

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 internal violence or disturbances, often compounded by natural disasters. The ICRC provides emergency aid, but also implements medium-term assistance projects to preserve the livelihoods of vulnerable communities, and supports physical rehabilitation services. It visits detainees, restores family links, particularly for relatives separated by the closed Eritrea-Ethiopia border and for refugees, promotes IHL and supports the Ethiopian Red Cross Society.

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	5,812
Assistance	10,158
Prevention	2,512
Cooperation with National Societies	1,012
General	-

► **19,494**

of which: Overheads 1,190

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	71%
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PERSONNEL

64	expatriates
340	national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2007, the ICRC:

- ▶ followed individually the cases of over 1,200 detainees during visits to 122 regionally run places of detention and made recommendations for improvements to detention conditions, which several regional authorities acted upon
- ▶ assisted in the voluntary cross-border repatriation of 2,482 civilians to Eritrea and Ethiopia, reuniting the most vulnerable with relatives
- ▶ improved access to water or health care for over 98,000 people living in violence-prone regions and provided relief goods to some 37,000 IDPs
- ▶ deployed being unable to resume work to protect and assist conflict victims in the Somali Regional State after the authorities expelled its delegation from the region in July
- ▶ helped 8 physical rehabilitation centres improve patient care by providing materials and training
- ▶ contributed to Ethiopia's preparation for the November meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention by hosting a workshop for government officials on implementing the Convention

CONTEXT

The Ethiopian government faced a number of challenges in 2007.

Clashes between government forces and armed groups continued in the Somali Regional State (SRS), with civilians killed, wounded, arrested and displaced. Military operations intensified in the region after the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) attacked a Chinese oil installation in April, killing 74 workers.

Low-intensity violence, springing from a mix of political, ethnic and religious grievances, erupted sporadically in other regions, including Afar, Oromia and Tigray, sometimes involving the armed forces. In Gambella, internal violence had subsided and IDPs began returning home.

By year-end, all the people, mainly opposition party members, held in connection with the 2005 post-election violence had either been released or sentenced, with many later pardoned.

Despite favourable agricultural conditions over the past four years, the government estimated that over 8 million people remained dependent on food aid.

On the international front, Ethiopian troops stayed on in Somalia to help the Somali transitional federal government counter attacks by armed groups. Ethiopia had intervened militarily in Somalia in late December 2006 to support the interim government in ousting the Supreme Islamic Courts Council from central and southern Somalia. Ethiopia stated publicly that it had detained "terrorism" suspects in connection with the Somalia conflict.

Ethiopia and Eritrea were still deadlocked over issues that had now stalled the physical pegging out of their new border for five years. On 30 November, the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission in The Hague said that it considered the line it had drawn in its 2002 ruling as the official border and its own mandate fulfilled. Relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia remained tense, with both sides increasing their military presence in the border area.

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 and monitored individually	1,232	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>				
<i>of whom females</i>	45	Food	Beneficiaries	10,860	20%	60%
<i>of whom minors</i>	60	Essential household items	Beneficiaries	37,188	20%	60%
Number of visits carried out	177	Agricultural inputs and micro-economic initiatives	Beneficiaries	40,746	20%	60%
Number of places of detention visited	122	Water, sanitation and habitat projects	Beneficiaries	112,134	22%	44%
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS		WOUNDED AND SICK				
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>		Hospitals supported	Structures	9		
RCMs collected	8,742	Admissions	Patients	126		1
RCMs distributed	9,818	<i>Physical rehabilitation</i>				
People reunited with their families	72	Patients receiving services	Patients	10,209	2,594	1,569
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>		Prostheses delivered	Units	2,316	353	127
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	226	Orthoses delivered	Units	3,870	1,094	1,134
<i>of whom females</i>	104					
<i>of whom minors at the time of disappearance</i>	94					
Tracing cases closed positively (persons located)	197					
Tracing cases still being handled at 31 December 2007 (people)	660					
<i>of which for females</i>	175					
<i>of which for minors at the time of disappearance</i>	144					
<i>Unaccompanied minors (UAMs) and separated children (SCs), including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers</i>						
UAMs/SCs newly registered by the ICRC	65					
UAMs/SCs reunited with their families by the ICRC	61					
UAM/SC cases still being handled at 31 December 2007 (people)	54					
DOCUMENTS ISSUED						
People to whom travel documents were issued	177					
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	527					

ICRC ACTION

The ICRC retained its focus in Ethiopia on protecting and assisting people affected by armed conflict or other situations of violence and on meeting the humanitarian needs remaining from the 1998–2000 international armed conflict with Eritrea. In early 2007, the delegation reassessed both the situation in Ethiopia and its operations and redistributed its resources and activities accordingly, closing down the Harar sub-delegation and Awasa office.

The ICRC reminded the authorities and armed groups of their obligations under IHL and alerted government officials to the needs of people affected by the conflict in the SRS or situations of violence elsewhere. Where necessary, the delegation stepped in to distribute relief goods to IDPs and returnees, while hospitals and clinics received supplies to treat the weapon-wounded. Eight limb-fitting centres also continued to receive substantial ICRC support.

In parallel, the ICRC carried out scheduled assistance programmes designed to help farmers and herders in violence-affected regions (Afar, Gambella, the SRS and Tigray) to improve their economic situation. The veterinary training programme was expanded in the SRS to support struggling pastoralists, while micro-economic initiatives were phased out in Gambella as the economic situation improved.

ICRC activities in the SRS were suspended from July, when the delegation was expelled from the region. The government publicly accused the ICRC of supporting armed groups. The organization denied the accusation, reaffirming that its activities were carried out in strict accordance with its mandate and principles of neutrality and independence. The ICRC initiated a dialogue with the authorities to clarify the matter, but the situation remained unchanged at year-end.

Despite efforts, the ICRC did not regain access to federal detention facilities, denied since December 2005 following the post-election unrest, or manage to establish a dialogue with the government regarding people detained in connection with the Somalia conflict. Delegates visited regionally run detention facilities, monitored conditions and respect for inmates' judicial guarantees, and mobilized the authorities to act on its findings. With ICRC support, several regions acted to upgrade prison infrastructure and medical care, while the delegation stepped in to improve conditions in 18 prisons. Given access restrictions, the ICRC was unable to follow individually the cases of all security detainees, and therefore concentrated, where possible, on the most vulnerable.

In accordance with the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the ICRC followed up the small number of remaining cases of former POWs related to the conflict with Eritrea. It also assisted in the voluntary cross-border repatriation of civilians to Eritrea and Ethiopia, reuniting vulnerable people with their families, and delivered RCMs sent between relatives separated by the closed border.

The promotion of IHL remained a priority, with the focus on the authorities, armed forces, universities and influential civil society sectors. The armed forces suspended their IHL programme with the ICRC after the organization's expulsion from the SRS.

The Ethiopian Red Cross Society received substantial support to reinforce its emergency response, tracing and dissemination programmes, and the ICRC continued to facilitate coordination within the Movement. It also coordinated its activities with the UN agencies and NGOs working in fields of common interest, including through its attendance as an observer at UN cluster meetings.

CIVILIANS

Protecting civilians

Until its expulsion from the SRS in July, the ICRC documented allegations of IHL violations committed against civilians and captured fighters in the region and took them up confidentially with the parties to the conflict. The relevant authorities received a written report in May. The dialogue with the parties was sometimes difficult, and field access increasingly restricted. In April, nine civilians captured by the ONLF, including seven Chinese nationals, were released and handed over to the authorities, with the ICRC acting as neutral intermediary.

Elsewhere, the ICRC monitored the situation of IDPs, mainly in Gambella, and of Somalis and people of Eritrean origin. The authorities were informed of ICRC concerns, in accordance with humanitarian principles and IHL.

Providing emergency aid

IDPs and residents affected by armed conflict or violence began rebuilding their lives with the help of ICRC relief goods. The Ethiopian Red Cross distributed some of the aid. The ICRC stepped in only after close coordination with the authorities in charge of humanitarian assistance.

- ▶ 10,860 people (1,810 households) received food, including one-week rations for 3,000 residents in the SRS and one-month rations for 7,860 IDPs in Oromia (Borena zone)
- ▶ 37,188 IDPs (6,198 households) in Gambella, Borena zone, and the SRS received essential household items
- ▶ 19,434 IDPs (3,239 households) in Gambella and Borena zone received seed and tools

Preserving community livelihoods

Rural communities in areas affected by armed conflict or other situations of violence worked with the ICRC on a range of projects designed to improve their economic situation and avoid long-term aid dependency.

After ICRC training, 209 livestock owners in the SRS (Degehabur and Fik zones) were able to boost their herds' productivity by treating common livestock diseases. To reduce health risks in those regions and the neighbouring Korahe zone, communities and the ICRC constructed or repaired reservoirs, wells and latrines and promoted hygiene.

In Afar, communities continued to benefit from a five-year ICRC assistance programme initiated in 2004 in Boromodaitu district (population 44,000). With training, materials and supervision, 40 farmers increased animal fodder production in six zones, then began teaching their neighbours, with the ICRC providing the necessary seed and tools to another 320 farmers. In other initiatives, ICRC-trained community animal health care workers treated some 15,000 head of livestock in the district, over 2,000 families received vouchers to treat their livestock (around 41,000 animals) against parasites, and a system was organized in the new ICRC-built pharmacy to provide veterinary supplies. The pharmacy also ensured an affordable drug supply for the 56 ICRC-trained community health workers and traditional birth attendants who, with ongoing training, offered primary health care services throughout the district. To improve public health, communities also received 401 household water filters, and the ICRC constructed four wells. Sufferers of a cholera outbreak in early 2007 were treated at an emergency centre set up by the ICRC, while six other centres were supplied with water and sanitation and hygiene items.

In Gambella and Tigray, villagers faced fewer health risks after the ICRC constructed or repaired vital water facilities and two health posts (Gambella) and organized hygiene-promotion training.

To aid economic recovery in Gambella, 83 livestock owners from areas with returning IDPs completed a basic veterinary course, and 8 of the 20 Gambella cooperatives assisted in 2006 received additional training and materials on the basis of their improved productivity.

- ▶ 21,312 people (3,516 households) benefited from agricultural/veterinary/micro-economic initiatives, including:
 - 12,336 people from the distribution of veterinary treatment vouchers in Afar
 - 4,320 people from the provision of basic materials to cooperatives in Gambella
 - 2,256 people from livestock management training courses in Gambella and the SRS
 - 2,400 people from training and distributions of seed and tools to improve fodder production in Afar
- ▶ 98,424 people benefited from water/sanitation/habitat projects

Restoring family links

Thousands of people communicated with relatives on the other side of the closed Eritrea-Ethiopia border through the tracing and RCM services. At their request, people of Eritrean or Ethiopian origin were repatriated and children, the elderly and the sick reunited with relatives across the border, under ICRC auspices. This was their only legal means of returning to their country of origin. Their official documents were also forwarded so that they could apply for further studies or jobs.

- ▶ 7,793 RCMs collected from and 8,218 RCMs distributed to civilians, including 64 from unaccompanied/separated children
- ▶ new tracing requests registered for 49 people (including 22 females and 13 minors at the time of disappearance); 36 people located; 417 people (including 110 females and 80 minors at the time of disappearance) still being sought
- ▶ 72 people in Ethiopia reunited with family in Eritrea (including 61 unaccompanied/separated children), and 90 people in Eritrea reunited with family in Ethiopia (including 40 unaccompanied/separated children)
- ▶ 65 unaccompanied/separated children registered; 32 cases of unaccompanied/separated children still being handled
- ▶ 122 people voluntarily repatriated from Ethiopia to Eritrea and 2,360 from Eritrea to Ethiopia
- ▶ 6 official documents relayed from Ethiopia and 42 from Eritrea across the border

Many refugees in Ethiopia still relied on the tracing and RCM network to contact family members left behind. Restoring contact between child refugees and their parents and, if possible, reuniting the families remained a priority: all but three such children on the ICRC's register had contacted relatives by year-end.

- ▶ 874 RCMs collected from and 1,570 RCMs distributed to civilians, including 14 from and 66 to unaccompanied/separated children
- ▶ new tracing requests registered for 177 people (including 82 females and 81 minors at the time of disappearance); 161 people located; 243 people (including 65 females and 64 minors at the time of disappearance) still being sought
- ▶ 22 cases of unaccompanied/separated children still being handled
- ▶ 177 Somalis issued with an ICRC travel document

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

The ICRC's expulsion from the SRS in July further curtailed the organization's detention activities. The authorities had already denied the ICRC access to the central investigation department since August 2004 and to federal prisons since December 2005, as well as to some other key detention facilities.

Visiting detainees

Throughout 2007, the ICRC followed up with the authorities a small number of pending cases of former POWs of Eritrean origin, and also visited detainees held in regionally run prisons. Delegates were no longer in a position to follow up systematically the cases of all security detainees, so from March focused, where access permitted, on those considered most vulnerable. They also assessed general detention conditions and respect for inmates' judicial guarantees and informed the authorities confidentially of their findings and recommendations. This contributed to some detainees' cases moving more quickly through the legal process and to improvements in prison conditions (see below).

Improving detention conditions

Inmates received hygiene and other essential items from the ICRC and could correspond with their families through RCMs, while prison authorities were assisted in improving water, sanitation and kitchen facilities and accommodation for women. With ICRC support, regional coordinators responsible for prison infrastructure were appointed in Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State and began implementing projects. In parallel, staff from 49 prisons in three of the regions were trained in operating and maintaining infrastructure.

Prisons also received medical supplies, and ICRC staff stepped in, where necessary, to address health problems. At ICRC-organized round-tables, prison and local authority personnel in Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz and Tigray agreed on ways to improve medical care in detention facilities. With ICRC support, a Ministry of Health psychiatric nurse initiated prison rounds in Tigray, and the Addis Ababa psychiatric hospital assessed some 100 detainees' mental states, which was a precondition for their trial.

- 1,232 detainees visited and monitored individually (including 45 females and 60 minors) and 465 newly registered (including 36 females and 30 minors), during 177 visits to 122 places of detention
- 75 RCMs collected from and 30 RCMs distributed to detainees
- 527 detention certificates issued to former detainees or their families
- 13,710 detainees benefited from water/sanitation/habitat projects in 18 places of detention

WOUNDED AND SICK

Treating the weapon-wounded

A total of 126 people injured as a result of armed conflict or violence in Afar, Gambella and the SRS were treated at 9 medical facilities, with the ICRC supplying surgical and dressing materials and drugs. Those patients transferred to Addis Ababa had their transport and hospital fees covered.

Supporting physical rehabilitation services

To improve care for disabled people, eight physical rehabilitation centres (Addis Ababa, Arba Minch, Asela, Bahir Dar, Dessie, Harar, Mekele and the Cheshire facility near Menegesha) received ICRC materials to produce mobility devices. Five of the centres also benefited from on-the-job training and physiotherapy services provided by ICRC specialists. In addition, two ICRC-sponsored Ethiopian students who graduated in July from a three-year course at the Tanzania Training Centre for Orthopaedic Technologists joined the Bahir Dar and Harar centres. Internal management problems at the Harar centre led to the suspension of ICRC support there in October.

The year 2007 also saw the Ethiopian authorities, with ICRC input, launch a process to define a national strategy to upgrade rehabilitation services.

- 10,209 patients (including 2,594 women and 1,569 children) received services at 8 ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centres
- 1,430 new patients (including 219 women and 96 children) fitted with prostheses and 2,849 (including 854 women and 805 children) fitted with orthoses
- 2,316 prostheses (including 353 for women, 127 for children and 813 for mine victims), 3,870 orthoses (including 1,094 for women, 1,134 for children and 385 for mine victims), 7,317 crutches and 591 wheelchairs delivered

AUTHORITIES

With its energies focused on military engagement in Somalia and internal issues, the government did not consider IHL implementation a priority.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed an interest, however, in reactivating the interministerial IHL committee, which had last met in 1998. To support this initiative, a ministry representative participated in the ICRC's Second Universal Meeting of National IHL Committees, held in Geneva, Switzerland, in March. At the three-day event, 150 experts from over 80 States discussed legal measures to include in national legislation to prevent disappearances during armed conflict, clarify the fate of missing persons and better assist their families.

In September, government representatives and Ethiopian and international mine experts evaluated Ethiopia's implementation of the Ottawa Convention during a two-day workshop hosted by the ICRC. This contributed to Ethiopia's preparation for the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, held in Jordan in November.

Another positive development was the government's publication in April of the ICRC's Amharic translation of the 1977 Additional Protocols, ratified by Ethiopia in 1994.

Outside the capital, local authorities in violence-prone areas learned about IHL during 16 ICRC presentations.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) and police worked with the ICRC to integrate IHL and international human rights standards into training programmes for all ranks. The ENDF was already teaching IHL, using its own instructors. The police achieved the same level of autonomy in April following a week-long evaluation course organized by the ICRC for 22 instructors at the Police College.

In parallel, 632 military personnel were briefed on IHL and 1,112 female ENDF officers took part in workshops on the impact of armed conflict on women. In the field, some 5,200 police and civilian militia members stationed in violence-prone regions participated in one- to two-day information sessions on human rights and good policing.

Other planned activities were postponed owing to internal military priorities and the ENDF's suspension of cooperation with the ICRC following the organization's expulsion from the SRS.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Public attention was drawn to humanitarian issues and IHL through the ICRC's participation in events to mark International Women's Day, World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day and World Water Day, as well as media coverage generated by the delegation's press releases and interviews. In violence-prone areas, elders and other community leaders learned about IHL and the ICRC during numerous presentations by field staff.

Most of the main universities taught IHL, but there was a shortage of instructors. At Addis Ababa University, postgraduate law students were able to take their final examination thanks to an ICRC legal adviser who stepped in to teach the compulsory IHL course. Mekele (Tigray) and Haremaya (Harar) university law faculties reinforced their capacities to teach IHL by sending lecturers, sponsored by the ICRC, to November's pan-African course on IHL (see *Pretoria regional*) and by drawing on ICRC materials and expertise to run their courses. A team of 3 Haremaya University law students, also sponsored by the ICRC, participated in the pan-African IHL competition in the United Republic of Tanzania (see *Nairobi regional*), and finished second.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Ethiopian Red Cross Society, as the country's largest humanitarian organization (with some 1,000 staff and 90,000 volunteers), helped run the tracing and RCM network and took part in some ICRC relief distributions and activities to promote IHL. Its newly appointed secretary-general initiated management reforms, and the National Society continued to develop its first-aid, assistance, tracing and communication programmes through the range of initiatives below, directly supported by ICRC funds, materials and expertise.

Strengthening infrastructure and management

- ▶ the salaries covered of 23 staff in 11 branches, 2 headquarters staff and 12 tracing officers
- ▶ 1 branch rehabilitated
- ▶ 11 branches received office supplies and funds to help cover running costs
- ▶ headquarters representatives sponsored to participate in ICRC meetings abroad on economic security and tracing
- ▶ activities monitored in 8 regional branches

Providing first aid and assistance

- ▶ 24 branch heads trained in disaster management
- ▶ 24 personnel trained as first-aid instructors and 2,022 as first-aiders
- ▶ 18 ambulances, 20 service vehicles and 2 motorbikes added to the fleet
- ▶ relief goods delivered regularly to branches for redistribution

Restoring family links

- ▶ 2 tracing staff trained in management
- ▶ an introductory and a refresher tracing course held for volunteers
- ▶ headquarters and branches received 200 tracing manuals and 3,000 brochures
- ▶ branches provided with 15 bicycles and 1 computer

Promoting IHL and the Fundamental Principles

- ▶ 2,047 local government and religious leaders in 7 regions and 6,562 university students participated in dissemination sessions
- ▶ 33 programmes about the Movement broadcast on radio and television
- ▶ branches provided with dissemination brochures, leaflets and posters