



# liberia

Following the spread of intense fighting early in 2003, which ended with a peace agreement in August, the ICRC stepped up its operations in Liberia. With large numbers of people returning home to their destroyed villages, needs remain great. In 2005, ICRC assistance and protection activities concentrated on returnees (former IDPs and refugees) and residents, the wounded and sick, detainees, and children separated from their families. The ICRC supports the Liberian Red Cross Society and promotes IHL among all armed forces present in Liberia. The ICRC has worked in Liberia since 1970, initially through its regional delegations. Its operational delegation in Monrovia was opened in 1990.

## EXPENDITURE (IN CHF ,000)

Protection	6,031
Assistance	21,429
Prevention	747
Cooperation with National Societies	1,952
General	16

► **30,174**

of which: Overheads **1,822**

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	<b>92.2%</b>
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## PERSONNEL

<b>46</b> expatriates
<b>306</b> national staff (daily workers not included)

## KEY POINTS

### In 2005, the ICRC:

- reunited 71 Liberian refugee and displaced children, including those formerly associated with fighting forces, with their parents in Liberia; continued monitoring 142 children, including those formerly associated with fighting forces;
- collected 33,136 RCMs, including 438 from children separated from their families; together with the Liberian Red Cross, distributed 26,630 RCMs, including 329 to children;
- visited 548 detainees in 33 places of detention; facilitated the return of almost 400 Liberian ex-fighters interned in Sierra Leone;
- assisted over 430,000 people by distributing seeds to 75,000 families, tools to 85,000 families and essential household items to 24,000 families;
- revived 6 primary-health-care facilities by renovating and equipping them, and continued to support 5 existing facilities in Lofa, Grand Kru, Grand Bassa and Montserrado counties; rebuilt 3 facilities in Lofa and built/repaid 468 wells/682 latrines in Monrovia and 6 counties;
- organized sessions on the Movement for over 2,000 police recruits and promoted respect for international standards governing the treatment of detainees.

## CONTEXT

All actors in Liberia – the UN, the National Transitional Government (NTG) and civil society, etc. – devoted 2005 to organizing the presidential elections in October, which recorded a high turnout of the 1.3 million registered voters. The international community and its observers declared the elections and the presidential run-off in November largely a success. The elections proved to be a stiff contest, with Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf emerging the victor over George Weah. The swearing in of the new president was planned for January 2006.

All military factions were disbanded and some 107,000 fighters disarmed and demobilized – three times more than expected. Nevertheless, the rehabilitation and reintegration process made a slow start. With relatively few programmes to equip them with useful skills, many ex-combatants were left disillusioned and disgruntled, making them a potentially serious security threat. Some 15,000 troops from the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) helped maintain peace and stability in the country.

By the end of 2005, some 50% of Liberian refugees had returned from Sierra Leone and Guinea, and well over 80% of the estimated 300,000 IDPs had left the camps where they were staying. Unfortunately, the vast majority could only make it home after the onset of the rainy season when it was too late to plant crops, making it difficult for them to start rebuilding their lives.

Homes had been destroyed during the conflict, and agricultural land had become

overgrown after years of lying fallow. Public services such as health care, schools, water supply and sanitation were rundown or inexistent. Refugees and IDPs returned to their areas of origin with very little, and in some regions, their return rekindled ethnic animosities and land and property disputes.

The International Civilian Police (CIVPOL) made progress in creating and training a new police force. However, the restructuring and training of the new armed forces were delayed by lack of funding, and the planned strength of the force was reduced from 4,000 to 2,000. Judicial reforms remained at the embryonic stage.

The NTG was particularly notorious for corruption. Reluctant to disburse funds pledged for the country's reconstruction and in an effort to rein in corruption, the donor community signed an agreement with the NTG, binding also on future governments, providing for the placement of international experts in key government institutions to provide checks and balances.

Liberia continued to depend substantially on imports and foreign aid. With the UN sanctions on diamonds and timber extended for 12 months and the commercial agricultural sector all but collapsed, little was produced locally, and unemployment was high.

The fragile situation in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire affected areas along the border between the two countries, with reports emerging of the recruitment of fighters, including children, by Ivorian armed groups.

## MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		CIVILIANS		
Detainees visited	548	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>		
Number of visits carried out	62	Food	Beneficiaries	36,119
Number of places of detention visited	33	Essential household items	Beneficiaries	143,898
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS		Agricultural inputs and micro-economic initiatives	Beneficiaries	432,029
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>		Water-supply schemes and sanitation systems (completed projects)	Beneficiaries	4,750
RCMs collected	33,136	<i>Health</i>		
RCMs distributed	26,630	Health centres supported	Structures	11
People reunited with their families	71	Consultations	Patients	99,242
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>		Immunizations	Activities	69,360
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	123	WOUNDED AND SICK		
Tracing requests closed positively (persons located)	36	Hospitals supported	Structures	2
Tracing requests still being handled at 31 December 2005	256	Admissions	Patients	1,296
<i>Unaccompanied minors (UAMs) and separated children (SCs), including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers</i>		Operations	Operations performed	312
UAMs/SCs newly registered by the ICRC	76			
UAMs/SCs reunited with their families by the ICRC	71			
UAMs/SCs cases still being handled at 31 December 2005	142			
DOCUMENTS ISSUED				
People to whom travel documents were issued	25			

## ICRC ACTION

The ICRC's priority was to provide protection and assistance to the significant numbers of refugees returning spontaneously to Liberia and the even larger numbers of IDPs returning to their places of origin. It provided agricultural tools and other material assistance and repaired or built health-care facilities and water and sanitation systems to help the people in areas that had absorbed the most returnees, mainly Lofa and Nimba counties, to rebuild their lives. The organization extended similar support to other areas, such as the south-east, which had been affected by prolonged conflict but had received little external assistance. To cater to the needs of returnees in these areas, the ICRC stepped up emergency assistance to them. It also provided the health facilities it had rehabilitated with medical supplies and on-the-job staff training.

Considerable emphasis was placed on restoring contact between family members dispersed by the conflict, particularly reuniting children with relatives. The ICRC initiated programmes tailored to meet the needs of individual children separated from their families, including those formerly associated with fighting forces.

The ICRC regularly visited the ever-increasing number of places of detention throughout the country to monitor conditions of detention and provide assistance as required. It also continued to promote IHL, human rights law and the ICRC's role and mandate among foreign military

contingents, the newly trained Liberian police force and the fledgling judiciary.

Lack of Liberian health staff, the remoteness of certain areas and delays in the restructuring of the Liberian armed forces hampered the implementation of certain ICRC objectives. Moreover, willing as they were to cooperate with the ICRC, the authorities had limited capacity to act.

Mainly alone in implementing assistance programmes in many parts of Liberia, the ICRC was concerned that less humanitarian aid than needed or expected had been forthcoming. Its uninterrupted presence and activities in the Liberian hinterland confirmed the ICRC as a major actor within the humanitarian and international community. It pursued regular discussion and coordination with other agencies present in Liberia.

The ICRC remained the Movement's lead agency in Liberia and continued to support the Liberian Red Cross's tracing, communication, first-aid and emergency-response programmes.

## CIVILIANS

## Protecting civilians and restoring family links

The few armed elements still present were confined to isolated parts of the country. The diminishing threat from these quarters was counterbalanced by a marked increase in violent criminality, often involving firearms and mob violence in parts of Monrovia.

Areas rich in natural resources, including rubber plantations and gold and diamond mines, attracted former fighters who continued to pose a threat to local security. The alleged recruitment of children in areas adjacent to the Ivorian border was another cause of concern.

Through its considerable tracing and assistance programmes, the ICRC reinforced its presence in communities throughout Liberia and was thus in a position to monitor closely vulnerable population groups.

Thousands of families dispersed by conflict continued to rely on RCMs to re-establish and maintain contact with relatives in and around Liberia.

The ICRC began implementing some of the recommendations of a 2004 external evaluation of its programme to trace the relatives of Liberian children separated from their families. At the end of 2005, the ICRC was monitoring over 713 such children living in the West African sub-region. About 44% had yet to re-establish links with their families.

- 71 refugee and displaced Liberian children reunited with family in Liberia; 55 new cases of unaccompanied/separated children and 21 of demobilized children registered
- 33,136 RCMs collected (438 from children separated from their families) and 26,630 RCMs delivered (329 to children)
- 123 tracing requests collected from Liberian parents and children outside the sub-region; 36 solved positively and 256 (including 133 women and 165 minors at the time of disappearance) still being processed at the end of 2005
- all children previously reunited with their families regularly monitored to ensure their effective reintegration

The ICRC launched a sub-regional poster campaign, featuring 371 unaccompanied minors from four countries, drawing much-needed attention to the lingering plight of children separated from their families.

### Helping IDPs and returnees cope with their circumstances

By late 2005, well over half of the nearly 600,000 Liberians in IDP and refugee camps had returned to their places of origin. The launch in March of the UN-supported process to accelerate the return of IDPs considerably increased the numbers returning to their homes. By the end of 2005, a mere 50,000 people were estimated to have remained in IDP camps and over 200,000 in refugee camps.

International NGOs and other government partners provided preventive and primary health care in the camps. The ICRC continued to run a clinic in Blamacee Camp for IDPs in Montserrado County until the end of 2005, when all the families in the camp had received resettlement entitlements. It also helped the community take over and run the facility as a clinic for the resident population.

- some 10,000 consultations performed in ICRC clinic, and 63 patients referred to Monrovia hospitals
- 249 health-education sessions organized for the community

The ICRC maintained latrines, wells and bathhouses and disposed of solid waste in five camps housing 60,000 people. With the closure of two camps in June and the steady return of IDPs to their places of origin, the number of people assisted dropped to 20,000. In tandem with these projects, the ICRC and the Liberian Red Cross carried out activities to promote hygiene.

In regions receiving returnees, the ICRC provided residents and returnees with tools, seeds and household items.

- tools distributed to some 85,000 households, 1,400 tonnes of rice seed and vegetable seeds distributed to 75,000 families, vegetable-seed kits distributed to 6,000 families
- 150 tonnes of food distributed as seed-protection rations for 30,000 individuals
- some 24,000 essential household items (kitchen sets, sleeping mats, tarpaulins, clothes, buckets) distributed to returnees

Small-scale ICRC-run agricultural projects benefited approximately 800 individuals. These included kitchen-garden projects teaching vulnerable women how to produce vegetables for income generation, and a project aimed at multiplying improved rice-seed varieties.

Kitchen-garden projects in Lofa and Nimba counties, involving over 120 children, were among the very few vocational training programmes for children, including those formerly associated with fighting forces, outside Monrovia. These programmes provided valuable lessons for bigger reintegration programmes initiated at the end of 2005 for the same target group.

Through a pilot shelter project, using the food-for-work approach, over 250 traditional houses were constructed for vulnerable returnees in Lofa and Nimba counties.

The ICRC maintained support to the Liberian Red Cross Child Advocacy and Rehabilitation programme in Monrovia. The object of the programme was to provide schooling, vocational training and psychological support to 150 children affected by conflict, thus facilitating their return to a normal life.

### Health care, water and sanitation for conflict-weary civilians

Just as rural communities had begun to recover from the effects of conflict, the return of large numbers of former IDPs threatened to overstretch already meagre resources. Essential services such as water supply and basic sanitation remained inadequate, leaving rural populations dependent on the limited health services provided by humanitarian agencies.

International NGOs began expanding primary health care and reviving clinics and health centres. Some counties, however,

continued to struggle without external assistance. With hospitals functioning in only five counties, the ICRC referred patients to secondary health-care facilities in Monrovia and transferred emergency cases directly to them.

The ICRC maintained its primary-health-care activities in Voinjama District of Lofa County, remained the sole international actor supporting the health sector in Grand Kru County and launched a new project in Kolahun District.

The refresher training programme for traditional midwives continued in Lofa County, and a similar one was launched in Grand Kru County. The programme concentrated on antenatal care, babies' nutrition, and hygiene, while raising awareness of and providing guidance on the management of cases involving sexual violence. The courses were attended by 95 traditional midwives in Lofa and 102 in Grand Kru.

In Voinjama District, the Voinjama health centre became the main medical facility, with a doctor appointed by the Health Ministry and a basic laboratory. The health centre performed 38,679 consultations. Three additional clinics provided basic preventive and curative health care in the district.

In Kolahun District, the ICRC renovated and furnished two clinics and a health centre in preparation for reopening in early 2006.

In Grand Kru County, five facilities were upgraded and provided with medical supplies, and Health Ministry staff received incentives. A health centre was equipped with a basic laboratory.

- some 90,000 consultations given at ICRC-supported primary-health-care facilities (an average of 11 centres) covering an estimated population of 189,000 people

The ICRC continued to improve water supply and sanitation conditions for underserved communities and institutions in six counties and in Monrovia and its environs. Altogether, 341,920 people benefited from the organization's water and sanitation programmes, including 4,750 who benefited from those completed in 2005.

- 337 wells and 376 latrines constructed or rehabilitated in places anticipating huge numbers of returnees, chiefly Lofa, Grand Gedeh, Bong, River Gee, Maryland and River Cess counties

- ▶ 131 wells and 303 latrines constructed in swampy and/or overpopulated communities in Monrovia and its environs, including in 10 orphanages

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

### Safeguarding the welfare of detainees

Years of war in Liberia had caused the collapse of national law and order institutions, particularly the correctional and judicial systems, as evidenced by congested places of detention and a surge in the number of cases awaiting trial. With the gradual rise in the number of detainees countrywide throughout 2005, an increasing number of places of detention resumed operations.

The ICRC had unfettered access to all official places of detention and visited detainees regularly. It extended its activities to all the 33 newly identified or established places of detention. It collected 44 RCMs from detainees and distributed 10 RCMs to them, thereby enabling them to re-establish contact with their families.

In 2005, the ICRC successfully monitored compliance with the conditions of the repatriation of 387 Liberian internees held in Sierra Leone since 2003 and of their reintegration into their communities (see also *Sierra Leone*).

The ICRC encouraged the authorities to assume their rightful role in improving detention conditions and supported them in doing so.

- ▶ separate latrines and bathhouses constructed for male and female detainees in 3 prisons; a similar project under way in another prison

## WOUNDED AND SICK

### Bringing health care closer to the people

Greater Monrovia had several private and public hospitals. Seven counties had functional secondary hospitals. People from other counties, however, had to travel long distances or even seek care from neighbouring countries.

The ICRC continued supporting the Stephen A. Tolbert Memorial Hospital in Grand Bassa County until December 2005, when it was handed over to the Mittal Steel Company. The very busy 30-bed general hospital provided outpatient and

preventive services, surgical, medical, paediatric and obstetric care for emergency and semi-elective patients, and received patients from River Cess County.

#### *Stephen A. Tolbert Memorial Hospital*

- ▶ some 32,000 outpatient consultations given; over 950 patients admitted; 312 operations performed
- ▶ a generator, monthly fuel supplies, medical and other supplies and incentives for 70 staff provided
- ▶ seminars held monthly to build the capacity of the management team and the quality of nursing care

Lack of human resources hampered the ICRC's plans to revamp the Rally Time Hospital in Grand Cess County, and the facility functioned as a health centre with a basic laboratory.

#### *Rally Time Hospital*

- ▶ medical supplies donated, and financial incentives provided to staff
- ▶ some 9,000 outpatient consultations carried out; over 300 patients admitted

## AUTHORITIES

### Promoting IHL and its implementation

The ICRC maintained its dialogue with the international and national authorities, attending coordination meetings and briefing representatives of the government, UNMIL and the UN, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and NGOs on its role and activities. Its efforts included:

- ▶ regular contact with the Foreign and Justice ministries, sponsoring 2 ministry representatives to attend an ECOWAS/ICRC course in Abuja on IHL implementation;
- ▶ contact with a professor of international law at Liberia University to discuss an IHL study;
- ▶ 3 IHL sessions/workshops on IHL and the ICRC for 152 local and community leaders/representatives of the Independent Human Rights Commission;
- ▶ publication of news releases on the website of the UN Humanitarian Information Centre for Liberia.

## ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

### Raising awareness of IHL and humanitarian principles among the armed and security forces

The formation and training by UNMIL/CIVPOL of the new police force progressed well, exceeding the initial target of training 1,800 officers. The ICRC:

- ▶ organized 67 sessions on its mandate and activities, for 2,016 recruits;
- ▶ regularly met CIVPOL instructors and the management of the police academy.

The Defence Ministry, supported by the US government and UNMIL, dismantled the 15,000-strong army, demobilizing over 12,000 troops. The ICRC:

- ▶ maintained contact with the ministry;
- ▶ established contact with DynCorp, a private security firm restructuring/training the armed forces;
- ▶ maintained a dialogue with the UNMIL military hierarchy and troops;
- ▶ organized 18 sessions on IHL, the ICRC and the UN Secretary-General's bulletin on observance by UN forces of IHL for 1,260 UN military observers and the UNMIL command.

## CIVIL SOCIETY

### Familiarizing the public with IHL

The ICRC continued to foster relations with the local and international media. Humanitarian issues that caught the media's interest included an exhibition marking 20 years of the ICRC's water and sanitation programmes, as well as child-protection, tracing and economic-security activities.

- ▶ 2 trips organized for international journalists to witness the reunification of refugee/displaced Liberian children with their families in Liberia
- ▶ 6th tracing campaign launched with the media
- ▶ testing of the educational comic book, *Battle of the villages*, successfully completed in 9 schools



## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

### Strengthening the National Society's legal, doctrinal and structural base

The ICRC, the Liberian Red Cross and the International Federation organized six workshops on governance for 14 Red Cross chapters, attended by 201 participants. The National Society's newly adopted first-aid training policy helped to put in place an effective contingency plan ahead of the general and run-off elections.

With support from the ICRC, the president and the secretary general of the National Society attended the Council of Delegates in Seoul in November.

The Liberian Red Cross produced a draft of internal regulations on the use of the emblem by its staff and volunteers and a draft petition to the National Transitional Legislative Assembly for the enactment of an emblem law. It submitted them both to the authorities for review.

### Supporting Liberian Red Cross activities

The ICRC continued to support the National Society's tracing network, with 209 volunteers operating in 159 locations. The two partners produced and distributed a handbook for all tracing officers and volunteers active in the country.

- 180 tracing volunteers trained
- 2 courses conducted for 21 tracing officers

ICRC efforts to strengthen the National Society's capacity to promote IHL, the Fundamental Principles and respect for the emblem included:

- sessions for 2,000 National Society staff/volunteers;
- a training module on IHL promotion;
- the donation of 15 television sets, generators and video recorders;
- the donation of 30 flip charts for use in dissemination;
- help with the printing of 4,000 brochures/calendars;
- help in establishing 60 Red Cross youth clubs in primary schools;
- information sessions for 236 tracing volunteers/media personnel/students;
- 2 refresher trainers' courses for dissemination officers.

ICRC support to the Liberian Red Cross in assisting people affected by conflict remained on course. Within the scope of a

national contingency plan, trained Red Cross volunteers ran first-aid posts in major cities during the general elections.

The National Society signed a contract to deliver a first-aid course for 500 Firestone Rubber Company workers and trained 20 UNICEF staff.

National Society activities supported by the ICRC included:

- first-aid training for 400 volunteers;
- distribution of 32,060 kg of seeds/seedlings to 3,985 families and 1,761 agricultural tools to 934 families;
- the creation of 10 community committees to manage constructed/rehabilitated water wells; the training and equipping of 20 people to maintain community water pumps;
- analysis and treatment of over 200 water sources; the installation of 300 chlorination pots in open wells;
- distribution of material assistance to 474 families;
- the supply of starter kits to 145 children from the Child Advocacy and Rehabilitation programme.

Movement partners continued to observe security rules updated by the ICRC and held meetings on issues of common concern. Additionally, guidelines for internal and external communication were established.