

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

**Vorwort:** Foreword  
**Autor:** Sommaruga, Cornelio

### **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:** 14.03.2026

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

# FOREWORD

*Never since the end of the Second World War had the International Committee of the Red Cross been faced with as many murderous conflicts as it was in 1992. Looking back on the year's crises, I cannot help having mixed feelings: never before had our delegates, working in over 60 countries, been so active or reached so many victims, and yet never before had our activities in certain conflicts seemed so fundamentally questioned, nor had the rights of victims been so tragically flouted.*

*In the troubled aftermath of the Cold War, history has suddenly unravelled under the pressure of nationalist, ethnic, religious and political claims. New ideologies of violence have wrought a fundamental change in the nature and traditional dimensions of conflicts. Anarchy and intolerance have turned war into a merciless struggle in which no one is spared, least of all civilians. Millions of men, women, children and elderly people have been starved, detained, tortured or massacred as a result of intolerable policies; others have been forced into exile, deprived of even the most basic necessities. Countless women have been viciously raped. In the light of the odious acts and widespread devastation witnessed by our delegates, I wonder whether we can still speak of war. When each person is considered the enemy of all others, when hatred and cruelty cease to be the product of hostilities and become instead their driving force, it is no longer simply war we are confronted with, but the very denial of humanity. We have reached the very depths of barbarity.*

*The events of 1992 have shown the horror that awaits us when the rules of international humanitarian law, set forth in the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, are flagrantly disregarded.*

*More than ever before it is imperative for all governments to assume responsibility for what is happening throughout the world. They must be reminded that only through compliance with the humanitarian rules can the tragic consequences of war be limited, the spiral of violence halted and barbarity kept at bay. It is up to the international community to put an end to these heinous acts. It is up to neutral and impartial humanitarian institutions to assist and protect the victims of these acts while avoiding any politicization of their work.*

*In these dark times when the principle of humanity itself is in jeopardy, the ICRC will continue with perseverance, thoroughness and humility to carry out the tasks of prevention and assistance that are entrusted to it under the Geneva Conventions.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cornelio Sommaruga', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

**Cornelio Sommaruga**  
*President of the ICRC*