

burundi



For 37 years until 1999, the ICRC monitored the situation in Burundi and took action on an ad hoc basis. Since then, it has been present in the country, focusing on helping people to overcome the worst consequences of conflict. It works with the prison authorities to ensure that detainees are treated according to internationally recognized standards. It rehabilitates water and sanitation systems for vulnerable groups. It reunites children separated from their parents with their families and restores family links. It also supports training in IHL for the armed and security forces.

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	2,393
Assistance	3,091
Prevention	1,101
Cooperation with National Societies	443
General	-

► **7,028**

of which: Overheads 429

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	90%
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PERSONNEL

19 expatriates
130 national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2007, the ICRC:

- ▶ visited and monitored individually 779 detainees during 333 visits to detention facilities
- ▶ provided support to increase the number of detainees receiving antiretroviral treatment
- ▶ covered the costs of hospital treatment and food for 51 weapon-wounded patients and provided 18 medical kits to enable medical personnel to treat people injured in armed clashes
- ▶ ensured access to safe water for 168,700 people in urban and rural areas
- ▶ organized IHL sessions for over 2,500 members of the armed and police forces
- ▶ trained 200 Burundi Red Cross volunteers in first aid and emergency response

CONTEXT

Implementation of the comprehensive ceasefire agreement, aiming to bring an end to the non-international armed conflict between the government and the Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu-Forces nationales pour la libération (Palipehutu-FNL), stalled. In July, the FNL withdrew from the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, the body charged with overseeing the implementation of the agreement.

By year-end, some 2,800 alleged FNL dissidents had reportedly come forward requesting demobilization or integration into the security forces. The last quarter of 2007 witnessed sporadic armed clashes, including the first clashes between the National Defence Forces (FDN) and FNL elements since the ceasefire came into effect in 2006, as well as attacks by the FNL on the alleged dissidents.

In April, Hussein Radjabu, having been deposed as president of the ruling Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD) in February, was detained on charges of threatening national security. His detention deepened internal divisions within the ruling party, leading to the loss of its parliamentary majority. Despite attempts by President Pierre Nkurunziza to form a new government and restore confidence in his administration, the main opposition parties and a faction of the CNDD-FDD boycotted the work of parliament, resulting in legislative paralysis. An agreement between the ruling party and the main opposition parties paved the way for the formation of a government of national unity in November.

The price of basic commodities rose sharply and food deficits persisted throughout the year, with many people remaining dependent on WFP distributions. This, combined with the government's failure to deliver announced salary increases, led to social discontent and periodic strikes.

The security situation deteriorated markedly, with an increased incidence of armed robbery and other violent criminality.

The UN and the government held discussions on the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms and agreed to set up a truth and reconciliation commission and a special tribunal. With the support of the government and the newly established UN Integrated Office in Burundi, the UN Peacebuilding Commission approved a peacebuilding plan and began implementing projects in priority areas.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

	Total		Total	Women	Children	
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)			CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM			
Detainees visited	9,158	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>				
Detainees visited and monitored individually	779	Water, sanitation and habitat projects	Beneficiaries	172,438	27%	44%
	<i>of whom females</i>					
	16					
	<i>of whom minors</i>					
	33					
Number of visits carried out	333					
Number of places of detention visited	90					
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS						
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>						
RCMs collected	5,456					
RCMs distributed	5,174					
People reunited with their families	5					
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>						
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	262					
	<i>of whom females</i>					
	125					
	<i>of whom minors at the time of disappearance</i>					
	114					
Tracing cases closed positively (persons located)	83					
Tracing cases still being handled at 31 December 2007 (people)	216					
	<i>of which for females</i>					
	105					
	<i>of which for minors at the time of disappearance</i>					
	85					
<i>Unaccompanied minors (UAMs) and separated children (SCs), including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers</i>						
UAMs/SCs newly registered by the ICRC	23					
UAMs/SCs reunited with their families by the ICRC	5					
UAM/SC cases still being handled at 31 December 2007 (people)	69					
DOCUMENTS ISSUED						
People to whom travel documents were issued	9					
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	2					

At the regional level, Burundi became a member of the East African Community. It ratified the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region and participated in a number of regional security coordination meetings with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda.

ICRC ACTION

The ICRC intensified its visits to detainees in temporary and permanent detention facilities to check on their treatment and living conditions and, where necessary, made confidential recommendations for improvements to the authorities. Specific emphasis was placed on the need to improve the conditions of detention of women and children and to rehabilitate dilapidated facilities. The delegation sustained its drive to mobilize support for the national authorities' efforts in these areas from certain members of the international community.

Hundreds of thousands of Burundian refugees, most of whom were in the United Republic of Tanzania, and foreign refugees living in Burundi could use the tracing and RCM services to restore and maintain family links. The ICRC devoted particular effort to reuniting unaccompanied children with their families, in close cooperation with partner institutions in Burundi.

Public and private hospitals, as well as the Palipehutu-FNL, were able to treat people injured in armed clashes, thanks to the provision of ICRC medical support.

Given the destruction or deterioration of water infrastructure, the ICRC continued to work with the urban and rural water boards to

rehabilitate a number of installations so that thousands of families would have clean drinking water.

In response to the authorities' increasing interest in IHL, the ICRC provided information and guidance on the ratification and implementation of IHL instruments. The armed and security forces participated in IHL sessions and requested support for the integration of IHL into military training at all levels and of IHL and human rights standards into police training.

The ICRC developed its dialogue with members of the Palipehutu-FNL and familiarized them with its mandate, activities and core principles of independence and neutrality, to ensure safe access of its delegates to people in need.

In cooperation with other Movement partners, the ICRC provided technical, material and financial support to boost the capacity of the Burundi Red Cross and to strengthen its communication and disaster management departments.

The ICRC coordinated its activities with the Burundi Red Cross and other Movement partners active in Burundi and provided them with regular security updates. It also cooperated with UN agencies and other humanitarian actors in fields of common interest, in order to maximize impact, fill gaps and avoid duplication of effort.

The ICRC closed the sub-delegation in Rumonge in June and transferred the majority of its staff to the Bujumbura delegation or the Gitega sub-delegation to ensure the continuity of the ICRC's protection and assistance activities in the south of the country.

CIVILIANS

The ICRC maintained contact with the military authorities with a view to promoting respect for IHL and, in particular, the protection of civilians (see *Armed forces and other bearers of weapons*).

Rural communities whose water supply had been damaged during the conflict benefited from repairs to essential infrastructure carried out by the ICRC, working in partnership with the Direction Générale de l'Hydraulique et des Energies Rurales, Burundi's rural water board. Residents of Buhiga, Matongo, Mubone, Mwumba and Nyamugari had their water supply restored or extended. The water and sanitation facilities of local health centres and schools were also upgraded. More than 76,000 residents of Butihinda, Gihofi, Giteranyi, Isale, Kije and Rwanzari were set to gain clean water following feasibility studies in their communities. A training programme to teach local committees how to maintain systems rehabilitated since 2004 continued, complemented by ad hoc ICRC assistance to aid with the systems' upkeep.

Thousands of residents of towns in Bujumbura, Gitega and Makamba provinces looked forward to improved access to safe water and the resulting beneficial effect on general health and hygiene following repairs to dilapidated water systems performed by the ICRC, working closely with Regideso (the urban water and electricity board). Residents of Mutaho, in Gitega province, were also set to benefit from improvements to the water and sanitation facilities and electricity system of a local hospital. A feasibility study for a rehabilitation and development project in Cibitoke town was performed, with work set to begin in 2008.

- 168,700 people benefited from water/sanitation/shelter/habitat projects

Public and private hospitals received direct support from the ICRC to deal with surgical and medical emergencies, and medical personnel were provided with first-aid and dressing kits to treat people injured in armed clashes.

- 51 weapon-wounded treated and fed in public and private hospitals with ICRC support
- medical personnel received 18 first-aid and dressing kits

Many Burundians remained refugees outside the country, in particular in the United Republic of Tanzania, although some 40,000 of them returned during the year. Burundi continued to host refugees from countries elsewhere in the region, with 10,000 citizens of neighbouring DRC crossing into Burundi to seek refuge from instability in the east of the DRC. They joined some 22,000 of their compatriots already hosted by Burundi. Many of them restored or maintained contact with relatives through the ICRC's tracing and RCM services, including residents of Gasorwe and Mwaro camps, thanks to volunteer-run tracing posts, and, from October onwards, 300 Rwandan refugees in Giharo camp. Overall, the number of RCMs relayed in 2007 decreased slightly from 2006, while the proportion of messages re-establishing family links increased slightly to around 20% of the total collected.

Wherever possible, unaccompanied children and vulnerable adults were reunited with their families in their countries of origin. In Burundi, the ICRC and the International Rescue Committee, a UNHCR implementing partner, cooperated to monitor the reintegration of such people into their communities.

- 5,206 RCMs collected from and 4,944 RCMs distributed to civilians, including 199 from and 161 to unaccompanied/separated children
- new tracing requests registered for 262 people (including 125 females and 114 minors at the time of disappearance); 83 people located; 216 people (including 105 females and 85 minors at the time of disappearance) still being sought
- 23 unaccompanied/separated children registered (including 2 demobilized children); 5 reunited with their families; 69 cases of unaccompanied/separated children (including 1 demobilized child) still being handled
- 9 people issued with an ICRC travel document

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Visiting detainees

Following a presidential decree in December 2006, some categories of sentenced detainees were released. The full impact of the decree had yet to be seen, as implementation was not completed during the year. Many of the demobilized members of the FNL interned in a temporary centre were released in April, but others continued to be held, and some new arrests were made. The arrest of Hussein Radjabu was followed by a wave of arrests of his supporters. The total number of people deprived of freedom in relation to the conflict or for reasons of State security thus remained significant, and the ICRC continued to follow their cases individually.

The general prison population fell slightly during the first half of the year, owing to the presidential decree. However, high rates of criminality, aggravated by a strike by Ministry of Justice civil servants, drove up the numbers detained, and by year-end there were some 8,200 inmates in Burundi's 11 prisons. Temporary detention facilities were also affected by increasing overcrowding. More than 100 places of temporary detention under the responsibility of the National Police of Burundi, the FDN and the Service National de Renseignement housed an estimated 2,500 inmates.

The ICRC increased the frequency of its visits to detainees in both central prisons and temporary detention facilities and held confidential discussions with the relevant authorities regarding their treatment and detention conditions. It backed up this dialogue with an increased number of written reports to the authorities, emphasizing the need to respect judicial guarantees.

The ICRC also reminded the authorities of the specific needs of vulnerable detainees and stressed the need to separate women and minors from adult males. The delegation persevered with its attempts to enlist support from the international community for the prison authorities' efforts to improve conditions of detention for women and children and to rehabilitate prison facilities.

Detainees were able to restore or maintain contact with their relatives through the RCM service and, where necessary, the ICRC notified foreign embassies of the detention of their nationals in Burundi.

- 9,158 detainees visited, of whom 779 monitored individually (including 16 females and 33 minors) and 655 newly registered (including 16 females and 27 minors), during 333 visits to 90 places of detention
- 250 RCMs collected from and 230 RCMs distributed to detainees

Improving detention conditions

Cooperation continued with the prison authorities and the relevant government ministries to improve prison living conditions, access to water, and hygiene facilities. Detainees benefited from the rehabilitation of a dispensary in Mpimba prison and a kitchen in Muyinga prison and from improved access to water and sanitation in Muyinga and Rumonge prisons. Also in Muyinga, work began on infrastructure to separate male adult detainees from women and children. Detainees from seven prisons received basic electrical and plumbing training.

Representatives of the Ministries of Health and Justice participated in an ICRC-organized coordination seminar, which recommended the establishment of a formal interministerial agreement and the creation of the position of medical coordinator within the penitentiary administration. In February, both ministries also attended an ICRC-organized round-table on mental health in detention involving all the main stakeholders in the field of detention in Burundi.

All prisons had a functional dispensary to provide primary health care, staffed by Ministry of Health nurses and stocked with drugs and equipment co-funded by the ICRC. Free medical referral schemes were in place for detainees. The ICRC visited all prisons at least once a month to provide assistance and check on the quality and accessibility of health care, including services for patients suffering from malaria, tuberculosis and onchocercosis (river blindness).

HIV/AIDS remained a major problem in Burundian prisons. The ICRC took measures to reinforce coordination on the issue and, where necessary, provided support to ensure that detainees' access to preventive and curative services in this respect was equivalent to that of the rest of the Burundian population. As a result, the number of detainees undergoing antiretroviral treatment increased from 19 in January to 48 in December.

The ICRC organized seminars on hygiene and health promotion in six prisons for about 120 detainees and 100 staff of local health and detention authorities. Levels of mortality and morbidity remained low; no significant outbreak of communicable disease was recorded.

All 8,200 detainees received a monthly supply of soap from the ICRC and, where necessary, other items, such as blankets. As in 2006 insecticide and spraying and protective materials were donated to the prison, administration to enable it to carry out pest control campaigns in all prisons, in cooperation with the ICRC. Detainees in temporary detention facilities regularly received soap and occasionally other hygiene articles.

- ▶ 3,738 detainees benefited from water/sanitation/habitat projects
- ▶ 22 people held in relation to the conflict provided with financial assistance to return home upon their release

AUTHORITIES

Dialogue with national authorities, including with representatives of parliament and the senate, was further developed, in order to promote the ratification and implementation of IHL instruments.

One priority was the finalization of legislation implementing the Ottawa Convention. The revised penal code awaited parliamentary approval, following drafting by the relevant commissions, which drew upon ICRC technical support and legal expertise. Legislation implementing the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Chemical Weapons Convention also awaited parliamentary approval.

The director general of the Ministry of Justice, with financial assistance from the ICRC, attended the launch of the French-language version of the ICRC's study on customary IHL in Paris, France.

Meetings of the Steering Committee for Peacebuilding in Burundi, which aimed to develop a strategic framework for peacebuilding in the country, were attended by the ICRC in an observer capacity.

- ▶ 40 participants, including representatives of relevant ministries and the senate, attended a workshop co-organized with the University of Burundi to promote IHL and discuss IHL-related issues, such as the possible creation of a national IHL committee

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Burundi's former armed movements had been either incorporated into the national army or police force or demobilized or were in the process of being disbanded, with the main exception of the Palipehutu-FNL.

Military instructors organized IHL sessions, with ICRC support, for all ranks countrywide. Troops departing on peacekeeping missions attended briefings on IHL and the ICRC and received relevant literature. The Ministry of Defence approved new armed forces regulations, drafted with ICRC support, providing for the integration of IHL into military instruction.

In a significant development, the police authorities formally requested ICRC support in the integration of IHL and human rights standards into police training.

- ▶ 588 army officers and 580 rank and file attended IHL sessions throughout the 5 military regions
- ▶ 31 army officers participated in a two-week IHL train-the-trainer course
- ▶ 80 army officers joining the African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia briefed on IHL and the ICRC's activities in that country
- ▶ 3 army officers attended two-week IHL courses abroad
- ▶ 1,300 police officers and 275 sergeants briefed on IHL, human rights standards and humanitarian principles

CIVIL SOCIETY

The media continued to learn about IHL and the ICRC's mandate and activities through press releases, events, promotional material and interviews. The inauguration of completed water projects, the 30th anniversary of the 1977 Additional Protocols and IHL workshops received good coverage, as did events to mark World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day (8 May), which featured an exhibition on Movement activities and a joint press conference with the Burundi Red Cross.

Education authorities and the ICRC met to discuss the integration of the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme into the secondary school system. A network of eight universities throughout the country continued to receive support for their efforts to include IHL in their curricula.

- ▶ some 70 officials attended a seminar on the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme
- ▶ more than 250 students attended 2 conferences on IHL and the ICRC's mandate and activities

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Burundi Red Cross received increased support from the ICRC and Movement partners to reinforce its capacity to prepare for and respond to emergencies.

- ▶ stocks of essential household items for up to 1,000 families, 40 first-aid kits, sanitation materials, office equipment and 3 vehicles donated to the National Society
- ▶ 80 volunteers trained to form part of emergency response brigades in 4 provinces
- ▶ 120 volunteers instructed in first aid in 6 provinces
- ▶ 10 volunteers trained in stock management
- ▶ the head of the emergency response department participated in training abroad on the Safer Access approach

The National Society continued to receive ICRC support for its programmes to increase awareness of IHL and the Movement and thereby build public support for its activities and facilitate its role as an auxiliary to the public authorities.

- ▶ 120 representatives of the provincial and communal authorities attended 4 dissemination sessions in 4 provinces
- ▶ 5 media briefings jointly organized by the National Society and the ICRC to publicize events such as World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day and Movement activities

Regular meetings between Movement partners enhanced coordination and helped develop the skills and activities of the National Society. Movement partners working in Burundi received security updates and advice from the ICRC.