

**Zeitschrift:** Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross  
**Herausgeber:** International Committee of the Red Cross  
**Band:** - (1994)  
  
**Rubrik:** Middle East and North Africa

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

**Download PDF:** 27.04.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**



Civilians queue for water in Aden. The water supply system broke down after being damaged by the fighting in June, and the ICRC set up pumps and generators to increase the output of local wells.

ICRC/R.Sidler



## 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> : 73

National Societies<sup>1</sup> : 3

Local employees<sup>2</sup> : 303

## Total expenditure

Sfr 43,663,880



⊕ ICRC regional delegation ⊕ ICRC delegation

ICRC / AR 12.94

## Expenditure breakdown

### Sfr

|                      |            |
|----------------------|------------|
| Protection/tracing:  | 13,793,582 |
| Relief:              | 2,216,354  |
| Medical assistance:  | 13,676,326 |
| Cooperation with     |            |
| National Societies:  | 2,600,773  |
| Dissemination:       | 1,698,408  |
| Operational support: | 7,175,660  |
| Overheads:           | 2,502,777  |

# MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

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

<sup>2</sup> Under ICRC contract, as at December 1994.



*In Israel and the occupied territories the ICRC pursued its protection activities for the civilian population under Israeli occupation and detainees held by the Israeli authorities, in accordance with its mandate under the Geneva Conventions. ICRC delegates kept up their efforts to make the various parties aware of their responsibilities in the face of violations of the most basic principles of international humanitarian law.*

*Following the Cairo agreement of 4 May between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and under the terms of a memorandum of understanding signed by the ICRC and the PLO in July, the institution adapted its activities to meet the humanitarian needs emerging in the autonomous territories of the Gaza Strip and Jericho.*

*Following various meetings between the ICRC, the Federation and the "Palestine Red Crescent Society" in 1994, it was confirmed that the ICRC would continue to coordinate the activities of the various National Societies participating in programmes for the Palestinian population in the occupied and the autonomous territories. The ICRC also maintained close contacts with the "Magen David Adom" in Israel.*

*Elsewhere in the region, and despite sustained efforts by the ICRC to resolve a number of humanitarian issues, the following situations still required its attention.*

- In the aftermath of the Iran/Iraq conflict of 1980 to 1988, the repatriation of Iraqi POWs and efforts to elucidate the fate of tens of thousands of missing soldiers from both sides remained deadlocked. The ICRC submitted a memorandum to the signatory States of the Geneva Conventions which were members of the UN Security Council, to the Organization of the Islamic Conference and to the United Nations requesting that they do everything in their power to resolve the situation.*
- The ICRC pursued its efforts to resume its activities for the some 20,000 Iraqi civilians on record as being interned in the Rafha camp in Saudi Arabia since the end of the Gulf war. Some of them had been POWs and had lost that status once the general repatriation was completed in October 1991.*
- The fate of the some 650 individuals (Kuwaitis, Saudis, Iraqis and others) reported missing in connection with the Gulf war remained to be determined. A Technical Sub-Committee was established to speed up progress in this matter.*

*When conflict broke out in Yemen in May the ICRC immediately started to carry out its traditional activities, in coordination with the National Society, in particular providing food aid, medical, sanitation and other supplies, and tracing services. ICRC delegates were able to visit and register persons detained in connection with the situation.*



Living conditions in Iraq continued to deteriorate to an alarming extent. In order to meet the most urgent needs throughout the country, the ICRC carried out medical, orthopaedic and sanitation programmes.

In North Africa the ICRC's main concern continued to be the situation in Algeria. The ICRC's activities in the country had been suspended in July 1992, and it was unable to resume its work despite many approaches made to the authorities. In connection with the conflict in the Western Sahara the ICRC registered Moroccan prisoners held by the Polisario Front, and continued to visit Sahrawi prisoners in Moroccan hands who had been receiving ICRC visits since they resumed in 1993. The institution made representations to both sides with a view to finding a speedy solution to the problem of these people, some of whom had been detained for 19 years.

Finally, the ICRC used audiovisual material, much of which was produced by the Cairo delegation, to spread knowledge of humanitarian law in the region and provide information about ICRC operations. In several countries the internal situation made it vital for the ICRC to pursue and step up contacts established with the authorities concerning the nature of its mandate and the exercise of its right of humanitarian initiative in situations of internal conflict not specifically covered by humanitarian law. In addition, delegates encouraged countries which had not yet signed one or both of the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions to become party to these treaties.



ICRC delegation  
 ICRC sub-delegation  
 ICRC mission  
 ICRC office  
 ICRC orthopaedic centre

## The Near East

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

The process of normalizing relations between Israel and the Palestinians and between Israel and its Arab neighbours continued in 1994. On 4 May Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) signed an agreement in Cairo marking the beginning of limited self-rule for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area. On 25 July Israel and Jordan signed a declaration in Washington formally ending the state of belligerency between the two countries, followed by a peace accord signed on 26 October.

Following the signing of the Cairo agreement in May the Palestinian police force started to take responsibility for maintaining law and order in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area. The inhabitants were living under very harsh economic conditions, exacerbated by the periodic

closing-off of the autonomous territories during the year which made it difficult to work in Israel and export goods. Tension was heightened by the continued presence of settlers in Gaza and Israeli armed forces assigned to protect them.

Regarding the ICRC's activities, on 13 July the institution signed a memorandum of understanding with the PLO "for the benefit of" the Palestinian Authority. The agreement gives formal status to the ICRC's presence and activities in the territories under Palestinian jurisdiction. In particular, it allows the institution to visit all persons detained by the Palestinian Authority as soon as they are arrested. The ICRC Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa met the President of the Palestinian Authority and Chairman of the PLO on two occasions in 1994. The first was just after the signing of the Cairo agreement, to discuss matters concerning the ICRC's presence and activities in the autonomous territories; the second was in November, when questions relating to the implementation of the ICRC/PLO



agreement were raised. The Delegate General also handed over the ICRC's first report on conditions of detention following visits to people detained under Palestinian jurisdiction.

The ICRC stated in writing to the Israeli authorities that, in its view, the Fourth Geneva Convention remained applicable in all the territories occupied by Israel, including East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. Moreover, the ICRC considered that all Palestinians from the autonomous territories who were held by the Israeli authorities were also entitled to protection under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

In the occupied territories the ICRC continued to promote compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention by calling on the Israeli government to respect its provisions, at the same time taking practical steps to help the civilians whom the Convention protects. It acted as a neutral intermediary between the Israeli authorities and civilians under occupation, making constant representations for humanitarian reasons on behalf of people from all the occupied territories. For the ICRC, the Fourth Geneva Convention provides the answer as to how to respect the victims' right to humane treatment and at the same time satisfy a State's security requirements.

Indiscriminate acts of violence against both Palestinian and Israeli civilians were on the increase in 1994. In a Hebron mosque 29 Palestinian worshippers were killed by an Israeli settler on 25 February. Several attacks took place on Israeli soil, causing the deaths of dozens of Israeli civilians. The ICRC issued four public appeals between February and October, urging all parties to respect and/or ensure respect for the most basic principles of international humanitarian law.

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

## Activities for the civilian population in the occupied territories

The ICRC was deeply concerned about the expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, especially along the "green line" and around Jerusalem. The policy, which is in violation of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, had serious consequences in humanitarian terms: the constant tension caused by the close proximity of Israeli and Palestinian communities and the presence of Israeli troops to protect settlers erupted periodically in incidents of violence.

During 1994 the delegation made a number of written representations at various levels, mainly concerning cases of ill-treatment of protected persons,

### IN 1994 THE ICRC:

- carried out 442 visits to 46 places of detention in Israel and the occupied territories;
- had access to Palestinian detainees held by the Israeli authorities: the total decreased from 10,375 to 6,191 between January and December;
- supervised the family visit programme, which enabled 173,046 people to visit their relatives in detention;
- visited 522 detainees in 7 places of detention in the autonomous territories;
- handled 22,000 Red Cross messages, issued 13,448 certificates of detention and arranged for 571 powers of attorney;
- arranged for 1,162 transfers between Israel, the occupied and the autonomous territories and Jordan and Syria.



acts of violence by settlers and the use of live ammunition by Israeli security forces in situations in which it appeared to be unjustified. No reply was received from the authorities to summary reports on implementation of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the occupied territories submitted by the ICRC in 1991, 1992 and 1993.

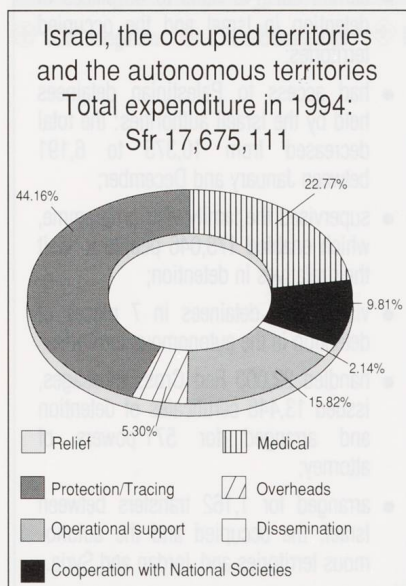
In 1994 the IDF\* demolished or walled up a total of 90 houses belonging to protected persons. Seventy cases were for administrative reasons, 15 during operations to arrest wanted people and five, in clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, as a punitive measure.

Israeli occupation of the so-called security zone in southern Lebanon and military operations in and near the zone continued to affect civilians in the area. The ICRC delegations in Israel and Lebanon coordinated their efforts on behalf of these people. During 1994 delegates made representations to the Israeli authorities regarding the conduct of hostilities and alleged failure to respect international humanitarian law on the part of the IDF and the SLA.\*

## Activities for detainees in Israel and the occupied territories

As a result of releases and transfers carried out under the terms of the agreements between Israelis and Palestinians, the number of Palestinians detained in Israel and the occupied territories fell from 10,375 at the end of 1993 to 6,191 on 31 December 1994. However, a monthly average of 576 arrests were made in the West Bank and 205 in Gaza. Of particular concern to the ICRC were detainees under interrogation: an average of nearly 300 people a month were notified to the ICRC after they had spent more than 12 days in interrogation sections, and about half of these spent more than 28 days under interrogation. ICRC delegates who regularly visited these detainees did not note any improvement in their treatment. Under Article 31 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, physical or moral coercion against protected persons is prohibited.

ICRC delegates carried out ad hoc visits to 20 prisons, five military detention centres and a number of police stations and provisional military detention centres. They provided material and medical assistance and monitored medical conditions. Following the visits the ICRC submitted oral and written reports to the competent authorities. (For tracing services for detainees, see below.)



\* IDF: Israel Defence Forces

\* SLA: South Lebanon Army



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 ICRC was still denied access to the Khiam detention centre in the Israeli-occupied zone in southern Lebanon. A memorandum was submitted in June reminding the Israeli authorities of their responsibility under the terms of the Geneva Conventions and reporting on conditions of detention in the centre, on the basis of accounts given by former detainees.

By the end of 1994 access had not yet been granted to two Lebanese detainees known to be held in Israel. Nine others, who had been hidden from the ICRC for several years, were visited by delegates for the first time. A total of 73 Lebanese nationals were being held in facilities run by the Israeli Prison Service or in police stations.

Despite difficulties caused by the closing-off of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank from Israel and the closing-off of East Jerusalem from the rest of the occupied territories, arrangements continued to be made for family visits to Palestinians detained by the Israeli authorities. The programme was supervised by the ICRC, coordinated and funded by the Norwegian Red Cross, with financial assistance from the Swedish government via the Swedish Red Cross, and run by the Central Committee of the Red Crescent Societies in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. In addition, the tracing agency organized a visit in June by 83 relatives from Jordan to 23 Palestinians who were held in six places of detention under Israeli responsibility.

Also under ICRC supervision, the Australian Red Cross started to provide support for programmes run by two non-governmental organizations to help former detainees resume normal life in their families and the community at large.

## Activities for detainees in the autonomous territories

Under the terms of the agreement signed by the ICRC and the PLO in July, delegates started to visit people detained by the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and Jericho. As from 9 August, a total of 522 detainees were visited in seven places of detention. By the end of the year the ICRC had not yet been granted access to all people detained in interrogation sections.

## Tracing activities

The ICRC continued to act as a neutral intermediary between Israel and the Arab countries with which it still had no direct official relations. The institution worked with the respective authorities to organize the transfer and repatriation

of 390 people across the King Hussein/Allenby bridge between Israel and Jordan and 772 people, mainly pilgrims and students, across the demarcation line separating the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights from Syria. However, no family visits could be organized, and 73 people from the occupied Golan Heights were still waiting for the green light from the Israeli authorities to cross the line to visit relatives in Syria. Red Cross messages and radio messages were exchanged between civilians in Israel, the occupied and the autonomous territories and their families in countries without diplomatic relations or postal links with Israel.

The tracing agency gathered information on the whereabouts of detainees, mainly through notification by the Israeli detaining authorities, the registration cards filled in by detainees during ICRC visits and information collected from families of detainees. The data was then circulated to the network of ICRC offices. In 1994 the agency responded to more than 80,000 requests from families for information on detained relatives, and exchanged Red Cross messages between detainees and their relatives in countries having no official links with Israel. The agency issued certificates of detention enabling detainees' families and ex-detainees to obtain certain benefits and arranged for detainees to sign powers of attorney to enable their families to settle their affairs on their behalf.

In the autonomous territories the tracing agency started to collect information on detainees held by the Palestinian authorities in order to inform their families of their whereabouts.

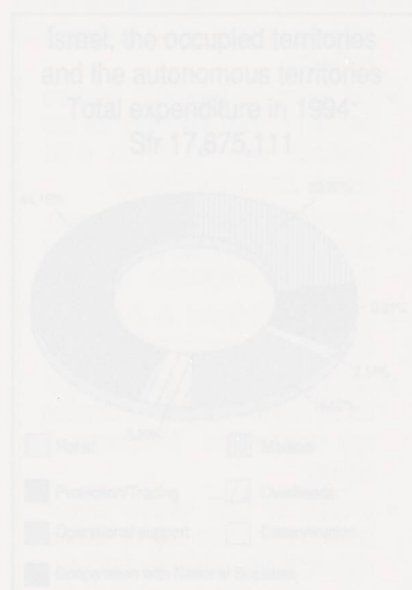
## Medical activities

In January the ICRC launched an assistance programme for Palestinian NGOs providing primary health care for the population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The programme enabled health care to be provided free of charge to the large proportion of Palestinians who could not afford the nominal charges levied: some 800,000 people benefited from the scheme. In support of the programme, the Finnish, French and Icelandic Red Cross Societies seconded nurses to work in the field.

A programme providing financial assistance to private Palestinian hospitals in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which was funded by the European Community and implemented by the Netherlands Red Cross under ICRC supervision, was renewed and ran until the end of the year.

## Dissemination

The ICRC organized sessions for the legal department of the Israeli security forces and, for the first time, gave a presentation on humanitarian law and the





ICRC to about 30 instructors from the Israeli border police in November. In another first, an exhibition on ICRC operations and the Movement's principles was shown in Tel Aviv in March.

In the occupied and the autonomous territories the ICRC set up its travelling exhibition of the original calligraphy used in its 1994 Arabic calendar, gave talks on its activities at Palestinian youth camps and, in connection with World Red Cross/Red Crescent Day, carried out a major information campaign in cooperation with the "Palestine Red Crescent Society".

The delegation also arranged for translations into Hebrew and Arabic of the Movement's basic texts and organized seminars for academics on humanitarian law.

From 10 to 12 September the ICRC took part in an international human rights colloquium organized by the Gaza Centre for Rights and Law and attended by some 60 eminent professors, lawyers, researchers and members of NGOs.

### Cooperation with the "Magen David Adom" (MDA) and the "Palestine Red Crescent Society" (PRCS)

Close contacts were maintained with the MDA in 1994. The ICRC's Director for Principles, Law and Relations with the Movement met the MDA's President in May in Tel Aviv to discuss topics of mutual interest.

A programme to support the PRCS's emergency medical service was launched at the beginning of 1994, with the aim of replacing 11 ambulances and providing financial assistance to cover the costs of existing services, including vehicle maintenance expenses and salaries, for one year. In July an expert from the German Red Cross carried out a survey of emergency services in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and drafted a report which was submitted to the President of the Palestinian Council for Health and to other organizations concerned.

The ICRC also cooperated with the PRCS with a view to teaching humanitarian principles in schools.

### Coordination of international Red Cross/Red Crescent activities in the occupied and the autonomous territories

The ICRC and the Federation had agreed in 1993 that the ICRC, by virtue of its role as neutral and independent institution and intermediary, would be responsible for the overall coordination of international Red Cross and Red Crescent activities to support the PRCS and the Palestinian population during the transitional period provided for in the Declaration of Principles signed in

1993 by Israel and the PLO. At a series of meetings in 1994 between the ICRC, the Federation and the PRCS, it was confirmed that the Federation would concentrate on supporting the PRCS elsewhere in the region, while the ICRC would continue to be responsible for overall coordination of National Society projects in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. During 1994 four National Societies carried out projects in the area under ICRC supervision, and four National Societies provided staff to help implement ICRC projects.

## JORDAN

On 26 October, following a declaration signed in Washington three months earlier, Jordan and Israel signed a peace accord ending 47 years of belligerency between the two States. The ICRC's activities in Jordan continued to focus on visits to detainees and dissemination. The delegation carried on its tracing work for Palestinians affected by the consequences of the Arab-Israeli conflict, although the volume of such activities fell substantially. As in 1993, the delegation in Amman also acted as a logistic base for the ICRC's humanitarian relief programmes carried out in Iraq.

The Executive Committee of the Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies met in Amman on 4 and 5 April. The ICRC was represented by the Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa.

### Activities for detainees

In 1994 the ICRC delegation in Amman concentrated essentially on visits to security detainees under interrogation at the GID.\* Some security incidents occurred early in 1994, leading to a rise in arrests. Delegates made regular two-weekly visits to a total of 436 detainees held at the GID and submitted reports to the authorities concerned. During the year they also carried out 15 ad hoc visits to security detainees at the Swaqa, Qafqafa and Juweideh rehabilitation centres and at the Zarqa military detention centre.

In September the head of delegation in Amman met the Crown Prince and the Prime Minister of Jordan to discuss the ICRC's detention activities.

### Tracing activities

The ongoing peace process brought some benefit to families separated as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict: the telephone service between Jordan and Israel was restored in August and a postal service was expected to be in

#### IN 1994 THE ICRC:

- carried out 57 visits to 436 detainees in 8 places of detention, registering 406 for the first time;
- handled 15,000 Red Cross messages, opened 65 tracing cases and resolved 75, and issued 2,117 certificates of detention and 52 travel documents;
- carried out 390 repatriations and transfers on medical and humanitarian grounds.

\* GID: General Intelligence Directorate



operation by 1995. However, as the restrictions on the free movement of Palestinians between Jordan and the occupied and the autonomous territories remained in force, the ICRC continued to act as a neutral intermediary in arranging for transfers across the River Jordan on humanitarian grounds and to exchange official documents and urgent Red Cross messages.

Following an agreement with the authorities, the ICRC was able to set up a system for the exchange of Red Cross messages between detainees held at the GID and their families. It also arranged occasional family visits to the GID.

## Dissemination

During the year major dissemination efforts were directed at the troops assigned to serve as UN peace-keepers in the former Yugoslavia. Delegates also briefed military and police observers going to the former Yugoslavia, Mozambique, Angola, Georgia and other countries. An exceptional dissemination activity in Jordan was the holding of sessions for around 200 officers of the Palestinian police forces assigned to serve in the autonomous territories of Gaza and Jericho.

Various seminars on international humanitarian law were held for academic circles, especially law and political science students, and dissemination activities for schools were carried out in cooperation with the Jordan National Red Crescent Society. The exhibition of calligraphy used in the ICRC's 1994 Arabic calendar was shown in Amman in November under Royal patronage and in cooperation with the National Society.

In 1994 the delegation expanded its contacts with local and foreign media, particularly those of other Arab countries, and regularly supplied press correspondents and TV and radio stations in Jordan with information about ICRC activities worldwide. This network of media contacts helped to raise awareness of the ICRC's mandate in the region.

## LEBANON

The population of southern Lebanon continued to suffer the consequences of the conflict in the area. Frequent armed clashes between the IDF/SLA and Lebanese resistance movements caused deaths and injuries among civilians, particularly during the first four months of the year and among those living just north of the occupied zone. In addition, civilians living in and near the occupied zone were subjected to regular harassment owing to the situation prevailing in the area.

The 24th Regional Conference of Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies was held in Beirut from 1 to 4 November. The ICRC was represented

### IN 1994 THE ICRC:

- handled 5,500 Red Cross messages and carried out 20 transfers and repatriations;
- issued 89 certificates of detention, opened 65 tracing cases and resolved 37;
- fitted 154 new patients with prostheses and 137 with orthoses, manufactured 392 prostheses and 293 orthoses, and made 86 repairs to artificial limbs.

by its Vice-President and the Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa.

## Protection of the civilian population

ICRC delegates in the field monitored events and, in cases of alleged violations of international humanitarian law, intervened on behalf of the victims: delegates collected information on incidents in which civilians had been targeted in the fighting and passed it on to the parties concerned. In order to assist civilians in practical terms, delegates organized temporary cease-fires so that inhabitants of the villages near the edge of the zone could work in their fields and repair water-supply pipes, distributed relief supplies to victims of the hostilities and arranged for the lifting of expulsion orders from the occupied zone.

## Activities for detainees

For activities relating to the Khiam detention centre see *Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories*.

In November the ICRC made an offer of services to the Lebanese government with the aim of gaining access to all security detainees. At the end of the year, discussions were still going on with the authorities concerned.

The ICRC was able to arrange occasional family visits and forward parcels to detainees held by the Hezbollah movement, and exchange Red Cross messages for them.

## Tracing activities

The ICRC's tracing work in Lebanon involved processing information on detainees in Israeli-run places of detention, including Khiam, exchanging Red Cross messages between families separated as a result of the conflict and/or without other means of communication, and dealing with tracing requests concerning people reportedly arrested by parties to the conflict. The agency also arranged for detainees released from the Khiam detention centre to return to their families.

## Medical activities

ICRC mobile clinics, staffed by Lebanese medical teams, gave a total of 2,172 medical consultations to the inhabitants of several villages in and close to the occupied zone who had difficulty in gaining access to medical facilities. Delegates distributed medical and surgical supplies to hospitals and



dispensaries providing treatment to those wounded in the conflict, and provided emergency assistance to medical facilities in Palestinian refugee camps.

The ICRC continued to run orthopaedic workshops in Sidon and Beit Chebab.

## Cooperation with the National Society

The ICRC gave 11 Lebanese Red Cross dispensaries in the occupied zone equipment and financial support, thus enabling them to become operational by the end of 1994. It also paid part of the running costs of the National Society's first-aid department and provided it with medical supplies.

## Dissemination

In addition to continuing dissemination activities for officers of the Lebanese army, the ICRC for the first time held dissemination sessions for officers and soldiers of UNIFIL\* and the SLA, concentrating on rules of behaviour for combatants and ICRC activities.

The ICRC arranged two round tables on international humanitarian law, one attended by members of the legal profession and the other by members of the Hezbollah movement. In April the ICRC helped to finance and participated in a seminar organized by the human rights centre at Jinan University on the theme "Prisoners of war and the application of international humanitarian law". In March Lebanese radio began broadcasting the serial on humanitarian law produced by the Cairo delegation and entitled *One Thousand and One Days*.

## SYRIA

The ICRC's activities in Syria mainly comprised tracing services for families separated by the Arab-Israeli conflict and, in particular, for the population of the occupied Golan Heights (see *Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, Tracing activities* for details). Other traditional activities, such as the exchange of Red Cross messages and the processing of tracing requests, continued for Palestinians. In some cases the ICRC arranged for Palestinians to return to their homes in Gaza or the West Bank.

For the first time, a course on international humanitarian law was held for officers of the Syrian armed forces. It took place in December and lasted one week. Two seminars on humanitarian law and the Movement were organized

### IN 1994 THE ICRC:

- handled 1,700 Red Cross messages and issued 196 travel documents;
- arranged for 772 transfers between the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and Syria;
- fitted 113 new patients with prostheses and 14 with orthoses, manufactured 232 prostheses and 20 orthoses, and made 90 repairs to artificial limbs.

\* UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

for volunteers from the Syrian Arab Red Crescent in Damascus, and the ICRC helped the National Society in its dissemination activities by providing publications for distribution.

The ICRC continued to support the "Palestine Red Crescent Society" orthopaedic centre, successfully completing a programme to introduce new, cost-effective technology for the production of artificial limbs.

## The Gulf

### IRAN

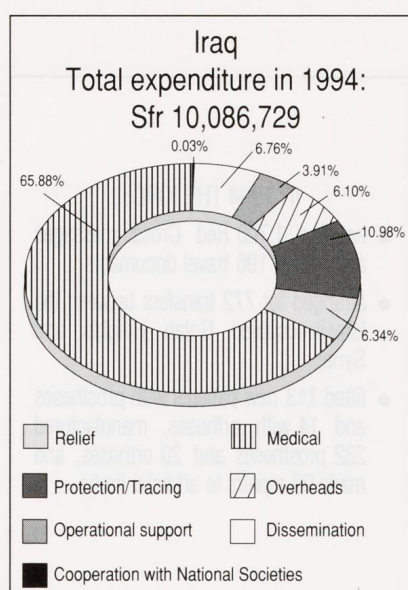
The ICRC had withdrawn its expatriate staff from Tehran in 1992 at the request of the authorities. Negotiations with the Iranian authorities regarding unresolved humanitarian issues left over from the Iran/Iraq war were carried out from Geneva headquarters (see *Aftermath of the Iran/Iraq war*).

### IRAQ

Iraq's population continued to suffer severe hardship under the embargo imposed on the country in August 1990 and still in effect throughout 1994. According to figures published by WHO,\* there was a sharp rise in infant mortality from 1990. In 1994 Iraq's medical structure deteriorated further under the embargo: it had depended heavily on imported technology, and spare parts and technical expertise were in short supply. There was also a severe shortage of essential drugs. Likewise, water supply and waste water disposal systems were increasingly unable to meet demands, with serious consequences for public health. Frequent and lengthy power cuts in the north of the country made the situation even worse. In an effort to alleviate the effects of these shortages on the population, the ICRC continued to carry out several health programmes during the year.

A priority for the delegation in Iraq was to maintain regular contacts with the authorities on issues of humanitarian concern connected with the aftermath of the Iran/Iraq war and the Gulf war (for details, see *Aftermath of the Iran/Iraq war* and *Aftermath of the Gulf war*).

The three northern governorates of Arbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah under Kurdish control were the scene of conflict as from May. Military operations in the area frequently led to the displacement of thousands of people and put a



\* WHO: World Health Organization



severe strain on the daily life of the population. The ICRC stepped up its presence in the area during 1994, carrying out several missions from Baghdad to provide ad hoc emergency medical assistance, intervene on behalf of civilians and detainees and maintain contact with the local Kurdish authorities and other parties to the conflict.

### Activities for the civilian population

In northern Iraq ICRC delegates had regular contacts with the local Kurdish authorities and factions involved in the fighting in order to monitor the situation of vulnerable population groups and intervene on their behalf. In their contacts with commanders of military operations, the delegates repeatedly reminded them of the protection and respect due to the civilian population.

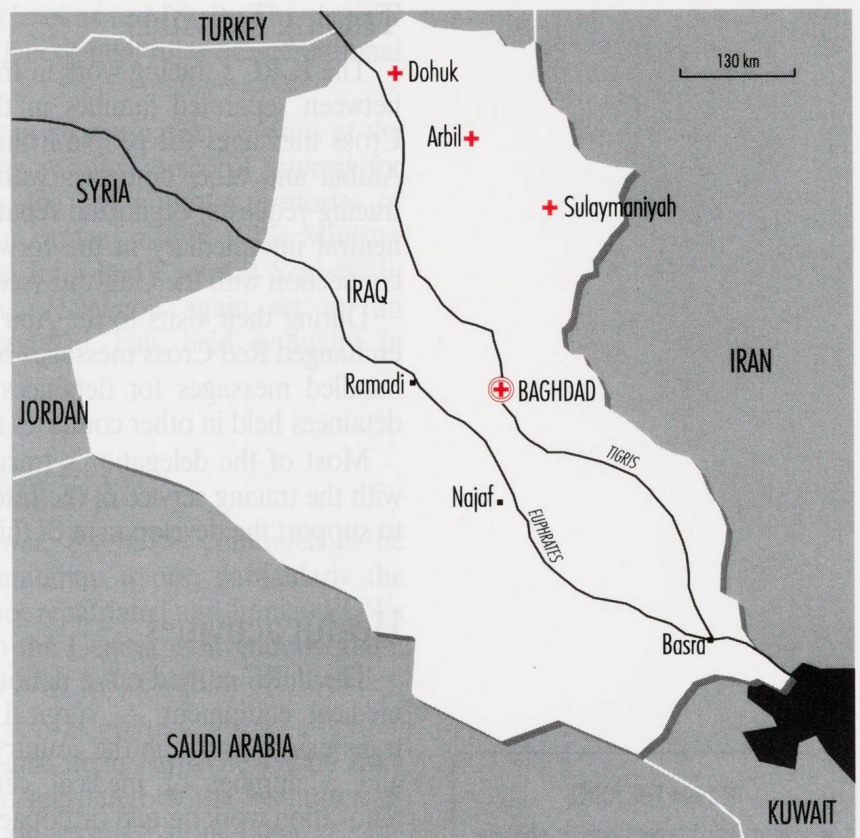
### Activities for detainees

Delegates carried out monthly missions to northern Iraq and visited detainees held by the local Kurdish authorities. Following the clashes in May, delegates also had access to a number of detainees held by the various parties to the conflict.

In 1994 the ICRC carried out several visits to foreign nationals held in Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad who had no diplomatic representation in Iraq. Delegates distributed personal hygiene products and educational and leisure items.


Delegates visited 64 Iranian servicemen held in Ramadi camp IX in May. The ICRC took steps during 1994 to regain regular access to these detainees.

At the beginning of May six Iranians recently released from detention in Iraq were seen by the ICRC. Three of them were repatriated to Iran under ICRC auspices. The ICRC had visited these prisoners regularly since their capture in March 1991 and during the last visit the month before their release delegates had handed out family parcels from Iran to the prisoners concerned.



ICRC / AR 12.94





## Tracing activities

The ICRC's tracing work in Iraq continued to focus on maintaining contact between separated families in the region. The tracing agency handled Red Cross messages for people living in Iraq and their families in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other countries without diplomatic links with Iraq. It processed tracing requests, organized repatriations in cases of hardship and acted as a neutral intermediary in the forwarding of information on people missing in connection with the Gulf war (see *Aftermath of the Gulf war*).

During their visits to the Abu Ghraib prison and Ramadi camp, the ICRC exchanged Red Cross messages between detainees and their families. They also handled messages for detainees in Iraq and their families abroad, and for detainees held in other countries and their families in Iraq.

Most of the delegation's tracing 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.

## Health activities

The ICRC carried out a nationwide programme to distribute medicines and medical equipment — surgical and X-ray materials — to all the blood transfusion centres in the country, the central pharmacies of each governorate and a number of medical centres. It also undertook construction and renovation work on two orthopaedic centres in Basra and Najaf, which became operational by the end of 1994, had an air-conditioning system installed in a paraplegic centre run by the Ministry of Health in Baghdad so that the centre could start operating, gave training in orthopaedic techniques to Iraqi technicians and supplied materials to three government orthopaedic centres in Baghdad for the manufacture of prostheses. In addition, a nationwide programme was conducted to deliver the spare parts and chemicals needed to maintain water treatment plants supplying drinking water.

In northern Iraq the ICRC maintained a stock of emergency medical supplies at its offices and made ad hoc distributions to health facilities treating people wounded in the periodic clashes. In November an ICRC team including a doctor carried out a medical survey in the area, and identified major needs in the orthopaedic field.

## Dissemination

In late October, for the first time, the ICRC organized three days of lectures and simulated war situations illustrating the basic principles of the law of war

### IN 1994 THE ICRC:

- visited 585 detainees held in northern Iraq, 64 Iranian servicemen in Ramadi camp and 353 foreign nationals in Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad;
- handled 24,731 Red Cross messages, issued 224 certificates of detention and 269 travel documents for people of Iranian origin, and solved 265 tracing cases;
- completed a nationwide programme to supply medical, surgical and radio-logical materials to medical facilities;
- carried out an orthopaedic programme involving renovation of premises, training and the supply of materials;
- completed a programme to provide spare parts to help the water authorities maintain or rehabilitate about 100 compact water treatment units and several water treatment plants.



for 26 high-ranking military instructors to the Iraqi armed forces. The seminar was concluded by a two-day presentation on the essential rules of international humanitarian law.

During the year delegates in Iraq took part in dissemination sessions at the Palestine Representation in Baghdad covering various topics of interest for Palestinian policemen training for service in the autonomous territories of Gaza and Jericho. Sessions were also held for student nurses at the Ministry of Higher Education, and for members of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society. In cooperation with the National Society, the delegation again set up an information stand at the International Baghdad Fair held annually in November.

## AFTERMATH OF THE IRAN/IRAQ WAR

Six years after the end of the Iran/Iraq war, the ICRC continued to be seriously concerned about unresolved humanitarian issues, particularly the plight of Iraqi prisoners of war (POWs) still not repatriated and Iranian POWs whose fate remained unknown. According to the Geneva Conventions, these matters should have been settled immediately after the cessation of hostilities, i.e. in 1988.

The ICRC again did its utmost in 1994 to gain access to some 19,000 Iraqi POWs held in Iran who had been visited and registered by the institution or were known to it on the basis of information received from other reliable sources. The aim was to ascertain whether the POWs wished to return home, and to organize repatriations for those who did. Attempts were also made to determine what had happened to 475 Iranian POWs who remained unaccounted for by the Iraqi authorities.

Despite several meetings held to further the process, no progress was made in organizing the repatriation of the 1,244 Iraqi POWs visited in Iran by the ICRC in October/November 1993 who had expressed their wish to return home. This was inconsistent with Iran's undertaking to repatriate them at latest one month after their interviews with the ICRC. The institution never received the Red Cross messages written by the POWs during these visits, nor was it able to exchange messages on behalf of the thousands of others remaining in captivity.

Several high-level missions were carried out. The ICRC's Director of Operations, accompanied by the Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa, visited Iran from 13 to 17 February. They met the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Chairman of the Commission for POWs.

The Delegate General carried out a mission to Baghdad from 29 April to 4 May to meet the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Head of the Ministry's Legal Department. In August the Delegate General was received by the Iraqi Ambassador to the UN in Geneva.

However, by September stalemate had been reached with regard to the POWs held in both countries. The ICRC submitted a memorandum to a number of signatory States of the Geneva Conventions, pursuant to Article 1 common to the four Conventions, requesting that the relevant articles be implemented, notably those relating to the repatriation of POWs. The Delegate General, on a mission to New York from 21 to 23 September, handed over the memorandum to the UN Secretary-General and the signatory States of the Conventions which were members of the UN Security Council. The obligation of signatory States to respect and ensure respect for the Conventions was invoked and their good offices were requested to find a solution to this pressing humanitarian issue. The memorandum was also submitted to the Secretary-General of the OIC\* and to the Chairman of its Summit. The ICRC stated that it would remain at the disposal of the parties to find a solution to the issue.

On 19 November the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister met the ICRC President and the Delegate General in Geneva; Iraq's remaining obligations as mentioned in the memorandum were discussed. No formal response was received from the Iranian authorities, but they did propose to submit to the ICRC a list of 4,168 Iranians missing or reportedly held captive in Iraq.

## AFTERMATH OF THE GULF WAR

In an effort to resolve the humanitarian issues still outstanding after the Gulf war, in particular the some 650 individuals (Kuwaitis, Saudis, Iraqis and others) reported missing, 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 1 July, 6 September and 8 December. The Iraqi authorities had started as from June to provide information on the 609 people reported missing by the Kuwaiti authorities. All the parties involved agreed at the September meeting to form a Technical Sub-Committee in order to speed up progress in this matter; the Sub-Committee met for the first time directly after the Tripartite Commission meeting in December, the eleventh since the Gulf war.

\* OIC: Organization of the Islamic Conference



The issue was also discussed at several high-level meetings during the year. These included meetings between the Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa and the Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Head of the Ministry's Legal Department in Baghdad in early May, between the Delegate General and the Iraqi Ambassador to the UN in Geneva on 15 August and between the ICRC President and Delegate General and the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister on 19 November at ICRC headquarters.

On 26 June representatives from the regional delegation in Kuwait attended a hearing of the Human Rights Committee of the National Assembly in order to explain the situation regarding people who went missing after Kuwait was liberated. Together with the Kuwaiti authorities, the ICRC continued to follow the cases of 89 such people.

### Repatriations

On 11 December, under the auspices of the ICRC, mortal remains identified by the Iraqi authorities as those of a Kuwaiti national reported missing in connection with the Gulf war were handed over to the Kuwaiti authorities at the border between Iraq and Kuwait. In March the mortal remains of an Iraqi soldier who had died in 1991 were handed over at the border under ICRC auspices.

In April the ICRC was officially informed by the Kuwaiti Ministry of the Interior that it should no longer deal with family reunification requests or other requests made by former residents of Kuwait who were living in Iraq and had requested permission to return to Kuwait. The Kuwaiti authorities considered that the remaining cases, concerning some 2,000 people, should use the normal channels through the immigration office. Nevertheless, the ICRC continued to facilitate the return of those suffering particular hardship. During the year four Kuwaiti nationals or former residents were repatriated from Iraq to Kuwait under ICRC auspices, and 13 Iraqi nationals, one Sudanese national and nine stateless persons from Kuwait to Iraq.

## KUWAIT

### Regional delegation

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

In order to carry out its humanitarian activities in connection with the conflict that broke out in Yemen in early May, the ICRC set up a delegation in the country (see separate heading).

#### IN 1994 THE ICRC:

- visited 833 detainees in 29 places of detention in Kuwait, registering 296 for the first time; handled 22,500 Red Cross messages and issued 440 certificates of detention and 115 travel documents.

## KUWAIT

### Activities for detainees

During the year ICRC delegates continued to monitor the conditions of detention and treatment of people held in connection with the Gulf war. The majority of those visited were Iraqi, Jordanian, Yemeni and Sudanese nationals, Palestinians with travel documents and stateless persons. The average number of detainees visited by the ICRC at the end of the year was 435. Delegates had access to people held in places of detention under the jurisdiction of the Ministries of the Interior (police stations, prisons and deportation centres), Defence and Social Affairs.

The ICRC ensured 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 83 deportees, along with their relatives, were accompanied to the border by ICRC delegates.

The delegation followed trials of Kuwaiti and other nationals accused of security offences, in order to monitor respect for the fundamental judicial guarantees.

### Tracing activities

The delegation took part in the efforts still being made to trace people who had disappeared in connection with the Gulf war and maintained regular contacts with the National Committee for Missing and POW Affairs (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.

## SAUDI ARABIA

At the request of the Saudi authorities the ICRC closed its delegation in Riyadh in January 1994. The ICRC was henceforth unable to continue its visits to the some 20,000 Iraqi civilians on record as being interned in the Rafha camp. Some of them had been POWs and had lost that status once the general repatriation was completed in October 1991; they were subsequently entitled to protection as civilians under the Fourth Geneva Convention.



In order to find an arrangement which would enable the ICRC to resume its protection activities in Rafha, the ICRC made repeated approaches to high-level Saudi authorities. The regional delegate saw the Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, the Governor of Riyadh and the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, but no further access was granted to Rafha camp.

A cooperation agreement with the Jeddah-based OIC was signed at ICRC headquarters on 17 February.<sup>1</sup>

Following a meeting early in the year between the President of the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) and the regional delegate, the ICRC was granted the status of organization officially accredited to the Programme in March.

## BAHRAIN

Several demonstrations against the Bahraini authorities took place towards the end of 1994, leading to violent incidents in which a number of people were injured and arrests were made. The ICRC intensified its contacts with the authorities, in particular the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Interior and Social Affairs. Contacts were also maintained with the National Society.

## OMAN/QATAR/UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The ICRC maintained regular contacts with the authorities and National Societies in these countries.

The ICRC's exhibition of the calligraphy used in its 1994 Arabic calendar was shown in Abu Dhabi in February.

## YEMEN

The tension already prevailing in Yemen after the 1993 elections, combined with several outbreaks of violence early in 1994, culminated in open conflict on 5 May between government forces and breakaway southern forces. The conflict ended on 7 July with the fall of Aden.

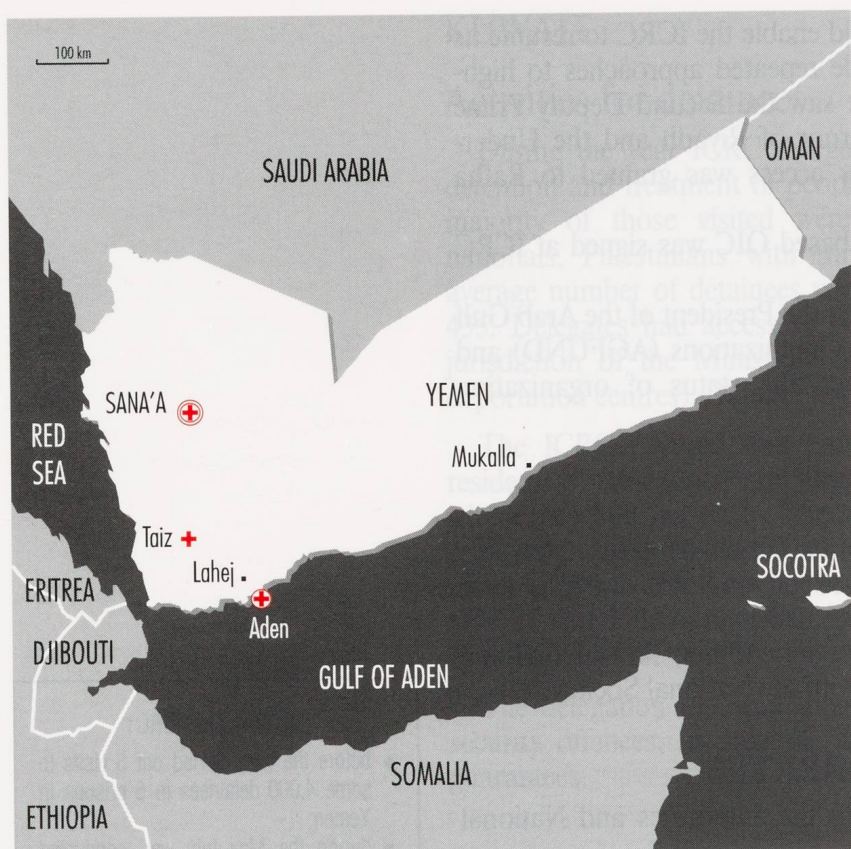
ICRC delegates started to arrive in the country on 4 May. They were sent first to Sana'a, then to Aden, Taiz and Mukalla. At the height of the fighting there were 29 expatriate delegates in Yemen, concentrating on sanitation and medical activities, the distribution of relief to civilians and visits to those detained in connection with the conflict. The ICRC issued several appeals to all combatants, reminding them of their responsibilities under international

### IN 1994 THE ICRC:

- before the war, carried out 6 visits to some 4,000 detainees in 6 prisons in Yemen;
- during the May-July war, conducted 24 visits to 18 places of detention and registered 2,936 people detained in connection with the conflict;
- after the war, visited 6,500 detainees, registering 140 for the first time, in 40 places of detention;
- handled 2,200 Red Cross messages and solved 53 tracing requests, mainly for Somali refugees living in Yemen;
- visited 24 hospitals and provided them with 35 tonnes of medical assistance for the treatment of war-wounded, and carried out 169 operations on war-wounded at the surgical ward in Taiz;
- provided spare parts and generators to help the water authorities restore the water supply in Aden;
- distributed food and other assistance to 5,143 families displaced by the fighting.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 19.





ICRC delegation ICRC sub-delegation

ICRC office

ICRC / AR 12.94

humanitarian law and urging them in particular to respect civilians, the sick and wounded, people placed *hors de combat* and prisoners. During the conflict the ICRC coordinated its activities closely with the Yemeni Red Crescent Society and the various UN organizations and NGOs on the spot.

In early June the Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa visited Yemen in order to evaluate ICRC activities in the country.

The war was followed by a period of widespread looting in Aden, then sporadic clashes between various armed groups in the city and in the Hadramout area of south-eastern Yemen. The ICRC continued to assist the thousands of displaced people in Aden until they were able to return to their homes, and carried out major sanitation work to ensure water supplies.

Throughout the country, the ICRC continued to distribute medical supplies to hospitals treating the wounded, and to visit people detained for security reasons or in connection with the conflict.

## Activities for the civilian population

The intensity of the fighting forced many civilians to flee combat areas. Some 20,000 sought refuge in public buildings in Aden. In cooperation with the National Society, the ICRC distributed food and other supplies from its emergency stocks to these displaced people, in some cases carrying on distributions after the war had ended to enable them to return to their villages.

As part of its activities to protect vulnerable groups and in cooperation with UNHCR and the authorities, the ICRC organized the evacuation on 24 May of some 800 Somali refugees still living in Al Kud camp, which had been caught in crossfire between the warring forces. The evacuees were resettled in villages outside the combat zone. During the conflict the ICRC also evacuated 150 foreign nationals by boat to Djibouti.



## Activities for detainees

Between February and April ICRC delegates visited various places of detention in Sana'a, Hodeida, Taiz, Dhamar and Aden, and in some prisons carried out a scabies control programme. When hostilities broke out, the ICRC was able to visit most of the detainees held in connection with the conflict.

After the war the ICRC continued its work in Yemen's central prisons run by the Ministry of the Interior, carrying out visits in September and December. The delegates looked at conditions of detention, made representations to the authorities and provided material assistance in cooperation with the Yemeni Red Crescent Society. A programme to repair and improve the water supply and waste water disposal systems in the main prisons was started in December.

In addition, during the war, the ICRC reached an agreement with the authorities to visit places of detention under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence and the Department of State Security.

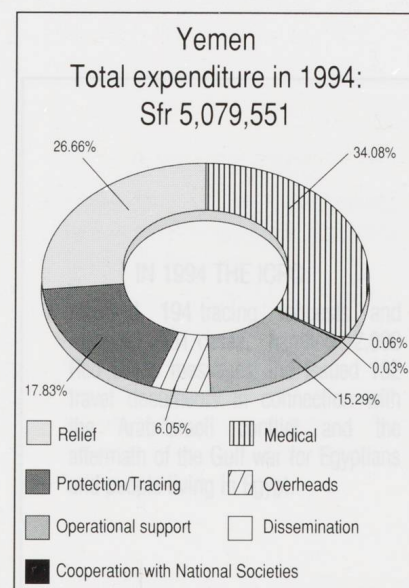
## Tracing activities

Throughout the year, with the exception of the war period, the ICRC offered its tracing services to Somali refugees living in Yemen. During the war the agency also maintained links between family members living in Yemen and their relatives abroad, between families separated within the country and between detainees and their relatives, and kept track of individual detainees registered by the ICRC.

## Medical activities

Yemen's medical structure was put under severe strain by the influx of war-wounded. An estimated 2,000 to 3,000 people were killed and between 6,000 and 7,000 were wounded in the conflict. Most of the victims were members of the armed forces, with the notable exception of the casualties among civilians in Aden towards the end of the war. Between May and August the ICRC visited hospitals and other facilities treating the wounded, and provided them with emergency medical supplies. At the beginning of July the ICRC set up a surgical unit at the Thawra Hospital in Taiz with equipment provided by the Finnish Red Cross and a surgical team seconded by the Belgian, British, Finnish and Icelandic National Societies. The unit functioned for seven weeks, helping local surgeons to cope with serious cases.

During the siege of Aden the ICRC marked two hospitals near the front line with Red Cross flags in order to ensure that they were spared the effects of the fighting. When the city fell ICRC delegates made representations to the authorities in an effort to avoid a further erosion of basic infrastructures, to



bring about improvements in water supplies and rubbish collection and to encourage hospital staff to carry on working. Delegates maintained a presence in the main hospitals to prevent looting. In cooperation with MSF,\* the ICRC provided material assistance to help prevent a further deterioration in the health situation.

ICRC doctors accompanied delegates in their visits to detention facilities and provided ad hoc medical assistance. Following the visits, the ICRC drew the authorities' attention in particular to the situation of psychiatric patients in prisons and discussed possible solutions with them.

## Water and sanitation

Following damage caused to the main pumping station of Bir Nasser during the battle for Aden, the city's 450,000 inhabitants were virtually without water and had to rely on around 50 wells producing insufficient and poor-quality water.

The ICRC immediately sounded the alarm, warning that a human catastrophe would result if the situation continued. In cooperation with the local authorities, ICRC sanitation engineers rehabilitated wells in public places and in mosques in the city, installed generators and pumps, repaired and replaced piping systems, tanks and standpipes and set up distribution points to maintain a limited supply of water.

Once the conflict was over ICRC delegates organized a system for distributing water by tanker truck, making between 250,000 and 300,000 litres of water a day available to vulnerable groups — such as people in hospitals and prisons, the displaced and the inhabitants of certain areas of the city — during the most critical period. They also arranged for the collection of the rubbish that was accumulating in the city. In the meantime ICRC engineers, in cooperation with their Yemeni counterparts, started to repair the two main pumping stations in Bir Nasser and Lahej to enable them to resume operation, and provided the water services with logistic back-up, equipment and technical expertise.

## Dissemination

After the war the ICRC started to prepare a dissemination programme in cooperation with the National Society. The programme aims, through the intermediary of Red Crescent volunteers and military experts, to alert children in schools in Aden and Lahej provinces to the danger of landmines scattered in the southern part of the country.

\* MSF: *Médecins sans frontières*



## North Africa

### EGYPT

The delegation in Cairo pursued its policy of publicizing the activities of the ICRC and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the ICRC's mandate under the Geneva Conventions. In addition, it continued to promote understanding and acceptance among opinion-makers of the ICRC's role in situations of political violence. Target audiences were the media, academic and diplomatic circles, schools and military and police academies. The delegation drew particular attention to the issues of humanitarian law given prominence by the ICRC during the year, such as limiting the use of landmines.

The delegation produced high-quality educational and promotional material in Arabic for distribution throughout the Arab world. In 1994 it again produced a calendar, this time illustrated with calligraphy from classical Arab literature, and organized a travelling exhibition of a collection of calligraphy which was shown in several countries in the region. At the end of the year it brought out a calendar for 1995 illustrating how humanitarian ideals in the area have developed through the ages. Other productions included an illustrated booklet, strip cartoons and a series of brochures on humanitarian law. The delegation also produced radio programmes, a film, voice-overs for ICRC films, video clips and an animated cartoon on the Third Geneva Convention. It arranged for the translation into Arabic of several ICRC documents, including the booklet *Code of Conduct for Combatants*, for distribution to armed forces throughout the region. Members of the delegation gave presentations on humanitarian law and the ICRC to senior officers and instructors of the Egyptian armed forces and Palestinian policemen assigned to serve in the autonomous territories of Gaza and Jericho. They represented the ICRC at a number of regional and international seminars and conferences held during the year in Cairo, including the UN International Conference on Population and Development and an OAU\* meeting on an inter-African mechanism to prevent conflicts.

The delegation's tracing activities consisted mainly in the forwarding of Red Cross messages and processing of tracing requests for Egyptians living in Iraq, Palestinians and people from the Horn of Africa. Some 80 tracing cases were under investigation at the end of the year.

#### IN 1994 THE ICRC:

- received 194 tracing requests and resolved 101 cases, handled 2,000 Red Cross messages and issued 162 travel documents in connection with the Arab-Israeli conflict and the aftermath of the Gulf war for Egyptians and people living in Egypt.

\* OAU: Organization of African Unity

## TUNIS

### Regional delegation

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

The regional delegation for North Africa coordinated the ICRC's activities in the region. It maintained contact with the authorities and the National Societies of the countries covered in order to promote wider acceptance of the activities entrusted to the ICRC by the international community under the Geneva Conventions and the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It promoted compliance with international humanitarian law by spreading knowledge of the law itself and of the history, principles, ideals and work of the Movement. Principal target groups included government authorities, the armed forces and academic circles. The delegation also urged governments and National Societies to take action at the national level to ensure implementation of the humanitarian treaties.

The tracing agency in Tunis handled thousands of Red Cross messages in connection with the Western Sahara conflict, mainly for Moroccan prisoners held by the Polisario Front, and, up to early July, forwarded family messages for Bosnian children in a camp in Libya.

The travelling exhibition of calligraphy from classical Arab literature used in the ICRC's 1994 calendar and produced by the delegation in Cairo was shown in Morocco and Tunisia.

## ALGERIA

Once again in 1994, the ICRC was seriously concerned about the events in Algeria. The civilian population continued to suffer the tragic effects of a widening spiral of violence. Tens of thousands of people were believed to have lost their lives since 1992, including intellectuals, civil servants, journalists and at least 70 foreigners, and in 1994 thousands of arrests were reported.

The ICRC's visits to detainees had been suspended by the Algerian authorities in July 1992. Throughout 1994, the institution continued its efforts to regain access to detainees in the country. The Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa met the Algerian Ambassador to the UN in Geneva on many occasions in connection with this matter. ICRC representatives at such meetings as the 91st Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Paris in March, the OAU conference in Tunis in June and the OIC Summit in Casablanca in December took the opportunity to talk



to Algerian government contacts. During the year ICRC staff also met various personalities from the Algerian political world.

In order to further the ICRC's objectives and discuss the development of dissemination activities in Algeria, the regional delegate went to Algiers in February and September. He followed up contacts with the National School of Administration, the National Observatory for Human Rights, the media and the Algerian Red Crescent (ARC). On 7 November the ICRC's President, Vice-President and Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa received the President and Vice-President of the ARC in Geneva; the National Society leaders gave assurances that the ARC would remain available to facilitate the ICRC's work.

## LIBYA

In Libya the regional delegation concentrated on building up contacts with the Libyan Red Crescent. Towards the end of March and again in October the regional delegate met National Society representatives in Benghazi to discuss the holding of dissemination seminars. In May an ICRC doctor attended a conference on medical science in Benghazi with about 800 participants, and gave a talk on the ICRC's medical approach in emergency situations.

On the occasion of a national celebration, the regional delegate took the opportunity to meet government officials.

As in 1993, the ICRC arranged for the exchange of Red Cross messages between some 800 Bosnian children and those accompanying them, who had arrived in Libya in December 1992, and their families near Zenica. The Libyan Red Crescent was very active in forwarding these messages, which numbered some 2,400 in 1994. The children returned to Bosnia-Herzegovina at the beginning of July.

## MAURITANIA

Delegates carried out three missions to Mauritania during the year. They maintained contact with the authorities and the media and discussed the promotion of international humanitarian law, particularly among the armed forces and in academic circles. They also collected information on the situation in neighbouring Mali.

## MOROCCO/WESTERN SAHARA

The plight of prisoners taken in connection with the Western Sahara conflict, many of whom had been in captivity for 19 years, remained a major concern for the ICRC. Under the UN settlement plan, the cease-fire in effect since

### IN 1994 THE ICRC:

- carried out 2 visits to 1,253 detainees held by the Polisario Front, registering 981 for the first time;
- carried out 2 visits to 93 detainees held by the Moroccan authorities, registering 21 for the first time;
- handled 25,699 Red Cross messages for Moroccan prisoners held by the Polisario Front and Sahrawi prisoners held in Morocco.

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, but the referendum has repeatedly been delayed because of differences in opinion over who should be allowed to vote. The ICRC's view is that the release of all prisoners should be carried out in accordance with the rules of international humanitarian law, whether or not a political solution is found. In particular, the institution continued to negotiate with the Moroccan authorities the return home of a group of 198 Moroccan prisoners whose names had been put forward for repatriation in 1989 by the Polisario Front and a group of 25 Moroccans considered by the ICRC as serious medical cases.

Throughout the year the ICRC continued its visits to combatants held by both parties to the conflict. Under the authorization to visit detained Sahrawis given by the King of Morocco in January 1993, ICRC delegates again visited 72 Sahrawis held by the Moroccan authorities in Agadir from 30 May to 4 June and from 6 to 9 December 1994.

In early February the ICRC handed over a note addressed to the Secretary-General of the Polisario Front to the Front's representative in Algiers. The note summarized the humanitarian issues outstanding from the Western Sahara conflict, in particular ICRC access to all the remaining Moroccan prisoners who had not yet been registered. Following a meeting of the ICRC President with a member of the political secretariat of the Polisario Front and talks in May between the Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa and the Front's Secretary-General, at the beginning of August a team of seven delegates, including two doctors, registered Moroccan prisoners being held by the Front in Tindouf in southern Algeria. The team saw 950 prisoners, 689 for the first time. During a further visit in November, delegates saw 307 prisoners, 292 of whom were registered for the first time.

By the end of the year, the ICRC had carried out five visits since 1978 to Sahrawis held in Morocco, registering a total of 92. During ten visits between 1975 and the end of 1994, the institution had registered 2,156 Moroccans held by the Polisario Front.

All Sahrawi and Moroccan prisoners were photographed during the visits; the photographs were then sent along with the Red Cross messages they had written to their families to give added reassurance.

## TUNISIA

The ICRC's activities in Tunisia centred around dissemination and information projects.

A manual in Arabic was produced by the Ministry of Defence on the basis of the ICRC's *Code of Conduct for Combatants*.



Close contacts were maintained with the Arab Institute for Human Rights, and ICRC representatives spoke on several occasions at seminars and training sessions organized by the Institute.

The regional delegation cooperated with the Tunisian Red Crescent in organizing a drawing competition for schoolchildren in celebration of 8 May, and at the invitation of the National Society the ICRC gave three presentations on humanitarian law, the ICRC and the Movement for a group of young first-aiders on 21 and 22 July.

Close contacts were maintained with the Tunisian press. A delegate took part in a seminar held by the Association of Tunisian Journalists, and several interviews with ICRC delegates were broadcast by Radio Sfax and Radio Tunis. In December Radio Sfax also broadcast a round table convened by the delegation with journalists on the theme of water and armed conflict, and the regional delegate attended a seminar on the media at the service of human rights organized by the Ministry for Human Rights.

An ICRC team headed by the ICRC Vice-President attended the OAU conference held in Tunis from 6 to 15 June. Meetings were arranged with African heads of State, ministers and other government representatives, and interviews were given to the press.