

Zeitschrift: Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross
Herausgeber: International Committee of the Red Cross
Band: - (1992)

Rubrik: Cooperation within the movement

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 12.12.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

COOPERATION WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

POLICY MATTERS

The ICRC has a statutory responsibility to ensure respect for the Fundamental Principles of the Movement, the general guidelines on conduct to which any Red Cross or Red Crescent member may refer in specific situations.

The Principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence are the essence of the Movement's policy. They also serve as a basis for more detailed studies on specific topics, designed to keep the activities of the ICRC, National Societies or the Movement as a whole on the right course.

In 1992, the ICRC carried out an extensive review of its humanitarian activities in situations of non-international armed conflict, internal strife and similar cases. The study set out to define the legal, statutory and other considerations taken into account when making an offer of services, and analysed the special nature of the ICRC's contribution, as a neutral and independent institution and intermediary, in resolving humanitarian problems arising out of such conflicts. Among the other subjects covered were the ICRC's increasing involvement in activities for people affected by violence and living in a hostile environment, the protective nature of its emergency relief operations, the sort of mediation it can offer to parties to a conflict and the categories of detainees it wishes to visit. The ICRC found it useful to clarify and in some cases even change

its attitude to some of these issues. (See *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 294, May-June 1993.)

Other subjects that came under study during the year were the future of the Movement and the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems. The ICRC also responded to National Society enquiries concerning implementation of the Fundamental Principles.

THE WORK OF THE STATUTORY BODIES

Standing Commission

Following the decision taken in Budapest in November 1991 to postpone the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, in 1992 the Standing Commission analysed the consequences of this postponement and considered possible policies for the future.

The Standing Commission met on 9 and 10 March 1992 under the chairmanship of Dr Ahmad Abu-Goura. Convinced of the importance of holding the International Conference in the near future, the Standing Commission reaffirmed its intention to have the 26th International Conference convened as soon as possible and informed the governments and National Societies accordingly. The possibility of holding the Conference after the next statutory meetings of the Movement, scheduled for October 1993 in the United Kingdom, was considered.

The British Red Cross gave up this idea when the British government announced that it was not in a position to provide financial support. At its meeting on 25 June, the Standing Commission acknowledged that the Conference could not be held in 1993, and that the earliest possible date would be in 1995. The Standing Commission intended to use this extra time to examine a wide range of issues related to the future of the International Conference. With this aim in mind, it set up a working group comprising the Deputy Chairman of the Commission, a representative of the ICRC and a representative of the Federation to consider the issues at hand. The working group submitted to the Standing Commission at its meeting on 24 November 1992 an interim report putting forward several proposals. At the request of the Commission, the working group sent a questionnaire concerning the preparation of the next Conference to all the National Societies. The 1993 Council of Delegates will be informed of the work completed under its auspices.

Nine years will therefore have passed between the 25th Conference, held in 1986, and the following one, scheduled for 1995, a period during which the Movement will not have had an opportunity for multilateral discussions with the States in an appropriate forum. The ICRC considers this hiatus too long. With the consent of the Standing Commission, it approached the Swiss government on this matter. The Swiss authorities agreed to convene an *ad hoc* Conference in 1993 during which humanitarian issues of common interest could be considered.

The ICRC and the Federation, each of which covers half the budget of the Standing Commission, decided to in-

crease their contributions. This would allow the Commission to meet certain expenses which had previously been borne by National Societies having a representative on the Commission.

Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace

The mandate and composition of the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace, set up by the Council of Delegates in 1977, was extended in conformity with Resolutions 3 and 4 of the 1991 Council of Delegates.

The Commission is composed of representatives of the Federation, the ICRC, the Henry Dunant Institute and 16 National Societies¹ as opposed to 14 under its former mandate.

The Commission met on two occasions, on 5 May in Cordoba (Spain) and on 14 and 15 October in Geneva, under the chairmanship of Mr Maurice Aubert.

Having taken note of the work done previously, the members of the Peace Commission exchanged views on the modification and extension of its mandate necessitated by major changes in the international situation. The Commission concentrated on redefining its tasks pursuant to Resolution 3 of the last Council of Delegates, in particular the section concerning the Movement's contribution to promoting respect for human rights. At the end of its May meeting the Com-

¹ In addition to the permanent members (the ICRC and the Federation), the National Societies represented include: Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Hungary, Malaysia, Nigeria, Paraguay, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Sudan, Sweden and Tunisia.

mission set up a sub-commission which would function as an *ad hoc* working group and respect the rule of consensus prevailing within the Commission itself (see below).

During its second meeting, the Peace Commission was informed of the proceedings of the sub-commission. It identified as an initial subject for consideration the prevention and regulation of armed conflicts or disputes. This included dissemination and respect for the Fundamental Principles of the Movement as a factor of peace; ways of preventing conflicts and mediation and reconciliation procedures; and action to foster understanding between various cultures and between different ethnic, social and cultural groups.

It also clarified the sub-commission's terms of reference, inviting it to pursue its study of the Movement's role in ensuring respect for human rights.

The work of the Peace Commission itself focused on the various aspects of its mandate. In the area of dissemination, the Commission was informed of progress made in discussions on the application of the Guidelines for the '90s.

Sub-commission

The sub-commission established in May 1992 by the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace comprises representatives of four National Societies that are members of the Peace Commission (France, Sweden, Hungary and Tunisia), and ICRC and Federation representatives.

The sub-commission met on three occasions (17 June, 8 September and 2 and 3 November) in Geneva, under the chairmanship of Mr Peter Nobel, Secretary General of the Swedish Red Cross.

Its work centred on:

- a) examining the role of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in ensuring respect for human rights, including the rights of refugees, problems encountered by minority groups, the rights of women and children, and promoting respect for the fundamental rights of the individual;
- b) clarifying the concept of the right to humanitarian assistance.

In October, the sub-commission submitted an interim report to the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace. The Commission agreed to send a circular letter and questionnaire to the National Societies on the implementation of the resolutions already adopted on the subject of promoting respect for human rights.

RELATIONS WITH THE COMPONENTS OF THE MOVEMENT

National Societies

Dialogue and contacts

In pursuance of the institution's ongoing dialogue with the National Societies, the President of the ICRC, members of the Committee and ICRC staff had many opportunities throughout 1992 to meet with representatives of National Societies both at ICRC headquarters and abroad.

The main topics discussed were the following: the challenges facing the ICRC, the National Societies and the Federation in their daily activities in the field; and issues concerning the entire International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, such as the future of the Movement, its

capacity to take action, and the need for a multilateral dialogue with governments in the framework of the International Conference.

The ICRC President or members of the Committee visited the National Societies of the following countries: Federal Republic of Germany, Austria, Spain, France, United Kingdom, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Mali, Senegal, Iraq, Tunisia, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Haiti, Panama, Paraguay, Japan, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Participation in regional National Society conferences and commemorative events

The ICRC attaches great importance to its participation in regional conferences, which offer an opportunity to meet a large number of National Society representatives and to discuss matters of mutual interest. President Sommaruga, several Committee members and various members of staff took part in the following regional meetings and conferences:

- ☐ Official opening of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Pavilion at Expo '92 in Seville (Spain, May)
- ☐ Fourth Regional Conference of European National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Netherlands, May)
- ☐ Fifth meeting of Pacific Islands Red Cross Societies (Solomon Islands, June)
- ☐ European Youth Summit (Austria, July)
- ☐ Eighth Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Leaders of countries within ASEAN (Philippines, August)

- ☐ Pan-African Conference of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Swaziland, September)
- ☐ 22nd Conference of Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies (Abu Dhabi, November)
- ☐ 125th Anniversary of the Netherlands Red Cross (Netherlands, December).

Following the informal dialogue begun in 1991 with representatives of National Societies that are members of the Federation's Executive Council, the ICRC President, various members of the Committee and senior staff met with Federation and several National Society representatives in Cordoba in May 1992. These contacts allowed for discussion, in a frank and open atmosphere, on relations between the ICRC and the Federation and on problems facing the National Societies. They also prompted further thought on the future of the Movement.

Visits to ICRC headquarters by National Society representatives

The ICRC is always pleased to receive visitors from National Societies at its headquarters, whether they happen to be passing through Geneva or come by special invitation. Such contacts offer the opportunity to hold working meetings with the staff of various ICRC services which concern the visitors or are of interest to them. Moreover, these visits enable certain National Society representatives who previously knew the ICRC only through its delegations to acquire a broader view of the institution and its operations.

In 1992, 80 visits were arranged for presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries-general, directors, staff and volunteers of

National Societies in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, Europe and North America.

The ICRC also held many information sessions for groups of National Society staff and volunteers from all over the world.

Development of National Societies

In 1992, the ICRC contributed to the development of National Societies by offering cooperation in increasing their operational capacity in the event of emergency situations (armed conflicts). Also, through contacts in the field, it sought to consolidate their knowledge of international humanitarian law and the Fundamental Principles.

The ICRC helped train National Society leaders, staff and volunteers by inviting them to seminars on a wide range of topics: dissemination of the Fundamental Principles and international humanitarian law; an introduction to the Movement; preparation of National Society delegates called upon to take part in ICRC field missions; and, finally, health in emergency situations. The Division for Principles and Relations with the Movement also consulted all the National Societies on implementation of the Fundamental Principles and the introduction of the new regulations governing use of the emblem, which were adopted by the Council of Delegates in 1991.

The ICRC's efforts to increase the operational capacity of National Societies focused on those affected by conflict situations (support in the form of equipment and logistics to ensure assistance for victims of the fighting), giving priority to National Societies with limited financial resources. The ICRC handed over telecommunications equipment and vehicles to several Red Cross Societies in Central

America upon its withdrawal from the area. This policy was followed, according to needs, all over the world.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The ICRC and the Federation kept each other informed of their respective activities and consulted each other regularly on the coordination and distribution of their work, and on all matters of interest to the whole Movement.

These exchanges between the various services of the two institutions were often informal, though formal meetings were also held. Joint Federation/ICRC meetings were held four times in 1992. Matters discussed included preparations for and follow-up to the dialogue between the members of the ICRC Committee and Executive Board and members of the Federation's Executive Council. Discussions in this framework took place in Cordoba in May following the Federation's Executive Council meeting there. The ICRC had organized a similar meeting in Yverdon-les-Bains (Switzerland) in 1991, whereas the Cordoba meeting was arranged by the Federation.

The joint ICRC/Federation meetings also examined the progress made by the Working Group on the Future of the Movement and matters relating to the 26th International Conference. Many other issues were also discussed, mainly concerning National Societies the role of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in the world, the Movement's image and its activities.

Such meetings provided an opportunity to clarify the respective mandates of

the two institutions and to work out a common approach towards respect for the Fundamental Principles by all the components of the Movement.

Joint Commission on National Society Statutes

In accordance with the mandate conferred upon it by resolutions of the 22nd and 24th International Conferences, the Joint ICRC/Federation Commission on National Society Statutes met eight times in 1992. The Commission examined the new situations which have emerged in the countries of the former Soviet Union and in the Balkans. In regard to the latter, the ICRC decided to defer recognition of any Red Cross or Red Crescent Society constituted in the former Yugoslavia until the end of hostilities. This decision was based on Resolution XII of the 17th International Conference of the Red Cross held in Stockholm in August 1948.

The Commission examined the situation with regard to recognition of National Societies of new States in Europe and Central Asia. It also considered the cases of six National Societies facing internal reorganization problems or operational difficulties inconsistent with the principles of the Movement.

The Commission also examined draft statutory amendments submitted by 27 National Societies, to which it gave its approval or sent recommendations, and followed the development of 11 emergent Societies or Societies that had applied for recognition. On the basis of its recommendations, the ICRC Committee recognized three National Societies, the Seychelles Red Cross on 19 June, the Saint Kitts and Nevis Red Cross Society on 27 August and the Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross Society on 4 November.

It was also on the recommendation of the Commission that the ICRC confirmed the validity of the recognition of the Russian Red Cross. The number of National Societies recognized by the ICRC was 153 at the end of the year.

Mr Pierre Gaillard, who had presided over its work for nine years, took leave of the Commission in 1992.

Funds and medals

Joint Commission for the Empress Shôken Fund

This fund was created in 1912 by a gift from the Empress of Japan, for the purpose of promoting the development of National Society activities in peacetime. Since then the Fund has received several gifts from the Japanese Imperial family, the government, the Japanese Red Cross, various associations and the Japanese public. In 1992, the Imperial family donated three million yen to the Empress Shôken Fund. The regulations governing the Empress Shôken Fund were revised by the Council of Delegates held in Budapest in November 1991. Following the postponement of the 26th International Conference, the ICRC submitted the new regulations to the States party to the Geneva Conventions for approval on 31 January 1992, inviting them to communicate any objections within six months. Since no objections were received by this deadline, the regulations came into effect in the version adopted by the Council of Delegates. All the States party to the Geneva Conventions and the National Societies were officially informed of this in accordance with the procedure announced.

The Joint Commission for the Fund, which includes Federation and ICRC

members, met on 8 April under the chairmanship of Mr Maurice Aubert and in the presence of the head of Japan's Permanent Mission in Geneva and two of his staff as observers. Taking into account the criteria set for the allocation of funds, the Commission decided to distribute the income among the National Societies of the following eight countries: Afghanistan, Bolivia, Dominica, Liberia, Nepal, Paraguay, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Togo. The amount distributed, CHF 420,000, was used for development projects and for the purchase of vehicles and other equipment.

Maurice de Madre French Fund

The Maurice de Madre French Fund was set up on the basis of property bequeathed by Count Maurice de Madre, who died in 1970. Its purpose is to assist members of National Societies who suffer injury, illness or accident in the service of the Movement and, in the event of their death, to assist their families.

The Board of the Fund met twice in 1992, in June and December.

The Board decided to provide financial aid over a period of three years to the families of 23 rescue workers of the Bangladesh Red Crescent who lost their lives during an operation to save victims of a natural disaster. The Board also gave favourable replies to requests for grants from Mozambique, El Salvador, Afghanistan, Mali and Togo.

Florence Nightingale Medal

The Florence Nightingale Medal Commission, composed of members of the Committee and the ICRC's Chief Medical Officer, awards the highest distinction that can be received within the Movement by a member of the nursing profession. The medal is awarded every

two years to active members or regular helpers of National Societies, and also to members of affiliated medical or nursing institutions. The medal is awarded for showing exceptional courage or dedication in time of peace or war.

The regulations governing the Florence Nightingale Medal were revised by the Council of Delegates in Budapest in 1991.

Following the postponement of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the ICRC submitted the revised regulations to the States party to the Geneva Conventions for approval on 31 January 1992, inviting them to make any objections known within six months.

No objections having been forthcoming within the time prescribed, the regulations entered into effect in the version adopted by the Council of Delegates. The ICRC informed the States party to the Geneva Conventions and the National Societies accordingly in a circular letter dated 3 August 1992.

Henry Dunant Institute

The ICRC, the International Federation and the Swiss Red Cross are members of the Henry Dunant Institute and take turns in providing it with a chairman for a two-year term of office. The Secretary General of the Swiss Red Cross, Mr Hubert Bucher, was Chairman of the Institute from October 1990 to October 1992, when he was succeeded by ICRC Vice-President Claudio Caratsch.

The aim of the Institute is to provide its members and other interested parties with facilities for study and research, training and instruction in all fields of activity in which the Red Cross and Red Crescent is involved. It thus contributes to strengthening the unity and universal

nature of the Movement. The ICRC is the main source of funds for work carried out at the Institute. Together with the Federation, the Swiss Red Cross and certain National Societies, it is associated with the programme run by the Institute to produce publications and organize seminars, insofar as these projects are of mutual interest. In 1992, among other activities, studies were carried out on child soldiers and on the voluntary services offered by Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies today, and a training seminar was held on management methods.

As in the past, ICRC staff took part as instructors in seminars held in the context of the Institute. The 17th introductory course, on the international activities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent was held in May 1992 in English and was attended by 24 National Society representatives from all continents. In November, a regional seminar was held in Yaoundé (Cameroon) on the measures taken at the national level for implementation of international humanitarian law in French-speaking African countries. (For further details see p. 160).

