

# ALGERIA



ICRC delegation 
 ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic project 
 ICRC office

The ICRC has been working in Algeria, with some interruptions, since the 1954–62 Algerian war of independence. Aside from visiting people held in places of detention run by the Ministry of Justice and people remanded in police stations and gendarmeries, it supports the authorities in strengthening national legislation with regard to people deprived of their freedom and promotes IHL. The ICRC supports the Algerian Red Crescent in its reforms process and partners with it to restore links between separated family members.

## KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS IN 2015

- ▶ Judicial personnel received ICRC training in human rights norms at the justice ministry's request and, in line with these norms, took steps to update procedures involving detainees in remand custody.
- ▶ Detainees stood to benefit from the prison administration's efforts, based on ICRC recommendations, to improve the management of their medical records.
- ▶ Family members dispersed by detention or other circumstances reconnected via ICRC and, at times, Algerian Red Crescent family-links services. One foreign detainee received regular family visits.
- ▶ At a workshop organized by the Algerian defence ministry and the ICRC, senior military officers from about 70 countries enhanced their capacity to incorporate IHL in field operations.
- ▶ The authorities, with ICRC support, continued to pursue efforts to advance the implementation of IHL. Algeria acceded to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

## EXPENDITURE IN KCHF

Protection	939
Assistance	186
Prevention	772
Cooperation with National Societies	351
General	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,273</b>
<i>Of which: Overheads</i>	<b>139</b>

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	76%
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## PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	6
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	13

## YEARLY RESULTS

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

**MEDIUM**

PROTECTION	Total
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>	
<b>Restoring family links</b>	
RCMs collected	1
RCMs distributed	37
Phone calls facilitated between family members	17
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	18
People reunited with their families	1
<i>of whom unaccompanied minors/separated children</i>	1
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>	
<b>ICRC visits</b>	
Detainees visited	14,944
Detainees visited and monitored individually	122
Number of visits carried out	40
Number of places of detention visited	32
<b>Restoring family links</b>	
RCMs collected	8
RCMs distributed	22
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	150

## CONTEXT

Despite the developments elsewhere in the region, the security situation in Algeria remained relatively stable. Military operations, however, continued against groups suspected of endangering State security or of being associated with the unregulated trade in weapons; casualties and arrests were reported following sporadic clashes. In the south, communal violence occasionally broke out, sparked by a decline in the economy.

Migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, continued to arrive in the country. State services or the Algerian Red Crescent helped some of the people who had fled violence in Mali or the Syrian Arab Republic (hereafter Syria) meet their immediate needs.

Algeria maintained its key role in regional dialogue, notably as host of peace talks between parties to conflict from Libya and from Mali.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

In Algeria, the ICRC visited detainees in 32 places of detention – including places of temporary detention under the authority of the interior and justice ministries – paying special attention to foreigners, people in solitary confinement and other particularly vulnerable inmates. Confidential feedback based on visits, including from an ICRC doctor, to detainees in certain prisons helped the ICRC provide the authorities with specific information for implementing and/or replicating improvements throughout the prison system. Judicial officials and police/*gendarmérie* personnel took steps to update procedures involving detainees in remand custody in line with human rights norms, after receiving ICRC training on the subject. The prison administration, acting on ICRC recommendations, initiated efforts to improve the management of detainees' medical records. Penitentiary authorities received reference materials on international norms applicable to their duties; training, including courses abroad, helped to strengthen their ability to tackle issues related to detainees' treatment and health. The ICRC also conducted briefings for prison officers/guards to further their understanding of its working methods.

ICRC family-links services helped detainees held far from their homes, or whose families were abroad, maintain contact with their relatives. The ICRC facilitated a meeting between the prison administration and religious personnel, who were in communication with foreign detainees' relatives; the aim was to encourage greater cooperation in helping foreign detainees stay in touch with their families. Family members dispersed by other circumstances reconnected with help from the Algerian Red Crescent and/or the ICRC. When appropriate, these people were reunited with one another through the efforts of other actors, with the ICRC's support/coordination.

To foster dialogue on humanitarian issues and promote respect for IHL throughout the region, the ICRC continued to explore points of common interest with the authorities. It sponsored the attendance of instructors from the foreign affairs ministry and from judicial/military/prison service training institutions in advanced courses on IHL, or other applicable norms, abroad. The ICRC organized, jointly with the defence ministry, the annual Senior Workshop on International Rules governing Military Operations. It supported the national IHL commission's new plan of action for implementing IHL; in 2015, Algeria acceded to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Support for the Movement was promoted through public events and publications on the Movement's role in Algerian history. An agreement was being finalized with the Algerian National Archives to have copies of the ICRC's documents on the Algerian war of independence digitized and made available to the public.

Through workshops and meetings, the ICRC helped further understanding of the Fundamental Principles and the Safer Access Framework among National Society leaders, with a view to encouraging the National Society to conduct its activities in line with neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action, and in coordination with other Movement components.

## CIVILIANS

### Members of dispersed families reunite in Algeria and abroad

Family members dispersed by armed conflict/violence, detention, migration, or other circumstances, used family-links services provided by the ICRC and, on occasion, the Algerian Red Crescent to restore or maintain contact with each other. Two families stayed in touch with relatives held at the US internment facility at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba through monthly video calls and RCMs; each also sent a food parcel. An ex-detainee, formerly held in the Guantanamo Bay internment facility and resettled in Algeria, was visited by his family; the ICRC covered their travel expenses. When appropriate, efforts were made to reunite family members: a Congolese refugee rejoined his family in France with assistance from the French Red Cross and the UNHCR, in coordination with the ICRC; an unaccompanied child was repatriated to Algeria, with support from the government officials concerned and the ICRC.

Vulnerable foreigners, particularly irregular migrants, were referred to the appropriate services, partly through ICRC coordination with local associations, international organizations and other parties concerned. At a regional workshop, a representative of the National Society took part in discussions of best practices for restoring family links for migrants (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*).

The ICRC remained ready to support the authorities in responding to the needs of the families of people unaccounted for since past internal violence in Algeria.

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

### Foreign detainees restore contact with their families

Around 14,900 detainees in 32 places of detention – including places of temporary detention under the authority of the interior and justice ministries – received visits from the ICRC, conducted in accordance with the organization's standard procedures. More than 100 of the most vulnerable – among them, security detainees, foreigners and people in solitary confinement – were monitored individually.

Detainees held far from their homes, or whose families were abroad, were among those who used RCMs and short oral messages to contact and/or send news to their families. A total of 14 foreigners had the ICRC notify their consular representatives of their situation. With ICRC support, one foreign detainee was visited by his family regularly.

Some 30 religious personnel, who were in contact with the families of foreign detainees, were briefed on the ICRC's activities for

detainees. With the ICRC's help, a representative of these personnel met with the directorate of the prison administration, encouraging greater cooperation in helping foreign detainees stay in touch with their families.

### **The authorities take steps to ensure that the treatment of detainees complies with applicable norms**

The authorities and the ICRC discussed confidential feedback, based on the visits mentioned above; this facilitated regular dialogue on such subjects as detainees' treatment, living conditions and access to National Society/ICRC family-links services. Findings and recommendations from visits to detainees at certain prisons were particularly aimed at helping the authorities implement and/or replicate improvements throughout the prison system.

To enhance understanding of the ICRC's working methods, briefings for prison officers and guards were likewise held during visits. Penitentiary officials furthered their knowledge of these methods and of international norms applicable to their duties using ICRC-provided reference materials and/or during a study trip to France and Switzerland. Notably, the justice ministry requested the ICRC to conduct training on human rights norms for judiciary, police and *gendarmierie* personnel (see *Actors of influence*), after which they took steps to update procedures involving detainees in remand custody.

### **Detainees stand to benefit from authorities' efforts to improve management of their medical records**

With professional advice from an ICRC detention doctor, who helped monitor the health of detainees receiving care at three places of detention and two hospitals, penitentiary authorities and health personnel continued to explore how detainees' access to health care within and outside prisons could be improved and how adherence to medical ethics – with respect to confidentiality and issues linked to detainees' treatment, for instance – could be strengthened. They further honed their ability to address these issues during a study trip abroad (see *Kuwait*); some health personnel supplemented their knowledge of ethical issues related to the provision of health care in detention at a regional conference (see *Jordan*). The prison administration, acting on ICRC recommendations, instructed services to make improvements to the way detainees' medical records were managed; these efforts were in progress by year's end. The health and justice ministries also drafted amendments to domestic legislation in order to transfer responsibility for penitentiary health care from the latter to the former.

## **ACTORS OF INFLUENCE**

### **Senior military officers discuss incorporation of IHL in operations at an international workshop**

At the justice ministry's request, 60 magistrates, judicial staff and police/*gendarmierie* officers learnt more about applying human rights norms to their work at two ICRC workshops; the justice ministry also co-organized courses for their trainers (see *People deprived of their freedom*). Through advanced courses abroad (see *Lebanon*), a magistrate, a foreign affairs ministry official and three instructors from the Cherchell Military Academy and prison service training institutions refined their techniques for teaching IHL and other applicable norms.

Members of the Sahel Fusion and Liaison Unit – a regional organization of military forces and intelligence services, based in Algeria – met with the ICRC and exchanged views on how IHL applied in international and non-international armed conflicts; they also added to their

knowledge of IHL and the ICRC's activities in countries affected by armed conflict – Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen, for example – through ICRC publications.

During the Senior Workshop on International Rules governing Military Operations, organized by the Algerian defence ministry and the ICRC, more than 80 senior military officers from about 70 countries, and representatives of multilateral organizations, shared best practices for incorporating IHL in the planning and conduct of field operations (see *International law and policy*). The ICRC's president, who opened the event, also discussed the promotion and development of IHL, and other areas for cooperation, with various Algerian government officials.

### **Algeria accedes to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons**

As a follow up to the 2014 regional meeting of IHL experts in Algeria, the national IHL commission adopted a new plan of action for implementing IHL – with ICRC support – and contributed to Algeria's accession to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. At panel discussions: magistrates, some of whom had previously attended ICRC training in IHL and/or international norms governing detention, clarified how domestic mechanisms can be applied to sanction IHL violations; diplomats and diplomats-in-training broadened their understanding of the ICRC's working methods and of the humanitarian issues affecting the region.

The defence ministry continued to promote safe practices among children in mine-contaminated areas – in line with Algeria's implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention – through comic books produced with the ICRC.

### **People learn more about the Movement's role in Algerian history through public events/publications**

Media coverage of the ICRC's work in Algeria and abroad – in Syria and Yemen, for example – helped make the general public aware of urgent humanitarian concerns and of the ICRC's activities for detainees and victims of conflict/violence. At a press conference organized by a local association, former detainees spoke of the help given them by the ICRC during the Algerian war of independence. Five books, published by an Algerian historian after consulting the ICRC's archives, added to the growing literature on the subject. An agreement was being finalized with the Algerian National Archives to have copies of ICRC documents from the period 1954–1962 digitized and made available to the public.

Some 300 students of journalism and political science became more familiar with these issues and the ICRC's mandate at a university conference. At a seminar abroad (see *Niger*), an Algerian academic discussed the points of correspondence between Islamic law and IHL.

## **RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

The National Society responded autonomously to the needs of vulnerable people in Algeria, including those who had fled violence in Mali or Syria; and it delivered aid on behalf of the Algerian government to conflict-affected people in Libya, Mali and Niger.

Some joint activities that had been planned with the ICRC – such as an assessment of family-links needs in areas covered by the National Society's branches – did not take place, partly because of various internal constraints and the National Society's involvement in humanitarian operations abroad. At various ICRC-organized

meetings/workshops, National Society leaders strengthened their understanding of the Fundamental Principles and the Safer Access Framework, and learnt from volunteers' experience of providing family-links services for detainees, particularly migrants in detention; they were also encouraged to strengthen their coordination with other Movement components. Through regional exchanges (see *Abidjan* and *Dakar*) and participation in Movement statutory meetings, other National Society representatives strengthened their ability to bolster the National Society's governance and operational capacities.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total			
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>					
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>			<b>UAMs/SC*</b>		
RCMs collected		1			
RCMs distributed		37			
Phone calls facilitated between family members		17			
<b>Reunifications, transfers and repatriations</b>					
People reunited with their families		1			
	<i>including people registered by another delegation</i>	1			
<b>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</b>			<b>Women</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		33	1	2	1
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	25			
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		18			
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	18			
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		72	15	6	4
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	34			
<b>UAMs/SC*, including demobilized child soldiers</b>			<b>Girls</b>		<b>Demobilized children</b>
UAMs/SC reunited with their families by the ICRC/National Society		1			1
	<i>including UAMs/SC registered by another delegation</i>	1			
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>					
<b>ICRC visits</b>			<b>Women</b>	<b>Minors</b>	
Detainees visited		14,944	121	81	
			<b>Women</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>
Detainees visited and monitored individually		122	3		1
Detainees newly registered		90			
Number of visits carried out		40			
Number of places of detention visited		32			
<b>Restoring family links</b>					
RCMs collected		8			
RCMs distributed		22			
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		150			
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		1			
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		1			

\*Unaccompanied minors/separated children