# **TUNIS** (regional)

COVERING: Libya (see separate chapter), Mauritania, Morocco/Western Sahara, Tunisia



ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic centre
Map shows structures supporting ICRC operations in Libya

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)	
Protection	12,605
Assistance	33,518
Prevention	4,222
Cooperation with National Societies	2,969
General	-

53,314 of which: Overheads 3,224

IMPLEMENTATION RATE	
Expenditure/yearly budget	70%
PERSONNEL	
Expatriates	77
National staff	71
(daily workers not included)	

#### **KEY POINTS**

#### In 2011, the ICRC:

- stepped up activities and increased its support to the Tunisian Red Crescent to enable an effective response to needs arising from armed conflict in Libya
- with the Tunisian Red Crescent and the International Federation, provided meals, essential household/hygiene items and family-links services to people fleeing Libya and also facilitated 96,783 phone calls
- with Tunisia's water authorities, constructed a water distribution system in Choucha transit camp and 2 pipelines in the wider border area, making adequate quantities of clean water available to Tunisians and people fleeing Libya
- following riots in Tunisian prisons, helped the authorities restore the penitentiary system to full capacity, notably by renovating damaged accommodation and clinics and enhancing health and safety
- in Mauritania, strengthened its support to the penitentiary authorities, launching various initiatives to improve detainees' access to adequate food, health care and hygiene conditions
- welcomed the ratification of the 1977 Additional Protocols by Morocco and of the Rome Statute by Tunisia

The regional delegation based in Tunis, which has been operating since 1987, regularly visits people deprived of their freedom in Mauritania and Tunisia to monitor their treatment and conditions of detention. Acting as a neutral intermediary, it is also involved in efforts to resolve issues of humanitarian concern arising from the aftermath of the Western Sahara conflict. It promotes implementation of IHL by the authorities, including its integration into national legislation and into training programmes for the armed forces. National Societies in the region are essential partners in this process.

### CONTEXT

In Tunisia, street protests that began in December 2010 on socioeconomic grounds swiftly gathered momentum, transforming into a popular challenge to the long-ruling regime. Widespread violence ensued, alongside prison riots, and the armed forces were deployed to maintain order. On 14 January, the president departed, giving way to a first transitional administration. In October, constituent assembly elections, widely respected for their credibility, took place. A coalition government, led by the Ennahda party, took office in December to draw up a new constitution. In the absence of tangible economic improvements, public protests continued throughout the year.

From February, the outbreak of armed conflict in Libya caused several hundred thousand foreigners and Libyans to flee to neighbouring countries, mainly Tunisia and Egypt (see *Egypt*), exacerbating socio-political pressures. The Tunisian authorities and humanitarian organizations developed operations to provide shelter, relief and/or repatriation/resettlement assistance to refugees and people in transit until the situation stabilized.

Tunisia's uprising found echoes across the region. Protests in Morocco and Mauritania prompted the authorities to act to alleviate socio-economic and, in some cases, political or ethnic tensions. In Morocco, a vote for constitutional reform resulted in parliamentary elections and a new government. The country's Consultative Council for Human Rights (CCDH) was replaced by the National Council for Human Rights (CNDH).

The status of Western Sahara remained a contentious issue between Morocco and the Polisario Front. Families on both sides continued to seek news of relatives missing from the 1975–91 Western Sahara conflict. Mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW) remained from this period.

Violence persisted around the Mauritania-Mali frontier, involving, according to some sources, the self-styled Al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb. Security operations targeting armed groups suspected of endangering State security reportedly led to arrests. Reports of prolific cross-border weapon trading linked to the Libyan conflict generated unease regionwide.

### **ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS**

Given regional developments, the Tunis delegation adapted its priorities, scaling up its activities to meet humanitarian needs arising from unrest in Tunisia (also affecting prisons) and,

Main figures and indicators PROTECTION	Total		
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)			
Red Cross messages (RCMs)		UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected	171	36	
RCMs distributed	88	16	
Phone calls facilitated between family members	96,787		
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons <sup>1</sup>		Women	Minors
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	487	77	63
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	111		
including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation	11		
Tracing cases still being handled at 31 December 2011 (people)	421	75	39
UAMs/SCs*, including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers			Demobilized children
UAM/SC cases still being handled by the ICRC/National Society at 31 December 2011	30	7	
Documents			
People to whom travel documents were issued	230		
Official documents relayed between family members across borders/front lines	9		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses) <sup>2</sup>			
ICRC visits		Women	
Detainees visited	24,510		
Detainees visited and monitored individually	234	12	1
Detainees newly registered	92	11	1
Number of visits carried out	119		
Number of places of detention visited	40		
Restoring family links			
RCMs collected	81		
RCMs distributed	37		
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	79		
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	16		

\* Unaccompanied minors/separated children 1. Not including people missing as a consequence of the Western Sahara armed conflict

2. Mauritania, Morocco/Western Sahara, Tunisia

Main figures and indicators	ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.) <sup>3</sup>					
Economic security, water and habitat					
Food		Beneficiaries	1,626	40%	20%
	of whom IDPs	Beneficiaries	1,626		
Essential household items		Beneficiaries	126,140	16%	4%
	of whom IDPs	Beneficiaries	126,140		
Water and habitat activities		Beneficiaries	145,000	28%	45%
	of whom IDPs	Beneficiaries	48,000		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categorie	s/all statuses)				
Economic security, water and habitat					
Food <sup>4</sup>		Beneficiaries	257		
Essential household items <sup>4</sup>		Beneficiaries	1,444		
Water and habitat activities <sup>5</sup>		Beneficiaries	3,305		
WOUNDED AND SICK					
Hospitals <sup>3</sup>					
Hospitals supported		Structures	9		
	of which provided data	Structures	6		
Admissions		Patients	1,265		
	of whom weapon-wounded	Patients	1,265		
Operations performed			1,150		
Outpatient consultations		Patients	8,850		
	of which medical	Patients	8,850		
First aid <sup>3</sup>					
First-aid posts supported		Structures	1		
	of which provided data	Structures	1		
Wounded patients treated		Patients	691		
Physical rehabilitation <sup>6</sup>					
Centres supported		Structures	1		
Patients receiving services		Patients	531	176	106
New patients fitted with prostheses		Patients	17	5	
Prostheses delivered		Units	20	4	
	of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war	Units	15		
New patients fitted with orthoses		Patients	56	30	-
Orthoses delivered		Units	64	32	4
	of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war	Units	7		
Crutches delivered		Units	89		
Wheelchairs delivered		Units	11		

subsequently, armed conflict in Libya. (For a description of ICRC operations conducted by the Tunis delegation in Libya, see the separate chapter: *Libya*.) In March, the ICRC increased the operation's budget and appealed for additional funds. Regionwide, it pursued planned protection activities for detainees and dispersed relatives, while working to broaden support for humanitarian principles and the Movement's neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action.

To guide an effective Movement response at the Tunisia-Libya border, the ICRC and the International Federation strengthened their support to the Tunisian Red Crescent to facilitate emergency operations. In coordination with the Tunisian authorities and other actors present, including Movement components, the ICRC worked alongside the National Society to meet the basic needs of new arrivals, mainly in Choucha transit camp. As necessary, they provided meals, household/hygiene essentials and family-links services. With the Tunisian water board, the ICRC installed a water supply system and sanitation facilities in Choucha, contributing to adequate living conditions there. Outside the camps, to reduce strain on local resources, it delivered aid to Libyan refugees and struggling Tunisians and substantially upgraded the water network. Hospitals admitting people wounded in Libya but seeking treatment in Tunisia received medical/surgical materials and, in one case, war-surgery training. As the situation normalized, the ICRC scaled down emergency assistance, subsequently focusing on helping the National Society prepare for the October elections.

ICRC delegates continued to visit detainees in Mauritania and Tunisia. In Mauritania, they stepped up support to the authorities, combining direct assistance with advice and training to encourage sustainable improvements to penitentiary health care and living conditions. They launched initiatives to combat malnutrition and poor hygiene, provided on-the-job training to health workers and renovated unsound water/sanitation infrastructure. In Tunisia, the authorities readily accepted ICRC help to restore the penitentiary system to full capacity, improve health and safety, and better prepare prison workers to handle unrest. This included rehabilitating damaged clinics and accommodation.

Besides establishing contact with the transitional Tunisian administration, the ICRC maintained dialogue with authorities in Mauritania and Morocco to strengthen their support for IHL and ICRC activities. It provided training for government officials and IHL implementation bodies to advance treaty ratification/ implementation and for military/security personnel in Mauritania and Morocco to enhance their understanding of IHL/international human rights law. Closer cooperation with media circles and the organization of IHL events for civil society members widened awareness of Movement activities and humanitarian principles.

The ICRC prosthetic/orthotic workshop and physical rehabilitation centre in south-west Algeria continued to provide limbfitting and physiotherapy services to disabled Saharawi refugees, including mine/ERW victims.

Operational priorities delayed planned mine-risk education activities in Western Sahara. With ICRC guidance, however, the Moroccan Red Crescent prepared to resume these, while redesigning its family-links and communication strategies. The Mauritanian Red Crescent benefited from similar support in revising its statutes, policies and operational strategy.

### **CIVILIANS**

With the onset of hostilities in Libya, Libyans and foreign residents of Libya streamed into south-east Tunisia. While most Libyans sought refuge in local communities, foreigners gathered in transit facilities established by the authorities and humanitarian organizations to await repatriation/resettlement in third countries.

Mandated by the authorities to coordinate the relief effort, the Tunisian Red Crescent received increased support from the ICRC and other Movement components to enable an effective response to emergency needs (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*). Together they worked with all actors present to handle the flow of arrivals. ICRC efforts focused mainly on providing familylinks services, improving living conditions in the largest camp, Choucha, and strengthening the National Society's capacities in terms of camp management. Frequent meetings served to identify unmet needs, allocate responsibilities and establish referral systems.

## People in transit contact relatives and obtain required paperwork

Throughout the year, people in transit received assistance from National Society/ICRC teams in locating/contacting families in Libya or elsewhere, making 96,783 calls via a free telephone service. To facilitate UNHCR/IOM evacuation efforts, 230 people obtained ICRC travel documents.

Many people met delegates privately to discuss their circumstances, enabling the ICRC to learn about conditions in Libya and to collect allegations of arrests and abuses. The latter were collected with a view to approaching the alleged perpetrators and urging them to take the necessary corrective measures.

# People in transit, refugees and vulnerable Tunisians receive water, food and other essentials

Upon arrival, over 125,000 people in transit camps and Libyans staying with Tunisian families were given ICRC kits containing essential household/hygiene items, including some from the International Federation. Tunisian families struggling under increased socio-economic pressures similarly received household necessities.

In regions affected by influx, 145,000 people benefited from ICRC water/sanitation initiatives undertaken alongside the national water board and local authorities. Installing a water distribution system in Choucha ensured that camp residents had continuous access to clean water. New showers and latrines and regular waste collection contributed to a healthy environment. After securing the camp water supply, ICRC engineers turned to upgrading the wider water network, while UNHCR assumed responsibility for managing/maintaining camp infrastructure. Tunisians and refugees in border areas saw their water supply increase substantially with the construction of two pipelines (5-km and 10-km long), thereby alleviating strain on local wells.

Meal provision in Choucha was a joint effort. Of four on-site kitchens, one was operated by the National Society with help from the ICRC, which installed the facilities, and from WFP and local communities, which donated ingredients. Between March and 17 April, when WFP partners took over, National Society volunteers served over 373,000 meals. Outside Choucha, 1,626 Libyan refugees were similarly assured of a nutritious meal thanks to ICRC food donations. In May, tensions among frustrated groups awaiting transfer, and among Tunisians affected by their presence, resulted in the destruction of Choucha. ICRC activities there, briefly suspended, resumed on a smaller scale following its reconstruction. As the situation in Libya stabilized, the influx tailed off, refugees began returning and needs at the border diminished. Movement partners scaled down their activities, continuing to offer family-links services (see above). By year-end, only Choucha camp remained open, under UNHCR management, hosting some 3,600 foreigners awaiting resettlement. Meanwhile, Tunisia having reinstated border controls in October, migrants awaiting administrative clearance received ad hoc food, water and/or blankets.

#### Family-links services remain available regionwide

Family-links services remained available to dispersed relatives elsewhere in Tunisia and the wider region. In particular, families maintained contact with relatives detained/interned in the US internment facility at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba or elsewhere abroad through RCMs and phone/video calls. One Tunisian who had resettled in Europe following his internment received a family visit there arranged by the ICRC, easing his reintegration.

The Libyan crisis, while delaying progress on promoting the Restoring Family Links Strategy for the Movement among the region's National Societies, demonstrated the relevance of familylinks services. The Moroccan Red Crescent requested ICRC training to better integrate family-links activities into disaster management.

### Efforts pursued to provide answers to the families of persons missing from the Western Sahara conflict

The ICRC remained ready, as a neutral intermediary, to assist the Moroccan authorities and the Polisario Front in clarifying the fate of people missing in connection with the Western Sahara conflict and in informing the families accordingly. Following the dissolution of the CCDH mandated to address the issue for Morocco, the CNDH that replaced it proposed resuming discussions once it had established itself.

### **PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM**

Detainees in Mauritania and Tunisia received visits from the ICRC, according to its standard procedures, to monitor their treatment and living conditions. Some used Movement family-links services to contact their families/consular representatives.

Following visits, observations and, where necessary, recommendations were shared with the authorities confidentially. They were encouraged to promote existing legislation designed to protect detainees and to penalize any proven abuses. After the Tunisian uprising, the Defence and Interior Ministries granted the ICRC access to all detainees under their jurisdictions. People newly arrested for State security reasons, including individuals associated with the former regime, therefore benefited from ICRC visits.

### Tunisian interim authorities supported in restoring the penitentiary system to full capacity

The Tunisian uprising sparked riots among detainees feeling ill-informed and uncertain of their future. Fires and violent confrontations with prison personnel ensued. Damage to infrastructure rendered some quarters uninhabitable, including clinics, aggravating longstanding overcrowding and impeding medical care.

Drawing on a subsequent ICRC assessment of conditions in 28 prisons, and the resulting recommendations, Tunisia's interim authorities welcomed advice and practical support in addressing urgent needs, restoring the penitentiary system to full capacity and better preparing prison workers to manage tensions.

Inmates in one prison regained full use of their quarters after the ICRC renovated damaged accommodation. A fire-detection/ alarm system, part-installed by year-end, stood to improve their safety. Four damaged clinics had essential equipment refitted. Penitentiary officials discussed their experiences at ICRC-facilitated round-tables, bringing to light management/health care issues requiring attention.

Among other steps taken to improve detainees' well-being, around 100 health workers examined medical ethics at an ICRC seminar, focusing on confidentiality and the accurate documentation of physical/psychological symptoms. Inmates sentenced to death acquired the right to receive family visits.

Towards year-end, the authorities announced their intention to resume ICRC-supported projects to tackle overcrowding initiated in 2010 but sidelined during 2011. To help them better analyse/ respond to prison population trends, an ICRC-commissioned statistics expert advised on improvements to data collection/ sharing procedures.

## Detainees in Mauritania benefit from new nutritional and health care initiatives

Lacking the resources to address shortcomings in prison infrastructure and management, the Mauritanian authorities benefited from increased ICRC material, training and advisory support aimed primarily at establishing an effective penitentiary health

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM		MAURITANIA	TUNISIA
ICRC visits			
Detainees visited		1,778	22,732
Detainees visited and monitored individually		66	168
	of whom women		12
	of whom minors		1
Detainees newly registered		23	69
	of whom women		11
	of whom minors		1
Number of visits carried out		48	71
Number of places of detention visited		7	33
Restoring family links			
RCMs collected		20	61
RCMs distributed		4	33
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		29	50

system and so securing detainees' well-being. With ICRC encouragement, the Health and Justice Ministries met more regularly to explore solutions and accepted help in appealing to the Finance Ministry for increased funding.

Through a therapeutic feeding initiative launched to combat life-threatening conditions in Nouakchott's Dar Naïm prison, 257 malnourished detainees received high-calorie supplements alongside their regular meals. Meanwhile, five prison clinics received donations of basic medicines/equipment, helping ensure that wounded/sick inmates obtained adequate treatment.

To mitigate general health risks, 1,444 detainees received soap and other items to facilitate good hygiene. On ICRC advice, some formed hygiene teams to conduct regular cleaning, while the Health Ministry appointed a hygienist to coordinate hygiene-control mechanisms. Inmates at risk from scabies had their quarters fumigated and, as needed, received treatment. These initiatives, alongside an overhaul of water/sanitation facilities in one prison, contributed to healthier conditions.

In parallel, prison health workers benefited from on-the-job training and supervision, backed by salary incentives, to kick-start sustainable improvements. They were encouraged to adhere to regular working hours, increase the frequency of consultations and improve medical stock management.

To promote adherence to judicial guarantees, relevant officials worked with delegates to produce a reference document outlining the guarantees to be respected at various stages in the judicial process.

### **WOUNDED AND SICK**

Having sustained injuries in Libya, wounded people sought treatment in southern Tunisia. To support them in handling the influx, nine hospitals received ICRC medical/surgical materials and 29 hospital personnel honed their techniques in treating weapon wounds on an ICRC course.

With resources focused on Libya-related needs, the ICRC temporarily suspended an initiative, begun in 2010, to raise awareness of the dangers of mines/ERW in Moroccan- and Polisario Frontcontrolled parts of Western Sahara. Nevertheless, volunteers from the Saharawi Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Moroccan Red Crescent (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*) prepared to resume activity, improving their communication skills at ICRC workshops.

Meanwhile, 531 disabled Saharawis, including victims of mines/ ERW, benefited from limb-fitting/physiotherapy services provided by the ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic workshop and physical rehabilitation centre in Rabouni, near Tindouf, south-west Algeria. Serving nearby refugee camps, the centre prevented patients from having to travel long distances for treatment. Six local physiotherapists and prosthetic/orthotic technicians upgraded their skills with ICRC training, helping ensure sustainability.

### **AUTHORITIES**

Tunisia's transitional government developed a constructive dialogue with the ICRC, including by cooperating to improve detainees' conditions (see *People deprived of their freedom*). The government's support, and coordination with actors at field level, facilitated the Movement's contribution to humanitarian operations linked to the Libyan conflict (see *Civilians* and *Wounded and sick*).

In Mauritania and Morocco, dialogue focused on building support for the ICRC's neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action and aimed at formalizing the ICRC's presence there. Following the dissolution of the CCDH in Morocco (see *Context*), contact was initiated with its successor, the CNDH.

Drawing on ICRC expertise, materials and sponsorship, the region's governments made advances in treaty ratification. Morocco and Tunisia ratified the 1977 Additional Protocols and the Rome Statute respectively, while Mauritania prepared to ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Tunisia's IHL committee spearheaded progress on legislation protecting the Movement's emblems. Representatives of 18 Arab States adopted recommendations towards the creation of an Arab Model Law on IHL at a gathering in Rabat organized by Morocco's national IHL committee, the League of Arab States and the ICRC. Besides co-organizing with the ICRC round-tables for officials and parliamentarians, national IHL committee members joined IHL instructors and diplomats at regional ICRC seminars to enhance their expertise. In Mauritania, discussions began aimed at encouraging the authorities to bring national legislation in line with IHL.

### **ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS**

Given the unrest in the region and security operations around the Mauritania-Mali border (see *Context*), building respect among weapon bearers for Movement operations, international human rights law and other rules governing the conduct of security operations was crucial. Military/security institutions regionwide cooperated with the ICRC to that end.

During briefings or seminars at national/regional training institutions, some 300 police officers and peacekeepers in Morocco and over 230 military/security personnel in Mauritania examined the application of these bodies of law in contemporary situations of violence/armed conflict and, where relevant, their command responsibilities.

Mauritania's chief military/security commanders and Tunisia's Interior Ministry accepted ICRC proposals to help them better integrate IHL/international human rights law into their forces' basic training. Tunisian officials particularly requested support in redesigning the police/National Guard curricula to incorporate rules applicable when maintaining public order. Tunisia's armed forces, meanwhile, were given IHL reference materials to support them in pursuing IHL instruction independently.

At the Tunisia-Libya border, military authorities maintained regular contact with delegates regarding security issues. They were reminded of their responsibility to respect the principle of

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM		MAURITANIA	TUNISIA
Economic security, water and habitat			
Food	Beneficiaries	257	
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	1,444	
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	1,305	2,000

*non-refoulement* should combatants from Libya enter Tunisian territory. Representatives of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and ICRC delegates similarly exchanged views on the humanitarian/security situation region-wide and in Saharawi refugee camps in particular. Planned seminars for MINURSO and African Union Standby Force personnel were postponed given new operational priorities.

### **CIVIL SOCIETY**

Efforts to increase acceptance of humanitarian principles and the Movement continued, taking advantage of new media freedoms to expand contacts among journalists.

Media representatives in Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia strengthened cooperation with the ICRC. At a seminar organized with the Tunis-based African Centre for Training of Journalists and Communicators, for example, journalists enhanced their understanding of IHL. Access to such events, including regional media workshops, and to ICRC information materials/interviews contributed to wider, more accurate coverage of Movement activities, including at the Tunisia-Libya border (see *Civilians*).

Through bilateral meetings, seminars and round-tables, human rights and religious organizations, legal associations and ICRC delegates discussed issues of mutual interest, such as penitentiary health care in Mauritania. In Morocco, some 60 NGO representatives acquired a greater insight into the legal framework protecting civilians at a CNDH/national IHL committee seminar incorporating ICRC presentations.

Institutions and academics supported ICRC efforts to stimulate interest in IHL and the Movement in higher-education circles, co-organizing lectures/seminars or publishing IHL-related articles. Over 50 students debated common ground between IHL and Islamic law at a regional forum run by Mauritania's leading religious training institute and the ICRC. Dialogue developed with this institute aimed at introducing IHL in its curricula. At a lecture co-organized by Tunis University, UNHCR, the IOM and Movement partners, Tunisian students learnt about the humanitarian response to the Libyan conflict. ICRC-sponsored lecturers honed their expertise at regional IHL events.

### **RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

The Tunisian Red Crescent played a central role in assisting people fleeing Libya, building its visibility as a neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian actor. To help it do so, it received increased ICRC funds, materials, training and guidance to strengthen its management structure and relief, family-links and communication capacities, in coordination with the International Federation and partner National Societies. Ahead of elections in October, attention focused on training/equipping volunteers to provide effective first-aid cover.

Operational priorities in Tunisia/Libya delayed some planned activities in the wider region. Nevertheless, the Mauritanian and Moroccan National Societies continued to receive support in developing a full range of humanitarian services and to facilitate their participation in Movement meetings.

With International Federation/ICRC advisory back-up, the Mauritanian Red Crescent pursued the revision of its statutes, policies and operational strategy. The Moroccan Red Crescent, meanwhile, redesigned its communication and family-links strategies. Volunteers in the Moroccan-controlled part of Western Sahara, preparing to pursue mine-risk education activities tested in 2010 (see *Wounded and sick*), sharpened their presentation skills and adapted supporting information materials.

Amid efforts to develop regional family-links services (see *Civilians*), including for migrants, Mauritanian and Tunisian personnel forged links with colleagues at a Movement workshop.