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*War leaves countless men, women and children bereft and alone,  
far from their homes and families. The ICRC seeks to alleviate their suffering.*



## West Africa

### ICRC delegations:

Liberia, Sierra Leone

### ICRC regional delegations:

Abidjan, Dakar, Lagos

## Central Africa

### ICRC delegations:

Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda

### ICRC regional delegation:

Yaoundé

## Southern Africa

### ICRC delegation:

Angola

### ICRC regional delegations:

Harare, Pretoria

## East Africa

### ICRC delegations:

Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda

### ICRC regional delegation:

Nairobi

### Staff

ICRC expatriates<sup>1</sup>: 358

National Societies<sup>1</sup>: 95

Local employees<sup>2</sup>: 3,093

### Total expenditure:

Sfr 263,837,912.77

### Expenditure breakdown

Protection: 31,871,871.79

Assistance: 173,919,980.62

Preventive action: 13,437,544.86

Cooperation with National Societies:  
9,612,745.75

Overheads: 15,256,928.00

General: 19,738,841.75

<sup>1</sup> Average figures calculated on an annual basis.

<sup>2</sup> Under ICRC contract, as at December 1999.



⊕ ICRC regional delegation    ⊕ ICRC delegation    ⊕ ICRC mission or other presence

ICRC / AR 12 99

Hopes that the dawn of a new millennium would bring brighter prospects for the countries of Africa were disappointed as the continent continued to be plagued by a range of conflicts that caused widespread suffering, mass displacements and the progressive impoverishment of its people.

Angola, once thought to be on the road to peace, sank back into a state of civil war. The Lusaka accord that was intended to end the 20-year conflict in 1994 finally and definitively collapsed when fresh fighting broke out on the Central Planalto in December 1998. The international conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, believed to have caused the deaths of tens of thousands of soldiers on both sides of the front line, defied all efforts to find a solution. Clashes continued throughout the year in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in a situation made more complex by the plethora of armed forces, factions and groups involved in the fighting. Particularly brutal conflicts traumatized the populations in Sierra Leone and the Republic of the Congo.

On other fronts, even if the situation was no worse, there was little cause for optimism. The slow-burning conflict in Sudan reached an impasse, with sporadic military operations taking place in the south and east of the country. The south of Somalia remained mired in insecurity and interfactional fighting, although in the north, Somaliland appeared to have achieved a degree of stability, and the establishment of a new geopolitical entity, Puntland, brought a measure of calm to the region. Niger and Côte d'Ivoire were rocked by coups d'états, although thankfully they occurred with little or no bloodshed. Elsewhere, tensions and social unrest persisted.

Intensive negotiations with the support and participation of a number of African countries led to the signature of peace agreements in July in Lomé, Togo, with a view to ending the civil war in Sierra Leone, and in Lusaka, Zambia, in the context of the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. On both occasions, the ICRC had the opportunity to put humanitarian law on the agenda and to ensure that humanitarian concerns, such as the release of prisoners and access by humanitarian organizations to the victims, were taken into account. Implementation of the accords' provisions, however, especially with regard to issues such as demobilization, took a while to get off the ground. Towards the end of the year, talks also began between the Senegalese government and the Casamance separatist movement and between the parties to the conflict in the Republic of the Congo.

The 11-month civil war in Guinea-Bissau ended in May, when the military junta took power and the President left the country. The first round of presidential and legislative elections took place in November. Other positive developments, resulting from democratic elections, included the restoration of a civilian government in Nigeria and the smooth handover of the presidency in South Africa.

The most immediate and palpable effects of the conflicts were felt first and foremost by civilians. Extreme violence characterized the hostilities in Sierra Leone and the Republic of the Congo. In January, thousands of people were killed or mutilated during the rebel advance on the Sierra Leonean capital, Freetown. In the Republic of the Congo, the second half of the year saw streams of half-starved and traumatized people emerging from the forests, to which they had fled to escape the terror sown by marauding militias. In these and other contexts, the wanton and predatory behaviour of the combatants, who resorted to acts of unspeakable cruelty, rape and the systematic looting of homes and infrastructure, was at the root of much of the suffering.



In Angola, 300,000 to 400,000 displaced people swelled the populations of the main towns under government control. An unknown number of people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo -- probably in the hundreds of thousands -- were uprooted across the country. In Guinea-Bissau, the capital was emptied twice of its population in 1999, although civilians were generally spared the worst effects of the fighting.

In many countries, notably Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan, a progressive economic decline, combined with the effects of prolonged conflict and rampant looting by combatants, had brought public administration to the point of collapse, destroyed infrastructure and disrupted vital supply lines. Thousands, if not millions, of people were thus caught in a seemingly endless cycle of poverty and despair.

It is little wonder, then, that the African continent occupied the lion's share of the ICRC's 1999 budget and saw the heaviest staff involvement. The organization had 21 delegations in Africa in 1999: 12 operational delegations, 7 regional delegations, and missions in Kivu and to the OAU\* in Addis Ababa.

In addition to the 120,000 detainees in Rwanda held in connection with the 1994 genocide, the ICRC visited some 28,000 prisoners and security detainees in 18 African countries in 1999. These included prisoners of war (POWs) held in the contexts of the fighting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and on the Ethiopian side in the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict. Eritrea being one of the few countries not to have signed the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC was not granted access to Ethiopian POWs held in Eritrea. The ICRC President addressed the issue during an official visit to Asmara; the Eritrean government then made a pledge at the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Geneva to sign the Geneva Conventions. The ICRC also visited some 1,350 civilian internees in Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 1999 it was granted access to detainees for the first time in the Republic of the Congo, in Burundi following the renewal of its activities in the country, in Namibia in connection with the conflict in the Caprivi Strip, in Cameroon, in Equatorial Guinea and in Guinea-Bissau.

Besides visits to detainees, the ICRC was able to carry out a wide array of humanitarian activities in 1999. Needs were such that it mounted large-scale relief operations (food and medical assistance) in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and expanded its field activities in Somalia. In northern Mali, the ICRC drew to a close its programmes to develop the health care system and to improve the water supply for rural communities, after a three-year implementation phase.

For the most part, the ICRC maintained good relations with the authorities and all the warring parties and encountered few political obstacles in the accomplishment of its mandate. The main exception was Sierra Leone, from which the ICRC was requested to leave in January, to return only in May. The organization was able to relaunch its activities in Burundi after a three-year hiatus, focusing mainly on people deprived of their freedom. The more stable situation in Rwanda made it possible for the ICRC to operate in areas of the country previously off-limits for security reasons. Similarly, the ICRC was once again able to carry out activities in south-west-

\* OAU: Organization of African Unity

ern Uganda, from which it had withdrawn in December 1998 in the absence of security guarantees.

Security, it must be said, remained a major concern, and although acceptance of the ICRC's work and mandate was generally good throughout Africa, the organization found that its room for manoeuvre was sometimes limited by the need to avoid exposing staff to unnecessary risks. Movements were restricted, for example, outside urban areas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo and Burundi. In Somalia, no permanent structures such as offices or residences were established.

This made the ICRC's cooperation with the individual National Societies of paramount importance. Their intimate knowledge of the terrain and greater freedom of movement in certain contexts meant that they could often reach areas off-limits to the ICRC. For its part, the ICRC contributed to the development of National Societies' emergency preparedness and tracing and dissemination activities by providing financial and technical support, training staff and donating vehicles, furniture and equipment. The ICRC also worked closely with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in those contexts where the Federation was engaged in the institutional development of the National Society.

The regional delegations in Africa were once again of great service. In addition to their traditional activities to promote the dissemination and national implementation of humanitarian law in the countries they cover, most of the regional delegations found themselves active in operational contexts. From Abidjan and Lagos, the ICRC coordinated the Movement's activities and support to the National Society during the ICRC's five-month absence from Sierra Leone. The regional delegation in Dakar was able to intervene rapidly during the hostilities in Guinea-Bissau. From Pretoria, the ICRC closely followed the crisis in the Comoros. Delegates based in Harare visited POWs held in connection with the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and took action when fighting broke out in Namibia's Caprivi Strip. The Nairobi delegation, with its logistics centre, continued to play its special role of support to the operational delegations not only in neighbouring countries, but as far afield as Kosovo and East Timor.



## LIBERIA



⛶ ICRC delegation

ICRC/AR 12/99

*uneasy peace*

*attacks in the north-west*

Two years after his election, Liberia's President and his NPP\* party were still grappling with the political and economic difficulties that had beset the country since its emergence from a seven-year civil war in 1997. Tensions persisted, especially in the border counties of Lofa, Nimba and Grand Gedeh. Numerous human rights violations continued to be reported, a situation not helped by the proliferation of para-military groups. The economy remained in disarray. Investors stayed away, deterred by the country's political instability and human rights record.

Opposition to the government was mainly organized from abroad, with armed factions making periodic cross-border incursions, allegedly from rear bases in Guinea. Trouble in the region was also attributed to returning Liberian soldiers who had fought alongside rebels of the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone's civil war. Clashes took place in April and again in August in Lofa county in north-western Liberia, leading to the displacement of thousands of people. Homes and warehouses containing humanitarian aid stocks were systematically looted. Hostages taken in August, including a few expatriate aid workers, were later released in Guinea.

\* NPP: National Patriotic Party

*destruction of weapons*

*Sierra Leonean refugees  
still present in large numbers*

*programmes for detainees  
expanded*

*progress in humanitarian law  
teaching*

Relations between Liberia and Guinea deteriorated as a result of attacks on both sides of the border, including in September by Liberian armed groups on three Guinean villages. An extraordinary summit organized by ECOWAS\* in Abuja, Nigeria, on 16 September helped to ease the situation, and Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea agreed to cooperate to secure their mutual frontiers and to furnish each other with lists of dissidents with a view to their expulsion within the framework of the revived Mano River Union.<sup>3</sup>

In October the government announced that the disarmament process had been officially completed. Weapons and ammunition belonging to 21,000 combatants were destroyed in Tubmanburg on 18 October in the presence of the Liberian Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defense and Education, members of the diplomatic community, the UN Secretary-General and representatives of the ICRC and the Federation. Five days later the last ECOMOG\* troops withdrew from Liberia, after a nine-year presence in the country.

In another positive development, many formerly displaced people returned to work on the land. The government launched a countrywide agricultural programme, but at the end of the year the promised seeds and tools had yet to materialize.

Some 35,000 refugees from the civil war in neighbouring Sierra Leone remained in five camps, one of which was located between the capital and the border and the others in the suburbs of Monrovia. Following the clashes in Lofa county in August, about 10,000 of the refugees were relocated to Sinje camp. The ICRC, together with the Liberian National Red Cross, paid monthly visits to these camps to assess the situation and promote the exchange of Red Cross messages.

The ICRC carried on its visits to security detainees, including those sentenced for their alleged part in the attempted coup d'état of September 1998 and held in Monrovia's central prison, and others still awaiting trial at the Barclay Training Center. Written authorization was received from the Ministries of Justice and Defence to visit all places of detention under their jurisdiction. These included places of detention run by the army, to which the ICRC had not previously had access other than on an occasional basis. The ICRC also received the necessary clearances to visit detainees held in police stations.

Seven years of war had left the Liberian prison administration stripped of technical and financial resources. The ICRC therefore launched a programme to restore kitchen and sanitary facilities and to carry out other minor repairs to infrastructure in eight Liberian prisons, three of them in Monrovia and five in rural areas. Monthly food distributions were carried out to the detainees' families to enable them to take food to their detained relatives.

Humanitarian law and the ICRC's mandate formed an integral part of training at the Police Academy, and courses benefited from regular ICRC participation. The army, which was in the process of being restructured, incorporated the basics of humanitarian law in its new training programme. A one-week course for future instructors of the armed, police and security forces, organized by the ICRC in March in cooperation with the Liberian Red Cross, provided representatives of these different services

\* ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

<sup>3</sup> Mano River Union: a customs and economic union established in 1973 between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

\* ECOMOG: Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group



*humanitarian issues  
given centre stage*

with their first opportunity to meet officially. A nine-member committee was formed to work with the National Society and the ICRC in developing future programmes. Together with the Ministry of Defence, the ICRC developed a teaching module on humanitarian law, the ICRC's mandate and the National Society's role for military instructors giving courses on "military tactics" for male university students and secondary school pupils.

Liberia ratified the Ottawa landmines treaty on 23 December.

Emphasis was placed on promoting humanitarian values among both the general public and arms bearers and on creating an environment conducive to humanitarian activities. The ICRC chose 15 March, the Liberian national day, to launch activities related to the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. A concert featuring the South African singer Lucky Dube took place in Monrovia before an audience of tens of thousands. In addition, weekly concerts featuring music, dance and sketches were held in various urban and rural communities with the participation of local musicians and entertainers, stressing the importance of humanitarian values and highlighting health and hygiene issues.

In August, a statue depicting seven life-size combatants with arms outstretched towards a volume of the Geneva Conventions was unveiled by the ICRC on Monrovia's main street. Ministers and other representatives of the government and of civil society attended the ceremony, which included performances of local dances and scenes portraying violations of humanitarian law.



## IN 1999 THE ICRC:

- visited 34 detainees in 6 places of detention, including those detained in connection with the 1998 attempted coup d'état; visits to detention centres in rural areas were conducted with the National Society;
- during visits to places of detention, distributed food (provided by the WFP\*), clothing, bedding, recreational items and hygiene products to the inmates;
- employed the services of a local nurse to carry out regular medical visits to detention centres and dispense medicines as necessary; transferred serious medical cases to a referral hospital;
- carried out structural repair work to improve the water supply and sanitation system in 7 prisons;

\* WFP: World Food Programme



- in conjunction with the Liberian Red Cross, exchanged 2,858 Red Cross messages, mainly on behalf of Sierra Leonean refugees, some of them unaccompanied children trying to locate their parents;



- through the Liberian Red Cross, distributed food and material assistance (including cooking pots, tarpaulins and blankets) to people displaced by the clashes in Lofa county in July and August;



- sank 3 wells and repaired 20 hand pumps in Monrovia and up-country, and repaired or maintained existing installations/facilities;



- provided support for the National Society's tracing and dissemination programmes;
- reactivated 3 Liberian Red Cross branches in Voinjama, Gbarnga and Zwedru, areas to which the ICRC did not have easy access, and provided them with financial, food and medical assistance to enable them to help the victims of clashes;
- provided support for the activities of Liberian Red Cross volunteers, such as the cleaning of market places, water points and wells;
- defrayed the running costs of 2 Liberian Red Cross clinics treating patients in remote areas (Dolo's Town and Gbarnga) where the local population had limited access to medical care, and supplied them with basic drugs and dressings; financially supported 3 National Society health posts in camps for displaced people and refugee centres;



- conducted sessions on humanitarian law for members of the police, armed and security forces;
- gave regular courses on humanitarian law to prison officers, and distributed publications on the ICRC's mandate and first-aid kits to detainees;
- organized a seminar for 26 members of the Liberian press corps in January to enhance the media's understanding of humanitarian law and Red Cross activities, and regularly provided related articles for publication in daily newspapers and programmes for radio broadcast.



## SIERRA LEONE



*fighting continues into January*

*peace agreement reached in Lomé*

The beginning of the year saw no let-up in the fighting between rebel forces and government troops, which had taken a turn for the worse in December 1998.<sup>4</sup> Following skirmishes in the hills around the capital, the AFRC\*/RUF\* forces entered Freetown in the first week of January. The ensuing street battles, with ECOMOG attempting to defend its positions in the capital from the advancing rebels, left at least 5,000 dead and many more wounded, the majority civilians. After weeks of heavy fighting, the rebels were driven back to the countryside, where they continued to hold out for several months against the joint ECOMOG/CDF\* forces.

A cease-fire in May brought the fighting to a halt, and on 7 July a peace agreement was signed after six weeks of talks in Lomé, Togo, involving members of the Sierra Leone government and the RUF, representatives of the governments of Sierra Leone's neighbours and the UN. The accord provided "inter alia" for the disarmament and demobilization of the various armed groups and their integration into a new,

<sup>4</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, pp. 45-50.

\* AFRC: Armed Forces Revolutionary Council

\* RUF: Revolutionary United Front

\* CDF: Civil Defence Forces

*peace plan inches forward*

*security situation limits access  
to thousands of displaced*

*ICRC expelled from Freetown*

restructured army, amnesty for all former combatants and collaborators, elections within two years, the transformation of the ECOMOG mandate into peace-keeping and protection, and the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The issue of impunity was a subject of some controversy, given the many and horrific atrocities that had been committed in the context of the conflict, but it was later specified that the amnesty did not cover perpetrators of war crimes.

The rebels remained in control of about half of Sierra Leone's territory. The RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, who had been sentenced to death for treason in 1998 but pardoned as part of the accord, and AFRC leader Johnny Paul Koroma arrived back in Freetown in October, with the stated intention of beginning the disarmament and demobilization of their respective forces. Both leaders conducted tours of the bush to exhort their followers to abide by the peace agreement. Their efforts did little to limit violations of the peace agreement by some of their forces who, feeling sidelined, openly opposed the accord. In addition to battles between RUF and AFRC forces for control of the town of Makeni, there were numerous accounts of harassment of civilians and human rights violations, ambushes of commercial and humanitarian convoys and further population displacements.

The UN Security Council adopted a resolution in October creating UNAMSIL,\* a 6,000-strong peace-keeping force of observers and soldiers, for an initial period of six months. Troops began to arrive as of mid-November. As a step forward in cementing the peace process, in November the RUF was registered as a political party whose members could stand in future elections.

Progress in implementing the peace agreement was painfully slow. Of the estimated 45,000 combatants, little more than 10,500 had handed in their weapons by 15 December, the deadline set for the completion of the disarmament process. Apart from informal releases, prisoners in the hands of the various parties remained in captivity. The return and resettlement of many of the refugees and displaced people, which were conditional on the disarmament and demobilization process, had barely begun.

Between January and the signing of the cease-fire, attacks and clashes mainly in the eastern and northern parts of the country prompted large population movements. Some 300,000 displaced people gathered in 22 camps in Freetown, Waterloo, Kambia, Yele, Bo and Kenema. Those outside the capital rarely received any form of assistance.

Even after the cease-fire, large tracts of the country, particularly in Kono, Koinadugu and Kailahun in northern and eastern Sierra Leone, remained inaccessible to humanitarian organizations. Freedom of movement, which the peace agreement was expected to facilitate, was still limited. While access was possible to areas under government control, humanitarian agencies were reluctant to extend their activities to areas controlled by the RUF and AFRC for want of security guarantees and the ability to operate independently.

The intensity of the fighting in early January obliged the ICRC to reduce the number of expatriate staff in Freetown to a strict minimum of five, including a surgeon and an anaesthetist. A week later, on 13 January, the remaining expatriates were expelled by the Sierra Leonean government on the unfounded accusation that the ICRC had

\* UNAMSIL: United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone



*National Society active throughout*

*return to Sierra Leone*

*release of detainees  
not accomplished as planned*

assisted the rebels. An ICRC-chartered helicopter evacuated them to the Guinean capital, Conakry. Before its departure, the ICRC talked with or forwarded messages to representatives of all the parties to the conflict, including countries contributing to ECOMOG forces, and reminded them of their obligation to abide by the rules of humanitarian law. It also issued a press release on 22 January, formally rejecting the accusations made against it and drawing attention to the detention by ECOMOG of six of its local staff members. These were released the following day.

The ICRC's absence, and indeed that of most other humanitarian agencies, and the inaccessibility of large parts of the country made it impossible to get an accurate picture of the plight of the civilian population or to respond to its needs. The ICRC nonetheless continued to act as lead agency for the Movement's emergency activities in Sierra Leone from outside the country, including the coordination of financial and in-kind contributions from participating National Societies. In particular, it provided support to the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, which was the only component of the Movement operating within the country.

The Sierra Leone Red Cross had suffered badly during the fighting and its capacity was almost totally wiped out. Nevertheless, the National Society continued to see to the medical needs of the wounded and to assist displaced people. It ran three health centres in Freetown -- in the National Stadium, Howe Street and Bailor Barrie's Compound -- with a staff of six nurses and 50 volunteers, and two teams of 17 first-aid workers assisted the medical staff of Connaught Hospital, at which a blood bank was also operational. Having established that its substantial non-food stocks in Freetown had remained intact, the ICRC put them at the National Society's disposal to distribute to displaced people sheltering in Bailor Barrie's Compound.

In the meantime, the ICRC took all possible steps to resume its activities in Sierra Leone. These included written representations and meetings in various capitals with, among others, Sierra Leonean government officials, ECOWAS and ECOMOG representatives and the UN Special Envoy. On two consecutive missions to Freetown in April, the Delegate General for Africa met the Sierra Leonean President and the Commander-in-Chief of the ECOMOG forces, as well as other high-level military and government officials. The authorities subsequently publicly retracted all the accusations made against the ICRC earlier in the year. This paved the way for the ICRC and the Federation to return to Sierra Leone on 17 May to resume aid programmes for the victims of the conflict.

Under the terms of the Lomé peace accord, the parties undertook to make arrangements for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners and civilians abducted during the conflict. A "committee for the release of prisoners of war and non-combatants" was set up, with the ICRC acting in an advisory capacity. During the peace negotiations in Lomé, the ICRC submitted a position paper to the parties and the UN, setting out its role in the event of any releases and its standard procedures in such circumstances. Despite this, the handful of releases that took place before the end of the year were carried out randomly and without ICRC involvement.

During the attack on Freetown, some prisoners escaped. The ICRC provided assistance to former detainees it had previously visited and registered and who presented themselves at the delegation. The ICRC also participated in the early stages of the demobilization process by providing material assistance and plastic sheeting to



*Red Cross message network  
developed and expanded*

*restoring self-sufficiency*

*changing medical needs*

the NCDDR\* to give out to combatants who handed in their weapons, as the authorities lacked the means to do so themselves. The NCDDR, UNAMSIL and a number of NGOs subsequently took over this task.

To enable displaced and dispersed families to keep in touch with relatives, the Red Cross message network was revived in 12 camps in Freetown in May and June and progressively extended to include previously inaccessible regions. Volunteers from the Sierra Leone Red Cross were trained and equipped, and awareness campaigns conducted in all sites where displaced people had gathered, in hospitals and clinics, in interim care centres for abducted children, and in schools and institutions. A radio programme on the Red Cross message network was aired on national radio.

Early assessments by the ICRC and the National Society in Freetown revealed significant needs among the displaced people, particularly for shelter materials before the arrival of the rainy season. The ICRC was requested by the authorities to assume responsibility for assistance to the 13,000 displaced people in Waterloo camp. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of displaced people around Bo and Kenema had been left almost entirely without assistance, owing to difficulties of access. An improvement in the security situation along the roads linking Freetown, Bo and Kenema in mid-June enabled humanitarian organizations to send the first consignment of food relief to these areas.

The self-sufficiency and food security of displaced people in government-controlled areas of the country improved significantly in the second half of the year. The 50,000 displaced people on the Freetown peninsula and 60,000 in Kenema district were the focal points for assistance from the humanitarian community. Camps were built to relocate families from public buildings and in order to provide more adequate accommodation.

As the peace process advanced, the ICRC transformed its emergency assistance into rehabilitation programmes. Together with the Sierra Leone Red Cross, it distributed agricultural assistance, shelter materials and other essentials to displaced people to facilitate their return home. Agro-assistance packages targeting farmers in three districts (Kenema, Pujehun and Tonkilili) particularly affected by the conflict were distributed in October and November to 36,000 people in time for the second planting season, and post-distribution evaluations determined that the distributions had had a significant impact on restoring the beneficiaries' self-sufficiency.

In order to ensure that surgical activities in Netland Surgical Hospital in Freetown continued while it was absent from the country, the ICRC handed these over to MSF,\* but kept up the payment of rent and staff salaries. At the Lumley (formerly the Lakka) Rehabilitation Centre, which was transferred to the annex of the ICRC delegation, four local ICRC nurses and one physiotherapist provided care for 50 patients and 30 of their relatives. The ICRC arranged with the WFP to make food deliveries to the patients of Netland Surgical Hospital and the rehabilitation centre and to their relatives.

After the cease-fire, the relative peace meant that the ICRC could return to providing health services to the victims of the conflict, focusing on surgical activities in Netland and Kenema, the provision of drugs to health centres in Freetown, and

\* NCDDR: National Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization and Rehabilitation

\* MSF: "Médecins sans frontières"



## *rebuilding the ICRC's image in Sierra Leone*

maternal and child health at Princess Christian Maternity Hospital. The ICRC transferred the bulk of its surgical assistance from Netland Surgical Hospital, where needs were diminishing, to the Kenema District Hospital, the main referral hospital in the east, where many war-wounded were expected to emerge from inaccessible areas following the cease-fire and in anticipation of the return of refugees and displaced people to the region. Repairs and rehabilitation work were initiated on the hospital and an ICRC surgical team began work in September.

Before and after the ICRC's expulsion in January, the local press had published numerous critical and unfounded articles about the organization, which together with the accusations levelled against it by the authorities had contributed to a very negative perception of the Red Cross in Sierra Leone. However, as the year progressed the ICRC's image slowly began to improve and more balanced articles appeared in the press. Immediately after its return to the country in May, the ICRC concentrated on bilateral dissemination to ensure that its role and activities in the country were better understood. It also made a point of communicating with and together with the National Society, so as to ensure a common front for the Movement in Sierra Leone. Contacts were established with military officers and instructors with a view to introducing humanitarian law into the training programmes of the future restructured armed forces.

## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- provided material assistance to around 1,300 released detainees;



- together with the Sierra Leone Red Cross, exchanged 6,930 Red Cross messages between displaced people and their relatives within Sierra Leone and between Sierra Leone and abroad;



- together with the National Society, provided 2,857 tonnes of material assistance (blankets, sleeping mats, buckets, kitchen sets and soap) to some 37,000 displaced people and other war victims;
- in October, together with the Sierra Leone Red Cross, distributed agricultural inputs (cassava sticks, sweet potato vines, groundnut seed, vegetable kits and swamp hoes) to more than 36,000 displaced people and vulnerable resident families in the Kenema, Tonkilili and Pujehun districts to help them regain self-sufficiency;
- provided ad hoc material assistance through the Ministry of Health and local NGOs to vulnerable people, mainly in hospitals, orphanages and homes for the handicapped;
- in December, initiated a number of small-scale institutional food-distribution programmes to meet the special needs of amputees, hospital patients, polio victims, pregnant women, former child combatants and orphans in Freetown;





- until August, assisted the Netland Surgical Hospital with medical supplies and salary incentives for its staff;
- began construction of an operating theatre, physiotherapy unit, outpatient department and kitchen and laundry facilities at the Kenema District Hospital and transformation of the existing kitchen into a 40-bed surgical ward; provided a surgical team to carry out general and corrective surgery (the team performed 96 operations on 48 patients);
- resumed support to 4 clinics in Freetown that treated a total of 29,025 patients over the year, providing them weekly with drugs and medical supplies and paying salary incentives to staff; immunized 6,757 people, including 4,919 children, attending the clinics as part of the WHO\* Extended Programme on Immunization;
- provided the 20-bed maternity ward in the Princess Christian Maternity Hospital with the medical supplies and equipment allowing it to dispense free medical/surgical maternity care for destitute people with life-threatening conditions; provided the services of an expatriate health delegate and local field officer to supervise the wards and train Ministry of Health staff; paid the salaries of staff involved in the programme;



- provided support for the Lumley Rehabilitation Centre treating a total of 100 patients and their relatives transferred from Netland Surgical Hospital after surgery;



- continued to support the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, whose assets were substantially depleted by the conflict, in its emergency-preparedness, tracing and dissemination programmes;
- assisted the National Society in restoring and refurbishing its Bo and Kenema branches;
- held a workshop in Freetown in June with 13 staff and volunteers of the five main branches of the National Society to develop a dissemination plan of action and identify target groups;



- organized press conferences and seminars for the local media and the National Society to explain the ICRC's mandate and principles and to address some of the misconceptions and rumours that had preceded the ICRC's expulsion;
- reinforced its participation in the weekly radio programme, "Red Cross Na Salone", aired by the Sierra Leonean Broadcasting Service, including a panel discussion in September on protection in general and the Movement's tracing network in Sierra Leone in particular.

\* WHO: World Health Organization



## ABIDJAN

### Regional delegation

(Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Togo)

*coup d'état in Côte d'Ivoire*

*ICRC gains broader access to detainees in Côte d'Ivoire*

*mounting tension in Guinea*

Of the countries covered by the regional delegation, Benin, Ghana and Togo were generally stable in 1999, apart from the resurgence of ethnic strife in Benin following legislative elections in March, and in Ghana, where about 500 people fled into north-east Togo. Deteriorating economic conditions also prompted social unrest in Ghana and Togo. In May, the Togolese President, whose turn it was to hold the Presidency of ECOWAS, was asked to mediate in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.<sup>5</sup> Togo was also actively involved in finding a solution to the conflict in Sierra Leone during the peace negotiations in Lomé in June.<sup>6</sup>

The build-up to the presidential elections to be held in October 2000 overshadowed other events in Côte d'Ivoire, with the President attempting to outlaw the opposition RDR's\* main candidate on the grounds that he was not of Ivorian origin. The political contest between the presidential rivals revived ethnic hatreds, of which people of Burkinabè extraction were the main victims. In November a conflict over land ownership broke out in the south-west of the country between Ivorians from the Kroumen tribe and the immigrant community, mainly from Burkina Faso. More than 20,000 of the immigrants fled the fighting and sought refuge in Grabo and Tabou before being forcibly sent back to Burkina Faso.

The population's dissatisfaction with the state of the economy, in particular the rising cost of living and increases in tax and the cost of insurance, led to public sector strikes, student unrest and violent demonstrations. Many people were arrested, including in October the 13 main RDR leaders, and schools and universities were closed down. The general unrest culminated in a bloodless coup d'état on 24 December, when the army, taking advantage of the chaos generated by mutinous soldiers claiming back pay, toppled the President. In the process, the main jail in Abidjan was opened and emptied of its occupants, including political detainees and penal-law offenders. Meanwhile, several members of the old regime were arrested and held in the Akouedo military camp.

Prior to the coup, the ICRC had negotiated and obtained greater access to places of detention, including police stations, so as to reach all categories of detainees, and a series of visits began in March. In addition, the ICRC carried out ad hoc visits to the 13 arrested RDR leaders and to the members of the old regime arrested in connection with the coup.

Following his contested win in elections in December 1998, the Guinean President tightened his hold on the reins of power. The opposition leader and other opponents of the government arrested during the electoral process remained in detention. The issue fuelled the animosity of ethnic groups cut off from the power base, and opposition parties boycotted all the parliamentary sessions throughout the year. In mid-October, Conakry was the scene of widespread student protests against sharp price increases. Clashes between the security forces and protesters left two dead and several dozen wounded. A large number of people were detained.

Attacks by Liberian rebels on the Liberian town of Voinjama, allegedly from bases in Guinea, put a strain on relations between the two countries. In April, Liberia's President threatened military action against Guinea if the Liberian dissidents

<sup>5</sup> See pp. 74-75.

<sup>6</sup> See pp. 51-52.

\* RDR: "Rassemblement de la République"



*visits authorized  
to detainees in Guinea*

*progress in the implementation  
of humanitarian law*

*making humanitarian law  
a reality*

operating in Guinea were not contained. Liberian armed groups from bases in Liberia had also carried out incursions onto Guinean territory. Armed RUF members also made regular cross-border raids on Guinean border villages from Sierra Leone, sometimes in search of food, other times to settle scores. The peace process in Sierra Leone begun in mid-year and a dialogue between Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia helped to improve security along the borders.

The conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau had prompted large influxes of refugees into Guinea. A UNHCR census in June 1999 estimated the number of refugees in Guinea at 480,000, of which 420,000 were in the region of Guéckédou and Nzérékoré and 60,000 in Forecariah. The end of hostilities in Guinea-Bissau enabled Guinean troops to withdraw from that country and refugees who had fled the conflict to be repatriated.

In November the ICRC Vice-President met the Guinean President and other senior government officials in Conakry. Following the visit, the Ministries of Security and Justice signed an agreement granting the ICRC access to all places of detention throughout Guinea, the fruit of two years of negotiations. The categories of detainees were to include imprisoned political opponents of the regime and Sierra Leonean refugees arrested near the border on charges of complicity with the rebels. Unfortunately, the ICRC had temporarily to suspend its visits, begun in December, because it was not allowed to carry them out in full accordance with its customary procedures.

The Ivorian Ministry of Defence established a national humanitarian law bureau in charge of dissemination to the armed forces and training in the law of armed conflict. The ICRC provided financial and technical support and trained members of the bureau and the legal staff of the Ministry of Defence. Following regular working sessions attended by the ICRC, a training programme in humanitarian law was incorporated into the official curriculum of the national police academy in Côte d'Ivoire.

The Ivorian parliament ratified the Ottawa landmines treaty, as did the Togolese National Assembly. In December Togo adopted a law governing the use of the red cross and red crescent emblems. An interministerial committee on humanitarian law was established in Benin with the financial and technical support of the ICRC.

On 19 June, with the support of the ICRC and the Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire, a theatre group gave its first performance of a play on the theme "Even wars have limits", as part of the "People on War" project. The performance took place at Ki-yi Village, a private institution for the rehabilitation of street children in Abidjan. A hundred diplomats, government representatives, artists and journalists attended the opening of the play, the first in a series on the same theme that was performed regularly at the Ki-yi Village theatre. In addition, a rap music contest was organized over a two-month period by Côte d'Ivoire's most popular radio station; contestants were required to improvise lyrics on humanitarian themes. In Togo, as part of a country-wide media campaign, a short play on the basics of humanitarian law was broadcast in three languages on national television and radio.

In April the Paris-based International Law 90 Research Centre (IL90) invited 20 African, American and European experts to take part in a discussion on compliance with humanitarian law held at the University of Abidjan before an audience of 300 people. Besides the ICRC, the speakers included the Director of the Côte d'Ivoire Legal



Research Centre (CIREJ) and the Secretary-General of the International Commission of Jurists.

The ICRC used the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions as an opportunity to promote better knowledge of humanitarian law in all the countries of the region, organizing press conferences, workshops and exhibitions to give greater prominence to the role and mandate of the ICRC and foster public awareness of humanitarian issues, especially through the media and among National Society members. In Côte d'Ivoire, the ICRC and the National Society organized a three-day cultural festival in Abidjan. Before an audience of about 5,000 people, 50 of Côte d'Ivoire's best groups and entertainers performed on an open-air stage during two non-stop shows of music, dance, theatre and comedy. The works of seven local artists were displayed alongside the ICRC's "People on War" photo exhibition.

## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- in Côte d'Ivoire, visited detainees in 18 places of detention; when necessary distributed soap, agricultural tools, seeds, fertilizer and books to all inmates; carried out ad hoc sanitary work and provided medical care; provided supplementary food for a three-month period to malnourished prisoners in Sassandra and Man prisons, in cooperation with a local NGO;



- in cooperation with UNHCR, monitored the situation of Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees in camps in Guinea and assessed the needs of Guineans displaced because of the tension in the border area;



- exchanged 4,119 Red Cross messages on behalf of Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Guinea;



- jointly with the Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire, distributed assistance (rice, oil, salt, baby food, straw mats, blankets and shelter materials) to 6,000 people of Burkinabè origin, driven from their land during the conflict in November;



- in Guinea, supplied medical materials to health facilities located along the borders with Liberia and Sierra Leone;
- during the disturbances in Conakry in October, transported the wounded to hospital together with Guinean Red Cross volunteers, assessed needs in the various hospitals treating the wounded and distributed basic first-aid materials through the National Society;



- financed the information/dissemination and emergency-preparedness programmes of the Red Cross Societies of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Togo; contributed to coordinators' salaries and the production of regular newsletters, supplied equipment and materials, funded the National Societies' activities commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions and helped organize and/or fund seminars, dissemination sessions and training courses;
- helped the Red Cross of Benin create, train and equip 26 new emergency medical teams and evaluate 99 existing teams; provided the National Society with financial and technical support to record five radio programmes aimed at raising public awareness of Red Cross principles in three languages;
- provided financial support to the Côte d'Ivoire Red Cross for a number of community-based initiatives to spread knowledge of the Movement's work; trained 11 emergency teams and 72 new volunteers; funded the refurbishment of a number of working areas at the National Society's headquarters;
- in Togo, funded and took part in a six-day workshop for 24 women leaders from the central region with the aim of familiarizing the participants with first-aid techniques and Red Cross principles; as part of its pilot programme for Red Cross training in primary schools, financed and conducted 3 working sessions with 8 participating teachers; carried out 45 Red Cross information tours in 15 villages in rural areas;
- in Togo, conducted a Red Cross information session in mid-August for 61 volunteers from the National Societies of Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo;



- continued its efforts to promote greater understanding and acceptance of humanitarian law and of the ICRC among various target groups in the region, namely the civilian and military authorities, the police, the armed forces, various organizations, academic circles and the general public.



## DAKAR

### Regional delegation

(Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal)

*President ousted in Guinea-Bissau*

*emergency response during the fighting*

*visits to detainees proceed*

*glimmer of hope in Casamance*

On 31 January fighting broke out in Guinea-Bissau for the third time since 1998<sup>7</sup> between troops loyal to the President and those of the military junta. Some 70,000 people fled, approximately 100 were killed and 400 wounded. The President met the head of the military junta in Bissau on 20 February and announced the creation of a government of national unity. With the withdrawal of foreign troops from Senegal and Guinea by mid-March, most of the displaced people returned home. The truce was short-lived, however. A further bout of fighting in May prompted yet another exodus from the capital. After two days of clashes in which 80 people died and more than 200 were injured, the government forces were defeated and the military junta's soldiers marched into Bissau. As calm returned to the capital, displaced people began to flock back. ECOMOG peacekeeping forces, which had refrained from taking part in the fighting, ended their mission in Guinea-Bissau in May. Presidential elections were held on 28 November in a generally quiet and orderly manner, with the two leading candidates going forward to a second round scheduled for January 2000.

At the height of the fighting, the ICRC publicly appealed to the parties to comply with the rules of humanitarian law. The violence of the exchanges of artillery fire in Bissau in January made it difficult for ICRC delegates to move about the capital freely, but as soon as it was safe to do so they delivered emergency medical supplies to the Simao Mendes Central Hospital, where five surgeons were operating round the clock on the war-wounded, while National Society staff evacuated the wounded and dead. When displaced people returned to the capital following the truce, the ICRC and the National Society distributed emergency assistance to those whose homes had been destroyed in the fighting. In May, an ICRC team worked alongside the National Society, administering first aid, evacuating the wounded to hospital and transporting corpses to the morgue.

Visits continued to prisoners held by the military junta. In January, for the first time since the onset of hostilities, delegates were also able to visit people detained by the government in connection with the conflict. Following the junta's victory in May, the ICRC approached the new authorities and ECOMOG in order to obtain access to more than 700 newly arrested people, including members of the old regime. Although many were rapidly released, more than 100 detainees falling under the ICRC's mandate were still being held at the end of the year, awaiting the next step in the legal process.

Following the end of hostilities and the return of displaced people to their homes, the ICRC scaled down its Red Cross message service and relief activities. Four field trips carried out by the ICRC throughout the country to assess the situation revealed that farmers were able to harvest and sell their cashew nuts, enabling them to purchase enough rice to see the population through to the next rice harvest.

A meeting between the Senegalese President and the MFDC\* leader on 22 January hinted at the possibility of peace for Senegal's conflict-torn Casamance region. A further positive sign was the release in February of 117 people held in connection with the unrest. Clashes were nonetheless regularly reported between the separatist movement and the armed forces, especially in areas close to the border with Guinea-Bissau, where the MFDC continued to maintain bases. The fighting claimed

<sup>7</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, pp. 54-55.

\* MFDC: "Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance"



*vegetable gardens  
to improve detainees' health*

*troubles persist in northern Mali*

*programmes completed  
in northern Mali*

*seminar on light weapons*

civilian lives and led to fresh population displacements. Peace talks got under way in Banjul on 26 December, the third attempt by the two parties since 1991 to find a peaceful settlement to the conflict. On the last day of the year, 41 detainees held in connection with Casamance events were released after receiving a presidential pardon.

The ICRC continued to visit detainees held in connection with the strife in Casamance. It launched its third vegetable garden project, this time at the Bignona prison, where the annual production of roughly 85 tonnes of vegetables was intended to help improve the nutritional intake of detainees at the Bignona and Ziguinchor prisons. The Kolda vegetable garden project, which had yielded 45 tonnes of vegetables in its initial one-year period, continued to run successfully and greatly helped to balance and enhance the quality and quantity of food distributed to the detainees.

Municipal elections in Mali in June concluded the election process (legislative, presidential and municipal) initiated in 1997. Although the elections were relatively unperturbed in most parts of the country, there were upheavals in the Gao and Kidal regions. Inter-ethnic clashes occurred in July and August in the north, claiming some 30 victims. Additional troops were deployed in the northern part of the country to help ease tensions. The situation in the north, compounded by the activities of armed bandits, seriously restricted the ICRC's movements in the area.

In 1999 the ICRC completed two major projects for the population in northern Mali begun in the early 1990s in the aftermath of the rebellion and designed to help counter the region's recurrent instability and chronic underdevelopment. The first, conducted over a period of three years, involved constructing or rehabilitating and equipping 19 community health centres – ten around Timbuktu by an ICRC team, and nine around Bourem in Gao as part of a project delegated to the Belgian Red Cross. ICRC and Belgian Red Cross teams conducted missions to the field to offer people in remote areas health services similar to those provided in the health centres, such as vaccination, and to raise awareness of basic health standards. By the end of the year, the ICRC and the Belgian Red Cross were in a position to hand over responsibility for all the health centres to local associations representing the communities.

The ICRC also completed its water and sanitation project, begun in 1997. Over three years it sank or rehabilitated some 150 wells or water holes serving health centres and remote rural communities without access to clean water.

With the financial and technical support of the Norwegian Red Cross, PCASED\* and the ICRC, the Mali Red Cross Society organized a seminar in Bamako on 5 and 6 October on the theme of "humanitarian challenges in the face of the proliferation of light weapons", attended by representatives of the National Societies of nine ECOWAS member States (Mali, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Togo and Benin). An official ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions was held alongside the seminar, with the participation of the former Malian head of State, Amadou Toumani Touré.

On 9 April a coup d'état which led to the assassination of the President, who himself came to power in a coup in 1996, caused worldwide indignation and the immediate suspension of international aid to Niger. The junta regime that followed the

\* PCASED: Programme for Coordination and Assistance on Security and Development in West Africa



## *coup d'état in Niger*

coup set up a Niger Reconciliation Council, a body of 14 members acting as the supreme executive power. Six months after the coup, on 17 October, presidential and legislative elections were held and the military rulers prepared to hand over power to a civilian government, but not before securing an amnesty for themselves and those who had taken part in the 1996 coup.

## *protests in Burkina Faso*

Violent demonstrations in Burkina Faso following the murder of journalist Norbert Zongo in December 1998 gave way to generally peaceful student, trade union and human rights group protests against the reign of impunity. Riots erupted again at the end of November in Ouagadougou, opposing the security forces and students demanding the release of 22 of their colleagues arrested during earlier protests.

## *assistance to Burkinabè returnees*

Some 10,000 people of Burkinabè nationality, violently expelled from Côte d'Ivoire in November,<sup>8</sup> returned to Burkina Faso. Many had had to leave everything behind. With ICRC support, the Burkinabè Red Cross mounted an assistance operation for the returnees in several towns along the border.

## *Gambia: detainees allowed to communicate with families*

In July the ICRC was given permission to exchange Red Cross messages on behalf of detainees held in Mile 2 prison in Banjul, Gambia, for their part in the 1994 coup attempt. They had been kept incommunicado for more than four years.

On 26 November, a working meeting was held between the Interministerial Committee on Humanitarian Law and the ICRC to examine the status of implementation of humanitarian law in Senegal.

Following the coup in Niger, the ICRC established contact with the new authorities during a mission to Niamey in June in order to secure guarantees from the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Justice and Higher Education that humanitarian law programmes would continue. Another mission to Niamey in October was undertaken by the representative of the ICRC's Advisory Service based in Abidjan and a delegate from Bamako at the request of Niger's Ministry of Justice and Human Rights to assist the authorities in revising the penal code to take into account grave breaches of humanitarian law.

## *humanitarian law implementation*

In Burkina Faso, a seminar on the implementation of humanitarian law in May, attended by some 50 key figures from various ministries and by representatives of the National Society, and a follow-up meeting in July, resulted in the creation of a provisional national committee with a view to incorporating humanitarian law into national legislation.

An assessment of the current state of implementation of humanitarian law in Gambia was finalized by a Gambian lawyer and, on the ICRC's recommendation, the government created an interministerial committee on humanitarian law on 12 August. This was followed on 30 November and 1 December by Gambia's first seminar on the implementation of humanitarian law, organized jointly by the ICRC, the Gambia Red Cross Society and the Gambian Department of State for Justice.

## *humanitarian law and military training*

The Mali armed forces Chief-of-Staff and close advisors met with a view to incorporating a compulsory humanitarian law programme into the curricula of military education centres as of 2000. On 12 August, the ICRC held a meeting with some 30 senior officers to emphasize the importance of disseminating humanitarian law to the Malian armed forces and of including it in military training. The Chief-of-Staff and Joint Chiefs-of-Staff attended the presentation, as did the directors of the military

<sup>8</sup> See p. 57.

academies. A meeting was also held in May with the Minister of Defence and his key advisor in Ouagadougou to discuss the dissemination of humanitarian law to the Burkinabè armed forces and its teaching in military academies.

Following the authorization received in May from the Army Commander, dissemination sessions began for members of the Gambian armed forces. The first and second phases of the programme went ahead in military barracks in Banjul and the interior in July and October respectively. On these occasions, copies of the "Soldier's Manual", specially printed by the delegation in the national colours, were distributed to the troops.

### IN 1999 THE ICRC:

- in Guinea-Bissau, from March visited 741 detainees in 5 places of detention under the authority of the military junta; provided them with food and material assistance and offered them the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their families; supplied ad hoc food assistance to detainees;
- in Gambia, visited 22 detainees in 2 places of detention and distributed assistance to the inmates to improve their living and hygiene conditions;
- in Senegal, visited 166 detainees (21 for the first time) in 3 places of detention; provided assistance for the maintenance of the detainees' vegetable garden in Kolda prison, extended medical assistance to the clinics of the Kolda and Ziguinchor detention centres, and distributed books and card games;



- exchanged 230 Red Cross messages on behalf of displaced people and families dispersed by the conflict in Guinea-Bissau;





- through the Senegalese Red Cross, distributed 244 tonnes of food to 6,214 people displaced by the clashes in Casamance;
- distributed material assistance (tents, matting, jerrycans, buckets and blankets) to 2,515 families whose homes had been destroyed by the fighting in Bissau in October 1998;



- in Mali, supported and completed the health programme in Gao and Timbuktu, by helping construct 19 health centres, training staff and improving the water supply and sanitation facilities in existing health centres; trained nursing aides and midwives in courses organized by the ICRC in Timbuktu and by the Belgian Red Cross in Gao;
- in Guinea-Bissau, provided medical supplies to the Simao Mendes Central Hospital, which treated the wounded during the bouts of fighting, renovated the hospital's radiology wing, supplied spare parts for x-ray equipment and repaired shattered windows in the surgical wing; provided the military hospital at the air base with dressing kits;
- together with volunteers of the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau, retrieved corpses from the river during the hostilities in January and arranged for their burial;



- in Mali, continued to repair wells and sank 8 new ones for use by humans or livestock between Gao and Timbuktu;



- provided support for the publication of newsletters, special brochures and first-aid manuals produced by the region's National Societies as part of its assistance to dissemination programmes;
- financially supported the production of the Burkinabè Red Cross Society's weekly radio programmes on the Movement's principles and humanitarian law;
- conducted training and refresher courses for 22 Senegalese Red Cross first-aid teams;
- supported the construction of a head office for the Senegalese Red Cross's medical-social centre in the conflict-torn Kolda region and of the local branch headquarters, and partially met the operating costs of the Ziguinchor regional committee;
- supported the Senegalese Red Cross's programme of food assistance to displaced people from nine villages in Casamance;
- contributed towards the running costs of the Gambia Red Cross Society;
- participated in the start-up study on the Mali Red Cross Society's five-year strategic plan, organized under the aegis of the Federation;



- held workshops for the authorities in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal to promote humanitarian law and evaluate the progress made so far in its implementation;
- held consultations with military authorities and key officials of the region's Ministries of Defence concerning the inclusion of humanitarian law in military training programmes; held workshops on ICRC activities and humanitarian law for members of the region's armed forces;
- organized events around the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions in all the countries of the region and produced promotional items such as T-shirts, baseball caps and schoolbooks.



## LAGOS

Regional delegation  
(Nigeria)

*return to civilian rule*

*intercommunal violence persists*

*scale-down of ECOMOG forces*

*authorities tackle prison  
overcrowding*

General Abdulsalam Abubakar, who had come to power in 1998 on the death of the country's military ruler, General Sani Abacha,<sup>9</sup> and the Provisional Ruling Council continued to oversee the country's transition to civilian rule. Elections in February were won by Olusegun Obasanjo, president of Nigeria from 1976 to 1979, making him Nigeria's first civilian ruler for over 15 years. Obasanjo was sworn into office on 29 May in Abuja and immediately embarked on a political reform programme covering a broad range of sectors, with particular emphasis on food security, education, physical and social infrastructure, unemployment and the Niger Delta question.

Urgent issues of power sharing and reconciliation between the country's ethnic groups remained to be resolved and ethnic tensions continuously hovered beneath the surface. Outbreaks of intercommunal violence occurred at various points in the year in Anambra, Kaduna and Ogun states, resulting in hundreds of casualties. In the volatile Niger Delta area, hostilities between the Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo peoples escalated, and three gunboats had to be despatched to the area. Following the murder of 12 policemen and the abduction of four soldiers in Bayelsa state in November, the federal government launched a massive military operation to restore order. The resulting clashes left virtually the whole town of Odi destroyed, and most of the inhabitants fled to more secure grounds.

Further friction arose over plans by certain local authorities to introduce Sharia law in areas inhabited by both Muslims and Christians. Business interests also played a part in exacerbating tensions. On 25 November, violent clashes erupted between Yoruba and Hausa communities in the densely populated Ketu area of Lagos over control of the market and collection of levies. Many houses, shops and vehicles were burned, paralysing the economic activity of thousands of traders and residents. Some 80 to 90 people were killed.

Military operations in connection with the dispute with Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula stayed frozen pending a ruling by the International Court of Justice, expected in 2001. All prisoners of war held in connection with this conflict had been repatriated in 1998.<sup>10</sup>

The defence chiefs of countries contributing to ECOMOG peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone met in Abuja in April to review their operations. At the meeting, a Nigerian official stated that his country intended to withdraw its 12,000-strong force from Sierra Leone by the end of the year, although this was not in fact done. Meanwhile, the last batch of Nigerian soldiers serving in the ECOMOG forces in Liberia returned home, ending nine years of Nigerian military involvement to restore peace to Liberia.

The government established a task force to look at ways of easing congestion in prisons and the courts, especially regarding cases involving detainees held without trial. With this in mind, it unveiled a two-phase prison reform programme aimed at reducing the death toll, disease, squalor and overcrowding in prisons. In early March, the Provisional Ruling Council released 30 persons accused of taking part in the coup plots of 1995 and 1997. Three weeks later, eight non-commissioned officers, convicted for their part in the coup plot of 1990, were also freed. At the end of May, just before the transfer of power to President Obasanjo, the Council repealed

<sup>9</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 60.

<sup>10</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, pp. 60-62 and p. 86.



*ICRC acts through  
the National Society*

*humanitarian law on the agenda*

Decree 2 of 1984 which authorized the indefinite detention of persons without trial on undefined grounds of security. Decree 2 had been used by past military administrations to lock up political opponents. According to the former Minister of Internal Affairs, 3,239 inmates were released from prison between June 1998 and May 1999.

The Nigerian Red Cross Society, present in all 36 states, is widely known and accepted. The ICRC therefore concentrated on building up the National Society's capacity to respond to any eventuality, especially in areas to which the ICRC would not have easy access. It also supported the Nigerian Red Cross's efforts to provide assistance to the victims of internal violence, wherever needs arose, such as the distribution of dressing materials to clinics treating the wounded and assistance to the displaced. The National Society also developed a welfare programme in the prisons of 12 states, for which the ICRC provided support and technical assistance.

The Nigerian Red Cross was quick to respond during the violence in Lagos in November, mobilizing 52 volunteers to help provide first aid and evacuating more than 150 casualties to hospital. The ICRC supplied the National Society with dressing materials for two hospitals treating the wounded and with jerrycans and cups for the distribution of safe water to 700 displaced persons who had taken refuge in the Ketu police station.

Following the military intervention in Odi in November, many people were left homeless and living in precarious conditions. The ICRC supplied the Nigerian Red Cross with mattresses, cooking utensils, soap, jerrycans and medicines to distribute to these people, and sent water tankers to provide clean water.

In April the ICRC submitted a legal memorandum to the Nigerian Minister of Justice detailing the amendments to Nigerian legislation required to give effect to the Additional Protocols and strengthen protection of the emblem. The ICRC also recommended the creation of an interministerial committee to look into these matters.

A major shake-up in the police and armed forces following the change of government prevented the ICRC from fully implementing all of its planned dissemination programmes. As a result of the retirement or transfer of many senior officers, the ICRC had to concentrate on building up a new network of contacts in the Ministry of Defence and within the various divisions of the armed forces. It nonetheless kept up its efforts to promote the inclusion of the law of armed conflict in the curricula of the major military training institutions, holding workshops and meetings with senior officers.

Nigeria was one of the countries selected for the ICRC's "People on War" project. The recruitment of participants in the survey was carried out by the National Society's state branches in Lagos, Enugu, Rivers and Kaduna. After a three-day workshop held in Lagos, 42 Red Cross volunteers interviewed 1,000 people in 12 states on their experiences of conflict and views on humanitarian law, in this case in connection with the Biafran civil war, and conducted 20 in-depth interviews and eight focus group discussions.

In addition, the ICRC organized several events around the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. Together with the Nigerian Red Cross, the National Human Rights Commission and the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, it organized two seminars on the theme "Even wars have limits", one in Lagos attended by 160 participants and one in Abuja attended by 120 guests, representatives of ministries and government offices, the Nigerian armed forces, NGOs and diplomatic missions.



## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- supported the National Society's programme to improve the water supply and sanitation systems in prisons by providing technical assistance for training workshops for branch leaders responsible for implementing the programmes and by supplying basic sanitation materials;



- provided the Nigerian Red Cross with supplies and logistic and financial support for its emergency activities in aid of communities affected by intercommunal clashes in Bayelsa, Niger Delta, Kaduna, Odi and Lagos;



- distributed water to homeless people in Odi and Bayelsa states in December;



- supported the Nigerian Red Cross's efforts to be more present at grassroots level, including through emergency-preparedness training and workshops on hygiene and sanitation;
- defrayed the structural expenses of the National Society's dissemination department and covered the costs of producing publications on humanitarian law;
- supplied the Nigerian Red Cross with first-aid and relief materials to improve its branches' emergency preparedness and assist people affected by intercommunal clashes;
- conducted a two-day dissemination workshop for 32 representatives of the 37 branches of the Nigerian Red Cross to harmonize the National Society's dissemination policy and techniques;



- gave presentations on the law of armed conflict and ICRC activities to members of the Nigerian armed forces, Sierra Leonean army cadets, members of the security forces and others;
- offered technical assistance for the drafting of national laws and regulations for the implementation of humanitarian law and its inclusion in official training programmes.

## BURUNDI



⊕ ICRC delegation

+ ICRC office

ICRC/AR 12 99

*little progress in peace talks*

Several rounds of peace talks in Arusha, Tanzania, failed to achieve a breakthrough in the quest for a solution to the conflict in Burundi. Nevertheless, on 23 January the heads of State of Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Ethiopia, together with high-level representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia, agreed to lift the embargo imposed on Burundi following the 1996 coup d'état.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the lifting of sanctions, Burundi's economy continued its downward spiral, with harsh repercussions on the lives of ordinary people. Unemployment remained high and poverty widespread. The health and education infrastructure had suffered badly, medicines were in short supply, and qualified medical staff had either left the country or were concentrated in Bujumbura. Drought in the north-east and, paradoxically, heavy rainfall at other times of the year resulted in partial crop failures. This, coupled with the huge numbers of displaced people no longer cultivating their lands, sent food prices soaring.

If the north and east of Burundi were generally calm in 1999, the same could not be said for the south and west of the country. From the beginning of May there

<sup>11</sup> See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, p. 53.



*escalation of armed incidents*

*population movements*

*ICRC progressively  
resumes activities*

*security still a major problem*

*visits to detainees focus  
on improving living conditions*

was a marked increase in the number of attacks by armed groups against military targets and the civilian population in Bururi, Makamba, Rutana and Bujumbura-Rural provinces.

The situation worsened as the year progressed, and also began to affect the outskirts of Bujumbura and southern districts. Confrontations and skirmishes between government forces and armed opposition groups caused numerous casualties among combatants and the civilian population.

More than 600,000 internally displaced people remained in camps; most of them had been there since 1996. Some 200,000 others were still living as refugees in neighbouring Tanzania, with about 50,000 more arriving to swell their numbers in the second half of the year. As part of a government policy to improve security in the affected regions, a further 330,000 people were relocated by the security forces to makeshift sites in Bujumbura-Rural province, bringing the total of internally displaced people and Burundian refugees to nearly 1.2 million out of a population of approximately 6.4 million. Many of the relocation sites in Burundi were out of reach of the UN and NGOs, situated as they were in difficult terrain well off the roads or in areas affected by ongoing fighting; this made it hard for aid workers to respond to the needs of displaced people.

In March, following an in-depth dialogue with the authorities begun in July 1998,<sup>12</sup> the ICRC formally resumed its activities in Burundi after a three-year hiatus brought about by the serious security incident in June 1996 which cost the lives of three of its delegates.<sup>13</sup> Initial emphasis was placed on activities for people deprived of their freedom and assistance to the sick and wounded.

Attacks on the main roads around Bujumbura obliged the ICRC to suspend journeys by car outside the capital from the end of June and thereafter to adapt its methods so that delegates could continue their work in relative safety. The ICRC set up a decentralized network, with outposts in Ngozi and Gitega, to which delegates could travel by ICRC plane from Bujumbura, and from there carry out visits to prisons. A serious security incident in October, during which nine people, among them two expatriate UN aid workers, were killed in an ambush in a relocation camp in the southern province of Rutana, underscored the fragile nature of the security situation.

An offer of services to visit detainees in prisons was addressed to the highest authorities and accepted by the Ministry of Justice. In April the ICRC conducted its first visits to civilian prisons in three years in accordance with its traditional working procedures. By June it had visited eight of the country's eleven central prisons, which between them housed more than 80 per cent of the prison population. A plan of action was drawn up with a view to tackling the problems observed in cooperation with the prison authorities. A Memorandum of Understanding setting out the framework for cooperation between the ICRC and the DGAP\* on a rehabilitation programme in jails visited by the ICRC (water supplies and distribution, toilets and showers, waste systems and kitchen facilities) was signed by the Ministry of Justice in November.

Work centred on improving detainees' health and hygiene conditions so as to reduce the risk of epidemics and the spread of disease. Hygiene products were dis-

<sup>12</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 63.

<sup>13</sup> See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, p. 51.

\* DGAP: "Direction générale des affaires pénitentiaires"

*water and medical care  
are given priority*

*raising awareness*

tributed to the inmates of prisons visited, and health monitoring programmes were initiated in Gitega prison and Ngozi men's prison.

On 28 June, in close cooperation with the ICRC delegation in Kinshasa, the Bujumbura delegation helped repatriate 13 Burundian civilians who had been interned in Lubumbashi and Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.<sup>14</sup>

The ICRC supplied medicines to two local dispensaries per region selected because they provided treatment both in prisons and to the general public. Local health staff received additional training so that they could provide appropriate care for sick detainees. The ICRC also distributed badly needed medical supplies to health centres and hospitals. In response to attacks in the outskirts of Bujumbura, the ICRC delivered medical materials to hospitals in Bujumbura and Gitega treating the wounded.

Owing to the conflict and economic embargo, many urban water systems had not been maintained for years. Following assessments in Bujumbura, Gitega and Ngozi prisons, the ICRC decided to increase the availability of water not only in the prisons but also for the local population, including in particular hospitals. In Ngozi, for example, the ICRC rehabilitated three water catchments and repaired a 123m<sup>3</sup> water reservoir and one of the pumping stations, thereby increasing the town's overall water supply for the benefit of the residents, detainees and health facilities. The ICRC developed good working relations with the REGIDESO,\* with which a Memorandum of Understanding was signed concerning the rehabilitation of the water distribution system.

All the ICRC's activities in Burundi included a dissemination component, to help build up understanding and acceptance of the organization and its working methods. Delegates also met regularly with key government officials and senior armed forces officers in order to promote ongoing consultation regarding the ICRC's various plans and projects and to receive direct feedback from them.

<sup>14</sup> See p. 77.

\* REGIDESO: Burundi's water authority for urban areas



## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- visited 9,200 detainees of all categories in 8 places of detention in Bujumbura, Ngozi, Gitega, Muramvya, Muyinga, Rutana and Ruyigi, and distributed hygiene products, kitchen utensils and recreational items to them;
- carried out a comprehensive disinfection and disinfestation operation in Mpimba prison (Bujumbura); handed over equipment and materials to the prison authorities and trained teams of prisoners to carry out similar operations regularly;
- repaired sanitary installations in 3 places of detention; began work to install a 45m<sup>3</sup> water tank in Gitega prison;



- provided basic medical supplies to 6 dispensaries for the treatment of 1,500 people per month from among both the local and prison populations;
- provided Bujumbura's 2 main hospitals, the Military Hospital and Prince Regent Charles Hospital, and the hospitals of Gitega, Ngozi and Rutana with monthly supplies of drugs and surgical materials for the treatment of some 120 war-wounded;
- provided support to the Gitega hospital for the treatment of the war-wounded;



- assessed the need to rehabilitate and improve water production and distribution systems in Ngozi town, with a population of 25,000 people; together with the REGIDESO, devised a plan to increase the daily quantity of clean water available for inhabitants of Ngozi from 30 to 70 litres per capita, and to this end, rehabilitated 3 water catchments and repaired the 123m<sup>3</sup> water tank;



- trained staff of the Burundi Red Cross Society (provincial and communal committee members and volunteers) in the dissemination of humanitarian law;
- at the end of May, in cooperation with the Federation, held a three-day training course for new volunteers from the Bujumbura-Rural branch of the Burundi Red Cross Society;
- in cooperation with the Federation, trained provincial relief teams as part of the National Society's disaster-preparedness programme;



- in September, at the request of armed forces instructors, presented the ICRC, its activities and basic rules of humanitarian law as part of a training course for 20 officers at the Burundian army's "Institut Supérieur des Cadres Militaires" in Bujumbura;
- made presentations on humanitarian law and the ICRC's role and mandate to local and prison authorities;
- organized a half-day session on the ICRC's mandate and activities in Burundi for representatives of the country's main media.



# DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

## PROTECTION

5,686,697

## ASSISTANCE

18,506,051

## PREVENTIVE ACTION

705,543

## COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

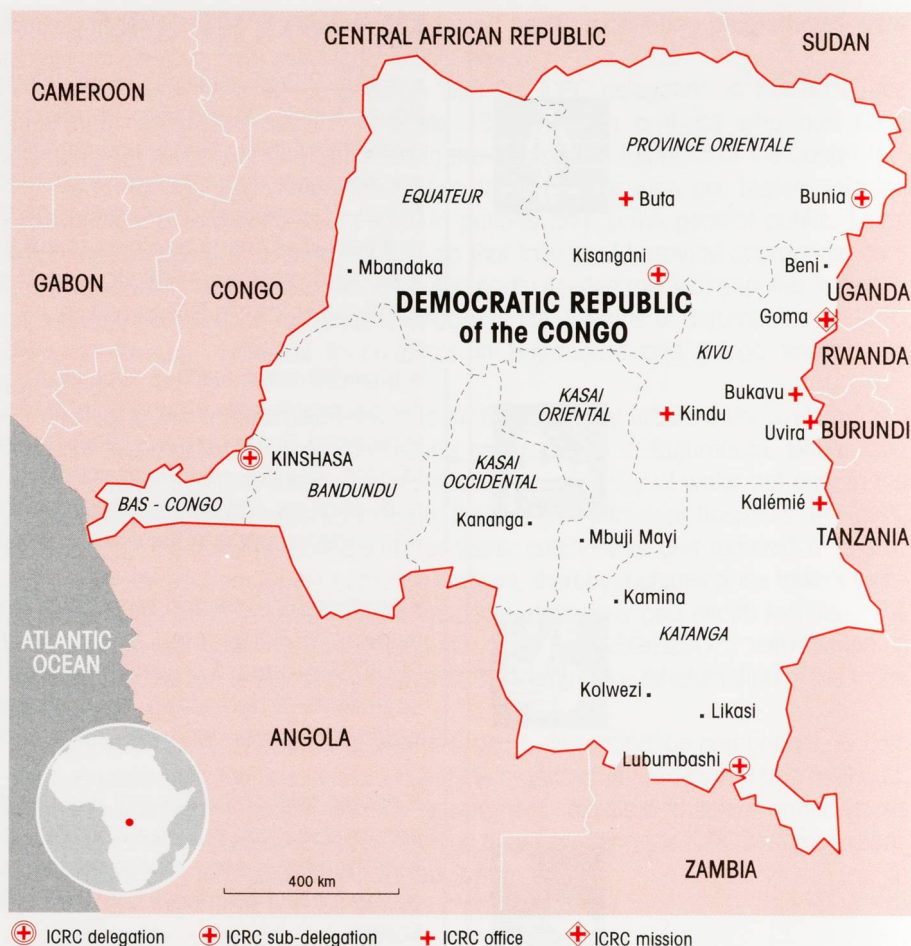
1,509,280

## OVERHEADS

1,615,143

## GENERAL

1,719,618

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 29,742,333**


The year was another one of huge upheaval for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The country was shaken by the conflict which had broken out in August 1998<sup>15</sup> and rapidly developed into an internationalized conflict, with the forces of at least six other African nations involved in the fighting between government troops and myriad opposition groups and factions. It remained divided by a front line that left the government in control of Kinshasa and the west and south of the country and the RCD\* opposition in control of much of the east and north-east.

The end of 1998 saw the emergence of a new opposition movement, the MLC,\* operating in the north-west of the country. In mid-May, the ousting of the RCD leader resulted in the creation of a second RCD movement (RCD-Wamba) backed by Uganda and based in Kisangani; the original movement based in Goma continued to enjoy the support of Rwanda. A rift between Uganda and Rwanda, a reflection of the split within the RCD, escalated to the point where the forces of the two countries

<sup>15</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, pp. 64-65.

\* RCD: "Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie"

\* MLC: "Mouvement de libération congolais"



*peace efforts lead  
to Lusaka agreement...*

*... but few tangible changes*

clashed in Kisangani in August. The situation was brought under control following meetings between high-level representatives of Uganda and Rwanda.

Clashes between government and opposition forces in the east and south-east prompted ever more population displacements, with many people flocking over the border into neighbouring Tanzania. Goma, Uvira and Kalémié were all hit by aerial bombardments in May, causing numerous civilian casualties. The situation was compounded by instances of localized ethnic strife, often causing the worst havoc and the greatest number of casualties. Bloody clashes over land rights erupted in June between the Hema and Lendu tribes in the north-eastern district of Ituri. According to local sources, the fighting claimed thousands of lives, and an estimated 100,000 to 150,000 people fled their homes, 85,000 of them finding refuge in and around Bunia.

The international community, led by the OAU\* and the SADC,\* organized a series of meetings to seek a peaceful settlement to the conflict. A partial solution was found after Libya succeeded in bringing the presidents of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Chad and Eritrea around the same table to sign the Syrte accord on 18 April. The only tangible result, however, was that Chadian forces withdrew from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in May. In June, talks were initiated in Lusaka, Zambia, in an effort to find a more comprehensive agreement. A cease-fire was signed on 10 July by all the countries involved in the conflict and in August by representatives of the different opposition groups. It came into effect on 1 September, and a timetable was set for the withdrawal of all foreign forces, the re-establishment of government control over the whole territory and the normalization of the security situation along the country's borders with its neighbours.

On the ground the cease-fire appeared to have little impact, with serious clashes between the armed opposition and government forces threatening to undermine the agreement, and each party accusing the other of violating the cease-fire. The scheduled withdrawal of foreign forces had not taken place by the end of the year, nor had the disarmament of the different opposition groups. The creation of a Joint Military Commission to oversee the cease-fire took months to get off the ground, amid wrangling over who was to represent the RCD. The Commission finally met three times in 1999, mostly to discuss the release of POWs and captured combatants and access by humanitarian organizations to victims of the conflict.

Hesitant steps were taken towards inter-Congolese negotiations to settle matters on the internal level. In December, a former president of Botswana was appointed to mediate the talks. On 20 December representatives of the different opposition movements met in Kabale, Uganda, and agreed to present a common front, while making clear that they remained distinct organizations.

The consequences of the conflict were devastating for civilians. The security situation remained precarious throughout the country all year long. Many people had to abandon their lands and means of survival to seek shelter with relatives or live in organized camps. In these places, accommodation was often hazardous or unsuitable, there was no access to clean water, hygiene conditions were poor and medical facilities hard to reach. The full number of displaced was unknown but estimated in the hundreds of thousands.

\* SADC: Southern African Development Community



*civilians in distress*

*security constraints restrict  
ICRC movements*

*visits to POWs, internees  
and detainees*

Furthermore, a year of intense conflict coupled with the country's long-term socio-economic decline found the population increasingly impoverished and less and less able to meet its daily needs. The infrastructure, including communication links, electricity, water distribution systems and health care, was in a state of total disrepair. The disruption of internal trade routes hampered the delivery of vital food-stuffs to the west of the country, causing hardship and deprivation for many people and sending prices soaring. Harsh economic measures, such as the banning of foreign currency transactions, progressively suffocated the economy, especially in the capital, where many foreign companies laid off staff.

In most cities, the economic situation was compounded by acute localized emergencies as a direct result of the war, such as population displacements, refugee movements from Angola or the Republic of the Congo, food shortages and epidemics. Often, coping mechanisms were overburdened by the presence of hundreds of thousands of displaced people and, indirectly, the fighting hampered agricultural activity and the proper functioning of local economies.

Security constraints remained one of the main obstacles to the conduct of humanitarian operations. The ICRC worked within a limited geographical radius, generally concentrating on the main urban centres. It maintained a presence in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Goma, Bukavu, Kisangani and, from October, in Bunia, and made regular trips to Kalémié, Kindu, Beni and Uvira. For other, less accessible areas, the ICRC relied heavily on the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its network to assess needs and distribute assistance.

In accordance with the Third Geneva Convention, the ICRC visited POWs held on Congolese territory, and the relevant authorities were notified of their whereabouts. Confidential reports on the POWs' treatment and material conditions of detention were submitted to the Detaining Powers. Where necessary, and after the authorities had been made aware of their responsibilities in this respect, the ICRC provided the POWs with food, medicines and other assistance. It also visited POWs of various nationalities held on the territory of other countries party to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.<sup>16</sup> Again in accordance with the Third Geneva Convention, the ICRC organized several repatriations of seriously ill POWs.

The Lusaka accord contained a specific mention of the ICRC with regard to provisions governing POWs and other persons detained in connection with the conflict. On 27 October the ICRC submitted a memorandum to the nine signatories of the accord, reminding them of their obligations with respect to persons deprived of their freedom and protected by the Geneva Conventions and of the provisions of humanitarian law with regard to deceased and missing persons.

The ICRC also visited security detainees in the "Centre pénitentiaire et de rééducation" in Kinshasa and places of detention in Katanga province. The poor material conditions of detention prompted it to initiate assistance programmes. Projects were implemented to provide a reliable water supply and to improve cooking facilities and sanitary installations. In eastern areas under RCD control, regular visits to persons deprived of their freedom were carried out in North Kivu, South Kivu, Oriental Province and Tanganyika district (Katanga province). With the expansion of ICRC activities in areas previously off-limits to the organization, places of detention were visited for the

<sup>16</sup> See pp. 91, 97, 104 and 106.



first time in Bunia, Kisangani, Kalémié, Uvira, Beni and Goma. All detainees received basic assistance, and health delegates ensured that they had access to medical care and, where necessary, provided the authorities with dispensary kits. Repairs and renovation work to hygiene systems were carried out in the central prisons of Goma, Bukavu and Uvira.

In addition, the ICRC visited civilian internees protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention and persons arrested because of their ethnic origin or allegedly held for their own security. The ICRC regularly supplied them with food and other assistance, as well as medicines and medical materials, and carried out an assessment of their nutritional condition. Particular attention was paid to the needs of interned women and children. Visits were also conducted to some 500 civilians held in Katanga province, including both Congolese and foreign nationals interned in various locations. People who so wished were repatriated/transferred to their country of origin.

The ICRC remained in regular contact with the Congolese authorities concerning the protection of civilians from Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi living in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for Congolese citizens of Rwandan origin. In accordance with the provisions of the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions, the governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi agreed to allow Rwandan and Burundian internees, as well as Congolese nationals with a direct family link in one of these countries, to be transferred to Rwanda or Burundi. In accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention, the ICRC as a neutral intermediary organized the repatriation/transfer of the internees in June and July, ensuring that those who voluntarily agreed to leave were allowed to travel.

The ICRC developed the main means of contact for families dispersed by the conflict and arranged for unaccompanied Congolese and Rwandan children to be reunited with their parents. A Red Cross message network, comprising more than 60 tracing offices run by National Society volunteers under the supervision of the ICRC, was set up in numerous locations around the country.

In the east of the country, civilians continued to be displaced. For the most part, they were housed by local residents, while a number of them returned to their fields by day. The ICRC provided them with supplementary food assistance and ad hoc half rations.

Food supply lines to Kinshasa became increasingly difficult because of the general insecurity, the disruption of supply mechanisms, the loss of means of transport and military obstacles. As a result many Kinshasa residents started to grow their own food. The main problems they encountered were lack of seeds and tools, high prices and restricted opportunities for trade. Through a project managed by the ICRC in cooperation with the FAO,\* vegetable kits and gardening implements were distributed to vulnerable families in the most destitute districts of Kinshasa (Mont Ngafula, Kimbanseke and Massina), who were willing to develop small-scale vegetable production.

The civilian population's state of health deteriorated steadily as a result of the conflict. The economic slowdown, large numbers of destitute displaced people and high costs of treating the war-wounded made it increasingly difficult for the health system to respond adequately to needs. Outbreaks of severe diarrhoeal diseases, measles and malaria put an additional strain on health facilities.

\* FAO: United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

*Red Cross message network*

*large-scale relief programmes*

*precarious health situation*

The main referral hospital in Kinshasa had to handle large influxes of war-wounded from around the capital. The ICRC completed major rehabilitation work on the wards and the pumping house capacity was increased. In the main towns of the Kivu provinces, around 20 health centres, mainly treating patients for illnesses such as malaria, respiratory tract infections, worms and diarrhoea, were supplied with basic medicines and training manuals. A health centre in Kindu was transformed into a permanent referral structure, with the capacity to admit 30 patients and perform surgery.

Water and sanitation projects continued on both sides of the front line. The rehabilitation of the water-treatment plant in Kinshasa signified improved access to clean water for 60 to 80 per cent of the population.

*aid for flood victims*

In December heavy rains caused the Congo river and one of its tributaries, the Ndjili, to burst their banks, resulting in extensive flooding in low-income residential districts of Kinshasa and displacing some 40,000 people. The ICRC, working with the Federation, the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Belgian Red Cross, launched a relief operation to assist the victims by supporting dispensaries treating displaced people, treating and distributing drinking water and establishing a temporary health structure at the Kinshasa General Hospital for the treatment of water-borne diseases such as cholera.

The ICRC maintained a constant dialogue with the Congolese authorities, especially with regard to the inclusion of humanitarian law in the Draft Constitution of the Third Republic and the ratification by the government of Protocol II additional to the Geneva Conventions.

*military main thrust  
for dissemination*

A number of approaches were made to high-level members of the armed forces, the Defence Ministry, General Secretariat and General Chief-of-Staff in order to promote the introduction of systematic teaching of humanitarian law in military training. For the first time since the change of government, in June the ICRC held a four-day seminar for 155 senior armed forces officers.

In the east, contacts were forged with the Department of Military Activities, the Department of Mobilization and Propaganda and the Department for Conflict Resolution and National Reconciliation, as well as with the MLC, to raise awareness of humanitarian law.

A unique event took place on 13 November, when a dissemination session held in Bunia was attended by 30 members of different ethnic groups, including the warring Hema and Lendu tribes. The session was considered a success and similar events were requested.



## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- visited a total of 5,768 people detained in connection with the conflict and held in various locations; these included 103 POWs of various nationalities detained in Kinshasa and Kisangani and 90 POWs held in neighbouring countries involved in the Congolese conflict; 4,390 former combatants and security detainees in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi and the RCD-held areas of Goma, Bukavu, Kalémié, Bunia, Beni, Kisangani and Uvira; and 1,185 civilian internees and civilians detained for their own security, whether Congolese or foreign nationals;
- in June and July, participated in the voluntary repatriation/transfer of 483 Rwandan and Burundian internees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Rwanda and Burundi;
- assisted in the repatriation of 9 POWs released for humanitarian reasons;
- offered all categories of detainees the possibility to communicate with their families throughout the country and abroad via Red Cross messages;
- provided 646 tonnes of food and 64 tonnes of material assistance, including blankets, soap and plates, and basic medical supplies to detainees in all places of detention visited, and distributed milk powder, games, schoolbooks and reading books for children in internment camps;
- in Kinshasa and Lubumbashi, organized a therapeutic feeding programme for 435 severely malnourished detainees;
- carried out renovation work to make clean water available in central prisons in Goma, Bukavu and Uvira and other permanent places of detention;



- evacuated 6 Angolan nationals from Kisangani to Luanda and notified the authorities of cases of foreigners in need of protection;



- exchanged 48,398 Red Cross messages on behalf of family members separated by the conflict;
- registered 567 unaccompanied Congolese children and reunited 276 with their families;
- assisted child soldiers receiving medical treatment in Kisangani, helped them restore family links by means of Red Cross messages and, following their demobilization, reunited them with their families;
- received 566 tracing requests and located 322 people;
- issued 871 travel documents for children and adults travelling abroad;





- in cooperation with the FAO, distributed vegetable kits, watering cans and gardening implements to 11,000 vulnerable families in Kinshasa to enable them to undertake small-scale vegetable production;
- in Lubumbashi, provided monthly assistance to some 3,600 people who had fled from the areas of Kalémié and North Katanga in October 1998 and settled in 5 sites;
- provided 2,867 tonnes of food and 419 tonnes of non-food assistance to 161,000 internally displaced people in North and South Kivu and 625 tonnes of food and 13 tonnes of material assistance to 3,600 displaced people in Katanga;
- following inter-tribal fighting in the Bunia region, assisted some 15,000 people with half-rations of food and non-food kits;
- provided start-up kits and seeds to displaced people returning to settle in the Masisi region to enable them to start up agricultural production;
- distributed monthly food and ad hoc material assistance to two transit centres for 378 unaccompanied children or war orphans;
- supplied food, soap and medicines to some 300 refugees from the Republic of the Congo settled in one site in the Bas-Congo region;
- between May and September, regularly supplied food and medicines to 2 nutrition centres in Goma and Kalémié treating 423 severely malnourished children;
- organized a relief programme (sanitation and material assistance) for 25,000 people affected by the flooding in December, and repaired the dike on the Ndjili river;



- in government-controlled areas, supplied 10 referral hospitals and 30 health centres in locations where displaced people had gathered with essential drugs and surgical materials;
- in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, supplied drugs and medical materials to 6 hospitals, 17 health centres and 2 nutritional centres, between them serving a population of more than 2 million, and maintained or repaired surgical and medical equipment;
- during fighting in Kisangani, together with Red Cross volunteers, evacuated the war-wounded to hospitals, provided 1 tonne of relief aid and supplied some 20 medical facilities with essential drugs;
- helped clean the military hospital in Kokolo camp, improved the water-storage capacity and repaired the electricity supply to essential services;
- trained health workers from Kalémié, Kisangani and Kivu health zones in the treatment of war injuries;
- in November, initiated a food-for-work scheme in 4 hospitals in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo as an incentive for health staff;



- in the Kalembe-Lembe workshop, run jointly by the ICRC and the National Society, produced an average of 30 prostheses a month and fitted amputees with artificial limbs;





- carried out 14 projects to improve the water supply mostly in urban but also in some rural areas, including well digging, spring protection and the installation of water-distribution points;
- assisted the REGIDESO\* in maintaining the production of treated drinking water at the Ndjili and Likunga stations and supplied water-treatment chemicals so that clean water could be provided to more than 80 % of Kinshasa's 6 million inhabitants;
- completed work on the Kimilolo pumping station in Lubumbashi, increasing water-production capacity by 20 %, and installed a 12km-long power line to the pumping station in Likasi, increasing capacity by 10,000 m<sup>3</sup>;
- constructed 85 water fountains in Lubumbashi and Likasi to ensure access to clean water for 200,000 people;
- in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, ran 38 safe-water projects for a total population of 2,600,000 people and regularly supplied the REGIDESO with water-treatment chemicals in 11 major cities according to needs;
- undertook major projects to improve the water supply in Bukavu and Kisangani and resumed work on the urban water supply in Bunia (suspended since August 1998 for security reasons);
- completely renovated the sanitary facilities and sewage system in five wards of the main referral hospital in Kinshasa, as well as the hospital's incinerator building, equipment and water-pumping station, enabling the wards to function properly;
- carried out water and sanitation projects in 10 health centres in Kinshasa to ensure a supply of clean water and the disposal of sewage and other waste, including building latrines, sinking wells and laying water pipes;

\* REGIDESO: water authority





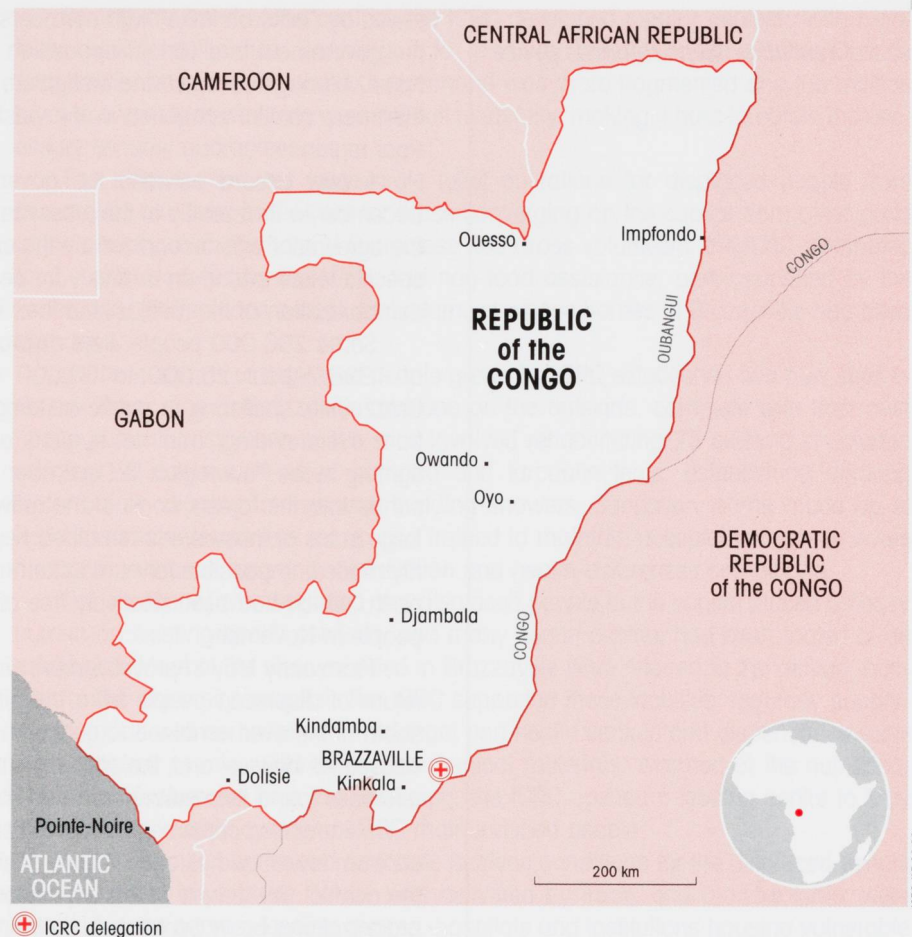
- contributed to the National Society's running costs and supplemented the salaries of its coordinators at the general secretariat;
- supported Red Cross branches in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo by offering regular financial support to the provincial committees' permanent staff, donating office furniture and providing and furnishing container offices (which were also used as first-aid posts) for section committees;
- trained 643 first-aid volunteers, held 8 emergency-preparedness workshops for 209 heads of Red Cross emergency teams, and supplied materials for first-aid activities to 20 section committees;
- trained 79 Red Cross volunteers to carry out tracing work in 45 outposts set up in areas often off-limits to the ICRC, including the collection and distribution of Red Cross messages and the identification of unaccompanied children;
- trained 50 National Society dissemination officers in the promotion of the Movement's principles and activities;
- supplied equipment and materials to National Society teams carrying out a sanitation programme in 16 health facilities in Kinshasa, including regular cleaning, waste disposal and removal, emptying septic tanks and vector control;
- provided trucks, drivers and fuel to the National Society, which was distributing food supplied by the WFP to hospitals and vulnerable and displaced people;
- as the National Society was often called upon to act in particularly dangerous contexts where the ICRC was not always present, trained volunteers and handed over emergency kits containing bandages, tabards, disinfectant, first-aid kits and chalk to section committees;
- provided logistical support to the National Society to help it deal with the aftermath of the fighting in Kisangani in August, where it had been particularly active in the burial of mortal remains and sanitation work;



- conducted dissemination sessions for officers of the armed forces, national police and rapid intervention police;
- gave presentations on the ICRC and its mandate to representatives of NGOs, university students and beneficiaries of ICRC activities;
- in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, organized dissemination sessions on the Movement and the ICRC's mandate and activities for people from a variety of backgrounds (local ICRC staff, Red Cross volunteers, secondary school students, leaders of children's associations, etc.);
- organized events around the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, including conferences and meetings for officers from the headquarters of the Congolese armed forces, professors and students from the faculty of law of Kinshasa University, and representatives from the media and the international community; set up stands jointly with the National Society, which were visited by some 4,000 people;
- in August and September organized a Red Cross exhibition, visited by 6,700 people at the National Fair in Kinshasa.



## REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



ICRC delegation

*escalating violence*

The spiral of armed violence that began in 1998<sup>17</sup> continued into 1999. Efforts by government forces to regain control in the south-west of the country and southern Brazzaville failed, and heavy fighting and shelling broke out again in January. Government militias and armed forces loyal to the President clashed with opposition militias in the Pool region and in the Niari, Bouenza and Lékoumou prefectures. In the south-west, Dolisie, the country's third largest city, was attacked by opposition militias in January and all of its 80,000 inhabitants fled. In May an armed group managed to penetrate into the northern districts of the capital. As the year progressed, however, government forces aided by the Angolan troops that had been instrumental in bringing the President to power in 1997 regained control of towns in the Pool region and west of the country, including Dolisie and Nkayi.

The government at first steadfastly rejected any peace negotiations with the opposition. In August, however, after the successful staging of a pan-African music festival, it marked the 39th anniversary of independence by announcing an amnesty for all those who handed in their weapons and renounced violence. This was fol-

<sup>17</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, pp. 73-79.

*tentative steps towards peace*

lowed by "talks on talks" with members of the opposition in exile. On 16 November the government and certain opposition commanders signed a cease-fire in Pointe-Noire. Although several hundred fighters took advantage of the amnesty offered under the truce, conflict continued in the west of the country and in the north-west of the Pool region.

A new accord between the government and the rebels was signed on 29 December in Brazzaville in the presence of the President of Gabon. On this occasion, the agreement was recognized by the exiled opposition leaders and contained more specific references to an amnesty for people handing in their weapons and plans for demobilization of the militias and their integration into the army or civilian life.

Some 200,000 people were displaced from the south of Brazzaville at the end of 1998. About 25,000 to 30,000 of them found refuge in sites in northern Brazzaville, sheltering in public buildings, schools and churches. The sites suffered from overcrowding, minimal hygiene and poor access to clean water. In addition, fighting in the Pool region in December 1998 and January 1999 drove tens of thousands into the forests north of the railway line. Little was known of their plight, as large tracts of these areas remained beyond anyone's control, and the lack of security made it impossible for humanitarian organizations to reach them. Flooding in the north, which had been relatively free of conflict, led to the displacement of 10,000 people in November.

From early May improved security in southern Brazzaville encouraged the steady return of displaced people from the sites in the northern sector, although districts south of the river remained largely uninhabited. The systematic looting and damage caused to houses and the medical infrastructure in Brazzaville meant that many returnees found themselves homeless or without access to basic health care.

Meanwhile people began to re-emerge from the forests. They were joined by others from towns and villages in Pool fleeing the insecurity and deprivations caused by the conflict. All arrived in the capital on foot, on trucks organized by humanitarian organizations or, in September, by train, filling the camps for displaced people previously occupied by Brazzaville residents. Many were in a pitiful state, underfed and bearing harrowing tales of robbery, rape and violence. Some, too sick or malnourished to complete the journey, died before reaching safety.

Almost all NGOs and humanitarian organizations withdrew from the Republic of the Congo in December 1998, but began to return gradually at the beginning of the year. The components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement remained throughout the troubles and worked together to contain the worst effects of the conflict. The ICRC, assisted by volunteers of the Congolese Red Cross, who in turn were supported and trained by the Federation, carried out emergency operations for war-wounded, displaced people and returnees.

The ICRC was able to work in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire and made occasional visits to Dolisie and Nkayi. The rest of the country remained inaccessible for most of the year. The full range of ICRC activities was limited by the precarious security situation, which put at risk both staff and supplies. From November improved security made it possible for humanitarian organizations to begin assistance programmes for the civilian population in the south of Pool.

*displaced people  
endure terrible suffering*



*Movement works  
together in Brazzaville*

*massive aid for displaced*

*health facilities overstretched*

*visits to detainees:  
patient efforts pay off*

*Red Cross message link*

During the worst of the conflict, the ICRC developed regular contacts with high-level military authorities, enabling it to intervene rapidly in Brazzaville. Outside Brazzaville, however, the chain of command was more fragmented and the militias loyal to a variety of warlords were difficult to identify, making it hard to obtain the necessary security guarantees.

The ICRC carried out large-scale relief operations for displaced people from Brazzaville and later in the year for those converging on the capital from other parts of the country. With the help of Congolese Red Cross volunteers, the ICRC distributed food, partly donated by the WFP, and non-food assistance, partly supplied by the Federation, to displaced people and returnees whose homes in Brazzaville had been damaged.

As the numbers of displaced people grew, the ICRC established two new sites to receive them, one in Brazzaville and one on the outskirts, complete with their own health posts. Construction of the sites involved rehabilitating 25 existing structures, erecting 85 community-sized bamboo and tarpaulin tents, establishing drinking water points, digging latrines and building showers. Sanitation teams made up of Red Cross volunteers were set up and trained to maintain acceptable hygiene levels through continuous cleaning, disinfection and health-awareness campaigns.

The number of war-wounded and displaced people in the capital placed a heavy burden on existing health services, and many health centres had been looted of all medicines. Most of the war-wounded in Brazzaville were referred to the military hospital or the university hospital. The ICRC supported these facilities, regularly supplying them, as well as hospitals in Talangai and health centres and dispensaries serving displaced people, with drugs and medical materials. Alarmed at the nutritional condition of returnees from the Pool area, the ICRC opened a feeding centre in May that served a weekly average of 700 malnourished people.

Access to clean water and adequate hygiene conditions for the displaced people was of critical importance. Water was delivered by truck, and bladder tanks were installed in the camps, feeding centres, hospitals and institutions housing vulnerable people. Cleaning materials were distributed and latrines constructed. Water-distribution systems in Brazzaville also required repair and rehabilitation. In addition, the ICRC provided technical know-how and materials to the SNDE\* to enable it to ensure a sufficient and clean water supply for the displaced and resident populations.

On 12 November, following two years of negotiations interrupted at times by outbreaks of fighting, the government signed an agreement authorizing the ICRC to visit people deprived of their freedom. After further discussions were held with the Ministries of Justice, Defence and the Interior, visits began at the end of the year to places of detention in accordance with the ICRC's customary procedures.

A Red Cross message network was developed to offer a communication link between Congolese living abroad and their families in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire. Later in the year, as the security situation improved, the service was extended to parts of the Pool prefecture. The ICRC registered children separated from their parents during the violence and initiated a search for their families. The national radio station was present when the 100th unaccompanied child was reunited with his relatives and took the opportunity to broadcast the names of the remaining children, which led

\* SNDE: national water board

*brutality against  
civilians commonplace*

*Dissemination Commission set up*

to eight more reunifications in the following week. The delegation also continued to exchange Red Cross messages between the Rwandan refugee population and members of their families abroad and to trace the families of unaccompanied Rwandan children.

Civilians were the main victims of the violence. Methods of warfare employed by the parties were often brutal and inhumane; rape was especially widespread. The ICRC reminded the warring parties of their obligation to respect civilians, and insisted on respect for civilians returning to Brazzaville or in camps for the displaced. During dissemination sessions for the armed forces, it emphasized the particular needs of women and children. Other organizations established programmes to provide support and care for victims of sexual violence.

Contacts were maintained with the top military authorities in order to ensure that humanitarian law was included in regular training courses for the armed forces, gendarmerie and police and to raise awareness of the ICRC and humanitarian issues among the military. A Dissemination Commission was set up at the beginning of the year by the Ministry of Defence, with the task of creating teaching programmes and assisting humanitarian law instructors trained by the ICRC at the end of 1998.<sup>18</sup> A dissemination programme for members of police intervention groups and district and traffic police was presented to and accepted by the authorities.

In December, the ICRC commissioned a Congolese professor of humanitarian law to carry out a three-month study on the implementation of humanitarian law in the Republic of the Congo.

Various events were organized around the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, including a press conference and dissemination sessions in Brazzaville and Owando for law students, Red Cross volunteers and ICRC employees.

<sup>18</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, pp. 75 and 79.



## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- following authorization from the government, visited 3 places of detention under the responsibility of the Ministries of Justice and Defence;



- constantly reminded the authorities and the warring parties of their obligation to respect the civilian population;



- exchanged 3,392 Red Cross messages on behalf of Congolese displaced people and Rwandan refugees and their relatives abroad;
- registered 187 unaccompanied Congolese children and reunited 155 with their relatives (the figures are totals since the onset of hostilities in 1998); registered a total of 302 unaccompanied Rwandan children from the time of the arrival of Rwandan refugees in the country and reunited 30 with their relatives (123 were in contact with their families in Rwanda through Red Cross messages);



- with the support of the Congolese Red Cross, provided more than 120,000 displaced people in 4 sites in Brazzaville with 116.4 tonnes of food, partly supplied by the WFP, and 1,738 tonnes of material assistance, partly supplied by the Federation; erected tents and tarpaulin structures to temporarily house 4,000 displaced people in Brazzaville, Mafouta and Matsimou;
- carried out a one-week distribution of food for 40,000 people returning from the Pool region in May;
- distributed 121 tonnes of material assistance (kitchen sets, tarpaulins, jerrycans, blankets and soap) to ease the return of some 7,000 people whose homes had been destroyed in districts of Brazzaville;
- managed a therapeutic feeding centre for malnourished displaced children and adults;
- supplied regular food aid to malnourished children in camps for the displaced;
- provided 1,746 tonnes of food supplies to some 25,000 vulnerable people in Brazzaville, with the support of the Congolese Red Cross;



- supplied medicines and medical materials and equipment to Brazzaville's 3 main hospitals, which treated a total of 1,803 war-wounded, and to 10 health centres and dispensaries serving displaced people;
- provided the services of a war surgeon for one month to train local surgeons in war-surgery techniques at the military hospital in Brazzaville, to which most war-wounded were referred;
- evacuated war-wounded and emergency medical cases to various hospitals in Brazzaville;
- rehabilitated 2 health posts in Malibu and Sangolo which were badly damaged in the fighting;
- until March, removed corpses from the street for burial; this activity was subsequently handed over to the authorities along with chemicals and materials (lime, chlorine, blankets, gloves and masks) to enable them to carry out the operation hygienically;





- in Brazzaville, built and equipped 2 new complete sites to accommodate up to 16,000 displaced people at Matsimou and Mafouta and oversaw their management;
- installed 12 bladder tanks in 6 sites and 2 hospitals for a total capacity of 75,000 litres of water;
- distributed 3.5 million litres of water by water truck to 8 camps, 2 feeding centres, 2 hospitals and 4 institutions for vulnerable groups (handicapped and elderly people);
- to improve hygiene conditions in sites for displaced people, dug 24 pit latrines and emptied existing latrines by vacuum truck, collected 600 m<sup>3</sup> of refuse and built 12 showers;
- supplied chemicals and equipment to the SNDE in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire to enable it to maintain minimal water quality;
- repaired 2 water installations damaged during the conflict in 1997 and 1998-99, the Owando pumping station in the north and the Djambala pumping station;
- began work on the complete rehabilitation of the Nkayi and Dolisie water-treatment plants, serving populations of 40,000 and 50,000, respectively;



- every week, involved 85 Congolese Red Cross volunteers, supported and trained by the Federation, in various emergency programmes, including tracing, medical, relief and water supply and sanitation activities;
- held training courses for 523 Red Cross volunteers working in emergency operations in Brazzaville;



- in mid-January, held a dissemination session for 450 cadets of the Marien Ngouabi military academy and donated a set of books on humanitarian law to the academy;
- introduced some 900 recruits, soldiers and officers of the Congolese armed forces to the basic principles of humanitarian law and the ICRC's mandate through dissemination sessions in training centres and military bases in Pointe-Noire, Ouessou and Impfondo;
- with the permanent Dissemination Commission, organized courses on humanitarian law for more than 700 officers and soldiers;
- carried out dissemination sessions for more than 850 policemen in Brazzaville;
- carried out ad hoc dissemination sessions and distributed soldier's manuals at checkpoints manned by government soldiers or militiamen;
- strengthened contacts with the local and international press through interviews and regular press releases on the ICRC's and the Movement's activities.



## RWANDA

### PROTECTION

11,243,799

### ASSISTANCE

19,339,237

### PREVENTIVE ACTION

1,383,662

### COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

34,307

### OVERHEADS

2,414,232

### GENERAL

1,364,411

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 35,779,648**



In 1999, the transitional government embarked on a policy of national reconciliation, with the aim of solving some of the population's basic problems, by focusing on the skills and responsibilities of the local authorities. It also stepped up its fight against corruption and bad management at different levels in an effort to demonstrate to the Rwandan people and the international community that no one is above the law. In March, local elections took place for the first time since the 1994 genocide.<sup>19</sup> The whole operation went ahead smoothly and without incident throughout the country.

Measures were taken to reintroduce a traditional, local form of justice known as "gachacha", which works on the principle of reconciling the parties and promoting social harmony rather than penalizing the guilty party. Meanwhile, trials of persons accused of taking part in the genocide continued at a slow pace. Following a procedural decision by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, based in Arusha, Tanzania, to release a former Rwandan government official accused of war crimes, Rwanda temporarily suspended its cooperation with the Tribunal.

<sup>19</sup> See the ICRC's 1994 Annual Report, pp. 53-54.

*security situation looking up*

*overcrowding still  
a problem in prisons*

Rwandan troops remained present in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo throughout the year. The peace agreement signed on 10 July<sup>20</sup> made specific reference to Rwanda's security problems. In August, Ugandan and Rwandan troops became embroiled in a two-day confrontation in Kisangani in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.<sup>21</sup> Following high-level talks, the dispute was resolved and a cease-fire signed between the two traditional allies.

Provinces in north-western Rwanda (in particular, Ruhengeri and Gisenyi prefectures), which had been the scene of clashes between the armed opposition and government forces in previous years, regained a measure of stability in 1999. One of the methods employed by the authorities to improve security in these regions was to prevail upon the local population to resettle in "safer" villages away from their homes and fields. Nonetheless, according to official military sources, in late December a group of Interahamwe militiamen succeeded in penetrating into north-western Rwanda, killing 29 people and injuring many others, in what was the first incident of its kind in more than a year.

The generally improved security situation enabled the ICRC to return progressively to certain communes previously off-limits to the organization in the prefectures of Gitarama, Gikongoro and Cyangugu. In these places, delegates met the authorities and went to communal lock-ups ("cahots") that had not been visited for up to two years. An ICRC expatriate was permanently stationed in the north-west town of Ruhengeri in early June.

The ICRC's main task in Rwanda remained its work in places of detention and visits to detainees accused of participating in the genocide. Some releases and new arrests occurred during the year, but overall the number of detainees showed a slight decline. However, the number of detainees visited by the ICRC in civilian prisons, communal lock-ups, "brigades de gendarmerie" and military camps remained particularly high. Overcrowding was still a major problem, and the prison infrastructure inappropriate for the number of prisoners. Material conditions in the central prisons, which had been improving, deteriorated again in some prisons owing to the transfer of dozens, sometimes hundreds, of detainees from other prisons, undertaken in view of the future establishment of the "gachacha" tribunals throughout the country. Despite some improvements, the situation in the lock-ups was still largely inadequate, with lack of food and medical care and poor hygiene conditions continuing to undermine health.

In October the ICRC submitted a confidential report on its detention-related activities to the highest authorities in Rwanda. The report covered the ICRC's visits to 168 places of detention between January 1997 and February 1999 and summarized its observations and recommendations relating to the treatment and general material conditions of detainees.

Following negotiations with the relevant authorities, the ICRC regained access to places of detention under the responsibility of the "gendarmerie" and continued to make representations to the relevant authorities so as to be able to make more regular and frequent visits to all detention facilities under the responsibility of the army.

The ICRC kept up the delivery of food to civilian prisons to supplement rations provided by the authorities, undertook repairs and renovations to prisons and lock-

<sup>20</sup> See p. 75.

<sup>21</sup> See pp. 74-75.



*children looking for their parents*

*assistance to hospitals  
scaled down*

*long-term and "quick impact"  
water and sanitation projects*

ups, and distributed medicines to prison dispensaries, hospitals and health centres to ensure that detainees received essential medical care.

The ICRC also visited 50 Zimbabwean and Namibian POWs and a South African citizen held in Kigali in connection with the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.<sup>22</sup> In accordance with the provisions of the Third Geneva Convention, three seriously ill POWs were repatriated to Zimbabwe in October under ICRC auspices.

Rwandan nationals arrested in various African countries in connection with the 1994 genocide were visited by the ICRC at the United Nations detention unit of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania.<sup>23</sup>

The search continued for the families of almost 5,000 unaccompanied children, most of whose cases dated back to 1994. The ICRC carried on the photo-tracing programme for children too young or too traumatized to give information on their families' whereabouts. In addition to three photo albums in circulation with photos of 1,765 children, 100 photos were published in five local newspapers in May. In all, 1,123 children whose photos featured in this way were reunited with their families. Several hundred unaccompanied Rwandan children registered in neighbouring countries (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Burundi) were also successfully reunited with their families. Information on unaccompanied children whose relatives could not be traced or who for various socio-economic reasons preferred not to be reunited with their families was handed over to the Ministry of Social Affairs, so that it could take charge of these children in the future.

The ICRC pursued a policy of gradually scaling down its assistance to health facilities. At the end of July, in agreement with the "Frères de la Charité" association, the ICRC ceased its support to the Gatagara prosthetic/orthotic centre, run for three years as a project delegated to the Swiss Red Cross. Support to the Kibuye District Hospital, to which staff had been seconded by the German and Swiss Red Cross Societies, ended in September.

The ICRC continued its programmes to restore or provide a reliable water supply in both urban and rural communities. It also provided technical and material support to the national water, gas and electricity board, Electrogaz, to enable rehabilitation work and other water projects to go ahead throughout Rwanda.

A number of "quick impact" projects were also carried out, targeting the most vulnerable members of the population, such as orphans and widows, and hospitals and other sanitary infrastructure damaged during the events in 1994. The projects consisted of harnessing rainwater, connecting it up to the existing water network, and installing or constructing water tanks, drinking fountains and taps. Tanker-trucks were used when the need for clean water in vulnerable institutions such as health centres and orphanages was particularly pressing, although long-term, sustainable solutions, such as provided for by the "quick impact" projects, were sought to replace this ad hoc emergency method.

Following an evaluation of the micro-projects carried out for survivors of the genocide and massacres over the past five years, the ICRC decided to concentrate on agro-pastoral projects which promote food production and, to some extent,

<sup>22</sup> See pp. 76-77.

<sup>23</sup> See pp. 148 and 151.

## *humanitarian law and principles*

income generation at the household level, since these appeared to have reaped the greatest benefits.

The ICRC continued to build on its policy of integrating dissemination into the everyday tasks of all delegates in Rwanda. In addition, it focused on promoting humanitarian law to specific target groups, notably prison guards, low-ranking officials and the beneficiaries of micro-projects.

An awareness programme for members of the armed forces got under way in January, including a first-aid component for military doctors. The number of sessions for RPA\* members was also stepped up. Potential future RPA trainers were identified and discussions on a new draft RPA Code of Conduct continued. After a two-year absence from Ruhengeri, on 18 and 19 May the ICRC was able to make a presentation on humanitarian law for 48 RPA officers in training at the "Ecole de gendarmerie nationale".

The latter part of the year saw the creation in certain prefectures of communal defence forces, who were given weapons and trained in their use. For the first time, the ICRC was given the opportunity of holding dissemination sessions for these armed civilians in Butare and Cyangugu, during which particular emphasis was placed on respect for the emblem, the wounded and civilians.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC sponsored and took part in a two-day sub-regional symposium on humanitarian law organized in Butare by the National University of Rwanda. The symposium was attended by professors from the universities of Goma, Bukavu and Bujumbura, as well as military and civil authorities.

Cooperation activities with the Rwandan Red Cross were limited as the National Society was undergoing restructuring. A new General Secretary was appointed in November. Meanwhile, Rwandan Red Cross volunteers continued to participate in joint activities with the ICRC, in particular dissemination events.

\* RPA: Rwandan Patriotic Army



## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- visited 116,589 detainees (8,848 for the first time) in 168 places of detention, including prisons, lock-ups, "brigades de gendarmerie" and military detention camps;
- visited 51 POWs in the hands of the Rwandan authorities as a result of the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and interned in Kigali; enabled them to correspond with their families through Red Cross messages;
- in accordance with the Geneva Conventions, assisted in the repatriation of 475 civilians from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Rwanda;
- provided 11,399 tonnes of food to detainees in civilian prisons and detainees in a military prison to supplement their regular government-supplied rations; supplied Nutriset-enriched milk to severely malnourished detainees and carried out Body Mass Index tests to assess inmates' nutritional condition;
- distributed 321 tonnes of material assistance (mainly hygiene products) and basic medical supplies to detainees;
- carried out repairs and renovation work to kitchens, firewood shelters, prison cells, sewers, waste-water and rainwater drainage systems to counter unhealthy conditions of detention;



- exchanged 19,965 Red Cross messages, of which 9,339 were between detainees and their families;
- reunited 1,610 unaccompanied children with their relatives, bringing the total to 67,922 family reunifications carried out, together with other organizations, since 1994; repatriated 670 unaccompanied children from neighbouring countries to be reunited with their families;



- provided 446 tonnes of food and 48 tonnes of non-food items to vulnerable groups, including survivors of the genocide and displaced people;
- supported 135 micro-projects giving vital assistance to approximately 13,500 vulnerable survivors of the genocide and massacres to enable them to rebuild their lives;
- paid the school fees and provided school materials for 2,000 orphans from the genocide and massacres in all prefectures so that they could attend secondary school;
- provided food and kitchen sets to 1,280 widows and orphans through AVEGA\* and ad hoc food assistance to some 200 orphans;



- until late September, supplied medicines and medical materials to the Kibuye District Hospital and provided the services of an expatriate medical/surgical team, in close cooperation with the German and Swiss Red Cross Societies; between January and September, the hospital admitted 624 patients, performed 985 operations and carried out 5,477 outpatient consultations;

\* AVEGA: "Association des veuves du génocide d'avril"





- from January to June, through a project delegated to the Swiss Red Cross, supported the Gatagara prosthetic/orthotic centre, which during that period fitted 31 amputees, produced 31 prostheses and 236 orthoses and manufactured 4 wheel-chairs and 368 pairs of crutches;



- in Kigali town, finished rehabilitating the Rwampara and Kimisange pumping stations, constructed 3 water tanks, laid 6.5 km of pipeline and installed and connected 50 distribution points for the benefit of 25,000 people, including Gikondo prison;
- rehabilitated the spring catchment system in Kibungo and laid an additional pipeline between the springs and the treatment station, increasing the quantity of water provided from 550 m<sup>3</sup> to 900 m<sup>3</sup> a day for an estimated population of 41,000 people;
- increased the capacity of the main water tank in Gikondo from 50 m<sup>3</sup> to 150 m<sup>3</sup> for the benefit of around 10,000 recipients;
- carried out 30 "quick impact" projects for 9 orphanages, 6 health centres, a widows' village and 13 communal lock-ups;
- trucked a total of 2 million m<sup>3</sup> of water to 3 health centres, 4 orphanages, 6 widows' villages and other vulnerable institutions;
- in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Ministry of Justice, organized a week-long seminar in Kigali in April for ministry technicians in order to enhance their engineering skills;



- conducted dissemination sessions for 58,896 people, including arms bearers, representatives of the authorities and civil society, prison authorities, detainees, health staff, National Society volunteers, local ICRC staff, young people and the general public;
- organized an eight-week first-aid training course, the first of its kind for the ICRC, attended by 67 RPA medics and students, with the participation of 8 national trainers from the Rwandan Red Cross; followed this up with a second course towards the end of the year for 62 RPA first-aid staff; held a three-day war-surgery seminar for 15 military doctors in August;
- arranged 71 performances of the play "The Reunificator" for audiences totalling 15,082 people throughout the country;
- produced and adapted a range of publications for Rwandan audiences, including a comic strip drawn by a Rwandan artist.



## YAOUNDÉ

## Regional delegation

(Cameroon, Central African Republic,  
Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon,  
São Tomé and Príncipe)

*visits to detainees  
begin in Cameroon*

*elections in the  
Central African Republic*

*spillover from the  
Congolese conflict*

Cameroon enjoyed relative stability in 1999. There were no further tensions with Nigeria over the Bakassi peninsula, following the repatriation in 1998 of all Nigerian and Cameroonian POWs and civilian internees held in connection with the dispute<sup>24</sup> and pending a decision on the issue by the International Court of Justice. A new contender for ownership of the territory presented itself in the form of Equatorial Guinea, without, however, resort to violence. People displaced by the conflict began gradually to return to their homes.

Having received a positive response from the Cameroonian authorities to its offer of services at the end of 1998, the ICRC began visits to all categories of detainees in March. During the first round of visits, it registered some 50 security detainees. It made various representations to the authorities to improve detention conditions and to address the issue of lengthy periods of preventive detention. The ICRC also undertook a water and sanitation programme in some prisons for the benefit of all the inmates.

The ICRC and the Cameroonian government signed a new headquarters agreement on 31 March. The signing ceremony took place in the presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and was attended by the national media.

On 8 May, the National Society launched a public campaign on use of the red cross emblem, with the support of the Ministry of Defence, which pledged to ensure respect for the emblem in the future. In addition, weekly radio broadcasts on the Red Cross attracted a wide audience, with listeners sending an average of ten letters a week to the delegation requesting more information. To mark the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, a workshop on humanitarian law and the Fundamental Principles was organized for 16 journalists, and the ICRC took part in two televised 30-minute talk shows and four documentaries on ICRC activities.

The Central African Republic was still suffering from the trauma of recent violent mutinies and continued its economic slide. Elections took place in September, with the incumbent President re-elected by a small majority. On the day of the elections, the National Society stationed first-aiders at all 50 polling stations, but they were only required to intervene for minor incidents. The opposition contested the result, leading to a climate of tension in the country. In view of this, the mandate of the UN peace-keeping force, MINURCA,\* was further extended until February 2000. The Security Council, in its session on 13 October, called on the Central African President to open his government to members of the opposition and to advance the process of national reconciliation.

In August, several thousand refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, among them Congolese troops fleeing the advance of rebel forces, arrived in Mobaye and Bangui. The soldiers were rapidly disarmed and repatriated to Kinshasa, while some 2,100 civilians were grouped in a temporary site in Port Amont. With the help of the ICRC, the Central African Red Cross Society provided assistance to the refugees, built shelters and sanitary installations and set up kitchens serving rice and beans. A further 2,000 refugees were transferred to another camp at Boubou, north of the capital, where one hundred Red Cross volunteers, trained by the ICRC in habitat, water and sanitation techniques and equipped for the purpose, dug latrines and

<sup>24</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 86.

\* MINURCA: United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic



*promotion of humanitarian law  
and values*

*troubles persist in parts of Chad*

*visits resume to detainees  
in Equatorial Guinea*

*Gabon National Society recognized*

built shelters. Blankets and tarpaulins were also distributed. In addition, a Red Cross message service was established for the refugees in Port Amont and Boubou. When the occupants of the Pont Amont camp were transferred to another location up-country, the ICRC and the National Society monitored the closure of the camp and ensured that humanitarian rules were respected.

The ICRC intensified efforts to rally broader support in the Central African Republic for a proposed national law on the red cross emblem and the Ottawa landmines treaty. In addition, the ICRC continued to work with the National Committee on Humanitarian Law with a view to introducing a sustainable programme on the law of armed conflict for the armed forces. Dissemination sessions were held for the first time outside the capital for 500 officers from the "gendarmérie", police and armed forces.

Chad remained prey to pockets of rebellion in various parts of the country, weakening the power of the central government. The valuable oil fields in the south continued to be a cause of violent confrontation between government forces and local communities. An insurgency in the north led by the former Minister of Defence succeeded in gaining control of a large part of Tibesti province. In the east, in the Ouaddai, while the ANR\* had ceased military activity and was awaiting its integration into the national army, the FNTR\* continued to be active.

Chadian forces, which had been present in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 1998 to fight alongside President Kabila, withdrew in May.<sup>25</sup> They took with them 27 military and civilian prisoners captured in connection with the conflict. One died following the transfer to N'Djamena, but the ICRC was allowed to visit the remaining 26 regularly and to provide them with assistance. On 24 October, 17 of them were repatriated by ICRC plane to the opposition-held areas of Goma and Kisangani in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The repatriation of the remaining nine awaited authorization from Kinshasa.

At the end of 1999, following a meeting in Paris between the ICRC's Deputy Delegate General for Africa and President Obiang, the ICRC resumed its visits to security detainees in Equatorial Guinea. The visits had been interrupted in March 1998 owing to non-acceptance of the ICRC's customary procedures.<sup>26</sup> A first round of visits took place in December to four places of detention in Malabo and Bata.

Following a joint ICRC/Federation mission to Gabon in April, the newly created Gabonese Red Cross Society obtained official recognition as a National Society by the ICRC and the Federation in August and was welcomed as the 176th member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. In preparation, the ICRC helped to consolidate nine regional chapters. It also strengthened the operational capacity of the branch in Tchibanga, an area faced with an influx of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

\* ANR: "Alliance nationale de la résistance"

\* FNTR: "Front national du Tchad renoué"

<sup>25</sup> See p. 75.

<sup>26</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 87.



## *Geneva Conventions anniversary events*

The ICRC and the National Societies of the region produced a range of promotional items and organized a string of events to mark the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions in each country. In Cameroon, the ICRC, the Federation and the National Society took part in the CEMAC\* subregional trade fair, during which Red Cross publications and promotional items were distributed. An art competition was launched and prizes awarded to the four best works. In Gabon, a 60-minute talk show was broadcast on the Pan-African radio channel, Africa No. 1, and two national television stations.

\* CEMAC: "Communauté économique et monétaire d'Afrique centrale"

## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- in Cameroon, visited 64 detainees in 54 places of detention, and distributed hygiene products (soap, plastic buckets and shovels), medicines and kitchen materials; sponsored the weekly drainage of septic tanks in Douala's central prison;
- visited 27 security detainees held by Chadian forces on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in N'Djamena following their transfer in June; participated in the repatriation of 17 detainees to Goma and Kisangani in October;
- in Chad, visited 44 detainees in 3 places of detention and, where necessary, distributed hygiene products and educational items;
- in Equatorial Guinea, visited 72 detainees in 4 places of detention and distributed hygiene products;



- with the support of the relevant National Societies, exchanged 2,266 Red Cross messages on behalf of refugees in the countries of the region;



- through the Central African Red Cross Society, provided material assistance (tarpaulins, blankets, salt, soap, bowls and cooking pots) to 5,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Pont Amont and Boubou camps;



- provided financial and material support to the region's National Societies, focusing particularly on their respective tracing services and dissemination activities; financed the publication of regular newsletters in Cameroon and Chad;
- supported the organization of training seminars in emergency preparedness and management, restoration of family links and media communication, and habitat for staff and volunteers of 5 of the region's National Societies, with the participation of the Federation;
- trained 56 trainers and 190 volunteers of the region's National Societies in water and sanitation work to enable them to respond to floods;
- in conjunction with the Cameroon Red Cross, conducted a workshop in September for 15 information officers of the region's National Societies;



- continued to promote greater understanding and acceptance of humanitarian law and of the ICRC among various target groups in the region, namely the civilian and military authorities, police, armed forces, various associations, academic circles and the general public;
- promoted the inclusion of humanitarian law in the training programmes of the armed and security forces of the region;
- in January, as part of the follow-up to the "So Why?" campaign, organized a weekend event in Bangui, Central African Republic, to promote tolerance and respect for victims of armed conflict, featuring 50 local performers before an audience of 25,000 people;
- produced programmes on humanitarian law for broadcast on radio and television in Cameroon, focusing on the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions; regularly financed Red Cross radio programmes in Cameroon and Chad, including one in Arabic.



## ANGOLA

### PROTECTION

1,280,036

### ASSISTANCE

37,206,747

### PREVENTIVE ACTION

785,539

### COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

8,176

### OVERHEADS

2,362,714

### GENERAL

1,910,405

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 43,553,618**



ICRC delegation

ICRC sub-delegation

Prosthetic/orthotic centre/workshop

The past year was marked by an intensification in the clashes that had resumed in December 1998 between Angolan government forces and UNITA.<sup>27\*</sup> The fighting, which first affected the Planalto (Huambo and the Kuito region), gradually spread to other provinces in the country. After a long period of stalemate, the Angolan army began to gain ground steadily and then, following an offensive launched in September, took a number of strategic UNITA strongholds, such as Bailundo and Andulo, and the movement's former headquarters, Jamba. Beginning in December, the army also conducted operations against UNITA positions from the territory of Namibia, with the endorsement of the authorities of that country.

The hostilities did not, however, prevent the parties to the conflict from calling for a negotiated settlement to the crisis. In an interview broadcast in August, Jonas Savimbi, the UNITA leader, indicated that he was ready to resume peace talks with the Luanda government. For his part, President Dos Santos insisted on the need for dialogue with UNITA but rejected out of hand any direct negotiations with Jonas Savimbi.

<sup>27</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 91.

\* UNITA: National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

*increasingly precarious  
living conditions*

*assistance for the Planalto*

*seed distribution in Huambo*

*representations  
in favour of detainees*

On the diplomatic level, the Angolan government severely criticized the international community, a number of specific countries (including Zambia) and the United Nations, accusing them of being responsible for the failure to implement the Lusaka agreement and even of tacitly supporting UNITA. Several international organizations and States condemned UNITA, while the United Nations Security Council reinforced the sanctions already imposed on it. At the request of the Angolan government and the United Nations Secretary-General, the mandate of UNOMA,\* which expired on 26 February, was not renewed. In October, the Security Council adopted a resolution authorizing the establishment of a new and smaller structure, UNOA,\* for an initial six-month period.

The resumption of hostilities resulted in massive new displacements of the civilian population. In rural areas, these displacements were detrimental to economic activity, particularly in agriculture, with harvests becoming a target for widespread pillaging. The deterioration in security conditions led to a reduction in agricultural production and hindered the movement of staple products, pushing up the cost of food in the markets and increasing the vulnerability of the civilian population to shortages. The humanitarian organizations endeavoured to respond to the new needs created by this situation.

After contacting the parties to the conflict, the ICRC resumed its aid flights to the Planalto in January. Materials such as plastic sheeting, blankets, jerrycans, soap and kitchen utensils were regularly distributed to displaced persons in Huambo and Kuito, where a system to monitor the food requirements of the population had been set up following a medical survey.

In response to the risk of a very short-term food shortage in Huambo, the delegation mobilized considerable logistical resources to implement an agricultural assistance programme, distributing hoes, fertilizer and seed. It also distributed food to enable the beneficiaries to bridge the gap between two harvests. The programme was launched in June, when the irrigated fields bordering the rivers ("nacas") are planted, and covered 54,000 resident or displaced families in the districts and villages on the outskirts of Huambo, the necessary material being flown in by the ICRC. Distributions were continued in August in anticipation of the harvests in the fields relying on rain water ("lavras") and were extended to cover a total of 67,000 displaced and resident families at risk in Huambo province. At the beginning of the year, the ICRC started a parallel programme to assist the war-wounded being cared for in Huambo hospital. The programme was extended in mid-March to all emergency cases being treated by the hospital's surgical and obstetric departments.

Throughout the year, the delegation made various representations to the authorities concerned in order to obtain renewed access to persons detained in connection with the resumption of the internal conflict. However, despite the agreement in principle of the Angolan armed forces Chief-of-Staff, the ICRC was not authorized to resume its activities for detainees in 1999.

As the military situation evolved, the ICRC was gradually able to extend the scope of its operations and to gain access to areas which had hitherto been very unsettled, such as the provinces of Malanje, Uige and Zaire. In many places, however, the pre-

\* UNOMA: United Nations Observer Mission in Angola

\* UNOA: United Nations Office in Angola



*hazardous working conditions*

*representation in relation  
to the conflict in the Democratic  
Republic of the Congo*

*promotion of international  
humanitarian law*

*prosthetic/orthotic activities*

carious security situation prevented the delegation from undertaking any significant action. Moreover, in the absence of the necessary guarantees, the ICRC was unable to resume the activities suspended since December 1998 in UNITA-controlled zones.

Finally, the troubled situation prevailing in Angola restricted the work of the international and humanitarian organizations present in the country and indeed several of them, including the ICRC, were the target of relatively serious incidents. This being the case, the delegation had no choice but to reinforce its security rules and to adapt them regularly to the changing circumstances.

At the end of the year, following the intervention of the Angolan armed forces in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the ICRC delivered to the authorities in Luanda and to the other belligerents a second memorandum, reminding them of their obligations under the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols.

Within the framework of its traditional activities, the ICRC continued its efforts to promote international humanitarian law in both civilian and military circles in Angolan society. With the approval of the authorities, it resumed its activities to spread knowledge of humanitarian law among Angolan police officers in Huambo province after an interruption of almost one year. On the other hand, programmes intended for the Angolan armed forces in the field had to be suspended because of the resumption and intensification of the conflict. The delegation also organized two major cultural events on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions and the publication of the results of the "People on War" project.<sup>28</sup> The events were attended by several hundred people representing the authorities, diplomatic circles, civil society and the international organizations.

During 1999, the ICRC continued to provide artificial limbs for amputees in the prosthetic/orthotic centres in Kuito, Bomba Alta (Huambo) and, from March onwards, Neves Bendinha (Luanda). In addition, the production units of the centres in Bomba Alta and Neves Bendinha continued to manufacture prosthetic/orthotic components. For security reasons, however, the ICRC had to suspend flights bringing in amputees from other provinces for fittings.

<sup>28</sup> See pp. 348-350.

## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- took steps to obtain access to 7 Angolan nationals who had been captured by the Namibian armed forces during the events in the Caprivi Strip in August and handed over to the Angolan authorities;
- continued its representations to obtain access to persons arrested in connection with the conflict between the Angolan government and UNITA;



- collected and distributed, in cooperation with the National Society, more than 10,000 Red Cross messages exchanged between Angolan nationals and between refugees and their families abroad;
- resolved 37 tracing requests, with positive results in 26 cases;
- reunited 14 persons with their families;
- carried out 5 family reunifications for children separated from their kin;
- in the context of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, repatriated 6 Angolan citizens from Kisangani in November, in application of the Fourth Geneva Convention;



- distributed, wherever possible in cooperation with the National Society, basic necessities (soap, blankets, jerrycans, etc.) to more than 28,000 displaced and resident families in the Huambo and Kuito regions;
- supplied 54,000 resident and displaced families in villages and districts on the outskirts of Huambo with agricultural assistance and food rations for the dry season during a six-month period; started a similar programme for 67,000 families for the rainy season;
- planted 400,000 trees in the Huambo and Kuito regions, in cooperation with the Angolan Ministry of Agriculture and a specialized local institute, within the framework of a reforestation programme designed to provide the resident population with wood and fruit and to stop soil erosion;
- established a seed propagation programme in Huambo;



- delivered medical supplies for the treatment of 200 war-wounded at Malanje hospital and provided the surgical department of this establishment with ad hoc support;
- supplied Huambo hospital with surgical and medical materials, as well as technical support, for the care of around 3,400 patients;
- supplied monthly food aid for 500 patients at Huambo hospital from July onwards;
- conducted primary health care evaluations among displaced populations in Huambo and Kuito;
- starting in June, supplied and supervised 4 primary health care structures on the outskirts of Huambo and a health centre situated in a displaced persons camp in Cuando, working in coordination with the Angolan Ministry of Health;
- provided support for a health centre in a displaced persons camp in Kuito, working in cooperation with the National Society;
- starting in June, supplied medicines to three Angola Red Cross health centres in Uige province;





- produced 2,016 prostheses and distributed orthotic components to other organizations active in the field of orthotics;
- fitted more than 70 new amputees every month; replaced and repaired prostheses for amputees fitted with limbs earlier;



- coordinated sanitation work and then, at the end of the year, set up a sanitation programme to improve the quality and quantity of drinking water in the camps for displaced persons around the town of Kuito;
- restored the drinking water supply of Huambo hospital;



- provided support and material for activities conducted by the Angola Red Cross to restore and maintain family links in provinces where the ICRC had no permanent presence;



- presented humanitarian law, the Movement and the ICRC to members of the Angolan armed forces and national police (a total of more than 1,600 officers, NCOs\* and policemen);
- invited a staff officer to Geneva to take a course on international humanitarian law, with a view to promoting the teaching of this branch of law in the Angolan armed forces;
- promoted the "People on War" project within the framework of activities to mark the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions;



- provided the population of the Huambo region, especially school children, with information on the dangers of anti-personnel mines, through over a hundred shows performed by a troupe of traditional singers and dancers and seen by more than 6,000 people;
- organized a theatrical evening in Luanda in June, in cooperation with UNICEF and the Angolan Mine Clearance Institute, the occasion being associated with an exhibition of photographs relating to anti-personnel mines.

\* Non-commissioned officers

## HARARE

### Regional delegation

(Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe)

*cooperation with National Societies*

*promotion of international humanitarian law*

*regional repercussions of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*

*Caprivi Strip*

The year under review was marked by tensions in Namibia connected with the events in the Caprivi Strip and then, at the end of the year, developments in the situation in Angola. In Malawi, the presidential and parliamentary elections in June were followed by a period of unrest. The economic and social situation also remained difficult for much of the region's population, which was hard hit by the effects of the Aids epidemic.

As in previous years, the ICRC focused its efforts on programmes of cooperation with the region's National Societies. Special attention was devoted to reinforcing their capacity to take action in emergency situations, especially during the elections which took place in various countries in the region (Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia) in 1999. At the same time, efforts were pursued to provide training for activities to promote humanitarian law and to restore and maintain family links. As well as providing financial or material aid, the ICRC also organized seminars on various topics for the volunteers and staff of the National Societies; some of those seminars were run jointly with the regional delegation of the Federation.

The ICRC also continued to promote awareness of and respect for international humanitarian law in the six countries covered by the Harare regional delegation, targeting such various groups as the authorities, the armed forces and security services, academic circles, the media, NGOs and the general public. The 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions presented numerous opportunities in this respect. With regard to dissemination programmes for the armed forces, the ICRC took advantage of its contacts with the SADC\* Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre to arrange for teaching of the law of war in the context of events organized by this body. In addition, discussions were continued to encourage the authorities concerned to adopt measures for the implementation of this branch of law and to ratify various humanitarian law treaties.

The ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to have direct repercussions on Namibia and Zimbabwe (which were militarily involved) and on Zambia. The latter not only received thousands of Congolese refugees on its territory but also acted as mediator in the peace negotiations which resulted in the signature of the Lusaka agreement<sup>29</sup> in July. In accordance with the Third Geneva Convention, the ICRC, for its part, continued its visits to Rwandan prisoners of war held in Zimbabwe. At the end of the year, the Harare regional delegation submitted a second memorandum<sup>30</sup> to the governments of Namibia and Zimbabwe with regard to respect for international humanitarian law in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In the middle of the year, approximately 500 of the 2,500 people from the Caprivi Strip who had taken refuge in Botswana<sup>31</sup> were repatriated to Namibia. When these departures met with hostility from refugees who did not want to return, the Botswana security forces intervened and a number of the refugees were arrested. Other refugees were subsequently taken into custody when they tried to leave Botswanan territory by clandestine means. A further repatriation of around 1,000 people took place in the third quarter. During the year, the ICRC made a number of

\* SADC: Southern Africa Development Community

<sup>29</sup> See p. 75.

<sup>30</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 94.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



## *involvement of Namibia in the conflict in Angola*

## *Post-election unrest in Malawi*

## *tension between Zambia and Angola*

visits to the camp where the Namibian refugees were being held in order to assess their situation from the humanitarian point of view.

At the beginning of August, clashes broke out in Caprivi province between members of a secessionist movement and the Namibian army, with casualties on both sides. The ICRC, which was on the spot at the time, supplied medicines sent by the National Society, as well as seeking and obtaining access to the people arrested in connection with these events.

In December, the Angolan conflict spilled over into northern Namibia after the latter allowed Angolan forces to conduct operations against UNITA from its territory. These incidents, which took place in the Kavango region, resulted in casualties and led to people being displaced, especially Angolan refugees. The ICRC visited the area during the same month to assess the humanitarian situation of the people concerned and to obtain access to individuals detained in connection with the events.

In Malawi, violence erupted in June in a number of opposition strongholds following the announcement of the general election results and the re-election of the incumbent president. Buildings, including mosques, were burned down and the police, as well as making a number of arrests, opened fire on the demonstrators. The Malawi Red Cross Society provided first aid and humanitarian assistance to around 60 victims of the unrest. The opposition obtained permission from the High Court to check some of the ballots, but the situation remained tense, and renewed clashes broke out between opposition militants and the police when the president's election victory was confirmed in December.

The beginning of 1999 was marked by tension between Zambia and Angola, with Angola accusing the Zambian government of supporting UNITA. The situation further deteriorated in March when a bomb exploded outside the Angolan embassy in the Zambian capital, killing an employee. Although the tension eased somewhat following discussions held in Swaziland in May between the two countries' defence ministers, the positions of both parties hardened again right at the end of the year when troops were mobilized on either side of the border as a result of the Angolan army's offensive against UNITA.

On the humanitarian level, several thousand Angolan nationals fled to Zambia, seeking refuge from the fighting in their country.

With regard to Zambia's internal situation, 59 of the soldiers who had been charged with taking part in the attempted coup in October 1997 and whose trial began in June 1998<sup>32</sup> were sentenced to death in September.

<sup>32</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 95.

## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- registered and visited, in August, 110 persons arrested after the events in the Caprivi Strip and being held in three places of detention in Namibia; made two further visits at the end of the year to the persons still detained and, in December, registered 11 new detainees; provided the detainees with recreational materials;
- paid regular visits to 43 Rwandan prisoners of war registered in 1998 and held at the Chegutu airbase in Zimbabwe; in February, visited a 44th Rwandan prisoner of war, wounded and held at the military hospital in Harare; in July, organized the repatriation of one of these prisoners who was freed on medical grounds; provided material assistance to the prisoners;
- gave all of the above-mentioned detainees the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their families;
- continued representations to obtain access to the detainees held by the security services in Zambia;
- took part in a four-day international seminar held in Mozambique in October, dealing with general matters connected with the operation of the prison system;



- provided logistical support and relief materials for the operations carried out by the ICRC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Angola;



- supported Namibia Red Cross training activities with regard to preparation for emergency situations, the restoration of family links and the dissemination of the principles of humanitarian law, especially in the Caprivi region;
- in connection with the conflict in Caprivi, supplied material for and took part in the training of 18 volunteers of the new Kassane branch of the Botswana Red Cross Society;
- assisted the two above-mentioned National Societies to collect and distribute Red Cross messages for persons who were either resident in the Caprivi Strip or had fled the region to take refuge in Botswana;
- assisted the Zambia Red Cross in its activities to restore family links among the refugee populations from Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and helped it to organize a national seminar on tracing techniques and the promotion of humanitarian law;
- in cooperation with the Federation, provided support for the training of and equipment for 210 volunteers of the Malawi Red Cross Society who were to be active in 7 regions of the country;
- financed the dissemination activities of the Mozambique Red Cross at the police academy in Maputo;
- organized a regional tracing workshop in October, which was attended by participants from the National Societies of the countries covered by the Harare regional delegation and from the National Societies of Kenya and Uganda;
- organized, jointly with the Johannesburg Institute for the Advancement of Journalism and the University of Pretoria, a three-day workshop, held in Harare in November, for heads of information departments of southern African National Societies;





- generally coordinated and strengthened programmes for the restoration and maintenance of family links conducted by the region's National Societies, thus enabling the exchange of 3,500 Red Cross messages between refugees from various African countries and their families;
- facilitated the holding of a first course on the law of war for officers of the Botswana army and, in this context, made a presentation to some 20 senior officers;
- organized, within the framework of a course given by the British Military Advisory and Training Team in June, a course on the law of armed conflict which was attended by around 30 senior officers of the Mozambique armed forces;
- took part in courses organized for the officers and instructors of the Zimbabwean armed forces and the army of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, held at the All Arms Battle School, Nyanga (Zimbabwe), in July and August;
- directed a workshop on the law of war, held in July at the Zimbabwe Staff College for around 60 officers from the Zimbabwean armed forces, police force and prison service, and from foreign armed forces;
- obtained a directive from the high command of the Malawian armed forces relating to the incorporation of the law of armed conflict into the training programme of its troops;
- held over ten seminars in Malawi on the implementation of humanitarian law for representatives of the government, the army, the police, the prison service and NGOs;
- organized a course on the law of armed conflict in February for 19 instructors of the Namibian army;
- directed the first course for UN staff officers, held at the SADC Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre in Harare, attended by 31 officers from the armed forces of 11 SADC member countries and one Senegalese officer.

## PRETORIA

### Regional delegation

(Comoros, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland)

Throughout the year, the Pretoria regional delegation monitored the development of the situation in the various countries covered by it. The political situation was relatively calm everywhere but in the Comoros, where tensions persisted. Whenever necessary, the delegation intervened on behalf of victims or helped the National Societies concerned to provide them with assistance. In general, the ICRC continued to supply institutional, material and financial support for the programmes (particularly dissemination of international humanitarian law, restoration of family links and preparation for emergencies) and structural development of the region's National Societies. In addition, the regional delegation pursued its efforts to raise awareness of and respect for humanitarian law in political, military and academic circles and schools, and among the general public and the media. In this regard, the delegation benefited from the impact of the campaign conducted in South Africa to mark the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions and, in particular, the "People on War" project.<sup>33</sup> As regards dissemination to the armed forces, the ICRC took part in the preparatory phase of a basic course on international humanitarian law and human rights to be given by the South African police to its 120,000 members. The delegation also kept up its representations to encourage States to adopt measures for national implementation of international humanitarian law and to ratify certain humanitarian law treaties (the Hague Convention of 1954, the Ottawa treaty, the Statute of the International Criminal Court, the 1980 United Nations Conventional Weapons Convention, etc.).

Following the general elections in June, which went off peacefully and resulted in a clear victory for the ANC,\* the presidency of the Republic of South Africa passed from Nelson Mandela to Thabo Mbeki.

Though there was a sharp drop in acts of political violence during the year, the deterioration in the economic situation (partly attributable to the fall of the gold price on the international market), the policy of budget austerity followed by the South African government and the persistence of social problems, all contributed to continuing high levels of crime, especially in the big cities. With regard to violence, South Africa adopted an innovative approach to the proliferation of small arms by announcing in March that it intended to destroy all military surpluses and arms and ammunition confiscated by the police services. The arms were destroyed in public, drawing people's attention to the problem. For its part, the ICRC contributed to efforts to raise awareness of the issue through a survey conducted within the framework of the "People on War" project, targeting especially the black townships of Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town. At the same time, the delegation provided financial and logistical support for the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre, with a view to organizing workshops for the Johannesburg township communities on how to resolve problems by discussion rather than violence. The participants' attention was also drawn to humanitarian law and the activities of the Red Cross, particularly in connection with community development projects.

A conference organized under the aegis of the OAU was held in Antananarivo at the end of April in an attempt to resolve the crisis connected with the secession of the islands of Anjouan and Mohéli. Eventually, all the delegations from the Comoros -

*violence persists in South Africa*

<sup>33</sup> See pp. 348-350.

\* ANC: African National Congress



## *army coup d'état in the Comoros*

with the exception of the Anjouan delegation - signed an agreement which would give a greater degree of autonomy to each of the three islands of the Comoros archipelago. Anti-Anjouan demonstrations immediately broke out in Moroni, the capital of the Comoros, resulting in the departure of many people originating from Anjouan. The Comoros Red Crescent provided assistance for these people before their departure and then received and registered them on their arrival in Anjouan. The army, which had been brought in to restore order, then overthrew the Comoros government on 30 April. In December, fresh negotiations were held in Pretoria, on the initiative of the OAU, between representatives of the three islands and various African states of the Indian Ocean. When the Anjouan delegates refused to sign the Antananarivo agreement, the other participants at the meeting gave them until 1 February 2000 to do so. They also called on the new government in power in Moroni to restore constitutional government as soon as possible.

The ICRC carried out several missions to the Comoros in 1999 in order to assess the humanitarian situation and to hold talks with the civilian and military authorities and with officials of the National Society. During one of these missions, the ICRC was informed of the release of four detainees whom it had registered in December 1998.<sup>34</sup>

## *withdrawal of foreign forces from Lesotho*

The last of the Botswana and South African peacekeeping forces withdrew from Lesotho in late April and early May. These forces had been brought in under the aegis of the SADC in September 1998 in order to restore order in the country.<sup>35</sup> In addition, the past year also saw the continuing trial of members of the Lesotho armed forces charged with mutiny after the events of 1998.

## *evaluation of the nutrition and kitchen garden project in Madagascar's prisons*

In late May and early June, the ICRC assessed the impact of the pilot nutrition and kitchen garden project conducted in Madagascar's prisons.<sup>36</sup> In general, the malnutrition rate had decreased by 10% since the project's implementation. However, significant disparities were noted between one place of detention and another, partly because of the differences in the budgets allocated to the various prisons. The evaluation also showed that the improvement in the nutritional situation in the prisons was principally due to the professionalization of the distribution of food aid by the Catholic chaplaincy of Madagascar's prisons, as well as the declared intention of the National Directorate of the Madagascar prison administration to resolve the main problems and to exercise greater supervision over prison staff. The results of the evaluation were delivered to the main parties concerned at the end of December on the occasion of one of the missions to the island by the Pretoria regional delegation.

<sup>34</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 99.

<sup>35</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 98.

<sup>36</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 100.

## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- revisited 78 security detainees at the central prison and at the high security prison in Maseru (Lesotho) in April; in December, paid a further visit to 74 of these detainees, the others having been released in the meantime;
- offered all of the above-mentioned detainees the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their families;



- through the exchange of Red Cross messages, helped maintain family links between refugees from various African countries in South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland and their families abroad;



- organized, in cooperation with WHO and the University of Pretoria Health Department, a second HELP (Health Emergencies in Large Populations) course, held in Pretoria in November and attended by 15 participants from 11 countries;



- supported South African Red Cross preparations for the national elections in June by providing training in first aid for more than 500 volunteers and instructors and distributing materials (first-aid kits, flags, tabards);
- continued to support the community first-aid programme of the South African Red Cross Soweto branch;
- organized, jointly with the Johannesburg Institute for the Advancement of Journalism and the University of Pretoria, a three-day workshop for heads of information departments of southern African National Societies;
- supplied the Comoros Red Crescent with first-aid materials for the treatment of a total of 300 injured; provided financial support for the training of 95 National Society volunteers in the prevention and treatment of cholera on the archipelago's three islands;
- continued to support the community first-aid programme launched by the Malagasy Red Cross and, in this context, supplied first-aid material to the National Society;





- participated, as an expert in international humanitarian law, in a joint military exercise conducted in South Africa and mobilizing around 4,500 soldiers from 12 of the 14 SADC countries, civilian police forces, UN institutions and NGOs;
- presented humanitarian law during a three-week course on peacekeeping operations organized at the Pretoria Army College;
- arranged and organized, in some cases in cooperation with other institutions, sessions on humanitarian law, held in South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland for members of the armed and police forces of these countries;
- took part in the organization of a course to train future South African military observers for service in contingents of the UN, the SADC and the OAU;
- promoted the campaign to mark the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, in particular by conducting a large-scale survey in South Africa on the limits of war within the framework of the "People on War" project.

## ERITREA

### PROTECTION

1,081,193

### ASSISTANCE

10,720,092

### PREVENTIVE ACTION

21,822

### COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

307,851

### OVERHEADS

652,428

### GENERAL

172,946

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 12,956,332**



⊕ ICRC delegation

+ ICRC office/antenna

An incident in the disputed border area of Badme, between Eritrea and Ethiopia, in May 1998 rapidly escalated into full-blown war.<sup>37</sup> In 1999, troops clashed on several fronts along the 1,000-kilometre border separating the two countries. Between February and April, intermittent but fierce battles were waged on the fronts in the Badme, Tsorona and Mereb regions. By June, with the onset of the seasonal rains, neither side had gained a decisive advantage. Tension between the two neighbouring States was still simmering at the end of the year.

The rains brought a period of relative calm during which diplomatic efforts were stepped up to try to find a peaceful settlement to the conflict. The OAU framework agreement, which was first brokered in the summer of 1998, formed the basis for all subsequent mediation efforts. The peace initiative was given an additional boost in July when it seemed that the stalemate had been broken and that the two sides had agreed in principle to the OAU plan of implementation. At the end of the year, however, joint agreement on the technical arrangements of the peace accord was still pending.

<sup>37</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 101.

*international efforts at mediation*



*the high toll of war*

The war, which involved two regular armies confronting each other from well-entrenched positions, was reported to take a high toll in military casualties. Civilians most directly affected were people living close to the front lines, tens of thousands of whom were displaced, deported or chose to return voluntarily to their respective country of origin. Many were separated from their family members, underwent traumatic experiences prior to or during the deportation and lost many or all of their assets.

Despite intense efforts to gain access to prisoners of war (POWs) captured by Eritrea since the outbreak of the war, including a visit by the ICRC President to Asmara in August during which he met the Eritrean President and Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the end of the year the authorities had still not given the ICRC permission to conduct the visits.

During the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,<sup>38</sup> held in Geneva in November, the Eritrean government pledged to initiate procedures for the ratification of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. Although Eritrea is not yet party to the Geneva Conventions or their Additional Protocols, it is nonetheless bound by the customary rules applicable in the event of international armed conflict.

The ICRC made written and oral representations to the authorities, drawing their attention to the basic provisions of humanitarian law, notably those contained in the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I. It reminded the Eritrean authorities of their obligations in particular towards POWs and Ethiopian civilians deprived of their freedom.

While it remained impossible for the ICRC to gain access to POWs, regular ICRC visits were conducted to a number of civilians of Ethiopian nationality detained in connection with the conflict.

Activities carried out to re-establish family links picked up considerably, particularly the exchange of Red Cross messages, as the service became better known among Eritreans and the Ethiopian population in Eritrea. This was the result of the ICRC's increased presence in the field, including in the camps for internally displaced people and in the Ethiopian state of Tigray.<sup>39</sup> The ICRC was also actively involved in reuniting families separated as a consequence of the conflict, but the number of such cases remained low as many potential candidates, who had been separated from their relatives when the latter were deported, were either allowed to leave their country of residence voluntarily or were expelled in their turn.

In its capacity as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC continued to ensure the safe passage across the front lines of people who had been expelled or were returning voluntarily to their country of origin.<sup>40</sup> When necessary, ad hoc assistance was provided to those people in cooperation with the National Society. The assistance took the form of medical aid for the most vulnerable, material supplies and help in transporting the deportees/voluntary returnees from the crossing point. All safe-passage operations were put on hold in February, however, owing to the renewed outbreak of hostilities. Although the ICRC ensured the safe passage from Ethiopia to Eritrea of 2,890 civilians of Eritrean descent in July, no further safe-passage operations took place for the rest of the year because of the lack of agreement by the relevant authorities.

<sup>38</sup> See pp. 376-377.

<sup>39</sup> See p. 123.

<sup>40</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 102.

*visits to prisoners of war  
and Ethiopian civilians deprived  
of their freedom**family news*

*safe passage for deportees  
and returnees*

*assistance for the displaced*

*medical supplies and training*

*promotion of the law  
of armed conflict*

*cooperation with other key players*

In the last quarter of 1999, Ethiopia proceeded to organize the repatriation, on three separate occasions, of around 3,100 civilians. While the majority of the people concerned had, to the ICRC's knowledge, applied earlier for voluntary repatriation, these operations nevertheless posed considerable problems of humanitarian concern. The ICRC, in its capacity as a neutral intermediary, had been unable to secure the agreement of both parties for such operations at the time and thus was not involved in organizing safe passage across the front lines. ICRC assistance was limited to support for the Red Cross Society of Eritrea in each operation.

The ICRC made a series of representations concerning respect for the rights afforded by the Geneva Conventions to Ethiopian aliens living in Eritrea or wishing to return home voluntarily. The authorities at the highest level were thereby informed of recurring humanitarian issues, and a solution found to a number of problems encountered by Ethiopians living in difficult conditions. Throughout the second half of the year it nevertheless remained impossible to organize safe-passage operations for potential voluntary returnees to Ethiopia.

The situation of the tens of thousands of civilians displaced from the border area and living in camps worsened during the first half of 1999. The ICRC first provided camps in Debub province with shelter and non-food material, distributed in cooperation with the Red Cross Society of Eritrea. Food was distributed by other organizations, but since they could not meet the demand, the ICRC made up for the shortfall between July and December.

The ICRC assisted medical facilities treating the war-wounded by providing medical supplies, equipment, surgical instruments and medicines. Ten future physiotherapists followed a five-month course set up in the main hospital of the Eritrean capital. This course, conducted by two ICRC physiotherapists, provided both theoretical teaching and practical training. The course will count towards an 18-month diploma course in physiotherapy to start in 2000.

The delegation maintained a constant dialogue with the authorities to further their understanding of the ICRC's work and of international humanitarian law and to promote the accession of the State of Eritrea to the four 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols of 1977.

In terms of dissemination programmes, the Red Cross Society of Eritrea had access to a large segment of the population through the Circus Eritrea, a youth group which performed plays and songs promoting fundamental Red Cross principles. In addition, the Eritrean Red Cross organized dissemination sessions along with each training course for first-aiders, thereby reaching the local population, rural authorities, secondary school students and Red Cross volunteers.

The ICRC worked in close cooperation with the different components of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement in the region. It also kept in regular contact for coordination purposes with other humanitarian organizations, both national and international, particularly in the field of assistance.

The ICRC strove to support the Red Cross Society of Eritrea, which was not yet recognized by the Movement or the Eritrean government. At the 27th International Conference, the latter pledged to take steps to speed up the process of establishing the National Society's legal status.



The ICRC also endeavoured to strengthen the National Society's emergency-response, first-aid training and ambulance services, especially in conflict areas. The ambulance services, provided by the Red Cross Society of Eritrea within the framework of its cooperation agreement with the ICRC, were used to evacuate the wounded to medical facilities. The ICRC also reinforced the National Society's dissemination and tracing capacities. All surveys and subsequent assistance programmes targeting conflict victims were carried out in close cooperation with the Red Cross Society of Eritrea, which throughout the year gained weight and respect as a major player in the humanitarian field.

## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- visited 17 Ethiopian civilians protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention and held in 4 places of detention, and continued its efforts to gain access to Ethiopian POWs;



- ensured the safe passage across the front lines of Eritrean and Ethiopian civilians expelled or returning voluntarily to their respective country of origin;



- together with the Eritrean Red Cross, handled 4,134 Red Cross messages to allow people unable to contact their families as a result of the international armed conflict to inform relatives of their whereabouts and welfare;
- in cooperation with the respective Red Cross Societies, reunited 2 families who had been separated by the international armed conflict;
- exchanged 10,386 Red Cross messages between civilian internees held in Eritrea and their families in Ethiopia;



- in cooperation with the Red Cross Society of Eritrea, provided assistance for displaced people in Debu province, distributing 7,008 tonnes of food, 4,207 tents, 2,000 tarpaulins, 24,680 blankets, 12,625 jerrycans and 35.8 tonnes of soap;



- in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, assisted health facilities by supplying 14 hospital tents, beds, hospital equipment, surgical and medical supplies and medicines for the war-wounded;
- helped renovate a regional hospital;
- established a training course for future physiotherapists;



- supported the Red Cross Society of Eritrea with a view to strengthening its emergency response, first-aid training and ambulance services, especially in conflict areas, and reinforcing its dissemination and tracing capacities;



- fostered contacts with regional and federal government authorities to further understanding of the ICRC's work and humanitarian law;
- promoted the incorporation of the law of armed conflict in the training of the Eritrean Defence Forces.



## ETHIOPIA

### PROTECTION

3,088,274

### ASSISTANCE

3,886,462

### PREVENTIVE ACTION

817,142

### COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

61,617

### OVERHEADS

616,946

### GENERAL

610,260

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 9,080,701**



An incident in the disputed border area of Badme, between Eritrea and Ethiopia, in May 1998 rapidly escalated into full-blown war.<sup>41</sup> In 1999, troops clashed on several fronts along the 1,000-kilometre border separating the two countries. Between February and April, intermittent but fierce battles were waged on the fronts in the Badme, Tsorona and Mereb regions. By June, with the onset of the seasonal rains, neither side had gained a decisive advantage. Tension between the two neighbouring States was still simmering at the end of the year.

The rains brought a period of relative calm during which diplomatic efforts were stepped up to try to find a peaceful settlement to the conflict. The OAU framework agreement, which was first brokered in the summer of 1998, formed the basis for all subsequent mediation efforts. The peace initiative was given an additional boost in July when it seemed that the stalemate had been broken and that the two sides had agreed in principle to the OAU plan of implementation. At the end of the year, however, joint agreement on the technical arrangements of the peace accord was still pending.

<sup>41</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 101.

*international efforts at mediation*

*the high toll of war*

*ICRC work in relation  
to the international conflict*

*internal unrest*

*visits to POWs, civilian internees  
and detainees*

The war, which involved two regular armies confronting each other from well-entrenched positions, was reported to take a high toll in military casualties. Civilians most directly affected were people living close to the front lines, tens of thousands of whom were displaced, deported or chose to return voluntarily to their respective country of origin. Many were separated from their family members, underwent traumatic experiences prior to or during the deportation and lost many or all of their assets.

Within the context of the international conflict with Eritrea, the ICRC's objectives in Ethiopia were twofold: to ensure that humanitarian law was respected and that protected populations were treated in accordance with its provisions; and to continue visits to POWs and interned civilians in order to ascertain that the treatment they received and the conditions in which they were held complied with the provisions of the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions. In August, the ICRC President made an official visit to Addis Ababa. He met the State President, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, with whom he discussed pending humanitarian issues with regard to the international conflict. It was during this visit that the ICRC was informed by the highest authorities that it could resume its activities in the state of Tigray.<sup>42</sup>

With attention focused on the international conflict with Eritrea, military activity by armed opposition groups, which had fallen off in 1997 and in 1998, seemed to regain a certain momentum, particularly in Somali National Regional State<sup>43</sup> and in the Borena zone of Oromiya Regional State, where sporadic clashes between opposition groups and the Ethiopian armed forces were reported. Other areas enjoyed relative calm.

The ICRC focused its efforts in connection with the internal unrest on regular visits to detainees held in connection with the change of government in 1991 or for reasons of State security, combined health and veterinary projects for nomadic populations in the Afder zone of Somali National Regional State, and rehabilitation programmes for amputees and the war-wounded.

The ICRC visited POWs and civilian internees, held first in Bilate and then in Dedessa internment camps, in accordance with its standard procedures. The aim of the visits was to ensure that the material conditions of internment and the treatment afforded to the POWs and civilian internees were in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions. The ICRC maintained a regular dialogue with the authorities concerned and reported its findings and recommendations to them.

In addition to its protection and assistance activities related to the international conflict, the ICRC also continued its regular visits to people detained either in connection with the change of government in 1991 or for reasons of State security. In July, for the first time since September 1997, it was authorized to visit detainees held at the Central Investigation Department, but it was subsequently denied authorization for follow-up visits. In Tigray Regional State, the ICRC was able to resume visits to detainees held in civilian prisons in December. Oral and written representations were made to the relevant authorities regarding specific aspects of the detainees' treatment and living conditions.

<sup>42</sup> See p. 120.

<sup>43</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 105.



## *preventive health measures in prisons*

During their visits, delegates and ICRC sanitary engineers paid special attention to the health situation in places of detention. Emphasis was placed on preventive health measures and sound hygiene practices in order to reduce the incidence of such ailments as diarrhoea and skin diseases. A pilot project to promote basic health education, launched in 1998 and carried out in cooperation with the Jima School of Environmental Health, was extended to cover all the prisons visited. The project involved local partners in raising detainees' awareness of personal hygiene routines adapted to the prison environment.

ICRC sanitary engineers made improvements to the water and sewage systems in places of detention throughout the country, upgrading sanitary facilities, water supply systems and kitchens. Their work consisted of completing new water-distribution systems, installing water reservoirs, and building walkways, latrines, septic tanks, shower rooms and wash basins.

## *ICRC monitors trials*

The ICRC continued to monitor the trials in Addis Ababa and in the regional supreme courts of detainees accused of committing crimes during the previous regime. It also began to monitor the trials of detainees held for reasons of State security. The ICRC shared its observations on respect for judicial guarantees concerning those held in connection with the change of government in 1991 or for reasons of State security with the relevant legal authorities. The delegation also made a number of formal representations to regional authorities concerning the issue of extrajudicial detention of people visited by the ICRC and who had been detained for between two and six years without a court appearance or without being charged.

## *Red Cross messages*

Following the interruption of telecommunication and postal services between Eritrea and Ethiopia as a result of the armed conflict between the two countries, a network was set up in cooperation with the Ethiopian Red Cross Society to collect and distribute Red Cross messages so as to allow separated family members, the displaced and civilians interned in Ethiopia to inform their relatives of their whereabouts and welfare. Around 90 % of all family messages were exchanged between civilian internees and their next-of-kin.

## *safe passage for deportees and returnees*

In its capacity as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC continued to ensure the safe passage across the front lines of people who had been expelled or were returning voluntarily to their country of origin.<sup>44</sup> When necessary, ad hoc assistance was provided to them in cooperation with the National Society. The assistance took the form of medical aid for the most vulnerable, material supplies and help in transporting the deportees/voluntary returnees from the crossing point. All safe-passage operations were put on hold in February, however, owing to the renewed outbreak of hostilities. Although the ICRC ensured the safe passage from Ethiopia to Eritrea of 2,890 civilians of Eritrean descent in July, no further safe-passage operations took place for the rest of the year because of the lack of agreement by the relevant authorities.

The situation of Eritreans living in Addis Ababa and, as such, protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention was closely monitored by the ICRC. The most destitute were given medical assistance, and representations were made to the authorities concerned stressing both the rights afforded to this population under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the importance of organizing safe-passage operations for those who had expressed the wish to return to Eritrea.

<sup>44</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 102.



*assistance to those displaced  
by the international conflict*

*preparing for the worst*

*medical supplies and training*

*ambulance services*

In the last quarter of 1999, Ethiopia proceeded to organize the repatriation, on three separate occasions, of around 3,100 civilians. While the majority of the people concerned had, to the ICRC's knowledge, applied earlier for voluntary repatriation, these operations nevertheless posed considerable problems of humanitarian concern. The ICRC, in its capacity as a neutral intermediary, had been unable to secure the agreement of both parties for such operations at the time and thus was not involved in organizing safe passage across the front lines.

On 10 February, the Ethiopian authorities in Tigray ordered the ICRC team and all other international organizations and NGOs to leave the region, thereby putting an end to any immediate assistance to the displaced there. The ICRC was allowed to return to the area in August, however, and it set up programmes to assist people displaced by the conflict and living in camps and to provide support for medical facilities treating the war-wounded.

In order to strengthen the Ethiopian Red Cross branches near the conflict zones and to build up preparedness in case the situation deteriorated further, the ICRC provided training to first-aid instructors and first-aiders in the Tigray and Afar regions. To bolster the capacity of health facilities in these areas, the ICRC pre-positioned medical stocks in warehouses to treat a further 300 war-wounded. Additional back-up supplies were stocked in Addis Ababa for the treatment of over 1,000 war casualties and appropriate logistical supply lines were secured by the delegation with the ICRC's regional logistics centre in Nairobi in case of further needs.

The ICRC assisted four civilian hospitals in Tigray, providing equipment, surgical instruments and medicines for the treatment of the war-wounded. In two hospitals, rub-halls (multi-purpose tents) were installed to increase hospital capacity. A training programme in maxillofacial surgery was organized by the ICRC for four Ethiopian surgeons working at the Armed Forces General Hospital in Addis Ababa.

ICRC support for the Ethiopian Red Cross Society's ambulance services included the repair and complete maintenance of ten ambulances in the ICRC workshop in Addis Ababa. In addition, the ICRC upgraded the National Society's ambulance fleet in Tigray after its return to the state, and donated six new ambulances, four of which were earmarked for conflict response in Tigray. Construction work started on a Red Cross workshop to enable the Tigray branch to maintain its ambulance fleet unaided.

Under a tripartite assistance agreement reached between the Armed Forces General Hospital, the Addis Ababa branch of the Ethiopian Red Cross and the ICRC, two Red Cross ambulances and their drivers, financed by the ICRC, were loaned to the hospital for the purpose of transporting wounded soldiers from airstrips in and around the capital to the hospital for surgical treatment.

Following the resumption of ICRC activities in March in Somali National Regional State,<sup>45</sup> the main problems addressed by the ICRC in the state's Afder zone included the nomadic population's lack of access to health services and the threat to young children and pregnant women of the most prevalent diseases in the region – malaria and diarrhoea. Efforts were also made to combat the lack of veterinary services by increasing knowledge of the main livestock diseases and controlling

<sup>45</sup> The ICRC had withdrawn its expatriate staff from Somali National Regional State in June 1998, following the abduction of one of its teams. For more information, see the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 105.



*integrated health  
and veterinary projects*

*rehabilitation of amputees*

*focus on emergency preparedness*

*promoting international  
humanitarian law*

the prevalence of the tsetse fly. In addition, shallow wells were rehabilitated and steps were taken to improve the quantity and quality of the water available in nomadic areas for both human and animal consumption. All activities were based on the principle of community involvement and participation.

In October 1998, the ICRC launched a project in Gode with a view to increasing the town's water supplies by 50% without consuming additional fuel. This was achieved by renovating a 500,000-litre reservoir, improving the river catchment system and repairing a number of electromechanical components. The work, undertaken in close cooperation with the regional water authorities, included the provision of safe water to schools, prisons and Gode hospital.

The prosthetic/orthotic centre in Addis Ababa continued to be used by the ICRC and the Special Fund for the Disabled as a regional centre for Africa and the Middle East. Prosthetic components were produced for use principally in prosthetic/orthotic centres throughout these regions, but consignments were also shipped to Asia and Europe. Technicians from countries as far afield as Norway and Zimbabwe received training at the centre.

The government-run centres of Mekele (Tigray region) and Harar received ICRC assistance in the form of staff training, repairs/renovations to premises and deliveries of prosthetic/orthotic components.

ICRC cooperation with the Ethiopian Red Cross focused on the National Society's emergency preparedness in relation to the international conflict and support for cooperation activities conducted in connection with the internal situation. Many ICRC activities in the field were carried out with the support of Ethiopian Red Cross staff.

The ICRC continued to work together with both the Ethiopian Red Cross Society and the Federation to improve the National Society's ability to provide services to the most vulnerable at community level. Much emphasis was placed on emergency preparedness and on regular cooperation activities in the areas of tracing, dissemination, first aid and the development of branches in potential conflict zones.

The ICRC fostered contacts with regional and federal government authorities to increase understanding of the ICRC's work and international humanitarian law. Delegates promoted the incorporation of the law of armed conflict into the teaching curricula of the Ethiopian Defence Forces.

The ICRC sponsored the attendance by the Head of the Federal Police Training College at a two-week "pool officer" training course in Geneva on international humanitarian law/human rights and good policing. In turn, he facilitated a five-day ICRC training course on this subject for police trainers held in Ethiopia in May. A half-day dissemination session at the Training College was also organized for police cadets.

Dissemination sessions organized jointly with the Ethiopian Red Cross Society were held for government officials and religious and community leaders in Asebe Teferi, Dire Dawa, Harar, Metu and in the Ogaden region. The main topics discussed were the ICRC's activities in Ethiopia and the basic tenets of international humanitarian law.

The State-run Civil Service College incorporated a 28-hour humanitarian law course into the Law Faculty's curriculum for second-year law students beginning their

## *ICRC mission to the OAU*

academic year in 1999/2000. The College is the first in Ethiopia to include a specialized course on humanitarian law in its official teaching programme.

The delegation sponsored and worked on the translation of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols into Amharic. In October, as a result of the ICRC's efforts and those of the Legal Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ethiopian authorities formally transmitted these translations to the Swiss Federal Council, depositary of the Conventions.

The ICRC continued to support the work of the interministerial committee for the development and implementation of international humanitarian law and made a sustained effort to encourage the government to ratify the Ottawa landmines treaty and the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons.

The ICRC's permanent mission to the OAU focused on gaining broad insight into the political scene in Africa and on building strong relations with the institutions of and the ambassadors accredited to the OAU, ECA,\* UN agencies, African regional organizations such as the SADC and ECOWAS, and NGOs. The ICRC's objective was to encourage greater recognition and wider application of international humanitarian law throughout Africa and to raise awareness of the ICRC's role and worldwide activities.

\* ECA: UN Economic Commission for Africa



## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- visited some 570 Eritrean POWs and 1,350 civilian internees, providing them with material assistance and hygiene, educational and recreational items, and delivering basic medical supplies to the medical facilities in the internment camps in which they were being held;
- visited approximately 9,100 detainees held in connection with the change of government in 1991 or for State security reasons in 88 places of detention and where necessary provided them with basic medical supplies, blankets, hygiene and recreational items;
- carried out water-supply and sanitation improvements in 26 places of detention;
- held 3 workshops for prison employees on prison health issues;
- continued to monitor 3 trials in Addis Ababa of detainees accused of committing crimes during the previous regime;
- made formal representations on behalf of security detainees who had spent between 2 and 6 years in detention without a court appearance or without charges being filed against them;



- ensured the safe passage across the front lines of Eritrean and Ethiopian civilians expelled or returning voluntarily to their respective country of origin;



- exchanged 17,994 Red Cross messages between civilian internees held in Ethiopia and their families in Eritrea or third countries;
- in cooperation with the Ethiopian Red Cross, handled 3,065 Red Cross messages to allow people unable to contact their families as a consequence of the international armed conflict to inform relatives of their whereabouts and welfare;
- in cooperation with the Ethiopian Red Cross, handled 4,660 Red Cross messages in order to maintain or restore family links for Ethiopian refugees outside the country and for refugees from neighbouring countries settled in Ethiopia;
- exchanged 2,046 Red Cross messages between people detained under the responsibility of the civilian authorities and their families;
- in cooperation with the respective Red Cross Societies, reunited 2 families who had been separated as a consequence of the international armed conflict;



- in cooperation with the Ethiopian Red Cross, provided assistance for displaced people living in camps in Tigray, distributing food, tents, tarpaulins, blankets, jerrycans and bars of soap;





- in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, provided hospitals with medical supplies/equipment and surgical instruments; pre-positioned medical stocks in warehouses and an additional back-up stock in Addis Ababa for over 1,000 war-wounded; and held war-surgery seminars for surgeons of the Armed Forces General Hospital and field hospitals;
- in rural areas of Somali National Regional State, held a course for nomads on drug treatment for their livestock;
- supplied measles vaccines to health authorities in Somali National Regional State;



- held courses in polypropylene technology for 41 prosthetic/orthotic technicians at the training centre in Addis Ababa, and carried out repairs and renovation work to the premises;
- supplied components and material for prosthetic/orthotic projects worldwide;



- started a water-supply project in Gode town;
- provided material and technical assistance to repair hand-pumps, clean and rehabilitate wells and construct rainwater-harvesting dams for the pastoral population and their livestock in the Afder zone (Somali National Regional State);



- helped to maintain and strengthen the Ethiopian Red Cross Society's regional branches and their operational capacity, especially in areas affected by conflict;
- worked with the Federation to improve the ability of the Ethiopian Red Cross to provide services to the most vulnerable at the community level;
- helped the National Society to build its capacity in the areas of emergency preparedness, first aid, tracing and dissemination;
- conducted regional workshops to train National Society dissemination officers, tracing volunteers and Red Cross youth leaders;



- fostered contacts with regional and federal government authorities to further understanding of the ICRC's work and humanitarian law;
- promoted the incorporation of the law of armed conflict into the teaching curricula of the Ethiopian Defence Forces;
- held seminars for officers and cadets from the Ethiopian Police Force, police instructors, students and government officials to present the role of the ICRC and the Movement and the provisions of humanitarian law.



## SOMALIA

### PROTECTION

1,262,085

### ASSISTANCE

16,079,733

### PREVENTIVE ACTION

675,996

### COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

421,437

### OVERHEADS

1,169,727

### GENERAL

578,509

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 20,187,487**



⊕ (ICRC delegation in Nairobi)

⊕ SRCS/ICRC hospital

With the fall of Siad Barre's regime in 1991 and the subsequent collapse of central government, Somalia fell prey to anarchy, with a host of ever-fragmenting clans and factions jostling for power. Development and recovery efforts were seriously impaired by the prevalence of violence and lawlessness, leaving the population in a precarious, volatile and vulnerable environment dogged by underdevelopment and adverse weather conditions.

Peace initiatives at the international, regional and local levels systematically failed to find common ground between the different groups. The low-intensity conflict in central-southern Somalia dragged on, without any foreseeable political solution.

Heavy fighting in Mogadishu North in March brought about the collapse of the Benadir administration; together with the disbanding of the newly created unified police force, this marked a fresh setback for the formation of a central government and seriously undermined the authority of the major warlords and their clan factions. In June, the town of Baidoa, controlled by the SNA,\* was taken by the RRA.\* In the

\* SNA: Somalia National Alliance

\* RRA: Rahanwein Resistance Army

*disparities between  
north and south*

*fewer humanitarian players*

*emergency and  
medium-term response*

same month the port city of Kismayo was seized by a coalition of SNF\* and SNA forces. Despite efforts to re-establish law and order through Sharia courts in Mogadishu and the south, opposition from warlords resulted in intermittent clashes.

Elsewhere, such as in the north-eastern Puntland state and Somaliland, relative peace and stability prevailed, although occasional fighting did break out in the regions of Sool and Sanaag. Somaliland continued to work on its reconstruction and development, a move started in 1991 with its secession and self-proclaimed independence.

In the north, communities are less fragmented along ethnic lines than elsewhere in the country. A consensus is therefore easier to achieve. The subsequent political stability encouraged the international community to invest in the region, which started on the road to recovery.

In central and certain southern regions stability is enhanced when one clan alone has political and military control. However, a large part of the south continued to be affected by the absence of legitimate authorities, the lack of social and public infrastructure and services, clashes, natural disasters and chronically depleted local resources. These elements all put an additional strain on the already fragile coping mechanisms.

The number of humanitarian workers operating in Somalia fell drastically after 1998 owing to the increasingly tense security situation. Indeed, the hostage crisis of April 1998 prompted most other humanitarian organizations to suspend or limit their operations throughout the country.<sup>46</sup> In 1999, humanitarian workers were the victims of numerous acts of violence and threats. Striking a balance between making an impact in humanitarian terms (measured by evaluating and monitoring the assistance provided) and the inevitable risks run by humanitarian workers when on Somali territory remained a dilemma.

The ICRC Somalia delegation was therefore still based in Nairobi, Kenya, with expatriates and field officers conducting regular and frequent trips to all parts of Somalia. They carried out surveys and monitoring activities, ensured the smooth running of programmes and maintained vital contacts. Most ICRC activities were implemented countrywide via the Somali Red Crescent Society - the only Somali structure which could still claim a degree of national representation - and ICRC Somali staff.

The main thrust of the ICRC's work remained an emergency response to the direct effects of conflict combined with natural disasters. Such activities included medical assistance to the war-wounded, dealing with recurring basic health care problems, water distribution, emergency repairs to boreholes in drought-stricken areas in central Somalia and the provision of material assistance. The delegation also adopted a medium-term approach designed to maintain local coping mechanisms and preserve the basic living conditions of specific target groups, such as women and children.

In southern Somalia, the poor climatic conditions severely affected the coping mechanisms of farmers in rain-fed areas and of nomads directly affected by the low level of precipitation over the last four rainy seasons. A marked depreciation of the shilling and a substantial increase in the price of imported food and commodities further eroded the purchasing power of the population. Access of the most vulnerable groups to basic foodstuffs became a matter of grave concern.

\* SNF: Somali National Front

<sup>46</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 111.



## *dire food situation in the south*

To combat any nutritional decline, the ICRC distributed food and material assistance to people affected by fighting and/or natural disaster. The delegation also distributed seed so as to enable the farming community and some nomads to reinforce the local coping mechanisms which had been debilitated as a result of the conflict.

Those displaced by the fighting in southern Somalia (mainly Lower and Middle Juba and Lower and Middle Shebele), including some 1,400 families who were expelled from Kenya in June, received ICRC material assistance. The fall of Kismayo and fighting in the district between SPM\* militiamen and those of the SNF/SNA coalition triggered a large population movement, mainly towards the Kenyan border. This border crossing was subsequently closed and access to the whole western part of Lower Juba became problematic. In late September, the ICRC gained access to the area from inside Somalia and distributed non-food items to displaced families coming from Kismayo and its environs.

When the "gu" and "deyr" rains resulted in flooding along the main rivers in Somalia, the ICRC provided the affected families with shelter and cooking material, as well as seeds to help prevent another crop failure. Sandbags were also distributed to the local communities along the Juba and Shebele rivers to prevent the flooding of their fields.

Foodstuffs and seed were supplied to over 60,000 families displaced by the fighting in southern and central Somalia. Their access to food had been hampered by poor security conditions, the families' low purchasing power and the rise in staple food prices caused by the failed "gu" harvest. Non-food supplies consisting primarily of shelter and cooking items were handed out to over 20,000 families in Hiran, Lower and Middle Juba, Lower Shebele and the Somali capital, Mogadishu.

During the first three months of 1999, a drought in the central regions of Galgudud, Hiran, Mudug and Nugal prompted the ICRC to transport water in by truck. Once the initial emergency had been contained, the ICRC adopted a long-term approach founded on basic rehabilitation, including repairs to and the supply of generators, pumps and spare parts for boreholes and underground reservoirs. Whenever possible, the ICRC involved local communities in the rehabilitation of water points, reservoirs, boreholes and hand-dug wells with a view to ensuring a regular and safe supply of water for human consumption and for livestock.

Without outside humanitarian assistance, medical facilities could not provide the necessary treatment for the war-wounded and the resident and displaced civilian population. In 1999 as in the past, the ICRC therefore provided regular support to hospitals. The 90-bed Keysaney hospital in Mogadishu North, which has received ICRC assistance since 1991, was often full to overflowing, with 70 % of patients being war-wounded from various parts of the country. Following the rapid collapse of the Benadir administration in March 1999, government support to the Medina Hospital in Mogadishu South ceased. The ICRC therefore increased its supplies to the health facility's surgical unit. To ensure the hospital's smooth running, the ICRC carried out major rehabilitation work to its water distribution network, its electricity supply and its buildings. In November, the ICRC conducted an evaluation of the hospital's situation in view of further steps to be taken in 2000.

\* SPM: Somali Patriotic Movement

## *provision of safe and sufficient water supplies*

## *ICRC assistance to hospitals*



*outpatient departments and  
mother and child health care*

*cholera outbreak*

*essential tracing services*

*cooperation with the Somali Red  
Crescent*

*traditional values  
and humanitarian rules*

Regular or ad hoc support was given to the Medina health post, which functioned as a first-aid post, the surgical departments of Baidoa and Galkayo hospitals, and to private hospitals confronted by an influx of war-wounded (such as Luq hospital). Medical supplies were also furnished to health posts in Lower Juba and Lower Shebele which regularly treated war casualties.

With no national or regional health systems up and running, the civilian population in rural or conflict-stricken areas had little or no access to health care. To ensure that vulnerable groups in conflict zones received basic medical treatment, the ICRC supported outpatient clinics and mother and child health care centres run by the Somali Red Crescent Society in Galgudud, Hiran and Lower Juba. In April, the ICRC also took over the running of six clinics in Kismayo previously supported by the Federation.

An emergency stock of oral rehydration salts for a possible cholera outbreak was permanently positioned at Mogadishu South and made available to other parts of Somalia, such as the Lower Juba and Marere regions, where two outbreaks of watery diarrhoea occurred. While the disease was still reaching epidemic proportions, the ICRC handed over supplies on a weekly basis to the Benadir Cholera Therapeutic Centre in Mogadishu South. The ICRC also furnished supplies to the Somali Red Crescent's four oral rehydration dispensing centres in Mogadishu South, where cholera was most prevalent. Assistance took the form of regular supplies of drugs, including antibiotics and infusions, and improvements made to the centres' sanitation facilities. On average, 1,000 patients per month (mostly displaced people) received treatment against cholera. Thanks to the Somali Red Crescent's support, the ICRC also conducted educational and preventive activities in areas where cholera had hit or where it could be expected according to the pattern witnessed in previous years.

With thousands of Somalis still displaced within their homeland or scattered throughout the world, the ICRC's tracing programme remained one of the largest and most invaluable services rendered in a country whose centralized postal system collapsed years ago. Services were hampered, however, owing to security problems, particularly in the Kismayo area. The ICRC had handed over responsibility for the tracing service to the Somali Red Crescent in October 1998, but it remained on hand throughout the year to provide technical and financial support as needed.

Working in close coordination with the Federation, the ICRC assisted the Somali Red Crescent in the implementation of its primary health care programmes and supervised Somali health education teams providing training for traditional birth attendants and community health workers from outlying villages. The delegation also provided appropriate support for the Red Crescent's tracing, dissemination and emergency-preparedness programmes.

The ICRC kept up its efforts to promote respect for humanitarian rules by drawing parallels with Somalia's nomadic tradition and oral culture. A series of short plays ("googoos") were aired on the BBC Somali Service and local radio stations. These combine humour, sketches and music and cover such issues as women and war, lack of freedom of movement, aid and aid dependency. The ICRC also pursued its dissemination strategy aimed at illustrating the similarities between local traditions of warfare and the basic humanitarian rules contained in the Geneva Conventions.



Delegates and field staff took every opportunity to increase awareness of matters relating to protection of the civilian population through contact with the authorities, militias and elders.

Somalia was one of the contexts chosen for the ICRC's "People on War" project.<sup>47</sup> On the basis of 1,000 questionnaires and in-depth interviews, the Somali people were asked to share their personal experiences of conflict and their views on respect for humanitarian rules in time of war.

<sup>47</sup> See pp. 348-350.

## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- backed the Somali Red Crescent Society's efforts to handle 22,518 Red Cross messages for members of dispersed families in Somalia and abroad;
- opened 285 tracing cases and solved 185;
- broadcast the names of 5,112 Somalis on the BBC Somali Service in Nairobi on behalf of families trying to locate missing relatives;
- assisted, in its capacity as a neutral intermediary, in the exchange of prisoners captured by the SPM and the SNF/SNA;



- initiated a seed distribution programme targeting farming families in the Gedo, Lower and Middle Juba, Hiran, Bay, Bakol and Lower and Middle Shabele regions, distributing 982 tonnes of seed;
- distributed 1,449 tonnes of food and 478 tonnes of material assistance to people affected by fighting or natural disaster in the Gedo, Lower and Middle Juba, Lower and Middle Shabelle, Hiran, Bakol and Bay regions;
- provided sandbags to farmers along the Juba and Shabelle rivers to fill gaps in the flood protection system;



- fully supported Keysaney hospital in Mogadishu North, run by the Somali Red Crescent in cooperation with the ICRC, by supplying medicines, surgical materials, cleaning products and fuel and paying running costs and the salaries of staff;
- provided regular support to health facilities treating war casualties and distributed food as necessary (Baidoa, Galkayo and Medina in Mogadishu South), channelling supplies through the Somali Red Crescent;
- furnished 6 health facilities treating the war-wounded in Lower Juba and Lower Shebele with ad hoc medical assistance comprising dressing, dispensary and paediatric kits;
- pre-positioned medical stocks in Mogadishu South to optimize assistance to the war-wounded;
- supported 11 outpatient clinics run by the Somali Red Crescent Society, which performed consultations in Hiran, Galgudud and Lower Juba, and took over the running of 6 such clinics in Kismayo previously supported by the Federation;
- pre-positioned an emergency stock of oral rehydration salts in Mogadishu South for a possible cholera outbreak;
- at the height of the cholera epidemic, handed over supplies on a weekly basis to the Benadir Cholera Therapeutic Centre in Mogadishu South;
- provided essential assistance and conducted educational and preventive activities in areas where cholera had hit or where it could be expected according to the pattern witnessed in previous years;



- supplied water to help combat the serious water shortage in the Hiran, Mudug, Nugal and Galgudud regions;
- helped rehabilitate water points, reservoirs, boreholes and hand-dug wells throughout Somalia;



- in coordination with the Federation, assisted the Somali Red Crescent in the implementation of its primary health care programmes by training medical personnel, building or rehabilitating dispensaries and furnishing medical supplies;
- supervised 8 Somali health education teams, in coordination with the Federation, which organized training sessions for traditional birth attendants and community health workers from outlying villages;



- continued its programmes for young people and militia members, using plays, comic strips and video cassettes adapted to the Somali culture to encourage them to abide by certain minimum standards of behaviour in the conduct of hostilities;
- took every opportunity to increase awareness among the authorities, militias and elders of matters relating to protection of the civilian population;
- informed a variety of target groups about its activities in Somalia through publications, press releases and regular contact with the media.



## SUDAN

### PROTECTION

1,138,983

### ASSISTANCE

34,224,717

### PREVENTIVE ACTION

561,979

### COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

1,507,624

### OVERHEADS

2,445,431

### GENERAL

2,627,341

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 42,506,075**



ICRC delegation ICRC sub-delegation ICRC office ICRC hospital Prosthetic/orthotic centre/workshop

Throughout 1999, internal conflict and unrest persisted across large areas of Sudan. Sporadic military operations were reported in southern and eastern Sudan: in the oil-rich areas of Unity State (western Upper Nile), in the southern Blue Nile region, in and around Kassala and in the Nuba mountains. The presence of the oil pipeline running from Unity State (Upper Nile region) towards Port Sudan served to heighten tension, resulting in frequent inter-factional fighting and subsequent population displacements, particularly in Unity State. The increasing splintering of factions and shifting of alliances made it extremely difficult to predict future developments on Sudanese territory.

A fragile cease-fire, brokered in 1998 between the government and the SPLM/A,\* was extended throughout the year to enable vital humanitarian activities to continue in the Bahr al-Ghazal and the western and central Upper Nile regions. At year's end a negotiated settlement to the fighting between the Sudanese government and the SPLM/A on the one hand, and the government and the NDA\* on the other, remained beyond reach.

\* SPLM/A: Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army

\* NDA: National Democratic Alliance, an umbrella group of northern opposition forces including the SPLA

*security incident*

*the situation of the resident  
and displaced populations*

*ICRC's emergency response*

*treating the war-wounded*

In December, the president of Sudan dissolved Parliament and declared a three-month state of emergency. By the end of the year all federal and national ministers and governors had been asked to resign.

On the international level, normal diplomatic ties were established with Egypt and Ethiopia. An agreement aimed at normalizing relations between Sudan and Uganda was signed in December. This included provisions for the repatriation of Sudanese POWs.

The ICRC's operation in Sudan was one of the organization's largest in Africa. Activities focused on assisting and protecting internally displaced people and residents seriously affected by the 16-year conflict, supporting the war-wounded and civilians to ensure that they received adequate surgical treatment and basic health care, and monitoring the situation of people deprived of their freedom.

In February, two ICRC expatriates, two Sudanese Red Crescent staff and three government officials strayed onto SPLA-held territory and were subsequently detained. Although the two ICRC expatriates were released and one Red Crescent employee managed to escape, the other member of the National Society and the three government officials died. The ICRC strongly voiced its concerns about the outcome of this incident and asked for a full inquiry to shed light on the events.

Low levels of development in tandem with persistent armed conflict often put most southern Sudanese living in the rural, isolated and war-torn parts of the country in a precarious situation. The conflict routinely prevented farmers from working their fields and subsequently from buying essential supplies. Access to safe drinking water and medical services ranged from poor to non-existent in some parts. Moreover, population movements in the western Upper Nile/Unity State put additional strain on a fragile economy and challenged the availability of natural resources. Traditional coping mechanisms were overwhelmed whenever there was an influx of civilians fleeing the fighting.

In view of the precarious situation in Sudan, a country not only plagued by war but also by natural disasters, the ICRC placed considerable emphasis on emergency preparedness. The delegation closely monitored changes in the humanitarian environment and remained at the ready to provide the appropriate swift response. Stocks of emergency non-food kits were pre-positioned in government-held areas in the north and in southern Sudan. These were distributed as needs arose and were regularly replenished. Assistance took the form of medical evacuations of the wounded, both civilian and military, support to local health facilities for the treatment of war casualties, water and sanitation programmes aimed at ensuring access to safe drinking water and preventing the spread of water-borne diseases, and distributions of material assistance, fishing equipment and seeds as appropriate.

The ICRC provided comprehensive care for surgical emergencies and the war-wounded at its two referral hospitals: the 560-bed Lopiding surgical hospital in Lokichokio (northern Kenya) and the government-run Juba Teaching Hospital. Patients were evacuated from southern Sudan to Lopiding and subsequently repatriated by ICRC aircraft following their treatment and convalescence. Training in surgery and preventive health, such as mother and child health care, was given by experienced ICRC personnel to doctors and nurses from the surrounding area and from southern Sudan.



*rehabilitation for the war-disabled*

*insufficient medical care  
for civilians*

*water and habitat*

Repairs and improvements were made to the Juba Teaching Hospital, which offered comprehensive surgical care to civilians and the war-wounded. The ICRC delivered medical items on a regular basis to the hospital's surgical wards and pharmacy, mainly drugs and surgical instruments. The Sudanese Red Crescent operated the sewage truck donated by the ICRC to evacuate the hospital's sewage effluent. The ICRC provided food rations to government employees as a work incentive, and an ICRC surgical team worked in the hospital, which served a population of 150,000, and provided training for in-house doctors and those from the surrounding area.

In May, the ICRC signed a cooperation agreement concerning support for the National Centre for Prostheses and Orthoses in Khartoum with the Ministries of Social Planning and of Defence. The ICRC maintained a permanent presence in the centre, paid for repairs and improvements made to the building and equipment, supervised the transport and accommodation of patients coming from outside the city and offered training to employees. The centre served amputees and the disabled coming from government-controlled areas. The prosthetic/orthotic workshop in Lopiding hospital provided prostheses and orthoses for amputees from rebel-held southern Sudan.

The conflict in Sudan has had a particularly damaging effect on medical infrastructure in government- and opposition-held areas. Those health facilities still functioning were all too often inadequate, with damaged surgical structures frequently run by inexperienced medical staff. The delegation's medium-term, "integrated" approach combined preventive and curative medical care. This included vaccination programmes, health education and veterinary projects. The ICRC provided primary health care clinics, such as those in Yirol, Juba, Chelkou, Raja and Wau, health posts and dispensaries with regular supplies in order to improve basic health care. Training and preventive measures were an important component of ICRC medical activities. Health delegates focused on health education, vaccinations, mother and child care, professional training and monitoring activities.

Water and sanitation work was carried out to provide access to safe drinking water and to prevent disease. In many areas, fighting and neglect have either partially or completely destroyed water-supply and sanitation systems. The ICRC was actively involved in drilling boreholes, rehabilitating shallow wells, increasing water-storage capacities, repairing sewage systems and constructing latrines in Bentiu, Yirol, Chelkou, Juba and Wau. Local people were also trained by ICRC engineers in bore-hole drilling, rehabilitating hand-dug wells, the installation of hand pumps and hygiene awareness.

The unstable security situation in Unity State compelled ICRC expatriates to leave Bentiu in June. Nevertheless, delegates returned on a regular basis to ensure that the most essential services remained operational, particularly the production of safe drinking water.

The drilling of a deep well to supply water to several public taps in the El Salam camp for displaced people in Khartoum was handed over to the Sudanese Red Crescent. This was part of a concerted effort by Care International, the Federation, the National Society and others to replace the uneconomic tanker-truck service in the El Salam and El Bashir camps.

*encouraging self-sufficiency*

*visits to detainees*

*one of the largest Red Cross  
message networks*

*Sudanese Red Crescent*

In 1998, famine swept across huge areas of southern Sudan. Operation Lifeline Sudan<sup>48</sup> and organizations such as the ICRC made a concerted effort to bring down the mortality rate among the displaced by rapidly sending in relief supplies and launching feeding programmes. The situation of those affected by the famine improved steadily, so that in 1999 the ICRC was able to focus its attention on post-emergency and rehabilitation activities. These consisted chiefly of a large-scale seeds and tools programme to help internally displaced people and residents re-establish their self-sufficiency and reduce their need for direct assistance. Some 60,000 households (around 300,000 people) in Juba, Wau, Bahr al-Ghazal and the western Upper Nile were targeted to receive crop seed and essential farming implements. Distributions began in March so they could be completed before the onset of the rainy season.

In November, the Nuers from western Upper Nile traditionally move to the near-by swamps with their cattle. As fish is the staple food until the next rains, the ICRC distributed hooks and twine to ensure the population had an adequate diet. Fishing equipment and mosquito nets were also distributed to 6,000 displaced and resident households in the region, and in Wau and Juba.

Delegates conducted visits to detainees held by the SPLM/A in detention camps in southern and eastern Sudan. Owing to problems of direct access partly arising from security constraints, not all visits could be carried out in a timely fashion.

In December, the ICRC visited detainees in southern Blue Nile for the first time. Visits to the detention centre were carried out according to the ICRC's standard procedures.

A detainee released by the SPLA after ten years in captivity was handed over by the SPLM to the ICRC. He was then flown from Lokichokio to Khartoum in an ICRC aircraft and placed in the hands of representatives of the Sudanese government.

In 1999, some 4 million Sudanese were internally displaced, living in camps or as residents in other parts of the country. Some 200,000 refugees from neighbouring countries had sought shelter in Sudan while more than 300,000 Sudanese refugees resided outside the country. In the absence of any postal services or telecommunications, Red Cross messages were the only means by which family members could remain in contact. With a monthly average of 8,000 messages exchanged, the Red Cross message network in Sudan remained one of the largest in the world.

Two tracing programmes were broadcast on Radio Omdurman and Unity Service, transmitting information about the ICRC/Red Crescent tracing programmes in the various languages spoken in Sudan.

Many tracing activities in government-controlled areas were carried out in close cooperation with the Sudanese Red Crescent Society.

Local branches of the Sudanese Red Crescent played a significant role in all aspects of the ICRC's work in government-controlled areas. The ICRC continued to support the Sudanese Red Crescent and its structures at both headquarters and branch level. It gave regular financial and logistical support to all five branches in southern Sudan and to the Kassala and Ed Damazin branches in the north-east.

<sup>48</sup> A massive relief operation carried out by a consortium of UN agencies and 42 NGOs.



## *humanitarian law courses for warring parties*

In April, a special six-day training workshop was held in Khartoum for information and dissemination officers from 21 Red Crescent branches. Courses highlighting the ICRC's role and mandate were also organized for ICRC and Red Crescent staff members in Khartoum, Juba, Wau and Bentiu. Support to the branches included the preparation, implementation, supervision and financing of community-based first-aid training courses held in Wau, Raja, Juba and Malakal for Red Crescent volunteers.

The ICRC pursued its efforts to promote the systematic inclusion of humanitarian law in training programmes for the armed forces. Training programmes for soldiers/non-commissioned officers, junior and senior officers were revised to incorporate the main provisions of humanitarian law.

Ad hoc sessions and training courses were organized for arms bearers from the main parties to the conflict. These included a three-day course held for the first time since 1996 for SPLA commanders in Bahr al-Ghazal and two two-day courses for SPLA officers. For the first time ever, the ICRC was able to conduct a two-day session for company commanders and non-commissioned officers of the Sudanese armed forces at the government's Jebeid Infantry School. Also for the first time, the ICRC addressed brigadiers at the military academy in Khartoum and police colonels at the police academy. The third basic course on the law of armed conflict for military instructors took place at the Command and Staff College. This was followed by the first advanced course for military instructors.

Other sessions targeted the Popular Defence Forces (government-supported elements), the Southern Sudan Defence Forces (government allies) and the Unified Police Forces in places like Wau, Bentiu and Khartoum.

The first eight-hour module on humanitarian law was held as part of a Masters in Law course on the international protection of the individual.

## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- visited 299 detainees held by the SPLA in 5 detention camps;
- distributed high-protein biscuits, material assistance in the form of soap, clothing, cooking sets, seeds and recreational items, and dressing kits and basic drugs for the detention centres' health facilities;
- assessed the detainees' access to water and distributed purifying tablets as necessary;
- collected and distributed 2,286 Red Cross messages for detainees and their next-of-kin;



- in close cooperation with the Sudanese Red Crescent's network of volunteers and others, exchanged 92,921 Red Cross messages between displaced people, refugees and their families abroad;
- reunited 5 unaccompanied children with their families in Sudan;
- continued to register and monitor the cases of children stranded in Wau since the 1998 famine;



- implemented a major seed and tool programme for some 60,000 families affected by the conflict in southern Sudan;
- distributed 564 tonnes of food and 1,056 tonnes of other assistance to the most vulnerable among the displaced people and residents in conflict areas;
- following the floods in central and northern Sudan which affected over 50,000 people, donated shelter material and blankets to the Sudanese Red Crescent operation for distribution to the neediest inhabitants in Dongola and Juba;



- undertook long-term integrated projects focusing on health, water supply and sanitation and food security in Wau, Juba, Bentiu, Chelkou and Yirol;
- provided support for 7 health centres around Raja in a project delegated to the German Red Cross and in cooperation with the Sudanese Red Crescent;
- supervised and trained local medical staff, provided public health care materials and conducted vaccination campaigns;
- ran the ICRC's Lopiding surgical hospital in Lokichokio (Kenya), which admitted a monthly average of 218 patients from southern Sudan (a total of 2,613 in 1999), many of whom were evacuated by ICRC plane and repatriated following treatment;
- organized a workshop on mother and child health care in Lokichokio for expatriate and local midwives; held a general workshop on primary health care, including mother and child health care, at the hospital for all ICRC health delegates, water and sanitation engineers, agronomists and nutritionists;
- continued to supply essential drugs to Juba Teaching Hospital; admitted and treated 2,718 surgical patients, including 159 war-wounded; provided medical staff with food for work; furnished the services of an expatriate surgical team and carried out construction work on the premises;
- provided medical and surgical supplies to health facilities (clinics or hospitals in Wau, Raja, Ed Damazin, Kassala, Bentiu and Gedaref) on an ad hoc basis;



- provided medicines and medical supplies to military and civilian hospitals and health dispensaries in camps for displaced people in Kassala (north-eastern Sudan) in cooperation with the Sudanese Red Crescent;
- provided assistance to the Yirrol primary health care centre and trained nurses and midwives in primary health care and mother and child health;
- supplied primary health care clinics in Juba with medicines, medical equipment and tools and trained medical staff;



- provided support to the National Centre for Prostheses and Orthoses (Khartoum), which manufactured 531 prostheses and 169 orthoses for 360 patients;
- produced 390 prostheses and 153 orthoses at the prosthetic/orthotic workshop in Lopiding surgical hospital for 265 patients;



- repaired and improved sewage systems and provided access to clean water for hospital patients, displaced people and residents, covering a total of 100,000 people throughout Sudan;
- provided drinking water to people displaced or otherwise affected by the conflict in Sudan and ensured that the inhabitants of Lokichokio had an adequate supply of water during the dry season by maintaining the existing water system;



- provided full support to 5 Sudanese Red Crescent branches in the south (Raja, Wau, Bentiu, Malakal and Juba) and structural and ad hoc support to 2 branches in eastern Sudan (Kassala and Ed Damazin);
- distributed emergency assistance in cooperation with Sudanese Red Crescent branches in the conflict zones in the south and north-east;
- through the Sudanese Red Crescent, distributed food supplies and soap to patients from Sabbah Children's Hospital and children from the Juba orphanage;
- signed a 2-month loan agreement with the Sudanese Red Crescent for a tanker-truck to transport safe drinking water to the flood victims in Dongola and the surrounding area;



- conducted dissemination sessions for military officers (government and SPLA), security officers, police officers, Sudanese Red Crescent volunteers and university students;
- conducted regular dissemination sessions for patients at the ICRC hospital in Lokichokio, focusing on the Movement and the law of armed conflict.

## UGANDA



During the year under review, Uganda remained a key player in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa regions. It continued to be involved in the conflict in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo, backing armed opposition groups fighting the Congolese government.

In December, a peace agreement was signed by the Ugandan and Sudanese governments. Brokered by the Carter Center in Nairobi, the agreement includes provisions for the repatriation of Sudanese POWs, the reunification of abducted children with their families and pledges to stop supporting each other's armed opposition groups. Just before the agreement was signed, the Ugandan Parliament approved an Amnesty Law which offered all armed opposition groups in and outside the country six months to put an end to their armed opposition "without fear of prosecution".

The plight of Ugandans living in the West Nile region improved in 1999 as a result of peace negotiations between the government and the UNRF II.\* Most displaced people from the north-west were able to return to their homes and take steps towards resuming a normal life. Although the security situation was less acute in

\* UNRF II: Uganda National Rescue Front II



*Acholiland, northern Uganda*

*dire needs in the south-west*

*emergency assistance*

Acholiland, in northern Uganda, than in previous years, tension mounted at year's end. Armed opposition groups remained active in the south-west, where humanitarian practitioners were often unable to reach the destitute resident and displaced populations because of the lack of security guarantees. The Ugandan capital, for its part, again fell victim to violence when it was rocked by a series of bomb blasts.

The security situation in Acholiland started improving in February and became increasingly stable up until the very last week of the year. Displaced people living in protected camps, set up by the government to regroup the rural population around trading centres protected by the army, enjoyed increased freedom of movement, had regular access to larger tracts of land and were able to plant their seeds at the start of the rainy season. Prospects for the approximately 320,000 displaced people living in various camps in Gulu and Kitgum districts therefore steadily brightened. At the end of December, however, infiltrations by the LRA\* were again reported, upsetting the calm.

In November 1998, the ICRC had been forced to suspend most of its humanitarian operations and all field movements in the south-west owing to the lack of security guarantees from all parties.<sup>49</sup> However, in the light of the tremendous needs of the displaced population and after having obtained the necessary security guarantees, the ICRC resumed its activities in May. The following month it opened an office in Bundibugyo to coordinate its activities in the region. In December, however, the situation deteriorated with an upsurge in the activities of armed opposition groups (ADF\*), again forcing the ICRC to evacuate its team for want of security guarantees from all parties to the conflict.

The ongoing conflict between the ADF and the UPDF\* troops in the south-west led to the displacement of some 150,000 civilians who sought refuge in 50-odd camps. Living conditions were difficult, with most people lacking appropriate shelter, health facilities and sanitation infrastructure. Such large-scale population movements to camps also affected access to food. The arrival of different groups of Congolese refugees put an additional strain on the scant resources. Basic health care was also lacking in the region for both the resident and displaced populations.

After receiving the necessary security guarantees, the ICRC provided emergency assistance to meet the most urgent shelter and hygiene needs. In Kasese district, the combined effects of a serious drought and a sharp increase in the number of displaced persons put an unbearable strain on resources. The ICRC began food distributions in September to stem the tide of malnutrition and encouraged the displaced and resident populations to use the seeds it had provided for planting. Non-food assistance included the distribution of tools, soap, blankets, tarpaulins and jerrycans. As the harvest was satisfactory, the ICRC was able to suspend its food distributions in early December.

The cramped conditions in the camps resulting from the fresh influx of displaced people led to a severe outbreak of cholera. Within a few days over 300 patients were admitted to Kagando hospital. The death toll was kept relatively low and the outbreak was contained, largely thanks to the hospital's effective case management and out-

\* LRA: Lord's Resistance Army

<sup>49</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 124.

\* ADF: Allied Democratic Forces

\* UPDF: Uganda People's Defence Forces



*scourge of cholera and malaria  
in the south-west*

*helping the displaced  
in Acholiland*

reach services provided by Red Cross volunteers, substantial material support from the ICRC and efficient coordination between the Ministry of Health, the district health services, NGOs and the Uganda Red Cross.

The health delegate based in Bundibugyo carried out weekly checks on infectious diseases, supported the local dispensaries caring for the displaced population and provided ad hoc assistance to Bundibugyo district hospital. Clinic facilities were improved as necessary and drugs distributed to ensure their smooth running. The ICRC health team launched a cooperation programme with the camp hygiene committees to improve sanitary conditions. A water and sanitation engineer was also employed to upgrade the access to water in this cholera-prone area, particularly in rural camps for the displaced.

The ICRC was able to monitor the health situation in Kilembe valley thanks to frequent contact with the relevant health authorities and the Red Cross branch in Kasese. The major health concern was a severe outbreak of fatal falciparum malaria amongst the displaced population. In addition to the Red Cross health education programme run by the Kasese branch, which received ICRC support, the delegation organized a case-management workshop for the treatment of severe malaria. It also provided oral and injectable medicines for health centres and hospitals in the district.

The ICRC's sub-delegation in Kasese launched a pilot project together with the Uganda Red Cross to study the acceptability of mosquito nets impregnated with insecticide among 350 displaced families in an effort to prevent the insect-borne disease. If the nets are well received and effectively used, a large-scale distribution is planned for the year 2000. The National Society's malaria-awareness programme, which also received ICRC support, was extended until the end of 1999. The ICRC also lent its support to the Uganda Red Cross drama group, which helped to raise community awareness of malaria control.

In 1999, the ICRC conducted a major seed and tool distribution for displaced people in Acholiland. With the help of Red Cross volunteers, beneficiaries received crop seeds and vegetable kits. The excellent rain patterns ensured an abundant harvest for both displaced people and residents.

The situation of the 350,000 displaced people still living in camps in the region improved considerably as the year progressed, the majority being able to benefit from the agricultural assistance provided by the ICRC to boost their economic security. Many were able to return home and work their fields, while others began agricultural production on their land but returned to the camps at nightfall.

As resettlement movements increased, the need for tools to rebuild homes and till fields became more acute. The ICRC distributed additional tools and vegetable seeds, targeting some 75,000 households among displaced people and vulnerable residents.

Pockets of displaced people in Adjumani district, totalling about 10,000 people, were assisted with the most essential non-food items (tools, blankets, jerrycans, cooking pots and soap) and food rations were provided to tide them over until the next harvest. A similar programme was carried out for pockets of displaced people in the West Nile region.

Although the plight of the displaced people in Acholiland improved over most of the year, the security situation deteriorated rapidly in December and many of those who had left the camps set up for the displaced were obliged to return.



## *training for local nurses*

Staff in local health clinics in Acholiland were under-trained and lacked sufficient resources to implement first-aid programmes or to buy basic medicines to supplement Ministry of Health supplies. The ICRC therefore distributed primary health care medicines to district health structures, including hospitals and dispensaries. It also organized, in cooperation with the district director of the health services, a three-month training course for nursing aids working in the camps for the displaced with a view to upgrading their professional knowledge of case management.

To improve communication between health structures in Acholiland and the Ministry of Health in Kampala, the ICRC funded a one-week training course in Gulu district on monthly reports on health services. The course was intended for those in charge of clinics in areas with a large displaced population.

## *ICRC vaccination campaigns*

Thanks to close monitoring of the health situation in Acholiland, an outbreak of measles in some of the biggest camps in Gulu district was detected in time and the relevant authorities duly informed. The Ministry of Health launched a vaccination programme to prevent an epidemic. In Bibia camp, close to the border with southern Sudan, a diarrhoea outbreak, feared to be cholera, was contained through a rapid joint response by the health authorities and the ICRC. The delegation in Uganda supplied soap, chlorine and jerrycans to improve hygiene and the safety of the area's water supply. In September and October, the ICRC took part in the national polio campaign by giving logistical support to Gulu district health workers.

## *caring for the sick and wounded*

Hospitals in conflict areas did not have the materials or the professional capacity to respond to all the needs of the civilian population let alone any major influx of war-wounded. The ICRC therefore distributed emergency kits containing dressing material, syringes, drugs, gloves and other basic items to hospitals treating the war-wounded.

## *war-surgery seminar*

In July, Hoima district hosted a two-day war-surgery seminar organized by the ICRC in close cooperation with the Ugandan Association of Surgeons. The seminar was attended by military and civilian surgeons working in conflict areas. The Association provided special services in five district hospitals in the region, operating on over 230 patients who otherwise would not have benefited from such expert care.

## *rehabilitation of amputees*

The prosthetic/orthotic centre in Fort Portal operated effectively. The Ministry of Health announced the adoption of ICRC prosthetics/orthotics technology throughout the country. Technicians from Gulu hospital were the first to be trained in the use of that technology at the ICRC centre.

## *emergency preparedness with the Uganda Red Cross*

The National Society, the ICRC's main local partner, required support in improving its emergency-preparedness and response capacity. Six branches in conflict and conflict-prone areas in south-west and northern Uganda began to implement guidelines for disaster-/conflict-preparedness and response, and volunteer recruitment.

As a part of its emergency-preparedness and response programme, the Uganda Red Cross, with the ICRC's support, conducted a ten-day basic first-aid training course for volunteers from these six Red Cross branches. In November, the Gulu branch hosted a regional workshop on emergency preparedness and response for the nine northern branches.

Delegates visited security detainees in military bases, police stations and civilian prisons in accordance with standard ICRC procedures. Detainees included sus-



*visits to detainees and POWs*

pected members of various opposition groups. Following the bombings in Kampala and subsequent arrests, the ICRC increased the number of visits to places of detention in the capital and its suburbs.

The ICRC kept up its regular visits to Sudanese POWs held in military facilities in Kampala and enabled them to maintain contact with their families in Sudan through Red Cross messages.

Contact was also maintained between security detainees and their next-of-kin thanks to the Red Cross message service, run by the ICRC in cooperation with the Uganda Red Cross Society. Family visits were organized for the families of detainees held in Kampala, Jinja, Katojo and Fort Portal. The ICRC covered the transport and accommodation costs for the visits by the families, most of whom lived in northern Uganda. The delegation provided released detainees with a ticket home (mostly to the West Nile region) and basic material assistance.

The ICRC distributed vegetable seed and gardening implements to prisons in Uganda. The programme, which was carried out for the first time in the country, aimed to supplement prison food supplies. An ICRC agronomist monitored progress on a regular basis.

In September, the ICRC completed its rehabilitation projects in both Luzira Upper and Remand Prisons in Kampala. This included extensive work on the water supply and associated evacuation systems of shower rooms, toilets, washing facilities and kitchens. Elsewhere, the ICRC distributed medical items and medicines on an ad hoc basis to prevent outbreaks of communicable diseases.

*the protection of civilians*

The ICRC made representations to both the LRA and the UPDF regarding respect for the civilian population caught up in the spiral of violence in Uganda. Cases of violations of international humanitarian law were submitted to the relevant parties.

*tracing and dissemination workshops*

With the help of the ICRC, the Uganda Red Cross developed an efficient tracing department. In July, the National Society held a joint dissemination and tracing workshop in Kampala for participants from northern and eastern branches. Dissemination and tracing guides were produced and distributed to participants as reference material. The Uganda Red Cross is the first African National Society to publish a dissemination reference guide. A second workshop was held in November, also in Kampala.

*training for army instructors*

The ICRC maintained relations with the UPDF with a view to integrating international humanitarian law into military training. Contact with the armed opposition was limited to the LRA.

The ICRC trained UPDF officers as instructors in the law of armed conflict. For the first time, three-day sessions for junior officers and non-commissioned officers were held in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Infantry Divisions. Two three-day basic sessions on the law of armed conflict were also held at the Kabamba and Jinja military training schools. Dissemination sessions for soldiers in the field, including members of the reserve forces in northern Uganda and in the West Nile region, took place on a regular basis.

A series of radio spots and posters was produced in five local languages and in English, focusing on the basic principles of humanitarian law and the obligation of belligerents to respect civilians in all circumstances. The posters targeted arms bearers, particularly armed opposition groups.



*first-ever course for the police force*

A consultative meeting with 20 senior police officers, drawn mainly from regional posts, training schools and headquarters, was held in Jinja in September under the guidance of the ICRC Police and Security Forces coordinator from Geneva. This was followed by a two-week training course for future instructors, the first time such a course was held in Uganda.

## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- regularly visited some 1,860 people detained for security reasons or in connection with the activities of armed opposition movements and held in 61 places of detention;
- provided detainees with 56.4 tonnes of material assistance and basic medical supplies;
- regularly visited 72 Sudanese POWs held in Kampala and supplied them with clothing, hygiene products and recreational items;
- renovated the water supply and sewage systems and the kitchens in Kampala's prisons;
- initiated a vegetable garden programme and distributed 390 kg vegetable seed to prisons throughout the country;
- handled, partially in cooperation with the Uganda Red Cross, 7,153 Red Cross messages for detainees, their families and Sudanese POWs;
- facilitated family visits for minors and for re-arrested members of the West Nile Bank Front;



- made representations to the parties concerned when acts of violence committed against civilians were brought to its attention;



- helped the Uganda Red Cross run its Red Cross message network for members of families separated by conflict and refugees in the country (some 16,000 Red Cross messages were exchanged);
- registered unaccompanied minors among displaced people and refugees and, with the assistance of the Uganda Red Cross, reunited 2 of them with their families;



- provided displaced people in Acholiland in northern Uganda with 794 tonnes of seeds, 274,600 hoes, 74,400 axes, 74,300 machetes and 465 tonnes of soap;
- distributed 122 tonnes of soap, 53,200 blankets, 18,200 tarpaulins, 13,220 cooking pots and 13,950 jerrycans to displaced people and residents in Bundibugyo and Kasese districts in the south-west;



- regularly supplied dressings and surgical materials to private and government hospitals treating war casualties;
- regularly visited and supported health facilities catering to the needs of displaced people in Acholiland and in the south-west, supplying drugs and dressing materials to relieve temporary shortages;
- provided Kampala University Hospital with surgical kits to help treat victims of the bomb blasts in the capital;
- held a war-surgery training course for 63 civilian and military surgeons working in 23 hospitals in conflict areas;
- organized a case-management workshop for the treatment of severe malaria in the south-west;
- in cooperation with the district director of the health services, organized a 3-month training course for 15 nursing aids working in the camps for the displaced;
- funded a 1-week training course on the health management information system (monthly reports on health services), for those in charge of clinics in areas with a substantial displaced population in Gulu district;
- supplied soap, chlorine and jerrycans to improve hygiene and the safety of the water supply in Gulu district to prevent the spread of cholera;
- took part in the national polio campaign by giving logistical support to the Gulu district health authorities;



- continued prosthetic/orthotic work at Fort Portal in western Uganda, which fitted 81 patients (of whom 35 were victims of anti-personnel mines) with 86 prostheses;
- provided training to prosthetic/orthotic technicians from Gulu district;



- upgraded the access to water in cholera-prone areas in the south-west, particularly in rural camps for the displaced;



- supported the Uganda Red Cross, in particular in the areas of tracing, promotion of humanitarian law, emergency preparedness and response;
- whenever possible, involved National Society branches and volunteers in its assistance programmes in conflict zones;
- held two joint dissemination and tracing workshops in Kampala for participants from northern and eastern branches;
- supported a first-aid training course for volunteers from the 6 Red Cross branches in conflict and conflict-prone areas in the north and south-west;
- supported the National Society's cholera and malaria prevention and control programmes;





- trained groups of UPDF officers and policemen to teach the law of armed conflict to new recruits;
- gave dissemination sessions to soldiers and reserve forces, security agencies, religious leaders, members of civil society and Uganda Red Cross volunteers;
- organized dissemination sessions in the conflict areas of Gulu, Kitgum, Arua and Kasese for Red Cross volunteers, branch governing boards, recipients of ICRC/Red Cross relief assistance, teachers and schoolchildren;
- organized dissemination sessions for refugee leaders in Orichinga and Nacivali refugee settlements;
- launched a radio spot and poster campaign in conflict areas with the aim of reaching out to armed opposition groups with a message to respect the life and dignity of the civilian population.

## NAIROBI

## Regional delegation

(Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania)

*urban violence and  
intercommunal clashes in Kenya**tension in the north of Kenya**tracing services for refugees  
in Kenya**assistance to victims  
of violence or famine*

The ICRC's regional delegation in Nairobi had a dual purpose: first, to meet the needs of conflict victims and carry out humanitarian diplomacy in the three countries it covered; and second, to provide logistical services and other specialized support to ICRC operations in the surrounding countries of the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes regions, or even further afield.

Kenya's moves towards political reform brought to light a number of underlying tensions. The process to amend the constitution ground to a halt following disagreements between the ruling KANU\* party and opposition groups. External pressure demanded structural reforms to the economy, the privatization of large sectors of State industry and a determined fight against corruption. Economic tension and its consequences were readily expressed in public outbursts of violence. The centre of the country's tourism trade, Coast province, witnessed a spate of violence which began in December 1998 and persisted until the end of 1999, despite the increased security presence. In addition, ethnic clashes over land rights, cattle rustling and water sources continued to occur sporadically in rural areas, notably in Pokot and Marakwet in western Kenya, and also in Turkana in the north. These resulted in civilian victims and population displacements.

In the north, clashes were reported between the Ethiopian army and rebels of the Oromo movement. Tension also flared at the Kenya-Somalia border, which was closed for an undetermined period because of alleged arms trafficking, and all commercial flights were suspended between Kenya and Somalia. Humanitarian flights were allowed to operate under a strict clearance process.

Turkana district in the northern Rift Valley province experienced a serious famine, the consequence chiefly of a prolonged drought and insecurity linked to frequent Pokot incursions into Turkana by cattle raiders.

Some 200,000 refugees (Burundians, Congolese, Ethiopians, Rwandans, Somalis and Sudanese) had sought refuge in Kenya. Although their numbers were on the decline, many had not yet returned to their homes and remained in Kenya's urban areas and in refugee camps in northern Kenya.

The ICRC, in cooperation with the Kenya Red Cross, enabled refugees to contact their families via Red Cross messages. The ICRC also provided the financial support allowing the Kenya Red Cross to set up a tracing office in the newly created camp in Kakuma. This camp, the third of its kind in northern Kenya, was opened to house the large influx of Sudanese and Somali refugees. Members of the Kenya Red Cross tracing department took part in various workshops aimed at sharing practical field experience with neighbouring National Societies.

Clashes in the Wajir district of north-east Kenya at the end of 1998 prompted the flight of 4,000 people. Food stocks in the entire region were severely depleted and a drought was looming. Between January and April 1999, the ICRC and Kenya Red Cross distributed food and non-food supplies to 880 destitute families.

Violent disturbances at the beginning of 1999 in Nguma, in Coast province, led to the displacement of 200 families, who were also assisted with food and non-food supplies.

Following clashes along the Rift Valley between the Pokots and Marakwets on the one hand, and the Pokots and Turkanas on the other, the ICRC provided medical

\* KANU: Kenya African National Union



## *water-supply projects*

## *working with the Kenya Red Cross Society*

## *promotion of international humanitarian law*

equipment, drugs and materials to six hospitals and four dispensaries treating the casualties.

The ICRC worked with three communities to help repair a dispensary in Kuerisoi, construct a maternity unit in Kamawaura and renovate the Kaibei dispensary. The ICRC met 70% of the construction costs, the remainder being raised by the local community.

Following a series of mine incidents on the Kenya/Ethiopia border, the ICRC donated physiotherapy and prosthetic/orthotic equipment and materials to Moyale District Hospital for the treatment of landmine victims.

The ICRC provided logistical support for Red Cross first-aid activities for the victims of the urban violence which broke out in Nairobi during the reading of the budget in June.

In rural areas of Kenya, pastoral and farming communities often shared limited water resources. This frequently resulted in tension, outbreaks of violence and damage to community infrastructure. Moreover, the use of water supplies in some places by both humans and livestock facilitated the spread of endemic water-borne diseases.

The ICRC therefore programmed water-supply rehabilitation activities in Pokot, Marakwet and Eastern Baringo, in a project delegated to the American Red Cross. The project included the rehabilitation of gravity water systems, the digging of shallow wells and the sinking of boreholes.

The ICRC also drew up a water-source development and dam rehabilitation project in Laikipia, which it delegated to the Swedish Red Cross. Work included the rehabilitation of four dams and the drilling of new boreholes to increase access to water for some 38,000 people and thereby ease the tension between various tribes.

The ICRC focused its cooperation with the Kenya Red Cross on capacity-building. It monitored the income-generating activities of four branches receiving ICRC technical and financial support. The delegation also helped the National Society recruit dissemination officers for three regional offices and organized training for the newly recruited dissemination coordinator. The ICRC helped to strengthen the National Society's emergency-preparedness and response capacities by holding a number of workshops for Red Cross staff and volunteers, government officials and NGO representatives in Coast province and in Embu.

In January, a course on "Society and international humanitarian law" was incorporated into the compulsory syllabus for all undergraduates at Kenya's Egerton University. The course, the first of its kind in East Africa, was delivered by six lecturers with the assistance of expert tutors provided by the ICRC. The ICRC also helped adapt the course for inclusion in a distance-learning programme developed by the University and the Department of Defence and aimed at officers of the Kenyan armed forces. Efforts were also made to reinforce the teaching of humanitarian law at the Law Faculties of Moi University and of Dar Es Salaam University in Tanzania.

"Flowers in the Morning Sun",<sup>50</sup> a play commissioned by the ICRC and written by a celebrated Kenyan playwright, was performed in rural communities affected by ethnic clashes. The play's message is to promote respect for human life and dignity during internal disturbances. Audiences included the victims of ethnic strife, arms

<sup>50</sup> See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 131.



*promoting membership  
of international treaties*

*family messages  
for refugees in Tanzania*

bearers, community leaders, local administration officials, and police and prison authorities. The play also toured Tanzania, starting with Dar es Salaam University and then continuing on to western Tanzania, where it was staged in the camps housing refugees from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A video version was produced and distributed in Kenya to military outposts, training colleges, universities, schools and religious groups.

The ICRC's Advisory Service<sup>51</sup> had a delegate based in Nairobi to encourage the region's countries to ratify humanitarian law treaties and to incorporate their provisions into domestic legislation. Partly as a result of those efforts, the Republic of Kenya acceded to the two 1977 Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions in February 1999.

In June, a national seminar in Mombasa brought together representatives from various Ministries and Departments of the Office of the President, the Kenya Law Society, the Standing Committee on Human Rights, academics and members of the Kenya Red Cross. Organized jointly by the Attorney General and the ICRC, the seminar reviewed Kenya's national implementation of its obligations under humanitarian law treaties and conventions. Recommendations included the swift ratification of the Ottawa landmines treaty, the 1980 UN Conventional Weapons Convention, the 1954 Hague Convention on Cultural Property and the 1976 Environmental Modification Techniques Convention. Particular emphasis was placed on the need to ratify the Statute of the International Criminal Court, which Kenya subsequently signed in New York in August, and to recognize the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission.

As a follow-up to this seminar, the ICRC, in cooperation with the authorities, organized a consultative workshop in Nyeri in October on the ratification and implementation of the Ottawa treaty. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, who attended the workshop, expressed the government's willingness to ratify the treaty.

The fighting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo led waves of refugees to seek asylum in the Kigoma region, and thousands continued to flee the violence in Burundi. At year-end, Tanzania was sheltering some 100,000 Congolese refugees, 276,000 Burundian refugees and 20,000 Rwandan refugees.

The Nairobi delegation continued to support the Tanzania Red Cross in handling the exchange of family messages, mainly for the refugee population, between Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular southern Kivu, and between Tanzania and Rwanda. Delegates continued to visit the Tanzania Red Cross tracing offices located in the refugee camps in Kasulu, Kibondo and Ngara (north-west Tanzania). In an effort to concentrate on the most needy, the ICRC and the Tanzania Red Cross focused their tracing activities on unaccompanied minors. The names of newly registered unaccompanied minors were entered in the ICRC's database and inter-camp family reunifications were carried out for Burundian, Congolese and Rwandan unaccompanied minors, sometimes after a separation of up to six years.

The ICRC conducted visits to individuals accused of genocide or war crimes and being held in the detention facility of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania.

<sup>51</sup> See pp. 351-353.



## *visits to detainees*

In June, the ICRC was granted access for the first time to people detained on the island of Zanzibar on charges of treason. The visit was carried out in accordance with ICRC standard procedures and the delegates' findings were discussed with the authorities in charge.

On the Tanzanian mainland, the ICRC visited Mwisu camp in the Kagera region to assess the material conditions and treatment of the people being held there. Among those detained were people alleged to be foreign combatants and foreign nationals with no refugee status. Following the round-up of refugees in Kigoma, a large number were sent to prison. The ICRC negotiated the exchange of family messages in the three prisons in the Kigoma district and delegates were able to conduct the first visit to these detention centres in December.

## *safe water*

Following severe outbreaks of cholera in the three main prisons of Dar es Salaam, delegates made follow-up visits to three water rehabilitation projects to provide safe water for some 3,000 prisoners in Keko, Segerea and Utonga. Work on the projects was completed in cooperation with the prison authorities.

The ICRC, together with the Tanzania Red Cross, also conducted a water and habitat project in four villages for some 10,000 families in Zanzibar (Pemba and Ugunja islands). Wells, latrine blocks and washing slabs were constructed.

## *surgical facilities for the war-wounded*

The ICRC handed over basic medical and surgical material to the Maweni regional hospital in Kigoma for the treatment of Burundian and Congolese war-wounded. It financed the treatment of severely wounded patients in a mission hospital in Kigoma. Following an ICRC evaluation, this hospital became the referral structure for difficult war-surgery cases. The nurse in charge of war-wounded patients followed a seven-week surgical training course at the ICRC's hospital in Lokichokio. Staff at the two hospitals took a course on ICRC activities and the Fundamental Red Cross Principles.

## *law of armed conflict*

High-ranking officers of the Tanzanian People's Defence Forces confirmed that the law of armed conflict would be incorporated into its training curriculum as from the year 2000. To this end, a one-week training course on the law of armed conflict was conducted for training officers. It should be recalled that Tanzanian soldiers regularly participate in peace-keeping operations.

## *Red Cross messages for refugees in Djibouti*

In Djibouti, the ICRC focused on the plight of some 20,000 Somali refugees from Somaliland and 700 Ethiopian refugees who had been in Djibouti since 1990. The ICRC tracing network continued to serve as the only means of contact for most of the refugees in the country.

## *visits to security detainees in Djibouti*

Delegates carried out regular visits to security detainees in Gabode's central prison in Djibouti and provided inmates with blankets and hygiene items. Security detainees who conducted a hunger strike at the prison were visited by an ICRC delegate accompanied by a health delegate. In December, the ICRC organized a general disinfection of the prison.

## *care for the war-wounded and Djibouti army veterans*

ICRC delegates also visited war-wounded detainees belonging to the FRUD\* opposition group who were hospitalized in Peletier.

The delegation set up a medical stock in Djibouti enabling the war-wounded and landmine casualties in Peletier hospital to receive medicines and hygiene articles.

\* FRUD: "Front pour la Restauration de l'Unité et de la Démocratie"

## *Nairobi as a regional hub*

Amputee veterans from the Djibouti army were transferred to Addis Ababa for the replacement of their prostheses. In addition, the Djibouti office handled the necessary materials for the ICRC's prosthetic/orthotic centre in Hargeisa, Somaliland.

Acting as a regional hub, the Nairobi delegation provided essential services for other ICRC operations, including nutritional, agricultural, veterinary and water and sanitation expertise, dissemination to the armed forces, the procurement and management of emergency stocks, transport services, staff and administrative support, tracing, logistics and media and donor liaison. The well-developed infrastructure in Nairobi enabled the regional delegation to provide emergency humanitarian assistance at short notice anywhere in the region, throughout Africa and even in Kosovo, the Caucasus and East Timor.



## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- carried out 2 visits to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda detention facility in Tanzania, registering 7 new detainees;
- visited 18 detainees on Zanzibar island for the first time and 72 internees/detainees held at the Mwisu camp in Kagera, Tanzania;
- in Djibouti, carried out 4 visits to 46 security detainees in Gabode central prison; supplied the prison with hygiene products and blankets;
- visited, on two separate occasions, 5 war-wounded detainees belong to the FRUD opposition group who were hospitalized in Peletier;



- supported the tracing activities of the Kenya Red Cross, which exchanged 53,087 Red Cross messages between refugees and their families in their countries of origin;
- with the Tanzania Red Cross, continued the tracing programme for Congolese, Burundian and Rwandan refugees, handling 38,683 Red Cross messages on their behalf throughout Tanzania;
- with the assistance of the Tanzania Red Cross, conducted 301 inter-camp reunifications of refugees separated as a result of conflict in neighbouring countries;
- continued to serve as the main means of communication for Somalis and Ethiopians in refugee camps in Djibouti, exchanging 2,145 Red Cross messages on their behalf in cooperation with the National Societies of the countries where their relatives were living;



- in cooperation with the Kenya Red Cross, distributed 587 tonnes of food and 18.7 tonnes of material assistance to displaced people and other vulnerable groups in Kenya;
- distributed high-energy biscuits to 13 feeding centres managed by the Kenyan Department of Social Services;



- donated basic medical and surgical materials to Lodwar hospital and other hospitals and dispensaries along the Rift Valley in Kenya;
- distributed medical and surgical supplies to Maweni Regional Hospital in Kigoma, Tanzania;
- in cooperation with the local community in Kenya, made repairs to a dispensary in Kuerisoi, helped to build a maternity unit in Kamawaura and carried out renovation work at the Kaibei dispensary;



- launched a number of water-supply and sanitation projects in Kenya, notably in Nakuru, Laikipia, Kerio, Pokot, Marakwet and East Baringo; delegated 2 water-supply projects to the American and Swedish Red Cross Societies;
- together with the Tanzania Red Cross, conducted a water and habitat project in four villages for some 10,000 families in Zanzibar (Pemba and Ugunja islands);
- completed, in cooperation with the prison authorities, 3 water rehabilitation projects providing safe water for some 3,000 prisoners in Dar es Salaam's three main prisons (Keko, Segerea and Utonga);





- built up the capacity of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the region in the areas of dissemination, tracing and conflict preparedness;
- worked with the respective National Societies in the area covered by the delegation to organize events and activities marking the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions;
- provided logistical support for Kenya Red Cross first-aid activities for the victims of urban violence in Nairobi;
- helped equip an office at the Kenya Red Cross Nakuru branch;
- funded the renovation of a Tanzania Red Cross building in Zanzibar;
- provided logistics and management support for an ICRC workshop held in Djibouti for 50 dissemination and tracing officers from the Somali Red Crescent Society;



- organized 4 courses for 2,268 members of the security forces and military officers and cadets and 7 courses for 197 senior officers of the 3 Kenyan armed forces;
- produced an English/Kiswahili version of the "Code of Conduct for Combatants" and a first-aid guide for distribution to some 10,000 troops in both Kenya and Tanzania;
- distributed the illustrated proverbs of eight ethnic groups in Kenya to various communities in troubled areas, thereby depicting humanitarian issues in the light of local culture;
- supported 4 Kenyan University Red Cross Clubs in Maseno, Moi and Egerton, and the new United States International University Club;
- distributed some 10,000 copies of a book on the protection afforded to children by humanitarian law in times of unrest to schools located in conflict-prone areas in Kenya;
- held a 1-week training course on international humanitarian law in Dar es Salaam for 22 senior training officers of the Tanzanian People's Defence Forces;
- presented the "So Why?" campaign and its local version to Somali teachers in the UNHCR refugee camp of Ali Adde, Djibouti;
- in cooperation with the "Centre National de Recherche, d'Information et de Production de l'Education Nationale" (CRIPEN), carried out the first phase of a project comprising education modules for young people in Djibouti;
- helped the ICRC specialist for dissemination to the armed and security forces carry out evaluation missions in the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and advised an instructor from the Nairobi-based pool of military instructors with regard to teaching missions in Rwanda, Sudan and Uganda.





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