

The ICRC, in its capacity as an official observer to the African Union (AU), works with member States to draw attention to problems requiring humanitarian action and to promote greater recognition of IHL and its integration into AU decisions and policies, as well as wider implementation of IHL throughout Africa. It also aims to raise awareness of and acceptance for the ICRC's role and activities within the AU Commission and other AU bodies. It endeavours to build strong relations with AU-accredited intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and UN agencies in Addis Ababa.

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

In 2014:

- ▶ the African Union (AU) adopted regulatory frameworks to ensure that its peace-support missions complied with IHL and other relevant norms, including in relation to the treatment of detainees
- ▶ the AU developed its three-year Strategic Framework on Mine Action and Explosives Management, drawing on the results of past workshops organized jointly with the ICRC
- ▶ member States endorsed a set of measures to address the threats faced by health-care services and to boost their own resilience to armed conflict and other emergencies
- ▶ through its public communication, the AU drew attention to IHL-related concerns and encouraged member States to facilitate the ICRC's access to communities in need

YEARLY RESULTS

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

HIGH

EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)

See Ethiopia

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

See Ethiopia

PERSONNEL

See Ethiopia

CONTEXT

The African Union (AU) continued to back diplomatic and military efforts to curb the instability caused by armed conflict and political unrest across Africa. It lent political support for peace talks in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, between parties to the conflict in South Sudan; these talks were mediated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). AU-led international forces maintained a presence in several countries. Ethiopian troops formally joined the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Troops of the AU-UN Mission in Darfur remained in Sudan. In accordance with a UN resolution, in September, the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) transferred its authority to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic.

The AU took steps to address the prevalence of sexual violence in armed conflict, such as launching a Gender, Peace and Security Programme and appointing a Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security.

The African Standby Force (ASF), composed of troops from various member States, continued to build its capacities through a training programme called AMANI AFRICA II, with the aim of becoming fully operational by 2015.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

To bolster efforts to protect and assist conflict-affected populations across Africa, the ICRC continued to promote the incorporation of IHL in the AU's policies and raise awareness of humanitarian issues and Movement activities among AU officials, representatives of member States and organizations working with the AU.

The AU endeavoured to incorporate IHL in the normative frameworks for its peace-support missions; an ICRC legal adviser provided technical guidance in the drafting of several policy documents. It revised, in accordance with applicable international law, the rules of engagement of MISCA and AMISOM and the directives for these two missions' police components. The AU included in MISCA's rules of engagement a set of standard procedures for the treatment of people held by it, and adopted a similar set of procedures for AMISOM's treatment of defectors from armed groups and detained former combatants. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) finalized guidelines on police custody and pre-trial detention in Africa. With a view to developing a framework for regulating conduct and discipline for all its peace-support missions, the AU reviewed pertinent conduct and discipline policies, including those concerning sexual violence.

Drawing on ICRC expertise, the AU promoted the implementation of IHL-related instruments among its member States. The AU Commission on International Law (AUCIL) developed a model law, with ICRC support, for incorporating the African Union Convention on IDPs in domestic legislation. State representatives discussed, during a workshop organized by the AU and the ICRC, ways to overcome obstacles to fulfilling their responsibility – under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Cluster Munitions Convention – to assist people affected by mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). Key recommendations from past workshops on the issue were included in the AU's three-year Strategic Framework for Mine Action and Explosives Management.

The AU and the ICRC cooperated in drawing attention and finding solutions to pressing humanitarian concerns. In line with the goals of the Health Care in Danger project, at a workshop jointly facilitated by the AU and the ICRC, AU experts and member State representatives agreed on measures to increase protection for health-care services on the continent and strengthen their resilience to armed conflict and other emergencies. In consultation with the ICRC, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) drafted terms of reference for missions to monitor the situation of children in the Central African Republic (hereafter CAR) and South Sudan.

Regular interaction with diplomatic representatives to the AU, and other key stakeholders in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, promoted support for the ICRC's neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action across Africa.

ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

AU adopts standard procedures for the treatment of people held by international forces

The AU incorporated IHL in normative frameworks for its peace-keeping operations, with the support of an ICRC legal adviser seconded to the AU.

The AU Peace Support Operations Division revised the rules of engagement for MISCA and AMISOM and the directives for their police components to ensure that they conformed to applicable international law. MISCA's rules of engagement included a set of standard procedures for the treatment of detainees. In June, the AU adopted a similar set of standard procedures for AMISOM's treatment of defectors from armed groups and detained former combatants.

With a view to developing a framework for regulating conduct and discipline for all its peace-support missions, the AU reviewed pertinent policies and documents – including those concerning sexual violence – in consultation with the ICRC during a workshop held in December. Participants in the workshop drafted a policy on conduct and discipline that included a section specifically instructing peace-support troops to comply with IHL.

The ACHPR adopted guidelines, developed with expert assistance from the ICRC, for police custody and pre-trial detention in Africa.

International forces learn about their responsibilities under IHL and other applicable law

During an AMANI AFRICA II training exercise, a senior mission leaders' course and other training sessions organized by the AU, troops from various African countries learnt about IHL and other norms applicable to the use of force in peace-support operations.

To ensure that the protection of civilians and detainees and other IHL-related concerns were always taken into account in the planning and training of AU-led missions, the ICRC submitted IHL training modules to the African Peace and Security Training Academy.

AUCIL develops model law for implementing the African Union Convention on IDPs

Discussions continued with the AU Defense and Security Division, the Department of Political Affairs, and the Office of the Legal Counsel on joint efforts to encourage African States to ratify and implement IHL-related instruments, such as the African Union Convention on IDPs and the Arms Trade Treaty.

The AUCIL finalized a model law – developed in consultation with the ICRC – that would help States incorporate the African Union Convention on IDPs in domestic legislation. The AU Commission promoted the ratification and implementation of the treaty at two regional workshops attended by representatives of member States, international organizations and the ICRC. The AU produced and distributed pertinent reference materials with ICRC support.

Owing to other priorities, AU experts were unable to attend IHL courses abroad, including a seminar aimed at helping them promote existing legal frameworks regulating small arms and light weapons, and the Arms Trade Treaty, which entered into force in December.

Member States discuss solutions to challenges in assisting victims of weapon contamination

The AU and the ICRC organized a follow-up workshop to build on the results of a 2013 workshop on meeting clearance deadlines set by the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions: the workshop focused on helping States Parties fulfil their obligation, under these treaties, to assist victims of mines/ERW. During the workshop, 22 senior officials and experts from 19 AU member States adopted recommendations for addressing the humanitarian needs of people affected by weapon contamination.

On the occasion of the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, the AU launched its three-year Strategic Framework for Mine Action and Explosives Management, which incorporated key recommendations from previous AU-ICRC workshops on tackling the consequences of weapon contamination. AU and State representatives learnt more about the ICRC's efforts to assist mine/ERW victims through a photo exhibition and a statement delivered during the event.

ACERWC and ICRC seek to address the needs of conflict-affected children

The ACERWC, with technical advice from the ICRC, drafted terms of reference for missions to monitor the situation of children affected by armed conflicts in the CAR and South Sudan. It emphasized the main concerns for children – such as their recruitment into fighting forces – and the protection due to them under IHL. Briefings conducted on the sidelines of the 23rd and 24th sessions of the ACERWC underscored how the ICRC's assistance programmes helped conflict-affected families meet their needs in a dignified manner, and thus mitigate certain risks to which children are particularly exposed, such as the risk of being forced to marry for survival. An ICRC statement delivered during an open debate organized by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) emphasized the importance of the ICRC's dialogue with the authorities and weapon bearers in different contexts on measures to prevent abuses against children.

Members of the Paris Principles Steering Group – tasked with promoting adherence to the 2007 Paris Commitments and the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups – held a regional meeting in Africa to identify measures to prevent the recruitment of children into fighting forces and to facilitate the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers. The group included representatives of States, child-protection agencies, regional bodies and the ICRC.

AU endorses measures to mitigate threats to health-care services

During a seminar organized by the AU and the ICRC in support of the goals of the Health Care in Danger project, AU experts and

member State representatives endorsed a set of 20 recommendations focusing on measures that States, AU bodies, international organizations and humanitarian agencies could take to increase protection for health-care services in Africa and strengthen their resilience to armed conflict and other emergencies. An exhibition mounted at the seminar venue helped raise awareness of the project among the participants.

Dialogue with key decision-makers fosters support for ICRC activities in Africa

ICRC presentations at AU-organized events, and meetings with the chairperson of the PSC and other AU officials, diplomatic representatives to the AU, and other stakeholders in Addis Ababa, raised awareness of humanitarian issues, including the prevalence of sexual violence and violence against health care in armed conflict. Such interaction also helped boost support for the Movement's priority activities and working methods in countries affected by conflict or unrest, such as the CAR, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, South Sudan and Sudan. The AU and the ICRC exchanged information on their respective initiatives to prevent and respond to sexual violence in armed conflict; the Gender, Peace and Security Programme coordinator and the newly appointed Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security met with the ICRC.

Such efforts contributed to the frequent inclusion of IHL-related concerns in AU policy documents and public communication. For example, after being briefed by the ICRC president on the organization's activities and operational challenges in Africa, the AU PSC issued a statement urging member States to facilitate the ICRC's access to communities in need of humanitarian assistance and to issue security guarantees for its staff.

Talks with leaders of an opposition group involved in the armed conflict in South Sudan, and with the IGAD team facilitating the peace negotiations in Addis Ababa, contributed to promoting acceptance for the ICRC's neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action in South Sudan (see *South Sudan*).

During a press conference, local and foreign journalists covering the ICRC's president's visit to the AU in October learnt more about the ICRC's activities in Africa and beyond, including its response to the Ebola outbreak. Owing to human resource constraints, an IHL workshop planned for media professionals was postponed to 2015.