

algeria



The ICRC has been working in Algeria, with some interruptions, since the 1954–1962 Algerian war of independence. It 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*. The ICRC also works to promote IHL among Algerian civil society, the authorities and the armed forces. The ICRC supports the Algerian Red Crescent’s reform process, which resumed in 2007.

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	875
Assistance	89
Prevention	479
Cooperation with National Societies	401
General	-

► **1,844**

of which: Overheads 113

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	66%
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PERSONNEL

5	expatriates
6	national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2007, the ICRC:

- ▶ continued visiting detainees in prisons, police stations and *gendarmeries* to assess their treatment and living conditions
- ▶ held meetings with the Algerian Red Crescent to discuss efforts to regularize its governing and operational structures
- ▶ reinforced contacts with Algerian universities to promote the integration of IHL into law and Islamic science curricula
- ▶ intensified contacts with civil society, the armed forces and local media to spread knowledge of and gain support for IHL and the Movement
- ▶ restored contact between families in Algeria and close relatives detained/interned abroad or living in countries where conflict had disrupted communications

CONTEXT

Pro-government parties retained a clear majority in parliamentary elections held in May.

Scores of people were killed and hundreds wounded in several car bomb and suicide attacks carried out during the year against government and foreign civilian targets, including the Constitutional Court and UN offices in Algiers. An organization calling itself the al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb, formerly known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, claimed responsibility for the attacks. In response, the armed forces stepped up their offensive against Islamist militants.

The escalation of violence shattered a period of relative calm marked by government efforts to introduce a Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation designed to heal the rifts in society caused by the violence in the 1990s. The charter, endorsed by national referendum in September 2005, proposed an amnesty for people allegedly involved in the years of unrest that followed general elections in 1992 and compensation for the families of the victims, including those with close relatives still unaccounted for from that period.

Increased oil revenues helped to finance government-backed social and economic reform and development programmes. The government also went ahead with reform of the country’s judicial and penitentiary systems.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

	Total		Total	Women	Children
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		WOUNDED AND SICK			
Detainees visited	18,469	<i>Physical rehabilitation</i>			
Detainees visited and monitored individually	96	Patients receiving services	66	11	6
Number of visits carried out	32	Prostheses delivered	13	1	1
Number of places of detention visited	31	Orthoses delivered	56	8	3
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS					
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>					
RCMs collected	95				
RCMs distributed	121				
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>					
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	1				
Tracing cases still being handled at 31 December 2007 (people)	4				
	<i>of which for females</i>				
	2				

ICRC ACTION

ICRC activities in Algeria focused mainly on visits to detainees to assess their treatment and living conditions.

Contacts were reinforced with Algerian universities to promote the inclusion of IHL in law curricula and with key sectors of civil society, such as the media and various religious circles, to promote knowledge and acceptance of the Movement and the ICRC's mandate and activities.

CIVILIANS

Restoring family links

Through ICRC tracing and RCM services, families in Algeria were able to locate and restore/maintain contact with relatives detained/interned abroad or living in conflict-affected countries such as Iraq where communications remained difficult.

- ▶ 75 RCMs collected from and 117 RCMs distributed to civilians
- ▶ new tracing request registered for 1 person; 4 people (including 2 females) still being sought

The ICRC remained at the disposal of the Algerian authorities to help them clarify the fate of persons unaccounted for in relation to past internal violence.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Visits continued to places of detention run by the Ministry of Justice and to people detained in police stations and *gendarmeries*.

The dialogue on detention issues was maintained with the Ministry of Justice. An ICRC report on its observations made during prison visits carried out in 2006 was submitted to the ministry in September. The report resulted in the holding of a round-table bringing together all the authorities concerned at the national level.

In addition, two ICRC reports on the treatment of suspects held in provisional detention centres under the authority of the Ministries of Interior and Defence were presented to the authorities.

- ▶ 18,469 detainees visited, of whom 96 monitored individually (including 1 minor) and 78 newly registered (including 1 minor), during 32 visits to 31 places of detention
- ▶ 20 RCMs collected from and 4 RCMs distributed to detainees

WOUNDED AND SICK

As part of an ongoing programme initiated in 2001, financial support was maintained 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.

Meetings with the Ministry of Health were held on a regular basis to discuss the possibility of the National Pedagogical Institute for Paramedical Training, where Algerian prosthetic/orthotic technicians were trained, becoming involved in the running of the centre.

- 66 patients (including 11 women and 6 children) received services at 1 ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centre
- 11 new patients (including 1 woman) fitted with prostheses and 56 (including 10 women and 6 children) fitted with orthoses
- 13 prostheses (including 1 for a woman and 1 for a child) and 56 orthoses (including 8 for women and 3 for children) delivered

AUTHORITIES

Contacts were kept up with the Algerian authorities on issues of mutual humanitarian concern. Towards the end of 2007, the Algerian president approved the creation of a national IHL committee.

- the director of legislation and research at the Ministry of Justice and the ICRC held regular meetings to assess progress made in integrating IHL into Algerian legislation
- the president of the interdepartmental committee on the implementation of the Ottawa Convention attended a regional meeting on mines and explosive remnants of war held in Tunis, Tunisia, in September
- the Algerian Ministry of Solidarity organized a second national seminar on mine awareness and prevention, at which the ICRC presented its mine-action programme for Algeria
- 2 high-ranking officials from the Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs participated in a regional meeting on IHL held in Cairo, Egypt (see *Egypt*)

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

As it had since an initial ICRC seminar on IHL for Algerian military instructors took place in 2003, the Algerian armed forces journal *El Djeich* regularly published articles on IHL. More than 300 senior officers attended a national seminar on IHL in October.

A high-ranking officer of the Algerian armed forces participated in the Senior Workshop on International Rules governing Military Operations (SWIRMO) held in Geneva, Switzerland, in August.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The ICRC broadened its networks with academic and media circles to promote greater knowledge of IHL and to encourage the teaching of the subject at university level.

- progress was made on the establishment of a National Research Centre on IHL at the faculty of law of the University of Algiers, as well as on the creation of a regional research department on IHL at the faculty of law in Blida. University law libraries in Algiers, Blida, Constantine and Setif received documentation on IHL, and law students regularly consulted an IHL library set up at the ICRC delegation in Algiers
- a book on IHL authored by Algerian scholars was in preparation for publication early in 2008
- the Diplomatic Institute of International Relations, under the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the ICRC organized a seminar on IHL, and plans were laid to start IHL training programmes for diplomats and magistrates
- all 127 prisons in Algeria received the ICRC quarterly magazine *Al Insani* containing articles on humanitarian topics
- the ICRC's Exploring Humanitarian Law programme, launched in 2005, continued to be pilot-tested in a number of schools near Algiers

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The ICRC remained concerned by the absence of elected governance in the Algerian Red Crescent for the previous three years and participated as an observer in its general assembly in late August, when the National Society elected a new president. These developments opened up opportunities for new dialogue and collaboration between the ICRC and the Algerian Red Crescent.

The Algerian Red Crescent worked on updating its existing first-aid manuals, with ICRC support. It also published the 28th issue of its internal bulletin and upgraded its website, aided by the ICRC.