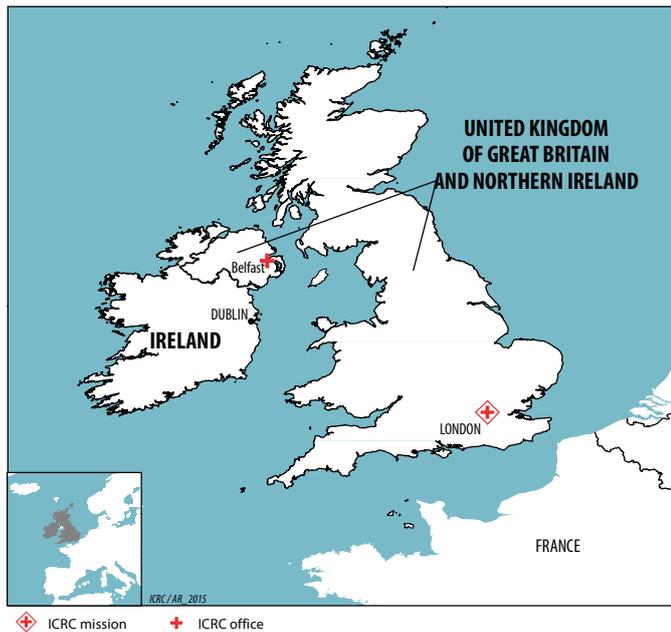


# LONDON

COVERING: Ireland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland



Set up in 2003, the London mission focuses on pursuing humanitarian diplomacy and facilitating ICRC operations in the field. Through contact with the British government, armed forces, members of parliament, think-tanks, the media and international NGOs, it seeks to secure broad support for IHL and ICRC and Movement operations. It has similar contact with the Irish authorities and is developing its cooperation with the armed forces. The mission operates in partnership with the British Red Cross on a range of common areas, while cooperation with the Irish Red Cross is concentrated on IHL and issues related to Movement coordination.

## KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS IN 2015

- ▶ During the drafting of its defence/security approach, the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (hereafter UK) drew on ICRC expertise in IHL and humanitarian issues.
- ▶ Community-based groups continued their work to mitigate violence and its consequences in Northern Ireland, with financial/technical assistance from the ICRC.
- ▶ Detainees at 2 prisons in Northern Ireland, particularly people held in relation to current violence and the past situation, received ICRC visits to check on their treatment and living conditions.
- ▶ The UK Ministry of Justice agreed to the ICRC's proposal to follow up people detained in England and Wales in relation to counter-terrorism legislation.
- ▶ The British Red Cross and the ICRC enhanced their partnership in addressing people's needs and pursuing humanitarian diplomacy. The Irish Red Cross Society received support for its health programme in prisons.

EXPENDITURE IN KCHF	
Protection	2,141
Assistance	–
Prevention	1,230
Cooperation with National Societies	381
General	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,764</b>
<i>Of which: Overheads</i>	<b>230</b>

IMPLEMENTATION RATE	
Expenditure/yearly budget	95%

PERSONNEL	
Mobile staff	4
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	14

## YEARLY RESULTS

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

**HIGH**

PROTECTION	Total
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>	
<b>ICRC visits</b>	
Detainees visited	1,209
Detainees visited and monitored individually	65
Number of visits carried out	8
Number of places of detention visited	2

## CONTEXT

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (hereafter UK) remained influential internationally, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and as a member of NATO, through which it participated in military operations overseas; in December, it carried out air strikes against the Islamic State group in the Syrian Arab Republic (hereafter Syria), and continued similar operations in Iraq. The government outlined a five-year approach to national defence and security through the *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review* published in November.

Sectarian tensions and incidents of violence persisted in Northern Ireland. The threat level for international “terrorism” in the UK was at “severe”.

Ireland and the UK responded to the influx of refugees into Europe by agreeing to accept 2,600 and 20,000 refugees from Syria, respectively, over the next five years. Both countries maintained their commitment to UN peacekeeping missions.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC continued to strengthen its position as a key source of reference on IHL and humanitarian issues. Through interaction with the authorities, civil society and the wider public, it promoted the development of informed positions on humanitarian issues; encouraged policy/decision-making that took humanitarian considerations into account; and enlisted support for the Movement. It pursued activities to address humanitarian needs created by armed conflicts and other situations of violence, including in Northern Ireland.

Through bilateral meetings, high-level visits and briefings, ICRC representatives kept government ministries, parliamentary committees and other influential bodies up to date on the humanitarian situation and ICRC operations in contexts of military or diplomatic interest to the UK. The government consulted the ICRC while drafting its five-year approach to national defence/security (see *Context*), which promoted adherence to international law, including IHL. The ICRC also provided input to a parliamentary committee conducting an inquiry into the Syrian refugee crisis.

Dialogue with the UK armed forces continued to focus on operational and legal matters/policy. The ICRC lent its expertise in humanitarian issues to the UK military on various occasions: for example, it provided advice for the revision of the military’s IHL manual and conducted presentations, on IHL and related issues, at military colleges and training institutions.

The ICRC sought to strengthen its cooperation with Ireland’s Defence Forces, which organized a course – on responding to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear emergencies – for ICRC delegates.

Contact with a broad network of authorities and members of civil society in Belfast, Dublin and London enabled the ICRC to raise awareness of the humanitarian needs arising from past and ongoing violence in Northern Ireland. Such efforts also helped to clarify the neutral, impartial, independent and humanitarian nature of the ICRC’s response. The ICRC provided technical/financial support to 13 community-based organizations that were working to mitigate the effects of the violence. It also visited, in accordance with its standard procedures, detainees held in separate quarters

at the Hydebank Wood and Maghaberry prisons. It reported its findings on the treatment and living conditions of the detainees through confidential reports submitted to the authorities.

In December, the UK Ministry of Justice agreed to the ICRC’s proposal to follow the situation of people detained in England and Wales in relation to counter-terrorism legislation.

Engagement by the ICRC with academic institutions, think-tanks, NGOs, media representatives and other members of civil society centred on: promoting knowledge of IHL and international norms; mobilizing support for the ICRC’s activities; and identifying opportunities for cooperation. This included organizing/attending events that drew attention to the issues covered by the Health Care in Danger project, the Movement’s Fundamental Principles and various humanitarian concerns. Multimedia content, disseminated via different platforms, helped relay humanitarian messages to a wider audience.

Cooperation with the British Red Cross and the Irish Red Cross Society was further strengthened. Partnership with the British Red Cross focused on assisting people affected by conflict/other violence, including migrants, and on promoting IHL. The Irish Red Cross received support for its health and first-aid programme in prisons.

## CIVILIANS

Dialogue continued with the relevant authorities, members of civil society, paramilitary groups and others concerned to broaden awareness of the humanitarian needs arising from the violence in Northern Ireland, and from past conflict. On this basis, the parties concerned identified ways to address these needs.

Thirteen community-based groups kept up their efforts to mitigate violence and its effects on vulnerable people in Northern Ireland. With financial/technical assistance from the ICRC, these organizations provided various forms of support/services, including: diversionary programmes for young people likely to be involved in violence; psychological support and counselling for former detainees; and mediation services benefiting individuals targeted by paramilitary groups. The humanitarian impact of the ICRC’s support for these community-based groups and the ICRC’s added value as a neutral and independent organization were recognized in an independent evaluation carried out by an external consultant.

Some families who received physical threats or were expelled from their communities covered their transport/short-term accommodation expenses with ICRC financial assistance. To help prevent similar incidents, local groups were engaged in discussions on alternative ways to resolve community disputes.

## Efforts to resolve the fate of missing persons continue

Six of the 17 people officially known as “the disappeared”, who had gone missing during past conflict, were still unaccounted for; their cases remained under investigation. Dialogue continued with key parties concerned – the Independent Commission for the Location of Victims’ Remains, the UK and Irish authorities, relatives of the missing, the victims’ organization WAVE Trauma Centre, and paramilitary groups – to facilitate the exchange of any information that could help to clarify their fate.

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

The concerns of people detained in relation to past conflict and current violence in Northern Ireland remained central to the

ICRC's discussions with detaining parties in Belfast and London. Meetings with legal firms and humanitarian organizations working for the well-being of detainees helped bolster these efforts.

In December, the UK Ministry of Justice agreed to the ICRC's proposal to check on the situation of people in England and Wales detained in relation to counter-terrorism legislation.

### **Detainees at two prisons in Northern Ireland receive visits from the ICRC**

In all, over 1,200 detainees held in separate places at the Hydebank Wood – including the Ash House facility – and Maghaberry prisons received ICRC visits conducted in accordance with the organization's standard procedures; 65 detainees were followed up individually. Comprehensive reports on issues of humanitarian concern observed by ICRC delegates were shared confidentially with the authorities concerned, and recommendations discussed with officials and prison managers. Meetings with the families of detainees, former detainees and other parties concerned also helped inform the ICRC's analysis of the detainees' situation and key concerns.

With the agreement of the authorities, provision of health care and other related issues at the Maghaberry maximum security prison were assessed by the ICRC, in cooperation with a doctor working with the prison health service. The assessment, which was carried out over a four-month period, helped to further the ICRC's understanding of the humanitarian issues in this facility.

In August, at the request of the authorities concerned, the ICRC – in its capacity as a neutral, impartial and independent organization – agreed to chair a forum for the detainees and the authorities at the Maghaberry prison. The forum sought to resolve issues concerning detainees' treatment and conditions; although initially planned for six months, it concluded in November when the detainees withdrew from the discussions.

### **ACTORS OF INFLUENCE**

Bilateral meetings, and briefings and high-level visits from ICRC representatives, including the president, kept the authorities and parliamentarians in the UK updated on humanitarian needs, operational challenges and ICRC operations in such places as Afghanistan, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen. These efforts provided opportunities to relay key messages on humanitarian issues, pursue contact with government ministers, and foster support for ICRC activities for vulnerable people worldwide, including in Northern Ireland (see *Civilians* and *People deprived of their freedom*).

Discussions continued with the UK authorities on the identification of the remains of Argentinians in the Falkland/Malvinas Islands.

### **The UK government draws on ICRC advice while reviewing its security policy and humanitarian response**

During meetings/discussions with officials from the UK government and military, the ICRC emphasized the need for decision/policy-making that took humanitarian principles into account and supported neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action. The UK government consulted the ICRC while drafting its five-year approach to national defence/security (see *Context*); this allowed the ICRC to draw attention to the potential impact of the UK's national defence strategies on the activities of humanitarian organizations. The review, published by the UK in November, reflected support for adherence to various bodies of international law and for the ICRC's efforts to strengthen compliance with IHL. Input was also submitted

to an inquiry by the parliament's International Development Committee into the Syrian refugee crisis; written evidence from the ICRC highlighted the prevailing situation in Syria, its regional impact and the ICRC's response.

Dialogue continued with the UK military on operational and legal matters/policies. For example, the military drew on ICRC advice in revising its IHL manual and drafting its contribution to NATO's guidelines on humanitarian assistance and disaster response. Military lawyers discussed the Arms Trade Treaty and its implementation with their counterparts from other Commonwealth States at a meeting organized in the UK by the ICRC's London and Washington delegations. Members of the armed forces discussed IHL, the protection/provision of health care during armed conflict, other humanitarian issues and ICRC activities during ICRC presentations at military colleges/training institutions. An exchange of letters was signed by the UK Defence Academy and the ICRC to enhance cooperation in this regard.

In Northern Ireland, paramilitary organizations were encouraged, through dialogue, to respect humanitarian principles at all times and support the ICRC's activities.

Efforts were pursued to strengthen cooperation with Ireland's Defence Forces, which hosted a course for ICRC delegates on responding to emergencies arising from the use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons.

### **Authorities and civil society groups discuss humanitarian issues at ICRC events**

Authorities, policy-makers, think-tanks, academics, NGOs, diaspora networks and other circles of influence exchanged views on various humanitarian issues at events organized/attended by the ICRC, which offered views/suggestions based on its field experience. These occasions also helped strengthen the ICRC's relations with these parties and identify opportunities for cooperation.

Young medical professionals, for example, discussed the issues covered by the Health Care in Danger project during an event organized at the Royal Society of Medicine. Members of the Muslim Charities Forum learnt more about the similarities between IHL and Islamic law, and about the ICRC and the Movement at training sessions organized with the British Red Cross. At events organized with Chatham House and the University of Exeter in London, participants furthered their understanding of the Movement's Fundamental Principles. Other events covered such topics as: sexual violence during armed conflict, humanitarian financing and the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. Two universities and the Overseas Development Institute, a think-tank, drew on ICRC advice for research on humanitarian activities in areas of conflict.

Briefings and other means of interaction with media representatives enabled the ICRC to promote IHL and humanitarian principles more broadly. Various audiences learnt about the humanitarian situation in countries affected by conflict/other violence and about the ICRC's activities through articles, videos and updates posted on the organization's website and social media platforms.

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

Partnership with the British Red Cross continued in the UK and internationally, within the framework of a 2014–16 agreement. Cooperation in matters of operational and institutional priority

covered various areas, such as: assistance for people affected by conflict and other violence, including in Northern Ireland; promotion of IHL and the Movement; support for the Health Care in Danger project; application of the Safer Access Framework; and information sharing and coordination.

The British Red Cross and the ICRC, together with the Cyprus Red Cross Society, assessed the conditions of migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, staying at a UK military base in Cyprus. With some technical support from the ICRC, and in line with Movement guidelines, the British Red Cross set up a unit to enhance its capacities to monitor the conditions of migrants detained in the UK.

Dialogue was maintained with the Irish Red Cross, including on its efforts to strengthen its human resources. In May, it hosted the annual meeting of European National Societies on family-links services, at which participants discussed the restoration of family links in the aftermath of natural disasters – for example, the earthquake in Nepal in April – and among migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers. Discussions were under way to evaluate the Irish Red Cross's health and first-aid programme in prisons, jointly with the ICRC and WHO.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
ICRC visits				
	Total	Women	Minors	
Detainees visited	1,209	149	1	
		Women	Girls	Boys
Detainees visited and monitored individually	65	2		
Number of visits carried out	8			
Number of places of detention visited	2			