



ethiopia

The ICRC has been continuously present in Ethiopia since 1977. Its priority is to protect and assist people detained, displaced or otherwise affected by the 1998–2000 international armed conflict with Eritrea or by other armed conflicts, often compounded by natural disasters. The ICRC provides emergency aid, but also implements medium-term assistance projects to preserve the livelihoods of vulnerable communities affected by past conflict, and supports physical rehabilitation services. It visits detainees, restores family links, particularly for relatives separated by the closed Eritrea-Ethiopia border, promotes IHL and supports the Ethiopian Red Cross Society.

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	2,140
Assistance	3,862
Prevention	1,818
Cooperation with National Societies	692
General	-

► **8,512**

of which: Overheads 519

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	85%
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PERSONNEL

25	expatriates
141	national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2009, the ICRC:

- ▶ despite persistent efforts, was unable to convince the authorities to lift restrictions on ICRC access to the Somali Regional State and to security detainees held in federally run prisons
- ▶ helped improve services for disabled people through substantial support to 7 physical rehabilitation centres and through advocacy leading to increased government resources for staff training
- ▶ enabled thousands of relatives separated by the sealed Ethiopia-Eritrea border to communicate via the family-links service
- ▶ assisted the Ethiopian Red Cross Society in boosting its capacities by partnering it in distributing aid to 31,290 IDPs and in promoting the Movement among political and community leaders
- ▶ improved water and sanitation facilities for 85,000 villagers in Afar and Tigray
- ▶ worked with the police to standardize the force's teaching of international human rights norms

CONTEXT

Against a backdrop of rising political tensions ahead of the May 2010 elections, the Ethiopian government grappled with widespread food shortages, and its troops were reportedly still fighting an armed group in the Somali Regional State (SRS).

The armed forces and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) both claimed victories as their non-international armed conflict reportedly dragged on in the SRS. With no independent observers in the region, it was impossible to have a clear picture of the situation. Fighting had escalated from April 2007 after the ONLF killed 74 workers at a Chinese oil installation. The SRS and other regions were also prone to sporadic low-intensity violence, usually fuelled by a mix of ethnic and political grievances.

Amid pre-election tensions, the government refuted allegations by opposition parties that large numbers of their supporters were being detained. In December, 43 people arrested in May for allegedly plotting to overthrow the government were tried, with five sentenced to death, including the leader of the main opposition party in the 2005 elections, and the rest receiving sentences of 10 years to life.

A prolonged drought affecting most of East Africa, combined with Ethiopia's widespread chronic poverty, led the government and UN to issue joint appeals to feed up to 6.2 million people. Food shortages were aggravated by escalating commodity prices linked to the global economic crisis.

On the international front, Ethiopia announced in January that it had withdrawn its troops from Somalia after a two-year military intervention in support of Somalia's transitional federal government against armed groups. To the north, tensions persisted with neighbouring Eritrea, as no progress was made in physically demarcating their shared border (see *Eritrea*).

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

	Total		Total	Women	Children
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)			
Detainees visited	7,214	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>			
Detainees visited and monitored individually	130	Essential household items	<i>Beneficiaries</i>	31,290	20%
	<i>of whom women</i>		<i>of whom IDPs</i>	31,290	
	<i>of whom minors</i>	Water and habitat activities	<i>Beneficiaries</i>	85,000	25%
Number of visits carried out	12	PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM			
Number of places of detention visited	6	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>			
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS		Essential household items	<i>Beneficiaries</i>	6,691	
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>		Water and habitat activities	<i>Beneficiaries</i>	4,930	
RCMs collected	8,030	WOUNDED AND SICK			
RCMs distributed	6,113	<i>Physical rehabilitation</i>			
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>		Patients receiving services	<i>Patients</i>	9,271	2,084
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	80	Prostheses delivered	<i>Units</i>	1,852	254
	<i>of whom women</i>	Orthoses delivered	<i>Units</i>	2,620	649
	<i>of whom minors at the time of disappearance</i>				1,066
Tracing cases closed positively (persons located)	131				
Tracing cases still being handled at 31 December 2009 (people)	325				
	<i>of whom women</i>				
	<i>of whom minors at the time of disappearance</i>				
Unaccompanied minors (UAMs) and separated children (SCs), including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers					
UAMs/SCs newly registered by the ICRC/National Society	124				
	<i>of whom girls</i>				
DOCUMENTS ISSUED					
People to whom travel documents were issued	131				
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	85				

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC again faced significant restrictions in Ethiopia in carrying out its mandate. The organization was not allowed to resume work in the conflict-affected SRS, despite persistent efforts to engage high-level authorities in a dialogue on the ICRC's mandate and neutral and independent stance. The ICRC had been expelled from the SRS in July 2007, accused of supporting armed groups, which it firmly denied. At year-end, the organization was still awaiting the promised clarification of the accusation. The ICRC was also unable to regain access to federally run prisons, which held most people detained for reasons of State security. Visits to those facilities had been denied in stages between 2004 and 2007.

Given the restrictions, most assistance and protection activities were concentrated in Afar and Tigray, the regions worst hit by the 1998–2000 international armed conflict with Eritrea and the ongoing border tensions. The ICRC visited detainees of Eritrean origin and monitored general conditions in regionally run detention centres there, according to its standard working procedures. The authorities engaged in a confidential and constructive dialogue with the ICRC on its findings, with some jails making the recommended improvements. Delegates also worked with rural communities to upgrade water and sanitation infrastructure.

In March, the Eritrean authorities withdrew authorization for the ICRC to assist in the voluntary repatriation of civilians across the sealed Eritrea-Ethiopia border, something it had done since the war ended in 2000 (see *Eritrea*). Relatives on opposite sides of the border could still communicate through the family-links

service, run by the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, the Red Cross Society of Eritrea and the ICRC. Delegates also recontacted families whose relatives were still reportedly missing in connection with the past Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict to explore ways of helping them with any legal, economic or psychological problems they faced.

The ICRC expanded its longstanding initiative to help boost the quality and availability of services for physically disabled people in a sustainable manner. Seven physical rehabilitation centres were supported (one more than in 2008), and the authorities, with ICRC input, began standardizing management procedures and allocated more resources to training.

To build up grassroots support for IHL and the Movement, the ICRC gave presentations, often together with the Ethiopian Red Cross, to more than 1,000 local government officials and community leaders. With ICRC input, the police also made progress in improving training in international human rights norms and the authorities introduced IHL in a new standardized public international law degree.

Besides jointly running the family-links service and, new in 2009, promoting IHL together, the Ethiopian Red Cross regularly worked alongside the ICRC to deliver aid to people displaced by ethnic clashes. The National Society was an invaluable partner and at the same time gained more experience in those fields. To maximize the impact of aid efforts, the ICRC facilitated coordination of Movement activities and coordinated its operations with the relevant UN agencies and other humanitarian actors in the field.

CIVILIANS

The ICRC remained concerned by reports of alleged IHL violations committed in the SRS. Despite persistent efforts, however, the organization was not allowed to resume work in the region (see *ICRC action and results*), so had no first-hand knowledge of the situation there.

Elsewhere, delegates monitored the effects of violence, usually ethnic clashes, on the population, as well as the circumstances of Somalis and people of Eritrean origin living in Ethiopia. The authorities were informed of any concerns, in accordance with humanitarian principles and IHL.

IDPs set up temporary homes

As part of Ethiopian Red Cross/ICRC relief operations, people driven from their villages by tribal clashes in Oromia and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State received basic shelter and household items to set up makeshift homes. National Society personnel were an invaluable aid to the ICRC and at the same time gained more experience in assessing needs and organizing aid distributions. The ICRC provided the bulk of the goods.

- 31,290 IDPs (6,085 households) received essential household items

Northern border communities have clean water

Reflecting conditions countrywide, border communities in northern Afar and Tigray faced health risks because of inadequate water and sanitation facilities. Many villagers relied for their water on rivers that dried up after the rainy season or on wells which were uncovered, and therefore unsafe, and were a six-hour walk away.

In both Afar and Tigray, the water boards, communities and the ICRC pooled resources to construct new wells and repair hand pumps. Having clean water nearby reduced health risks, gave villagers time for other productive activities and saved them money otherwise spent on medical treatment for water-borne diseases. Twelve communities were also taught how to assess and improve water, sanitation and hygiene, using the WHO-developed Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) guidelines. They then built new latrines and liquid- and solid-waste disposal pits, with the ICRC providing the materials.

- 85,000 people benefited from water and sanitation projects, including:
 - 55,000 people from the repair of 104 hand pumps
 - 27,000 people from hygiene training and the provision of 900 slabs to build latrines
 - 3,500 people from the construction of 2 hand-dug wells and the drilling of 6 boreholes

Families dispersed by conflict stay in touch

Thousands of people uprooted by conflict communicated with relatives through the family-links service run by the Ethiopian Red Cross and the ICRC. Most were sending news through RCMs to family on the other side of the sealed Ethiopia-Eritrea border. In March, Eritrea withdrew authorization for the ICRC to assist in the voluntary repatriation of civilians across that border (see *Eritrea*). People in Eritrea who returned home to Ethiopia, and vice versa, could still, however, have key documents, usually education certificates, relayed across the border by the ICRC to help them apply for jobs or further studies.

Families awaiting information about relatives reportedly missing in relation to the 1998–2000 war were recontacted by the ICRC to determine what assistance they needed with economic, legal and psychological problems, and the ICRC's role in providing it.

- 7,992 RCMs collected from and 6,100 RCMs distributed to civilians, including 395 from and 188 to unaccompanied/separated children
- new tracing requests registered for 80 people (21 women; 36 minors at the time of disappearance); 177 people located, including 46 for whom tracing requests had been registered by another delegation; 325 people (49 women; 49 minors at the time of disappearance) still being sought
- 1 person registered by another delegation reunited with family
- 124 unaccompanied/separated children registered
- 131 people issued with an ICRC travel document
- 23 official documents relayed from Ethiopia and 60 from Eritrea across the border

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

People continued to be detained in Ethiopia for reasons of State security. Those detainees were not, however, visited by ICRC delegates because the government had denied the organization access to the SRS and to federally run prisons, where most security detainees were held (see *ICRC action and results*). Families who had previously asked the ICRC to trace relatives allegedly detained in connection with State security were informed that the delegation could not follow up the cases.

Given the access restrictions, the ICRC focused on visiting detainees of Eritrean origin and monitoring general conditions in regionally run detention centres in Afar and Tigray, according to the organization's standard working procedures. The authorities and the ICRC established a constructive and confidential dialogue on the findings, with some jails making the recommended improvements.

Inmates could contact their families through RCMs and, where necessary, received hygiene and recreational items to contribute to their general health and welfare. In two prisons, detainees faced fewer health risks after the ICRC stepped in and helped the authorities improve water and sanitation facilities.

- 7,214 detainees visited, of whom 130 monitored individually (3 women; 2 minors) and 88 newly registered (3 women; 2 minors), during 12 visits to 6 places of detention
- 38 RCMs collected from and 13 RCMs distributed to detainees
- 85 detention certificates issued to former detainees or their families
- 4,930 detainees benefited from water and sanitation projects
- 6,691 detainees received hygiene and recreational items

WOUNDED AND SICK

There were too few physical rehabilitation centres and skilled staff in Ethiopia to meet demand, and even the existing services for physically disabled people were not well publicized.

To help provide quality care, seven prosthetic/orthotic centres (one more than in 2008) received ICRC support (see map for locations of centres). The physical rehabilitation centre in

Dire Dawa was renovated and added to the programme because it was the only one serving all of Afar, the SRS and south-east Oromia. All centres received materials and components to produce artificial limbs and other appliances. Four had ICRC specialists on staff full time, while the other three received supervisory visits. More than 3,000 patients not living locally had their transport and food costs paid for by the ICRC during their treatment. The number of appliances produced was 4% more than in 2008, but below the annual target, mainly because of power cuts. The cuts also increased costs because patients had to stay longer to complete their treatment.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and its regional offices backed a number of ICRC initiatives designed to improve the quality and availability of physical rehabilitation services in a sustainable way. At a two-day ICRC workshop, managers of the ICRC-supported centres and relevant regional officials and NGO representatives drew up standardized job descriptions for key posts and fine-tuned the centres' five-year plans of action and budgets agreed at the 2008 workshop. At another workshop, centre administrators were trained in computer software that allowed them to order and track stock more efficiently. In a year-end breakthrough, the federal authorities also agreed to commit resources to an ICRC-taught, internationally recognized diploma course for prosthetic/orthotic technicians, starting in early 2010. In ICRC training initiatives in 2009, a total of 18 technicians boosted their skills during a three-week course on upper-limb prostheses and a two-week course on wheelchair construction.

- ▶ 9,271 patients (including 2,084 women and 1,832 children) received services at 7 ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centres
- ▶ 1,017 new patients (including 148 women and 70 children) fitted with prostheses and 1,553 (including 382 women and 602 children) fitted with orthoses
- ▶ 1,852 prostheses (including 254 for women and 113 for children; 461 for mine victims), 2,620 orthoses (including 649 for women and 1,066 for children; 15 for mine victims), 2,842 crutches and 773 wheelchairs delivered

AUTHORITIES

The authorities' commitment to IHL and neutral and independent humanitarian action was crucial in ensuring that civilians were spared in time of armed conflict.

To build up grassroots support for humanitarian principles and the Movement, some 520 regional government officials, most of them based in violence-prone areas, took part in presentations given by the Ethiopian Red Cross and the ICRC.

At the national level, the upcoming elections and other pressing issues took precedence over IHL implementation, although the Ethiopian government did announce in April that it had fulfilled its obligation under the Mine Ban Convention to destroy stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines. The Foreign Affairs Ministry also repeated to the ICRC its intention to revive the national IHL committee to assist the government in ratifying international treaties and drafting the relevant domestic laws.

Discussions between the authorities and the ICRC focused mainly on the restrictions the organization faced in Ethiopia, which were still in place at year-end (see *ICRC action and results*).

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) had suspended IHL training initiatives with the ICRC in 2007 after the organization's expulsion from the SRS. The ENDF subsequently announced that it had integrated IHL into military training curricula. The ICRC stood ready to assist with training, and at the request of the ENDF's legal department, organized a two-day course for 36 military legal advisers on their role in counselling commanders on the application of IHL.

The police, with ICRC input, forged ahead with plans to standardize the teaching of international human rights norms and IHL principles at the Police University College and regional training centres. During two two-day workshops, 55 college and regional instructors analysed progress made since last year's evaluation of the curricula and teaching of those subjects and agreed to focus in 2010 on training instructors. The centres also received teaching materials. In parallel, around 550 police personnel stationed across Ethiopia were briefed during two-day sessions on international human rights norms and IHL principles.

CIVIL SOCIETY

For the Movement to carry out its activities effectively, it needed public support.

The national media responded to a number of ICRC initiatives to encourage reporting on issues from a humanitarian perspective. For example, 20 media representatives attended a press conference to mark the 60th anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, while around 100 journalists and postgraduate communication students at Addis Ababa University learnt during workshops about the media's rights and responsibilities under IHL when reporting on conflicts. To foster awareness of IHL at grassroots level, more than 600 village elders and religious leaders living in violence-prone areas took part in presentations given jointly by Ethiopian Red Cross and ICRC personnel.

After receiving ICRC input in 2008, Ethiopia's reform committee tasked with establishing standard law degree curricula reported that IHL would be included in the public international law degree, but not as a separate elective because there were too few teachers. The committee and the ICRC were discussing ways of solving that problem. To further stimulate academic interest in IHL, some 270 students at Addis Ababa and Haramaya (near Harar) universities and the civil service college participated in seminars and presentations, and a team of three law undergraduates entered the ICRC's regional moot court competition in the United Republic of Tanzania (see *Nairobi*).

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Ethiopian Red Cross regularly worked alongside the ICRC in 2009, providing invaluable assistance and at the same time broadening its capacities in relief management, tracing and communication (see *Civilians, Authorities and Civil society*). Throughout the year, it also received funds, materials and technical back-up to develop those activities and its infrastructure, especially in violence-prone areas.

With ICRC support:

- the salaries of 17 key National Society headquarters and branch staff covered, together with core running costs for headquarters and 28 branches
- 21 branch personnel trained in emergency response
- some 1,250 volunteers in branches countrywide and 275 prison inmates trained in first aid, with 75 volunteers taking refresher courses
- 120 medical personnel trained as first-aid instructors
- 6 National Society offices equipped to produce first-aid kits for branch use and to sell to generate income
- 60 volunteers trained in tracing
- 30 key personnel participated in the annual tracing workshop/meeting
- political officials, village elders, community leaders, journalists and students introduced to IHL and the Movement during 22 National Society dissemination sessions
- radio spots promoting the Movement broadcast in 3 violence-prone regions