

Zeitschrift: Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross
Herausgeber: International Committee of the Red Cross
Band: - (1993)

Rubrik: Western and Central Europe

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: 24.08.2025

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



A Croatian woman in search of her son approaches the ICRC tracing agency.

WESTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE

ICRC delegations:

Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia,
(Federal Republic of) Yugoslavia

Staff

ICRC expatriates* : 168

National Societies*: 69

Local employees** : 790

Total expenditure

CHF 173,801,047

Expenditure breakdown CHF

Protection/Tracing: 15,795,539

Relief: 108,799,255

Medical assistance: 26,703,039

Cooperation with

National Societies: 638,728

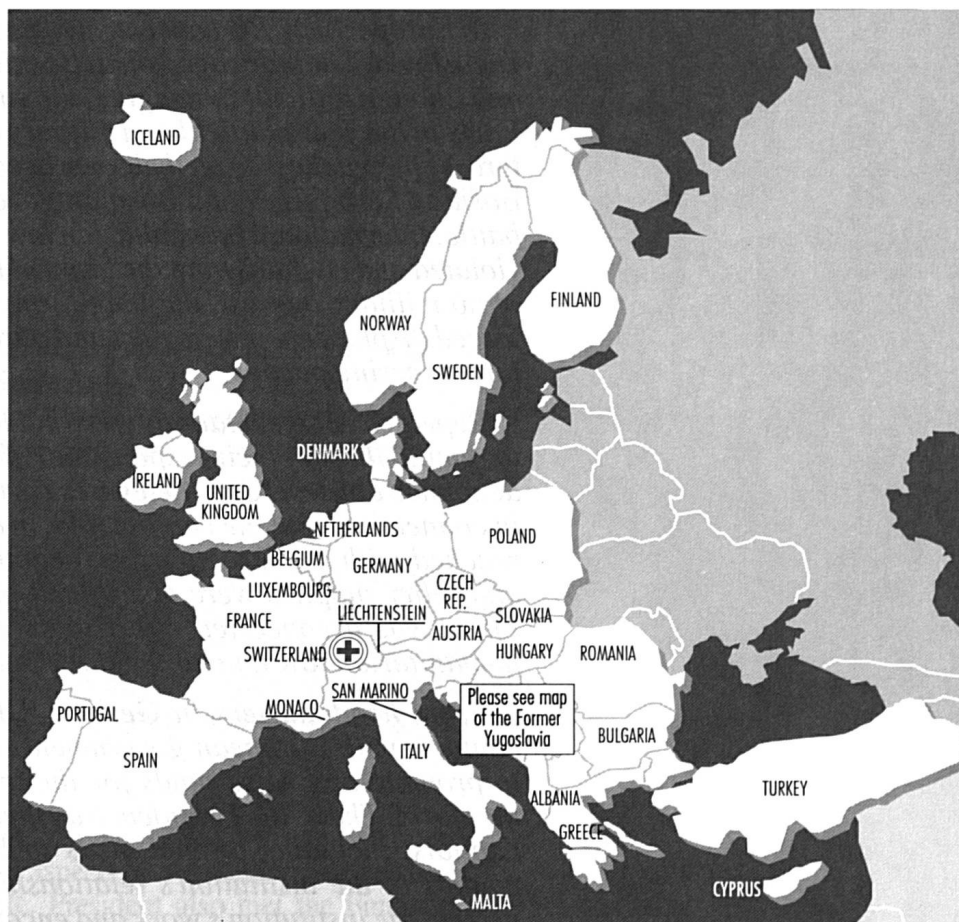
Dissemination: 2,034,248

Operational support: 11,866,912

Overheads: 7,963,326

* Average numbers calculated on an annual basis.

** Under ICRC contract, as at December 1993.



 ICRC Headquarters

ICRC / AR 12.93

WESTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE

In Europe the ICRC concentrated its energies on operations in former Yugoslavia. The war raged on in Bosnia-Herzegovina throughout 1993 and, though difficult to imagine, the situation deteriorated still further. Early in the year political and military alliances shifted; Bosnian Croat forces entered the fray on their own account, turning the conflict between Bosnian Serb forces and Bosnian government troops into a three-way battle. International humanitarian law was frequently and intentionally violated and civilians bore the brunt of the fighting. Attacks on buildings of no military interest, the long-term siege of towns and villages and forced displacement were part and parcel of the military strategy of the three warring parties.

Repeated representations were made by the ICRC to the authorities to remind them of their responsibility for the civilian population and to denounce abuses. ICRC delegates carried out visits to people detained in connection with the conflict and, in accordance with the agreements reached with the three parties, negotiated for their release. Medical and relief supplies were distributed in areas affected by the fighting. There was a concerted effort to spread awareness of international humanitarian law among the three parties to the conflict.

From headquarters in Geneva ICRC representatives maintained contacts with European governments and National Societies in order to promote and raise funds for the institution's activities throughout the world. The ICRC President travelled to many of the major European capitals, including official visits to Brussels and Athens within the context of the institution's relationship with the European Union, to present the institution's work and encourage support for its operations. Representatives of the ICRC regularly had talks with various committees and commissions of the European Union in Geneva and Brussels. Early in the year a delegate was assigned to deal with ICRC concerns related to the European Union.

In Central Europe the institution's main objectives included disseminating knowledge of international humanitarian law and the Movement's principles, encouraging the governments of countries in Central Europe to become party to the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols and advising emergent Red Cross Societies on the procedure for official recognition as a National Society.

Western Europe

ANDORRA

The Principality of Andorra acceded to the four Geneva Conventions in September.

BELGIUM

ICRC lawyers participated in a course, organized by the Belgian Red Cross, on international humanitarian law. Some 36 French-speaking law students from 18 countries attended the course from 1 to 11 September in Spa. A member of the Committee, the ICRC's governing board, gave the opening speech.

DENMARK

To make the traditional visit to the capital of the State holding the presidency of the European Union, the ICRC President travelled to Copenhagen in April. During his mission he met several high-ranking officials with whom he discussed ICRC activities. These talks were followed by meetings with leaders of the Danish Red Cross and a press conference organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

FINLAND

At the invitation of the Finnish Red Cross the ICRC President went on mission to Finland in March to discuss various aspects of cooperation between the ICRC and the National Society. The ICRC President also met the Finnish Prime Minister and other high-ranking officials to request their continued support for the ICRC.

ITALY

The ICRC President, accompanied by a member of the Committee, was received by the Italian President in early January. They also held talks with the Minister of Health and the Secretary-General at the Foreign Ministry. The discussions covered progress made in revising the statutes of the Italian Red Cross, as well as the ICRC's operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Somalia.

LUXEMBOURG

In May the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg officially recognized the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission. Luxembourg was the thirty-fourth State to make the declaration to that effect under Article 90 of Protocol I.

MALTA

Following a joint mission by the ICRC and the Federation in October, representatives from the two organizations concluded that the Malta Red Cross Society met the conditions necessary for official recognition as a National Society. Formal recognition was granted by the ICRC in November.

SPAIN

After a period of reflection, agreed by the ICRC and the Spanish authorities in 1989, before re-examining the issue of ICRC access to places of detention, the regional delegate travelled to Madrid for that purpose in October 1993. He met representatives of the Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs, as well as the ombudsman and relatives of security detainees, to discuss detention-related matters, including a resumption of ICRC visits. The ICRC, together with the Spanish authorities, concluded that an offer of services for ICRC visits was, under the present circumstances, no longer justified.

SWITZERLAND

On 19 March the ICRC signed a headquarters agreement with the Swiss Confederation which came into effect immediately. Under this agreement, which is governed by international law, the Swiss Federal Council recognizes the international legal status of the ICRC and guarantees its independence and freedom of action. The treaty also grants the ICRC the same status as that accorded to international organizations in Switzerland.¹

The President of the Swiss Confederation was received in June by the ICRC President at the Geneva headquarters where they discussed the upcoming International Conference for the Protection of War Victims. In September the ICRC President, on mission in Berne, met the Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs who had chaired the Conference and discussed its outcome with him.

Also in September the ICRC President received representatives of the Swiss federal parliament at headquarters, where they were invited to attend various presentations on ICRC operations throughout the world.

For information on the Symposium on Landmines, held in Montreux in April, and on the International Conference for the Protection of War Victims see pages 242 and 236.

UNITED KINGDOM

In September the Delegate General for Western and Central Europe went on mission to Northern Ireland to discuss with prison authorities the arrangements for a follow-up visit to prisoners held in connection with the events in the province,

¹ See also *The law and legal considerations* on p. 248.

and visits were scheduled to take place in the course of 1994. The ICRC has regularly conducted visits, in accordance with its standard procedures, to prisons in the province since 1982.

EUROPEAN UNION

In 1993 the ICRC appointed a delegate with the special task of developing its relations with the European Union (EU). On 18 May it signed, in parallel with the Federation and the National Societies of the twelve EU countries, a Framework Partnership Agreement with the European Commission. The agreement is intended above all to heighten the effectiveness of the humanitarian aid provided by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO). The ICRC also sought to establish closer contact with other bodies of the Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament, in particular by taking part in the proceedings of several of the Parliament's committees.

The ICRC President attached particular importance to visiting the States responsible for the presidency of the European Community, called the European Union since the Maastricht Treaty came into effect. He also held several working meetings with the ambassadors of the twelve EU countries in Geneva.

Central Europe and the Balkans

THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

The conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina continued unabated in 1993, claiming a high number of mostly civilian victims. Conditions became increasingly difficult as the battle for territory intensified; central Bosnia was the most severely affected. The country's economy was in ruins and basic medical and social services scarcely functioned. All of the warring parties persisted in ignoring humanitarian principles; churches, mosques and hospitals were shelled indiscriminately.

The search for a peace settlement continued throughout the year, but efforts to end the conflict met with little lasting success. Proposals presented in January by international peace negotiators provided for the reorganization of Bosnia-Herzegovina into ten provinces within a decentralized state. By June the plan had been replaced by a provisional agreement for dividing Bosnia-Herzegovina into three constituent republics - Croat, Muslim and Serb - within a demilitarized "Union of Republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina". Talks eventually reached an impasse and attention turned towards a global approach to peace in the former Yugoslavia which involved addressing the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina alongside



⊕ ICRC delegation ⊕ ICRC sub-delegation / office / mission ⊗ United Nations Protected Areas

issues such as Kosovo and the self-proclaimed "Republic of Serbian Krajina". Territorial arguments remained the greatest obstacle to agreement.

The plan for a three-way division of the country reflected a change in the course of the conflict as the alliance between Bosnian Croat forces (HVO)* and government forces disintegrated and Bosnian Serbs voted to become an independent state in May. Bosnian Serbs controlled the bulk of the territory, mostly in the north and the east, and Bosnian Croats claimed areas bordering the Republic of Croatia in the south-west, leaving the Bosnian government in control of parts of central Bosnia and towns in small enclaves. A brief description of the events in main towns in the three areas provides a general picture of the situation.

Heavy fighting which started in mid-May in Mostar, the largest city in Herzegovina, forced an estimated 55,000 Muslim inhabitants and displaced people to gather on the east bank of the Neretva river which runs through the city. Thousands of people were brutally rounded up and arbitrarily

detained by the HVO. Since the hills to the east of Mostar were held by Bosnian Serb forces, the Muslims found themselves in a siege situation. As from May there was a severe shortage of food, medicines and water. The battle over Mostar and central Bosnia between HVO and government troops escalated in October and thousands of villagers, particularly in central Bosnia, were forced to flee.

A month later the Bosnian Croat population of Travnik was forced to flee under the pressure of the Bosnian government forces and seek refuge in the surrounding hills, where they found themselves trapped between the Bosnian Serb and Bosnian government lines.

Bombardments of Sarajevo during July and early August were among the heaviest of the war. Conditions for the approximately 350,000 civilians in the besieged city deteriorated further as even minimal supplies of water, gas, electricity and food often failed to reach them. With the onset of winter and resumed shelling in October conditions were again exacerbated. It was impossible to bring in

IN 1993 THE ICRC:

- visited over 16,000 detainees at least once;
- handled over 4 million Red Cross messages;
- regularly provided some 190 medical facilities with emergency medical supplies;
- distributed relief supplies to about 1 million people directly affected by the fighting.

*HVO *Hrvatsko Vijeće Obrane* - Croatian Defence Council.

food aid to people in the Tarcin/Konjic area. Maglaj and Tesanj, for example, were inaccessible to the ICRC owing to the fighting and obstacles deliberately put up by the belligerents.

In the Bosnian Serb-held town of Banja Luka and the surrounding area harassment of the civilian population continued; about two-thirds of the pre-war Muslim population left the region.

In October a feud in the Bihac pocket between a breakaway Muslim group and the government turned into armed confrontation.

Public statements and appeals

The escalation of hostilities and the growing difficulties faced by the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations in gaining access to the victims prompted the ICRC on several occasions to appeal to the parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law, especially with regard to the civilian population in central Bosnia.

The ICRC publicly denounced breaches thereof, such as making prisoners work on the front lines. An ICRC press release in June reminded the parties that they were responsible for abuses committed in areas under their control, such as the targeting of civilians during combat, the destruction of their belongings and the inhumane treatment of detainees.

In the course of talks both in the field and at headquarters with the leaders of the parties to the conflict the ICRC expressed its concern about the serious violations of international humanitarian law, including security incidents involving ICRC staff and vehicles.

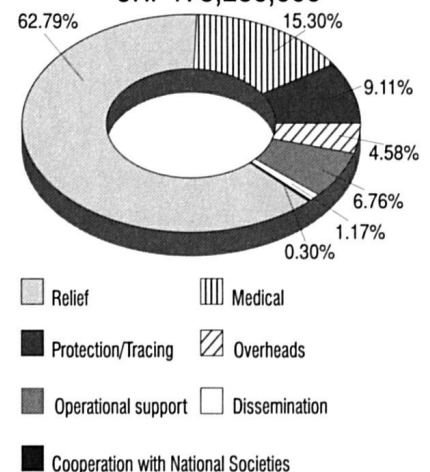
On several occasions the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Human Rights had talks with the ICRC President, as well as with other ICRC representatives. In July and again in November the ICRC President addressed special meetings of the Humanitarian Issues Working Group of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. During both meetings he expressed concern at the deterioration of the situation for the civilian population, in particular in central Bosnia and in besieged towns.

As guests at the 21st Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in Karachi in April, the ICRC Vice-President and other ICRC representatives were able to meet high-level officials. The ICRC's concern about the conditions of detention and call for the release of detainees in Bosnia-Herzegovina were taken up by the conference and included in the Karachi resolution.

The ICRC Director of Operations met the President of Bosnia-Herzegovina in Sarajevo in June to discuss ICRC activities in the country.

During the International Conference for the Protection of War Victims in August, the ICRC spoke out about its difficulties in reaching victims of the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the violations of international humanitarian law committed against the civilian population. The ICRC again called upon the

Former Yugoslavia
Total expenditure in 1993:
CHF 173,280,000



warring parties to stop their systematic abuse, including indiscriminate attacks, forcible expulsion and the destruction of private property.

The ICRC President travelled to Bosnia-Herzegovina in November, where he met the President of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat political leaders.

Action as a neutral intermediary

ICRC representatives had frequent meetings with high-level representatives of the warring parties with the aim of helping them reach an agreement on humanitarian issues. At ICRC headquarters on 5 and 6 March the ICRC convened a meeting of the plenipotentiary representatives of the Bosnian government and of Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats, who reconfirmed their agreement to respect the civilian population and all medical facilities, to notify the ICRC of and allow it access to all detainees and to guarantee the security of humanitarian workers in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The parties were reminded of their commitment, according to the terms of the October 1992 agreement, to release all detainees unconditionally and unilaterally. An ICRC plan of action for the release of detainees was presented to the parties a few days later.

Activities for detainees

During visits carried out in accordance with customary ICRC criteria, the conditions of detention were evaluated by ICRC delegates. Wherever necessary the ICRC provided detainees with food supplements, clothing, hygiene products, blankets, stoves and plastic sheeting. In some places of detention the ICRC gave technical assistance to ensure that detainees' basic needs for heating, drinking water and sanitation were met (see also *Water and sanitation* below). Emergency medical supplies were handed over to dispensaries of detention centres.

In May the Delegate General for Western and Central Europe presented the President of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb leaders each with an ICRC report on the conditions in places of detention under their control.

The ICRC made repeated representations to the authorities following reports that prisoners were being used as human shields and forced to work on front lines. A detailed report of allegations and ICRC findings, enjoining the three parties to the conflict to put an immediate stop to such practices, was handed over by the ICRC President to the three parties to the conflict during his November mission.

Over the year around 17,000 people detained in connection with the conflict were visited at least once by the ICRC. They also benefited from ICRC tracing services, and in 1993 more than 100,000 Red Cross messages were handled on their behalf.

Despite various agreements to release detainees unconditionally, the terms of few of these agreements were respected. However, exchanges were organized locally by the parties themselves. By mid-year, in an attempt to protect the interests of the prisoners exchanged, the ICRC drew up guidelines for international organizations or agencies involved in such exchanges.

In September, when the parties once again expressed their readiness to proceed with the unconditional release of all detainees, the ICRC offered its services and emphasized the fact that humanitarian considerations must override all other concerns.

By the end of the year some 13,000 detainees had been released by the parties. The ICRC transferred some 2,800 of them either to places within Bosnia-Herzegovina or to third countries, according to the wishes of each detainee.

Activities for the civilian population

The second year of the conflict proved no better than the first as far as respect for the civilian population was concerned. Whether they stayed at home or fled their towns and villages, civilians bore the brunt of the territorial contest and often became pawns in a larger political or military strategy.

In May the Delegate General presented the President of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb leaders each with an ICRC report on the situation of the civilian population in areas under their control.

As from March the international community resorted to air drops in an attempt to bring aid to people in besieged cities. In May the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 824 declaring Bihac, Gorazde, Sarajevo, Srebrenica, Tuzla and Zepa "safe areas". The plan met with ambiguous support from the conflicting parties and did little to increase the safety of the civilian population.

Access to the most vulnerable people was often cut off because of poor security, bad weather, bad roads or all three. Precious weeks and even months were lost in negotiations for the safe passage of vital relief supplies. Many destinations could be reached only by crossing the front lines, where combatants were extremely reluctant to let humanitarian aid through, since they viewed it as strategic support for the opposite side or a bargaining tool to increase assistance to areas under their own control. In spite of sporadic unilateral or bilateral cease-fires - usually called so that aid could be brought into a besieged area - much of central Bosnia was supplied only intermittently.

Furthermore, so-called irregulars, including bandits and snipers, commanded main roads and regularly carried out savage attacks on humanitarian convoys. A number of UN soldiers and members of relief organizations were killed.

In June, when the Bosnian Croats of Travnik were stranded between the front lines of the Bosnian Serb and Bosnian government forces, the ICRC distributed emergency relief supplies. Soon after, following an agreement with the Bosnian Serb authorities (whose front lines had to be crossed) and the Republic of Croatia,

the ICRC was able to evacuate 500 of these Bosnian Croats to Croatia. The adult male population had been rounded up by the Bosnian Serb forces and sent to Manjaca camp near Banja Luka.

As from July the ICRC was forced to abandon the Split-Zenica route because fighting flared up again along this road. Other less direct routes had to be found and negotiated. Convoys going to Zenica travelled from Zagreb via Banja Luka and those to Tuzla from Belgrade via Zvornik. Travelling these routes involved negotiating passage across several lines.

ICRC target groups for relief distributions included displaced people, the elderly and the disabled, as well as people in social welfare institutions and hospitals. Each month an estimated 500,000 people received parcels containing supplementary foodstuffs such as beans, cheese, vegetable oil and sugar as well as certain non-food items such as soap.

As the cold weather set in and the needs of the civilian population increased, the ICRC carried out a winter relief programme to meet the needs of people in besieged towns and in central Bosnia. The non-food items included warm clothing, blankets, footwear and about 29,000 wood-burning stoves. As from October an ICRC cargo aircraft transported relief consignments to Sarajevo. Food supplies were destined for the 17 community kitchens run in collaboration with the local Red Cross, which provided meals for some 15,000 people who for health reasons or because of their age could not take advantage of other forms of food aid. In 1993 the ICRC distributed about 40,000 tonnes of relief supplies in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Tracing activities

With an estimated 1,300,000 displaced people within Bosnia-Herzegovina alone there was great need for a means to re-establish contact between separated family members. Red Cross messages often served as the principal means of communication between relatives. The Central Tracing Agency, with the indispensable help of the local Red Cross and some 102 National Societies worldwide, handled more than 4 million such messages in 1993. During December alone an average of 150,000 Red Cross messages were handled per week by the ICRC delegations in countries of the former Yugoslavia.

More than 1,300 family reunifications were carried out by the ICRC, each handled on a case-by-case basis. The most vulnerable people were given priority, i.e. children and the elderly living in precarious conditions far from their family. In addition, the ICRC, in cooperation with UNHCR and the International Migration Organization (IMO), reunited 570 families with relatives who had been detained and released under ICRC auspices; they were helped to resettle in third countries.

Medical activities

Nutritional surveys carried out by ICRC medical personnel helped the institution to monitor the need for assistance among the civilian population. Particular attention was given to the condition of detainees and people in specialized care institutions, such as those providing rehabilitation and occupational therapy, homes for the elderly, mental hospitals and orphanages.

Medical services in Bosnia-Herzegovina, particularly in besieged towns, were in a desperate state owing to the fighting, mass population displacement and a breakdown of supply systems. Certain field hospitals lacked basic medical equipment such as operating tables and surgical instruments. The ICRC provided emergency medicines, surgical supplies and equipment to surgical facilities. Priority was given to those treating the war-wounded.

In April, following an agreement reached under the auspices of UNPROFOR between the Bosnian government and the Bosnian Serb forces, the ICRC sent a medical team to the besieged town of Srebrenica to evacuate sick people and war casualties to Tuzla. Two other teams distributed emergency medical supplies, blankets and food to the local population.

At the end of the year distributions were stepped up in war-torn areas such as Tuzla, Nova Bila, Vitez, Zepce and Mostar. Some 180 Bosnian Croat war casualties from Zepce, being treated in hospitals in Teslic and Banja Luka, were evacuated by the ICRC to Zagreb.

In 1993 the ICRC assisted some 270 medical facilities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs) and parts of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; some 190 such facilities in Bosnia-Herzegovina regularly received emergency medical supplies. They included hospitals, field hospitals, clinics with operating rooms, dispensaries and first-aid posts.

As an exceptional measure, disposable material essential for the treatment of patients with kidney disease was supplied by the ICRC to haemodialysis centres in Serb-held areas during the first six months of 1993, until another donor could be found. Centres in areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina held by Bosnian Croats or the government were supplied by other international humanitarian organizations.

The ICRC began reconstruction of two badly-damaged buildings at the Tuzla psychiatric hospital. Orthopaedic centres in Sarajevo and Banja Luka that manufacture prostheses for amputees were provided with the necessary materials.

Two seminars on war surgery were held in Banja Luka and Zenica for about 40 military and civilian surgeons.

The support of the numerous participating National Societies was of utmost importance for the ICRC's emergency medical programme. Some National Societies contributed supplies to ICRC operations, others provided medical personnel or financial support. A special non-emergency programme was carried out in the Banja Luka region where the ICRC supplied medical facilities with sets of medicines for chronically ill and mentally ill patients.

A number of specialized projects were made possible by joint programmes with certain National Societies. With the assistance of the Norwegian Red Cross major repairs were carried out at the Kosevo Hospital in Sarajevo, where a centre for the treatment of patients with spinal injuries was inaugurated in November; it was the first building in Sarajevo to be restored since the outbreak of the fighting there. Supervision of a rehabilitation programme for patients at Kosevo Hospital and at an out-patient clinic was begun. Disposable medical supplies and basic surgical equipment were provided to hospitals in Zenica and Tuzla. In a bilateral project the Netherlands Red Cross, working under ICRC coordination, began setting up gas generators and heaters in Sarajevo.

Water and sanitation

The protracted conflict led to serious water shortages and caused problems of access to clean water. In some places distribution and treatment plants were destroyed by the fighting or fell into disrepair for lack of spare parts and chemicals. Elsewhere they could not be used because there was no electricity. While many local water authorities were capable of maintaining a minimum supply of water, their resources, in terms of both personnel and materials, were often limited. The situation was complicated by the fact that many areas had modern, sophisticated water and sanitation systems which require expert maintenance.

All sides used denial of access to water as a weapon in their military strategy, which left isolated areas with no drinking water. On 8 June the ICRC denounced this practice. In addition to negotiating civilian access to water supplies with the warring parties, the ICRC also worked to ensure that the water in conflict areas was safe to drink. In all, ICRC water and sanitation teams worked in some 70 different municipalities.

So as to reduce risk of illness from contaminated water, chemicals for treating the water were distributed widely in areas such as Banja Luka, Bihac, Gorazde, Mostar, Sarajevo and Zenica. Chlorinators and spare parts were supplied to many water authorities. Water distribution points were set up in Mostar and Srebrenica. In collaboration with *Médecins sans Frontières* the ICRC put an abandoned water system in Srebrenica back into service. Emergency reservoirs were placed in centres for displaced people in Zenica.

With the assistance of the British Red Cross the ICRC repaired the water pipeline between Pale and Sarajevo. This project was unique in that it operated on gravity flow and did not depend on fuel or electricity.

In certain detention centres the ICRC was able to improve conditions for detainees by treating the water or by installing heaters or lighting.

Dissemination

The ICRC made a particular effort to spread awareness of the rules of international humanitarian law in 1993. Use of the media was a vital aspect of

the ICRC's approach to dissemination work. Radio spots on international humanitarian law were broadcast on local stations. ICRC delegates also helped to spread awareness of international humanitarian law through programmes on television and articles in the press. In addition, ICRC publications were translated into local languages. Seminars on the law of war were held for over 200 officers from all three parties, as well as for combatants in the field.

ICRC dissemination delegates held several seminars on ICRC activities and the Movement for leaders of local Red Cross branches.

Delegates strove to make the basic humanitarian principles known in order to encourage respect for the civilian population, to improve security for humanitarian workers and to increase the chances of success of the various ICRC operations.

CROATIA

Overall, the situation was tense on and off throughout the year. In spite of the 1992 cease-fire and the deployment of UN forces in the UNPAs, there was a resurgence of fighting early in 1993 between Croatian troops and forces from the self-proclaimed "Republic of Serbian Krajina" (RSK). Fighting flared up again in September with bombardment in UNPA Sectors South and North which also affected Karlovac, south-west of Zagreb.

During his mission in the former Yugoslavia in November the ICRC President met the Croatian President, Deputy Prime Ministers and other high-ranking officials in Zagreb where they discussed matters related to the conflict of 1991, as well as ICRC activities in the country.

The Croatian Red Cross was officially recognized as a National Society in August following a joint mission by the ICRC and the Federation.

Activities for civilians and detainees

Delegates based in ICRC offices in the UNPAs monitored the uneasy situation and prepared to take action in case conditions deteriorated. The Knin sub-delegation covered UNPA South; the Vojnic office UNPA North; the Okucani office UNPA West and the new Dalj office UNPA East. In addition to coordinating ICRC activities in Croatia the delegation in Zagreb and the sub-delegation in Split also served as logistics bases and provided support for the institution's operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The activities of the ICRC delegates included providing protection for minority groups, spreading knowledge of the rules of war, handling Red Cross messages and visiting people detained in connection with the conflict; assistance in the form of medical emergency supplies was given to hospitals near the front line treating war casualties.

In the UNPAs, ICRC delegates brought assistance to the needy, in particular the elderly and isolated people facing hardship. ICRC water and sanitation

engineers ensured that there was safe drinking in isolated areas. Emergency reservoirs were placed in centres for displaced people in Knin. Special attention was given to areas where minority groups were subjected to pressure. The ICRC intervened on several occasions at political and administrative levels, calling on the parties to respect the civilian population. ICRC visits were carried out to people detained in connection with the conflict between the Croatian government and the Serb forces.

The ICRC continued to visit and work for the release of prisoners still held in connection with the 1991 Croatian-Yugoslav conflict who, under an agreement signed in Budapest in August 1992, should all have been released as from that time. At a meeting in Geneva on 11 February the ICRC brought together plenipotentiary representatives of the parties to the 1991 conflict to deal with unresolved issues, and discussions with high-level officials on both sides continued throughout 1993. On 6 December the Deputy Prime Ministers of Croatia and Yugoslavia met in Geneva under ICRC auspices to discuss the fate of prisoners, and by the end of the year their release appeared imminent.

Dissemination

More than a dozen seminars on the law of war were held for a total of 650 officers of the Croatian army as well as for members of the Serb forces in the UNPAs. Briefing sessions on international humanitarian law were also held for UNPROFOR battalions in the UNPAs.

A series of training seminars on the role of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and international humanitarian law were held for senior leaders of all branches of the Croatian Red Cross; several publications and video programmes were given to the National Society for large-scale distribution.

YUGOSLAVIA (Serbia, Montenegro)

Following the December 1992 elections the new Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia formed a government in March. In addition to soaring inflation the country faced hardship because of international sanctions. Medical supplies dwindled as an indirect result of the sanctions; people found it difficult to pay for those medicines that were available.

During his November mission to Belgrade the ICRC President met the President, Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the President of Serbia as well as other high-ranking officials. In Podgorica he met the President of Montenegro. Discussions centred on issues related to the 1991 conflict, as well as ICRC activities in the region.

In August, following a mission by representatives of the Joint ICRC/Federation Commission for National Society Statutes, the ICRC confirmed recognition of the Yugoslav Red Cross.

Activities for detainees

The ICRC delegation in Belgrade visited prisoners held in connection with the Croatian-Yugoslav conflict.

An ICRC delegate based in Pristina continued to organize visits to people detained in connection with the situation in Kosovo. Delegates conducted two rounds of visits; in all, 64 people were visited in nine places of detention in Serbia.

Medical activities

Throughout the year the ICRC concentrated on the needs of hospitals receiving war-wounded and provided them with emergency medical supplies. Certain humanitarian needs arose on account of the breakdown of the distribution system; blood transfusion material, for instance, including blood test sets, was donated to the Blood Transfusion Institute in Belgrade. The orthopaedic centre in Belgrade received material for the manufacture of prostheses.

The ICRC helped the Yugoslav Red Cross buy medicines for distribution free of charge to refugees.

Dissemination

The ICRC and the National Society developed a programme called "Bridges to Humanity" for national radio. ICRC staff were invited a number of times for interviews on national television to talk about ICRC activities and international humanitarian law. Delegates held a seminar on the law of war for members of the Yugoslav armed forces in Belgrade.

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Formal submission by the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia of an application for membership of the United Nations in January provoked strong reactions over the name of the country and was the subject of deep disagreement with Greece. UN recognition was granted to it in April under that name.

In September the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia deposited with the Swiss government a declaration of succession to the Geneva Conventions and the two Additional Protocols. These instruments were previously applicable to the territory of the Republic of Macedonia by virtue of their ratification by the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in April 1950 and June 1979 respectively. In accordance with international practice the four Conventions and the two Protocols came into force for the country retroactively on 8 September 1991, the date of the Republic's independence.

The ICRC President travelled to Skopje in November where he held talks with the President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Minister of Health on the consequences, in humanitarian terms, of the war in the former Yugoslavia and on the question of recognition of the National Society. The President also gave a lecture at the Law School on the dissemination of international humanitarian law as a preventive measure.

Dissemination

In collaboration with the Ministry of Defence seven seminars were held for some 230 officers and their troops. Videos, teaching aids and other material had been translated into the local language for the seminars. Training courses in international humanitarian law were held for local Red Cross officials.

SLOVENIA

In March, at the Geneva headquarters, the ICRC President received the Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs. They discussed the effects of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia on the Slovenian population and the resultant humanitarian needs. The authorities expressed concern about the estimated 70,000 refugees in Slovenia, as well as for a number of Slovenes trapped in war-torn areas in Bosnia-Herzegovina or in the UNPAs.

The ICRC President, on mission in the former Yugoslavia in November, travelled to Ljubljana and discussed the humanitarian problems in the neighbouring war-stricken countries with the President of the Republic, several ministers, members of parliament and representatives of the Red Cross of Slovenia.

In August the Red Cross of Slovenia was formally recognized as the National Society following a joint mission by the ICRC and the Federation. A training course on National Society dissemination programmes was organized under ICRC auspices by the Belgian Red Cross for Slovenian Red Cross youth.

*

* *

Activities in the following countries were carried out by ICRC delegates based in Geneva.

ALBANIA

In July the Republic of Albania acceded to the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I) and Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II).

A dissemination delegate based in Geneva travelled to Tirana in July for a conference organized by the Federation on cooperation and dissemination. Other

participants included representatives of the Albanian, British, Bulgarian and Netherlands Red Cross Societies. During the same mission the delegate met the Minister of Defence to discuss the organization of seminars on the law of war for Albanian officers.

In November the regional delegate and an ICRC lawyer travelled to Albania where they held talks with Albanian authorities, including the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence and the Deputy Ministers of Justice and Public Order, on the ICRC's activities and the overall situation in the region in terms of humanitarian needs, as well as respect for the emblem and other issues related to international humanitarian law.

BULGARIA

The Deputy Delegate General for Western and Central Europe, accompanied by a dissemination delegate, attended the annual Bulgarian Red Cross Assembly in March. They also met Red Cross representatives to discuss setting up dissemination and tracing programmes. Delegates sought the cooperation of the authorities in promoting international humanitarian law.

The 10th Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the Balkan Countries, which took place in September in Sofia, focused on the situation in the region and on cooperation among the National Societies there. The conference was held under the auspices of the Bulgarian Red Cross and was attended by the ICRC's Director for Principles, Law and Relations with the Movement and the Delegate General for Western and Central Europe, who both took an active part. They clearly emphasized the importance of international humanitarian law and reported on the International Conference for the Protection of War Victims.

CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic announced its decision to succeed to the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols in February. Two reservations concerning the Conventions, previously made by Czechoslovakia, were maintained.

The Delegate General and the regional delegate attended the first General Assembly of the Czech Red Cross in June. The newly organized Czech Red Cross was formally recognized in August.

GREECE

In February Greece acceded to Protocol II additional to the Geneva Conventions.

A few weeks before Greece assumed the presidency of the European Union, the ICRC President went to Athens in December for talks with the President of

the Republic, the Minister of Defence and other high-level officials on the government's view of the conflict and the humanitarian needs in the neighbouring States of the former Yugoslavia. During his mission he also had talks with leaders of the Hellenic Red Cross.

HUNGARY

The Hungarian Red Cross organized a seminar in Budapest designed to lend support to local branches dealing with tracing requests and Red Cross messages. During the year Red Cross staff in Hungary were often called upon to deal with questions raised by the many refugees in the country.

POLAND

The ICRC Vice-President travelled to Poland in August where he met representatives of the Polish Red Cross and the government, including the Foreign Minister, with whom he discussed the Conference for the Protection of War Victims which was due to take place at the end of the month.

He also gave an opening speech to participants in the eleventh annual course on international humanitarian law. Some 40 university students and academics from a record 24 countries attended the course, which was held in English.

ROMANIA

In March the Deputy Delegate General and a dissemination delegate travelled to Romania to review the situation and hold talks with the authorities and Red Cross officials. Since the situation in the country no longer warranted its continuous presence there, the ICRC closed its delegation in Bucharest on 31 March.

The ICRC supported the Federation's "Spinal Cord Injury" project for paraplegic patients at the Bucharest Marinescu Hospital. The six-month project ended in December 1993.

SLOVAKIA

An ICRC delegation met high-level officials in early March to discuss the question of succession of the Slovak Republic to the Geneva Conventions. They also advised Red Cross representatives about procedures for formal recognition of the National Society.

In April Slovakia announced its intention to succeed to the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols. The declaration contained the reservations previously made by Czechoslovakia concerning the Conventions.

A dissemination delegate took part as an observer in a congress in May which brought together about 100 leaders of the former Red Cross Society. The newly

organized Slovak Red Cross elected a President and adopted its own statutes in preparation for its recognition as a National Society. It was formally recognized in August.

TURKEY

Throughout the year the ICRC had regular meetings with the Turkish authorities in order to keep them informed about its activities in the former Yugoslavia and in the Caucasus.

It followed the situation in Turkey closely throughout the year and reiterated its offer of services to the government in March with a view to obtaining access to detainees and civilians affected by the fighting in the south-eastern part of the country.