

TUNIS (REGIONAL)

COVERING: Tunisia, Western Sahara

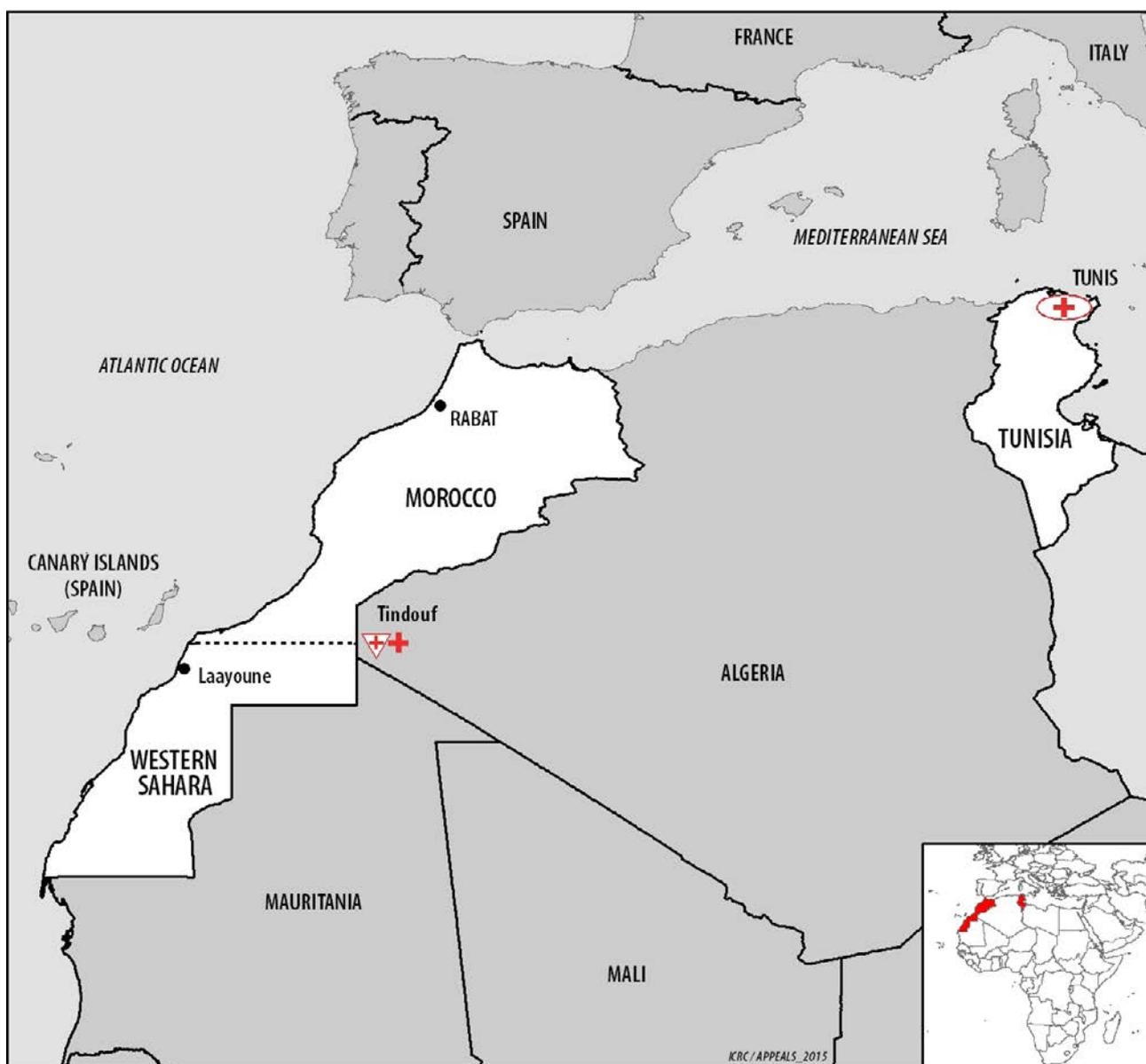
The regional delegation based in Tunis, which has been operating since 1987, visits people deprived of their freedom in Tunisia, monitoring their treatment and conditions of detention. It addresses issues of humanitarian concern arising from the aftermath of the Western Sahara conflict. It promotes awareness of IHL among the authorities, armed forces and other armed groups, as well as implementation of the law by these actors. The ICRC supports the Tunisian Red Crescent in building its capacities.

BUDGET IN KCHF

Protection	1,461
Assistance	2,575
Prevention	1,074
Cooperation with National Societies	300
General	50
Total	5,459
<i>Of which: Overheads</i>	333

PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	17
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	38



 ICRC regional delegation
  ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic centre
  ICRC office

MAIN TARGETS FOR 2015

- ▶ in Tunisia, detainees benefit from steps taken by the authorities – particularly the Interior and Justice Ministries – to reinforce existing treatment protocols and measures for reducing overcrowding, with ICRC technical expertise
- ▶ separated families reconnect through family-links services provided with the Tunisian Red Crescent – for example, phone calls for migrants and tracing services for the families of people reportedly affected by armed conflict abroad
- ▶ Sahrawi refugees disabled because of mines or for other reasons recover a measure of mobility through good-quality services at the ICRC-supported physiotherapy centre in the Rabouni hospital
- ▶ military/security forces deployed in Tunisia or abroad, and officers from other countries who are training in the country deepen their understanding of IHL and human rights principles following briefings

CONTEXT

Tunisian authorities, helped by the international community, are taking steps to implement financial and political reforms in the country; parliamentary and presidential elections are scheduled for the end of 2014. Military/security forces conduct operations against armed groups – particularly along Tunisia's borders with Algeria and Libya – that reportedly result in arrests. Tunisians allegedly affected by unrest abroad lose contact with their families or are detained upon their return.

Thousands of people fleeing instability in Libya seek refuge in Tunisia or passage to their home countries. Sub-Saharan migrants pass through Tunisia to reach Europe.

The status of Western Sahara remains a contentious issue between Morocco and the Polisario Front; the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) has been extended to 2015. Families there risk injury or death from mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), and thousands await news of family members missing since the 1975–91 Western Sahara conflict. Hundreds of thousands of Sahrawis remain in refugee camps in Tindouf, Algeria.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

In 2015, the ICRC regional delegation in Tunis will focus on helping the Tunisian authorities improve treatment and living conditions for people deprived of their freedom. To this end, the organization will visit detainees at nine prisons and six places of temporary detention, paying special attention to security detainees, minors, foreigners and women, and provide confidential feedback to the authorities. In particular, the ICRC will support efforts by the Interior and Justice Ministries to reinforce existing protocols governing the treatment of detainees. For example, through information sessions, workshops and other means, penitentiary staff and magistrates will be made aware of international norms on documentation and judicial/medical follow-up for victims of violence, including sexual violence, detainees on hunger strike and people who were injured before their arrest.

The authorities will also receive ICRC help to address overcrowding. For instance, to reduce the number of people who have to be detained, the ICRC will support efforts to promote the use of alternative sentences and to establish more structures similar to the pilot probation office in Sousse, Tunisia. At the same time, to ease the living conditions of the growing prison population, the authorities and the ICRC will upgrade infrastructure at prisons and several places of temporary detention. With regard to health care, direct ICRC assistance will be focused on two of the most

overcrowded prisons. Another benefit of these projects is that they will also equip the authorities with ideas to make system-wide reforms to penitentiary health services.

People separated by armed conflict/regional insecurity, detention or migration will reconnect through Movement family-links services. In Tunisia, families will receive news of relatives involved in armed conflict abroad through ICRC tracing services. State and other actors involved in clarifying the fate of people who are unaccounted for – including the Moroccan human rights council and the “Sahrawi Red Crescent”, who are working on missing-persons cases related to the 1975–91 Western Sahara conflict – will be encouraged to coordinate their efforts.

The ICRC-supported centre in Rabouni will continue providing physiotherapy services to Sahrawi amputees and other disabled people. To ensure that vulnerable people know of these services, the ICRC will conduct information campaigns and events marking the International Day of Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action. ICRC-trained community workers will ensure that people needing emergency attention receive care on-site or are stabilized until they reach appropriate facilities.

To facilitate the abovementioned activities, the ICRC will maintain/develop dialogue with the authorities, military/security force commands and other actors of influence on humanitarian principles and on supporting the Movement. For example, information sessions and other activities for military/security personnel – particularly operational units deployed within the country or abroad – will focus on increasing understanding of and respect for IHL and norms and standards applicable to maintaining public order.

With help from the ICRC, the Tunisian Red Crescent will prepare for emergencies, particularly in light of the influx of people fleeing instability in Libya and the upcoming presidential elections. Coordination between all actors will ensure that humanitarian needs are covered and duplication avoided.

HUMANITARIAN ISSUES AND ICRC OBJECTIVES

CIVILIANS

Tunisian families who lose contact with relatives reportedly involved in armed conflict elsewhere – for example, in Iraq or in the Syrian Arab Republic – and people fleeing instability in Libya may require help to maintain contact with their relatives. Families sometimes lose contact with relatives detained/interned abroad or who migrated. Migrants

who depart from Libya or Tunisia by boat are sometimes shipwrecked and rescued by the Tunisian coast guard.

The Moroccan human rights council and the “Sahrawi Red Crescent” are the primary actors responsible for clarifying the fate of thousands of people missing in relation to the 1975–91 Western Sahara conflict.

Objective

Family members dispersed by conflict, other situations of violence, detention or migration restore/maintain contact and, where appropriate, are reunited. Families are informed of the fate of relatives unaccounted for, including since the Western Sahara conflict.

Plan of action and indicators

Protection

Tunisia

Restoring family links

- ▶ provide financial, material and technical support, for example, through workshops abroad (see *Dakar*), to help the Tunisian Red Crescent provide family-links services, particularly during large influxes of people from Libya

With the National Society:

- ▶ through family-links services, help families dispersed by armed conflict, detention or migration restore/maintain contact and, where appropriate, reunite; in particular:
 - enable families to send RCMs and parcels, and make regular video calls/visits, to their relatives detained abroad, for example at the Parwan detention facility in Afghanistan (see *Afghanistan*)
 - provide phone services to migrants, including those rescued by the coast guard; assess their needs with a view to assisting State and other actors’ efforts in their behalf
- ▶ provide tracing services for families awaiting news of missing relatives; through information sessions and other means, encourage actors concerned to adopt good practices in handling human remains and to exchange information, thereby facilitating efforts to locate missing people
- ▶ help vulnerable foreigners in Tunisia return home/travel onward by providing them with ICRC travel documents or relaying official documents to them
- ▶ promote family-links services among vulnerable people in Tunisia, and among State actors and local organizations working in their behalf

1975–91 Western Sahara conflict

- ▶ to help actors working to clarify the fate of missing people – primarily the Moroccan national human rights council and the “Sahrawi Red Crescent” – re-examine cases of people reported as dead or missing:
 - acting as a neutral intermediary, facilitate exchange of information between them, and encourage the implementation of coordination mechanisms
 - provide them with technical advice

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Armed/security forces reportedly arrest and detain people in relation to local and regional insecurity or armed conflict abroad. The authorities, in particular the Interior and Justice Ministries, are pursuing efforts to reinforce existing protocols pertaining to the treatment of people held in places of temporary detention.

Overcrowding puts pressure on prison infrastructure and limited human resources. As a result, sometimes, newly recruited staff have to be put in service without adequate training, including in the proper treatment of detainees. The authorities are exploring ways to reduce overcrowding: the pilot probation office in Sousse sentences people to community service or conditional release; however, the planned expansion of some prisons has been delayed.

The penitentiary authorities run vocational training programmes at some prisons.

Objective

Detainees, particularly those at places of temporary detention, are afforded treatment and living conditions, including respect for their judicial guarantees, that meet internationally recognized standards.

Plan of action and indicators

Protection

- ▶ visit detainees at 9 prisons, 6 places of temporary detention and 2 minors’ centres in accordance with the ICRC’s standard procedures; pay special attention to people held for security reasons and vulnerable detainees, such as minors, foreigners and women; and document allegations of ill-treatment
- ▶ help improve treatment and living conditions for detainees by providing feedback to the authorities – including the Interior Ministry and security force commands – and working with them to:
 - ensure, through seminars and workshops, that penitentiary staff – notably, those working in jails and/or the newly recruited – and magistrates observe international norms on documentation and judicial/medical follow-up for victims of violence, including sexual violence, detainees on hunger strike and people who were injured before their arrest
 - add to health/medical staff’s knowledge of ethical issues associated with provision of care in detention, including through a seminar abroad (see *Jordan*)
 - update the curriculum of the national penitentiary training institution and ensure that trainers apply it; sponsor specialized training abroad for prison officials
 - coordinate the efforts of other organizations working for judiciary/penitentiary reform
- ▶ enable detainees to contact their relatives/consular representatives through family-links services
- ▶ to help reduce overcrowding:
 - facilitate the creation of probation structures in other judicial districts, by advising the authorities on granting the Sousse probation office a legal status and encouraging support from other actors
 - promote the use of alternative sentences among magistrates and penitentiary officials through a seminar and awareness campaigns
 - encourage ministry officials involved in justice sector reform to consider revising the penal code so that people receive lesser sentences for minor offences
- ▶ advise the authorities in adjusting eligibility conditions for vocational training and thereby benefit more detainees; monitor programmes supported in 2014

Assistance

- ▶ to improve health care for detainees, work with the authorities to:
 - facilitate coordination between the Health and Justice Ministries
 - monitor the application of national health policy in detention and detainees' access to health care
 - ensure proper human resource management, with a view to retaining experienced staff
 - develop contingency plans for disease outbreaks
 - at the Mornaguia and Borj El Amri prisons (8,000 detainees), provide staff with medical supplies and advice for improving information management, and sponsor advanced courses for 6 doctors; encourage the Health Ministry to supplement the training of health personnel at these prisons
- ▶ help the authorities improve living conditions for nearly 9,000 inmates, by:
 - conducting anti-scabies campaigns at the Mornaguia and Borj El Amri prisons and reactivating vector-control mechanisms there; and upgrading sanitation infrastructure in Borj El Amri
 - repairing water infrastructure at 1 prison (1,000 detainees), and upgrading family-visit areas at another
 - upgrading jails, notably at 2 police stations near Tunisia's border with Algeria
- ▶ encourage the authorities to create a technical committee to oversee the construction/expansion of prisons

- encouraging local authorities and other actors to provide and coordinate support
- ▶ assist 50 disabled patients in reintegrating into their communities
- ▶ promote physiotherapy services, through information campaigns and events marking the International Day of Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, and other means

WOUNDED AND SICK

Weapon contamination in Western Sahara still represents a danger to the local population. Sahrawi refugees have little access to emergency/specialized care; those disabled because of mine incidents or for other reasons seek physiotherapy services at a prosthetic/orthotic production workshop and physiotherapy centre housed in a hospital in Rabouni.

Objective

Disabled people in the Polisario Front-controlled part of Western Sahara and in refugee camps in south-western Algeria have access to physiotherapy services. In Tunisia and Western Sahara, patients needing specialized treatment receive an adequate standard of care.

Plan of action and indicators

Assistance

- ▶ so that people needing emergency attention receive on-site care or can be stabilized until they reach specialized facilities:
 - organize training sessions for Sahrawi community workers
 - in Tunisia, supplement the training of medical officers with technical advice on developing war-surgery skills

Physical rehabilitation

- ▶ help some 500 disabled Sahrawis regain a measure of mobility through free physiotherapy services at the Rabouni hospital and the provision of assistive devices; help maintain the quality of these services by:
 - training staff, including volunteers from the Sahrawi Health Ministry

ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

Tunisian military/security forces conduct operations in connection with unrest, regional insecurity and, to a lesser extent, migration. They also participate in peacekeeping missions abroad. Tunisia has ratified major IHL treaties, and IHL is taught at institutions of higher education. Sahrawi and Tunisian civil society organizations seek to influence the human rights policies in their respective contexts. In March 2014, the Polisario Front established the Sahrawi national human rights committee.

Religious circles and the media are knowledgeable about changes in the security situation and have far-reaching influence.

Objective

The authorities and their military/security forces understand and respect IHL and fundamental rules protecting people in situations of violence, and incorporate these in their decision-making processes. The media, academics and local organizations help foster awareness of humanitarian issues and IHL among these actors and the wider public, thus securing greater respect for human dignity. All actors understand the ICRC's mandate and support its work.

Plan of action and indicators

Prevention

- ▶ provide technical support for the Tunisian Red Crescent to boost its communication capacities

With the relevant National Society:

- ▶ raise awareness of and garner support for humanitarian principles and facilitate ICRC activities for vulnerable communities by organizing meetings, information sessions and other events for:
 - the authorities, to brief them on the ICRC's work and its priorities; in particular, discuss issues pertaining to human remains management and migration with the Tunisian Interior Ministry
 - community/religious leaders, Islamic scholars and the families of detainees/missing people; sponsor 1 scholar's attendance at a seminar on IHL and Islam (see *Niger*)
 - humanitarian/international organizations, including MINURSO and actors involved in clarifying the fate of people missing since the 1975–91 Western Sahara conflict; sponsor a Sahrawi humanitarian worker's attendance at a course on humanitarian action (see *Dakar*)
 - journalists, to encourage accurate reporting on humanitarian issues and to add to their knowledge of IHL provisions that protect them in armed conflict; sponsor journalists to attend workshops abroad
 - the public, to inform them of ICRC activities; to this end, make use of press releases, social media updates

and the ICRC's widely circulated Arabic-language quarterly, *Al-Insani*

- ▶ through information sessions and other means, foster support and respect for IHL and human rights principles, primarily among weapon bearers, namely:
 - military officers, including those in training; and officers from other countries who are training in Tunisia
 - medical officers (see *Wounded and sick*), briefing them on the issues covered by the Health Care in Danger project
 - peacekeepers, discussing in particular international norms applicable to their duties and ICRC operations in their place of deployment
 - security forces, highlighting international norms applicable to the use of force during arrest
 - senior officers, through courses abroad, including one on the humanitarian consequences of the use of anti-vehicle mines (see *Dakar*)
- ▶ work with the Tunisian authorities to ratify/implement IHL treaties and improve penitentiary policies, in particular by helping:
 - the national IHL committee add to its members' knowledge of IHL, through courses abroad, for instance (see *Lebanon*)
 - the Interior Ministry and security force commanders further elaborate existing protocols for the treatment of detainees in jails, including through study visits and seminars
 - the Interior and Justice Ministries promote the use of alternative sentences
- ▶ support academic interest in IHL, particularly among students and teachers of law, through workshops, courses, and moot court competitions (see also *Niger*)

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Tunisian Red Crescent is the primary humanitarian actor providing emergency relief to vulnerable people in Tunisia. For example, it coordinates humanitarian assistance for people fleeing instability in Libya.

The "Sahrawi Red Crescent" is involved in clarifying the fate of people who went missing in relation to the Western Sahara conflict, and in promoting safe practices among communities in mine/ERW-contaminated areas.

Objective

The Tunisian National Society has a strong legal basis for independent action and carries out its core activities effectively. The activities of all Movement components are coordinated.

Plan of action and indicators

Cooperation

- ▶ provide funds, training, materials and expertise to help the Tunisian National Society:
 - conduct family-links activities (see *Civilians*) and respond to emergencies in line with the Safer Access Framework, particularly in light of the upcoming presidential elections and the influx of people from Libya
 - promote humanitarian principles and the Movement
 - strengthen its statutes and management
- ▶ help coordinate Movement activities in the region to identify unmet needs and maximize impact