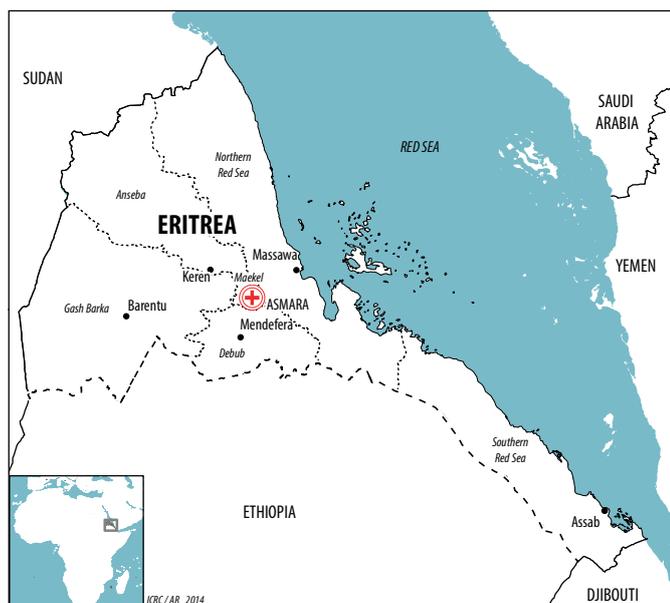


# ERITREA



ICRC delegation

The boundaries, names and designations used in this report do not imply official endorsement, nor express a political opinion on the part of the ICRC, and are without prejudice to claims of sovereignty over the territories mentioned.

The ICRC opened a delegation in Eritrea in 1998 in the context of the international armed conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia and continues to respond to the needs remaining from that two-year war. Its priorities are to help improve the resilience of the population concerned and to ensure compliance with IHL with regard to any persons still protected by the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions. The ICRC supports the “Red Cross Society of Eritrea”.

## YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

**MEDIUM**

## KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

- ▶ Households affected by past conflict took steps towards self-sufficiency with ICRC livelihood support, and had sustainable access to clean water through newly built/repared solar-powered water supply systems.
- ▶ Vulnerable people of Ethiopian origin renewed their residence permits with ICRC assistance. Those who wished to be repatriated through the government’s programme had their transport and other costs covered.
- ▶ Beneficiary communities, students, military personnel and the authorities learnt more about IHL and the Movement through joint activities of the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students and the ICRC.
- ▶ After a series of discussions, the “Red Cross Society of Eritrea” and the ICRC agreed to resume cooperation in 2016, and to focus on rebuilding operational and organizational capacities.
- ▶ Dialogue with the authorities sought to increase acceptance of ICRC mandate and work, but activities for conflict-affected people remained limited. The ICRC remained without access to detainees.

## EXPENDITURE IN KCHF

Protection	858
Assistance	2,936
Prevention	354
Cooperation with National Societies	88
General	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,254</b>
<i>Of which: Overheads</i>	<b>260</b>

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	101%
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## PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	3
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	42

## PROTECTION

	Total
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>	
<b>Restoring family links</b>	
RCMs collected	608
RCMs distributed	800
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	36

## ASSISTANCE

	2015 Targets (up to)	Achieved
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>		
<b>Economic security</b> (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Essential household items	Beneficiaries 10,000	
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries 239,000	475,192
Cash	Beneficiaries 4,870	4,420
<b>Water and habitat</b> (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries 22,500	67,837

## CONTEXT

Tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia persisted, but no major confrontations were known to have taken place in border regions. The Eritrea-Ethiopia border remained sealed, and both countries maintained a military presence in disputed areas.

No progress was made towards the demarcation of the Djibouti-Eritrea border or in the implementation of a mediation agreement signed by the two countries in 2010. Qatar, acting as a mediator, maintained troops in the disputed region.

The effects of past conflicts on livelihoods and public services continued to be felt: for instance, many households were unable to produce sufficient food or income. Eritreans continued to flee the country to avoid military conscription and seek better educational and economic opportunities.

Humanitarian activities were still limited following the government's request in 2011 that international humanitarian agencies terminate or reduce their activities. Eritrea signed several cooperation agreements with foreign governments and international bodies.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

Given the restrictions on the operations of international agencies in Eritrea (see *Context*), the ICRC endeavoured to regain the authorities' full acceptance of its humanitarian mandate and work. It continued to help vulnerable communities cope with their circumstances, particularly those affected by past conflict.

The ICRC sought to persuade the authorities that it was in their interest to recognize the applicability of the 1949 Geneva Conventions to the Eritrean context. Discussions with the authorities focused on humanitarian concerns and on possibilities to broaden the ICRC's activities. The ICRC pursued dialogue with the authorities on the resumption of visits to detainees of Ethiopian origin and to people held for security-related reasons; the authorities had withdrawn permission for such visits in 2009. To promote IHL and the Movement's work to a wider audience, the ICRC organized, jointly with the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS), dissemination sessions and other events for civilian/military authorities, students and the general public.

The ICRC continued to monitor the situation of Ethiopians living in Eritrea, with a view to ensuring that their rights under the 1949 Geneva Conventions, including in relation to voluntary repatriation, were respected; permission for the ICRC to accompany the voluntary repatriation of civilians was withdrawn in 2009. The ICRC covered transport and other related expenses of Ethiopians who wished to return home through the government's unilateral repatriations, and the costs of residence permits and medical care for Ethiopians who wished to stay in Eritrea. It also helped released detainees of Ethiopian origin meet some food/accommodation expenses.

Vulnerable households, mainly those in areas near the Eritrean-Ethiopian border, rebuilt or improved their livelihoods with ICRC support. In less fertile regions of the country, the ICRC conducted anti-parasite treatment and vaccination campaigns with the agriculture ministry, and built water ponds for livestock, helping pastoralist households preserve the health of their herds. ICRC-distributed seed and farming equipment helped hundreds of households, including those headed by women, to increase their harvest. Rural communities had a sustainable supply of potable

water after the ICRC helped authorities and communities build or repair solar-powered water-supply systems and trained community technicians to operate/maintain these facilities. The ICRC also donated spare parts for hand pumps for rural water supply systems.

In areas where it had access, the ICRC helped members of families dispersed by conflict, migration or other circumstances restore/maintain contact with one another through RCMs. It continued to follow up, with the pertinent authorities, requests for information from the families of people reported missing in connection with the 1998–2000 Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict. On behalf of the families concerned, the ICRC also continued to appeal to the authorities for information on 17 Djiboutian soldiers reported by their government as missing after the Djibouti-Eritrea hostilities in June 2008.

The absence of a legal framework recognizing its status limited the ability of the "Red Cross Society of Eritrea" to carry out humanitarian activities. Dialogue between the organization and the ICRC led to an agreement to resume cooperation on operational activities – particularly family-links services, emergency response and communication – and on organizational development.

## CIVILIANS

The ICRC continued to pursue dialogue with the Eritrean authorities, aimed at gaining acceptance of and support for its mandate and activities in the country. Amid restrictions on the operations of international humanitarian agencies, ICRC activities for conflict-affected people remained limited. The ICRC stood ready to distribute household essentials in the event of an emergency.

### Pastoralist households improve their livelihoods with healthier herds

Vulnerable households affected by conflict, including those in areas near the border with Ethiopia, restored or improved their livelihoods with ICRC support, helping bolster their resilience against the effects of violence.

In Anseba, Debub, Gash Barka and Northern Red Sea, where communities relied on their livestock for survival, over 89,700 households (some 449,000 people) had healthier herds after more than 3.1 million heads of livestock received anti-parasite treatment. Some 21,000 households (around 105,000 people) among them also had their herds protected from a contagious disease through a vaccination campaign carried out by the agriculture ministry and the ICRC in September. More households than planned were reached in areas where such an activity had not been conducted since 2011. Some households benefited from both anti-parasite and vaccination campaigns. Twenty Ministry of Agriculture staff members improved their readiness to deal with livestock-related emergencies at an ICRC-organized training.

Over 7,500 households (some 22,500 people) in Debub and Gash Barka had more water for their livestock after three ponds were constructed; work on a fourth pond was under way. More than 457 people supplemented their income with cash earned by helping in the construction of the ponds.

In Debub and Gash Barka, 343 farming households (some 1,700 people), headed mainly by women, increased their harvests using seed, tools and foot-operated irrigation pumps provided by the ICRC under a 2013 agreement with the agriculture ministry. Farmers in Gash Barka (supporting 2,000 people) received improved seed varieties, in line with another agreement with the agriculture ministry.

## Rural households have a sustainable supply of water

Some 48,780 people in Anseba, Debub, Gash Barka and Southern Red Sea enjoyed sustainable access to potable water after the local authorities maintained, repaired and/or built solar-powered water-supply systems with ICRC support. The environmentally friendly systems minimized running costs, which was particularly important because fuel was scarce in Eritrea. At training sessions conducted by the authorities/ICRC, local technicians learnt how to maintain these systems, which added to their accountability and helped ensure the sustainability of the systems. The authorities also worked on developing an inventory of water wells in the country, with the help of surveying equipment donated by the ICRC.

Around 19,000 people had better access to water, thanks to donations of spare parts for hand pumps, which improved water-supply systems in rural areas of Debub, Gash Barka and Southern Red Sea.

## People of Ethiopian origin are helped to cope with their situation

People of Ethiopian origin continued to be repatriated through Sudan by the Eritrean authorities; the ICRC's authorization to facilitate voluntary repatriation of civilians across the Eritrea-Ethiopia border was withdrawn by the government in 2009. Working within these constraints, the ICRC monitored the situation of Ethiopians living in Eritrea to help ensure that their rights under the 1949 Geneva Conventions, including voluntary repatriation in humane conditions, were respected.

Particularly vulnerable Ethiopians – women, minors, elderly people and former detainees – coped with their circumstances with some financial assistance from the ICRC. Among them were 3,454 people who renewed their residence permits, helping them obtain social benefits; 40 people were assisted with medical expenses. Nearly 700 people who wished to be repatriated were helped to meet their transport/accommodation and other expenses before and during their repatriation. Former detainees of Ethiopian origin received assistance for covering the costs of food/accommodation.

## Families separated by conflict restore contact with one another

Family-links services run by the “Red Cross Society of Eritrea” were suspended in 2012. Since then, these services had been provided by the ICRC in areas where it had access – for example, in Gash Barka but only to a limited extent. People used RCMs to restore/maintain contact with relatives separated from them by conflict, migration or other circumstances. Official documents were relayed between family members, enabling several people to pursue employment/further studies or meet administrative/legal requirements. Using travel documents provided by the ICRC at the request of UNHCR, 127 Somali refugees travelled to Slovakia, for eventual resettlement in the United States of America.

Dialogue was sustained in parallel with the Eritrean and the Ethiopian authorities on helping unaccompanied Eritrean minors in Ethiopia restore contact and, where appropriate, reunite with their relatives (see *Ethiopia*).

The ICRC continued to follow up, with the pertinent authorities, requests from families for news of their relatives missing in connection with the 1998–2000 Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict; no new information was made available. The families of the 19 Eritrean POWs held in Djibouti received news of their relatives through ICRC family-links services (see *Nairobi*).

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

The ICRC continued its discussions with the authorities, with a view to resuming visits to detainees of Ethiopian origin, in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention, and also to detainees held for reasons of security. The authorities had withdrawn permission for such visits in 2009.

Requests to the Eritrean government for information on the whereabouts of the 17 Djiboutian soldiers reported by their government as missing after the 2008 Djibouti-Eritrea conflict remained unanswered.

## ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

### Dialogue with authorities emphasizes the ICRC's humanitarian mandate

In light of limitations on ICRC activities and movement, dialogue with the authorities continued to focus on strengthening their trust and persuading them that it was in their interest to recognize the applicability of the 1949 Geneva Conventions to the Eritrean context. Meetings with government officials in the country and abroad, and the involvement of authorities in the planning and implementation of ICRC activities (see *Civilians*), enabled the ICRC to discuss humanitarian concerns, including issues related to migration, and to seek wider access to people affected by violence, including detainees (see *People deprived of their freedom*). At the UN General Assembly, for example, the ICRC's president and senior Eritrean officials pursued discussions on ways to develop cooperation on issues of humanitarian concern.

Representatives from the foreign, justice, defence and health ministries, and other government officials, learnt more about IHL and its implementation at an ICRC-organized seminar.

### Soldiers and future decision-makers further their understanding of IHL

Cooperation with the NUEYS enabled the ICRC to foster awareness of and support for IHL and the Movement's work among various audiences. Some 6,000 people – including students, national/local government officials and beneficiaries of ICRC projects – learnt more about IHL and the ICRC's work and mandate through dissemination sessions conducted by the NUEYS/ICRC. At similar sessions, thousands of military personnel, and young people attending the Sawa Military Training Centre, familiarized themselves with IHL and received reference materials. The general public learnt more about IHL and the Movement through the ICRC's briefings at a countrywide book fair and from articles published in local languages.

Twenty students enriched their understanding of IHL at an ICRC-conducted training course at the Asmara Law School. Discussions with the school's administrator, on the integration of IHL into their international law curriculum, continued.

## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The absence of a legal framework recognizing the status of the “Red Cross Society of Eritrea” hampered the organization's ability to carry out humanitarian activities and obtain funding. After discussions that also involved the relevant authorities, the “Red Cross Society of Eritrea” and the ICRC signed a document in May 2015 that formalized their commitment to resume cooperation. A framework agreement and plan of action to this end were being developed; the first draft of the agreement covered family-links services, operational communication and emergency response.

The “Red Cross Society of Eritrea” communicated the findings of an internal needs assessment to the ICRC, enabling the latter to identify priority areas for organizational development support.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total			
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>					
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>			UAMs/SC*		
RCMs collected		608			
RCMs distributed		800			
<b>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</b>			Women	Girls	Boys
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		159	66	19	11
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>		95			
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		36			
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>		15			
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		423	59	24	28
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>		304			
<b>Documents</b>					
People to whom travel documents were issued		127			
Official documents relayed between family members across borders/front lines		21			
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		8			

\* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>				
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	475,192	74%	1%
Cash	Beneficiaries	4,420	62%	12%
<b>Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>				
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	67,837	30%	40%