

**Zeitschrift:** Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross  
**Herausgeber:** International Committee of the Red Cross  
**Band:** - (1999)  
  
**Rubrik:** Asia and the Pacific

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

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

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

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

### **Terms of use**

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

**Download PDF:** 07.02.2026

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



*This apparently tranquil scene is deceptive. The landmines left behind after the war threaten lives and hamper the return to self-sufficiency. Through its mine-awareness programmes, the ICRC works to reduce the risk of mine injury around the world.*



## South and Central Asia

### ICRC delegations:

Afghanistan, Pakistan,  
Sri Lanka, Tajikistan

### ICRC regional delegation:

New Delhi, Tashkent

## South-east Asia and the Far East

### ICRC delegations:

Cambodia, Myanmar

### ICRC regional delegations:

Bangkok, Jakarta, Manila

### Staff

ICRC expatriates<sup>1</sup>: 201

National Societies<sup>1</sup>: 65

Local employees<sup>2</sup>: 2,139

### Total Expenditure:

Sfr 263,837,912.77

### Expenditure breakdown:

Protection: 16,020,910.90

Assistance: 66,300,866.87

Preventive action: 10,524,813.19

Cooperation with National

Societies: 6,487,786.43

Overheads: 6,627,236.00

General: 9,180,525.02



⊕ ICRC regional delegation

⊕ ICRC delegation

ICRC / AR 12 99

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

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

The upsurge of violence in East Timor dominated humanitarian operations in Asia in 1999. The ICRC, present in East Timor since 1979, had closely monitored the rise in tension as it continued to implement its health, protection and water and sanitation programmes before the independence ballot in August. In anticipation of the crisis, it built up its emergency stocks and worked to strengthen the Indonesian Red Cross emergency response capacity. When the violence exploded in September, the ICRC compound in Dili was attacked and expatriate staff forced to leave. The resulting setback to operations was only temporary, though, and the ICRC was nonetheless able to return to Dili promptly and to capitalize on its established networks and contacts, rapidly mounting extensive tracing and assistance activities to help the hundreds of thousands of victims of the conflict.

The crisis in East Timor was but one of the serious political, economic, ethnic and religious crises that plagued the Indonesian archipelago during the year. In cooperation with the Indonesian Red Cross the ICRC also met needs arising from outbursts of violence in the Moluccas, West Kalimantan and Aceh. Although the ICRC took advantage of the country's new spirit of democratization and reform, and expanded its dissemination activities to the Indonesian armed forces, the new political atmosphere had not, by the end of the year, removed all of the limitations to humanitarian work in the archipelago's areas of conflict. Owing to mounting violence in the Moluccas, the ICRC was not able to resume its presence there after a joint ICRC/PMI\* assistance programme came to an end in June. The Jakarta delegation continued to urge the Indonesian authorities to allow the ICRC to conduct its humanitarian operations in all areas affected by violence.

A sudden outbreak of violence in Guadalcanal, in the Solomon Islands, required a rapid humanitarian response in June 1999. In operations directed out of the Manila regional delegation, the ICRC cooperated with the Solomon Islands Red Cross Society to provide transport, relief supplies and protection to the victims of intercommunal tension there.

The demands of these sudden outbursts of violence did not lead the ICRC to neglect its activities in countries caught up in prolonged conflicts. The destruction and economic collapse brought about by decades of war have rendered the Afghan people progressively more dependent on international assistance, forcing humanitarian practitioners to question their role in a situation of perpetual conflict. With this in mind, the ICRC focused on assistance strategies designed to rebuild the population's self-sufficiency.

No settlement was reached in the struggle between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka. In major battles in November 1999, the LTTE regained nearly all of the territory that it had lost over the previous two years. The ICRC's role as a neutral intermediary and its relief and protection programmes were an essential factor in the survival of populations affected by the hostilities, but its extensive efforts to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and principles, particularly with regard to fighters "hors de combat" and medical care for all wounded combatants, met with limited success.

In Kashmir, the state of tension between India and Pakistan persisted. During the Kargil crisis, the ICRC gained access to prisoners of war captured in the fighting, and

\* PMI: "Palang Merah Indonesia" (Indonesian Red Cross)



was able to perform its role in situations of international conflict. While continuing to visit detainees held in connection with the prevailing situation in Jammu and Kashmir, it was increasingly hamstrung in gaining access to them under the terms specified in its Memorandum of Understanding with the Indian government. It requested a round table discussion to talk about these problems with the relevant authorities.

Broadened access to detainees held in connection with the Maoist insurgency in Nepal led to an expansion of ICRC detention activities there.

In Asia, the ICRC's most important breakthrough in 1999 came in Myanmar, where it began visits to detainees, expanded its presence to Mon and Kayin states, and established an office to manage its activities in Shan state. In China, there were no new developments in discussions on access to categories of detainees coming under the ICRC's remit. In spite of numerous missions to the Korean peninsula, the ICRC made no progress in its efforts to convince the authorities there to take a humanitarian approach to the issue of families separated since the Korean conflict.

In Cambodia, the completion of the repatriation of refugees from Thailand and significant progress toward political normalization reduced the need for ICRC activities. Staff and programmes were scaled down as needs shifted to the fields of development and human rights.

In 1999, Tajikistan made considerable progress toward peace, as most of the opposition's armed wings disarmed and various points of the peace agreement were implemented. These political advances had a limited impact on the population, as the economy and infrastructure remained too weak to allow a recovery of self-sufficiency. In the areas hardest hit by the fighting, living conditions remained too precarious to permit a withdrawal of humanitarian support, and the ICRC maintained most of its activities.

Australia, Cambodia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Solomon Islands and Tajikistan ratified the Ottawa treaty banning landmines in 1999, and India and Tajikistan ratified additional international treaties on weapons control. In Central Asia, the formation of new States presented the ICRC with a special opportunity to promote the incorporation of humanitarian law into new legislation, and in 1999 Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan established national committees for the implementation of humanitarian law. In the countries of Central Asia, as in other areas that were formerly part of the Soviet Union, the ICRC focused on promoting humanitarian values among young people.

In the Far East, the ICRC worked in 1999 to develop a regional approach to strengthening the application of humanitarian law. It helped plan and present the first ASEAN\* Regional Forum seminar on international humanitarian law, which was organized and co-sponsored by the Australian government and the ICRC.

\* ASEAN: Association of South-East Asian Nations

## AFGHANISTAN

### PROTECTION

1,757,011

### ASSISTANCE

33,629,442

### PREVENTIVE ACTION

924,347

### COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

1,965,564

### OVERHEADS

2,071,052

### GENERAL

903,293

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 41,250,709**

*peace initiatives founder*



⊕ ICRC delegation ⊕ ICRC sub-delegation + ICRC presence ⊕ Prosthetic/orthotic centre/workshop

After a calm winter, hopes for progress toward peace in Afghanistan were frustrated when the Taliban withdrew from UN-sponsored peace talks in Ashgabat. Fighting broke out around Bamyan soon after and was followed by a Taliban troop build-up in Kabul and along the Shamali and Tagab front lines. A final attempt to forestall the imminent offensive was made in the July "6 plus 2"\* meeting in Tashkent, but this, too, was unsuccessful.

In late July, Taliban forces advanced through the Shamali Plain up to Gulbahar, but were soon pushed back by a surprise counterattack in which northern coalition troops reclaimed most of the Shamali. This front line had stabilized by mid-August and remained relatively calm through the end of the year. The Taliban launched another offensive to the north of Taloqan in September, and by late October had gained complete control of the province of Kunduz after capturing two main districts bordering Tajikistan. Clashes continued in the north until the end of the year, with repeated Taliban air strikes reported in Taloqan.

\* Six neighbouring countries plus Russia and the United States



*heavy casualties  
and massive displacements*

*population polarized*

*paralysed economy*

*return of the UN*

*increasing isolation  
from international community*

*improved access to detainees*

*improving self-sufficiency*

The fighting resulted in little net change in the control of territory, but nevertheless inflicted heavy casualties, forced the displacement of large groups of civilians and generated many allegations of violations of humanitarian law committed by all sides. Concurrently, hit-and-run guerilla fighting persisted around the Mazar-i-Sharif area, claiming civilian lives and compromising security in the region.

The increasing polarization between the warring sides increased ethnic tension within communities, presenting a risk of reprisals and other rights violations even in areas untouched by combat. The ICRC continued to monitor the situation of civilian populations and to make representations to the authorities concerned regarding violations of humanitarian law.

The continued fighting paralysed the social and economic life of the country, draining the resources needed to rehabilitate infrastructure and institutions that had been destroyed or had deteriorated through two decades of war: roads and buildings were not being repaired even in areas securely controlled by the Taliban. Workers were rarely paid for their work, and when they were, their wages were usually well below the minimal survival needs of a family. In Kabul, the water distribution system functioned at less than 20% of its pre-war capacity. In rural areas, the destruction and deterioration of irrigation systems has rendered potentially arable land useless.

In 1998, American air strikes on suspected terrorist training sites and other security problems had prompted all UN agencies and most NGOs to withdraw from Afghanistan. During 1999 a number of these organizations began a cautious and limited return.

Afghanistan's isolation from the international community was deepened in 1999 by the sanctions imposed on the Taliban under UN Resolution 1267. The sanctions, which took effect in November, banned Taliban-controlled aircraft from takeoff and landing and froze Taliban assets abroad.

As the ICRC's access to areas of north Afghanistan improved, delegates were able to resume visits to detainees in Mazar-i-Sharif and Bamyan. After being blocked for two years by poor security conditions, ICRC teams were able to return to Kunduz to visit detainees there. In most areas, delegates were given regular access to detainees held in connection with the conflict, and to especially vulnerable detainee groups like women and children. There were only occasional problems gaining access to detainees, most notably in Herat and Kandahar. The ICRC improved health conditions in the prisons by building or repairing water and sanitation facilities and providing prison medical services with medications and other supplies. Released detainees were given financial and logistic support for their return home, and the ICRC financed visits to detainees by families who had to travel long distances.

By maintaining relations with both sides in the conflict, the ICRC was able to perform its traditional role of neutral intermediary, facilitating dialogue, the exchange of emissaries and the crossline transport of released prisoners and mortal remains.

The ICRC has been working to help victims of the war in Afghanistan for over 20 years, and has maintained an uninterrupted presence there since 1987; it remains deeply committed to helping the Afghan people survive the effects of protracted conflict. In recent years, with authorities who have little experience in government and who place priorities on military gains rather than on economic recovery, humanitarian organizations have begun to ask themselves whether their programmes have



*agricultural programmes*

*urban population hardest hit*

*improving health conditions*

*thousands flee fighting*

*helping families stay in touch*

become substitutes for the government. To avoid fostering dependency and feeding a situation of perpetual conflict, ICRC programmes focused in 1999 on rebuilding the population's self-sufficiency and on developing programme sustainability.

Since the majority of Afghanistan's population is involved in farming, agricultural programmes offer great potential for improving self-sufficiency. The ICRC helped bolster the food production capacity of entire areas by continuing its programmes for tool production, establishing of fruit and vegetable nurseries, plant protection, tree planting, seed distribution, rehabilitation of irrigation systems and livestock vaccination. Canal rehabilitation employed thousands of Afghans in a food-for-work project that increased available arable land. Crop yields were improved by the distribution of seeds, tools, pesticides and fertilizer. In a project in Badghis delegated to the German Red Cross, canals were cleaned, seeds were distributed and saplings planted, wheat flour was given to 2,000 of the poorest families in exchange for over 37 tonnes of insect pests that they had collected by hand.

In spite of the difficulties in rural areas, those hardest hit by the general economic collapse were urban populations. In 1999 the ICRC continued its food distribution to families headed by widows or handicapped persons in Kabul, at the same time searching for ways to increase their self-sufficiency. In one project, vulnerable families were provided with chickens, vegetable seeds and gardening tools. In a pilot project, the delegation distributed "Silo bread", a dark bread which, despite its high nutritional value, is less suited to Afghan tastes than the traditional local bread. This "self-targeting strategy", aimed at attracting only those who have no other choice, automatically selects the most needy. In cooperation with the Afghan Red Crescent Society, the ICRC also supported vocational training projects for orphans and young family breadwinners.

The ICRC continued to improve urban health conditions by building or repairing latrines, wells, and refuse containers in five districts of Kabul. Authorities at the neighbourhood and municipal level were encouraged to assume greater responsibility for informing the public about the proper use of latrines, and health education sessions on the subject were held for students and heads of households.

The heavy fighting in Shamali and in the north-east led to the displacement of thousands of people in the Shamali and Panjshir Valleys and in Takhar, Kunduz and Bamyan. The ICRC distributed food and household hygiene articles to displaced families and returnees in these regions and in Kabul.

By the end of 1999, most of the people who had fled from the area around Bala-Murghab to Herat in 1997 had returned home. The ICRC community-based assistance programme which was developed to encourage their return to the region was successfully completed, and the office in Petaw which had managed activities in favour of this population was closed.

Continued displacements increased the need for Red Cross tracing services. In October, the ICRC was able to offer 14,000 newly displaced people in Kabul the chance to contact relatives by means of Red Cross messages. There being no functional postal system in the country the Red Cross message system, which is now run by the Afghan Red Crescent Society, remains an important means for families dispersed by the conflict to keep in touch.



*helping earthquake victims*

*improving surgical care  
for the war-wounded*

*artificial limbs for amputees*

An earthquake hit Wardak and Logar in February, causing great material damage but little loss of life. The components of the Red Cross Movement worked well together to provide relief to families affected by the quake.

The ICRC continued to assist medical facilities caring for war-wounded and other surgical patients around the country. Extensive and regular support including surgical materials and equipment, water and sanitation improvement and other basic maintenance, fuel, and staff allowances were provided to the surgical departments in five major hospitals. Efforts were made to encourage authorities to take greater responsibility for these five facilities, but the continued weakness of the medical infrastructure and the increased demands brought about by the intensification of the conflict in the second half of the year made this hope unrealistic. The delegation also gave ad hoc assistance to ten other hospitals, nine of them in the north, and over 20 minor medical facilities which provided surgery for the war-wounded. Although its crossline flights to Baghram were blocked by the renewal of fighting in July, the ICRC continued to deliver medical goods overland to the north, via either the Anjuman Pass or the Taghab valley, using trucks and when this was impossible, donkeys. When fighting broke out in Taloqan, more than three tonnes of medical cargo were delivered by air and road to the hospital there.

First contacts were made with the authorities with the goal of setting up a national coordinating committee for health, but the absence of other humanitarian players and the immediate priorities of the authorities concerned slowed progress toward this goal.

Deliveries of medical material to the Panjshir Valley and Shamali Plain continued to be problematic in 1999. Owing to the fighting in the area, the three hospitals in Shamali were closed, and the ICRC increased its aid to the two hospitals it supports in Panjshir Valley, to help them care for the resulting influx of patients.

The four ICRC prosthetic centres in Herat, Jalalabad, Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif continued to produce and fit artificial limbs for mine victims and other patients, including victims of poliomyelitis. The prosthetic/orthotic components produced were used not only in the facilities in Afghanistan, but were also sent from Kabul to Dushanbe for use in ICRC programmes there. In Kabul, the ICRC continued its programme to monitor and provide home care for paraplegics in order to decrease medical complications and support their reintegration into their families and communities.

Since mines and increased fighting blocked access to existing centres, patients in the Panjshir and Shamali areas were unable to get prosthetic/orthotic services. Part of Gulbahar hospital was therefore rehabilitated to create a temporary orthotic/prosthetic centre for patients in areas not under Taliban control. The centre, staffed by technicians and physiotherapists recruited from the other four ICRC centres, had just begun treating and fitting patients in July when the offensive forced it to close. Improved security conditions permitted it to reopen in November. Of the 239 staff members employed in five ICRC orthotic/prosthetic centres, more than half were themselves disabled and 30 were women. The Afghan Red Crescent Society played an important part in locating patients and referring them to the centres.

## *mine information*

The Mine Information Project, which collates information on mine injuries collected in ICRC treatment centres, was extended to health structures in Mazar-i-Sharif and Pul-i-Khumri. Information was shared with other agencies to help plan future mine-clearance activities.

The ICRC could not have carried out its activities in Afghanistan without the support of the Afghan Red Crescent Society, which also ran its own relief distributions and food-for-work projects with financial and material assistance from the ICRC. In a project delegated by the ICRC, the Netherlands Red Cross assisted the Afghan Red Crescent Society marastoon (home for the destitute) programme, and in 1999 started discussing a new agreement with the National Society for the purpose of developing marastoon's autonomy and sustainability.

## *working together with Red Cross/Red Crescent partners*

The ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are working together to help the Afghan Red Crescent Society build its operational capacity and uphold the principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. The growing influence of the Taliban on the National Society has been of particular concern. In a joint evaluation of support for Afghan Red Crescent programmes, the ICRC and the Federation decided to shift from general and wide-ranging support to a more focused approach in which support was directly linked to specific programmes and activities. This prompted the redrafting of agreements between the National Society, the Federation and the ICRC.

## *spreading humanitarian values*

With a view to instilling respect for the principles of humanitarian law at all levels of society, sessions on humanitarian law and principles were presented at checkpoints, in military bases and in schools, and were attended by the local authorities, displaced people, students, and commanders and fighters from both sides. Contacts were made with the Ministry of Education in order to establish a programme teaching basic humanitarian law in religious schools, and sessions were held in Koranic schools in Kandahar, Jalalabad and Kabul province. As part of the "People on War" campaign, questionnaires were distributed and interviews conducted around the country in order to give the public a chance to air its views about the many facets of war. Media contacts were maintained and press releases issued to inform the public about important humanitarian issues.



## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- visited 8,024 detainees in 78 places of detention (4,300 for the first time), including 32 women and 306 minors, distributing bedding, clothing and hygiene articles to them;
- distributed 3,570 family messages to detainees and collected 6,599 messages for distribution to their relatives;



- with the Afghan Red Crescent Society, collected 8,265 Red Cross messages and distributed 5,719 to family members separated by the conflict;



- in Kabul, distributed more than 13,700 tonnes of food and 495 tonnes of other assistance to nearly 22,000 families headed by widows or handicapped people and to orphanages and other institutions serving vulnerable people;
- distributed more than 1,600 tonnes of food and 152 tonnes of other assistance to over 23,000 displaced and returnee families from other parts of the country;
- distributed 153 tonnes of shelter material to families affected by an earthquake in Wardak;
- in cooperation with the National Society, reclaimed 102,000 hectares of arable land for use by over 113,000 farmers by repairing irrigation systems in food-for-work projects that employed over 29,000 people;
- distributed 777 tonnes of food in food-for-work schemes such as those mentioned above;
- distributed over 2,100 tonnes of seed and 106,000 saplings to some 45,000 farmers, and sets of locally-made farming implements to about 20,000 families;
- provided insecticides and fungicides to improve the crop yields of around 10,000 families;
- provided medicines, equipment, funds to pay salaries and vaccines to a veterinary clinic in the Panjshir Valley that treated over 7,000 domestic animals and vaccinated 19,000;
- rehabilitated a Ministry of Agriculture veterinary vaccine production centre which produced some 8,580,000 doses of veterinary vaccines;



- fully supported the surgical departments in 5 hospitals which admitted over 29,000 surgical patients, more than 45% of whom were women and children, and gave about 142,000 outpatient consultations;
- made ad hoc distributions of surgical medicines and materials for 10 other hospitals treating more than 23,000 inpatients (of whom the majority were war-wounded) and giving over 45,000 outpatient consultations;
- provided home care to over 400 paraplegics in Kabul;



- produced 4,565 prostheses, 5,519 orthoses, 9,016 pairs of crutches and 855 wheelchairs for amputees and other handicapped people, and fitted 5,587 new patients for prostheses or orthoses;



- improved water quality and sanitary conditions for 100,000 people in Kabul by building or repairing over 50 wells, 10,000 latrines, and 14 refuse containers, and conducting health education sessions on their use;



- provided technical and material support for Afghan Red Crescent dissemination, tracing and first aid activities;
- in a project delegated to the Netherlands Red Cross, supported the Afghan Red Crescent marastoon (home for destitute) project;
- provided food and material support for Afghan Red Crescent relief and food-for-work activities;
- supported 17 Afghan Red Crescent small-scale vocational training projects for orphans and young breadwinners;



- established a programme teaching basic humanitarian principles in Koranic schools, offering 6 sessions on humanitarian principles to 768 participants;
- held 60 sessions on humanitarian law for 1,260 bearers of weapons;
- participated in the "People on War" campaign, conducting a countrywide survey to elicit the views of people affected by war;



- collected information on mine injuries from ICRC-supported medical facilities and shared them with the OCHA\*'s Mine Action Centre.

\* OCHA: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid



## PAKISTAN

*change in government*

*fighting in Kashmir*

*neutral intermediary*

*negotiating ICRC  
visits to detainees*

*logistics base  
for Afghan operations*

*family links*

International sanctions against Pakistan were maintained throughout 1999, adding to the political and financial problems faced by the coalition government led by the PML.\* In Karachi, tension between the MQM\* and the PML again fomented political violence that led to deaths and arrests. In other regions, sectarian violence continued, and economic and social conditions deteriorated. On 12 October, mounting tension between the military and the prime minister culminated in a military takeover of the government.

In May, Pakistan and India intensified the exchange of fire along the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir after several high positions were taken over by militants in the Kargil area. Heavy fighting continued through August, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of combatants and non-combatants and the displacement of tens of thousands of people within Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Most of these people were able to return home by the end of the year. The ICRC monitored the humanitarian situation of those affected by the fighting, distributing material assistance such as winter clothing, toiletries and school materials to displaced families.

Tensions with India were fuelled at the end of the year when an Indian aircraft was hijacked for the purpose of securing the release of Kashmiri militants held in custody by the Indian authorities.

The situation between Pakistan and Iran over developments in Afghanistan remained tense in 1999, but the visit to Iran in December of the new Pakistani leader signalled the new government's willingness to improve relations.

During the Kargil crisis, the ICRC fulfilled its role of neutral intermediary in the repatriation of prisoners of war released by both sides, and in the return of mortal remains. It also reminded the parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law.

The ICRC closely monitored developments in Pakistan throughout the year. It maintained contacts with national and provincial officials in an effort to gain access to people detained in connection with political tension and sectarian violence. After receiving a verbal agreement to begin detention activities in Punjab in March, the ICRC faced a setback in September when the authorities concerned showed a reluctance to accept ICRC standard visiting procedures.

Throughout 1999, the delegation in Pakistan continued to provide extensive logistical support to operations in Afghanistan. Two ICRC aircraft served the main destinations in Afghanistan, delivering emergency medical supplies and enabling NGOs to maintain their programmes by providing them with the only means of transport within Afghanistan.

Together with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, the delegation continued to enable refugees in Pakistan to maintain links with their family members in Afghanistan by means of Red Cross Messages. It also issued travel documents for Afghan refugees resettling in third countries.

In its continued endeavour to promote respect for humanitarian law among members of the armed forces and other arms bearers, the delegation pursued its programme of presentations on humanitarian law in military and police training institutions. In July, the ICRC was invited to extend its training activities to all three branches of the Pakistan Armed Forces, and it subsequently gave presentations on human-

\* PML: Pakistan Muslim League

\* MQM: Mutahida Qaummi Movement

*promoting humanitarian law*

*cooperation within the Movement*

itarian law and the law of war at sea to naval officers at the Pakistan Navy War College in Lahore, and to officers and cadets at the Navy Engineering College and the Naval Academy in Karachi. It continued to give presentations at the training academies of other branches of the armed forces, and in December it submitted a comprehensive proposal for expanded cooperation, including the integration of humanitarian law into the regular curricula of military training institutions, to the Director General of Military Training of the Pakistan Armed Forces.

In a new programme for dissemination to the police that was approved by the authorities in Punjab province, the ICRC made presentations on humanitarian law to police cadets and conducted workshops on the subject for instructors and staff members at police training schools.

To stimulate the general public's interest in humanitarian issues and principles, the delegation in Pakistan took part in the "People on War" campaign, organizing a mobile exhibition on ICRC activities and principles. The exhibition focused on the Indo-Pakistani wars of 1948, 1965 and 1971.

The Pakistan Red Crescent Society hosted a meeting in Islamabad for the National Societies of South Asia to discuss a strategic framework and core goals for the region. The meeting was facilitated by the Federation, and the ICRC participated throughout.

The Federation and the ICRC worked together with the National Society to assess its capacity as an institution. The ICRC cooperation delegate visited provincial branches to assess their training and management capabilities.

The ICRC also supported National Society first aid activity by donating ambulances and supporting their maintenance.

PROTECTION

315,380

ASSISTANCE

302,810

PREVENTIVE ACTION

480,070

COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

314,348

OVERHEADS

416,014

GENERAL

549,982

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 2,378,604**



## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- registered, visited and participated in the repatriation of 11 members of the armed forces captured in fighting between Pakistan and India, and participated in the repatriation of 2 mortal remains;



- with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, handled 1,107 Red Cross messages exchanged between Afghan refugees in Pakistan and their relatives in Afghanistan;
- issued travel documents for some 1,533 refugees, mainly Afghans, for resettlement in third countries;



- transferred 14,089 tonnes of relief goods and medicines and medical equipment to Afghanistan;
- provided 510 kg of plastic sheeting, blankets and clothing to several hundred families displaced by fighting in Kashmir;



- donated 2 ambulances to the National Society;
- supported 2 Pakistan Red Crescent Society mobile eye clinics treating patients in areas affected by fighting;



- made 11 presentations on humanitarian law to 1,741 armed forces personnel in the training academies of all three branches of the military, including nearly 500 naval officers and cadets;
- sponsored the attendance by one officer of the Pakistan Armed Forces at the Law of War course run by the San Remo International Institute of Humanitarian Law;
- held 2 workshops on humanitarian law for 28 police trainers and instructors, and made a presentation on humanitarian law to 200 police cadets;
- sponsored the attendance of two professors and one student from Pakistani law faculties at a course on humanitarian law and refugee law jointly organized by the ICRC and UNHCR in Bangalore, India;
- sponsored the participation of a senior legal officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in an ICRC conference in Geneva on the customary rules of humanitarian law;
- mounted a "People on War" exhibition which was viewed by 1,500 people.

## SRI LANKA

### PROTECTION

4,847,095

### ASSISTANCE

6,727,255

### PREVENTIVE ACTION

928,616

### COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

557,801

### OVERHEADS

844,151

### GENERAL

1,361,350

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 15,266,268**

*elections spawn violence*



⊕ ICRC delegation ⊕ ICRC sub-delegation + ICRC office/local office

Sri Lanka continued to be wracked by internal conflict throughout 1999. Fierce fighting between government forces and the LTTE\* in northern areas claimed numerous combatant casualties, and a rise in political tension in association with the year's parliamentary and presidential elections resulted in hundreds of violent incidents. Several prominent political figures were assassinated, including a TULF\* member of parliament who had been a key figure in government-sponsored peace efforts. In October it was announced that the presidential elections scheduled for 2000 would be held in December 1999, almost a year early. In the last days of the presidential campaign two separate bomb blasts killed some 35 people and injured over 200. One of the wounded was the President, who suffered facial injuries. On 21 December, 1999 the incumbent was re-elected for another six-year term.

Between March and September, the SLA\* launched several successive operations, code-named "Rana Gosh" ("Battle Cry"), north of Vavuniya. Meeting with very

\* LTTE: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

\* TULF: Tamil United Liberation Front

\* SLA: Sri Lankan Army



## *fierce offensives*

little resistance the army took large areas, including the Madhu Church site where thousands of displaced people were living in open relief centres.

In November, the LTTE launched a major offensive in the Vanni, the area between Vavuniya and the Jaffna peninsula. Code-named "Unceasing Waves III", the offensive enabled the LTTE to regain most of the territory that it had lost to government forces over the previous two years, including the strategically important town of Oddusuddan. In December, another LTTE offensive targeted the Jaffna peninsula. Heavy fighting around the SLA complex at Elephant Pass, the causeway linking the main island to the Jaffna peninsula, continued through the end of the year as government forces resisted LTTE attacks.

The fierce fighting in 1999 resulted in many combatant casualties and large civilian population displacements in the Vanni. In spite of the concentration of inhabitants near areas of combat, civilian casualties were apparently relatively low, with the exception of several serious incidents: in September 22 civilians were killed and 35 injured in the Vanni in an SLA aerial attack which hit a market, and in the eastern district of Ampara at least 50 civilians, including women and children, were killed by the LTTE; later in the year, 37 civilians were killed and around 60 injured by shelling at Madhu Church. The ICRC publicly expressed its concern over the sharp rise in civilian casualties, making constant and immediate representations to both government and LTTE forces regarding their obligation to uphold international humanitarian law and respect civilians.

As fighting around the LTTE-controlled areas of the Vanni region intensified, movements of civilians and humanitarian organizations became more and more hazardous. At the end of June all deliveries of food and medical supplies to the Vanni were blocked, as were civilian movements including medical evacuations. Acting as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC assisted the SLA and LTTE in reaching an agreement on the resumption of movements to and from the Vanni, and in August the ICRC was able to escort civilians, humanitarian workers and government food convoys across the lines. These movements were again blocked by renewed fighting at the end of the year, and the lines remained closed from the beginning of November until early December, when the ICRC facilitated an agreement to allow crossline transport from Vavuniya to the Vanni area.

## *clashes in the east*

In the east of the country, around Batticaloa and Trincomalee, intermittent armed clashes between the SLA and the LTTE claimed lives and disrupted security. Several violent incidents also occurred between Tamil groups in Vavuniya and Batticaloa districts.

## *visits to detainees*

Many arrests were made in connection with the rise in violence, and visits to persons detained in relation to the conflict remained a priority for the ICRC. Written and oral representations were made to the authorities concerned, reminding them of their obligation to guarantee the physical and moral integrity and to respect the dignity of all persons arrested, whether they were undergoing interrogation, awaiting trial or serving sentence.

## *facilitating the return of released captives*

Because of the fierce fighting in which neither side has made a practice of applying humanitarian law with respect to the capture of prisoners, the Sri Lankan conflict has often been characterized as a "no mercy" war. The ICRC has been unwavering in its efforts to convince both the LTTE and government forces to respect their human-



*maintaining family contacts*

itarian obligations towards enemy combatants who are "hors de combat". At the end of 1999, the ICRC was granted access to 11 SLA servicemen in the hands of the LTTE and facilitated their return from the Vanni after their release. Visits were carried out throughout the year to civilians and combatants held in LTTE custody.

The ICRC worked closely with the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society to promote the re-establishment of family links for the thousands of families dispersed by the fighting. Separated families, mostly in the Vanni or from the Jaffna peninsula, were able to communicate with family members through Red Cross messages. Messages regarding emergency or hardship cases were forwarded electronically to speed transmission. The ICRC also facilitated communication by transferring mail between Jaffna and Colombo for the Sri Lanka Postal Service.

The delegation continued to help reunite families separated by the conflict and to trace persons whose relatives were unable to find them. It acted as a neutral intermediary between the government and the LTTE regarding servicemen missing in action, and returned the mortal remains of soldiers and LTTE combatants to the respective parties.

ICRC relief programmes in Sri Lanka focused on people internally displaced by military operations in the Vanni. In addition to suffering the effects of violence, displaced people and residents have been impoverished by the disruption of the economic and social systems of the region wrought by the hostilities. Poor living conditions, an uncertain food supply and restricted access to clean water and medical facilities gave rise to serious health risks for the people living in the Vanni. Those in the eastern districts, the scene of sporadic fighting, were plagued by the same problems, albeit to a lesser extent.

In the Vanni, the ICRC distributed shelter material and household items to thousands of displaced families, and clothes to destitute children. The ICRC made seed distributions and developed plans for small-scale agricultural projects; it also repaired pumps and wells and did test drilling to improve water quality. In a project delegated to the Austrian Red Cross, work continued to improve the water supply in the Batticaloa and Trincomalee areas. The ICRC also served as a neutral intermediary and carried out proxy monitoring for a World Bank-funded irrigation project in the eastern regions.

Fighting also often disrupted medical services or prevented the wounded and sick from having access to functioning services. In cooperation with the Canadian Red Cross, the ICRC supported Sri Lanka Red Cross clinics and mobile health teams which made over 20,000 consultations a month to provide basic health services to populations affected by the conflict. It also supported a National Society mobile dental team in Trincomalee. An ICRC ship made weekly shuttles to maintain the only independent link between Jaffna and the rest of the island, transporting patients in need of medical care, health and education employees and humanitarian workers with their cargo of relief supplies.

The ICRC renovated the Friend in Need Society prosthetic/orthotic workshop in Jaffna, and provided the support needed to maintain artificial limb production there.

The low ratio of civilian-to-combatant casualties in Sri Lanka suggested that some effort was being made by the opposing forces to spare civilians. Nonetheless, the grave violations that did occur and the low number of prisoners taken in battle

*isolation and poverty in the Vanni**supporting prosthetic/orthotic services*



*encouraging compliance  
with humanitarian law*

*spreading awareness  
of humanitarian principles*

*working toward the ratification  
and implementation  
of humanitarian law*

*joint Red Cross activities*

*aid for victims of flooding*

*management support for the  
National Society*

showed that familiarity with and respect for humanitarian law remained limited among combatants from all sides. In order to promote the systematic teaching of humanitarian law within the Sri Lankan armed forces, the ICRC prompted the formation of a permanent working group for the promotion of humanitarian law within the SLA. The group, comprising senior army staff, met for the first time in 1999 and began work on the syllabus for army humanitarian law training.

Sessions on humanitarian law were held for members of the Sri Lankan armed and security forces and of opposition forces, for community leaders, Red Cross volunteers and civilians, including displaced people. The ICRC also provided educational materials on humanitarian law for use in university law schools, and every second month published a newsletter on its activities in Sinhalese, Tamil and English.

The ICRC continued to encourage the Sri Lankan authorities to ratify and implement humanitarian law treaties. It sponsored a symposium for 25 representatives of government ministries to promote the adoption of a Geneva Conventions Act and the formation of a national committee to incorporate humanitarian law into national legislation. To mark the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC sponsored a media campaign to heighten public awareness of humanitarian law.

The ICRC and the Sri Lanka Red Cross worked together to aid populations affected by fighting in the north and north-east. Joint activities included transport of the sick, the war wounded and mortal remains, the staffing and stocking of medical clinics and the provision of assistance to hospitalized civilians. The ICRC also provided financial, material and technical support for National Society tracing, dissemination and first-aid activities. With the backing of the ICRC, the National Society developed and approved a national First-Aid Plan, providing guidelines for all staff and volunteers in order to improve the coherence and effectiveness of their work.

The Sri Lanka Red Cross took the lead role in providing relief in areas of the northern and eastern districts affected by floods in early 1999. The ICRC and the Federation provided the National Society with contributions in kind for its distributions of material assistance to flood victims.

The ICRC and the Federation also worked together to support the National Society's efforts to have the Ministry of Justice put forward a Red Cross Act. They also helped the National Society improve its operational management, developing standardized formats for planning and reporting and putting into place systematic reporting procedures.

## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- visited 3,134 detainees held by the government, 1,997 for the first time, assessing their treatment and the material and psychological conditions of detention and providing them with basic material assistance as required;
- visited 38 detainees held by the LTTE;
- organized and financed 490 family visits to detainees, and provided transport and financial aid for the return home of 197 released detainees;
- supervised the release under its auspices of 11 detainees held by the LTTE;
- collected 2,034 Red Cross messages from detainees and delivered 1,981 family messages to detainees;



- acted as a neutral intermediary between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE in negotiations to allow cross-line transport of civilians, food and medical materials to areas cut off by fighting, and escorted movements across front lines;
- made representations to the opposing parties regarding violations of humanitarian law;



- collected 2,368 Red Cross messages and distributed 4,270 between family members separated by the conflict;
- opened 2,650 tracing files for persons whose families had no news of them;
- resolved 408 tracing cases by either locating the missing person, or by transmitting news about their fate or whereabouts;
- transported the mortal remains of 197 soldiers and LTTE combatants;
- reunited 84 persons with their families, as a rule escorting them out of conflict zones to the areas where their relatives were living;
- acted as a neutral intermediary between the government and the LTTE regarding information on combatants missing in action;



- distributed 1,579 tonnes of material assistance such as shelter materials and household items to 13,000 families displaced by fighting in the Vanni and Vavuniya regions;
- provided clothing to 2,000 destitute children in the Vanni;



- in a project delegated to the Canadian Red Cross, supported up to 6 Sri Lanka Red Cross Society mobile health teams and 28 primary health centres that provided basic health care in the Vanni region;
- supported 2 additional ICRC/National Society mobile health teams in the East;
- supported a National Society health team in Jaffna providing medical care to returnees from the Vanni, treating an average of 350 patients per month;
- helped the Trincomalee branch's mobile dental team treat an average of 750 persons per month;
- transported over 1,600 patients in need of medical care, as well as medical supplies and medical and humanitarian personnel in an ICRC ship that made weekly shuttles to and from Jaffna;





- provided financial and technical support, materials and equipment needed to maintain artificial limb production at the Friend in Need prosthetic/orthotic workshop in Jaffna, manufacturing 160 prostheses and orthoses;



- through a programme delegated to the Austrian Red Cross, built or repaired 95 wells and drilled 39 new boreholes to improve the drinking water supply for 3,500 families in Batticaloa and Trincomalee;
- repaired tube wells, did test drilling, and repaired hand pumps in the Vanni;



- with the Federation, backed National Society distributions of material assistance and shelter materials to more than 17,000 people affected by flooding;
- provided financial and material support for Sri Lanka Red Cross efforts to train 22 first-aid trainers and 407 volunteers, and to provide instruction on teaching techniques to another 50 trainers;
- translated and printed publications for use in National Society first-aid and dissemination activities;
- provided the Sri Lanka Red Cross with training equipment, vehicles and computers;



- showed 27 military trainers how to teach humanitarian law;
- held a symposium for representatives of government ministries in order to promote the implementation of humanitarian law on a national level;
- in the period leading up to the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, conducted a media campaign to increase public awareness of humanitarian law;
- conducted 192 sessions on humanitarian law for 11,191 people such as government officials, military and security personnel, members of opposition groups and civilians, including internally displaced people.

## TAJIKISTAN



⊕ ICRC delegation    + ICRC presence

A major breakthrough in the implementation of the 1997 peace agreement was made in 1999. Armed clashes between government and opposition forces ceased, the integration of UTO\* fighters into the Tajik armed forces was declared complete and the UTO disbanded its armed wings. In August, a Supreme Court decision ended the ban on opposition political parties, and UTO members subsequently began filling government and administrative posts. Many UTO members still in detention benefited from an amnesty. In September, the government held a referendum on proposed constitutional changes, and in the November elections the incumbent president was re-elected for a seven-year term.

Although these developments improved the country's overall stability, Tajikistan continued to be plagued by problems, making the peace a fragile one. Certain armed groups remained outside the peace agreement, and particularly in the Karategin Valley disarmament was not complete, leaving the government with tenuous control over the area. In the upper Garm valley, the presence of Uzbek refugees and of combatants who were active in areas across the borders with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan

\* UTO: United Tajik Opposition

*the peace process*

*destabilizing factors*



*assistance for vulnerable groups*

*relief logistics*

*medical activities reduced*

*prosthetic/orthotic centre opens*

*family news transmitted*

*still no visits to detainees*

*Ottawa treaty ratified*

further eroded the area's stability. Fighting broke out in southern Kyrgyzstan between the Kyrgyz army and armed groups with links in Tajikistan's Karategin valley; Uzbek air strikes against those groups hit Tajik territory and led to tension between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The economy in Tajikistan remained weak, with recovery hampered by poor infrastructure, a lack of resources, rampant crime and corruption, the harsh climate and the difficult topography. These problems left large groups of people in war-affected areas unable to recover their self-sufficiency. The ICRC provided technical and financial support for assistance programmes run by branches of the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan in the Karategin valley. It also distributed food and material assistance to the victims of landslides and of a typhoid epidemic in Garm, and to Red Crescent branch projects for vulnerable groups.

Access from Dushanbe to the most needy areas in the Karategin valley was sporadically blocked by the weather and isolated incidents of violence, forcing long detours through Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and thereby slowing humanitarian operations. The ICRC established a stock of relief supplies so that it could react quickly in case of fresh needs in southern Kyrgyzstan, and maintained emergency stocks in Khorog and Garm. The delegation in Dushanbe also provided logistical support for ICRC relief activities in Afghanistan and for the work of the regional delegation in Tashkent for people in southern Kyrgyzstan who were affected by the fighting there.

The ICRC programme to support treatment of the war-wounded was reduced as the hostilities diminished in intensity, but it continued to provide surgical supplies to hospitals for treatment of the wounded still receiving care. The delegation also reduced its emergency medical stocks. It maintained distributions of medical materials to facilities providing basic medical care in the Karategin valley, and explored possibilities for the handover of the programme to another organization.

The ICRC completed rehabilitation work on the Dushanbe prosthetic/orthotic centre, and staff from the Ministry of Social Protection were trained by a team including two Afghan prosthetic/orthotic technicians from the ICRC delegation in Kabul. The Tajik Red Crescent registered amputees throughout the country, and prosthesis production began in March. The project was delegated to the Canadian Red Cross Society and the centre was soon producing artificial limbs at a steady rate.

The Red Cross message system, handled by the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan, continued to enable civilians to communicate with family members abroad, particularly in Afghanistan.

Although the ICRC made regular representations to the authorities in a bid to gain access to persons deprived of their freedom in connection with the conflict, it was unable to obtain permission to visit detainees in accordance with its standard procedures.

Tajikistan's review of its legislation afforded a favourable climate for the ratification and implementation of humanitarian law. Thanks to its contacts with ministries concerned and a seminar organized for their representatives, the ICRC was instrumental in bringing about the establishment of a national committee for the implementation of international humanitarian law. The committee met for the first time in August 1999. In October, Tajikistan ratified the Ottawa treaty banning landmines and the Tajik president signed two decrees concerning Tajikistan's accession to the 1976

*humanitarian law instruction  
for the armed and security forces*

*promoting humanitarian law  
in academic circles*

*teaching humanitarian values  
in secondary schools*

*working within the Movement*

ENMOD\* Convention and to various protocols to the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons.

In their ongoing efforts to encourage the armed forces to incorporate instruction on humanitarian law into military and police training courses, ICRC dissemination delegates focused on teaching humanitarian law to senior officers, training unit instructors to pass on their knowledge to the troops, and producing publications on the law of armed conflict for training purposes. They ran "train-the-trainers" courses for the Russian Border Troops and for various units of the Tajik armed forces, set up humanitarian law libraries within military units, and provided training and materials for newly-introduced instruction on humanitarian law in police training facilities.

In order to encourage the teaching of and research in humanitarian law at university level, the ICRC organized a seminar on the instruction of humanitarian law for professors of penal law. It sponsored the participation of university faculty and law students in humanitarian law symposia, courses and competitions held outside Tajikistan. The delegation helped develop university-level materials for use in teaching humanitarian law.

The campaign to introduce humanitarian principles in secondary school curricula in Tajikistan progressed as planned in 1999. Copies of the school manual, "Look at the World with Wise Eyes", were distributed to eighth-grade pupils, teacher's manuals were printed and distributed, school inspectors were taught to train and supervise teachers in the use of the manual, and the training of teachers was begun.

The Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan played a key role in ICRC tracing and prosthetic/orthotic activities. With a view to developing the National Society's capacity to work autonomously, the ICRC provided dissemination training for its staff and volunteers both in the branches and at national headquarters. Food and non-food relief items were given to Red Crescent branches in the areas hardest hit by the conflict for their relief activities for the most vulnerable.

\* ENMOD: Convention on the Military or any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques



## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- with the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan, handled 488 Red Cross messages exchanged between members of separated families;



- distributed over 2,500 food parcels, 31 tonnes of food, and 13 tonnes of blankets, plastic sheeting, and used clothes to institutions aiding vulnerable groups, and an additional 3,863 food parcels, 22 tonnes of food, and 1 tonne of material assistance through National Society programmes assisting vulnerable families in areas affected by conflict;
- distributed food assistance and hygiene and household items to 3,500 victims of landslides, and material assistance to victims of a typhoid epidemic;



- made ad hoc distributions of medicines and medical materials to hospitals for the treatment of some 120 war-wounded;
- made regular distributions of basic medicines and medical materials to 6 health facilities (total capacity of 240 beds) providing medical care to civilians in the Karategin/Tavildara valleys;



- completed repair work at the prosthetic/orthotic centre in Dushanbe and opened an artificial limb workshop there;
- fitted 188 newly-registered amputees for prostheses, and manufactured 200 prostheses and 247 pairs of crutches;
- continued a training programme in polypropylene production techniques for 10 prosthetic technicians and bench workers;



- financed and organized 9 seminars for National Society representatives to train them how to locate and refer patients to the newly-opened prosthetic/orthotic workshop;
- financed and helped organize 3 Red Crescent branch soup kitchens and a bakery that fed a total of 290 vulnerable persons in the Karategin valley, and developed a honey-production project to generate income for them;



- developed a manual on the inclusion of humanitarian law in national criminal legislation;
- made presentations on humanitarian law to more than 900 members of the armed and security forces;
- produced 46,500 pamphlets on behaviour in combat in Tajik and Russian;
- trained over 120 military trainers in instruction of the law of armed conflict;
- printed 122,000 manuals and 6,000 teacher's guides for use in secondary school instruction on humanitarian principles, distributing 96,200 of the manuals and 5,500 of the teacher's guides;
- taught 94 teacher trainers to train and supervise teachers in the use of the secondary school teaching manuals;
- ran a seminar on humanitarian law for 23 law instructors from Tajik law faculties;
- sent a team of two law students and one instructor to the De Martens moot court competition in Minsk;
- sent two university faculty members and one Ministry of Security senior instructor to ICRC courses on humanitarian law held in Moscow;
- sent the head of the Department of Journalism of the Russian-Tajik Slavonic University to an ICRC humanitarian law course held in Ashgabad;
- sent a law student to a humanitarian law course in Warsaw organized by the Polish Red Cross;
- sent the head of the Tajik Higher Military College to the ICRC course on humanitarian law at San Remo;
- printed 2,000 copies in Tajik of a brochure on the protection afforded to journalists by humanitarian law.



## NEW DELHI

### Regional delegation

(Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives and Nepal)

*growing tensions  
in Indo-Pakistani relations*

*detention follow-up  
in Jammu and Kashmir*

*violence in the north-east*

*political unrest in Bangladesh*

*slow progress toward peace  
in the Chittagong Hill Tracts*

In 1999, tensions between India and Pakistan continued to put a strain on the situation along the line of control dividing Kashmir. From May to July, military operations intensified around the Kargil sector, causing hundreds of civilian and military casualties, and forcing the displacement of several thousand civilians. The ICRC submitted a memorandum to both the Indian and the Pakistani authorities, reminding them of their obligation to respect the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols in the conduct of operations. It also acted as a neutral intermediary, registering, visiting and participating in the repatriation of members of the armed forces captured in fighting between India and Pakistan, and returning mortal remains across lines.

Relations between India and Pakistan deteriorated further in December, after an Indian Airline aircraft was hijacked for the purpose of securing the release of Kashmiri militants held by the Indian authorities; the ensuing controversy over whether Pakistan was in any way responsible for the incident only served to increase tensions between the two countries.

In the second half of the year skirmishes between militant groups and the armed forces in Jammu and Kashmir increased, and the year ended with several militant attacks on key points, including the Legislative Assembly building in Srinagar. The ICRC, for its part, continued to visit detainees held in connection with the situation prevailing in Jammu and Kashmir. Following an October 1998 round-table discussion on detention activities with the Indian authorities, the ICRC was able in 1999 to cross-check transfers with police station registers, to follow up released detainees by visiting their homes or sending letters to their families, and to keep track of detainees previously visited but no longer being held in the same place of detention. Later in the year the ICRC encountered difficulties running its detention activities in Jammu and Kashmir. This prompted the organization to request another round-table discussion with the authorities. The request was still pending at the end of the year.

Despite negotiations between the different parties involved, sporadic acts of violence continued to occur in India's north-eastern states. The ICRC followed developments in the area, and in January its Delegate General met with representatives of several ministries to discuss the possibilities for expanding humanitarian activities in the north-east. Throughout the year, the ICRC worked to strengthen cooperation with Red Cross branches in Assam and Nagaland, financing the establishment of a first-aid programme at the state Red Cross branch of Assam. It also made presentations on humanitarian law to police officers in Nagaland and Mizoram, and to military personnel in Assam.

Large portions of Bangladesh were still recovering from the devastation of the 1998 floods, and the subsequent loss of property and jobs in the countryside resulted in increased migration to urban centres. The opposition alliance led by the Bangladesh National Party intensified its campaign against the Awami League government, and general strikes and violent clashes between opposition activists and the police contributed to an atmosphere of instability.

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, a peace accord signed in 1997 officially ended two decades of violence between the Bangladesh army and the tribal insurgency movement there. The resettlement of internally displaced people and of the tens of thou-



*permanent ICRC presence  
in Bangladesh*

*growing insurgency in Nepal*

*detainees in Bhutan*

*working to promote  
humanitarian law*

*marking the 50th anniversary  
of the Geneva Conventions*

*maintaining contacts  
with the media*

sands of refugees who returned from Tripura resulted in numerous land disputes, and tensions between different groups regularly generated violence and associated arrests. In May, a regional council was formed with the former rebel leader as its chairman.

In March 1999, the ICRC established a permanent presence in Bangladesh in order to keep a close eye on cooperation projects with the National Society and to monitor needs for humanitarian assistance in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. It opened an office in Dhaka in June with the permission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The ICRC and the Bangladesh Red Crescent society continued their dissemination campaign in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and conducted tracing workshops for Bangladesh Red Crescent units. The ICRC's regional legal advisors made contact with Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials regarding the ratification and implementation of humanitarian law treaties.

In May 1999, the NCP\* won an absolute majority in parliamentary elections, improving the prospects for political stability after a long succession of short-lived coalition governments. The economic situation remained grim, however, and Nepal's social indicators were still amongst the lowest in South Asia. The Maoist insurgency, or "peoples' war" ("jana yudha"), declared in 1996 continued to spread from its stronghold in mid-western Nepal to other districts, including areas near Kathmandu. In June 1999, government figures put the total death toll at 890. The ICRC obtained permission to visit detainees held in connection with the insurgency late in 1998, and carried out visits to places of detention in western and central Nepal throughout 1999. In October it obtained permission to visit police posts as well, and subsequently began visits in accordance with its standard procedures.

In Bhutan, the ICRC continued twice-yearly visits to detainees, making its first visit to detainees in Lodrai and return visits to Thimpu and Chamgang. In cooperation with the Nepalese Red Cross, it enabled seven Bhutanese women who were refugees in Nepal to make a 36-hour visit to their husbands detained in Bhutan. Most of the couples had been separated for years.

In all of the region's countries, the ICRC works to promote the principles of humanitarian law. In 1999, India acceded to Protocol IV (concerning the use of blinding laser weapons) and amended Protocol II (concerning the use of mines) to the 1980 UN Convention on Conventional Weapons.

The ICRC provided the National Societies of the region with guidelines, organizational back-up, and resource materials as they planned activities to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. As part of its own anniversary activities it launched a monthly newsletter, "ICRC Information", which was distributed extensively in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. In India, the ICRC encouraged the government to issue a postage stamp on the theme "Even wars have limits", and organized various media events.

The regional delegation's Media Liaison Office maintained contacts to encourage media coverage of humanitarian issues and Red Cross activities, and made presentations on landmines and other topics of humanitarian concern in courses, symposia and seminars. In Dhaka, it presented a module on communication and the media to Red Crescent branches.

\* NCP: Nepali Congress Party



*dissemination to police and  
armed forces*

*promoting the study  
of humanitarian law*

*cooperating  
with National Societies*

The ICRC continued to make presentations on humanitarian law to members of the armed forces and to the police in India and Bangladesh, and to the armed forces in Nepal. In November, a presentation on ICRC activities focusing on dissemination to the armed forces was given to military officers and political officials in Bhutan.

The regional delegation maintained contacts with law societies, universities and academic associations, cooperating with them to organize meetings, symposia and courses related to the teaching of humanitarian law in relevant university programmes. It worked with UNHCR, the National Commission on Human Rights and the Indian Society of International Law to offer a one-year diploma course on human rights and international humanitarian and refugee law. The first of its kind in South Asia, the course was launched in September.

The ICRC provided material and technical support for the tracing and dissemination activities of the region's National Societies. In India, it cooperated with the Federation to organize disaster-preparedness workshops, organized dissemination and tracing seminars, and provided funding and relief materials to support Red Cross branch activities for those affected by the fighting in Jammu and Kashmir.



## IN 1999 THE ICRC:

- visited 1,407 detainees in 21 places of detention in Jammu and Kashmir and forwarded 703 Red Cross messages between them and their families;
- visited 167 detainees in 3 places of detention in Bhutan and collected 258 Red Cross messages from them to be distributed to their families in refugee camps in Nepal, and organized family visits to the detainees;
- registered and visited 441 detainees in 41 places of detention in western and central Nepal;
- issued 773 travel documents, mostly for Afghan nationals;
- financed and helped organize tracing workshops and courses for the National Societies of Bangladesh and India, and produced and distributed tracing leaflets and promotional posters for their use;
- with the Indian Red Cross and the Federation, offered five state-level disaster-preparedness workshops;
- in India, provided two ambulances, relief goods and financial support to the Indian Red Cross for its activities for persons affected by fighting along the line of control;
- supported the first of three planned first-aid training workshops conducted by the Assam Red Cross branch;
- with the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, produced 10,000 leaflets, 2,000 posters, 40,000 bags for relief items and other materials to be used in a dissemination campaign in the Chittagong Hill Tracts;
- with the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, organized a seminar on international humanitarian law and human rights for 51 future police officers;
- organized 17 presentations on humanitarian law for 2,122 armed forces members in India, Bangladesh and Nepal, and 10 presentations for 666 police officers in India;
- in cooperation with the National Societies, held workshops in India, Bangladesh and Nepal to discuss dissemination strategies among branch representatives;
- in cooperation with UNHCR and the National Law School of India at the University of Bangalore, held a 10-day teaching session on humanitarian and refugee law for 27 post-graduate students and lecturers from throughout South Asia;
- with the Indian Society of International Law organized a seminar on humanitarian law for 80 diplomats, government officials and other civic leaders, and a symposium on humanitarian law instruction for 90 law tutors;
- with UNHCR, organized a teacher-training programme on humanitarian and refugee law in Meerut, India, which was attended by about 25 teachers of defence studies from throughout northern India;
- with the Association of Indian Universities, held a meeting of experts in defence studies from all over India to draft a humanitarian law syllabus for Masters-level programmes in defence and strategic studies;
- with the "Times of India", sponsored a contest for journalists on "Human Dignity and War";
- with UNHCR and the Indian Centre for Humanitarian Law and Research, organized a teacher training programme in Hyderabad for 24 law instructors from southern India.



## TASHKENT

### Regional Delegation

(Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,  
Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)

*clashes with fundamentalists*

*helping displaced  
and returning families*

*first visit to persons deprived  
of their freedom*

*encouraging the ratification  
and implementation  
of humanitarian law treaties*

*developing humanitarian law  
studies in academic circles*

The Central Asian States continued to suffer economic decline in 1999, with all four countries covered by the Tashkent delegation experiencing a decrease in foreign investment and a fall in economic indicators. Growing discontent with multilateral regional organizations became evident when Uzbekistan withdrew from the CIS\* Security Treaty and Turkmenistan pulled out of the CIS visa-free travel agreement.

A bombing incident in Tashkent in February, attributed to Islamic groups, heightened concern over the growth of fundamentalism in Central Asia. Leaders of all four of the countries covered by the regional delegation subsequently agreed to take strong measures against fundamentalist activities. Fighting broke out in August between the Kyrgyz army and a group of combatants operating along the border between southern Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Uzbek air strikes against these armed groups hit Tajik territory, resulting in a deterioration in the relations between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.<sup>3</sup>

The fighting in southern Kyrgyzstan forced the displacement of approximately 5,000 people in the Batken area. The ICRC and the Kyrgyz Red Crescent Society cooperated to distribute food and hygiene articles to displaced and returning families.

Following reports of arrests related to clashes in southern Kyrgyzstan, the regional delegation approached the Kyrgyz authorities for permission to visit detainees held in connection with the fighting. On 22 December the delegation was able to visit a prison under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Security. The visit was carried out in accordance with ICRC standard procedures and was the first ICRC visit to a place of detention in the countries covered by the regional delegation.

Throughout 1999, the Tashkent regional delegation continued to promote the incorporation of humanitarian law into national legislation and to help develop the teaching of humanitarian principles and law through national institutions. It handed over reports on the status of international law in national legislation to the governments of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. In Kyrgyzstan, the national committee on the implementation of humanitarian law, made up of representatives of different ministries, met for the first time, and the ICRC organized a training seminar for its members. Kyrgyzstan also ratified the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols, to which it had succeeded on its independence. In Uzbekistan, the ICRC cooperated with the Academy of the Ministry of the Interior, the Red Crescent Society and the National Human Rights Centre to organize a national seminar on the implementation of humanitarian law.

ICRC dissemination staff consulted with faculties of law, journalism and international relations on the process of including humanitarian law in their curricula, sponsoring the second meeting of the Central Asian Coordinating Council for the Teaching of International Humanitarian Law and working with Ruhr University to organize a conference on the same subject. The ICRC supported research on humanitarian law, sponsored the participation of students and faculty members in activities related to humanitarian law, and provided financial and technical support for the publication of materials on the subject. The period under review saw the systematic inclusion of humanitarian law in the curricula of universities in all four countries covered by the regional delegation.

\* CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 174-175.

*teaching humanitarian principles  
in secondary schools*

*incorporating the law  
of war into military training*

*working with the region's  
National Societies*

In an effort to instil humanitarian attitudes at an early age, the ICRC has pursued a strategy of making lessons on humanitarian issues a part of secondary school curricula. The Tashkent regional delegation maintained contacts to explore possibilities for developing school programmes in Kazakhstan, and in Kyrgyzstan a new school programme agreement was signed in November by the ICRC, the National Society and the Ministry of Education. In Uzbekistan, where the secondary school programme is relatively well developed, seminars were conducted to train educational specialists to become teacher trainers for over 12,000 grade 11 teachers. A handbook for students and a teacher guide on its use were tested, finalized and published in Uzbek, Russian and Karakalpak and distributed in schools throughout Uzbekistan. Having thereby achieved the objectives set forth in the first agreement, the ICRC, the Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Public Education signed a new agreement in July.

To promote the application of humanitarian law in military operations, the regional delegation continued its efforts to encourage the armed forces in the region to include the law of armed conflict in their training programmes. In 1999, the Ministries of Defence in both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan established comprehensive law of war training programmes. In Uzbekistan, the Deputy Minister of Defence appointed a working group to develop, in cooperation with an ICRC specialist, a curriculum and training manual on the law of armed conflict.

To promote cooperation and establish a regional approach to cooperation activities, the ICRC financed and organized a two-day workshop with the Federation and the Presidents of all four National Societies. It supported regional training courses on tracing and dissemination for National Society staff and volunteers in countries of the region. Complementing its other activities targeting young people, the delegation financed youth programmes of the Central Asian National Societies. In all four of the region's countries it participated in press conferences marking the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions.



## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- signed several cooperation project agreements with Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, and cooperation framework agreements with Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan;
- with the Kyrgyz Red Crescent, distributed 17 tonnes of family parcels and wheat flour and 2,000 blankets to some 5,000 displaced people and returnees in southern Kyrgyzstan;
- together with the Netherlands Red Cross Society, helped finance a Kyrgyz Red Crescent programme for the rehabilitation of young offenders;
- supported the Uzbek Red Crescent youth volunteer programme;
- sponsored a youth summer camp for orphans/refugee children and Red Crescent youth coordinators in Kyrgyzstan;



- finished printing over 530,000 copies of the student handbook "Man and Society" and distributed over 330,000, along with over 15,900 teacher's guides, to schools throughout Uzbekistan and conducted 22 seminars to show about 1,000 educational specialists how to train teachers in their use;
- in cooperation with the Institute for International Peacekeeping Law (Ruhr University, Bochum), organized a regional conference on the teaching of International Humanitarian Law in Ashgabad, attended by 22 participants from more than 15 universities of the five Central Asian Republics and Azerbaijan;
- sponsored the second meeting of the Central Asian Coordinating Council for the Teaching of International Humanitarian Law in Central Asia;
- sent representatives from Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Uzbek universities to an ICRC seminar in Moscow for Deans/Heads of Chair of Journalism;
- sent faculty members from Central Asian State universities to an ICRC-organized course on humanitarian law in Moscow, and to a course on customary humanitarian law held in Geneva by the ICRC Legal Division;
- arranged for teams from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan to participate in the De Martens moot court competition in Minsk;
- gave financial support to the Turkmenistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs to publish 1,000 copies of the Turkmen translation of the Geneva Conventions;
- financed the printing of 500 training manuals on the law of war for the Kazakh armed forces, and 500 for the Kyrgyz armed forces;
- trained the instructor of the new Kyrgyz National Guard course on the law of war and helped with the production of a training manual;
- organized a training course on the law of armed conflict to high-ranking officers of the Turkmenistan Border Guards;
- organized a photo exhibition, "People on War", to raise media and public awareness of the impact of war; the exhibition was visited by over 14,000 people in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

## CAMBODIA



⊕ ICRC delegation   
 ⊕ ICRC sub-delegation   
 ⊕ Prosthetic/orthotic centre/workshop

The formation of a coalition between the Cambodian People's Party and FUNCINPEC\* in late 1998 and the surrender of the last resisting Khmer Rouge fighters paved the way for significant progress toward stability in Cambodia in 1999. There were no armed clashes during the year. In May Cambodia became the 10th member of ASEAN, confirming international recognition of its new government's legitimacy. Discussions about trials of former Khmer Rouge leaders continued throughout the year, with the government and the United Nations disagreeing over the composition of the court, and heated international and internal debate over who should be tried.

One of the most heavily mined countries in the world, in 1999 Cambodia became the second ASEAN country to ratify the Ottawa treaty banning landmines.

Early in the year the last 50,000 Khmer refugees were repatriated from Thailand by UNHCR, thus bringing to a close the repatriation operation for those Khmer who had fled to Thailand in 1997. Largely regarded as a success, the operation nonetheless generated land disputes, and some returnees were settled on land that had not been cleared of mines.

\* FUNCINPEC: United National Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia

*Ottawa treaty ratified*

*repatriation completed*



*coping with the aftermath  
of decades of conflict*

*programmes scaled down*

*access to new areas  
in the north-west*

*treatment for amputees*

*searches for family members  
renewed*

*working together  
within the Movement*

*broadening awareness  
of humanitarian principles*

In spite of these important steps towards political stability, Cambodia continued to be plagued by problems accumulated over decades of conflict. The economy was weak, with much of the population living in poverty. A massive disarmament programme was undertaken during the year, but its success was uncertain and arms remained readily available. There was a high crime rate, and corruption continued to undermine attempts to develop the public and private sectors.

Most of these problems, however, are not part of the ICRC's remit, and with the cessation of hostilities, its programmes were scaled down. While delegates continued to make regular visits to detainees coming under the ICRC's mandate, the number of detainees dwindled. The need to assist surgical facilities and maintain emergency medical stocks for treatment of the war-wounded ended with the fighting. As programmes were cut back, the number of expatriate and local staff was reduced.

The surrender of the Khmer Rouge opened areas in the north-west that had previously been under their control. The ICRC's access to these areas improved in 1999, and its teams overcame poor infrastructure, bad weather conditions and mine-related security constraints to visit them, going as far as Anlong Veng, and to assess needs for tracing and prosthetic/orthotic services.

Mine injuries continued to occur, particularly in the north, and the need persisted for prosthetic/orthotic services for the country's tens of thousands of amputees. The ICRC's prosthetic/orthotic centres in Phnom Penh and Battambang manufactured and fit prostheses and orthoses for amputees and polio patients, and provided services to many amputees from the north who were finally able to seek treatment. Field trips were organized from the Battambang centre to make on-the-spot prosthetic repairs and to distribute crutches and wheelchairs to amputees or polio patients. Amputees were transported from remote areas to Battambang for their first fitting. The ICRC component factory in Phnom Penh continued to produce components not only for these facilities, but also for those of other organizations in Cambodia and for other rehabilitation centres in the region.

The opening of the north-west generated new possibilities for finding persons whose relatives had been searching for them for years. People in these areas were given the chance, after years of isolation, to write Red Cross messages to relatives, and tracing cases were re-opened as people renewed the search for their next-of-kin.

The delegation provided support for Cambodian Red Cross Society tracing and dissemination activities, helped organize workshops, and assisted with the preparation of media materials and the planning of events and activities. To mark the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC and the National Society jointly sponsored an event attended by over 100 government representatives and other leaders. The ICRC and the Federation worked together with the National Society to draft legislation on the National Society and the red cross emblem law.

The delegation gave lectures and provided educational material on humanitarian law at the Faculty of Law in Phnom Penh. The National Society and the ICRC gave joint talks throughout the country to government officials, students, police officers, teachers, and Red Cross youth advisers, and the ICRC published materials for their use.

*military training  
in humanitarian law*

*mine awareness*

In cooperation with the RCAF,\* the ICRC made presentations on humanitarian law to officers and army troops. It developed educational material for their use, and set up a humanitarian law documentation centre within the Armed Forces Training Directorate. For the first time, military instructors joined Red Cross dissemination officers in making presentations on humanitarian law to the military police.

While mine clearance significantly reduced the threat to civilians in some areas, Cambodia remained one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. Throughout the year the ICRC maintained contacts and supported activities to spread awareness of what ratification of the Ottawa treaty implied for the government, national legislation, and the general public. In order to raise public awareness of the issue, the ICRC and the National Society organized a Red Cross Marathon Against Mines in which a former deminer who was injured and became an amputee ran 700 km, the length of Cambodia, through some of its most mine-infested areas.

\* RCAF: Royal Cambodian Armed Forces



## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- visited 42 detainees in 16 places of detention, distributing articles such as blankets, hygiene materials, mosquito nets, clothing, and study and leisure materials as required;
- conducted a scabies-treatment programme in three prisons;
- collected 3,834 family messages from detainees, and distributed 3,522 messages to detainees from their relatives;



- in cooperation with the Cambodian Red Cross Society, resolved 29 tracing cases either by locating the person sought or by transmitting information on his or her fate or whereabouts to the family;
- opened 73 new tracing cases for persons seeking news from long-lost family members;
- collected 4,419 Red Cross messages from civilians, for distribution both within Cambodia and abroad, distributing 5,290;



- fitted 991 new patients with prostheses or orthoses;
- manufactured 1,553 prostheses, 362 orthoses, and 4,710 pairs of crutches;
- manufactured prosthetic/orthotic components including 1,518 knee joints, 9,115 alignment systems, and 1,752 orthotic sidebars;



- gave material and technical support to the National Society for the organization and implementation of its dissemination programmes and activities;
- in cooperation with the Cambodian Red Cross and the Federation, participated in the revision of the Cambodian Red Cross statutes and the drafting of legislation on the National Society and the red cross emblem;
- together with the Cambodian Red Cross and the Federation, organized a workshop on fundraising and dissemination for 23 National Society branch directors;
- in cooperation with the Cambodian Red Cross, presented 19 sessions on humanitarian law which were attended by 1,004 persons, including members of the military, law students, university faculty, government officials and police officers;
- with the RCAF, conducted presentations and workshops on humanitarian law for over 5,550 members of the armed forces;
- developed and produced more training materials on humanitarian law for use in military training institutions;
- in cooperation with UNHCHR and the RCAF, organized a seminar on human rights and humanitarian law for 51 army commanders;



- developed plans and materials for a campaign to promote the Ottawa treaty in 2000, including the release of the Khmer version of the ICRC video, "The Ottawa treaty: towards a world free of anti-personnel mines", produced in 1999.

## MYANMAR



*the ICRC expands its presence  
in Myanmar*

Although government negotiation with several armed ethnic groups has, over the past few years, resulted in an overall reduction in armed activity in Myanmar's border areas, conflict has continued in parts of the country and combined with political tensions and a flood- and drought-prone climate to weaken the economy. As a result, public medical and social services in remote areas found it difficult to meet the needs of the population. In October 1998, after a three-year absence, the ICRC re-established its presence in Myanmar by opening an office in Yangon. Early in 1999 it carried out health surveys in Shan state and began to implement a health promotion programme with the relevant authorities. In mid-1999 the ICRC obtained permission to extend its presence to other border states. It made surveys in Mon and Kayin states and opened offices there. The ICRC office in Yangon became an independent delegation in August.

In May, having obtained an oral agreement from the State Peace and Development Council giving it access to all places of detention in the country, the ICRC began visits to detainees. Visits were conducted in accordance with ICRC standard procedures, and after each visit the delegates' findings and related recommen-



*prison visits begin*

*maintaining family links  
for detainees*

*health promotion in Shan state*

*support for prosthetic/orthotic  
centres*

dations were presented to the authorities concerned. Detainees received recreational materials, and were given the possibility to write Red Cross messages to their families. From May to December, ICRC detention teams conducted 25 visits to places of detention in Myanmar, meeting thousands of detainees and registering the security detainees among them for further follow-up.

To facilitate the exchange of messages between detainees and their families, the ICRC, in cooperation with the Myanmar Red Cross Society, began building a Red Cross message network throughout the country. It also financed the transport of needy family members making visits to security detainees being held far from home.

Five villages in the Mong Pying township of eastern Shan state were targeted for health promotion activities. In April the ICRC made a needs assessment and conducted a participatory rural appraisal training course for locally-hired staff. It subsequently promoted the establishment of Village Health Committees, conducted health education sessions, made surveys of the drinking water supplies and provided material for their improvement, and carried out basic maintenance and repair work on medical facilities. It began a training programme for traditional birth attendants, and in cooperation with the Myanmar Red Cross it started community-based first-aid training.

To follow up the prosthetic/orthotic activities it had conducted in Myanmar from 1986 to 1995, the ICRC provided support to civilian prosthetic/orthotic workshops in Yangon and Mandalay, financing the cost of food, hygiene material and transfers for patients, providing polypropylene sheets and equipment and conducting technical teaching sessions for staff members. Two military prosthetic/orthotic centres were also provided with polypropylene sheets.

## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- conducted visits to more than 26,000 detainees in 18 places of detention, registering 1,245 security detainees and revisiting over 300 of them;
- financed transport for 155 persons making family visits to detainees;
- collected 199 Red Cross messages from detainees and delivered 63 replies from their families;



- conducted a survey of health service needs in Shan state and launched a pilot project for health promotion in five villages of the Mong Pying township in eastern Shan state;



- provided financial, technical and material support for two civilian prosthetic/orthotic workshops and material support for two military prosthetic/orthotic workshops.



## BANGKOK

## Regional delegation

(People's Republic of China,  
Japan, Laos,  
Democratic People's Republic of Korea,  
Republic of Korea,  
Macao, Mongolia, Taiwan,  
Thailand, Viet Nam)

*monitoring civilian populations*

*re-establishing family links*

*coming to the aid of amputees  
and the war-wounded*

*spreading knowledge of  
humanitarian law and principles*

During the year under review, the regional delegation's focus remained the promotion of ratification and implementation of humanitarian law treaties and the integration of the law of armed conflict into national military training programmes. The main thrust of cooperation projects with National Societies in the region was the development of their dissemination and tracing activities.

Discord on the Korean Peninsula, unresolved since the 1953 Armistice, continued throughout 1999 as the two parties failed to reach an agreement at peace talks in Geneva. The unabated tension again frustrated efforts to resolve the problems of the hundreds of thousands of Koreans who have remained separated from their family members, often without even news of their fate, since the fighting ended. The ICRC pursued contacts with the authorities and National Societies concerned with a view to promoting a humanitarian approach to the issue of separated Korean families.

Macao returned to Chinese sovereignty on 20 December, 1999.

By late March 1999, the Khmer who had fled to Thailand in the aftermath of the 1997 violence had been repatriated,<sup>4</sup> and the ICRC shut down its operation on the Thai-Cambodian border. The regional delegation continued to monitor the situation of the approximately 100,000 refugees from Myanmar living in camps along the Thai-Myanmar border, maintaining contacts with the leaders of refugee communities, the Thai authorities and humanitarian organizations operating in the area.

The Bangkok regional delegation continued to work with the tracing services of the region's National Societies and local Red Cross organizations, following up on individual tracing cases where ICRC action was requested. As the office responsible for centralizing all tracing files and related information concerning Cambodia, the Bangkok regional delegation cooperated with the National Societies concerned to locate persons whose families were searching for them. Until the Khmer refugees who were living on the Thai-Cambodian border were repatriated, a field officer stationed on the border oversaw a regular Red Cross message service between refugees in Thailand and their families in Cambodia. Between October 1997, when the service was started, and March 1999, over 2,200 messages were exchanged.

In a programme funded by its Special Fund for the Disabled, the ICRC pursued its cooperation with the government of Viet Nam to improve the quality of prostheses and prosthetic components produced in the Ho Chi Minh prosthetic/orthotic centre, to introduce ICRC prosthetic technology to provincial centres, and to finance the artificial limbs of destitute amputees not eligible for government support. Until the Khmer refugees returned to Cambodia, the ICRC gave first aid and surgical materials to Thai health facilities providing free health care for refugees, including mine victims.

The ICRC promoted plans for the formation of a permanent working group for coordinating instruction of the law of war within the armed forces of Thailand and Mongolia. In China and Thailand it launched "train the trainers" activities, organizing the first-ever workshop on the law of war for instructors from military academies around China, and the first instructor's course on the same subject for senior officers of the Royal Thai Armed Forces. Instructional material was developed and translated in association with these courses and for use by trainers in established training activities within the Mongolian armed forces.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 186.



*military humanitarian law  
training at the regional level*

*teaching future leaders  
about humanitarian law*

*cooperation within the Movement*

*50th anniversary events*

In a new region-wide approach to military humanitarian law training in the law of war, the regional delegation participated in the planning and presentation of the ASEAN Regional Forum seminar on the law of armed conflict. High-level representatives of the governments and armed forces of the region's countries participated in the seminar, which was sponsored by the Australian government. The delegation also launched a newsletter which focused on current humanitarian law training activities undertaken by the armed forces of the region. In order to obtain maximum benefit from contacts made during the San Remo course in international humanitarian law, the regional delegation hosted the first centralized briefing for all officers from East and South-east Asia whose attendance the ICRC had sponsored at the course.

The ICRC also maintained activities to broaden awareness of humanitarian law and the principles and activities of the Red Cross Movement in different sectors of society. In October, the regional delegate made a presentation on humanitarian law and Red Cross principles and activities to a group of future diplomats from the Republic of Korea. In Taiwan, the ICRC's role was presented to students of the Foreign Service Institute in Taipei. For the first time since the early 1990s, the ICRC was able to resume presentations on humanitarian law to law students in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The three-year project for training disseminators within the Red Cross Society of China, "Dissemination China 2001", progressed as planned, with the first regional seminar taking place in Hainan province in March. By the end of the year, about two-thirds of the provincial Chinese Red Cross branches had, on their own initiative, organized training for their staff and members and promotion events for the public.

With the return of Macao to Chinese sovereignty, the Macao Red Cross Society became a branch of the Red Cross Society of China, with a special autonomous status similar to that of the Hong Kong Red Cross Society. Both the Hong Kong and Macao Red Cross Societies participated in the "Dissemination China 2001" programme.

The regional delegation participated in a course on humanitarian law organized by the Japanese Red Cross in order to prepare participants from Japan and neighbouring countries for a mission abroad with one of the Movement's international components or with the Japanese Red Cross.

The regional delegation participated in the activities of National Societies around the region to mark the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. In Thailand, the National Society organized a symposium on humanitarian law which was attended by high-level members of the government and armed forces and by the Crown Princess, who is also the Thai Red Cross Executive Vice-President. The Japanese Red Cross invited representatives of the government, the armed forces and the Red Cross to a round-table discussion which included speakers of international repute. In Mongolia, the National Society, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ICRC together launched a Mongolian version of "IHL-Answers to your questions" at an event marking the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. The Vice-President of the ICRC attended the Mongolian Red Cross Society's 60th anniversary celebration.



## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- handled 250 Red Cross messages exchanged between Khmer refugees along the Thai-Cambodian border and their families in Cambodia;
- opened 33 new tracing cases;



- in Viet Nam, in a programme of the Special Fund for the Disabled, gave financial and material support for the prosthetic/orthotic workshop in Ho Chi Minh City, which fitted 806 new patients and manufactured 1,647 new prostheses and 172 canes.



- gave material and technical support to the region's National Red Cross Societies for the organization and implementation of their dissemination, tracing, and first-aid programmes;
- helped the Red Cross Society of China to plan, develop and produce educational materials for the three-year country-wide project "Dissemination China 2001";
- in cooperation with the Federation, funded an international camp for Red Cross youth organized by the Red Cross of Vietnam for 270 participants from Viet Nam and other countries in the region;



- gave talks on the law of armed conflict to 437 members of the armed forces, trained 85 military humanitarian law instructors, and developed training materials for use in military training institutions in various countries in the region;
- sponsored the attendance by armed forces officers from Thailand, China and Mongolia at the international humanitarian law course run by the San Remo International Institute of Humanitarian Law;
- launched a newsletter on military humanitarian law training activities undertaken by armed forces in the region, and distributed it region-wide to military and government contacts;
- provided educational materials for courses on humanitarian law at universities in Thailand and Laos;
- sponsored the translation of written material on humanitarian law, including the translation into Chinese by the Beijing University International Law Institute of selected articles from the "International Review of the Red Cross".



## JAKARTA

### Regional delegation

(Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia/East Timor, Malaysia, Singapore)

*intercommunal violence spreads throughout the Moluccas*

*ethnic violence in West Kalimantan*

*separatist conflict in Aceh*

*helping the victims of violence in Aceh*

Separatist and intercommunal violence rocked the Indonesian archipelago's trouble spots of East Timor, the Moluccas, West Kalimantan and Aceh in 1999. In Irian Jaya, separatist rallies and demonstrations were largely peaceful, but related incidents rendered the situation volatile. In spite of the turmoil, Indonesia successfully held its first multiparty parliamentary and presidential elections. Shortly after, the People's Consultative Assembly in Jakarta revoked the decree declaring the integration of East Timor into Indonesia and endorsed a proposal of amnesty for political prisoners.

In January, violence broke out between Christian and Muslim communities in Ambon. Flareups continued throughout the year and spread to all the Moluccas, claiming hundreds of lives, causing widespread destruction and forcing large numbers of people to flee their homes. An ICRC-backed PMI\* team monitored conditions in shelters for the displaced, gave medical consultations and distributed food and basic material assistance. This programme was completed in June, but the ICRC was unable to return to the Moluccas and so could not take action to meet the needs brought about by the increasing violence there.

Early in 1999 an upsurge of ethnic violence in West Kalimantan (Borneo) targeted migrants from Madura island. Clashes resulted in numerous deaths, the destruction of property and the displacement of thousands of Madurese. A joint PMI/ICRC team provided medicines and water tanks for use in camps for the displaced, and distributed clothes and basic household and shelter items. In response to the displaced population's deteriorating nutritional status, the Red Cross team distributed food to supplement government rice rations until evaluations showed a marked improvement.

Persistent violence between the Free Aceh Movement and the Indonesian security forces flared in July when an anti-separatist operation was launched. The conflict cost hundreds of civilian lives and forced tens of thousands of people temporarily to flee their homes. Sporadic outbreaks recurred at the end of the year, as demands for an independence referendum became more strident.

The ICRC made contact with the victims of the violence in Aceh and their families; when appropriate, it approached the authorities concerned regarding alleged violations of humanitarian law. It followed up on the cases of persons who were allegedly arrested or had disappeared, and visited persons detained by the Indonesian armed and security forces in connection with the situation. The ICRC strengthened PMI ambulance services, and helped train local Red Cross teams administering first aid and evacuating the wounded. It provided surgical material for the treatment of the wounded, and, together with the PMI, ensured that displaced persons living in shelters had access to drinking water and sanitation facilities. In a joint programme, the PMI and the ICRC provided food parcels and material relief supplies to vulnerable people such as widows, orphans, the handicapped, and victims of sexual abuse. For the first time in Aceh, the ICRC held seminars for armed forces personnel on the subjects of humanitarian and human rights law.

In January, clashes between pro-integration and pro-independence groups in East Timor were sparked by government discussions and declarations about East Timor's possible independence; the violence worsened as the date of the UN-

\* PMI: "Palang Merah Indonesia" (Indonesian Red Cross)



*tension mounts over  
East Timor's future*

*situation out of control*

*emergency response in East Timor*

PROTECTION	2,118,186
ASSISTANCE	19,889,293
PREVENTIVE ACTION	1,082,148
COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY	1,033,644
OVERHEADS	1,552,522
GENERAL	1,402,546
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>Sfr 27,078,340</b>

administered ballot drew near. The ICRC, which was already running protection, health and water and sanitation programmes in the territory, monitored the mounting violence closely. During an official visit to Indonesia in February, the ICRC President discussed the ICRC's concern over the situation in East Timor and other humanitarian issues with the Indonesian President and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence.

As tension in East Timor mounted, the ICRC office in Dili built up emergency stocks and the delegation in Jakarta worked to help improve the emergency response capacity of the PMI. In September, when the results of the ballot showed that a large majority of the population was in favour of independence, an explosion of violence forced nearly all East Timorese to flee their homes, either to isolated inland areas, to West Timor or to other islands of the Indonesian archipelago. A multinational peace-keeping force, INTERFET,\* was deployed and the Indonesian armed forces withdrew from East Timor. The People's Consultative Assembly revoked the decree declaring the integration of East Timor into Indonesia, paving the way for the formation of a new independent Asian state. Xanana Gusmao, the leader of the CNRT\* and former military leader of the East Timorese force Falintil returned in October, and the UNTAET\* was established to administer the transition to independence.

On 6 September, shortly after the violence erupted, the ICRC compound in Dili was attacked and the expatriate staff forced to leave the island. The ICRC returned to Dili on 14 September. It restored medical and surgical services at Dili General Hospital, re-established the Dili water supply, made distributions of food and other basic necessities in Dili to people who were starting to return en masse, and started protection activities that included tracing services to help separated family members. Relief bases were set up in Darwin<sup>5</sup> and Surabaya (Java) to provide logistical back-up, and the National Societies were asked to help provide staff. Over 50 expatriates were quickly deployed to manage emergency operations.

As security conditions permitted, ICRC offices were opened in Ainaro and Baucau and the focus of relief activity was shifted to remote areas that were not being assisted by other organizations. Besides distributing food, basic necessities and shelter materials, the ICRC also provided seeds and tools to help returnees regain self-sufficiency.

The ICRC consulted with INTERFET and later UNTAET in order to ensure that their detention procedures complied with humanitarian law, and regularly visited detainees held under their authority. It also monitored the situation of returnees and released detainees, approaching the authorities about alleged instances of intimidation or reprisal, and encouraging them to take measures to protect all sectors of the population.

In the wake of the dramatic events in East Timor, the ICRC engaged the Indonesian authorities on several occasions in a dialogue concerning respect for humanitarian law. Similar discussions were held with the States which had made contingents available to the multinational force, and with representatives of the pro-Indonesian militias in West Timor.

\* INTERFET: International Force for East Timor

\* CNRT: Council of National Resistance in East Timor

\* UNTAET: United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

<sup>5</sup> Financed and staffed by the Australian Red Cross.



## *re-establishing family links*

The ICRC set up message distribution points around East and West Timor, and the names of persons to whom messages were addressed were broadcast on the BBC World Service. Tracing teams registered unaccompanied children and engaged in an active search for the parents in East and West Timor. Of the thousands of families dispersed within Timor and around the archipelago, the ICRC reunited those whose separation had left some members particularly vulnerable. It also facilitated the repatriation of mortal remains.

## *joint Red Cross activities in West Timor*

As the post-ballot violence spread, many East Timorese fled to West Timor, where 250,000 people sought refuge in camps for the displaced. These included both people who had been expelled from East Timor by militias opposed to independence, and those who had fled spontaneously. Offices were opened in Atambua and Kupang to manage joint PMI/ICRC operations in favour of East Timorese living in the camps. The offices provided tracing services, distributed basic household and shelter material, improved water and sanitation systems, and established health posts to provide basic medical care for camp residents. At the end of year over 100,000 people were still living in camps for the displaced in West Timor.

## *dissemination to members of the military and police*

Continuing its promotion of the systematic teaching of humanitarian law in armed forces training programmes, the ICRC prompted the formation in May of a permanent working group on the law of armed conflict within the Indonesian Armed Forces. Knowing that tangible results cannot be achieved overnight, ICRC stepped up its efforts in this field, making presentations to military and police units involved in maintaining law and order around the archipelago. These included police forces sent to East Timor, high ranking military officers and military lawyers.

## *spreading awareness of humanitarian principles throughout society*

The regional delegation in Jakarta continued to work with many Indonesian groups and institutions, including members of the Ministry of Justice and prison officials, in order to promote respect for humanitarian law and principles and foster understanding of its activities.

In order to stir interest in humanitarian law and principles in academic circles, the delegation in Jakarta maintained contact with universities around the archipelago, conducting seminars and presentations for law professors. In cooperation with the Trisakti University Center for the Study of International Humanitarian Law, the ICRC organized an event to mark the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions and launched the ICRC publication entitled "Traditional laws of war in Indonesia". With a view to heightening public awareness of humanitarian issues and principles, it made presentations to journalists on humanitarian law and ICRC activities and working methods.

## *developments in Malaysia*

Malaysia ratified the Ottawa treaty banning landmines, and formed a Committee of International Law within its armed forces. The ICRC conducted dissemination activities in the country and cooperated with the Malaysian Red Crescent Society, participating in several of its activities.

**IN 1999 THE ICRC:**

- visited 135 detainees in 13 places of detention under Indonesian authority in East Timor, and 47 persons detained by multinational authorities;
- visited 72 detainees in 32 places of detention in Indonesia;
- with the PMI, organized family visits for 34 detainees being held in Indonesia far from their homes;
- organized the transport home of 40 released detainees in Indonesia;



- opened 37 tracing cases in Indonesia and 196 cases in Timor regarding persons who remained unaccounted for after arrest;
- in cooperation with the PMI, distributed 18,324 of approximately 40,300 Red Cross messages collected, and logged 2,003 satellite telephone calls in order to help family members separated by the East Timor crisis to recontact their next-of-kin;
- registered 420 unaccompanied children in East and West Timor, worked to locate their families, and helped reunite 68 of them with their families;
- reunited 222 families separated by the upheaval in East Timor;



- in East Timor, distributed 2,346 tonnes of food and 768 tonnes of material assistance to 70,000 people in Dili and 105,000 persons in other areas of East Timor;
- distributed agricultural tools and 108.6 metric tonnes of seeds to help returnees in East Timor regain self-sufficiency;
- provided 451 families in East Timor with the materials and technical assistance to build temporary shelters;
- in cooperation with the PMI, distributed 268 tonnes of food and 197 tonnes of material assistance to over 30,000 persons displaced by fighting in Ambon and West Kalimantan;
- In Aceh, in cooperation with the PMI, provided 51 tonnes of food and more than 3 tonnes of material assistance to some 3,000 vulnerable persons who were the victims of violence there;
- in West Timor, distributed 279 tonnes of food and 282 tonnes of emergency material assistance such as plastic sheeting, tarpaulins, and basic household articles to more than 150,000 persons who had fled East Timor;





- before the crisis erupted in East Timor, conducted regular visits to 32 remote villages to ensure mass treatment of scabies and intestinal parasites, and held health education sessions;
- after its return to Dili, provided the funds, personnel and medical supplies needed to restore and maintain medical, surgical, paediatric and obstetric services at Dili General Hospital, treating 969 in-patients and 10,891 out-patients and serving as the only referral hospital in East Timor;
- made health surveys and provided medical materials to humanitarian organizations, INTERFET medical facilities, dispensaries and mobile clinics providing medical care after the crisis in East Timor, and made 15 medical evacuations from isolated areas;
- in cooperation with the PMI, established 12 health posts in camps for the displaced in West Timor which provided basic medical treatment for as many as 200 patients a day;



- improved water installations for over 4,000 people in East Timor before the crisis;
- provided the personnel, funds and materials needed to restore the Dili water supply system after the crisis, including the salaries for 32 Dili Water Board workers;
- in cooperation with the PMI, delivered water tanks and built basic latrines in camps for the displaced in Aceh;



- provided financial, material and technical support to the PMI for its programmes to care for the wounded in situations of violence;
- gave presentations on humanitarian law, Red Cross principles and the role of the National Society in a 10-day PMI "train the trainers" workshop on disaster preparedness, and in a 3-day PMI seminar in Bandung for 300 Red Cross youth members;
- in cooperation with the Federation and the Malaysian Red Crescent, prepared to implement the "Exploring humanitarian law" educational project for teenagers.
- supported and participated in PMI branch activities on respect of the emblem for 30 students and Red Cross volunteers in Manado and 150 academics and civic leaders in Yogyakarta.



- presented Red Cross principles and humanitarian law to members of the Indonesian armed forces, including 1,200 soldiers and 60 officers in Aceh, and 373 members of the Mobile Brigades from Aceh and East Timor;
- gave presentations on humanitarian law to members of Indonesian police forces, including training sessions held in West Java for 900 policemen and similar sessions for 1,350 policemen who were being dispatched to East Timor;
- organized a 2-week course on humanitarian law for 48 military lawyers and high-ranking officers from all 10 Indonesian military commands (KODAM), the special force (KOPASUS), the army strategic-reserve command (KOSTRAD) and operational troops; also organized a seminar for 81 air force lawyers and administrative officers;
- in cooperation with Syiah Kuala University, conducted a one-week seminar on humanitarian law for 55 law lecturers from universities in Aceh, and for other participants from the PMI, the military command, the city police and the Legal Aid Foundation;
- organized an advanced course on humanitarian law for university professors at the Trisakti University Centre for the Study of International Humanitarian Law, and provided advanced training in humanitarian law at several universities for lecturers from Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, and the Eastern regions of Indonesia;
- with Syiah Kuala University and the Indonesian Journalist Association, organized a seminar on the protection afforded to journalists by humanitarian law, which was attended by over 50 participants in related fields;
- with the Dr. Soetomo Press Institute, organized a panel discussion on the same subject for 106 participants;
- conducted a course on humanitarian law for 36 officers of the Malaysian armed forces;



- supported and participated in a regional conference on landmines held in Bali; organized by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, the conference was attended by 35 participants from 15 countries;
- sponsored an exhibition on landmines in Denpasar.



## MANILA

## Regional delegation

(Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Autonomous States, territories and colonies of the Pacific)

*Red Cross assistance  
to displaced in Mindanao*

*protecting civilians  
in areas of fighting*

*visits to detainees  
in the Philippines*

*intercommunal violence  
in the Solomon Islands*

*over 10,000 displaced  
by violence in Guadalcanal*

In 1999, the Philippines were still suffering from the effect of the economic downturn that began in 1997 in many Asian countries. A high rate of unemployment and rapid population growth combined to push more people into poverty. The government met rising crime with a crackdown which, while managing to reduce the crime rate, overstretched the country's prison and judicial systems.

The Philippine government continued to be engaged in two separate armed struggles: the campaign against the communist NPA\* and the conflict in Mindanao with the MILF.\* In April, the ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary when the NPA released five captured Philippine military and police officers. In June, formal peace talks between the government and the NPA and associated political parties broke down. Later in the year more tension was generated when the NPA again captured an army officer and a police officer.

In January, heavy fighting between the AFP\* and the MILF around the MILF's Camp Omar forced the temporary displacement of an estimated 50,000 people. The ICRC and the Philippine National Red Cross Society provided food for families in evacuation centres. MILF/AFP clashes continued sporadically until the end of the year, and joint Red Cross relief distributions to temporarily displaced families were therefore maintained.

In areas where the hostilities escalated, the ICRC maintained contact with the AFP and with political groups associated with the NPA and the MILF, in order to promote the unconditional application of humanitarian principles and to foster respect for the civilian population.

The ICRC continued its visits to persons detained in connection with both conflicts. The ICRC's findings in the various detention facilities continued to be the object of substantive dialogue with the relevant authorities of the Philippine government.

In the Solomon Islands, grievances over traditional land rights were fanned by economic decline and resulted in disturbances in Guadalcanal. In April, violence erupted between the natives of Guadalcanal (the Gwale) and people of Malaitian origin. The government declared a state of emergency on 15 June. The newly-formed GRA\* took control of all of the province but the capital, Honiara. The intercommunal violence had abated by August, when a Commonwealth mediation effort resulted in the signature of a peace agreement. The state of emergency was lifted and the situation remained calm through the remainder of the year.

As a result of the disturbances there, about 10,000 Malaitians fled Guadalcanal to return to Malaita, and several thousand Gwale fled Honiara to outlying areas. In June, the ICRC and the Solomon Islands Red Cross ran six reception centres and helped some 8,000 people to leave Guadalcanal by boat, providing them with food. The ICRC served as a neutral intermediary in negotiations to ensure the delivery of medical supplies to outlying health posts whose supply lines had been cut by the disturbances, and escorted deliveries across lines. In July and early August, the joint Red Cross relief operation distributed food assistance, seeds, tools and soap in Malaita to families who had fled there, and soon afterwards made similar distributions to those who had fled Honiara to the province of Guadalcanal.

- \* NPA: New People's Army
- \* MILF: Moro Islamic Liberation Front
- \* AFP: Philippine Armed Forces
- \* GRA: Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army

*instability in Pacific islands*

*logistic support  
for East Timor operations*

*preventive activities*

*dissemination to military, security  
and opposition forces*

In late June, the ICRC began visiting detainees held in Honiara in connection with the events, and in the following months it received systematic notification of arrests from the authorities and made regular visits to places of detention in accordance with its standard procedures.

Limited resources, trade barriers and internal discord further undermined the economies of several Pacific islands. In Fiji, Samoa, and Vanuatu, ethnic and tribal rivalries resurfaced to challenge stability. In Papua New Guinea the peace process advanced slowly and a fragile stability was maintained.

The Australian Red Cross was quick to provide personnel and office space for the ICRC logistical base in Darwin which backed up ICRC relief operations in East Timor.

Throughout the region, the ICRC continued to promote humanitarian law and principles among members of the armed forces and other arms bearers, to encourage the ratification and implementation of humanitarian law treaties, and to spread knowledge of humanitarian principles at all levels of society. The ICRC office in Sydney encouraged the implementation of humanitarian law in Pacific island States, and maintained contact with government, academic and National Society representatives to discuss humanitarian needs in the region. Together with the Australian government, the ICRC organized and financed a seminar on the law of armed conflict held in the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum.

In the Philippines and the Solomon Islands the ICRC gave talks on humanitarian law to members of the armed and security forces, and to members of armed opposition groups.



## IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- visited 357 detainees in 91 places of detention in the Philippines;
- financed 122 family visits to those detained far from their homes;
- visited 43 persons detained in the Solomon Islands in connection with the unrest there;



- in cooperation with the Philippine National Red Cross, supplied 356 tonnes of food and more than 11 tonnes of material assistance to families displaced by the fighting in Mindanao;
- in cooperation with the Solomon Islands Red Cross, provided transportation for 8,000 people returning to Malaita from Guadalcanal, and more than 260 tonnes of food and 17 tonnes of material assistance such as tarpaulins, soap, and materials for planting and fishing to over 3,300 families displaced by unrest on Guadalcanal;



- in the Philippines, provided ad hoc assistance of medicines and surgical materials for the treatment of 80 people wounded in separate incidents;



- jointly with the Philippine National Red Cross, hosted seven youth volunteers from the Hong Kong Red Cross visiting the Philippines to speak with people in Mindanao as part of the "People on War" campaign;
- financed the printing of 40,000 brochures for use in Philippine Red Cross dissemination activities, and paid the salary of one National Society dissemination officer;



- with the Australian government, organized and financed the ASEAN Regional Forum seminar on the law of armed conflict, during which military training officers and senior government officials from 20 countries participated in three days of training in humanitarian law issues and training methods;
- gave presentations on humanitarian law to more than 500 members of the Philippine armed forces, and funded training materials to be used by the armed forces working group on humanitarian law;
- held dissemination sessions for over 700 members of armed groups in the Philippines and Solomon Islands;
- held sessions on the ICRC mandate and activities of the ICRC for staff and volunteers of the Philippine National Red Cross, and for local leaders;
- conducted a session on ICRC detention activities for 40 jail wardens from the Philippine Bureau of Jail Management and Penology;
- held a seminar in Honiara for government officials to encourage the adoption of national measures for the implementation of humanitarian law;
- in Papua New Guinea, organized two courses on humanitarian law and the Red Cross Movement for 50 members of the police force;
- in Fiji, organized one course on humanitarian law for 25 members of the police force, and another for 25 members of the military;
- with the Australian Red Cross, conducted a seminar to present issues related to media coverage and humanitarian action to media representatives.