	1				

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	ANGOLA	CAMEROON	CONGO	EQUATORIAL GUINEA	GABON
Economic security, water and habitat					
Food commodities			6		
Essential household items	565	2,966	6	401	
Health					
Number of visits carried out by health staff					3
Number of places of detention visited by health staff					2

Intervention Battalion instructors in Limbé, Cameroon, with ICRC input, deepened their understanding of IHL, and the Mouila national training school for non-commissioned officers in Gabon expanded its IHL curriculum.

Humanitarian dialogue in northern Cameroon expands

Increased contact with influential civil society members fostered mutual understanding of humanitarian principles and raised awareness of the Movement and its activities. In northern Cameroon, religious leaders and members of Islamic organizations took part in a seminar on such topics and a youth forum was organized by youth clubs from the Cameroonian National Society.

The public grew more familiar with the Movement because of media coverage of its activities, such as the health-in-detention seminar in Gabon (see *People deprived of their freedom*); the media drew on ICRC publications, press releases and interviews. Around 100 members of Cameroon's largest media organization, and journalists in Gabon, learnt more about reporting on humanitarian affairs at National Society/ICRC workshops, where sometimes they also received first-aid training. National Society dissemination sessions, and events like World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day (8 May), added to the public's knowledge of the Movement. With ICRC support, the National Societies developed their public communication activities – a radio programme in Cameroon, for instance – and upgraded their communication skills and materials/equipment.

Cameroon and Congo ratify weapon-related treaties

National Society/ICRC briefings and workshops helped the pertinent ministries in Cameroon, Congo and Gabon advance ratification and implementation of IHL-related treaties: Cameroon ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Biological Weapons Convention; Cameroon and Congo ratified a convention for the control of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa; and Cameroon also adopted implementing legislation for the Hague Convention on Cultural Property. In Congo and Gabon, however, draft bills protecting the emblem remained pending.

The Cameroonian Justice Ministry tapped into ICRC expertise for the revision of a draft national criminal code to be submitted to the National Assembly.

Angolan and Congolese government officials discussed domestic IHL implementation and issues linked to the use of anti-personnel mines at workshops abroad (see *African Union* and *Pretoria*).

Congolese students test their knowledge of IHL at debate

Selected universities and judicial bodies such as the Supreme Court in Equatorial Guinea stimulated interest in IHL and in its academic study, helped by ICRC expertise and IHL resources geared to their needs, including updated publications for their libraries and an e-learning platform. Students and teachers used the delegation's IHL documentation centre for study/research purposes.

Students and lecturers tightened their grasp of IHL at ICRC-supported events. Although no moot court competitions took place, in Congo, around 150 students attended a conference held at one university, and 53 students tested each other's knowledge of IHL at a debate organized by an IHL club directed by the National School of Administration and Magistracy. Officials from the Defence, Humanitarian Action, Interior, Justice and Youth

Ministries attended the debate. Students from the national institutes of public administration in Cameroon and Gabon, and from a penitentiary administration school in Cameroon, attended IHL seminars.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The region's National Societies strengthened their capacities in emergency preparedness/response, restoring family links, and disseminating/promoting IHL with financial/material ICRC support and training (see above).

Following a 2012 regional workshop in Brazzaville aimed at harmonizing first-aid approaches, 15 first-aid instructors from the Cameroon Red Cross Society honed their skills at a train-the-trainer workshop, and teams from the Angola Red Cross and the Gabonese Red Cross Society upgraded their skills at training sessions, which sometimes contained a family-links module. The Gabonese Red Cross organized a regional train-the-trainer course, which was attended by representatives of various National Societies, who then taught their peers at home. The Congolese Red Cross updated its first-aid manual, while 40 volunteers refreshed their emergency response and first-aid skills, applying the Safer Access Framework. The National Societies received first-aid equipment and, in Sao Tome and Principe, an ambulance.

Owing to internal constraints, a regional workshop on activities related to economic security did not take place.

The Congolese Red Cross strengthened its internal management and took over the administration of its finances. The Gabonese Red Cross elected the members of its governing board.

Movement components met regularly – sometimes in third countries – to coordinate their activities.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total		
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Red Cross messages (RCMs)			UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected		170	1	
RCMs distributed		287	9	
Phone calls facilitated between family members		5		
Reunifications, transfers and repatriations				
People reunited with their families		5		
	<i>including people registered by another delegation</i>	1		
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons			Women	Minors
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		46	10	17
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		16		
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	5		
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		78	16	29
UAMs/SCs*, including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers			Girls	Demobilized children
UAMs/SCs newly registered by the ICRC/National Society		16	9	
UAMs/SCs reunited with their families by the ICRC/National Society		3	1	
UAM/SC cases still being handled by the ICRC/National Society at the end of the reporting period		23	11	
Documents				
People to whom travel documents were issued		1		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)¹				
ICRC visits			Women	Minors
Detainees visited		2,775	170	82
Detainees visited and monitored individually		59	3	
Detainees newly registered		39	2	
Number of visits carried out		47		
Number of places of detention visited		24		
Restoring family links				
RCMs collected		24		
RCMs distributed		7		
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		4		
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		1		

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

1. Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)¹				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	436		26%
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	380	3%	4%
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)²				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection programme)				
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	6		
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	3,938		
Health				
Number of visits carried out by health staff		3		
Number of places of detention visited by health staff		2		

1. Angola, Congo

2. Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon