

# Middle East and North Africa

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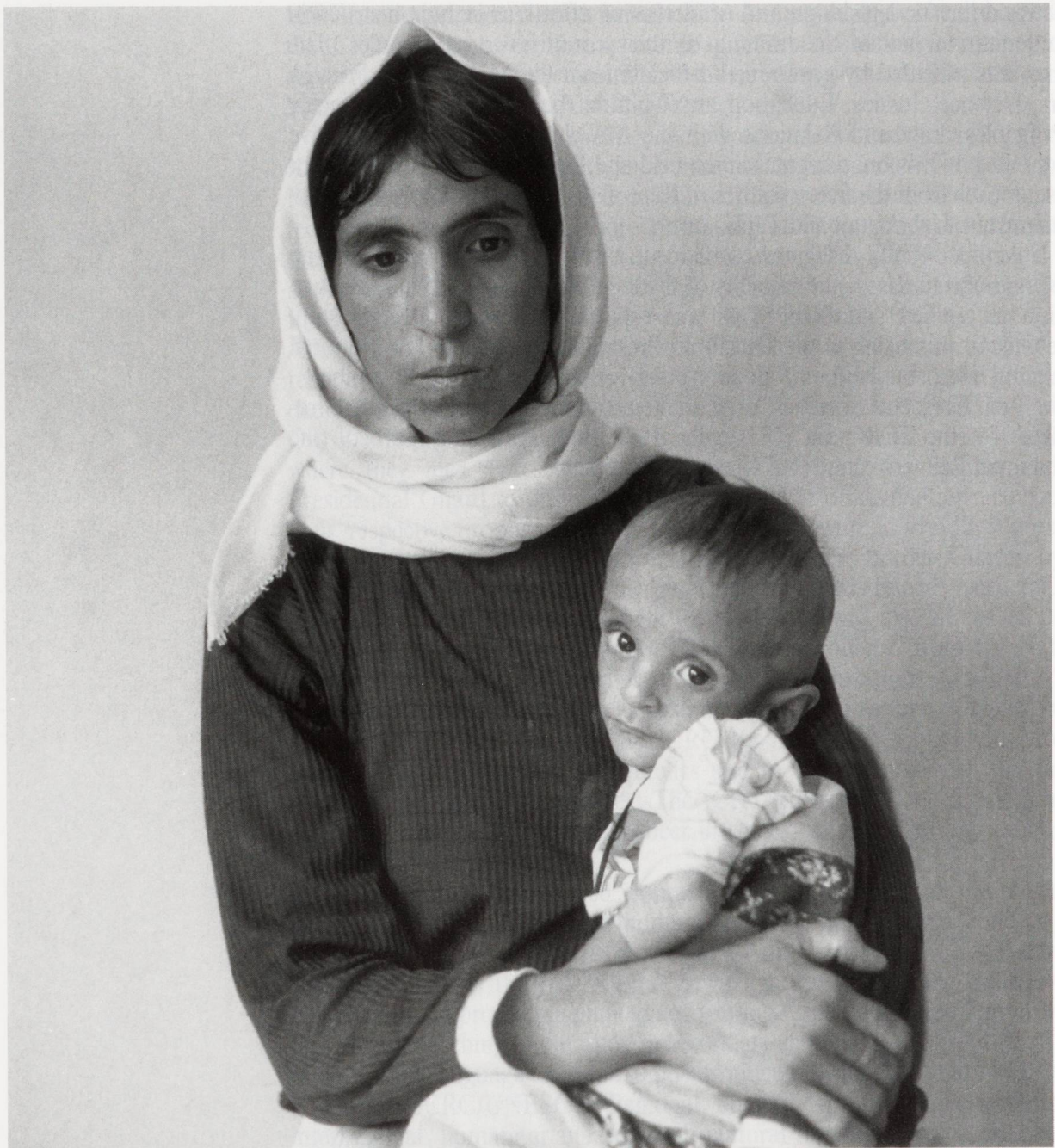
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ICRC/M.Comte

Civilians go on paying the price long after the war is over. In Iraq vulnerable groups have been increasingly exposed to malnutrition and disease, which is aggravated by the poor conditions of hygiene due to insufficient fresh water and ineffective waste water disposal. In 1995 the ICRC continued to help the Iraqi water authorities maintain at least a minimum of water and sanitation facilities.



## The Near East

### ICRC delegations:

Israel, the occupied territories  
and the autonomous territories, Jordan,  
Lebanon, Syria

## The Gulf

### ICRC delegations:

Iraq, Yemen

### ICRC regional delegation:

Kuwait

## North Africa

### ICRC delegation:

Egypt

### ICRC regional delegation:

Tunis

## Staff

ICRC expatriates<sup>1</sup>: 74

National Societies<sup>1</sup>: 10

Local employees<sup>2</sup>: 298

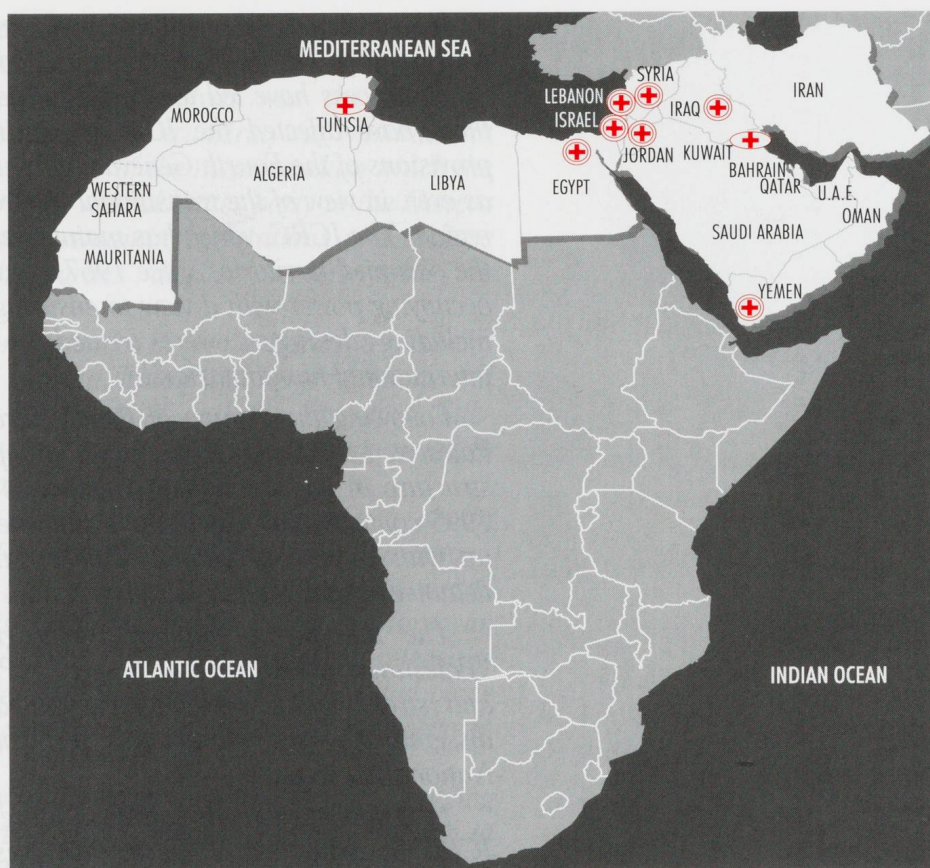
## Total expenditure

Sfr 33,021,456

## Expenditure breakdown

Sfr

Protection/tracing:	15,532,314
Relief:	284,901
Medical assistance:	9,693,014
Cooperation with	
National Societies:	1,274,096
Dissemination:	1,241,421
Operational support:	3,022,525
Overheads:	1,973,185



⊕ ICRC regional delegation ⊕ ICRC delegation

ICRC / AR 12.95

# MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

<sup>1</sup> Average figures calculated on an annual basis.

<sup>2</sup> Under ICRC contract, as at December 1995.



*In recent years the political environment in the Middle East has changed considerably. The interim agreements concluded as a result of the Arab-Israeli peace process have led to significant developments in the field, and some of them have affected the ICRC's activities. In 1995, a good many of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention nevertheless remained as relevant as ever, in view of the transitional nature of the situation in some parts of the region. The ICRC, which has maintained a continuous presence in Israel and the occupied territories since 1967, continued to make representations to the occupying power with a view to ensuring that people living under occupation, including detainees, were treated in accordance with the principles of international humanitarian law.*

*Following the signing of the Declaration of Principles by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in September 1993, the ICRC had set up a structure in the autonomous territories under Palestinian authority. During 1995 contacts and negotiations with the Palestinian authorities were stepped up with a view to gaining authorization for ICRC delegates to visit all detainees under Palestinian jurisdiction.*

*The ICRC also pursued its programmes to assist and develop the "Palestinian Red Crescent Society" (PRCS). These focused on supporting and strengthening the emergency medical department of the PRCS and disseminating the Movement's principles, and were supported by several National Societies.*

*In October, for the first time in more than ten years of unremitting efforts, ICRC delegates were able to visit prisoners held at the Khiam detention centre, in the Israeli-occupied zone in southern Lebanon.*

*In Iraq, the consequences of the embargo for the most vulnerable sections of the civilian population continued to give serious cause for concern. The ICRC pursued its water supply and sanitation programmes throughout the country in an effort to counter the constant deterioration in sanitation conditions. To assist war amputees and civilian landmine victims, it developed prosthesis production capacities in Basra, Najaf and Mosul.*

*After Turkey launched a military operation in northern Iraq in March, the ICRC discussed with the Turkish authorities their obligations under the Geneva Conventions to respect the civilian population in the area. The institution's observations and recommendations regarding the humanitarian implications of this military operation were submitted in a report to the competent authorities.*

*A resurgence of tension in the area as a result of inter-Kurdish clashes led the ICRC to expand its activities for the protection of detainees and the provision of medical assistance to the war-wounded. In its contacts with all*



the parties the ICRC laid particular stress on the rules of conduct for combatants and on respect for wounded civilians and combatants.

A long-standing problem that remained unsolved was the plight of thousands of prisoners of war captured during the Iran/Iraq war who had still not been repatriated. Very little came in 1995 of the memorandum which the ICRC had submitted at the end of 1994 to several States party to the Geneva Conventions, specifying the belligerents' remaining obligations under those treaties. The ICRC remained at the parties' disposal to help settle the outstanding humanitarian issues.

The Gulf war also had serious consequences in humanitarian terms, and by year's end the fate of hundreds of Kuwaiti, Saudi and Iraqi nationals still remained unknown. The Tripartite Commission and the Technical Sub-Committee set up by the ICRC to try and resolve this problem continued to meet regularly in Geneva or on the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border.

In Saudi Arabia the ICRC did not succeed in its attempts to obtain authorization to visit the thousands of Iraqi civilians interned in Rafha camp.

In connection with the Western Sahara conflict delegates again visited Moroccan prisoners held by the Polisario Front and Sahrawis in Moroccan hands, and repatriated 185 of the Moroccans. The question of the release of all remaining detainees was still unresolved, though the cease-fire had come into force more than five years ago and some of the prisoners had been in captivity for over 20 years.

A substantive dialogue resumed with the government in Algeria, enabling the ICRC to gain a better understanding of the complexity of the situation in the country, where the importance of ensuring respect for the Fundamental Principles was self-evident. The ICRC developed closer working relationships with the Algerian Red Crescent.

In connection with the ICRC's campaign against anti-personnel landmines, the institution was gratified to note that the Organization of the Islamic Conference in December adopted a resolution calling for the complete elimination of such weapons.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See also p. 44 and pp. 268-270.





(red circle with cross) ICRC delegation    (red circle with cross and dot) ICRC sub-delegation    (red diamond with cross) ICRC mission    (red cross) ICRC office  
 (red triangle with cross) Prosthetic/orthotic centre/workshop

## The Near East

### ISRAEL, THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND THE AUTONOMOUS TERRITORIES

The process of establishing autonomy for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, launched by the Declaration of Principles signed in October 1993 by Israel and the Palestinians, took its course in 1995 with the signing, on 28 September, of the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Interim Agreement provided for the expansion of Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank, and included, in particular, the release of Palestinian prisoners and detainees and the redeployment of the IDF\* from six main towns and 450 villages of the West Bank and from part of Hebron.

Redeployment was temporarily frozen after the assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister on 4 November. The IDF resumed redeployment on 8 November and,

in conformity with the Interim Agreement, by the end of the year had withdrawn from major West Bank towns, with the exception of Hebron and East Jerusalem. Elections were due to be held in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on 20 January 1996. As a direct result of the Agreement, over 880 Palestinians were released from Israeli detention in October.

In January, July and August bomb attacks were targeted at civilians inside Israel, killing 75 Israelis in all. The ICRC made two public appeals for the civilian population to be spared and for an end to acts of indiscriminate violence.

The Gaza Strip was closed off for nearly half of 1995 as a security measure. This exacerbated the economic hardship experienced by the population there, the majority of whom were unable to work in Israel for much of the time.

\* IDF: Israel Defence Force



The President of the ICRC, accompanied by the Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa, paid an official visit in June to Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories. He met the Israeli President, Prime Minister, Minister and Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and General Chief of Staff, with whom he discussed implementation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the ICRC's concern about the humanitarian issues which continued to affect the people of the region. In Gaza, he held talks with the President of the Palestinian Authority, and raised matters relating to the ICRC's visits to detainees held by the Palestinian authorities. During his visit the ICRC President also met the Presidents of the "Magen David Adom" and the "Palestinian Red Crescent Society" (PRCS).

In March 1995 the ICRC and the Federation signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the coordination of the Movement's activities in the occupied and the autonomous territories. Subsequently, the Federation had a representative based in the ICRC's Jerusalem sub-delegation. During the year the ICRC, in consultation with the Federation, continued to be responsible for coordinating National Society projects in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Two National Societies carried out projects in the area and four National Societies provided staff to help implement ICRC projects.

The ICRC remained at the disposal of the parties concerned to act as a neutral intermediary in order to help determine the fate of Israelis, Lebanese nationals and Palestinians reported missing in action in Lebanon. No progress was made in this regard.

### Activities for civilians protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention

Throughout the year the ICRC delegation maintained its activities for civilians protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention. Delegates monitored application of the Convention and made an average of five representations a month to the Israeli authorities, mainly regarding cases of ill-treatment of protected persons, the use of live ammunition by Israeli security forces in situations in which it appeared to be unjustified, and acts of violence by settlers. The ICRC was still concerned about the continued presence of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, with the resulting potential for tension and violence due to the close proximity of Israeli and Palestinian communities and the presence of Israeli troops to protect settlers. During the year ICRC delegates provided tents to 13 families whose houses had been destroyed by the IDF for security or administrative reasons.

#### IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- had access to all Palestinian detainees held by the Israeli authorities: the total decreased from 6,223 to 4,900 between January and December;
- in Israel and the occupied territories, carried out 363 visits to 59 places of detention, including to detainees under interrogation;
- ran the family visits programme, in cooperation with the PRCS, thus enabling around 130,000 people to visit Palestinian relatives in Israeli-run places of detention;
- handled 8,156 Red Cross messages, including 6,682 between detainees and their relatives in countries having no diplomatic links with Israel, issued 21,138 certificates of detention and arranged for 120 powers of attorney;
- arranged for 2 repatriations to Lebanon and 4 to Syria;
- arranged for 28 transfers between Syria and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights to enable 1,145 people to cross the demarcation line;
- in the autonomous territories, visited 638 detainees in 21 places of detention.



In May the ICRC handed over to the Israeli authorities a summary report on implementation of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the occupied territories.

Civilians living in the Israeli-occupied zone in southern Lebanon and near the front line continued to be affected by military operations in the area (see *Lebanon*). The delegation made representations to the Israeli authorities regarding the conduct of hostilities and alleged failure by the IDF and the SLA\* to respect international humanitarian law. On two occasions during the year the ICRC accompanied "Magen David Adom" representatives on survey missions to the north of Israel, following attacks from Lebanon in which rockets had fallen in civilian areas, causing deaths and injuries. The information collected on these missions enabled the ICRC delegation in Beirut to make representations to the appropriate parties regarding the conduct of hostilities.

### Activities for detainees in Israel and the occupied territories

An average of just over 6,000 Palestinians were detained by Israel between January and September. Over 880 were released in October in connection with the Interim Agreement, and on 31 December 4,929 Palestinians were being held. Delegates visited 59 places of detention in 1995 to monitor conditions of detention and treatment, paying particular attention to the treatment of detainees under interrogation. They reported their findings to the Israeli authorities. In April the ICRC issued a communication to the press following the death of a Palestinian detainee under interrogation and calling for such detainees to be treated in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention.

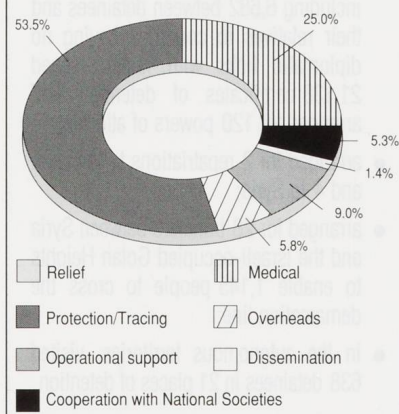
The delegation's legal expert attended public hearings in the trials of security detainees and remained in contact with their lawyers and the Israeli judicial authorities to ensure that the guarantees to which protected persons are entitled were respected.

The family visits programme, financed by the ICRC and run in cooperation with the PRCS, was seriously disrupted by the closures of the West Bank and especially the Gaza Strip. On many occasions the visits could not take place, meaning that some detainees did not see their families for several months. Under the annual programme of family visits for foreign detainees held in Israeli-run detention centres, a series of visits to Jordanian detainees was arranged for their family members residing in Jordan. It enabled a total of 97 Jordanians to see 24 relatives in six places of detention.

In the course of their visits to facilities under Israeli responsibility, ICRC delegates distributed assistance in the form of medicines and leisure items.

\* SLA: South Lebanon Army

Israel, the occupied territories  
and the autonomous territories  
Total expenditure in 1995:  
Sfr 13,554,241





In June a large number of Palestinian detainees launched a hunger strike in an attempt to obtain their release and were supported by sit-ins at ICRC offices in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Demonstrations on the streets in some towns in the occupied West Bank led to serious clashes with the Israeli security forces. Delegates stepped up their medical visits to detainees during the strike, which ended in early July.

The ICRC was still denied access in 1995 to two Lebanese nationals detained in Israel. After more than ten years of unrelenting efforts, involving constant negotiations and discussions with the Israeli authorities and the head of the SLA, the ICRC was finally granted authorization to visit Khiam detention centre in the Israeli-occupied zone in southern Lebanon.

## Activities for detainees in the autonomous territories

Following the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding by the ICRC and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) "for the benefit of" the Palestinian Authority in July 1994, the ICRC carried out detention-related activities in the autonomous territories. Under the terms of the memorandum the institution was granted access, in accordance with its customary working procedures, to detainees under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority.

In 1995 the ICRC visited 638 detainees in 21 places of detention. By the end of the year, however, it had not yet been granted access to all detainees in all detention facilities. In December a summary report on matters relating to the ICRC's visits to detainees under Palestinian jurisdiction was submitted to the authorities. Discussions on such issues had been held with various authorities during the year, notably the President of the Palestinian Authority.

## Tracing activities

As before, the ICRC played its role of neutral intermediary between Israel and the Arab countries with which it still had no diplomatic relations, arranging for the exchange of Red Cross messages and radio messages between civilians in Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories and their families in such countries. The ICRC delegations in Israel and Syria made the appropriate representations to enable 1,145 people to cross the demarcation line between the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and Syria. By year's end, however, 73 people from the Golan Heights were still awaiting permission from the Israeli authorities to cross the line to visit relatives in Syria.

The ICRC kept up tracing activities for detainees, by collecting data on them through notification by the detaining authorities, registration cards filled in by detainees during ICRC visits and information volunteered by their families. The data was then circulated to the network of ICRC offices so that families

### IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- carried out 47 visits to 532 detainees in 7 places of detention, releasing 450 for the first time.
- handled 7,432 Red Cross messages, opened around 320 family reunions and received 64, issued 297 certificates of detention and 120 leave documents, and forwarded 60 documents to and from the Israeli-occupied territories.
- in support of the order book system, organized 61 courses by telephone on medical and humanitarian law.
- accepted for 25 detainees held in Kfar Qatif Prison to be visited by 35 of their family members residing in Jordan.
- organized family visits for 97 detainees to visit 24 places relatives in Israeli-run places of detention.

could be informed of their detained relatives' whereabouts. In 1995 the ICRC responded to more than 80,000 requests from families for information on detained relatives, issued certificates of detention enabling detainees' families and former detainees to obtain certain benefits, and arranged for detainees to sign powers of attorney enabling their families to settle their affairs for them.

## Medical activities

ICRC doctors monitored medical conditions in Israeli prisons and detention centres, and concentrated on detainees under interrogation. During his visit in June, the ICRC President handed over to the Israeli authorities a list of 29 seriously ill, disabled or mentally sick detainees and asked for them to be released on humanitarian grounds. A further request concerning the remaining 24 – five having been freed in the meantime – was submitted at the end of the year.

Over 1995 the ICRC gradually scaled down its programme to assist Palestinian NGOs providing primary health care for the population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip who had difficulty in covering the nominal charges levied.<sup>1</sup> The programme was phased out at the end of the year. The ICRC paid 25 percent of the salaries of staff working in the clinics concerned, and throughout the year the Finnish, French and Icelandic Red Cross Societies seconded nurses to work in the field.

## Dissemination

In October, for the first time, the ICRC was able to arrange a dissemination session for Israeli army officers from operational units, which was attended by 38 officers. During the year other sessions were held for officers from the Israeli border police and IDF trainee legal officers. During his visit to Israel in June, the ICRC President gave an address at Tel Aviv University entitled "Humanitarian challenges today: the ICRC view", aimed at diplomatic, academic and press circles.

In April an Arabic-speaking ICRC expert on humanitarian law from Geneva headquarters toured universities in the West Bank and Gaza, gave lectures to students and held round tables and discussion groups for professors, journalists and various other professionals in the legal, security and detention-related fields. It was the first time that a tour of this kind was organized in the occupied and the autonomous territories. A presentation on the ICRC's detention-related work was held on 23 November for about 40 members of the Palestinian Preventive Security in Jericho.

<sup>1</sup> See the ICRC's 1994 Annual Report, p. 226.



## Cooperation with the “Magen David Adom”

The ICRC maintained close contacts with the “Magen David Adom”, and a member of the Committee, the ICRC’s governing body, met its President on 7 February. At the request of the “Magen David Adom” and the “Palestinian Red Crescent Society”, the institution organized the first working meeting, on 21 September, between their two presidents, which a Federation representative also attended. Discussions centred on ways and means of cooperating in the future, particularly in emergency and volunteer services.

## Cooperation with the “Palestinian Red Crescent Society”

The ICRC helped to strengthen the PRCS’s emergency medical service in the Gaza Strip and West Bank by replacing ambulances, paying 50 percent of running costs and installing a radio communication system. In September/October the German Red Cross conducted a survey to determine, along with the PRCS, how the emergency medical service should be developed in 1996.

The ICRC, with staff seconded by the Finnish Red Cross, supported the PRCS in setting up a dissemination department and trained staff in the various branches to propagate the Red Cross and Red Crescent principles.

## JORDAN

In 1995 Jordan and Israel concluded a series of agreements with a view to the gradual implementation of the peace accord signed on 26 October 1994. The ICRC’s activities in Jordan continued to focus on visits to security detainees, tracing activities and the dissemination of international humanitarian law.

As in previous years, the delegation in Amman served as the logistic base for the ICRC’s water and sanitation, prosthetic/orthotic and emergency medical assistance programmes in Iraq.

On 11 June the ICRC Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa and the head of delegation were received by the Crown Prince, who reiterated his support for the activities carried out by the institution in the Hashemite Kingdom. The ICRC representatives also met the Prime Minister, and handed him a report on visits carried out in 1994 to security detainees held at the GID.\*

## Activities for detainees

The ICRC delegation paid regular visits to 416 security detainees under interrogation at the GID. Early in the year, delegates encountered some

### IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- carried out 47 visits to 502 detainees in 7 places of detention, registering 450 for the first time;
- handled 7,403 Red Cross messages, opened around 100 tracing cases and resolved 68, issued 217 certificates of detention and 120 travel documents, and forwarded 660 documents to and from the Israeli-occupied territories;
- in support of the Jordan Red Crescent, facilitated 61 transfers by ambulance on medical and humanitarian grounds;
- arranged for 29 Jordanians held in Kuwait Central Prison to be visited by 36 of their family members residing in Jordan;
- organized family visits for 97 Jordanians to visit 24 close relatives in Israeli-run places of detention.

\* GID: General Intelligence Directorate



difficulties in gaining access to all detainees and had to suspend their visits for six weeks. Following representations to the relevant authorities, visits resumed on the regular twice-monthly basis.

In April a complete series of visits was made to five correctional and rehabilitation centres under the responsibility of the Public Security Directorate and to the Zarqa Military Correctional and Rehabilitation Centre. Several ad hoc visits were carried out throughout the year in connection with individual cases. The delegates submitted reports on their visits to the authorities concerned and, whenever requested, arranged for the exchange of Red Cross messages between detainees and their families. In all, 502 detainees were visited in 1995.

## Tracing activities

Although as a result of the peace treaty postal services were established between Jordan, on the one hand, and Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, on the other, the ICRC continued to forward official personal documents and urgent messages between Palestinians in the occupied and the autonomous territories and their relatives in Jordan. Red Cross messages were exchanged between families in Jordan and their relatives detained in Jordan or in detention facilities under Israeli responsibility.

In cooperation with the Jordan National Red Crescent Society and the "Palestinian Red Crescent Society", the ICRC continued to organize urgent transfers by ambulance of sick and handicapped people.

As before, Red Cross messages were exchanged between Jordanian detainees held in Kuwait Central Prison as a result of the Gulf war and their families in Jordan (see *Kuwait*).

## Dissemination

During the year the ICRC expanded its dissemination activities for various target audiences such as the media, military and police academies, security forces, schools and universities.

In December, in cooperation with the Jordanian Press Association, the delegation organized a two-day seminar for Jordanian journalists and other media representatives on the theme "Humanitarian Values and the Mediatization of Humanitarian Action". Early in 1995 sessions were held on humanitarian law, the Movement and ICRC activities for 2,384 members of the Jordanian army who were due to serve as UN peace-keepers in the former Yugoslavia. For the first time, in September, a session was held to inform new recruits and officers of the GID about humanitarian law, the ICRC and its detention-related activities. Contacts were also maintained with the police



academy and various Jordanian universities and institutions, where delegates delivered lectures on humanitarian law, its relation to human rights law and the principles common to humanitarian law and the Arabic and Islamic cultural heritage.

In cooperation with the National Society and the Ministry of Education, the ICRC gave presentations on basic principles of humanitarian law and the Movement to more than 2,000 schoolchildren, students and teachers. In August a training workshop was organized for dissemination supervisors from the Jordan Red Crescent and attended by representatives from the National Society.

In 1995 the delegation in Jordan stepped up its efforts to increase awareness among government officials and media representatives of the humanitarian aspects of the Review Conference of the 1980 UN Weapons Convention, in particular as regards the scourge of landmines.

## LEBANON

Military operations in southern Lebanon continued throughout 1995, with serious consequences in humanitarian terms for civilians in the Israeli-occupied zone and near the front line. Over 20 civilians were killed and 120 wounded in armed clashes between the IDF/SLA and Lebanese resistance movements. Early in the year the Israeli navy enforced a blockade, which was maintained throughout the year, on the southern coast of Lebanon, preventing fishermen from earning their living.

The ICRC President attended the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Lebanese Red Cross Society from 8 to 11 July. He took the opportunity to hold official meetings with various government contacts, in particular the Prime Minister. In the course of these meetings the ICRC was informed that there was no need, at that time, for the institution to visit detainees held in Lebanon for security reasons, as requested in its offer of services presented in November 1994.

The President also went to the Palestinian camp of Ein-El-Helweh in Sidon, where 80,000 refugees were living in extremely precarious conditions. Tensions between various groups and parties on occasion gave rise to armed clashes which mainly affected civilians.

In violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, two protected persons detained by Israel were expelled to southern Lebanon in mid-April at the end of their prison terms. Although the Palestinian Authority was prepared to receive them, the Israeli government did not approve their release to the autonomous

### IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- visited 201 detainees in Kham detention centre;
- handled 8,819 Red Cross messages;
- carried out 18 transfers out of the Israeli-occupied zone;
- issued 1,381 certificates of detention;
- between January and March, fitted 24 new patients with prostheses and 18 with orthoses, manufactured 61 prostheses and 43 orthoses, and made 23 repairs to artificial limbs.

territories. ICRC delegates visited them regularly at the UNIFIL\* compound and ensured that they were able to exchange Red Cross messages with their families. At the end of the year the ICRC was still making representations in order to find a humanitarian solution for these people.

The Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa visited Lebanon from 19 to 23 December. He discussed developments in the region and the issue of Palestinian refugees with the Minister for Refugee Affairs and the Minister of Health, and the introduction of international humanitarian law into Lebanese legislation with senior army officers. He also met the President of the Lebanese Red Cross and the Federation representative in Lebanon to examine the question of ICRC/Federation cooperation in the country. The topic was also stressed at a meeting of donor National Societies organized on 5 July in Beirut by the Federation and the Lebanese Red Cross, which the ICRC attended, to discuss funding of programmes to develop the "Palestinian Red Crescent Society" and the Lebanese Red Cross.

## Protection of the civilian population

ICRC delegates in the Israeli-occupied zone in southern Lebanon collected information on alleged violations of humanitarian law, and representations were made to the parties in conflict urging them to spare civilian lives. The delegation negotiated temporary truces with all the parties in order to carry out its humanitarian activities, which included retrieving the bodies of fallen combatants, in cooperation with Lebanese Red Cross first-aid teams, having damaged water mains and pumps repaired and arranging for fishing vessels confiscated by the Israeli navy to be returned to their owners. Delegates also distributed ad hoc material assistance to those affected by the conflict.

After a particularly serious clash broke out on 12 June in the Ein-El-Helweh Palestinian refugee camp near Sidon, killing 16 Palestinians and wounding 50 others, material assistance was given to families whose homes had been destroyed or damaged in the fighting. Delegates met leaders of the various factions to elicit their support in having Al-Qods Hospital declared strictly off-limits to armed fighters. They also discussed the conduct of hostilities.

## Activities for detainees

In January, for the first time since the opening in 1984 of Khiam detention centre in the Israeli-occupied zone, the ICRC started to organize family visits

\* United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon



to the detainees held there. The ICRC was responsible for visits by families living outside the zone, while the SLA arranged visits for those living inside it. Red Cross messages were exchanged and family parcels distributed. Later in the year, when the ICRC was allowed access to detainees in Khiam detention centre (see *Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories*), delegates conducted their first visit there from 9 to 24 October, during which they registered 191 detainees. A further ten newly arrested detainees were registered in the course of four subsequent ad hoc visits.

Throughout 1995 the ICRC maintained contacts with Hezbollah representatives with a view to gaining access to SLA members detained by the movement. On several occasions it was authorized only to organize the exchange of Red Cross messages between the detainees and their families and to forward family parcels to the detainees. In addition, it was able to arrange occasional family visits.

## Tracing activities

The ICRC's tracing work in Lebanon involved processing information on detainees in Khiam detention centre, organizing family visits and tracing services for them, and arranging the return home of detainees released from the centre.

In November the ICRC forwarded family parcels to Lebanese detainees in Israel, but was not allowed to organize family visits for them.

Delegates arranged for the exchange of Red Cross messages and official documents between family members separated as a result of the conflict and/or without other means of communication, and dealt with tracing requests for people reportedly arrested by parties to the conflict.

## Medical activities

The five mobile clinics run by the ICRC and staffed by Lebanese medical teams gave a total of 2,329 consultations during the year to people in seven villages in and close to the occupied zone who found it virtually impossible to reach medical facilities. The ICRC gave emergency medical assistance to hospitals, dispensaries and first-aid posts along the front line.

Following clashes in Palestinian refugee camps, delegates distributed medical supplies to hospitals inside the camps which were not run by the PRCS.

As from 1 April the ICRC ceased its assistance to the two prosthetic/orthotic centres in Beit Chebab and Sidon. The centres continued to operate independently and the ICRC planned to carry out occasional missions to ensure the necessary technical follow-up.

## Cooperation with the National Society

The ICRC assisted the Lebanese Red Cross Society by supporting its ambulance service in the conflict area in the south of the country and its dispensaries inside the occupied zone. It financed running costs and provided medical assistance.

In November, a workshop was organized by the Lebanese Red Cross, in cooperation with the ICRC, to train dissemination officers among National Society members. Presentations were made on the Movement, humanitarian law and dissemination techniques.

## Dissemination

During the year the ICRC held dissemination sessions for cadets and instructors at the Lebanese army staff college, Palestinian combatants in Ein-El-Helweh camp, UNIFIL officers and new members of Lebanese Red Cross first-aid teams. A conference on humanitarian law was organized at the Lebanese University in Beirut with the participation of the ICRC President.

## SYRIA

The Golan Heights remained occupied by Israel and, as before, the ICRC delegation in Syria, in cooperation with the delegation in Israel, acted as a neutral intermediary, arranging in particular for the transfer of people across the demarcation line between the occupied Golan Heights and Syria (see *Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories* for details).

Tracing services were provided for people affected by the Arab-Israeli conflict. The delegation forwarded official documents to and from the Golan Heights and Syria, and handled Red Cross messages and tracing requests for Palestinians.

In October a meeting was held between the ICRC, the Federation and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to discuss the National Society's plans for 1996 and to agree on coordinated support for its activities. The ICRC's assistance for the Red Crescent's maternal and child health care programme, which consisted in providing milk powder and wheat soya milk, was to be taken over by the Federation at the beginning of 1996.

ICRC support for the "Palestinian Red Crescent Society" prosthetic/orthotic workshop came to an end in March, as planned, and the German Red Cross took over responsibility for financing the centre's activities for three years as from April. During the 18-month ICRC programme, polypropylene technology had been introduced and the technicians trained in its use.

### IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- handled 1,247 Red Cross messages and issued 181 travel documents;
- arranged for 1,145 transfers between the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and Syria;
- between January and March, fitted 26 new patients with prostheses and manufactured 62 prostheses.



The delegation also focused on dissemination activities in Syria. In 1995 it organized one seminar on international humanitarian law for the Syrian armed forces and one for the UN forces stationed on the Golan Heights. Along with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, the delegation for the first time set up a stand at the Damascus International Book Fair in September, with ICRC publications on display.

## The Gulf

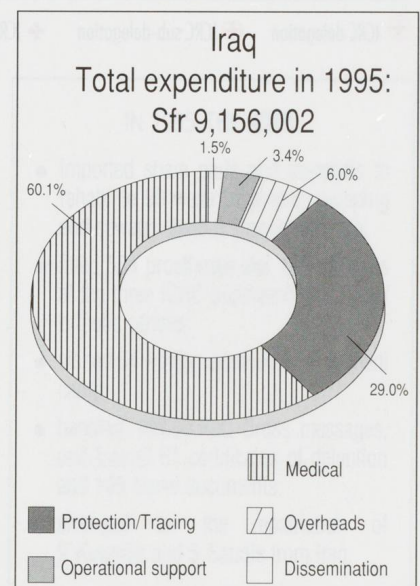
### IRAN

The ICRC kept an office in Tehran, with a staff of locally hired employees. Relations with the Iranian authorities concerning unresolved humanitarian issues left over from the Iran/Iraq war were maintained from Geneva headquarters (see *Aftermath of the Iran/Iraq war*).

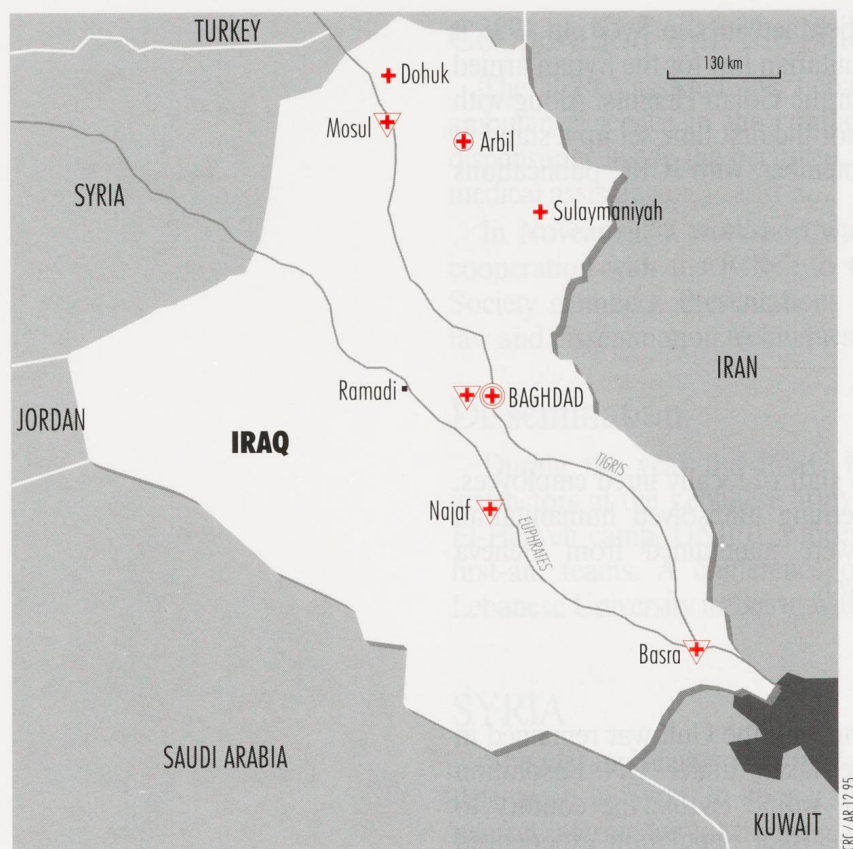
### IRAQ

The embargo imposed on Iraq in connection with the Gulf war remained in force throughout 1995, and no steps were taken under UN Resolution 986 allowing Iraqi oil sales which, *inter alia*, would enable the country to purchase essential humanitarian supplies. The Iraqi population experienced increasing hardship: although the government provided food rations covering up to 60 percent of people's basic needs, it was up to households to supplement them with their own purchases. This proved more and more difficult for a growing section of the population as their purchasing power continued to fall. Vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and the very young, were increasingly exposed to malnutrition and disease. At the same time, the country's medical services were no longer functioning properly owing to a lack of basic drugs and equipment. Poor conditions of hygiene, which lead to a higher incidence of disease, were aggravated by insufficient fresh water and ineffective waste water disposal, as it has been difficult in recent years to obtain essential spare parts for water supply and treatment facilities and to carry out the necessary maintenance work.

In response to the situation, the ICRC in 1995 continued to help improve water and sanitation facilities. Its aim was to contribute towards the water authorities' efforts to maintain a minimum service in ensuring the provision of good-quality water and the proper evacuation of waste water that are essential for public health. The ICRC also supported three prosthetic/orthotic centres in







ICRC delegation  
 ICRC sub-delegation  
 ICRC office  
 Prosthetic/orthotic centre/workshop

Iraq. For their part, the Iraqi Red Crescent Society and the Federation continued food distributions to some of those most affected and medical assistance programmes for Iraqi hospitals.

Furthermore, the ICRC delegation kept up its contacts with the authorities aimed at resolving the outstanding humanitarian issues concerning the Gulf war and the Iran/Iraq war. It also upgraded its activities in northern Iraq. (See *Aftermath of the Gulf war, Aftermath of the Iran/Iraq war and Northern Iraq.*)

The Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa visited Iraq, including northern Iraq, in May. He met the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, with whom he discussed the unresolved issues of humanitarian concern, in particular relating to prisoners taken in the Iran/Iraq war and people unaccounted for as a result of the Gulf war, and detention-related issues (civilians held in Abu Ghraib and Iranian prisoners in Ramadi). He also held talks with the President of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society.

## Activities for detainees

At the end of June the Iraqi authorities announced that the ICRC would no longer be authorized to visit non-Iraqi nationals detained in Abu Ghraib detention centre near Baghdad, although since 1991 the institution had had regular access to such prisoners, many of whom are entitled to protection under the Fourth Geneva Convention. A number of these individuals were detained in Abu Ghraib for illegal entry into Iraq: of these, nine Kuwaitis and five Saudis were subsequently released, and repatriated by the ICRC.

In February the ICRC visited 64 Iranian servicemen detained since 1991 in a camp in the city of Ramadi, but was not allowed to resume visits to these people on a regular basis. During the visit, delegates arranged for the exchange of Red Cross messages between the detainees and their families in Iran.



## Tracing activities

As before, the ICRC strove to restore and maintain contact between separated family members by handling Red Cross messages for people living in Iraq and their families in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other countries without diplomatic links with Iraq. Most of these activities were carried out in cooperation with the tracing service of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society. The ICRC continued to support the development of this service.

The delegation also handled messages for detainees in Iraq and their families abroad, and for detainees held in other countries and their families in Iraq. It processed tracing requests, organized repatriations and acted as a neutral intermediary in the forwarding of information on people unaccounted for as a result of the Gulf war (see *Aftermath of the Gulf war*).

## Water and sanitation

Early in the year two ICRC sanitation engineers, working in close consultation with local engineers, carried out an extensive survey of water treatment stations throughout the country and selected a number of projects in the 18 governorates (i.e. including northern Iraq), for which the ICRC planned to import the parts needed to keep a minimum supply of water going and rehabilitate sewage facilities. The equipment and materials were imported via Jordan. The ICRC organized teams of locally recruited engineers and technicians to implement the programme under the supervision of one of its engineers, and set up a workshop in Baghdad to do repairs.

By the end of the year only part of the programme had been carried out, as the process from assessment to implementation is extremely lengthy. Nevertheless, five rehabilitation projects in the Diyala, Maisan and Salaheddin governorates were completed, and 90 percent of the equipment destined for the Baghdad Water Supply Administration had arrived and been partially installed by the local authority. The programme carried on into 1996.

## Programme for the war-disabled

The ICRC kept up its support to government prosthetic/orthotic centres in Basra and Najaf, and, in cooperation with the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, set up a new one in Mosul, using facilities and equipment supplied after the Gulf war by the Swedish Red Cross. It also undertook construction work to expand the centre to meet local needs. The Swedish Red Cross financed the project for the second half of the year, and was also to fund it for the first six months of 1996. Some 700 patients benefited from the services provided in the three centres.

### IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- imported spare parts and materials to rehabilitate 90 water treatment, pumping and sewage stations throughout Iraq;
- fitted 554 prostheses and 148 orthoses at the three ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic centres;
- visited 64 Iranian servicemen in Ramadi camp;
- handled 18,700 Red Cross messages, and issued 61 certificates of detention and 186 travel documents;
- arranged for the repatriation of 9 Kuwaitis and 5 Saudis from Iraq.



The ICRC supplied the Basra, Mosul and Najaf centres with polypropylene components manufactured in its Baghdad workshop and trained local staff. It also gave financial and technical support for the prosthetic/orthotic training programme run by the Ministry of Higher Education in the capital. Preparations started for the opening of an ICRC centre in Arbil in response to estimated needs in northern Iraq, and the French Red Cross provided the funding to set it up.

## Cooperation with the National Society

The delegation continued its long-standing cooperation with and technical back-up for the National Society on tracing activities and supported the Red Crescent prosthetic/orthotic centre in Mosul by supplying materials, components and training for technicians. Otherwise, it participated in the Society's dissemination activities, particularly for young people, gave financial assistance for and contributed to the National Society's monthly bulletin, and carried out maintenance work on the fleet of over 20 Iraqi Red Crescent vehicles originally donated by the ICRC.

## Northern Iraq

The population in northern Iraq continued to suffer from the worsening economic situation and political instability, which led to the outbreak of several violent conflicts. From 19 March to early May the Turkish armed forces conducted a major operation against the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) in the region. In early July the Turkish army launched another military operation – on a smaller scale – into the northern part of the Arbil governorate, and the situation remained volatile along the Iraqi-Turkish border.

In addition, clashes which had started in December 1994, mainly between the two main Kurdish parties (the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan), carried on well into 1995. A cease-fire tacitly agreed in August in order to facilitate peace negotiations was still holding at the end of the year, barring sporadic fighting. At the end of August a new conflict erupted, this time between the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the PKK, and fighting continued until a cease-fire was concluded in December.

Owing to the conflict situation in northern Iraq, the ICRC assumed responsibility for the general coordination of the Movement's activities in the area, liaising in particular with the Federation and the Iraqi Red Crescent Society.

### IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- carried out 122 visits to 1,689 civilian and military detainees held in 47 places of detention in northern Iraq;
- arranged for the exchange of over 500 Red Cross messages between separated family members, half of them between detainees and their next-of-kin.



## Activities for the civilian population

The civilian population in northern Iraq bore the brunt of the hostilities – which flared up at different places each time – and suffered the combined effects of these various conflicts: arrests, displacement, destruction of private property and crops, injuries and deaths. Between end-March and early May, delegates based in Dohuk and Arbil conducted surveys and collected allegations of violations of humanitarian law in northern Iraq, where the Turkish army was operating. This information was then conveyed in writing to the Turkish government, along with a reminder of the obligation to respect the humanitarian rules. Similarly, delegates gathered reports and allegations in connection with inter-Kurdish clashes and relayed these to the various Kurdish groups, appealing to them to respect the rules of behaviour in combat and afford the civilian population and non-combatants the protection to which they were entitled.

## Activities for detainees

The ICRC enlarged its teams in the three offices in Arbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah, and stepped up detention-related activities and contacts with Kurdish groups. In the course of these contacts, delegates reiterated their request to all parties concerned for access to all detainees held in connection with the various conflicts and increased the number of visits to such people. They conducted over 100 visits to dozens of places of detention, and saw nearly 1,700 detainees, including, in June, two Turkish soldiers detained by the PKK, who had been captured during clashes with the Turkish army in September 1994.

At the beginning of March fierce clashes broke out along the demarcation lines between the Iraqi government army and peshmergas from various Kurdish groups, and several hundred Iraqi soldiers were captured. The ICRC was quickly granted access to them and provided material assistance in places where they were being detained, mainly in Arbil. By 21 October all of them had been released.

## Medical activities

In northern Iraq delegates provided hospitals with emergency medical and surgical supplies to treat a total of 936 war-wounded.

Towards the end of the year around 400 cases of cholera were reported in Sulaymaniyah, and a field hospital was set up there by several NGOs working in cooperation with the local health department. The ICRC gave emergency medical assistance to this hospital, which was subsequently handed over to the health authorities when the situation was deemed to be under control.

## Dissemination

The increased presence of delegates in northern Iraq enabled them to develop dissemination activities there. The ICRC's "Code of Conduct for Combatants" was translated into Kurdish and distributed to 2,000 combatants, mainly officers, and courses were organized in June for some 100 Kurdish commanders. In November, sessions on the ICRC's protection activities were held in 13 places of detention for nearly 400 participants.

## AFTERMATH OF THE IRAN/IRAQ WAR

Concerning the outstanding humanitarian issues connected with the Iran/Iraq war, the ICRC was unable to obtain any information as to the plight of some 19,000 Iraqi prisoners of war (POWs) who in 1990, according to its records, had still been under the responsibility of the Iranian authorities. About two-thirds of them had been visited and registered by the ICRC and one-third were known to the institution on the basis of Red Cross messages. Seven years after the end of the hostilities, the issue, including the question of repatriation, remained unresolved, although in August 100 Iraqi POWs were handed over by Iran to the Iraqi authorities in the presence of the ICRC. They were part of a group of 1,442 POWs who had last been seen by the institution in 1993 and who had expressed their wish to return home.

The Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa raised the issue with the Iraqi Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs when he visited Iraq in May. The ICRC maintained its request to the Iraqi authorities that they should account for 474 Iranians on whom the institution had collected information. It did obtain information on one Iranian POW held in Iraq and, for the first time in 15 years, was granted access to him. A delegate visited him three times during the year and was able to arrange for him to exchange Red Cross messages and photos with his family.

Otherwise, scant progress was made in 1995, despite the memorandum addressed by the ICRC in 1994 to Iran and Iraq, to a number of signatory States of the Geneva Conventions, to the UN Secretary-General and to the Organization of the Islamic Conference, requesting that the relevant articles of the Geneva Conventions be implemented, particularly those concerning the repatriation of POWs still in captivity.

The ICRC reiterated the fact that it remained at the disposal of the two parties to help resolve the humanitarian issues still outstanding, while taking note of the fact that during the year the parties held bilateral discussions on the matter.

In Geneva, where all the information relating to the POWs is centralized, the ICRC handled 350 tracing requests and issued 101 certificates of detention.



## AFTERMATH OF THE GULF WAR

In an effort to settle the humanitarian issues still unresolved after the Gulf war, in particular that of the some 650 individuals (Kuwaitis, Saudis, Iraqis and others) unaccounted for, representatives from Iraq and the Coalition (France, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and the United States) attended three meetings of the Tripartite Commission chaired by the ICRC on 7 April, 3 and 4 August and 28 November. At the August session it was decided that the meetings of the Technical Sub-Committee, which had been set up, *inter alia*, to speed up the process of exchanging information and had up to then been held in January, February and March in Geneva, should take place in the demilitarized zone on the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border. The Sub-Committee subsequently met on the border once a month from August to December, with meetings continuing into 1996.

The issue was also taken up at several high-level meetings during the year. The Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa twice met the Iraqi Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs. In May he visited Kuwait, where he discussed the matter with the Under-Secretary of State and the Director of the International Organizations Department, and held a meeting with the ambassadors of France, the United Kingdom and the United States.

In December the ICRC, acting in its capacity of neutral intermediary, led a team including 11 United States experts to the crash site of a United States pilot lost in 1991 during the Gulf war. The mission was organized and carried out with the cooperation and support of the Iraqi authorities.

### KUWAIT

#### Regional delegation

(Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates)

### KUWAIT

#### Activities for detainees

ICRC delegates continued to visit places of detention holding people in connection with the Gulf war, and saw more than 600 detainees during the year. The majority of those visited were Iraqi, Jordanian, Yemeni and Sudanese nationals, Palestinians with only travel documents and stateless persons.

#### IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- visited 620 detainees in 17 places of detention in Kuwait, registering 208 for the first time;
- handled about 20,000 Red Cross messages and issued 288 certificates of detention and 144 travel documents.

Delegates had access to people held in detention facilities under the jurisdiction of the Ministries of the Interior (police stations, prisons and deportation centres), Defence and Social Affairs.

Through its private talks with detainees and its contacts with the authorities, the ICRC sought to ensure that people under deportation orders (non-Kuwaiti residents of the country and illegal immigrants) were not expelled to a country where they had reason to fear persecution, that they had the opportunity to settle their personal affairs and were allowed to take their belongings with them, and that they were not separated from their close relatives. During the year 160 protected persons were expelled along with their families. The closure of the border between Iraq and Kuwait in February 1995 meant that the number of those expelled directly to Iraq subsequently fell considerably.

The major trials of Kuwaiti and other nationals accused of security offences were concluded at the end of March 1995, and the delegation therefore ended its monitoring of respect for fundamental judicial guarantees.

Following negotiations with the Jordanian and Kuwaiti authorities, the ICRC in June organized the first-ever family visits to Jordanian detainees held since 1991 at the central prison in Kuwait. A second visit took place in September. In all, 29 detainees were visited by 36 of their family members.

## Tracing activities

The delegation took part in the efforts still being made to trace people unaccounted for as a result of the Gulf war. It maintained regular contacts with the National Committee for Missing and POW Affairs and processed information in connection with the Tripartite Commission and Technical Sub-Committee meetings (see *Aftermath of the Gulf war*). It also continued to handle thousands of Red Cross messages to maintain contact between separated families in Kuwait and Iraq (some 20,000 in 1995).

## Dissemination

In March 1995 the delegation arranged a session on international humanitarian law at the Law Faculty of the University of Kuwait. It took part in seminars organized by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society and the Kuwaiti Institute for Scientific Research.

## SAUDI ARABIA

The ICRC pursued its contacts with the Saudi authorities aimed at regaining access to the thousands of Iraqi civilians living in Rafha camp. The Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa, accompanied by the regional delegate, carried out a mission to Riyadh and held talks with the Director



General of International Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Governor of Riyadh and the Director General for Coalition Affairs at the Ministry of Defence. The regional delegate also raised the matter in the course of several other missions to Saudi Arabia during the year.

The regional delegation maintained contact with the Saudi Arabian Red Crescent Society, the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND), the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Islamic Development Bank based in Jeddah.

## YEMEN

During the year the ICRC stepped up its activities for the civilian population and for detainees in the central prisons and in places of detention under the jurisdiction of the Criminal Investigation Department and the Political Security Administration. It also focused on dissemination activities for the armed forces, the Yemeni Red Crescent Society and the general public. In September it launched a project to help mentally ill detainees in Sana'a central prison. Many of the delegation's activities, notably this project, assistance in prisons, and a landmines awareness campaign, were carried out in cooperation with the National Society.

When an armed confrontation broke out in mid-December between Yemen and Eritrea over the Hanish islands, the ICRC appealed for respect for the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law and offered its services to the two countries. It was accepted as a neutral intermediary by both parties, and was able to register and, on 30 December, repatriate 196 Yemeni POWs taken by the Eritrean armed forces and 17 Yemeni civilians.<sup>1</sup>

## Activities for the civilian population

Following a number of accidents involving landmines and other unexploded munitions in the south of the country, the ICRC and the Yemeni Red Crescent Society organized a preventive campaign in 70 primary and secondary schools in the governorates of Aden, Abyan and Lahej. A straightforward and easily understandable message on the dangers of such devices was developed and passed on by 75 volunteers from the National Society to about 66,500 schoolchildren. Yemeni television lent its support by broadcasting films and interviews about mines, especially in the run-up to the Review Conference of the 1980 UN Weapons Convention held in Vienna in September.

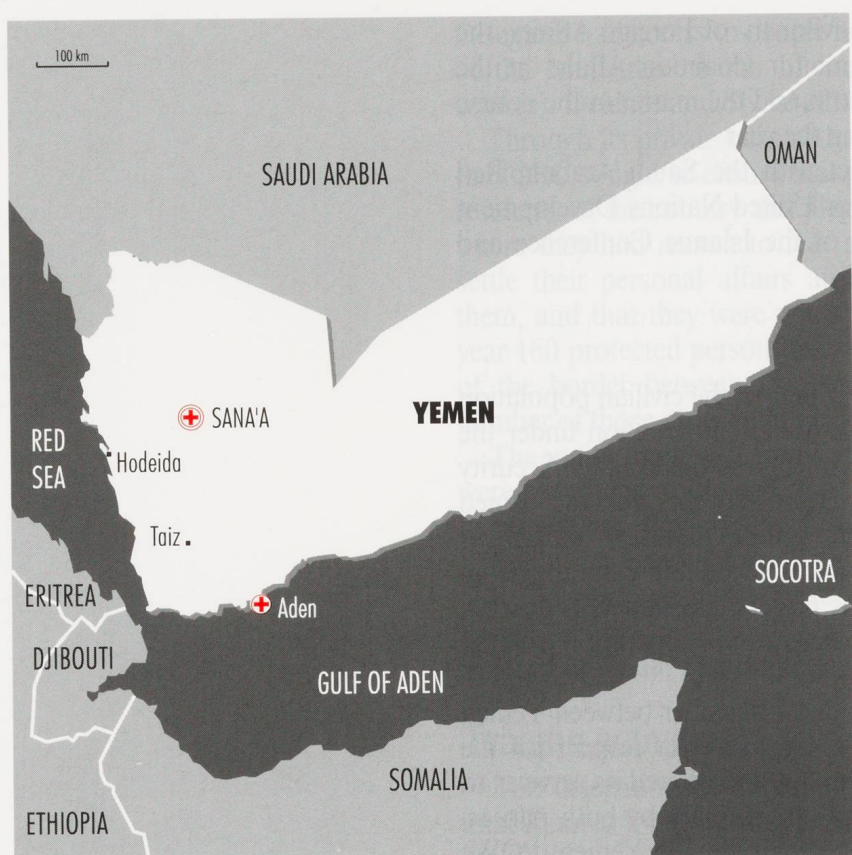
The ICRC carried out tracing work for Somali refugees living in Yemen. It processed tracing requests and arranged for the refugees to exchange Red

### IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- registered and repatriated 196 Yemeni POWs and 17 Yemeni civilians, following an armed confrontation between Yemen and Eritrea over the Hanish islands;
- carried out 58 visits to 37 places of detention and saw about 7,700 detainees;
- handled some 4,000 Red Cross messages essentially between Somali refugees living in Yemen and their families abroad;
- carried out a landmines awareness campaign, reaching 66,500 schoolchildren in southern Yemen.

<sup>1</sup> See also *Eritrea* p. 81.





Cross messages with their relatives. The search for family members in Somalia and Kenya was carried out in cooperation with the British Broadcasting Corporation.

## Activities for detainees

In 1995 the ICRC made repeated visits to central prisons and to places of detention under the jurisdiction of the Criminal Investigation Department and the Political Security Administration. In March, for the first time, delegates were granted access to people held by the Department of Military Justice. In all, more than 7,000 detainees were visited in 37 places of detention. During the year, three summary reports on conditions of detention were handed over to the appropriate authorities. In the course of their visits, and with the National Society's help, delegates delivered a substantial amount of material assistance to detainees, as well as medicines to treat the most common medical complaints encountered amongst the detainee population, dressings and injection sets.

At the end of September the ICRC completed major sanitation work on the country's three largest prisons, in Sana'a, Taiz and Hodeida, and more modest projects in three other central prisons. The programme, coordinated by an expatriate water and sanitation engineer, aimed to upgrade water supply facilities and waste water disposal systems. More than 70 percent of detainees in Yemen's prisons were estimated to have benefited from the improvements.

In September the ICRC launched a project, developed in partnership with the Yemeni authorities and the Red Crescent Society, to assist mentally ill detainees in the psychiatric section of Sana'a central prison. Once the section's premises and courtyard – in particular, the sanitation facilities – had been renovated and fitted out, a psychiatrist and chief nurse, both recruited by the ICRC in Yemen, and 30 Red Crescent volunteers, trained in mental health care during a two-week ICRC course in August, began providing care to around 100 mentally ill detainees. The project was supervised by an ICRC psychiatrist based in Geneva, who paid regular visits to Yemen.



## Medical activities

In addition to the water and sanitation and psychiatric projects mentioned above, delegates provided medical assistance early in the year to six Yemeni Red Crescent clinics, three government hospitals and homes for the elderly and handicapped children.

## Dissemination

The delegation organized two introductory sessions on humanitarian law and an instructors' training session for about sixty officers and senior officers of the Yemeni army. It also arranged a workshop on the Movement and dissemination techniques for 15 members of the Yemeni Red Crescent, and gave financial assistance to the National Society towards some of its publications.

## North Africa

### EGYPT

The delegation in Cairo continued to promote humanitarian values aimed at ensuring protection of conflict victims. To this end the delegation maintained close contact with the appropriate authorities and circles in Egypt, and brought out extensive dissemination material in the form of printed and audiovisual productions in Arabic, for use throughout the region.

The delegation continued its tradition of producing a "humanitarian" calendar. The 1995 version recalled agreements concluded between kings or rulers in different eras of Middle Eastern history, thus again seeking to draw parallels between local traditions and the values set out in humanitarian law so as to show the universality of these values. A series of children's strip cartoons illustrating humanitarian law was published in a national newspaper with a weekly distribution of 100,000.

On the audiovisual side, a radio series entitled *Humanitarian tales* told real-life stories of war victims and those providing humanitarian aid, such as volunteers from National Societies, ICRC delegates and local employees. The film *Voices from the Aftermath*, a collection of stories about women and children whose lives had been affected by war, was shot in various countries in the region, and produced in collaboration with Geneva headquarters.

A delegate to the armed forces was in Cairo from mid-August to mid-December to organize a number of training seminars for officers and to

#### IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- handled about 1,000 Red Cross messages and issued 179 travel documents in connection with the Arab-Israeli conflict and the aftermath of the Gulf war.

arrange courses and workshops for instructors to the armed forces in Baghdad, Beirut, Damascus and Sana'a.

The delegation's tracing activities consisted mainly in the forwarding of tracing requests and Red Cross messages for Egyptians living in Iraq and people from the Horn of Africa. The tracing agency in Cairo also issued travel documents for refugees accepted by the embassies of host countries, mainly Africans and Iraqis emigrating to the United States, Canada or Australia.

## TUNIS

### Regional delegation

(Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco/Western Sahara, Tunisia)

In North Africa, the situation of people still detained in connection with the Western Sahara conflict and the humanitarian implications of the crisis in Algeria were a source of ongoing concern to the ICRC.

The regional delegation in Tunis coordinated the institution's activities carried out in connection with these issues. Through their network of contacts with government authorities, the armed forces and academic circles in the countries covered, delegates were also involved in spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law and the history, principles, ideals and activities of the Movement. They promoted ratification of the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions and recognition of the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission. The delegation also encouraged governments and National Societies to take steps to follow up the Review Conference of the 1980 UN Weapons Convention, the 26th International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference and public awareness campaigns carried out by the ICRC such as those on water in war and anti-personnel mines. The ICRC moreover wished to encourage wider acceptance of the tasks entrusted to it by the international community.

During the year delegates stepped up their cooperation with Red Crescent Societies in the region. In particular, they participated in Tunisian Red Crescent seminars and in May organized with the National Society an exhibition of posters on the theme "Solidarity with women victims of war" to celebrate World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day. In Morocco the regional delegate gave a talk on humanitarian law at a seminar on the protection of women, organized by the Moroccan Red Crescent with ICRC support, and in Libya the ICRC cooperated with the Libyan Red Crescent in setting up a documentation centre.



Several missions were carried out to Mauritania to maintain contacts with the authorities and the Mauritanian Red Crescent and to arrange dissemination activities. An ICRC delegate made a presentation on humanitarian law at Nouakchott University in April. In the course of the missions and through various contacts, the delegate assessed the situation regarding refugees from northern Mali living in south-eastern Mauritania.

## ALGERIA

In 1995 violence in Algeria continued to claim lives, most of them civilian, and the ICRC remained seriously concerned about the situation there. The institution's Director of Operations and Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa visited the country in March, in pursuance of efforts to resume visits to detainees, suspended in 1992. They met the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Justice and officials from the Ministry of the Interior, who gave favourable consideration to the idea of the ICRC carrying out detention-related activities in the country. However, the practical procedures still had to be discussed. The regional delegate carried out follow-up missions to Algeria in the course of the year.

During their March mission, the ICRC representatives also met the President of the Algerian Red Crescent. They discussed the possibility for the ICRC – while waiting for the practical considerations to be finalized – to cooperate with the National Society, notably on dissemination work. In order to help improve the Red Crescent's operational capacity, the ICRC provided financial assistance towards a humanitarian law documentation centre and programmes for underprivileged and vulnerable sections of the Algerian population.

## MOROCCO/WESTERN SAHARA

The ICRC remained concerned about the plight of prisoners taken in connection with the Western Sahara conflict, many of whom had been in captivity for twenty years. Under the UN settlement plan, the cease-fire in effect since September 1991 was to be followed by the registration of all those eligible to vote in a referendum on self-determination for the people of Western Sahara and the repatriation of all prisoners, but the referendum has repeatedly been delayed. The ICRC remained firm in its view that all prisoners should be released in conformity with international humanitarian law, regardless of whether a political solution was found.

In November delegates repatriated 185 Moroccan prisoners who had been handed over to the ICRC by the Polisario Front. They were those who remained of a group of 200 whose names the Front had put forward for

### IN 1995 THE ICRC:

- carried out 2 visits to 905 prisoners held by the Polisario Front;
- carried out 3 visits to 78 prisoners held by the Moroccan authorities;
- repatriated 185 Moroccan prisoners who had been handed over to it by the Polisario Front;
- handled 32,962 Red Cross messages for prisoners held by the Polisario Front and those held in Morocco.

repatriation since 1989: the others had died in the meantime or were no longer in captivity. An ICRC team, including a doctor, subsequently carried out a follow-up visit to the former prisoners at the Ben Guerir military base in Morocco. By the end of the year all of them had returned to their families, except ten who still needed medical care and remained in hospitals in Rabat and Marrakesh. No progress was made regarding the repatriation of 24 other Moroccan prisoners considered by the ICRC as serious medical cases.

The ICRC reiterated its readiness to conduct another visit to all of the approximately 2,000 Moroccan prisoners held by the Polisario Front and in particular those whom it had not seen since 1993. In December an ICRC team carried out a visit to the Tindouf area of southern Algeria and saw a group of 720 Moroccan prisoners (visits to the remainder were planned for the near future). The delegates registered 24 of them for the first time since their capture and collected over 3,500 Red Cross messages, with prisoners' photos attached, to pass on to their families.

Delegates twice visited 72 Sahrawis held by the Moroccan authorities in Agadir, in June and November. Red Cross messages bearing photos of the prisoners were collected to be sent to the families.

By the end of 1995, the ICRC had carried out seven visits since 1978 to Sahrawis held in Morocco, registering a total of 93. In 11 visits between 1975 and the end of 1995, the institution had registered 2,173 Moroccans held by the Polisario Front.

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