

uganda



With the exception of the period following the killing of six ICRC staff members in April 2001 in neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo, the ICRC has been continuously active in Uganda since 1979. Late in 2003, given the dramatic needs of the victims of armed conflict in the north of the country, the ICRC resumed its field action, with a view to protecting and assisting those affected. These activities soon expanded into a major operation which has continued ever since. The ICRC also visits detainees falling within its mandate and strives to raise awareness of IHL and humanitarian principles among the armed and police forces.

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	1,303
Assistance	18,440
Prevention	1,380
Cooperation with National Societies	1,487
General	-

► **22,610**

of which: Overheads 1,380

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	93%
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PERSONNEL

33 expatriates
200 national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2007, the ICRC:

- provided essential household items, seed and tools to more than half of Acholiland's estimated 1.1 million IDPs
- drilled or rehabilitated 109 boreholes and supported the construction of 2,003 pit latrines
- provided 14 health centres and 9 hospitals with medical supplies and other support
- continued to visit detainees in 71 places of detention countrywide to monitor their treatment and living conditions
- began to strengthen HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria control in 3 prisons, together with the Ugandan Prison Service and the Ministry of Health
- briefed more than 6,000 military/police personnel on IHL/human rights law

CONTEXT

Peace talks between the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) resumed in Juba at the end of April. The parties reached agreement on a number of issues, prolonged the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement into 2008 and began to tackle the sensitive and crucial issues of accountability, reconciliation and justice. For the first time, an LRA delegation came to Kampala, met President Museveni and toured the country for consultations with the people, local leaders and victims of the conflict. However, internal problems within the LRA in the second half of the year brought the talks to a standstill. Delayed implementation by the LRA of core measures agreed by the negotiating parties brought the armed group under increasing political and military pressure.

Across northern Uganda, improved security enabled people to leave the main IDP camps and move to new sites, usually in their parishes of origin, where they enjoyed greater access to cultivable land. However, repeated cattle-rustling incursions by Karamajong warriors into Kitgum and Pader districts hampered the return of IDPs.

Military operations by the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) to disarm traditional warriors in the Karamoja region and to curb ongoing intertribal cattle raiding continued, leaving casualties on both sides. Highway robbery remained another factor of insecurity throughout the region.

In March, the UPDF claimed it had defeated a group of Allied Democratic Forces fighters who had entered Uganda from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Towards the end of the year, thousands of Congolese refugees arrived in western Uganda, fleeing fighting in the DRC.

Major flooding affected people in central and eastern Uganda in September. In December, an Ebola outbreak in the western region caused more than 30 fatalities.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kampala in November raised Uganda's international profile. The country pursued increased cooperation with its neighbours, in particular through the East African Community. In response to clashes between the armies of the DRC and Uganda over oil exploration around Lake Albert, Presidents Kabila and Museveni signed the Ngurdoto Agreement to ease tensions between the two countries. Uganda deployed over 1,500 troops to Mogadishu in support of the African Union Mission to Somalia.

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	420	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>				
<i>of whom females</i>	15	Food	Beneficiaries	5,905	21%	62%
<i>of whom minors</i>	15	Essential household items	Beneficiaries	604,666	21%	61%
Number of visits carried out	176	Agricultural inputs and micro-economic initiatives	Beneficiaries	618,767	21%	62%
Number of places of detention visited	71	Water, sanitation and habitat projects	Beneficiaries	336,202	25%	49%
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS		Health				
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>		Health centres supported	Structures	14		
RCMs collected	2,242	Consultations	Patients	123,811		
RCMs distributed	1,170	<i>of which curative</i>	Patients		42,985	46,788
People reunited with their families	2	<i>of which ante/post-natal</i>	Patients		5,762	
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>		Immunizations	Doses	46,673		
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	36	WOUNDED AND SICK				
<i>of whom females</i>	18	Hospitals supported	Structures	9		
<i>of whom minors at the time of disappearance</i>	13	Admissions	Patients	11,344	4,778	4,885
Tracing cases closed positively (persons located)	37	Operations	Operations performed	972		
Tracing cases still being handled at 31 December 2007 (people)	9					
<i>of which for females</i>	3					
<i>of which for minors at the time of disappearance</i>	2					
<i>Unaccompanied minors (UAMs) and separated children (SCs), including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers</i>						
UAMs/SCs newly registered by the ICRC	8					
UAMs/SCs reunited with their families by the ICRC	1					
UAM/SC cases still being handled at 31 December 2007 (people)	8					
DOCUMENTS ISSUED						
People to whom travel documents were issued	19					
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	16					

ICRC ACTION

The ICRC remained a key humanitarian actor in northern Uganda, where its strategy was to provide a sustainable response to the evolving needs of IDPs. It provided some 620,000 IDPs with material assistance and carried out protection activities on their behalf.

ICRC delegates monitored the protection needs of the civilian population in northern Uganda and, where necessary, made confidential representations in this regard to the relevant civil and military authorities.

As people left the main IDP camps and moved nearer to land they could cultivate, the ICRC distributed seed and tools to support agricultural production and thereby improve people's diet, income and self-sufficiency.

IDPs gained enhanced access to water through the drilling and rehabilitation of boreholes by the ICRC. In particular, the ICRC monitored the development of new transit camps and provided them with safe drinking water, as needed.

Having assessed the hygiene and public health situation in IDP camps in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts, the ICRC, the Swedish Red Cross and the Uganda Red Cross Society began a comprehensive hygiene promotion programme.

The ICRC continued to work with the health authorities to strengthen the capacity of the health system in northern Uganda, through measures such as staff training, the rehabilitation of health centres and the supply of medicines. A pilot project in

Kitgum Government Hospital aimed to improve medical services by boosting management capacity. Meanwhile, work to rehabilitate the hospital's infrastructure was ongoing.

Detainees in civil and military places of detention countrywide received visits from ICRC delegates, who checked on their treatment and conditions of detention. Findings and recommendations were shared confidentially with the relevant authorities. In conjunction with the Ugandan Prison Service (UPS) and the Ministry of Health, a project got under way to strengthen HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria control in three prisons.

Efforts of the armed forces and police to integrate IHL and human rights principles into their training benefited from ICRC assistance. The support included conducting dissemination sessions at field level and briefings or training sessions in military or police academies.

The ICRC maintained contact with the LRA through its office in Southern Sudan and briefed LRA fighters on the basic principles of IHL and respect for the red cross emblem.

The ICRC coordinated activities with other humanitarian agencies, including those participating in the UN cluster system, in order to strengthen complementarity and avoid duplication or gaps in protection or assistance programmes.

The Ugandan Red Cross and the ICRC continued to work closely together and conducted activities in northern and eastern Uganda according to agreed guidelines on the division of labour. The ICRC continued to support the structure and programmes of the National Society through financial and technical assistance.

CIVILIANS

Protection activities for IDPs

The situation in northern Uganda remained classified as a non-international armed conflict. The victims of alleged IHL or human rights violations, their families and eyewitnesses met directly with ICRC delegates, who collected and crosschecked information. When required, oral representations were made to the relevant authorities at local, regional or national level with the aim of putting an end to such abuses. IHL seminars were also held for the military and police to remind them of the protection due to civilians (see *Armed forces and other bearers of weapons*).

Food, economic security and material aid for IDPs

With increased access to land, more than half a million people used seed and tools provided by the ICRC to boost agricultural production during two planting seasons and to build self-sufficiency. They also received basic household items such as clothing, hygiene products for women, soap and school kits.

Some 12,316 people (2,240 households) who had lost their belongings in fire outbreaks or storms received essential household items from the ICRC and the Ugandan Red Cross, sometimes in coordination with other humanitarian organizations. Approximately 5,900 of them (1,073 households) received WFP food rations distributed by the ICRC.

Almost 1,500 vulnerable people (270 households) received 300 goats to increase their household income, in compensation for the cancellation of a poultry project owing to concerns over avian influenza. In conclusion of a programme begun in 2005, a total of 2,481 vulnerable people (451 households) received additional soap rations in order to reduce their expenditure and provide a small surplus to be sold or bartered for other items.

- ▶ 618,767 people (112,503 households) benefited from distributions of seed and tools
- ▶ 595,978 people (108,357 households) received essential household items
- ▶ 5,905 people (1,005 households) received food

Water, sanitation and health care for IDPs

Hygiene, sanitation and access to sufficient safe water remained key concerns for the people of northern Uganda. IDPs in 64 camps in Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts gained improved access to safe water through the drilling of 31 new water sources and the rehabilitation of a further 78. People in 20 camps benefited from the installation of 2,003 pit latrines built with ICRC technical and material support. A hygiene promotion programme, launched within the framework of an integrated partnership between the Swedish Red Cross and the ICRC, and with the active involvement of the National Society, got under way with a baseline survey in 11 camps in Kitgum and Pader districts. IDPs in 17 camps learnt about hygiene and public health issues at regular information sessions supported by the ICRC. The rehabilitation of seven health centres was in progress and included the construction of three maternity wards and sanitation and waste disposal facilities.

- ▶ about 316,000 people benefited from water/sanitation/habitat projects, including 26,000 from information sessions on hygiene and public health

With access to proper health services remaining a major problem for IDPs in northern Uganda, health facilities at district and

community level in Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts continued to receive regular and ad hoc ICRC support, including on-the-job training and the provision of essential medicines and basic medical equipment. Local communities thus benefited from increased access to primary health care and community-based activities, including vaccination and de-worming treatment for children, the distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets to over 24,000 households to prevent the spread of malaria, and an extensive cholera-prevention programme for the residents of five camps, conducted with the district health authorities.

In the 14 ICRC-supported health centres (catchment population: 130,332):

- ▶ 123,811 people given consultations, including 5,762 attending ante/post-natal consultations and 118,049 attending curative consultations
- ▶ 46,673 vaccine doses administered (18,171 to children aged five or under and 28,490 to women of childbearing age)
- ▶ 569 health education sessions held

People who had been separated from their families, whether refugees, IDPs, unaccompanied minors or other vulnerable persons, were able to restore or maintain contact with their relatives through tracing and family-links services provided by the Ugandan Red Cross, working in close cooperation with the ICRC. The National Society received ICRC technical and financial support to strengthen the capacity of these services at national and regional level. The support included the development of a training strategy for tracing staff and volunteers, updating the National Society's tracing manual, and providing close technical support in the handling of RCMs to or from detainees.

The demand for tracing and family reunification services was regularly assessed through joint Ugandan Red Cross/ICRC field trips, focusing on unaccompanied minors, so that the services provided could be tailored to specific needs. The National Society also monitored the tracing needs of women and children who had left Karamoja for socio-economic or security reasons and who had been returned to the region by the government.

- ▶ 1,668 RCMs collected from and 635 RCMs distributed to civilians, including 26 from and 15 to unaccompanied/separated children
- ▶ new tracing requests registered for 36 people (including 18 females and 13 minors at the time of disappearance); 37 people located; 9 people (including 3 females and 2 minors at the time of disappearance) still being sought
- ▶ 2 people reunited with their families, including 1 unaccompanied/separated child
- ▶ 8 unaccompanied/separated children registered; 8 cases of unaccompanied/separated children still being handled
- ▶ 19 people issued with an ICRC travel document

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Detainees falling within the ICRC's mandate continued to receive individual visits from ICRC delegates in places of temporary and permanent detention in the north and west of the country, in the Karamoja region and in Kampala. Particular attention was paid to allegations concerning persons arrested and/or detained in relation to the non-international armed conflict in the north, as well as in relation to other situations of violence, for example the arrest of

members of armed groups along the border with the DRC and Southern Sudan and those detained in relation to UPDF “cordon and search” operations in the Karamoja region.

The delegates monitored the treatment and living conditions of detainees in the places of detention visited, as well as respect for judicial guarantees, and made representations to the relevant authorities, where necessary. The ICRC reminded the authorities of their responsibility to ensure that detainees were able to maintain contact with their families. The RCM service was made available, where necessary, in conjunction with the National Society.

Overcrowding, compounded by dilapidated prison infrastructure and delays in the judicial process, continued to affect the well-being of detainees in prisons administered by the UPS. The UPS and the ICRC maintained their regular dialogue, with a particular focus on measures to be taken following the infrastructure/water and sanitation assessments and nutritional survey conducted in UPS prisons in 2006. Follow-up infrastructure rehabilitation projects were conducted in prisons in Gulu, Ibuga, Luzira and Rwimi.

Detainees’ health suffered as a result of the structural and technical deficiencies of the UPS health system and poor coordination between the UPS, the Ministry of Health and the private sector. The framework for a joint project aiming to boost the capacity of the Uganda Prison Medical Services to address HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria in three UPS prisons was agreed between the Ministry of Health, the UPS and the ICRC. The intention was to establish a model that could be replicated, with government resources, across the prison system. Having assessed health services in the three sites, plans of action were drafted and priority areas and key NGO partners identified. Inmates of two of the sites gained access to HIV voluntary counselling and testing services provided by local NGOs. Prisons received mesh to cover windows and equipment to conduct spraying campaigns, thereby reducing the exposure to malaria of more than 5,000 detainees.

Where needed, detainees benefited from ICRC distributions of blankets, uniforms, water containers, cleaning and cooking utensils, and hygiene and recreational items to complement the authorities’ efforts to improve material conditions of detention. Female detainees also received items such as sanitary pads and clothing.

- 420 detainees visited and monitored individually (including 15 females and 15 minors) and 214 newly registered (including 12 females and 13 minors), during 176 visits to 71 places of detention
- 574 RCMs collected from and 535 RCMs distributed to detainees
- 1 detainee visited by relatives with ICRC support
- 16 detention certificates issued to former detainees or their families
- some 20,000 detainees and UPS staff and their families benefited from water/sanitation projects
- 8,688 detainees received essential household items, clothing, or hygiene or recreational materials
- 71 released detainees had their transport/accommodation costs paid to enable them to travel home

WOUNDED AND SICK

Nine hospitals in Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts were supplied with medicines on an ad hoc basis. These hospitals served as referral facilities for a catchment population of some 1.1 million people, 80% of them IDPs.

In September 2007, Matany Hospital in Karamoja received medical supplies from the ICRC. Local doctors and operating theatre staff were trained in surgical procedures for the weapon-wounded. They operated on 63 patients altogether, of whom 23 were weapon-wounded.

Kitgum Government Hospital began a three-year project to improve health services for the population by streamlining procedures and increasing management capacity. An ICRC team of three experts (a doctor, a midwife and an administrator) began to work with the hospital’s management. The hospital also benefited from work to rehabilitate its water supply and electrical systems and received ad hoc donations of medical supplies. Staff underwent clinical training.

In Kitgum Government Hospital:

- 11,334 patients (including 4,778 women and 4,885 children) admitted: of whom 10 weapon-wounded (including 1 woman, 3 children, and 1 person injured by mines or explosive remnants of war), 967 other surgical cases, and 6,967 medical and 3,400 gynaecological/obstetric patients
- 972 surgical operations performed
- 72,220 outpatients given consultations, including 70,163 attending surgical or medical consultations and 2,057 attending gynaecological/obstetric consultations

AUTHORITIES

The government of Uganda ratified Additional Protocol III.

Three parliamentary committees held introductory meetings with the ICRC regarding IHL implementation, and later received relevant legal material, including the ICRC’s comments on the draft International Criminal Court bill.

Relevant authorities received input from the ICRC on:

- a draft bill to enact the Chemical Weapons Convention
- a draft national small arms and light weapons policy
- the protection of children in armed conflict with respect to a review of the Children’s Act
- a Ministry of Defence action plan to prevent the recruitment of child soldiers in the army

A participant from the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs attended an international IHL seminar in South Africa.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Activities to promote the integration of IHL/human rights standards into military/police doctrine, training and operations continued, within the framework of agreements signed in 2005 with the UPDF and the Ugandan Police Force. Military/police instructors attended train-the-trainer courses, and some teaching sessions were facilitated by instructors who had previously received ICRC training. Both the military and the police also learned about the mandate and activities of the ICRC.

UPDF training academies, five out of seven of which had incorporated IHL into their curricula, received IHL teaching and refer-

ence materials. In total, over 4,000 military personnel participated in information/training sessions including:

- ▶ 78 UPDF instructors/legal officers attending train-the-trainer courses
- ▶ 54 officers attending IHL courses in the Karamoja and Western regions
- ▶ 6 officers attending high-level IHL workshops/courses in Switzerland/San Remo (Italy)
- ▶ 4,130 officers, soldiers and members of local defence units in northern Uganda
- ▶ 100 UPDF officers selected for future peacekeeping missions abroad

Participants in sessions for the police included:

- ▶ 48 instructors attending train-the-trainer courses
- ▶ 173 UPS officers and 1,980 special constables to be deployed in the north and north-east of the country
- ▶ 47 Ugandan police officers before deployment on peacekeeping missions abroad

Twenty-six police instructors took part in a workshop to draft a curriculum plan for the inclusion of international human rights law and humanitarian principles in future police training.

The ICRC sub-delegation in Southern Sudan pursued dialogue with the LRA and held dissemination sessions for about 100 LRA members on basic IHL and respect for the red cross emblem.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Media coverage of ICRC activities was facilitated by regular contact between journalists and the delegation. Influential members of civil society learned about IHL/humanitarian principles and the ICRC and drew on the organization's IHL expertise.

- ▶ 57 news items relating to IHL and the ICRC's work featured in the media
- ▶ 3 media field visits organized to show ICRC assistance activities in northern Uganda
- ▶ over 20 journalists attended a media workshop in Kitgum district
- ▶ 80 community leaders attended 3 information sessions in the north of Uganda
- ▶ 60 lawyers attended an IHL workshop co-hosted with the Uganda Law Society
- ▶ an employee from a radio station in Gulu attended an ICRC course for broadcast journalists in Kenya
- ▶ the judges of a school essay competition on small arms proliferation consulted the ICRC

Students of law and other disciplines learned about IHL during their courses, with ICRC support.

- ▶ 315 students from 3 universities attended IHL presentations
- ▶ 2 university teams participated in a regional IHL moot court competition
- ▶ the winner of a regional IHL essay competition was one of 6 Ugandan entrants
- ▶ 3 lecturers attended the All Africa IHL Course in South Africa
- ▶ 3 lecturers attended an IHL round-table in Kenya

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Uganda Red Cross Society and the ICRC continued to work in close coordination, particularly in their complementary assistance operations in northern Uganda. National Society activities to restore family links and promote IHL and the Fundamental Principles also received ICRC support (see *Civilians*).

- ▶ essential household items donated for use in National Society flood relief and Ebola response programmes
- ▶ guidelines for the distribution of relief items developed
- ▶ the Ugandan Red Cross disaster management department strengthened through training in key Movement activities and tools
- ▶ 78 volunteers received dissemination training to help raise the National Society's profile in Karamoja in advance of planned activities there
- ▶ 19 branches undertook dissemination activities
- ▶ Pader branch office constructed, with ICRC support

The Ugandan Red Cross began the implementation of its strategic plan for 2007–10, involving major restructuring and, in particular, the establishment of decentralized units to facilitate the provision of technical support to branches. It adopted a revised constitution, elected a new national board, reviewed several policy areas and developed a four-year strategy for northern and eastern Uganda on which to base its activities for IDPs.

The Ugandan Red Cross and the ICRC continued to coordinate their activities with those of other Movement partners working in the country.