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Iraq Activity Report 2016

ICRC Iraq Delegation, January 2017

Millions of people throughout Iraq continue to suffer the consequences of armed conflict and the lingering effects of the past violence. Tens of thousands of people were killed or injured. Since 2014, over 3,3 million people have been displaced in various parts of the country.

In addition, over 140,000 people have been displaced since October 2016, when the Iraqi military launched a campaign to retake the city of Mosul. Displaced people and communities living near frontlines, in retaken villages or other affected areas have limited, if any, access to essential services and basic supplies, due to the widespread violence and the destruction of vital infrastructure.

With its established countrywide presence in Iraq, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was able to respond quickly to the needs of people effected by fighting, including those living near the frontlines and in areas where there are few or no other humanitarian organizations. In response to the increased needs linked to the Mosul military operation,

the ICRC scaled up its activities during the last months of 2016. As a core part of its mandate, it promoted compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL) and other rules protecting civilians. It assisted internally displaced persons (IDPs), host communities and returnees in newly retaken areas with food and essential household items; while other conflict-affected communities were provided with cash and livelihood support.

The ICRC also helped improve access to water and health services for millions of people. It visited detainees to monitor their treatment and living conditions, including their access to health care and the respect for judicial guarantees. It facilitated contact between relatives separated owing to current and past conflicts.

The ICRC has been present in Iraq since 1980. It is a neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian organization whose mandate is to protect and assist people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence.



ICRC

Visiting detainees and enabling them to reconnect with their families

The ICRC visited places of detention run by the Iraqi central and regional government authorities in order to monitor the treatment and living conditions of detainees. After these visits, it shared confidential reports of its findings and recommendations with the authorities, for them to take measures to ensure that detainees are treated with dignity, their judicial guarantees are respected and their living conditions, including access to health care, are of acceptable standards. The ICRC also facilitated contact between detainees and their relatives through Red Cross Messages (RCMs), oral messages (salamat) and other services linking them with their families.



In 2016, the ICRC:

- Conducted 343 visits to 45,064 detainees held in 107 places of detention;
- Improved the living conditions - ventilation and sanitation systems - and access to clean water for 7,848 detainees in various places of detention;
- Facilitated family links between detainees and their relatives. A total of 16,502 oral family messages were collected and distributed, while 8,952 RCMs were collected and 7,771 were distributed. Also, the ICRC resumed its support to family visits for detainees in some prisons;
- Provided emergency assistance to 7,848 detainees in 12 places

- of detention. The assistance included hygiene/educational and recreational items and winter supplies;
- It followed up with the authorities allegations of arrest, particularly in connection with the current hostilities. Over 2,698 new cases were collected and processed; and over 575 were solved positively
- Over 125 former detainees received attestations of detention helping them advance legal and administrative proceedings;
- Held training initiatives and dialogue with authorities and security personnel to ensure respect for judicial guarantees and the principle of non-refoulement (prohibiting the transfer of an individual to another authority, risking threats to his/ her life and freedoms).

Re-establishing family links and helping to clarify the fate of missing persons

Vulnerable people across Iraq, including displaced persons and Syrian refugees, restored and/or maintained contact with their relatives using Movement family-links services. Confidential representations on behalf of the families were addressed to the Iraqi authorities, in order to clarify the fate of people allegedly arrested in connection with current and past hostilities. Hundreds of people received travel documents that facilitated their resettlement abroad.

The ICRC maintained efforts to help families learn the fates of their missing relatives. It provided technical advice to Iraqi forensic experts during the search and recovery of gravesites and during the analysis of human remains. As a result, local capacities in human identification, data-management, injury analysis and documentation have been reinforced.

As a neutral intermediary, ICRC continued to support the Iraqi authorities in their efforts to clarify the fate of people still unaccounted for as a result of the 1988-1980 Iran-Iraq war and the 1990-1991 Gulf War. It also provided the institutions involved in recovering and identifying human remains with technical, material and infrastructural support for enhancing their services.



In 2016, the ICRC:

- ICRC donated a genetic analyser to Baghdad Medico-Legal Institute and provided them with training and capacity support;
- The Iraqi authorities transferred the remains of 394 people to the Iranian authorities under ICRC auspices;
- The Iranian authorities transferred the remains of 68 people to the Iraqi authorities under ICRC auspices;
- The ICRC provided assistance and training/capacity support

- to institutions involved in recovering and identifying human remains on the dignified management of dead bodies;
- The ICRC donated 500,000 USD of materials/equipment to support the Iran-Iraq joint excavation missions;
- Forensic technical advice has been given during the search and recovery of gravesites and during the analysis of human remains.



Providing emergency aid and livelihood assistance to vulnerable families

Amid challenges related to access and security, the ICRC provided emergency assistance in the form of food, blankets, cooking and heating stoves, hygiene kits, winter jackets, tarpaulins and other essential supplies to IDPs, host communities and returnees. Displaced people who had been living for some time in areas with functional markets were provided with unconditional cash, which helped them cover essential needs such as medical expenses and education and rental fees. The ICRC focused, in particular, on assisting vulnerable communities in Anbar, Salah al-Din, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninawa and Baghdad provinces. The beneficiaries of ICRC relief assistance included people displaced from Mosul and surrounding villages.

Where security conditions permitted, the ICRC helped vulnerable households, particularly those headed by women or by people with disabilities, to increase their agricultural production and/or to augment their incomes. The goal of these projects is to help improve self-sufficiency. Several hundred women-headed households were assisted in registering for state benefits.

In 2016, the ICRC:

- Covered the immediate food needs of 924,024 people mostly IDPs living in conflict-affected areas, including 81,000 people in Fallujah and 130,000 people in Ninawa Province;
- Provided unconditional cash relief to more than 90,000 displaced people;
- Provided essential household items to more than 925,000 people living in temporary shelters and settlements to improve their living conditions. Of those, 64,428 people received heating stoves, winter jackets and other supplies to help them cope with the adverse winter weather in Iraqi Kurdistan region and western Iraq;
- Assisted 21,036 farmers in Kirkuk, Najaf and Khanaqin by rehabilitating irrigation canals;
- Provided fertilizer to nearly 6,000 farmers in Kirkuk, Najaf and Baghdad for planting summer crops;
- Provided green houses to approximately 220 for vulnerable household farmers in Najaf and Baghdad;
- Provided wheat seeds to nearly 5,000 farmers in Kirkuk, Najaf and Baghdad for winter production;
- Provided cash-for-work to more than 2,500 workers in Najaf and Kirkuk for cleaning canals;
- Provided financial grants for establishing small income-generating businesses to nearly 1,200 of the most vulnerable women-headed households and people with disabilities;
- Assisted 540 women-headed households pursuing registration for social security assistance with the help of local NGOs;
- Provided capacity building to 23 assigned staff from the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Center and the Ministry of Displacement and Migration.

Improving the water supply and sanitation for IDPs, host communities and returnees

To help improve access of civilians, particularly the displaced people and the returnees, to clean water, the ICRC rehabilitated, upgraded or constructed water supply systems damaged as a result of conflict or neglect. It also carried out emergency interventions that restored or improved access to water for hundreds of thousands of people affected by conflict. All these initiatives helped reduce the risk of disease for millions of people. To ensure the sustainability of its projects, the ICRC also helped local technicians develop their capacity to maintain the rehabilitated water-supply systems.



In 2016, the ICRC:

- Provided access to clean water to 2,140,266 people including IDPs;
- Rehabilitated and constructed over 35 water supply systems in areas affected by conflict or neglected;
- Benefited 287,046 persons, including IDPs, from emergency repairs through 21 interventions in water supply systems and displaced settlements;
- Provided drinking water to around 12,500 displaced people as they arrived in a camp in west of Ramadi;
- Organized three training sessions for 83 technicians operating water stations, enhancing their ability to maintain water systems;
- Reduced the risk of disease for millions of displaced people.



Ensuring access of the wounded and sick to medical treatment and basic healthcare

As the situation evolved and increased needs in hospital-level care emerged, the ICRC responded by scaling up its support to health centers and hospitals, particularly those close to the frontlines. It provided them with equipment, surgical items, other medical supplies, and staff training to reinforce their capacity to accommodate the influx of emergency cases.

Training courses in first aid and in emergency room trauma care helped health personnel develop their abilities to stabilize and treat weapon-wounded patients. People living in areas heavily affected by the conflict or hosting a large IDP population had access to basic health services at primary healthcare centers (PHCC) that sustained their operations with technical support, medical supplies, or furniture donated by the ICRC. Several hospitals and primary health care centers were repaired or upgraded, to ensure the continuity of their services and to increase their capacities.



In 2016, the ICRC:

- Donated medical and surgical items to 27 hospitals and 30 PHCCs providing emergency care to weapon-wounded people. It provided emergency support (incentives, supplies, training) to four new PHCCs during Mosul operation. Some PHCCs also received furniture and equipment after their rehabilitation;
- Supported the provision of treatment to over 680,744 patients on primary healthcare needs, 131,080 patients on hospital care, 1,020 burns patients, 2,352 injured patients; and 3,750 war wounded cases.
- Engaged in a three-year capacity building and strengthening program to the main three systems of ambulance in Iraq, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Civil Defense (CD) and the Police Academy. The ICRC held 55 workshops to 235 participants from EMS, 42 participants of CD. It also provided first aid training to 114 weapon bearers and 726 health staff from PHCCs.
- Trained 141 doctors from 11 hospitals on Emergency Room Trauma. It also provided training to become ERTC trainers following ToT trainings in Kirkuk, Erbil, Dohuk, Najaf, Karbala, Diyala, and Baghdad.
- Organized a war wounded seminar in Kufa Medical College (Najaf Province) attended by 38 Iraqi surgeons from all over Iraq.
- Built and rehabilitated several medical facilities, such as the emergency room in Salahaldin General Hospital, Sheikhan Operating Theater, Al-Furat PHCC in Babel and Laylan PHCC in Kirkuk;
- Deployed a surgical team to Sheikhan Hospital to provide emergency and trauma surgical care for war wounded people during the Mosul Operation.
- Provided technical and material short-term support to 13 PHCCs, and trained 360 health workers in these PHCCs in Dohuk, Ninawa, Kirkuk, Babil, Baghdad and Karbala. The PHCCs provided 251,660 consultations.
- Vaccinated more than 2,490 women and children under 5 years of age;
- Trained 50 traditional birth attendants and midwives who will extend their services to pregnant women in Diyala and Kirkuk.

Enabling disabled people, including refugees and mine victims, to receive physical rehabilitation

The ICRC has been assisting the physical rehabilitation sector in Iraq since 1993. In 2016, the ICRC continued to support ten state-run rehabilitation facilities in Baghdad, Basrah, Najaf, Kerbala and Nasiriyah, which provide prosthetic and orthotic materials and devices to people with physical disabilities.

The organization also continued to manage its own physical rehabilitation center in Erbil. In addition, the ICRC organized training sessions for physical rehabilitation professionals and carried out initiatives to foster the social inclusion of people with disabilities. For example, it supported a wheelchair basket competition during the International Day of Persons with Disability in December.



In 2016, the ICRC:

- Provided physical rehabilitation services to 37,753 patients including 10,898 amputees at the ICRC physical rehabilitation center and state-run centers;
- Assisted more than 600 children by supporting the clubfoot clinic in Najaf;
- Provided 704 vulnerable service users with transport costs to access services;
- Provided on-the-job training to more than 80 professionals, and provided training to parents of children with cerebral palsy;
- Provided individualized wheelchairs to 386 persons with disabilities and delivered more than 1,000 walking aids at the ICRC-managed center in Erbil;
- Treated more than 1212 displaced persons and 217 refugees at the ICRC managed center in Erbil.

Reducing the impact of Weapon Contamination in Iraq

Millions of people in Iraq are exposed to the risk of mines and explosive remnants of war, such as unexploded bombs, shells, cluster-munitions and improvised explosive devices (IED), from past conflicts and ongoing military campaigns.

To mitigate such risks, the ICRC carried out awareness-raising initiatives for people who are unfamiliar with the problem and who are exposed to such explosive hazards.



In 2016, the ICRC:

- Provided mine and unexploded ordnance (UXO) risk awareness sessions for approx. 25,000 IDP's and local population who are exposed to hazards of weapon contamination;
- Sensitized 35 participants of the General Secretariat for the Council of Ministers, 234 health workers, teachers and other community leaders on the risks of weapon contamination;
- Provided two chemical de-contamination trainings and equipment in two health structures in Ninawa for 78 health staff;
- Supported Directorate of Mine Action (DMA) by printing 30000 leaflets and 2000 posters for risk awareness;
- Carried out several technical and non-technical surveys on weapon contamination in Anbar Province;
- Carried out several joint assessment missions in newly retaken areas.

Reminding parties to the conflict of their obligations, improving knowledge of International Humanitarian Law

The ICRC consolidated its dialogue with most parties to the conflict, urging them to abide by their obligations under IHL and other applicable norms. In meetings with the authorities, weapon bearers and traditional leaders, it emphasized the need to respect civilians, including patients and medical personnel, and to ensure their access to essential services and humanitarian aid. These efforts also helped facilitate ICRC access to people in need,

including those in retaken areas. However, contacts with certain armed groups remained limited.

In parallel, the ICRC worked on improving knowledge of international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL) through training activities for the political authorities and the armed and police forces in central Iraq and in the Iraqi Kurdistan region. It extended technical advice to the National Committee of IHL (NCIHL) and carried out training and education sessions in selected commands and directorates within the operational structure of the Iraqi Security Forces.

In 2016, the ICRC:

- Held training and information activities both in central Iraq and in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region for weapon bearers (including frontline commands and units) in order to increase their understanding of IHL & IHRL and to incorporate them in the planning and conduct of operations;
- Supported the NCIHL, in line with its plan of action to incorporate IHL into national legislation, and supported its participation in the Universal Meeting of NCIHL in Switzerland;
- Held training sessions on IHL for senior government officials,

weapon bearers, security personnel and judicial operators, and organized the annual national conference for university professors in Iraq;

- Conducted two trainings for the Iraqi High Commission of Human Rights, one each in Baghdad and in Najaf;
- Supported the incorporation and implementation of the “International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights” course into the curricula of the Iraqi Judicial Institute, in charge of training the country’s judges.



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IRAQ

Facts & Figures

2016



Water to 2,140,266 people adversely affected by the conflict was made available as a result of rehabilitating and constructing over 35 water supply systems



Health Care to 1,074,692 people through support to primary health care centers and hospitals with medical items, equipment, vaccination campaigns, capacity building and first aid training



Essential household items to 925,584 displaced people distributed, including detergents, personal hygiene items, cooking tools, cutlery, stoves, jerry cans, blankets and heaters



Food to 924,024 displaced people distributed, including sugar, lentils, rice, tomato paste, tea, canned food and other items



Cash Grants to 90,069 people through various programs to help them buy essential goods or start small income-generating businesses

IRAQ

Facts & Figures

2016



Visits to 45,064 detainees ensuring proper treatment and living conditions



Physical Rehabilitation to 37,753 disabled people at 10 state-run physical rehabilitation centers and one ICRC managed center



Exchanged 7,771 Red Cross Messages between detainees and their families



International Humanitarian Law Courses to more than 5,500 individuals from armed forces, authorities, tribal leaders, and academics