



ICRC-run programmes are often the only way for people to visit their detained relatives, and thus are vital for preserving family links.

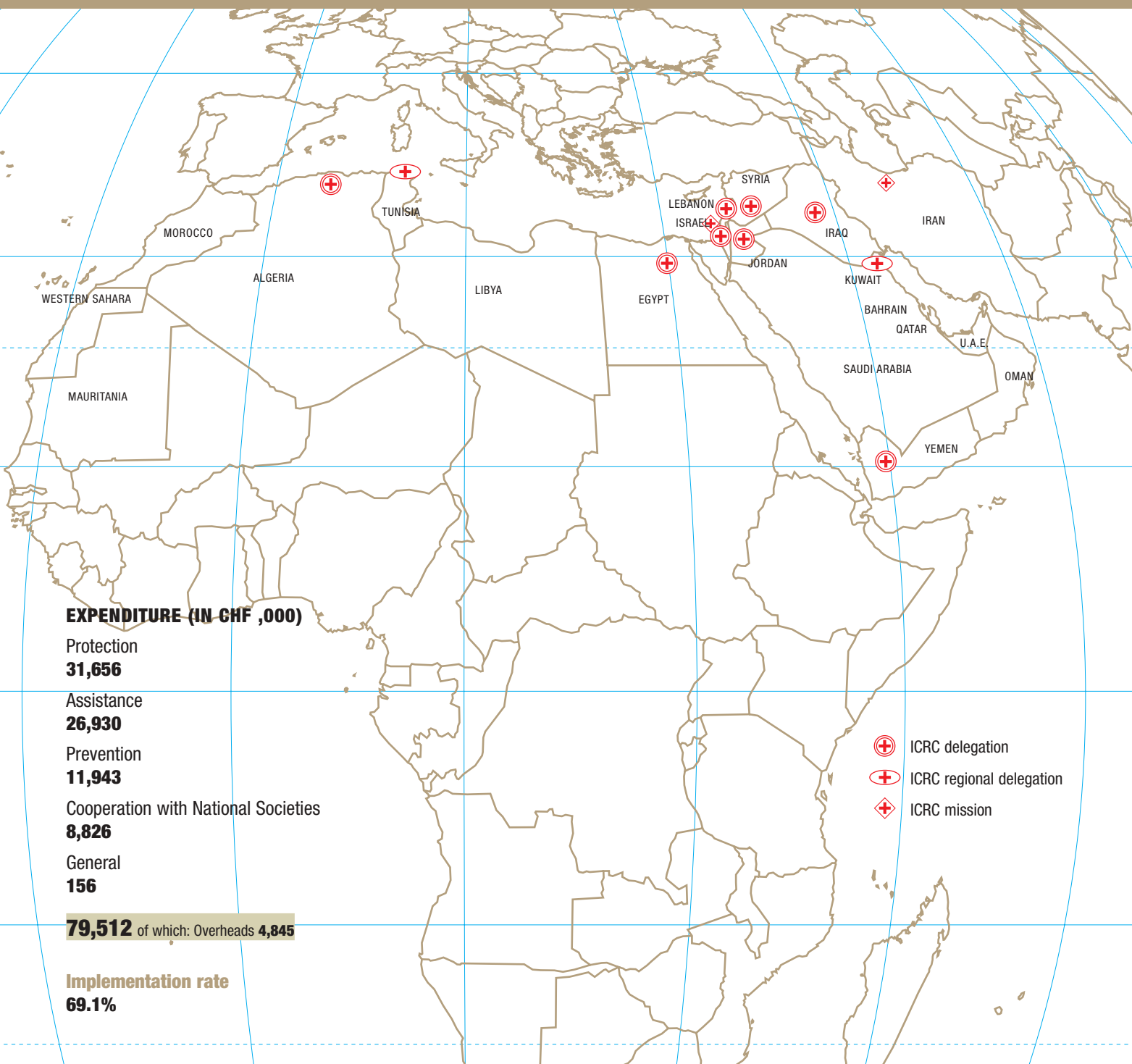
DELEGATIONS

- Algeria
- Egypt
- Iran
- Iraq
- Israel, the Occupied Territories and the Autonomous Palestinian Territories
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Syria
- Yemen

REGIONAL DELEGATIONS

- Kuwait
- Tunis

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA



EXPENDITURE (IN CHF ,000)

- Protection **31,656**
- Assistance **26,930**
- Prevention **11,943**
- Cooperation with National Societies **8,826**
- General **156**

79,512 of which: Overheads **4,845**

Implementation rate
69.1%

- ICRC delegation
- ICRC regional delegation
- ICRC mission

In 2005, the ICRC carried out a broad range of protection and assistance activities, often in close cooperation with the respective National Society, aimed at alleviating human suffering linked to past and present conflicts that have disrupted or claimed the lives of large numbers of people in the region. It actively promoted compliance with IHL, by intervening directly with the parties engaged in armed conflict or internal violence, particularly in Iraq and in Israel and the Occupied and Autonomous Palestinian Territories.

ICRC activities varied according to the context but in all cases were rooted in the organization's independence, neutrality and impartiality, whereby it seeks unhindered access to all victims of armed conflict and internal violence and contact with all belligerent parties.

The ICRC provided direct assistance to the victims of ongoing or recurrent hostilities in Iraq, the Occupied and Autonomous Palestinian Territories and Yemen. It also pursued efforts to resolve humanitarian issues still outstanding from past conflicts, including clarifying the fate of people unaccounted for in relation to the 1990–91 Gulf War and the 1975–91 Western Sahara conflict.

Restoring and maintaining links between family members separated by conflict or imprisonment in either their home countries or abroad was another area where the demand for ICRC assistance remained high, particularly in Iraq and in Israel and the Occupied and Autonomous Palestinian Territories, owing to the large numbers of people interned/detained in these contexts.

ICRC visits continued to people interned or detained in Algeria, Israel, the Occupied and Autonomous Palestinian Territories, Iraq, Jordan and Kuwait to ensure that their treatment and living conditions complied with applicable legal standards and, when necessary, to make recommendations to the detaining authorities for corrective action. ICRC detention visits also started in Mauritania and Tunisia, following the conclusion of agreements with the respective authorities in spring 2005. Visits to detention places in Yemen remained suspended for a third year as no agreement on working procedures could yet be reached. The ICRC also systematically requested access to people previously held by the United States at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba and transferred to their home countries. Such access was accorded in a number of countries, and follow-up visits to the detainees took place. The ICRC was in talks

with a number of other governments of the region on the possibility of conducting visits to detention places in their countries. Particular emphasis was placed on gaining or increasing access to security detainees, including those held in connection with the so-called "global war on terror".

The ICRC legal advisory service, in conjunction with the network of ICRC delegations in the region and the League of Arab States, encouraged Arab governments to adapt their national legislation in line with the provisions of IHL and supported them in doing so.

The ICRC made a concerted effort to enhance its understanding of the environments in which it operated, to build on its traditionally strong relations with the authorities concerned and to ensure that key segments of civil society had an accurate perception of the ICRC's mandate and role in order to facilitate its work. Thus, the ICRC reinforced its dialogue with civil society representatives, religious circles and radical groups in order to demonstrate the relevance of IHL in contemporary forms of armed conflict and violence and the ICRC's role in this regard. In all countries of the region, the ICRC stepped up work to promote adherence to IHL and the integration of its basic principles into military doctrine and school and university curricula.

To be ready to respond to needs relevant to its mandate, the ICRC closely monitored the political and humanitarian consequences of major developments in the region. These included general elections in Iraq, the evacuation of Israeli settlers and troops from the Gaza Strip, the ongoing construction of the West Bank barrier, the withdrawal of Syrian armed forces from Lebanon, intermittent skirmishes between Israeli forces and Hezbollah militants across the Israeli-Lebanese border and the volatile situation in northern Yemen.

In Iraq, despite severe security constraints, the ICRC was one of the only international humanitarian agencies to maintain a continuous operational presence in central, southern and northern parts of the country since the US-led military intervention there in March 2003. ICRC teams visited thousands of people detained/interned by the multinational forces in Iraq and the Iraqi authorities, and started to arrange family visits to one major internment facility in southern Iraq, which was difficult for them to get to given its remote location. It also rehabilitated health, water and sanitation facilities serving millions of people,

donated emergency medical supplies to hospitals treating the wounded, provided aid to families displaced by the fighting and delivered clean water to urban communities suffering acute shortages. It furthermore maintained its technical, material and training support to seven physical rehabilitation centres located in various parts of the country. In spite of its strong commitment to addressing some of the most urgent needs in Iraq, the ICRC was painfully aware of the frustrating limitations the difficult security environment imposed on its operations. Thus, pressing and large-scale needs in Iraq remained unmet owing to the overall weakness of the humanitarian response.

The ICRC operation in Israel and the Occupied and Autonomous Palestinian Territories remained one of its largest worldwide. As in the past, the core element of the ICRC's mandate was to strive to achieve respect by Israel for its obligations under IHL towards the Palestinian population living under its occupation and to make representations to the Israeli authorities with regard to alleged or documented violations of that law. Visits were made to thousands of Palestinians detained by Israel and to hundreds detained by the Palestinian Authority. The ICRC significantly expanded its family-visits programme for Palestinian detainees. It also stepped up field assessments to measure the impact of Israeli-imposed movement restrictions on the living conditions of the Palestinian population. Emergency aid was provided to thousands of particularly needy Palestinian families, including food parcels and household-relief kits for Palestinians whose homes had been destroyed or confiscated. In addition, cash-for-work and food-production projects were implemented in communities worst affected by acute unemployment and poverty, and water and sanitation infrastructure was rehabilitated or developed, in coordination with the Palestinian public utility authorities.

Gaining access to all places of detention in Lebanon remained an ICRC objective. The ICRC maintained a capacity to respond to the emergency needs of the civilian population in the event of a sudden intensification of cross-border violence between Hezbollah militants and Israeli forces. It also offered technical advice to the Lebanese authorities to reinforce their efforts to clarify the fate of persons unaccounted for from past conflicts.

As in past years, the focus of the ICRC in Syria was related to the Syrian population of the Israeli-occupied Golan, which is

protected by the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention. The ICRC enabled inhabitants of the occupied Golan to maintain contact with family members in Syria proper. It also facilitated travel to Syria proper by Golanese students and pilgrims who wished to pursue their studies or visit holy sites there. Continuing ICRC technical and financial support helped to sustain a prosthetic/orthotic centre run by the Syrian branch of the Palestine Red Crescent Society in Damascus providing artificial limbs and physical rehabilitation for Palestinians and other persons in need.

Jordan remained a key logistical and supply base for ICRC operations in Iraq and the Occupied and Autonomous Palestinian Territories. In Jordan itself, the ICRC visited people deprived of their freedom and restored contact between people in Jordan and members of their families detained/interned abroad or between family members otherwise separated by conflict. The ICRC also continued to facilitate the transfer of people in need of medical care between the West Bank and Jordan.

The principal objective of the ICRC in Egypt was to promote greater knowledge and acceptance of IHL at the national level and, in cooperation with the Cairo-based League of Arab States, throughout the region. The ICRC's regional documentation and promotion centre in Cairo continued to produce written and audiovisual materials on IHL, including translations into Arabic of IHL treaties, for distribution to government and civil society audiences in the region. Another priority was to facilitate the resettlement of asylum seekers and refugees, mainly from Africa, in third countries.

Resolving humanitarian issues still outstanding from the 1990–91 Gulf war, in particular the fate of persons unaccounted for in relation to that conflict, was a continuing priority for the Kuwait regional delegation. The Tripartite Commission set up by the ICRC in 1991 to address these issues remained the official forum for discussions between the parties concerned, namely Iraq, Kuwait and the coalition States – France, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The regional delegation also increased cooperation with the National Societies in the Gulf region.

In Yemen, the ICRC sought to resume detention visits, which it suspended in 2003 following a decision by the Yemeni authorities to restrict as of 2004 the organization's access to central prisons only. The

organization nonetheless continued to provide female detainees with improved medical care and sewing and literacy courses to enhance their prospects of reintegration into society following release. Ongoing ICRC technical and material support helped sustain State-run limb-fitting centres caring for the physically disabled. As in past years, ICRC tracing and family-links services enabled refugees in Yemen to locate and restore contact with relatives in their home countries, mostly in the Horn of Africa.

Within the framework of a formal mechanism established in early 2004, the ICRC worked with the Iranian authorities to clarify the fate of prisoners of war who were registered by the ICRC during the 1980–88 Iran-Iraq war or known to it via RCMs exchanged during that period. The ICRC also offered to facilitate a mechanism between Iran and Iraq aimed at shedding light on the fate of thousands of other people missing from the same conflict.

In Algeria, the ICRC carried out detention visits and cooperated with the Algerian Red Crescent Society to assist women and child victims of violence and to strengthen its national first-aid network. It also provided assistance to a prosthetic/orthotic unit in Algiers using ICRC technology to produce artificial limbs for Algerian amputees.

The Tunisia regional delegation repatriated the remaining Moroccan prisoners following their release by the Polisario Front after interviewing them individually to ensure that they wished to return to their country of origin. In addition, the delegation began detention visits in Tunisia and Mauritania after concluding access agreements with the authorities concerned. Acting as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC worked with the Moroccan authorities and the Polisario Front to try and clarify the fate of combatants from both sides unaccounted for in relation to the Western Sahara conflict.

The ICRC has maintained a permanent presence in most countries of the region for several decades.