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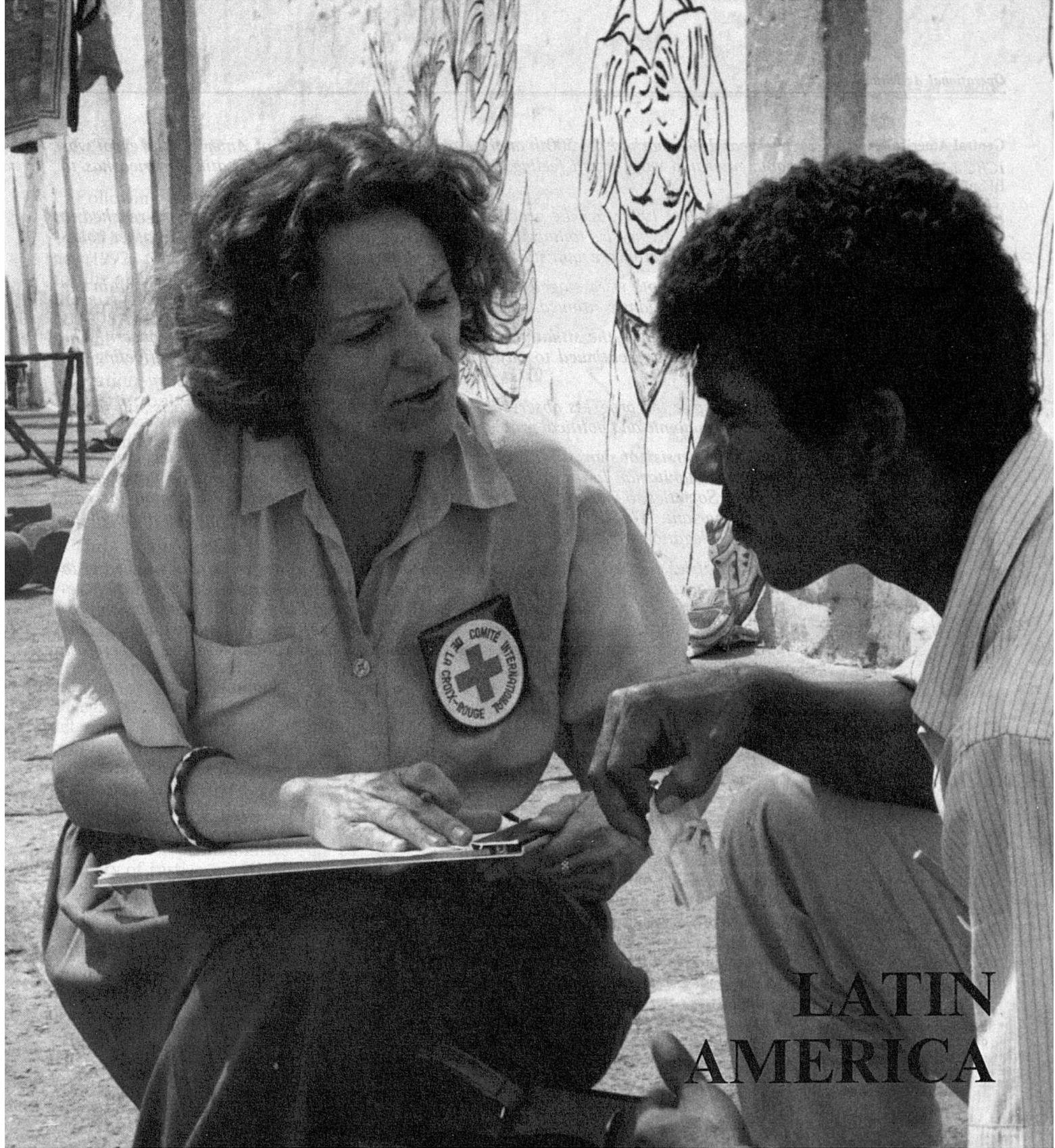
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LATIN
AMERICA

Central America

ICRC delegation:
El Salvador

The year 1992 marked the 500th anniversary of the "discovery" of America: the event was commemorated with mixed feelings which reflect the uncertainties Latin America has to face.

ICRC regional delegations:
Guatemala City
San José

In El Salvador, 1992 saw the gradual implementation of the peace agreement reached in January 1992, giving rise to hopes for a return to a more serene way of life. In other countries, however, there were unmistakable signs of unrest.

South America

ICRC delegation:
Peru

Two coup attempts were staged in Venezuela, while in Haiti there was no change in the situation and civilians continued to flee the country.

ICRC regional delegations:
Bogotá
Brasília
Buenos Aires

As in previous years, the situation in Peru gave the ICRC cause for great concern. The civilian population continued to pay a heavy toll in the unceasing violence affecting the country.

Staff

ICRC expatriates* : 65
National Societies* : 1
Local employees** : 138

Indeed, despite the progress observed in some areas, most of Latin America is still facing daunting economic and political problems which often lead to social unrest.

Amid these persistent signs of discontent, the ICRC's task of spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law and the Movement's principles, while at the same time helping National Societies to improve their capacity to cope with emergencies, is becoming increasingly important. This is why maintaining full coverage of Latin America through its regional delegations remains high on the ICRC's list of priorities.

Total expenditure

CHF 17,195,805

Many countries stepped up their efforts to improve respect for human rights by adhering to international instruments and reforming their legal systems, yet full implementation remained arduous. Promoting recognition of the International Fact-Finding Commission provided for in Article 90 of Additional Protocol I and setting up commissions for the implementation of international humanitarian law on the national level were therefore among the ICRC's targets for 1992.

* average numbers calculated on an annual basis

** as at December 1992

EL SALVADOR

Following the gradual implementation of the peace agreement reached at the end of 1991 and formally signed on 16 January 1992, the ICRC made preparations for the phasing out of its delegation. With the arrival of United Nations personnel (UNOSAL), the ICRC stopped monitoring the situation of the civilian population. Two offices and the San Miguel sub-delegation were closed in April, and by September only two expatriates were left in El Salvador. They worked under the responsibility of the ICRC's regional delegation in San José (Costa Rica). On 16 December the ICRC was formally invited to attend the peace celebrations held in San Salvador.

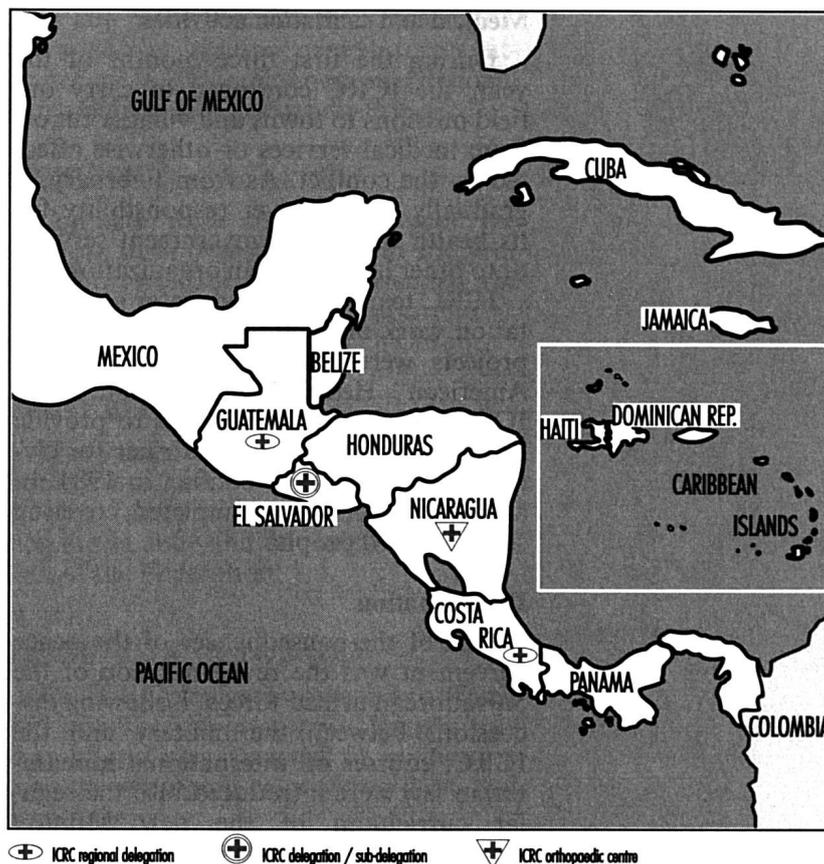
Throughout 1992 the ICRC continued to give financial support to help the Salvadorean Red Cross maintain its services.

Activities for detainees

An amnesty for security detainees was granted at the beginning of February. Delegates continued to visit places of detention to monitor the condition of people still being held and to check that those qualifying for release under the amnesty were in fact freed. Facilities visited included places of detention under the supervision of the security corps and the armed forces, penitentiaries run by the Ministry of Justice, civil defence units and hospitals. In January 100 such visits were carried out; by the end of June only a few detainees not eligible for release under the amnesty were still being held.

The report on ICRC visits carried out in 1991 was handed over to the authorities in May.

In the first few months of the year the ICRC continued to pay travel expenses



for families wishing to visit their relatives in detention.

Tracing activities

At the time of the peace agreement, the ICRC's tracing office in El Salvador had lists containing some 6,000 names of people who had disappeared during the 12-year conflict. In the hope of solving problems raised by the uncertainty as to their fate, the tracing agency began to review their cases with a view to submitting them to the authorities. In 1992, a total of 72 new cases were opened and 1,389 among those reviewed were resolved.

Medical and sanitation activities

During the first three months of the year, the ICRC continued to carry out field missions to towns and villages cut off from medical services or otherwise affected by the conflict. As from February, it gradually handed over responsibility for its health centres to government services or to other humanitarian organizations.

ICRC teams continued water and sanitation work until 30 September, when all projects were handed over to the Pan American Health Organization. The ICRC had started its projects to provide drinking water and build latrines for civilians affected by the conflict in 1984. In all, 244 projects were completed, covering some 150,000 people.

Dissemination

One of the consequences of the peace agreement was the reorganization of the Salvadorean armed forces. Following discussions between the military and the ICRC, courses on international humanitarian law were introduced into the regular curriculum of the new Military Academy. In March, 45 cadets attended a one-week course and three seminars were held for 120 officers. In addition, the ICRC helped the armed forces set up a mobile dissemination team.

GUATEMALA CITY

Regional delegation

(Belize, Caribbean, Guatemala, Mexico)

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Formal recognition was granted to the Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross Society in November following an ICRC mission carried out in August and on the recommendation of the Federation.

CUBA

The regional delegate travelled several times to Havana to meet senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The purpose of the talks was to encourage Cuba to ratify Additional Protocol II and to discuss the setting up of a centre for the dissemination of international humanitarian law.

At the end of January two dissemination courses were held by the ICRC for officers of the armed forces and senior civil servants. In May the regional delegate attended the National Society's celebrations to mark Red Cross day and had further meetings with the Cuban authorities.

GUATEMALA

On 22 May the Guatemalan Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Gonzalo Menéndez Park, visited ICRC headquarters. He was received by ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga, who handed him memoranda concerning proposals for ICRC action in favour of the civilian population and political detainees in Guatemala. At the same time the Delegate General for Latin America held talks with the Vice-President, Mr Gustavo Espina Salguero, in Guatemala, with whom the same matters were raised.

Owing to political difficulties, only a very small part of the planned ICRC operation to assist 12,000 displaced people in the department of Quiché could be implemented. Some 400 civilians, mostly women and children, were vaccinated in March and April. Relief supplies were also distributed.

HAITI

Throughout the year the ICRC remained in contact with the *de facto* government and authorities in Haiti. The

Delegate General and the regional delegate travelled to Port-au-Prince on 28 January and were received by the interim Prime Minister, Mr Jean-Jacques Honorat.

In January, February, March and June, the ICRC carried out visits to the National Penitentiary in Port-au-Prince and supplied its infirmary with a small stock of medicines and medical materials. The delegates were able to visit first 17 and then all 19 of the people arrested in connection with the occupation of the Canadian Embassy in late November and December 1991. By August 1992 they had all been released.

Detainees arrested following the failed *coup* against the government of Mr Jean-Bertrand Aristide in January 1991 and visited by the ICRC the same year, were released under an amnesty. In March, delegates were also allowed to visit the five provincial prisons, and in September they were given access to the interrogation service of the National Police.

To help local medical staff deal with emergency situations, a seminar on war surgery was held under ICRC auspices in Port-au-Prince between 28 January and 4 February. It was attended by 140 Haitian surgeons. The ICRC provided support for the National Society's dissemination efforts and for the maintenance of its vehicles.

When the authorities allowed Haitian refugees in Cuba to return home in April, the ICRC maintained constant contacts with the Red Cross Societies of both countries to ensure that the operation went smoothly. A total of 1,342 people were repatriated by UNHCR. Both the Haitian and the Cuban Red Cross were actively involved in assisting Haitian "boat people" and the ICRC helped the two National Societies set up an efficient telecommunications system.

In late November, 20 high-ranking officers of the Haitian armed forces attended an ICRC seminar on international humanitarian law in Port-au-Prince.

MEXICO

Contacts were maintained with the Mexican authorities throughout the year and the Delegate General attended the National Society's annual convention, which was held in Puebla on 28 October.

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

The Saint Kitts and Nevis Red Cross Society was given formal recognition in August, following an ICRC mission carried out in June and on the recommendation of the Federation.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

An ICRC delegate travelled to Trinidad and Tobago in August. He was told that all persons arrested in connection with the attempted *coup* of July 1990 had been released.

SAN JOSÉ **Regional delegation**

(Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama)

COSTA RICA

As in previous years, the ICRC took part in the annual Interdisciplinary Human Rights course held at the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights in San José from 22 September to 2 October. The ICRC gave a talk on international humanitarian law and the institution's activities to some 120 partici

pants, mainly high-ranking civil servants, diplomats, magistrates and teachers, from 24 Latin American countries.

HONDURAS

The first-ever regional seminar on international humanitarian law for Central America was held in Tegucigalpa from 20 to 24 January. Thirty-two officers from the armed forces of El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras and police officers from Costa Rica and Panama attended the event, which was organized jointly by the ICRC and the Honduras armed forces. This was the first time that representatives of the various countries' police and armed forces had had the opportunity to meet and hold discussions on an informal basis.

NICARAGUA

Since December 1991, the ICRC presence in Nicaragua has been limited to orthopaedic activities, all other matters being dealt with by the regional delegation based in San José (Costa Rica).

The President of Nicaragua, Mrs Violeta Chamorro, received the Delegate General for Latin America and the regional delegate on 19 May. Talks were also held with the Minister of Health. Following these discussions, the ICRC decided to continue to run the Erasmo Paredes orthopaedic centre and help train local-technicians until the end of 1993. In 1992,

the centre fitted more than 121 amputees and manufactured over 346 prostheses and 1,062 other orthopaedic appliances. Mrs Chamorro visited the centre on 1 July.

In December, the regional delegate held talks with the Minister of the Presidency, Mr Antonio Lacayo, and raised matters such as the dissemination of international humanitarian law, ratification of the Additional Protocols and the future of the National Society, which the ICRC continues to support.

PANAMA

A seminar on international humanitarian law was held in Panama on 10 and 11 February. It was organized by the Ministry of the Interior and attended by some 30 senior civil servants. The main speakers were the ICRC regional delegate and the President of the Panamanian Red Cross, Mr Jaime Fernandez Urriola.

In May and September, an ICRC team visited 43 political detainees held in two prisons, one place of detention under the responsibility of the police, and three hospitals. Some medical assistance was handed over to the prison authorities.

In accordance with its mandate under the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC also visited two prisoners of war and one civilian held in the United States.

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* *

PERU

As violence continued to tighten its grip on the country, especially in urban areas, President Alberto Fujimori, who was constitutionally elected in 1991, dissolved the National Congress at the beginning of April and put Peru under direct presidential rule. Efforts to break up the Shining Path movement intensified and its leader was captured in September. However, this did not stem the tide of violence and civilians continued to suffer throughout the country. In the capital guerrilla attacks took a heavy toll.

On 8 June, the Delegate General for Latin America travelled to Lima where he was received by President Fujimori. ICRC reports on the situation of the civilian population and of security detainees were handed to the President. These reports were also discussed with the Minister of the Interior, General Briones Davila. The Delegate General held talks with the Prime Minister, Mr Oscar de la Puente, who is also Minister for Foreign Affairs and the head of the joint military command. ICRC visits to detainees and the army's use of civilian defence groups in its campaign against guerrilla movements were among the issues discussed.

Activities for detainees

At the beginning of the year ICRC teams continued to visit people held in connection with the conflict in various detention centres run by the National Police, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice and the anti-terrorist unit DINCOTE*. As from April, however, they met with increasing resistance from the detaining authorities following

* *Dirección Nacional contra el Terrorismo*



the introduction of stricter legislation in detention matters. Under the new regulations, prisons previously administered by the National Penitentiary Board were taken over by the police.

On 6 May, fighting broke out in the Miguel Castro Castro prison when Shining Path detainees resisted transfer to other places of detention. ICRC visits were temporarily suspended. The ICRC President expressed his concern about the situation to President Fujimori on 13 May. On the same day an ICRC doctor was allowed to examine all security detainees in Miguel Castro Castro and in June delegates were able to interview the

Shining Path detainees held there, for the first time since the uprising. However, regular visits were resumed only in the first week of August.

On 13 August, a Supreme Resolution was issued regarding visits to detainees. It specified that the ICRC was allowed access to places of detention where people arrested for acts of terrorism were being held, but no new authorizations were given.

By 15 September the ICRC's visits to places of detention run by the Ministry of Justice had come to a halt, since authorizations allowing delegates to visit detainees according to the institution's customary procedures had not been renewed since May. This included the prisons taken over by the police in April.

In Peru and at ICRC headquarters high-level talks were held on several occasions with a view to obtaining further authorizations, but to no avail. The ICRC President took up this matter on 31 August when Peru's Prime Minister visited Geneva. Further approaches were made subsequently to Mr de la Puente and to the Minister of the Interior, but no progress was made.

The ICRC nevertheless carried out 1,727 visits to 407 places of detention in 1992. Delegates saw some 4,218 detainees, 2,950 of them for the first time.

The ICRC also continued to provide aid (toiletries, cleaning products, educational and recreational items) to detainees, and gave special assistance to tuberculosis patients at Lurigancho prison. Recently released detainees without means were given help as required (payment of travel costs to return home and a small sum to help them resume life in their communities). Three hundred families of detainees were given material assistance and transport vouchers so that they could visit their relatives in prison.

Activities for the civilian population

The ICRC continued to extend its field activities in the emergency areas and several new offices were opened. Doctors, nurses and delegates regularly carried out missions to protect the victims of violence by their presence and by their efforts to convince armed groups of the need to abide by the elementary rules of international humanitarian law.

Civilian victims of the conflict received food, blankets, warm clothing, seeds, tools, sheets of corrugated iron and kitchen utensils from the ICRC. This programme covered 18,151 people in 1992. The special programme to provide hot meals for orphans in school canteens continued, but in May the ICRC suspended its aid to one of the four canteens owing to monitoring problems. Nevertheless some 1,500 children received daily meals. In all, the ICRC provided 86 tonnes of relief supplies to Peru in 1992.

Medical assistance

Assisting victims of the violence was a priority for ICRC medical teams, which travelled regularly to the affected areas to assess needs, especially in local dispensaries and first-aid posts, give consultations, evacuate the wounded and provide medicines and medical supplies. They also continued to arrange for the wounded to be taken from the emergency areas to hospitals in the capital.

The cholera epidemic worsened in various regions, but the overall incidence of the disease was much lower than in 1991. In February the delegation launched a cholera control programme in isolated areas of the Selva and the Sierra, where the Ministry of Health was not able to ensure regular supplies.

An ICRC surgeon who was sent to Peru in December 1991 spent four months

training local surgical staff throughout the country in war surgery techniques. In addition, a special seminar on the subject was held in Lima in April and attended by 260 participants from civilian and military academies and hospitals, mainly situated in and around the capital.

Tracing activities

The ICRC continued to register security detainees and to forward news of them to their families. A monthly average of 1,870 people contacted ICRC offices, mostly to ask for assistance, and in 172 cases to file tracing requests concerning people reported missing in Lima or in the emergency zones.

Dissemination

Dissemination remained high on the ICRC's list of priorities for its work in Peru. Sessions were held throughout the country to spread information on the Movement's principles and the basic rules of international humanitarian law. The target groups included civilians, members of the armed forces and the police, and members of civil defence units operating under the responsibility of the Peruvian army. In June a series of courses was begun for some 2,500 students of the National Police School.

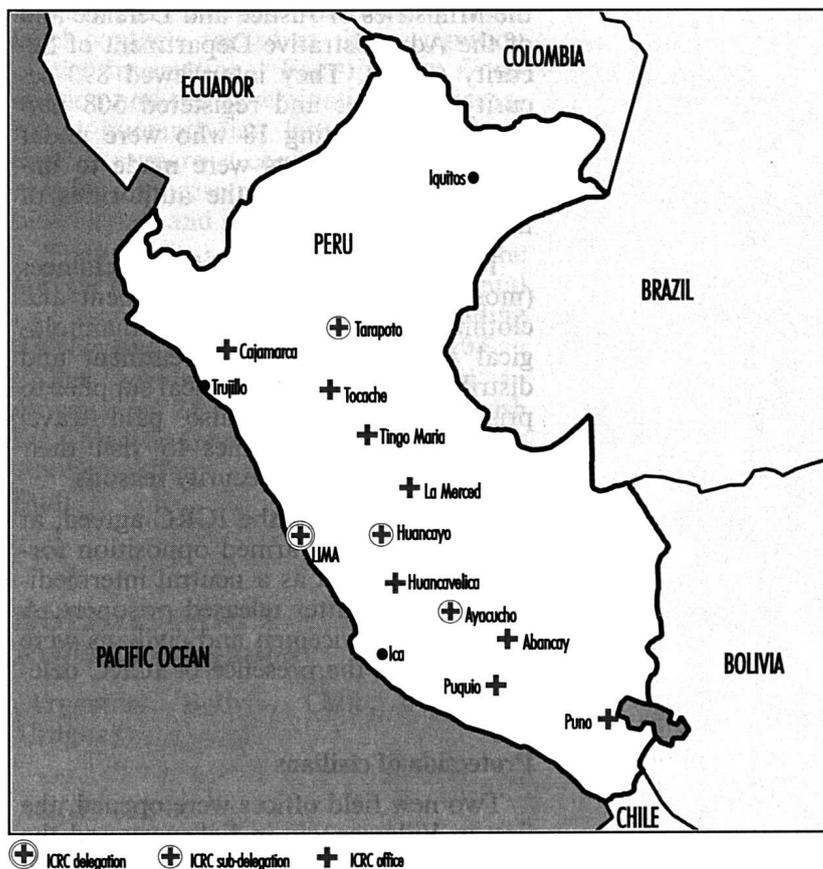
The magazine for schoolchildren which had been launched in 1991 ran to 50,000 copies.

BOGOTÁ Regional delegation

(Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela)

COLOMBIA

As in previous years, the ICRC continued to protect and assist civilians



affected by the violent clashes between government forces and the opposition movements belonging to the Coordinadora Guerrillera Simón Bolívar (CGSB). In October the country was swept by a new wave of attacks by the opposition, which was followed by a sharp increase in the government's efforts to quell the CGSB.

Activities for detainees

In 1992 ICRC delegates and doctors carried out a total of 264 visits in 148 places of detention under the authority of

the Ministries of Justice and Defence and of the Administrative Department of Security (DAS). They interviewed 893 security detainees and registered 508 new detainees, including 18 who were under interrogation. Efforts were made to improve notification by the authorities of newly arrested persons.

The ICRC provided aid for detainees (mostly toiletries, sports equipment and clothing), aid for dental, ophthalmological and other medical treatment and distributed dental and medical supplies to prison infirmaries. It also paid travel expenses for 839 families to visit their relatives detained for security reasons.

On ten occasions the ICRC agreed, at the request of the armed opposition forces, to be present as a neutral intermediary when the latter released prisoners. A total of 34 servicemen and civilians were thus freed in the presence of ICRC delegates.

Protection of civilians

Two new field offices were opened, the first in Villavicencio in February and the second in Popayan in September. With the Bucaramanga office opened in 1991, these new outposts enabled the ICRC to be within reach of the whole south-western region of the country.

Tracing activities

The ICRC tracing office in Bogotá continued to gather information on detainees visited by the ICRC. It also had access to the police register of newly arrested persons.

In 1992 the tracing office received new enquiries concerning 57 people. A total of 25 cases were successfully resolved, some of which had been submitted prior to 1992.

Medical assistance

A cooperation agreement was signed on 12 March with the Centre for Rehabilitation Surgery (CIREC) in Bogotá. An ICRC orthopaedic technician had arrived in February and with the help of a technical coordinator from ICRC headquarters worked out the details of ICRC involvement in the centre and the materials required. By the end of the year 483 orthoses and 396 prostheses had been produced. During the year 827 people were fitted with appliances, some of them farmers who had lost limbs in landmine accidents.

Dissemination

The ICRC's support for the large-scale dissemination programme run by the Colombian Red Cross was maintained. In October the National Society and the ICRC held a three-week seminar for Red Cross dissemination officers. Some 30 people including ten representatives from other Latin American National Societies took part. The programme covered not only the usual international humanitarian law and Red Cross principles, but also subjects such as human rights law and Red Cross action in the event of internal disturbances or tensions.

In April a series of weekly lectures was initiated for all graduates of the National Police School in Bogotá, including those at officer level.

In addition, delegates broadcast regular messages about the ICRC's work and principles on local radio stations in order to improve security conditions.

ECUADOR

The regional delegate established contacts with the new authorities in Septem-

ber. They agreed in principle, as had the former government, to allow the ICRC to visit security detainees.

The ICRC continued to support the Ecuadoran Red Cross dissemination programme. At the end of March an international meeting of Red Cross dissemination officers was held in Ipiales and attended by some 20 participants from the Colombian and the Ecuadoran Red Cross Societies.

VENEZUELA

Following the attempted *coup* which took place on 4 February, members of the Bogotá regional delegation immediately went to Caracas and established contacts with government representatives to offer the ICRC's services. As a result, between 30 July and 4 August delegates visited 53 security detainees arrested in connection with the incident. In November, when a second attempt was made to overthrow the government, the ICRC renewed its offer to visit detainees.

A seminar was organized jointly by the ICRC and the Colombian Red Cross to help the Venezuelan National Society prepare for emergency action in the event of mass demonstrations and other civil disturbances. The ICRC also donated first-aid supplies to the Venezuelan Red Cross.

BRASILIA Regional delegation

(Brazil, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname)

In May, Brazil deposited its instrument of accession to the 1977 Additional Protocols, which came into force in the country on 5 November. Throughout the year

the regional delegate maintained high-level contacts regarding the recognition of the International Fact-Finding Commission and the dissemination of international humanitarian law. He also took part in numerous conferences and other meetings concerning international humanitarian law and human rights.

The ICRC's activities in relation to the Rio de Janeiro summit on environmental issues are mentioned under the heading *The law and legal considerations*, p. 163.

The regional delegate travelled to Guyana on 27 April to hold talks with the Director-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the army Chief of Staff.

BUENOS AIRES Regional delegation

(Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay)

ARGENTINA

High-level contacts were maintained with the Argentine authorities with a view to setting up an interministerial commission for the implementation of international humanitarian law. The participants in a seminar held by the ICRC on 28 May — representatives of the ministries of Justice, the Interior, Defence, Foreign Affairs and Education, and high-level military legal advisers, professors and Red Cross officials — all expressed their support for such a commission. At the end of the year the final draft to be submitted to the President had yet to be completed.

On 2 December a seminar on the implementation of international humanitarian law was held by the ICRC and the

Ministry of Defence for Argentine troops due to join the United Nations peace-keeping forces.

BOLIVIA

At the end of February the regional delegate went to La Paz where he had talks with the Bolivian Vice-President, the Ministers of Defence, Health, Interior and Justice as well as representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Discussions centred on the creation of an inter-ministerial commission for the implementation of international humanitarian law, of which all were in favour. Progress was also made with regard to recognition of the International Fact-Finding Commission. These matters were raised once again in June, when the Delegate General travelled to Bolivia and was received by the President, Mr Jaime Paz Zamora, the Vice-President and the President of the Parliament. He had talks with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence as well as the Vice-Ministers of Justice, the Interior and Health. Progress was also made regarding a formal invitation for the ICRC to visit security detainees.

In July a seminar on the implementation of international humanitarian law was given jointly by the ICRC and the Ministry of Defence. Several other dissemination sessions were organized by the regional delegate, including a workshop for Bolivian Red Cross dissemination officers held in November.

CHILE

Between 17 and 28 August delegates visited 29 security detainees, including six

registered for the first time, in ten places of detention and distributed aid as needed. Additional visits were carried out in January, May and November in some of the prisons.

ICRC delegates also travelled five times to Santiago to hold high-level talks on setting up an interministerial commission for the implementation of international humanitarian law.

PARAGUAY

Talks were initiated with the Paraguayan authorities on recognition of the International Fact-finding Commission and the setting up of an interministerial commission for the implementation of international humanitarian law.

URUGUAY

Following several ICRC missions to discuss the issue, the President of Uruguay, Mr Luis Lacalle, announced the creation of an Interministerial Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law on 12 May. The Commission held its first meeting on 5 August; the ICRC regional delegate and representatives of the Uruguayan Red Cross, which is a full member, were present. Uruguay is the first Latin American country to set up such a commission. By 30 October the commission had submitted a report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommending its own formal and permanent constitution and had also drafted a law on the red cross emblem.

**RELIEF SUPPLIES DISTRIBUTED BY THE ICRC IN 1992
LATIN AMERICA**

Countries	Medical (CHF)	Relief		Total (CHF)
		(CHF)	(Tonnes)	
Colombia	46,250	20,718	6.7	66,968
El Salvador	206,523	38,468	12.9	244,991
Guatemala	665	9,257	1.4	9,922
Nicaragua	101,877			101,877
Panama	3,863			3,863
Peru	400,973	284,379	93.6	685,352
TOTAL	760,151	352,822	114.6	1,112,973

