

YAOUNDÉ (regional)

COVERING: Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe



The ICRC set up its Yaoundé regional delegation in 1992 but has been working in the region since 1972. It monitors the domestic situation in the countries covered, visits security detainees, helps restore contact between refugees, migrants and their families, and responds to the emergency needs of refugees in northern Cameroon. It pursues longstanding programmes to spread knowledge of IHL among the authorities, armed forces and civil society, and supports the development of the region's National Societies.

YEARLY RESULTS

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

MEDIUM

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

In 2014:

- as dialogue continued with the authorities to ensure unhindered access to all detainees, people in detention in five countries, including in northern Cameroon, received ICRC monitoring visits
- people who fled conflict in the Central African Republic restored/maintained contact with their relatives through enhanced Movement family-links services in Cameroon and Congo
- during ICRC-organized workshops, the region's authorities drew on the organization's technical expertise in ratifying/implementing IHL-related treaties; notably, Cameroon signed the Arms Trade Treaty
- over 770 officers and cadets of the armed/security forces of Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon learnt more about IHL and the ICRC during seminars/conferences
- through a strengthened ICRC presence in Maroua, dialogue on IHL-related issues with the local and military authorities and preparations to assist conflict-affected people developed in Cameroon's far north
- the National Societies of Cameroon, Congo and Gabon signed partnership agreements with the ICRC, thereby strengthening coordination in responding to humanitarian needs

PROTECTION		Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)		
Red Cross messages (RCMs)		
RCMs collected		1,007
RCMs distributed		304
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		368
People reunited with their families		26
<i>of whom unaccompanied minors/separated children</i>		26
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		
ICRC visits		
Detainees visited		3,491
Detainees visited and monitored individually		111
Number of visits carried out		37
Number of places of detention visited		25
Restoring family links		
RCMs collected		5
RCMs distributed		5
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		20

EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)	
Protection	1,608
Assistance	301
Prevention	1,691
Cooperation with National Societies	1,152
General	-
	4,752
of which: Overheads 290	

IMPLEMENTATION RATE	
Expenditure/yearly budget	93%
PERSONNEL	
Mobile staff	9
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	54

ASSISTANCE		2014 Targets (up to)	Achieved
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)			
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)			
Food commodities	Beneficiaries		1
Essential household items	Beneficiaries		1

CONTEXT

The region remained generally stable. However, insecurity and violence spilling over from neighbouring countries, as well as increased social unrest, prompted governments to adopt tighter security measures.

The growing frequency of attacks by the Nigeria-based Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'wati wal-Jihad armed group, also known as Boko Haram, led to the arrival of thousands of Nigerian refugees, further displacement and an increase in humanitarian needs in the region. People fleeing violence in the Central African Republic (hereafter CAR) continued to seek refuge in eastern Cameroon and north-eastern Congo.

In Congo, tensions with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (hereafter DRC) eased after the mass expulsion of allegedly irregular migrants earlier in the year.

In the enclave of Cabinda in Angola, low-level tensions persisted between the armed forces and purported members of the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC). The Angolan government continued to deport allegedly irregular economic migrants, but tens of thousands of Congolese migrants reportedly returned home voluntarily after border posts were opened as a result of agreements between Angola and Congo.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The Yaoundé delegation maintained its focus on visiting and monitoring detainees in the region's prisons and on helping National Societies in the region assist people in need. As waves of refugees fled conflict in the CAR and arrived in eastern Cameroon and north-eastern Congo, the ICRC, together with the pertinent National Societies and neighbouring delegations, helped people restore/maintain contact with their relatives. Towards the end of the year, it also strengthened its presence in the far north of Cameroon, owing to increased humanitarian needs in the area.

Visits to detainees continued in Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, with a view to pressing for improvements to inmates' living conditions. Detainees visited included people held on security-related charges and migrants. After these visits, the detaining authorities received confidential feedback of findings related to various issues, such as respect for international norms/principles applicable to arrest and detention. Dialogue with the authorities concerned in Equatorial Guinea sought to ensure that visits could be conducted according to the ICRC's standard procedures. In Gabon, the Ministry of Justice and the ICRC extended cooperation in tackling issues related to health in detention. Activities within this framework included hygiene-promotion sessions and vector-control campaigns organized with the Health Ministry, which helped reduce health hazards for detainees at the Central Prison in Libreville.

The ICRC maintained its multidisciplinary approach: this included developing its activities in the far north of Cameroon, where it strengthened its office in Maroua, enabling it, in partnership with the Cameroon Red Cross Society, to monitor and respond to the increased humanitarian needs.

The delegation further developed its support to the region's National Societies by signing partnership agreements in Cameroon, Congo, and Gabon. Whenever possible, the ICRC

worked with the National Societies to respond rapidly and effectively to the emergency needs of vulnerable people: it helped them strengthen their emergency-preparedness/response, family-links and communication capacities. Notably, the National Society in Cameroon and the Congolese Red Cross drew on ICRC support to respond to family-links needs arising from influxes of refugees fleeing the CAR.

The ICRC closed its office in Dundo, Angola, set up in 2012 to address allegations of abuse from irregular migrants from the DRC awaiting deportation; nevertheless, it continued to pursue the matter in dialogue with the authorities, and trained Angola Red Cross volunteers to help ensure that members of dispersed families could restore/maintain contact with their relatives.

Support for the authorities and the armed/security forces, for implementing IHL and incorporating it in their decision-making processes, continued. Legislators from Congo and Equatorial Guinea attended ICRC workshops; and dialogue with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Multinational Force of Central Africa (FOMAC) and the International School for Security Forces (EIFORCES) helped to further their understanding of IHL, humanitarian principles and international human rights law/internationally recognized standards applicable to law enforcement, and to enlist their support for the Movement's activities.

The delegation continued to strive to disseminate IHL principles and promote acceptance for ICRC activities among various stakeholders, such as traditional leaders, journalists and academics.

CIVILIANS

Refugees in Cameroon and Congo restore family links thanks to Movement efforts

The region's National Societies and the ICRC responded to the growing influx of refugees from the CAR (see *Context*) by stepping up their activities to help members of dispersed families restore/maintain contact with their relatives; among other things, they conducted joint field missions to assess the refugees' family-links needs and enabled over 1,300 RCMs to be exchanged.

At an ICRC-organized regional workshop in Douala, Cameroon, representatives of National Societies and ICRC delegations from nine countries shared their experiences in addressing family-links issues in central Africa and familiarized themselves with online family-links tools. The Cameroon Red Cross Society bolstered its family-links capacity with ICRC staffing support, including in Bertoua. Through training, 51 volunteers from the Cameroon Red Cross and the Congolese Red Cross enhanced their capacities to help members of dispersed families, particularly unaccompanied minors, restore/maintain contact with their relatives.

In total, 26 unaccompanied minors were reunited with their relatives: 2 rejoined their families in Congo, 17 from Chad and Congo rejoined their relatives in Cameroon; 1 was reunited with relatives in Chad, 4 rejoined their relatives at four refugee sites in Cameroon. In addition, people sought more information on their relatives through over 2,000 tracing requests. Some 120 cases of unaccompanied minors and separated children were registered in Cameroon and Congo.

Even as the ICRC closed its office in Dundo, people separated from their families continued to restore/maintain contact with

their relatives through ICRC-trained Angola Red Cross volunteers. During dialogue with them, the authorities concerned were urged to follow up cases turned over to them.

In Congo, through joint Congolese Red Cross/ICRC efforts, the situation of DRC citizens facing mass expulsion was monitored and their family-links needs assessed. Ten tracing requests were registered. Dialogue continued with the authorities concerned and other international organizations on the situation of minors and on the necessity of ensuring respect for the principle of *non-refoulement*. In Brazzaville, some 30 Congolese Red Cross volunteers, equipped with first-aid equipment/materials from the ICRC, reinforced their capacities to assist such people. Over the course of three workshops, 86 volunteers from three departments of the Congolese Red Cross enhanced their capacities in human remains management.

ICRC strengthens presence in northern Cameroon to meet needs of conflict-affected people

In the far north of Cameroon, where the armed conflict caused a rise in humanitarian needs (see *Context*), the ICRC strengthened its presence in Maroua towards the end of 2014 and furthered its dialogue with local and military leaders there, in particular to remind them of their obligations under IHL and other applicable laws. Based on an assessment, the ICRC prepared food, agricultural and other interventions to help vulnerable people meet their urgent needs in 2015. Unaccompanied Nigerian children, some of whom had already been registered at refugee sites, stood to benefit from the establishment of a family-links service, planned for the Minawao refugee camp, and to be managed by the Cameroon Red Cross with ICRC support.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Detainees in Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon received ICRC visits to monitor their treatment and living conditions. Those visited included people held on security charges and migrants. Discussions with the region's detention authorities focused on findings from these visits – related to respect for international norms and principles applicable to arrest and detention, and access to inmates – and recommendations for structural improvements. Distribution of ad hoc material assistance, such as hygiene and recreational items, eased the situation of some 5,400 detainees across the region.

In Angola, visits to purported FLEC detainees in the Cabinda province continued. Though the ICRC's office in Dundo was closed, the treatment of detained migrants continued to be monitored, as did the authorities' construction of a retention centre in Condueji.

Detainees in Cameroon's far north begin to receive ICRC visits

In Cameroon, members of armed groups continued to be arrested in growing numbers by security/defence forces; as a result, the ICRC visited – for the first time – some detainees in the far north. Detainees in Bertoua prison improved their conditions after a hygiene-awareness campaign and the distribution of essential items by the Cameroon Red Cross, following a health and nutrition assessment by the ICRC. The authorities also received a synthesis report covering visits conducted in 2013.

In Equatorial Guinea, visits to detainees in police stations used as places of detention continued; at the same time, in dialogue with the Justice and Defence ministries, the ICRC sought assurances that visits could be conducted in line with its standard procedures.

CIVILIANS	ANGOLA	CAMEROON	CONGO	GABON
Red Cross messages (RCMs)				
RCMs collected	29	730	248	
	including from UAMs/SCs*		70	
Reunifications, transfers and repatriations				
People reunited with their families	20	83	201	
	including from UAMs/SCs*		11	2
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons				
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		1,885	229	1
	of whom women		471	81
	of whom minors at the time of disappearance - girls		204	37
	of whom minors at the time of disappearance - boys		232	27
	including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation		186	4
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	3	304	61	
	including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation		8	1
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)	2	1,545	241	4
	of whom women		440	79
	of whom minors at the time of disappearance - girls		186	49
	of whom minors at the time of disappearance - boys		193	20
	including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation		153	17
UAMs/SCs*, including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers				
UAMs/SCs newly registered by the ICRC/National Society		104	24	
	of whom girls		24	15
UAMs/SCs reunited with their families by the ICRC/National Society		22	4	
	of whom girls		4	4
	of whom demobilized children		1	
	including UAMs/SCs registered by another delegation		17	
UAM/SC cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period		82	29	
	of whom girls		16	17
Documents				
People to whom travel documents were issued	1		2	

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

The authorities received reports covering visits carried out in 2013 and 2014, to assist them in carrying out penal reforms.

In Congo, dialogue with the detention authorities allowed for the continuation of ICRC visits to detainees, at the main prison in Brazzaville and other facilities.

Gabonese authorities tackle detainees' needs through health in detention pilot project

In Gabon, dialogue – within the framework of the pilot project on health in detention at two prisons in Libreville and Oyem – with the Health and Justice Ministries, as well as the prison services, focused on ways to improve detainees' hygiene, health and nutritional status. The Health Ministry and the prison health service forged closer links, owing to ICRC efforts, which included advocating inclusion of detainees, in the future, in various national programmes, such as health insurance and programmes related to AIDS and TB. The Health Ministry also organized, jointly with the ICRC, hygiene-awareness-raising sessions and a vector-control campaign at the Central Prison of Libreville, enabling detainees there to have more hygienic conditions. The Justice Ministry took on most of the ICRC's planned rehabilitation work to improve conditions at the prison. Owing to administrative constraints, similar activities for detainees at the Oyem central prison were delayed.

In parallel, the ICRC conducted monitoring visits to the two prisons and provided medical and other materials to support the project's activities, as well as recommendations to improve detainees' nutrition.

ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

Authorities across the region draw on ICRC expertise for ratifying/implementing IHL treaties

Regular interaction with the authorities and armed/security forces helped to further their understanding of, and gain their support for, humanitarian principles, IHL, international human rights law and the Movement's activities. The ICRC also pursued efforts to compile data on domestic practices of customary IHL.

Dialogue with governments in the region emphasized the importance of ratifying/implementing IHL-related treaties. Ministers and parliamentarians in Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon learnt more about the subject during ICRC-organized workshops; a national focal point from Congo participated in a meeting on weapon-related treaties in the United Republic of Tanzania (see *Nairobi*), with ICRC support.

Cameroon signed the Arms Trade Treaty. After an ICRC-organized regional seminar on weapons, in which two high-level ministerial representatives participated, Gabon ratified the Kinshasa Convention (see *Democratic Republic of the Congo*). The Gabonese authorities and the ICRC signed a headquarters agreement, laying out the framework for ICRC activities in the country.

Officers from all military branches in Congo learn to disseminate IHL

Over 770 officers and officers-in-training of the armed/security forces of Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon – including those at the Ecole Supérieure Internationale de Guerre, at the EIFORCES, which conducts peacekeeping courses mainly for officers from ECCAS member countries, and at the Ecole Navale à Vocation Régionale in Libreville – learnt more about IHL and the Movement's activities during seminars/conferences. During a train-the-trainer seminar in Congo, officers from all military branches, as well as from the police and gendarmerie, strengthened their ability to instruct their units in IHL. In Equatorial Guinea, cadets learnt about IHL, the Movement and the goals of the Health Care in Danger project through ICRC presentations at the military school in Malabo. In Angola, security forces, particularly those involved in operations concerning allegedly irregular migrants, were sensitized to norms applicable to their duties (see *Civilians*).

At the regional level, bilateral discussions with ECCAS/FOMAC, including the regional central command, aimed to facilitate instruction in IHL for the Central African Standby Brigade.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	ANGOLA	CAMEROON	CONGO	EQUATORIAL GUINEA	GABON
ICRC visits					
Detainees visited	21	39	45	942	2,444
of whom women		1	1	32	89
of whom minors		3		2	114
Detainees visited and monitored individually	21	39	45	6	
of whom women		1	1		
of whom boys		3			
Detainees newly registered	6	35	40	6	
of whom women		1	1		
of whom boys		3			
Number of visits carried out	2	9	10	13	3
Number of places of detention visited	2	6	6	9	2
Restoring family links					
RCMs collected		2	2	1	
RCMs distributed			5		
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative			12	8	
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	1			1	

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	ANGOLA	CAMEROON	CONGO
Economic security, water and habitat			
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	638	4,595
		172	

The ICRC maintained dialogue with the region's armed forces on incorporating IHL in their doctrines, training and operations.

Traditional leaders in northern Cameroon familiarize themselves with IHL and the ICRC

During seminars in northern Cameroon, 24 traditional leaders and members of civil society enhanced their understanding of the Movement's activities. Students from Maroua University learnt more about IHL and the ICRC during a conference.

Press releases, information sessions for journalists and other engagements with the media helped raise awareness of humanitarian issues, including those relating the situation in the CAR, and of the ICRC's mandate and activities. During seminars conducted with the National Societies in Cameroon and Congo, 70 journalists learnt more about the media's role in protecting victims of armed conflict.

Future decision-makers enriched their knowledge of IHL and the ICRC through guest lectures by the ICRC at Cameroon's universities, conducted in coordination with a local partner, and at Congo's National School of Administration and Magistracy. During a presentation at the Centre Africain d'Etudes Internationales in Yaoundé, diplomats and government officials furthered their understanding of the protection afforded to women by IHL.

In Congo, through their interaction with the ICRC, law professors at two universities in Brazzaville strengthened their ability to teach IHL. Students learnt more about IHL through the e-learning platform at the ICRC's documentation centre; a university IHL club organized a debate, with ICRC support.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The region's National Societies, with ICRC financial/material support and training, strengthened their capacities to evaluate and respond to the humanitarian needs of displaced people, refugees and vulnerable migrants (see *Civilians*), and to disseminate/promote IHL and humanitarian principles. Notably, the National Societies of Cameroon, Congo and Gabon signed partnership agreements with the ICRC.

In northern Cameroon, the Cameroon Red Cross Society evaluated the humanitarian situation in relation to the ongoing armed conflict. Officials from six committees enhanced their governance capacities, with ICRC support. Seven volunteers benefited from communication training in the Safer Access Framework. The National Society's legal adviser attended the IHL for humanitarian workers course organised by the ICRC.

The construction of an office and a warehouse, completed with ICRC financial support, enabled the Congolese Red Cross to enhance its capacities to respond to humanitarian needs in the Bouenza department. The National Societies of Cameroon and Gabon could better conduct field activities, thanks to ICRC-donated vehicles.

Some 160 National Society volunteers from Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, and São Tomé and Príncipe learnt how to instruct others in basic first aid through ICRC-supported training for new trainers; the Congolese Red Cross committed to revise their first-aid manual. Family-links capacities were also strengthened amongst the volunteer network of the National Societies of Cameroon and Congo, enabling them to respond more effectively to needs created by the crisis in the CAR (see *Civilians*). The Angolan Red Cross participated in a regional workshop on restoring family links (see *Harare*).

Cameroon Red Cross youth volunteers, with ICRC support, introduced IHL principles and the Movement's activities to nearly 500 students. The Gabonese Red Cross helped organize a youth summer camp with the participation of some 500 volunteers from Cameroon, CAR, Congo and Gabon.

With ICRC support, the region's National Societies also organized events, such as photo exhibits, marking "150 years of humanitarian action," and produced promotional materials to raise awareness of humanitarian principles and the Movement's activities.

Movement components met regularly to coordinate their activities, including through a regional meeting in Yaoundé.

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

1. Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Gabon
 2. Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	1		
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	1		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection programme) ¹				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	5,405		
Health				
Number of visits carried out by health staff		6		
Number of places of detention visited by health staff		2		

1. Angola, Cameroon, Congo