

ISRAEL, THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND THE AUTONOMOUS TERRITORIES

PROTECTION

8,164,374

ASSISTANCE

617,137

PREVENTIVE ACTION

1,754,558

COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL SOCIETIES

2,989,083

OVERHEADS

875,053

GENERAL

575,420

TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 14,975,625



+ ICRC delegation
 + ICRC sub-delegation
 + ICRC presence
 + ICRC mission

The year 2000 started on a positive note with new rounds of talks leading to the redeployment of Israeli troops in the West Bank. In May, the Israeli government decided to withdraw unilaterally from southern Lebanon ending 22 years of occupation.³ By midyear, however, hopes for achieving a sustainable peace in the region were dashed as negotiations between Israel and Syria stalled and talks during the Israeli-Palestinian summit in July in the United States failed to bring about an agreement. In September violence erupted in the West Bank, Gaza and northern Israel. At the end of the year, 305 Palestinians, 43 Israeli Jews and

13 Israeli Arabs had been killed, and more than 10,000 were injured.

Restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities on the occupied and autonomous territories severely affected the daily life of Palestinians, particularly following the upsurge in clashes. The territories were completely sealed off, with strict closures or curfews placed on certain localities. Numerous problems were encountered in transport, education and health care. The movements of emergency medical services were limited causing difficulties in accessing and evacuating the wounded and sick. The economic ramifications of the restrictions were catastrophic. The United Nations (UN) estimated that the poverty rate in

³ See p. 190.

the territories increased from 21% to 32% between September and the end of December as Palestinians were prevented from travelling to jobs and severe trade restrictions curtailed many commercial activities.

The ICRC, extremely concerned by the upsurge in violence, strengthened its presence in the area by increasing the number of expatriates and basing some of them permanently in Nablus, Ramallah and Hebron, in order to respond to the humanitarian needs arising from the events and to make regular representations to the relevant authorities regarding respect for the rules of the Fourth Geneva Convention, in particular those regarding the protection of the medical mission and the use of force. Although the Israeli authorities declared their support for and willingness to facilitate the ICRC's work, there were repeated restrictions on the movements of ICRC staff in the occupied territories.

On 21 November, the ICRC appealed to all involved in the violence to observe the restraints imposed by international humanitarian law and its underlying principles. Grave concern was expressed regarding the consequences in humanitarian terms of the presence of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, which is contrary to the Fourth Geneva Convention. It was recalled that the ICRC had consistently reminded Israel of its responsibility under the Fourth Geneva Convention for any acts committed towards Palestinian civilians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip – regardless of the status of the areas established within the framework of the Oslo agreement and the various subsequent interim agreements. The appeal also stressed the absolute and unconditional prohibition of terrorist acts, reprisals against the civilian population, indiscriminate attacks, or attacks directed against the civilian population.

Visits to detainees in Israel

The ICRC delegation pursued its traditional activities in favour of all detainees protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention. These comprised not just Palestinians but also other persons detained by the Israeli authorities, including Lebanese and Syrian nationals, among them people from the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights, and nationals of States that are at war with Israel or have no diplomatic relations with the country.

In April 2000, 13 of the 15 remaining Lebanese administrative detainees were released and repatriated under ICRC auspices. This followed the decision of the Supreme Court on 12 April to the effect that Israeli law does not authorize the holding of individuals in administrative detention in instances where the individuals in question do not pose a threat to Israeli security.⁴ The ICRC was still denied access to one of the two remaining administrative detainees, who had been held in Israel since 1994. These two detainees, respectively held since 1989 and 1994, should have been released at the latest following the Israeli withdrawal from the south of Lebanon, according to the Fourth Geneva Convention.

In addition, the ICRC continued to visit 22 Lebanese nationals still held in Israel after having been arrested in southern Lebanon and sentenced by a court in Israel. Their transfer to Israel was in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Moreover, they should have been handed over to their country of origin after the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon. The ICRC regularly reminded the State of Israel of its obligations in this regard.

Over the year, the ICRC visited 26 detention centres in Israel. It reported on its findings to the authorities, and made representations with a view to improving the treatment and conditions of detention. In March, the ICRC started its annual general visits to all prisons in Israel in order to evaluate the conditions of detention and treatment of detainees. Particular attention continued to be paid to detainees under interrogation, who were visited on a regular basis. In addition, a number of visits to individual detainees with special humanitarian needs were organized.

Throughout the year, the ICRC provided the detainees in the Meggido Military Detention Centre with educational and recreational materials. The delegation also distributed sets of clothing to foreign detainees held in Israeli prisons.

The ICRC continued to fund and organize, in cooperation with the Palestine Red Crescent Society, family visits for Palestinian detainees held in Israeli prisons. A total of 65,775 family visits from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem took place under the programme in 2000. Unfortunately, it was suspended as a consequence of the upsurge in violence which began in September.

Despite the provisions set forth in the Fourth Geneva Convention concerning the right of detainees to receive visits and despite long negotiations, unacceptable restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities remained the main obstacle to resumption of the programme. These restrictions consisted notably of prohibiting certain close family members from visiting detainees and reducing the duration of the permits enabling family members to travel to and from the prison. In the meantime, the ICRC forwarded some 600 parcels (clothes) from families to detainees from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

⁴ Six had already been released and repatriated prior to that date.

Visits to detainees in Gaza and the West Bank

At the request of the Palestinian Authority, the ICRC visited civilian and military places of detention in the autonomous territories. In February, it handed over a summary report on the situation of detainees between January 1998 and June 1999 to the President of the Palestinian Authority.

ICRC delegates continued to make regular visits to detainees in 40 places of detention in Gaza and the West Bank under the responsibility of the Palestinian Police, General Intelligence, Preventive Security Service, Military Intelligence, National Security Forces and Force 17 respectively. The delegation also pursued negotiations with the Palestinian Authority regarding access to one place of detention under the responsibility of the Preventive Security Service, two places under the Military Intelligence and one run by the Police. In all four of these cases the authorities in charge had failed to guarantee respect for the ICRC's standard visiting procedures.

Helping to maintain family ties

For over 30 years, a major problem for the 20,000 Syrian nationals living on the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights has been separation from other family members.⁵ Through its delegations in Israel and Syria, the ICRC continued to provide assistance, in its capacity as a neutral intermediary, to civilians protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention. In particular, it facilitated the passage of people who had to cross the demarcation line for humanitarian reasons.

From the end of May, the ICRC conducted humanitarian activities for Lebanese nationals who fled to Israel after the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon. Under its auspices, nine people returned to Lebanon and the mortal remains of eight others who had died in Israel were handed over to their families in Lebanon.

A hot line was opened at the ICRC's delegation for Lebanese wanting to send news to their families in Lebanon. The ICRC forwarded to Lebanon and distributed in Israel more than 800 documents as well as handling Red Cross messages exchanged between family members separated by the Israeli-Lebanese border. It also participated in the transfer to Lebanon of a two-month-old baby, and the repatriation of a medical patient and a detainee who had completed his sentence.

In its capacity as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC made representations on behalf of the three Israeli soldiers captured on Israel's northern border and the Israeli citizen held by the Hezbollah.⁶

Promoting humanitarian law

Throughout the year, the ICRC continued to support the pilot project for teaching humanitarian law in universities in Gaza and the West Bank in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education. Its activities in this regard included training professors to become local experts on the subject, providing support for students taking part in the course and the supplying of educational materials and publications relating to humanitarian law.

Dissemination sessions were carried out in both Israel and the occupied and autonomous territories for various groups, among them cadets of the Israeli armed forces and 30 Palestinian prison officials.

The delegation also took part in the "Exploring Humanitarian Law" project in cooperation with the Israeli and Palestinian education authorities, and produced a film on the social reintegration of Palestinian ex-detainees.

Urging respect for the Geneva Conventions

Parallel to its appeal of 21 November 2000 calling upon all those involved in the violence to ensure respect for civilians, the wounded, medical personnel and for those who are no longer taking part in the hostilities, the ICRC strengthened its efforts to disseminate the rules of international humanitarian law to arms bearers, political and humanitarian organizations and individuals present in the field.

⁵ See p. 193.

⁶ See p. 190.

As a larger number of delegates were present in the field monitoring the situation, the delegation organized several meetings with high-ranking representatives of the Israel Defense Forces in order to explain the ICRC's specific role and the Palestine Red Crescent Society's medical activities. In addition, a meeting with an Israeli military spokesperson and the Israel Defense Forces' head of doctrine was organized to discuss a more systematic dissemination approach and the extension of the ICRC's dissemination efforts to different units of the armed forces. To increase awareness of and respect for the rules of humanitarian law, the delegation organized a presentation on the ICRC's mandate and activities for 15 non-commissioned officers in Tel Aviv.

Protection-driven assistance strategy

At the end of the year, the ICRC devised a protection-driven assistance strategy targeting the direct victims of violence and closures. The objectives of this strategy were to facilitate access to sealed-off areas and provide emergency assistance to the villages most affected by the closures as well as to families whose homes were destroyed. Overall, 50,000 families were expected to benefit from this programme. The ICRC, as lead agency for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's activities in the occupied and autonomous territories and Israel, and in coordination with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, issued several information and appeal documents.

Cooperation with the Magen David Adom

Throughout the year, regular contact was maintained with the Magen David Adom. Two meetings were held bringing together the leadership of the Magen David Adom and the Palestine Red Crescent Society, with representatives of the International Federation and the ICRC to define possible areas of cooperation between the Magen David Adom and the Palestine Red Crescent Society.

A dissemination session was organized for Magen David Adom volunteer leaders, and was attended by about 45 volunteers and their instructors from around the country. The Magen David Adom also asked the ICRC, jointly with the American Red Cross, to help with the restructuring and development of its tracing unit.

Cooperation with the Palestine Red Crescent Society

The ICRC made particular efforts to strengthen the operational cooperation between the Palestine Red Crescent Society and the Magen David Adom. The Presidents of the two Societies met in Geneva on 20 and 21 December at the invitation of the ICRC and in the presence of representatives of the International Federation. They discussed difficulties faced by their respective organizations in rescue operations and agreed on practical steps to increase cooperation. Their aim was to ensure that the wounded and sick received prompt assistance and that medical services and personnel were adequately protected.

Throughout the year the ICRC continued to strengthen the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) of the Palestine Red Crescent Society. This support has greatly contributed to the Society's ability to respond effectively to past and present crises. Today the EMS has all the equipment and expertise needed to run an effective and stable service. In 2000, ICRC support included the donation of five new ambulances and 20 second-hand computers.

A massive effort to train ambulance staff was made with ICRC support. During the year this training included refresher courses for emergency medical technicians, sponsorship for the participation of two Red Crescent Society staff in the Medical Emergency Unit course organized by the German Red Cross in cooperation with the ICRC and the International Federation, and in a comprehensive Pre-hospital Trauma Life Support course. Two Palestine Red Crescent leaders attended an Emergency Response Unit team leader training course in Geneva, while eight social workers and *kindergarten* teachers from different branches took part in a training course.

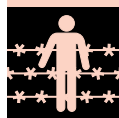
In response to the outbreak of violence at the end of September, the ongoing EMS programme adapted rapidly to the overwhelming needs facing the Palestine Red Crescent. The 13 mobile first-aid stations (field hospitals) which the ICRC had deployed in 1997 were constantly restocked with locally purchased medical equipment and supplies. The ICRC in Geneva sent in several tonnes of medical equipment and supplies. In order to reinforce the EMS vehicle fleet, six fully equipped ambulances were ordered.

Owing to severe restrictions on freedom of movement, the ICRC ensured the regular transport of medical supplies from the Palestine Red Crescent⁷ central warehouse to all branches throughout the West Bank and Gaza. In addition, action had to be taken on many occasions to help Red Crescent ambulances which were blocked at army checkpoints.

The delegation facilitated various visits to the occupied and autonomous territories by the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of a number of countries, among them Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Arab Emirates.

A logistics base, including a bonded warehouse and three trucks, was set up in Amman⁷ to coordinate the Movement's relief operations, to organize the arrival of international assistance donated by National Societies, and to transport the goods to the West Bank and Gaza.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- visited 3,384 detainees, including 2,024 monitored individually, in 26 places of detention in Israel;
- issued 18,370

certificates of detention;

- supervised the repatriation of 17 Lebanese and 2 Syrian detainees released by the Israeli authorities, after establishing in private interviews that they were returning of their own free will;
- visited 921 persons detained by the Palestinian security services in 40 places of detention;



- collected 1,386 and distributed 1,421 Red Cross messages exchanged between residents of the occupied

and the autonomous territories and their relatives living in countries without official relations with Israel, and between civilians and detainees;

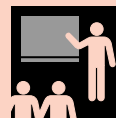
- supervised 21 handover operations (including 1 family reunion) enabling 830 people to cross the demarcation line to/from the Golan Heights (428 to Syria and 402 to Golan) in conjunction with the ICRC's delegation in Syria;
- organized 65,775 family visits from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem;
- supervised the repatriation of 6 civilians, including 1 baby, and the mortal remains of 4 people from Israel to southern Lebanon;
- forwarded over 82 documents for separated family members;



- gave extensive support to the Palestine Red Crescent Society's Emergency Medical Services programme,

including equipment and several training courses;

- provided support for the production and distribution of 30,000 promotional brochures about the structure and activities of the Palestine Red Crescent;



- in cooperation with Bir Zeit University, organized 2 workshops for 26 Palestinian university professors involved in

setting up humanitarian law courses, and provided documentation;

- held lectures for 50 Israeli university students;
- participated in the "Exploring Humanitarian Law" project.

⁷ See p. 188.



MEDITERRANEAN SEA

LEBANON

SYRIA

+ Majdel Shams
*GOLAN
HEIGHTS*

Jenin +

Tulkarm +

TEL AVIV (+)

+ Nablus
+ Qalqiliya

Ramallah +

+ Jericho

Jerusalem (+)

Bethlehem +

Gaza (+)

*GAZA
STRIP*

Hebron +

Khan Yunis

WEST BANK

JORDAN

ISRAEL

EGYPT

50 km

ICRC/AR.2000

(+) ICRC delegation

(+) ICRC sub-delegation

+ ICRC presence

(+) ICRC mission