



# israel, the occupied and autonomous territories

The ICRC has been present in Israel and the occupied and autonomous territories since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. It strives to ensure respect for IHL, in particular its provisions relative to the protection of civilians living under occupation. It monitors the treatment and living conditions of detainees held by the Israeli and Palestinian authorities and provides assistance to the Palestinian population. As the lead agency for the Movement in this context, the ICRC coordinates the work of its Movement partners and supports the activities of the Palestine Red Crescent Society and the Magen David Adom.

## EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	17,824
Assistance	37,436
Prevention	3,035
Cooperation with National Societies	3,101
General	-

► **61,396**

of which: Overheads 3,722

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	86%
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## PERSONNEL

82 expatriates
236 national staff (daily workers not included)

## KEY POINTS

### In 2007, the ICRC:

- actively sought compliance by Israel with its obligations under IHL towards the Palestinian population living under its occupation, as well as respect by Palestinian security forces and groups for civilians and medical facilities
- visited 21,825 Palestinian detainees held in Israel and 2,851 people detained by the Palestinian authorities to assess their treatment and living conditions
- enabled 7,273 Palestinian detainees held in Israel to receive visits from family members
- stepped up its emergency response in the Palestinian territories, in particular in the Gaza Strip, to ensure the functioning of medical facilities and access to safe water, thus reducing public health risks for the population
- assisted impoverished communities in Gaza and the West Bank through cash-for-work and livelihood-support projects, and distributed food and household essentials to thousands of particularly vulnerable families
- supported the long-awaited establishment of a Palestine Red Crescent Society ambulance service in East Jerusalem

## CONTEXT

The year 2007 saw two major developments in Israel and the Palestinian territories: the takeover by Hamas of the Gaza Strip in June, leading to a *de facto* split from the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank; and the tentative relaunching of peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, after a six-year hiatus.

Clashes between rival Palestinian groups came to a head in June when Hamas forces seized control of the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian unity government in Ramallah was immediately disbanded and an emergency caretaker government installed, after which the international boycott imposed on the PA since January 2006 was lifted and Israel resumed transfers of tax and revenue funds to the PA.

Meanwhile, the boycott of the Gaza Strip remained in force. Frequent rocket and mortar fire from Gaza on nearby Israeli towns continued to cause casualties and material damage. Retaliatory Israeli air strikes and ground incursions into Gaza also resulted in loss of life and material damage. Israel tightened its closure of Gaza's borders. By the end of 2007, Gaza's economy had ground to a near halt, while basic commodities, including fuel, had become increasingly scarce and vital infrastructure was on the verge of collapse.

In the West Bank, people's everyday lives and livelihoods continued to be constrained by frequent military incursions, arrests, mobility restrictions and the resulting economic stagnation.

In mid-2007, tension and rhetoric ran high between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, with both armies mobilizing along the demarcation line between the occupied Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic. On 6 September, Israel launched air strikes against alleged nuclear targets in the northern part of the Syrian Arab Republic, after which tensions seemed to de-escalate.

US-led efforts to revive the peace process culminated in an international conference in Annapolis, United States, in November. The Israeli and Palestinian delegations committed to launching bilateral talks aimed at the declaration of a Palestinian State by the end of 2008.

An international donor conference held in Paris, France, in December pledged an unprecedented USD 7.4 billion to the PA over the following three years.

The number of irregular migrants crossing into Israel from Sinai, Egypt, rose substantially during the year.

## MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

	Total		Total	Women	Children	
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>			<b>CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM</b>			
Detainees visited <sup>1</sup>	24,676	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>				
Detainees visited and monitored individually	10,220	Food	Beneficiaries	28,651	26%	47%
		Essential household items	Beneficiaries	11,139	26%	47%
	of whom females	Agricultural inputs and micro-economic initiatives	Beneficiaries	35,468	26%	47%
	of whom minors	Water, sanitation and habitat projects	Beneficiaries	531,050	25%	43%
Number of visits carried out	713	<b>WOUNDED AND SICK</b>				
Number of places of detention visited	142	Hospitals supported	Structures	29		
<b>RESTORING FAMILY LINKS</b>		Admissions	Patients	218,253		
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>		Operations	Operations performed	61,387		
RCMs collected	7,747	<i>Physical rehabilitation</i>				
RCMs distributed	7,341	Patients receiving services	Patients	50	6	32
People reunited with their families	4	Prostheses delivered	Units	9	2	2
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>		Orthoses delivered	Units	27	3	23
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	6					
	of whom females					
Tracing cases closed positively (persons located)	6					
Tracing cases still being handled at 31 December 2007 (people)	15					
	of which for females					
<b>DOCUMENTS ISSUED</b>						
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	15,862					

1. All detainees known through the authorities' notifications and followed up by the ICRC

## ICRC ACTION

The ICRC repeatedly reminded Israel of its obligations under IHL towards the Palestinian population living under its occupation. It also stepped up representations to the Palestinian authorities and the Palestinian security forces, in particular with regard to respect for civilians and medical facilities and personnel.

Palestinians suffering the worst effects of the occupation benefited from ICRC distributions of food and household essentials, as well as cash-for-work, livelihood-support and income-generating projects.

The cash-strapped Palestinian health sector received increased ICRC support, as did the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) of the Palestine Red Crescent Society. Daily ICRC coordination with the Israeli authorities facilitated the population's access to medical facilities and that of medical service providers to the sick and the wounded. An emergency stock of first-aid supplies was established in Gaza for use in stabilizing the wounded before their transfer to hospital. From June onwards, emergency assistance was stepped up to Gaza hospitals, which were running short of vital drugs, disposables, and other materials and equipment as a result of the closure of the Gaza Strip. Repeated representations were made to the Israeli authorities to let the necessary goods into the Strip and to allow patients in need of urgent treatment not available in Gaza to cross into and/or through Israeli territory to obtain it elsewhere.

To prevent a further deterioration of basic services in the Gaza Strip, water, wastewater and hospital infrastructure damaged during hostilities was repaired and four water and sewage projects were implemented. Continuous support was given to the Palestinian water authorities to improve access to safe water in the West Bank, and 19 projects to provide water infrastructure in poorly served West Bank communities were completed or under way.

ICRC delegates conducted regular visits to Palestinian detainees held by Israel to monitor their treatment and living conditions and to enable

them to exchange news with and receive visits from family members. From June 2007, however, families from Gaza were prevented by the Israeli authorities from visiting relatives detained in Israel.

Regular visits were also carried out by the ICRC to hundreds of detainees held by the PA, and written reports with the findings and recommendations were submitted systematically to the relevant authorities. After the Hamas takeover in Gaza, the ICRC gained immediate access to people detained by the new *de facto* authorities in Gaza. Despite concerted efforts to gain access to the three Israeli soldiers captured in June and July 2006, authorization to visit them had not been obtained by year-end.

The ICRC pursued its efforts to clarify the fate of people still unaccounted for from past conflicts in the region. In the occupied Golan, it renewed efforts to persuade the Israeli authorities to allow visits between separated family members – blocked since 1992 – to resume.

## CIVILIANS

### Protecting the civilian population living under occupation

Representations were made to the Israeli authorities regarding, in particular, mobility restrictions, the maintenance and expansion of settlements, settler violence against Palestinians, the West Bank barrier, the destruction or confiscation of Palestinian property, and the conduct of Israeli military operations. The case of Hebron was taken up to illustrate how mobility restrictions had contributed to the city's economic decline. The dialogue with the Israeli authorities also focused on East Jerusalem, where Palestinians suffered problems linked to settlements, the barrier or identity (ID) cards.

Palestinian farmers' access to their land located on the Israeli side of the West Bank barrier improved slightly. Access of West Bank ID holders to the Jordan valley was finally granted at the beginning of May, albeit only for pedestrians.

- ▶ 35 written and over 3,000 oral representations made to the Israeli authorities

Representations were made to the PA, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups regarding violence against Israeli civilians and attacks on alleged collaborators or members of rival Palestinian factions.

- ▶ 84 incidents documented and 10 oral representations made to Palestinian militant groups or to the Palestinian security services

### Economic security

Vulnerable groups in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where living conditions failed to improve following the lifting of the financial boycott of the PA, benefited from various forms of economic security assistance.

ICRC livelihood-support programmes were increasingly hampered by Israel's refusal to allow the importation of any construction, mechanical or agricultural materials into the Gaza Strip.

- ▶ 1,187 people (185 households) whose homes were destroyed or damaged received emergency shelter, food and household essentials
- ▶ 15,172 people (2,444 households) affected by military operations or other emergencies received ad hoc food assistance and 9,676 people (1,983 households) received other basic assistance
- ▶ some 12,292 people (1,866 households) in Hebron Old City received monthly food parcels and quarterly distributions of hygiene items
- ▶ impoverished communities benefited from cash-for-work projects: 25,615 people (4,237 households) benefited from the allocation of 83,840 man-days of work to help build/rehabilitate community infrastructure; 6,173 others (1,000 households) benefited from micro-economic projects (provision of livestock, professional tools and training)
- ▶ in Gaza, 460 vulnerable farming households (3,680 individuals) had their livelihoods improved through the rehabilitation of agricultural land and related infrastructure

### Access to safe water

- ▶ 531,050 people benefited from water/sanitation projects, including:
  - 150,000 people in Khan Yunis (Gaza) from the rehabilitation of the sewage installations
  - 20,000 people in Qalqilia (Gaza) and 12,000 in Al Zahra (Gaza) from work on the water supply installations
  - 13,000 people in Taqoa (West Bank) from the installation of a new water tank
  - patients of 3 Gaza hospitals from the rehabilitation of the hospitals' water facilities

During military operations in Gaza, municipal workers were able to carry out emergency repairs to water and sewage facilities thanks to ICRC escorts.

### Restoring family links

Travel to the Syrian Arab Republic by people living in the occupied Golan, as well as movements within and between locations in the Palestinian territories, remained subject to Israeli restrictions.

- ▶ more than 800 Druze students and clerics from the occupied Golan travelled under ICRC auspices between the occupied Golan and Damascus for study or religious purposes

- ▶ 4,264 RCMs collected from and 2,723 RCMs distributed to civilians, including families in the occupied Golan and Lebanese nationals in Israel
- ▶ new tracing requests registered for 6 people (including 2 females); 6 people located; 15 people (including 3 females) still being sought
- ▶ 1 deaf and 3 visually impaired West Bank students and 1 blind woman regularly visited family members in Gaza under ICRC auspices
- ▶ 4 children reunited with their families
- ▶ 131 official documents relayed between family members in the occupied Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic and between Lebanese nationals in Israel and their families in Lebanon
- ▶ 299 various certificates issued to families

Regular representations were made to the Israeli authorities on behalf of 157 Palestinian families awaiting the return of the remains of deceased relatives.

### Clarifying the fate of the missing

Work to clarify the fate of five Israelis missing from past conflicts in the region continued. Regular discussions were also held with the Israeli authorities on the question of repatriating the remains of Lebanese and other Arab combatants killed in action by Israeli forces.

- ▶ the remains of 3 Lebanese civilians repatriated to Lebanon; the remains of 1 Israeli citizen repatriated from Lebanon to Israel

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Detainees held in Israeli prisons, interrogation centres, provisional detention centres and police stations continued to receive regular visits from ICRC delegates, as well as family visits organized by the ICRC. Delegates assessed the treatment and living conditions of the detainees and their access to medical care. Reports of the visits, including recommendations for corrective action when necessary, were systematically submitted to the relevant Israeli authorities.

The number of detainees decreased slightly compared with 2006, reaching 11,258 by year-end. However the number of administrative detainees, as well as foreign detainees from countries with no diplomatic relations with Israel, increased. Foreign detainees received visits from relatives living in Israel, with the support of the Magen David Adom.

Concerted efforts to gain access to the three Israeli soldiers captured in June and July 2006 were to no avail. Their families were kept informed of any developments.

Five Lebanese detainees captured during the 2006 conflict – one of whom was repatriated in October – were regularly visited by the ICRC.

- ▶ 21,825 detainees visited, of whom 9,269 monitored individually (including 124 females and 777 minors) and 5,394 newly registered (including 47 females and 553 minors), during 419 visits to 43 places of detention
- ▶ 3,420 RCMs collected from and 4,589 RCMs distributed to detainees and 3,132 phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative

- 7,273 detainees received family visits through the organization of transport for 236,119 family members in a total of 3,480 trips to 27 Israeli places of detention
- 2,883 documents, of which 1,962 power of attorney documents, and 817 sets of personal belongings relayed between Palestinian detainees and their families
- 15,709 detention certificates issued to former detainees or their families
- 2,939 detainees received regular allowances of 100 shekels
- 6,777 sets of clothes and 524 medical items provided to detainees, in particular foreign detainees

Detainees held by the PA and by the new *de facto* authorities in Gaza were visited regularly. Palestinian authorities at all levels were contacted on several occasions regarding issues related to detainee treatment and respect for judicial guarantees. Written representations on the treatment and living conditions of detainees were submitted to the arresting and detaining authorities concerned, as well as a summary report on the treatment of people held by the Palestinian security services.

Representatives of the international community were mobilized in this regard, as well as on the issue of penal reform.

- 2,851 detainees visited, of whom 951 monitored individually (including 14 females and 37 minors) and 722 newly registered (including 9 females and 31 minors), during 294 visits to 99 places of detention
- 63 RCMs collected from and 4 RCMs distributed to detainees and 350 phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative
- 5 documents relayed between Palestinian detainees and their families
- 153 detention certificates issued to former detainees or their families
- 15 senior Palestinian security officers in Ramallah briefed on ICRC activities for detainees
- detainees received monthly distributions of hygiene kits, as well as ad hoc medical assistance and recreational and educational materials

## WOUNDED AND SICK

During the Palestinian health workers' strike from mid-February to end-May, triggered by the non-payment of salaries, all primary health care centres were closed and hospital services limited admissions to acute emergency cases. The second half of 2007 saw a resumption of hospital activities.

In response to rising needs, Ministry of Health facilities and the Palestinian Red Crescent's EMS received increased assistance, and the relevant authorities and international stakeholders were urged to provide the funding needed to ensure the availability of health services for the wounded and the sick. The Israeli authorities were urged to allow patients requiring treatment unavailable in Gaza and the West Bank to be evacuated for treatment elsewhere. From June, the Gaza public hospitals received additional support (food, laundry products, fuel, equipment, drugs and disposables) so that they could continue to function.

An assessment of West Bank and Gaza hospitals confirmed that essential equipment was either not working or in poor working order. A plan of action was prepared to provide the 18 hospitals surveyed with essential equipment in 2008.

- Ministry of Health central medical stores in Gaza and the West Bank received approximately 370 tonnes of drugs and consumables to supply 18 public hospitals in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as medical and nursing journals for medical professionals
- first-aid supplies to stabilize the wounded stockpiled and distributed as necessary in Gaza
- 181 visits made to 10 hospitals in the West Bank and 153 visits to 8 hospitals in Gaza to monitor access by patients and staff, the level of available medical supplies, the use of ICRC-donated drugs and consumables, and the impact of the financial crisis on essential hospital activities
- respect for medical personnel, transport and facilities promoted in the West Bank, including among members of armed groups
- the Palestinian Red Crescent EMS, which transported some 80,000 patients in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, received funds to cover operating costs, the ambulance fleet, the education centre and effective management practices
- 3 EMS working groups held to support the improved coordination, efficiency and effectiveness of the main ambulance service providers; regular meetings held with the main actors to advocate for improved coordination of ambulance services between the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem
- Magen David Adom emergency services received ongoing ICRC training and financial support

In the 25 ICRC-supported hospitals that provided data:

- 218,253 patients admitted: of whom 4,490 weapon-wounded, 57,101 other surgical cases, and 75,982 medical and 80,680 gynaecological/obstetric patients
- 61,387 surgical operations performed
- 502,569 outpatients given consultations, including 417,586 attending surgical or medical consultations and 84,983 attending gynaecological/obstetric consultations

In response to the large number of above-knee amputees from the June clashes in Gaza, an ICRC physical rehabilitation project was initiated in the Artificial Limb and Polio Centre in Gaza in November.

## AUTHORITIES

Israel was again urged on several occasions to ensure that the basic needs of the civilian population in the occupied territories were met, in accordance with its obligations under IHL as the occupying power. It was also encouraged to ratify the 1977 Additional Protocols.

- a Palestinian and an Israeli lawyer participated in an IHL session in Warsaw, Poland
- Palestinian officials attended various regional seminars on IHL

## ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

- various Israeli armed and security services, including operational units of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the West Bank and the Israeli Prison Service, attended 27 sessions on the ICRC and IHL
- the IDF International Law Department and the IDF legal adviser's office in the West Bank and the ICRC regularly shared views on IHL issues

- ▶ members of the Palestinian security services increased their knowledge of IHL during 18 ICRC-organized seminars
- ▶ Palestinian militants from various factions attended sessions on IHL

## CIVIL SOCIETY

### Media and civil society

Regular information was provided to the media, and seminars on IHL and the ICRC for Israeli and Palestinian journalists contributed to better media coverage of the ICRC's main concerns and activities in the Israeli-Palestinian context. The ICRC's public report *Dignity Denied*, issued in December and describing the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, drew the attention of stakeholders and the public to the plight of the Palestinian population.

- ▶ Palestinian religious leaders across the territories and members of Islamic charities in Gaza attended 29 seminars on IHL and the ICRC
- ▶ influential figures from Palestinian civil society attended 51 dissemination sessions aimed at reinforcing acceptance of and respect for ICRC field activities
- ▶ 17 sessions on the ICRC and IHL organized for Palestinian NGOs and 2 such sessions organized for Israeli NGOs

### Schools and universities

Some 270 schools in Gaza and the West Bank continued to teach the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme. New Palestinian Ministry of Education supervisors at national and regional level attended workshops on the subject.

Students and staff of the 6 main Palestinian universities in the West Bank and Gaza and Israeli students of international law attended IHL dissemination sessions.

In cooperation with Israeli academic circles, the ICRC organized an IHL guest lecture series, an international conference on the legal discourse on occupation in the Israeli-Palestinian context held in June, and a national IHL competition held at year-end.

## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The ICRC continued to lend its support to the implementation of the operational agreement between the Magen David Adom and the Palestinian Red Crescent concluded in November 2005, as well as to independent monitoring of the latter. The 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in November adopted a resolution calling for rapid and full implementation of the agreement and for increased monitoring of progress made in this regard. The Magen David Adom's advocacy efforts for better humanitarian access of Palestinian Red Crescent ambulances culminated in the long-awaited establishment of a Palestinian Red Crescent ambulance service in East Jerusalem.

During the second half of the year, the ICRC agreed to a reallocation of resources to support Palestinian Red Crescent efforts to replace the annual financial subsidy from the PA, suspended in 2006 owing to the PA's own financial crisis.

The Palestinian Red Crescent continued to help the ICRC implement various programmes benefiting the Palestinian population (see *Civilians*).

With ICRC support, the Palestinian Red Crescent:

- ▶ ran its EMS (see *Wounded and sick*)
- ▶ organized an Advanced Medical Post disaster drill in Bethlehem and the deployment of an Emergency Response Unit Mobile Field Hospital in Nablus, involving a total of 185 participants from the Palestinian Ministry of Health, Civil Defence and Military Medical Services
- ▶ held 1 tracing workshop for 40 staff and volunteers, 19 IHL training seminars for over 650 participants, and 1 five-day train-the-trainer workshop on dissemination for 17 participants
- ▶ produced 15 publications

Partner National Societies supported the Palestinian Red Crescent, in accordance with agreements with the ICRC and an operational alliance established by the International Federation. Monthly Movement meetings, chaired by the ICRC, contributed to coordinated action under a coherent overall security framework. Logistical support was provided to enable other components of the Movement to deliver and distribute aid in the West Bank and Gaza.

Development of the Magen David Adom's community-based disaster response and restoring family links capacities continued. As part of this process, the Magen David Adom participated in the organization of a pilot family visits programme for a small number of foreign detainees held in Israeli places of detention.

With ICRC support, the Magen David Adom:

- ▶ ran its emergency services (see *Wounded and sick*)
- ▶ organized a second five-day National Disaster Response Team training course, complementing participation in Movement training in logistics, water and sanitation, and information technology
- ▶ ran youth summer camps and volunteer and technical exchanges with sister National Societies, promoting the integration of the Magen David Adom into the wider Movement
- ▶ operated tracing services, which received 388 enquiries from within Israel and through the worldwide tracing network, and, in conjunction with the International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen, Germany, handled 612 enquiries from Israeli citizens seeking certification of internment (see *International Tracing Service*)