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*Red Cross messages help maintain the lifeline of communication.
Receiving news from loved ones, in this case from a daughter across the front line, can relieve mental anguish and restore hope.*

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

Western and Central Europe and the Balkans

ICRC delegations:

Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

ICRC regional delegation:

Budapest

Eastern Europe

ICRC regional delegations:

Kyiv, Moscow

The Caucasus

ICRC delegations:

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

North America

ICRC regional delegation:

Washington

Staff

ICRC expatriates¹: 167
National Societies¹: 85
Local employees²: 1,572

Total expenditure: Sfr 85,524,843.88

Expenditure breakdown

Protection: 6,127,109.43
Assistance: 43,963,719.79
Preventive action: 14,930,484.26
Cooperation
with National Societies: 6,035,858.41
Overheads: 4,412,343.00
General: 10,055,328.99

¹ Average figures calculated on an annual basis.

² Under ICRC contract, as at December 1999.



ICRC Headquarters
 ICRC regional delegation
 ICRC delegation

ICRC / AR 12.99

Throughout the period under review, vast regions of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus again suffered the effects of intermittent fighting or outright war, and the Balkans in particular continued to be plagued by a dispiriting spiral of violence and ethnically motivated attacks.

Peace talks convened at Rambouillet, France, in February failed to reconcile the Serbian authorities with the leaders of the Kosovo Liberation Army, and on 23 March, history hung in the balance when the NATO Secretary General authorized the launching of air strikes against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, with the declared aim of putting an end to ethnic violence in Kosovo. As controversy raged over the legitimacy of NATO's "obligation to intervene" in the affairs of a sovereign State, the ICRC notified NATO's member countries and the Yugoslav leadership that the 1949 Geneva Conventions were fully applicable in this unprecedented situation and reminded them of their obligations thereunder. More than half a million Kosovo Albanians crossed the border into Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. As a humanitarian crisis of staggering proportions unfolded, the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies decided to adopt an integrated, regional approach so as to better mobilize resources, both human and material, from within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and allocate them in the most efficient way possible. This approach allowed delegates to provide relief and medical support for the refugees who arrived in the neighbouring regions, to restore contact with their relatives left behind in Kosovo, and to come to the aid of people affected by the NATO bombing raids in Yugoslavia. Throughout the entire conflict, the ICRC kept its expatriate staff stationed in Belgrade. Delegates were thus able to assist with impartiality all civilians in need, whether in Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro or Serbia proper.

On 29 March, security constraints in the region forced the ICRC to withdraw its staff from Kosovo. In the midst of the war, the ICRC's President travelled to Belgrade and conveyed the organization's concerns with regard to the security of the civilian population. He was able to negotiate the ICRC's return to Pristina, and operations resumed there on 24 May, three weeks before the end of the conflict and the deployment of the international security force KFOR.

In the immediate aftermath of the conflict, the ICRC dealt with the most pressing needs, in particular with tracing missing persons. The fate of ethnic Albanian detainees transferred out of Kosovo when the hostilities ended was also extremely disquieting. The ICRC negotiated with the Serbian Ministry of Justice in July to obtain access to those detainees, and was subsequently allowed to visit some 2,000 of them and restore contact between them and their relatives in Kosovo.

In a region where tolerance dissipates quickly unless actively husbanded, the massive return of refugees to Kosovo brought more inter-ethnic violence. Another source of great concern for the ICRC was the spate of revenge attacks targeting Kosovo Serbs and members of the Roma (gypsy) and other communities.

Efforts continued on the part of the international community to find lasting solutions to the social and economic problems in the Balkans. To this end, a summit held in Sarajevo launched a Stability Pact designed to foster unity and rebuild the shattered economies of the Balkan countries. Signatories to the Pact included the Foreign Ministers of eight countries in the region - Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria,

Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In a speech given at the summit, the ICRC's President, while welcoming the initiative, voiced concern at the plight of tens of thousands of families in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including Kosovo, who were still without news of relatives who had disappeared during the fighting. The Red Cross remained committed to acting on behalf of the families for as long as the problem persisted, and urged the authorities in all the countries concerned to make every effort to respond to their need for information.

Peace in the Caucasus remained elusive, as clashes between Russian federal forces and armed insurgents resulted in a loss of lives on all sides, widespread destruction in the Chechen capital, Grozny, and fears that a spillover of violence might lead to instability in other countries in the region, particularly Georgia. Until October, the ICRC continued its assistance programme in Chechnya, with the support of the Chechen branch of the Russian Red Cross. Throughout the year, the relief operation in the northern Caucasus was directed by a team of expatriate staff based in Nalchik (Kabardino-Balkaria), and aided by the ICRC regional delegation in Moscow. It was expanded when hostilities resumed, first in Daghestan then in Chechnya, and additional support was provided by medical, relief, water and sanitation and logistics experts from ICRC headquarters in Geneva. The ICRC, together with its partners in the Movement, provided tens of thousands of people in the region with basic necessities, in coordination with the authorities and various humanitarian agencies. Other programmes, conducted mainly in neighbouring Ingushetia, included assistance for medical facilities treating the displaced and the wounded, and water-supply and sanitation projects.

Throughout the months of conflict, the ICRC reminded the authorities concerned of their obligation to spare civilians and their property during military operations and to refrain from using the threat of violence. It engaged in a direct dialogue with the Russian authorities regarding respect for humanitarian law and access to detainees, and also expressed its concerns to the Chechen leaders, through contacts with their representatives in Baku and Tbilisi.

The regional delegation in Kyiv continued its dissemination activities in the countries that it covered. Delegates gave numerous seminars and training courses on the law of war to the armed forces, and provided advice and technical support for the incorporation of international humanitarian law into national legislation.

As in the previous year, the ICRC pursued its efforts to protect and assist detainees and civilians still affected by unresolved conflicts in the southern Caucasus. Discussions continued with the parties involved in the Karabakh conflict regarding the fate of people captured or not yet accounted for. As tuberculosis continued to exact a heavy toll among the prison population, the ICRC maintained its support for existing eradication programmes. Treatment of the disease was particularly successful in Georgia, where the government implemented comprehensive control measures and gave the ICRC access to all prisons.

WESTERN EUROPE

*ICRC President travels
to promote humanitarian law*

During the year under review, the ICRC's President and other representatives of the institution held numerous meetings with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and government officials in preparation for the 27th International Conference³ of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The Conference brought together the States party to the Geneva Conventions and the various components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The ICRC's President visited various countries throughout the year to increase awareness of the problems facing the institution and to enhance knowledge of its mandate and work. His missions took him to the Holy See, Iceland, Italy, Lichtenstein, Monaco, Norway, Portugal and Sweden where he endeavoured to mobilize resources for humanitarian operations and participated in events to promote humanitarian law. He also travelled to Berlin, where he delivered an introductory address at the 102nd Inter-Parliamentary Conference and later met with government officials, including the President and the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. In April, the President had meetings in Brussels with the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs and with the President of the Belgian Red Cross Society and participated in a European Commission meeting on the crisis in the Balkans. On a return visit in October, he met with the European Union's Development and Humanitarian Aid Commissioner. The President paid an official visit to Finland in August, which at the time held the presidency of the European Union. Discussions with the Finnish President, the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence focused on the ICRC's relations with the European Union. The President also travelled to London in October, where he met with government officials and representatives of the Jewish community. In Vienna, the President addressed the Permanent Council of the OSCE,* stressing the need to strengthen links between the two organizations. At the end of the year, he had talks with the Secretary General of NATO and later addressed the North Atlantic Council, the first time that an ICRC President was invited to do so. In his speech, the President placed particular emphasis on the application of the rules of international humanitarian law in situations of armed conflict.

The ICRC remained in close contact with other organizations, as well. At a meeting with UNICEF senior representatives held in Sainte-Croix, Switzerland, the UNICEF delegation was headed by its Executive Director, while the ICRC team included the Director of Operations and the Deputy Director of Law and Communication. The meeting was chaired by the ICRC President, and the agenda covered a wide range of institutional and operational issues. At the tripartite meeting of the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the UN, held in Strasbourg in February, the ICRC was represented by the Head of Operations for Western Europe. Discussions focused primarily on the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, particularly in Kosovo. At the invitation of NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, a delegate from the ICRC International Organizations Division attended, as an observer, a week-long meeting which focused on the links between politics, economics and the military. The exercise underscored the importance of close coordination between all those concerned, including humanitarian organizations, in post-conflict situations. The annual UNHCR/ICRC meeting, held in Lugano in May, dealt with operating principles in large-scale humanitarian crises, and in particular with events in Kosovo and the southern

³ See pp. 375-377.

* OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

*close contacts with
international organizations*

*operational activities
in Northern Ireland*

offices in Western Europe

Balkans. The meeting was opened by the President of the ICRC, which was also represented by the Delegate General for Europe.

At the annual meeting of the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, the ICRC was represented by the Director for International Law and Communication. Delegates also participated in meetings of the Council of Europe, and the ICRC had observer status at the OSCE summit in Istanbul in November. In May, the ICRC President gave the opening address at the third annual Humanitarian Forum in Wolfsberg, Switzerland, which discussed the protection of victims of armed conflicts.⁴

Throughout the year, the ICRC President, Vice-Presidents, Committee members and representatives received Heads of State, Ministers and senior officials from other organizations. Visitors to ICRC headquarters this year included the American Deputy Secretary of State, the President of Portugal, a delegation from Luxembourg, whose leader reiterated her country's support for the ICRC, and the President and Secretary General of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture.

The head of the Task Force for Western Europe carried out missions to Dublin, Belfast and London, where she met with National Society representatives. The ICRC seconded a delegate to the British Red Cross to help set up a joint Irish Red Cross/British Red Cross dissemination project, designed to strengthen knowledge of the Movement and its principles and of the ICRC's mandate in Northern Ireland and in the border counties of the Republic of Ireland. An ICRC doctor and two delegates travelled to the Maze and Maghaberry prisons in Northern Ireland to visit detainees held in connection with the events that had occurred prior to the Good Friday agreement.

In 1999, the ICRC set up a permanent office in Belgium whose goal is to explain the organization's policy to institutions based in Brussels, particularly with regard to issues linked to humanitarian law. In France, the Paris office focused on establishing close links with senior government officials, the media and major French NGOs, and took part in emergency meetings of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the Balkans crisis.

As in the past, the ICRC remained in close contact with the Swiss Federal authorities in Bern. Two Federal Councillors made a courtesy visit to ICRC headquarters, and in June the President went to Bern, where he held talks with the Federal authorities, in particular the head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

⁴ See pp. 39 and 405.

ALBANIA

PROTECTION

2,838,812

ASSISTANCE

6,900,533

PREVENTIVE ACTION

337,528

COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

75,221

OVERHEADS

1,037,853

GENERAL

706,675

TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 11,896,621



ICRC / APR 12 99

long-term commitments crucial for economic recovery

The year under review proved to be a tumultuous one for Albania. From mid-March onwards, the country found itself embroiled in the chaos brought about by the Kosovo conflict, with hundreds of thousands of refugees streaming into the northern border region of Kukes. In an impressive show of solidarity, Albania welcomed nearly half a million Kosovar refugees in all. Most were taken in by host families, while the remainder found accommodation in camps and collective shelters. The adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 on 10 June 1999 subsequently put an end to the conflicts between Yugoslav armed and security forces and the KLA,* and between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Although the majority of Kosovo Albanians returned home, several thousand refugees who knew that their homes had been destroyed or were situated in insecure areas elected to remain in Albania over the harsh winter months.

Although a plethora of international aid organizations established their headquarters in Tirana during the crisis, long-term commitments to help the country towards economic recovery failed to materialize. The transition from a centrally

* KLA: Kosovo Liberation Army

*integrated Red Cross/
Red Crescent operation*

*using modern technology
to restore family links*

strain on local medical facilities

planned to a free-market economy floundered badly, while the repercussions of the Kosovo imbroglio further drained the public purse. Unemployment levels ran high throughout the year, and many Albanians continued to depend on remittances from relatives abroad. Although the number of incidents of unrest declined, crime was cause for serious concern, largely because of the ready availability of firearms. Particularly in the north-eastern regions of the country, mines and unexploded ordnance stymied economic development and posed a threat to the local population.

Given the magnitude of the Kosovo conflict, the ICRC and the Federation joined forces in an integrated approach to ensure a coherent and rapid response to the crisis. This was the first time that such a large-scale operation had been run jointly, with the Federation assuming the role of lead agency in Albania. Both the ICRC and the Federation cooperated closely throughout the crisis with the Albanian Red Cross, which enabled the ICRC in particular to undertake its activities to assist the victims of the conflict with minimal security risks. Also in conjunction with the Albanian Red Cross, the ICRC spearheaded a major tracing operation to restore family links.

During the crisis, the bulk of the ICRC delegation's work consisted in tracing activities. Delegates were despatched to various locations throughout the country, where they established a network of satellite phones that allowed refugees to inform their relatives, primarily in Europe and North America, of their safe arrival in Albania. By the end of June, tens of thousands of people had used this means of communication. In tandem with this operation and at their request, the names of refugees were broadcast on Radio Tirana and on major international radio networks, including the BBC, Voice of America, Deutsche Welle and Radio France Internationale. With the help of the American Red Cross, a Web site was launched to help restore family links; it proved to be effective and demonstrated the usefulness of electronic media in the humanitarian sphere. Despite this, thousands of persons remained unable to contact their relatives, and the ICRC collected hundreds of tracing requests from the most vulnerable.

Throughout the year, delegates continued to provide medical assistance in the form of surgical supplies and essential medicines for district hospitals in Albania's main towns, where the influx of refugees taken in by host families put a considerable strain on local health facilities. They donated medicines to several health centres, and in mid-April, at the height of the conflict, provided supplies for a medical post in northern Albania. They successfully negotiated with KLA leaders and with the Albanian authorities for the evacuation by helicopter of the war-wounded from the Bajram Curri and Tropoje districts to the Central Military Hospital in Tirana.

From April onwards, the ICRC's four relief delegates - one in the capital and three in Kukes - provided logistics support for the integrated Red Cross/Red Crescent relief operation. Ready-to-eat meals, high-protein biscuits and non-food items were distributed to the refugees by the Albanian Red Cross, with support from both the Federation and the ICRC. Initial supplies were for 150,000 refugees, but by mid-June this figure had been revised upwards to 344,735 people. Individual parcels and wheat flour were regularly handed out to the refugees, and additional food items were given to their host families.

The widespread presence of landmines, coupled with the rush of refugees returning to their homes in Kosovo after the conflict, prompted the ICRC to print several

the menace of cluster bombs and landmines

National Society support

thousand leaflets on mine awareness. In April, the ICRC and the demining unit of the Albanian government together produced and distributed a poster and leaflets on the threat posed by cluster bombs in the northern part of the country. Mine-awareness leaflets were translated and handed out by Albanian Red Cross volunteers and by ICRC tracing delegates, mainly in Kukes and from other Red Cross branches across the country during food distributions in June and July.

From the start of the crisis, National Societies from around the world were unstinting in their support of the Movement's efforts on behalf of the refugees. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates deployed first-aid volunteers, provided tents and relief items for collective centres and donated stocks of emergency medical supplies for treatment of the war-wounded.

IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- visited 17 people held for security reasons in connection with past internal unrest;



- set up a satellite telephone network enabling over 37,000 refugees from Kosovo to communicate with their families, and facilitated the broadcast of more than 22,000 names of refugees on radio;
- registered 299 children separated from their parents and 470 vulnerable people (the elderly, disabled, single women with children);
- issued 891 travel documents and helped people in need to contact the relevant embassies so that they could join family members in third countries;



- as part of the Red Cross/Red Crescent integrated and regional strategy in the Balkans, provided logistics support for the transport of 14,500 tonnes of food and other supplies to 6 regional distribution centres;



- airlifted 71 wounded people to hospital in Tirana;

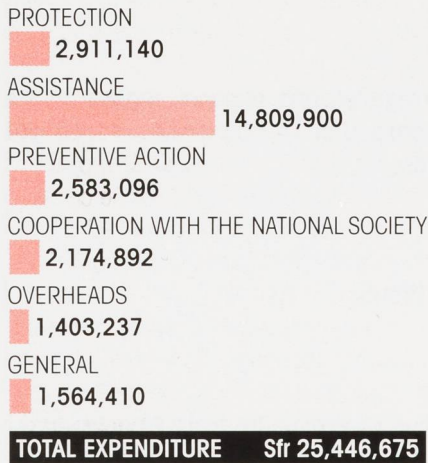


- delivered over 20 tonnes of water purification chemicals for eight Albanian water boards;



- printed and distributed 500 posters and 5,000 leaflets on cluster bombs;
- printed 102,000 mine-awareness leaflets for adults, of which 96,000 were distributed;
- printed 102,000 mine-awareness leaflets specially designed for children, of which 98,000 were distributed.

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA



⊕ ICRC delegation ⊕ ICRC sub-delegation/office Inter-Entity Boundary Line

Four years after the General Framework Agreement for Peace ended the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, political and economic gains in the region have remained modest. The conflict in Kosovo spilled beyond the borders of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as Bosnia-Herzegovina struggled to absorb thousands of refugees from the province and from Serbia proper. The arrival of the refugees put a damper on the tenuous efforts by State administrators to lay the foundations of a peaceful civil society and caused the region to slide deeper into economic insolvency. Despite injections of financial aid from the international community, the country's underfunded social safety net was unable to cope with the problems posed by the new arrivals. Although both the country's entities - the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Republika Srpska - were affected by events in Kosovo, the latter's economy was hit harder, since close economic ties with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia meant that out of a workforce of 250,000 people, an estimated 50,000 lost their jobs after the NATO bombings began. The psychological cost of the conflict was incalculable, particularly in Republika Srpska where many people had relatives in Serbia.

one million still displaced

According to 1999 estimates, roughly one million displaced people and refugees, one in every four Bosnians, remained reluctant to return to their homes, a sobering statistic that reflected a lack of confidence in the country's future. As one of several countervailing measures, in October the new High Representative* of the United Nations imposed a set of property laws designed to involve local politicians in facilitating the return of refugees and displaced people.

The divide between Bosnian Serbs, Croats and Muslims remained very much in evidence, as was demonstrated by the fact that the electorate cast its votes along ethnic lines. Over 30,000 members of the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR) were still needed to keep the peace between the three communities. Organized crime was perceived by ordinary citizens to be on the rise, and prominent war criminals indicted by the ICTY* were not brought to justice, two factors which severely eroded confidence in the judiciary. Steps were taken in the right direction, however, when the Madrid Peace and Implementation Conference decided on a thorough overhaul of the country's judiciary and on the adoption in both the country's entities of codes of ethics.

international support

The international community continued to give tangible support to efforts towards a lasting peace and long-term economic growth in Bosnia-Herzegovina. At the Fifth Donor Conference for Bosnia-Herzegovina, held in Brussels in May, donors pledged a staggering US\$ 1.05 billion for economic reform and reconstruction in the country, and promised to help shoulder the additional financial burden engendered by the arrival of people fleeing the Kosovo conflict. Despite the faltering economy, the authorities in turn did succeed in establishing a single currency.

the search for the missing continues

Throughout 1999, the ICRC continued to focus primarily on the families of the missing, since the fate of over 17,479 persons who disappeared during the war had yet to be clarified. The majority of the missing were adult men, and as long as they remained unaccounted for, their families continued to live in a psychological and legal limbo, unable to plan for the future and in a difficult position to claim social benefits.

database for the missing

Through the joint exhumation process carried out in both entities under the auspices of the High Representative, mortal remains continued to be exhumed and identified by the families. Poor weather conditions forced forensic teams to end exhumations in November. During the year, families were kept abreast of any developments in the search for their missing relatives and tremendous efforts were made to provide them with adequate support, advice and compensation.

The ICRC continued to press for a single permanent national structure which would better serve the long-term needs of the families of the missing. To this end, a database was set up containing all the facts pertaining to persons reported dead or missing during the Bosnia-Herzegovina conflict.

a Web site for family reunifications

Activities were carried out in order to re-establish contact between people who had been separated as a result of the conflict in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. A Web site,⁵ designed to help locate relatives and exchange messages, was made available to refugees in ICRC offices in Sarajevo, Bihac, Bijeljina and Banja Luka.

* High Representative: the official appointed to oversee implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton Agreement

* ICTY: International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

⁵ See p. 19.

*residents and refugees
in need of assistance*

“healthy communities” programme

*promoting knowledge
of humanitarian law among
armed and security forces*

“People on War”

Delegates were also involved in reuniting families in the Balkans and throughout Europe, in cooperation with other ICRC delegations and local Red Cross branches.

During the period under review, the ICRC worked closely with the local Red Cross in both entities, the Federation and other organizations to meet the most pressing humanitarian needs. Food parcels and blankets were provided for the refugees from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, monthly rations were supplied to vulnerable elderly people, heating materials were distributed to households throughout the country in winter, and seed potatoes and fertilizer were given to farming families. Wherever possible, produce was purchased on the domestic market, thus giving a much-needed boost to the local economy and avoiding delays due to customs and transport procedures.

The ICRC strengthened its support for health service reforms, particularly in primary health care. In partnership with local Red Cross branches, the “healthy communities” programme was expanded during the year, with eight pilot projects set up in four municipalities. Participants in the projects assessed local needs and put forward tangible proposals designed to improve health and other services in the region. Funding for the projects was provided by the ICRC and community and municipal grants, while several international NGOs contributed their technical expertise. By year's end, the principal community projects had drawn to a close.

An essential part of the ongoing reforms in the health sector was the ICRC's peer group approach in its work with health professionals. Peer groups of doctors were established in eight health centres (four in each entity). Task groups were then set up to promote activities that included the forming of a peer group network, ongoing medical training, management practices, the setting of standards, promoting good health, and informing the public about the concept of family medicine.

Nurses represented another vital link in the public health care programme. During the year, the ICRC worked with nurses throughout the country to translate, edit, and distribute WHO's* LEMON (Learning Materials on Nursing) texts, which introduce a modern concept of nursing. Following consultations with the health authorities and other international organizations,⁶ the ICRC, after many years of assistance to hospitals and blood transfusion centres, ended its involvement in the surgical supplies programme.

The army of the Bosnian Federation (AFBiH) and the Bosnian Serb army (VRS) had scant knowledge of the law of armed conflict and human rights law and the police forces of both entities were similarly unfamiliar with these concepts. As in the past, the ICRC therefore held courses, instructors' workshops and seminars on the law of armed conflict for selected units of each entity's armed forces. In November, it organized a seminar on the law of armed conflict in Sarajevo for 40 senior army officers of both entities. The event marked the first time since the end of the war that high-level officers had participated in a seminar of this nature. The ICRC encouraged both sets of police forces to incorporate the teaching of universal humanitarian principles and the law of armed conflict into the curricula of police academies.

Bosnia-Herzegovina was the first of over a dozen countries worldwide to participate in the ICRC “People on War” project⁷ designed to help increase understanding

* WHO: World Health Organization

⁶ See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 206.

⁷ See pp. 348-350.

threat of landmines remains

*steps towards forming
one National Society*

of and respect for the rules that protect victims of war. The report on Bosnia-Herzegovina was also the first to be made public, and was formally handed over to the country's Foreign Minister at the end of the year.

Landmines and other unexploded ordnance continued to litter the landscape of Bosnia-Herzegovina, posing a threat to the lives of the region's inhabitants and to newly arrived refugees. The ICRC thus maintained its support for a community-based mine-awareness programme involving local Red Cross staff and volunteers. Mine-awareness sessions were conducted for the most vulnerable groups, including agricultural workers, local residents and refugees from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In partnership with other international organizations, and in particular with the Red Cross in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the ICRC has long supported the efforts in both entities to restructure their National Societies in the aftermath of the war. It worked with the Federation towards the establishment and recognition of a single National Society for Bosnia-Herzegovina, since one unified structure would be better equipped to respond to the immediate needs of the most vulnerable and in the long term would assume responsibility for relief and tracing programmes. The Red Cross branches in the two entities were virtually the only functioning social institutions in the country. The ICRC thus encouraged authorities at both entity and State levels to support the Red Cross by easing the legal requirements for the formation of one National Society.



IN 1999 THE ICRC:

- visited 25 detainees charged with war crimes in seven places of detention;
- financed visits to detainees held by the ICTY in The Hague for relatives who did not have the means to pay their own way;



- of a total of 20,308 tracing requests collected since the beginning of the conflict, closed 2,001 files concerning people previously unaccounted for, including the cases of 279 people found alive;
- exchanged 181 Red Cross messages between refugees from Kosovo and their families;



- provided 485 tonnes of fuel, 2,520 tonnes of coal and 27,940 m³ of firewood to over 10,380 households, four collective centres and 12 institutions across the country;
- supplied monthly food parcels to 14,000 beneficiaries of the Red Cross home care programme;



- delivered surgical and medical supplies to 25 hospitals, 23 blood transfusion centres and four other health facilities;



- under a project delegated to the Swedish Red Cross, carried out intensive training programmes in four public health institutes, provided field equipment for the identification of water sources, gave training sessions on the use of this equipment to 20 teams from all 13 public health institutes in the country, and donated ad hoc supplies of material for water quality control;
- under the water-to-villages programme, in conjunction with the local Red Cross oversaw 25 water projects in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and 15 in the Republika Srpska;



- interviewed 1,800 people on the subject of conflict for the "People on War" project;
- gave 10 courses on the law of armed conflict for 268 officers of the armed forces of both entities and 33 presentations of ICRC activities and courses on the law of armed conflict to 1,000 members of NATO and SFOR;



- organized over 1,470 presentations for some 36,350 people, as part of its mine-awareness programme involving 130 community instructors.

CROATIA



+ ICRC delegation
 +• ICRC sub-delegation/office
 Eastern Slavonia, Baranja & Western Sirmium

ICRC / AR 12 99

impediments to the peace and reconstruction process

The winds of change swept across the Croatian political landscape in 1999. The death in December of President Franjo Tudjman, founder of the ruling Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), signalled the end of a chapter in Croatian politics. President Tudjman had led his country to independence and enjoyed widespread popular support, particularly in rural areas. After nine years of rule, he left a mixed legacy, however, since the country's economy remained in the doldrums and the transition to a free-market democracy was still incomplete. Nonetheless, despite the conflict in Kosovo, which had repercussions on all the Balkan countries, the security situation remained relatively stable, and the country stayed on course towards integration with the rest of Europe.

Two major obstacles continued to thwart sustainable economic and political reform and Croatian ambitions for closer ties with the European Union. Progress was slow on the contentious issue of the resettlement of Croatian Serbs who had fled the Eastern Slavonia and Krajina regions.⁸ Although encouraged by the European Union and the international community to restore constitutional rights and property to

⁸ See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 209.

withdrawal of aid organizations

returning Serbs, Zagreb's promises on refugee resettlement remained largely unkept. Legal and administrative hurdles hampered displaced Serbs from reclaiming their homes, particularly in the former Sector South. Croatia's perceived refusal to cooperate with the ICTY was the other main sticking point that prevented the country from forging deeper diplomatic and economic links with European institutions. In August, the president of the ICTY filed a report with the UN Security Council, and the Croatian authorities subsequently accelerated the extradition process of one of the principal indictees.

Several humanitarian organizations, including UNHCR, scaled down or completely ceased their operations in Croatia in the course of the year. This in itself was an indication that the county was on the road to recovery. By year's end, the ICRC had also pared down its staff in Croatia. It closed its delegation in Zagreb, but maintained a mission there under the umbrella of the Budapest regional delegation.

In the year under review, the ICRC pursued its brief to ascertain the fate of those who had gone missing during the conflict. Working closely with the Croatian and Yugoslav Red Cross tracing departments, delegates continued to try to shed light on over 4,000 tracing requests received since the 1991 conflict, and on the fate of persons who had disappeared during military operations in the former UN Sectors. A concerted effort was made to deepen links with the Croatian Red Cross, particularly with regard to tracing activities, while exhumations continued in Eastern Slavonia, and delegates were able, in some cases, to close their files on persons whose bodies were identifiable.

Throughout the year, the ICRC continued to fulfil its protection mandate. Delegates visited detainees held in relation to the Croatian conflict or for security-related offences, and after the cessation of NATO airstrikes, resumed the programme of family visits to and from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Croatia.⁹ For many families, these visits offered the only opportunity to see their detained relatives. A final protection report on the delegates' findings and recommendations with regard to the vulnerable Serb population in the former UN Sectors was submitted to the Croatian authorities in February.

Promotion of the costly, time-consuming activity of clearing mines and unexploded ordnance remained a priority on the ICRC's agenda in Croatia. Estimates indicated that over 6,000 square kilometres, roughly 10 percent of Croatia's territory, were still littered with mines. Some one million persons continued to live and work in the mined areas.

As in the past, the ICRC kept up its support for a community-based initiative to adapt mine-awareness methods to the local context. It was involved in various local projects in communities affected by mines. In former front-line villages and towns, Red Cross branches and local instructors requested that multimedia exhibitions on mine-awareness be continued. The exhibitions were seen by children, adults and the local authorities. In June, the Croatian government, in cooperation with the ICRC, local Red Cross branches and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, hosted the second Regional Conference on Anti-personnel Landmines in Zagreb. The primary purpose of the conference was to focus attention on the prodigious effort still needed to address the humanitarian problems engendered by landmines.

⁹ See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 210.

*over one million people still
threatened by landmines*

working with the National Society

Participants discussed the status and implementation of the Ottawa treaty, mine-awareness and assistance to victims, demining and destruction of existing stock-piles, and the reshaping of military doctrines with regard to mines. The conference was attended by participants from 33 countries, 14 international organizations and 50 non-governmental bodies.

The ICRC participated in and helped organize training seminars for professional and volunteer staff of the tracing departments of Croatian Red Cross branches. For the first time, representatives of both Red Cross entities in Bosnia-Herzegovina were invited to attend. The ICRC gave presentations on its mandate and experiences, tracing activities in Croatia and its role in the ongoing exhumation and identification process.

Vukovar, on the banks of the Danube, was perhaps the most potent symbol of the reconciliation efforts undertaken so far, as the city witnessed some of the worst atrocities of the Croatian conflict. Last year, a project was started to rebuild the Vukovar Red Cross branch with the help of the ICRC and participating National Societies, thus sending a profound political and emotional message to the victims of the conflict.

IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- facilitated six visits by families from Croatia to relatives detained in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia or vice versa;
- visited 86 people held in connection with the past conflict or for security-related offences, in 10 places of detention;



- submitted to the Croatian authorities the cases of 837 people missing as a result of military operations in the former UN Sectors, and provided answers to 104 families regarding the fate of their relatives;



- gave 4 three-day workshops on the law of armed conflict for 120 members of the armed forces;



- as part of its mine-awareness programme involving 100 Croatian Red Cross instructors, organized some 3,833 interactive presentations for 81,161 people, including 53,826 children, and 27 multimedia exhibitions for 21,000 people in mine-infested areas.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA

PROTECTION

7,148,803

ASSISTANCE

122,442,876

PREVENTIVE ACTION

1,298,576

COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

1,562,379

OVERHEADS

5,339,065

GENERAL

829,251

TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 138,620,950



⊕ ICRC delegation ⊕ ICRC sub-delegation/office ⊕ ICRC mission ⊕ ICRC field office

For the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the year ended as it had begun - with tension and violence. Serbs and ethnic Albanians failed to settle their differences over Kosovo during talks held at the beginning of the year in Rambouillet, on the outskirts of Paris. The implications of the conflict extended well beyond the Balkans since the collapse of the Rambouillet negotiations was followed by a series of air-strikes on targets in Serbia and Kosovo by NATO member countries. Much of the country's infrastructure was shattered and the region teetered on the brink of economic and monetary collapse. In the largest population movement in Europe over the last 50 years, hundreds of thousands of ethnic Albanians fled, mainly towards neighbouring Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro. After the cessation of NATO air strikes, waves of displaced people then poured back into Kosovo to find their homes and fields destroyed. In accordance with UN Security Council resolution 1244, Kosovo was placed under the authority of UNMIK.*

After the NATO Secretary General authorized military action against Yugoslavia, the ICRC sent a diplomatic note on 24 March to NATO and its member countries, and

* UNMIK: United Nations Mission in Kosovo

the ICRC's stance

to the Yugoslav authorities, reminding them of their obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular the four Geneva Conventions of 1949. The ICRC emphasized its readiness to fulfil the mandate conferred on it in the Geneva Conventions, and offered its services as an independent and neutral intermediary. The organization felt that it was crucial to work in proximity to those who would suffer most from the conflict, and accordingly decided to keep its expatriate staff in Yugoslavia.

worsening security situation

In Kosovo, activities at the beginning of the year focused on persons either detained by the Yugoslav authorities or reportedly held by the KLA, on monitoring the security situation and on medical services to the sick and wounded. As the threat of air strikes hardened into a certainty, the ICRC took additional security measures, reducing its staff from 31 to 19 expatriates and stepping up contacts with the authorities. On 29 March, owing to the worsening security situation and restrictions on the mobility of its personnel, the ICRC was forced to withdraw its international staff from Kosovo. In Serbia proper, it opened field offices in conjunction with the Yugoslav Red Cross in Novi Sad, Kraljevo, Nis and Belgrade.

unprotected civilians

The fate of civilians still trapped in Kosovo and exposed to the effects of the hostilities then became an overriding concern for the ICRC. During a visit to Belgrade on 25 April, the ICRC President negotiated the organization's return to Kosovo, and activities resumed on 24 May. As part of a phased return, a team of six delegates was sent to Pristina. In June, the arrival in Kosovo of KFOR, the NATO-led international security force, signalled the end of the conflict. The ICRC sub-delegation in Pristina was made a mission. In July, regional offices were opened in Pec/Peja, in Prizren, in Gnjilane/Gjilane, in the bitterly divided town of Mitrovica (with premises on both the Albanian and Serb sides of town), and two smaller offices in Djakovica/Djakova and Urosevac/Ferizaj.

ICRC emergency operations in Serbia changed dramatically as a result of the war, both in character and in magnitude. Existing food programmes were broadened to cope with larger numbers of beneficiaries, and other assistance projects were implemented to mitigate the effects of the air strikes and damage to water-supply systems and medical facilities. In parallel, protection and tracing activities also increased in scope. By year's end, the ICRC and participating National Societies had 96 expatriates and 450 locally hired staff operating throughout Yugoslavia.

tracing services cope with exodus from Kosovo

By late March, over 800,000 people had fled Kosovo. To cope with this massive displacement, the ICRC tracing agency provided services through its offices in Tirana, Montenegro (Podgorica, Ulcinj, Rozaje), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Belgrade and the four joint field offices. Several thousand telephone calls were made, enabling people to re-establish contact with their relatives, names of the displaced were broadcast on local and international radio stations and vulnerable persons were reunited with their families in neighbouring or third countries. Delegates collected and distributed Red Cross messages and registered unaccompanied minors and elderly people.

With the arrival of KFOR in Kosovo in June, the vast majority of Kosovo Albanians returned home, and the re-establishment of contacts with friends and family assumed huge importance. To reflect this priority, ICRC mobile teams, each with

*difficulties in fulfilling
the ICRC's protection mandate*

emergency relief operations...

in Serbia...

several satellite telephones, travelled to towns and villages throughout Kosovo, offering members of both Serb and ethnic Albanian communities the opportunity to contact their relatives. The service was extremely useful, particularly in remote villages and for vulnerable and isolated members of non-Albanian communities. As well as providing the phone service, the mobile teams collected allegations of arrests, requests for family reunifications, Red Cross messages and details of unaccompanied children.

In September, delegates began collecting tracing requests from people whose relatives had disappeared. By year's end, 2,950 people were still unaccounted for, and delegates in Kosovo made the systematic collecting and cross-checking of names a priority. At the same time, in a bid to provide psychological support to the families concerned, the ICRC set up six family link centres.

Following the cessation of hostilities, UNMIK appointed the ICRC as lead agency on the critical issue of the thousands of persons still unaccounted for. The ICRC coordinated the activities of international organizations who also dealt with this issue and centralized all data pertaining to the missing.

High on the ICRC's list of priorities was the fate of 1,700 ethnic Albanians held in Serbian prisons after the Yugoslav authorities withdrew from Kosovo in June. While the Dayton Agreement contained clauses pertaining to the release of detainees and the search for the missing, no such provisions were incorporated into the Military Technical Agreement signed by NATO and the Yugoslav army on 9 June. After successful negotiations with the Serbian Ministry of Justice, the ICRC was able to visit ethnic Albanians held in places of detention in Serbia. Relatives of missing persons were able to consult lists of detainees who had been visited by the ICRC, and detainees and their families were then able to contact each other using Red Cross messages. Delegates also visited persons held in the six detention centres under KFOR's responsibility, including those arrested on suspicion of having committed war crimes. In addition, the ICRC organized the safe return to Kosovo of almost all the detainees who had been released from prisons in Serbia. In Kosovo and elsewhere in Yugoslavia, the ICRC gathered information from hundreds of families from the Serb, Roma and other communities who reported that their relatives had been abducted by the KLA or by Kosovo Albanian civilians.

During the year, the ICRC continually adjusted its relief programmes to cope with the number of internally displaced throughout Yugoslavia. At the beginning of the year, ICRC relief efforts targeted some 65,000 beneficiaries in the Podujevo, Racak, Suva Reka and Mitrovica regions. Food, warm clothes and stoves were distributed to the most vulnerable families, and tarpaulins and plastic sheeting given to those whose homes had been damaged. By mid-March, in anticipation of a worsening security situation, additional convoys of relief items were sent to Kosovo, and ICRC teams drew up emergency plans.

By late summer, in cooperation with the Yugoslav Red Cross, the ICRC had launched a soup kitchen programme, with distributions made from roughly 230 points across Serbia. Several thousand people received one hot meal per day, while lunch parcels were delivered to beneficiaries who were unable to reach distribution points. A large segment of this group included some 150,000 Serbs and Roma who had fled Kosovo, fearing reprisals from the ethnic Albanian community.

and in Kosovo

*respect for the rights
of non-Albanians*

*community-based
mine-awareness approach*

*cooperation
with the International Red Cross
and Red Crescent Movement*

After delegates returned to Kosovo on 24 May, they continued to distribute aid to the internally displaced. Several hundred thousand people, mostly those who had remained in the region during the conflict and were living in remote areas, received food and non-food assistance. Large-scale distributions drew to a close in September, but the ICRC continued to plug the gaps in the WFP* pipeline whenever necessary. By the end of the year, the emphasis had shifted to more structured programmes that addressed wider segments of the community. A winter programme to provide heating units and warm clothing for 240,000 beneficiaries was channelled through the emerging local Red Cross, with the dual objectives of meeting the needs of the population and furthering the development of Red Cross structures.

In view of the violent acts perpetrated against non-Albanians in the recent past, new approaches were needed to develop a constructive dialogue on the issue. The ICRC held in-depth discussions with various community leaders and with UNMIK authorities in Kosovo to find effective ways of changing people's attitudes and behaviour towards other ethnic groups.

Given the large number of organizations involved in mine-awareness and demining activities in Kosovo, the ICRC took part in all regular coordination meetings, both to present its own work and approach and to gain an overall picture of other agencies' activities. By the end of the year, the ICRC mine-awareness programme had 11 officers trained in the community-based approach working out of the various ICRC offices around Kosovo. As the ICRC was the lead agency for gathering data on mine incidents, the officers also collected information on people who had died or sustained injuries because of mines and other ordnance.

In 1999, the ICRC assumed the role of the Movement's lead agency in Yugoslavia and as such was responsible for coordinating the activities of participating National Societies, whose involvement remained high throughout the year. A total of 20 National Societies implemented 35 projects and programmes throughout Kosovo and Serbia (18 delegated and 17 bilateral projects) in a wide range of sectors from health, soup kitchens and agriculture to mine-awareness¹⁰. Projects delegated to participating National Societies in Kosovo and Serbia accounted for nearly half of all ICRC delegated projects worldwide. Thanks to their presence, the Movement was able to meet the enormous needs in the region. In Kosovo, the Movement sought to help people to deal with the long-term consequences of the conflict by bolstering the local Red Cross structures.

* WFP: World Food Programme

¹⁰ See pp. 36 and 402.

IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- visited 2,094 detainees held in relation to the conflict in Kosovo, registered 54 people held by KFOR, and transferred 343 released detainees from Serbia proper to Kosovo;



- provided an extensive range of communication services whereby 126,667 telephone calls were made, enabling people in Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to re-establish contact with their relatives;
- broadcast 24,409 names of displaced people on local and international radio stations;
- transferred 110 elderly and sick people from enclaves in Kosovo and reunited them with relatives in Serbia;



- within the framework of the Movement's integrated and regional strategy in response to the Balkan crisis, and as lead agency, provided 7,900 tonnes of food and 2,165 tonnes of material assistance to people affected by the conflict and started a soup kitchen programme for beneficiaries in Kosovo (by end-December, some 15,700 meals were being provided daily);
- in Serbia and Montenegro, provided 17,400 tonnes of food and 2,165 tonnes of material assistance to people affected by the conflict;
- in November, supplied some 65,000 hot meals daily, and 21,130 lunch parcels for people unable to reach distribution points across Serbia, (7,930 tonnes of food and 170 tonnes of material assistance)
- by December, had provided 250,000 internally displaced persons from Kosovo with monthly food parcels, and hygiene parcels every two months;
- provided 18,277 Serb and Albanian families in Kosovo with 3,400 tonnes of seed, and 2,835 tonnes of fertilizer;
- for the Vojvodina branch of the Yugoslav Red Cross, financed the purchase of a boat which was used to ferry vulnerable people, including the elderly and children, from one side of the Danube to the other, and to carry relief supplies to areas throughout the province;



- donated medical supplies to five blood banks in Kosovo;



- in Kosovo, supported public health facilities and launched a well-cleaning programme (120,000 wells);
- kept some 50,000 people in Novi Sad supplied with safe drinking water;
- visited health facilities and supported them with technical equipment, mainly generators, in cooperation with the Yugoslav Red Cross;
- financed a weather station in Pancevo to monitor air quality;
- provided health and water and sanitation services in facilities housing internally displaced people in Montenegro;

delegated projects

● in **Kosovo**, coordinated the following delegated and bilateral projects listed below:

- the American Red Cross participated in the soup kitchen programme (see Relief section) in both north and south Mitrovica and Vushtrri/Vucitern, for more than 2,000 beneficiaries;
- the Austrian Red Cross renovated schools in Prizren;
- the Belgian Red Cross (Flemish section) participated in the soup kitchen programme (see Relief section) in Prizren and Suharekë/Suva Reka for 2,150 beneficiaries;
- the British Red Cross completed repairs on 15 schools in regions south-west of Pristina (Gjakova/Dakovica, Malishevë/Malisevo, Glllogovc/Glogovac, Rahovec/Orahovac, Suharekë/Suva Reka) and continued work on other schools in the region;
- the Finnish Red Cross distributed 1,200 hygiene kits and 200 kits with supplies for babies, ran a hospital management project in Gnjilane/Gjilane hospital, continued rehabilitation work on the Viti/Vitina health centre, and coordinated a basic health care project there;
- the German Red Cross participated in the soup kitchen programme (see Relief section) in the Pec/Peja region, serving almost 10,000 people in September and October, 9,500 in November, and 6,000 in December;
- the Japanese Red Cross carried out emergency repairs on small first-aid posts in the Decane/Decan region;
- the Netherlands Red Cross participated in the soup kitchen programme (see Relief section) serving beneficiaries daily in the Gnjilane/Gjilane, Viti/Vitina and Kamenica regions (1,525 people in November, 2,975 in December);
- the Norwegian Red Cross helped with the hospital management programme at the Shtimle/Stimlje Institute for the Mentally Handicapped, and under the farm machinery programme in Skenderaj/Serbica, Glllogovc/Glogovac and Lipjan held six agricultural workshops and from November onwards, repaired 60-100 tractors per week;
- the Spanish Red Cross completed repairs on nine schools and renovated a first-aid post in Llabjan, and began a farm machinery programme in Suharekë/Suva Reka;
- the Swedish Red Cross began a water-leakage detection programme and held seminars for the water boards of 12 municipalities;

bilateral projects

- the American Red Cross completed an assessment of the Viti/Vitina town water supply;
- the Austrian Red Cross provided 26 villages in the Istok/Istog area with food, non-food items, seed, farm tools, firewood and construction materials;
- the Belgian Red Cross (French section), distributed 162 tonnes of food and 21 tonnes of hygiene material, clothes, blankets, tents and bean seeds in Suharekë/Suva Reka;
- the Canadian Red Cross supported the well-cleaning programme in Kosovo;
- the Danish Red Cross finished work on shelter units in the Vushtrri/Vucitern and Mitrovica areas, and assisted the Shtimle/Stimlje Institute;
- the French Red Cross finished work on 650 houses in the Skanderaj/Serbica region, and distributed monthly food and non-food rations to 10,000 beneficiaries;



- the German Red Cross delivered building supplies for the construction of 400 houses in the Pec/Peja region, completed renovations on the paediatric clinic, and in November, distributed winter items to 10,000 beneficiaries;
- the Italian Red Cross completed an assessment of the gynaecological clinic in Pec/Peja;
- the Kuwait Red Crescent carried out ad hoc relief distributions through the local Red Cross;
- the Saudi Red Crescent provided seven ambulances to seven hospitals in Pristina, Ferizaj/Urosevac, Decan, Gnjilane/Gjilane, Pec/Peja, Prizren and Mitrovica, and medicines to 10 health centres;
- the Swiss Red Cross rebuilt 90 houses and two schools in Voksh/Voksa and Isniq/Istinic;
- the Turkish Red Crescent distributed food and non-food items to 26,000 people in the Prizren region, while a Turkish Red Crescent mobile medical team covered 36 villages around Prizren, providing 6,000 people with primary health care services;
- the United Arab Emirates Red Crescent reconstructed 1,000 houses in five villages in the Vushtrri/Vucitern region and in July and August, supplied relief assistance for 27,000 beneficiaries;

● in Serbia :

- delegated a soup kitchen programme to the following National Societies: the Belgian Red Cross (French section) in Mladenovac, the Canadian Red Cross in Novi Sad, the Danish Red Cross in Kraljevo, the Italian Red Cross in Kragujevac, and the German Red Cross in Nis;
- the Japanese Red Cross supplied 12 pharmacies with drugs for chronic diseases;
- from September onwards, the Swedish Red Cross ran a water quality programme in health institutions;
- the Finnish Red Cross began reconstruction of the Dragisa Misovic Hospital in Belgrade (bilateral programme);
- the German Red Cross rehabilitated a health centre in Kragujevac (bilateral programme);



- held four training sessions in Vushtrri/Vucitern for 180 future officers of the new Kosovo police force; the three-hour sessions dealt with the ICRC's role, its mandate and principles, and with international humanitarian law;
- in Pristina, gave a day-long seminar on international standards for police officers for 15 military instructors from Europe and North America;
- organized a two-hour presentation on protection issues for 12 international instructors;
- gave presentations on the law of armed conflict and ICRC activities for the Russian KFOR contingent in four regions in Kosovo;



- launched a community-based mine-awareness programme in 250 villages in Kosovo and trained 11 instructors.

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Macedonian generosity

*coordination with other
aid agencies*

support from the Federation

The Kosovo crisis marked a watershed for Macedonian leaders across the political spectrum. Between late March to June, as over 350,000 Kosovar Albanians streamed across the Yugoslav border into the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, observers feared that the country's delicate ethnic fabric might unravel. In a welcome show of political maturity, however, both leaders of the two main ethnic groups that form part of the tripartite governing coalition eschewed any rhetoric that might have ignited social and political unrest.

The refugees were given shelter, albeit at times reluctantly, by Macedonian authorities. It must be underscored, however, that the Kosovar refugees represented almost 18 percent of the Macedonian population - with the exception of Albania, no other country accepted as many refugees onto its soil. The short distance from Kosovo to Skopje, a mere 18 kilometres, allowed the refugees to cross the border in overwhelming numbers - at least 150,000 were accommodated in host families, 110,000 went to seven camps built by NATO forces, and close to 90,000 were evacuated to Western countries that had agreed to accept them.

The crisis in neighbouring Kosovo disrupted economic links with Serbia, causing the country's already moribund economy to shrink even further. Large public-sector enterprises, staffed mainly by Macedonians, were brought to the brink of bankruptcy, and unemployment figures spiralled upwards from 30 to 40 percent. Resentment between the two ethnic groups went up a notch, since the resident Albanian community suffered slightly less as its members were employed primarily in smaller, family-owned businesses and many received remittances from relatives abroad. Concerns about political risks caused foreign investments to dwindle, although major donor nations did pledge to increase their aid and trade ties with Macedonia, as part of their policy to promote stability in the southern Balkans.

UNHCR, in its role as lead agency, coordinated the myriad international aid agencies present in Macedonia during the conflict. To avoid overlapping, specific tasks and responsibilities in the seven refugee camps were assigned to the various NGOs, of whom there were 200 at the peak of the crisis. The ICRC coordinated efforts with UNICEF, the Save the Children Fund and CARE to restore family links. By the end of the summer most of the NGOs had left, but the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme, encouragingly, stayed on.

Relations with the authorities, nurtured over the years, enabled the ICRC to mobilize its resources quickly and effectively. A Headquarters Agreement was signed on 24 February and the ICRC's upgraded presence in the country - the Skopje office had been made a delegation¹¹ - meant that delegates were able to respond speedily to the crisis. In a matter of weeks, the number of expatriate staff increased from two to more than 30, and locally hired staff from seven to over 100.

The ICRC's activities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia could not have been carried out without the support of the Federation. For the first time in such a large operation, the Movement adopted an integrated approach, with the Federation as its lead agency. Together with the National Society, the Federation coordinated the operations of participating National Societies active in the refugee camps and provided assistance to persons accommodated in host families, while the ICRC concentrated on emergency assistance at the border and on its protection and tracing

¹¹ See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 219.

*using the Internet
to restore family links*

many refugees still remain

programmes. To help the National Society handle the crisis, the ICRC provided material and financial support to the 13 Red Cross branches most directly involved. Skopje subsequently became a vital logistics hub for ICRC relief activities in Kosovo and also housed the central database that stored all information relating to people who had gone missing in the crisis.

The ICRC focused its assistance programme on official checkpoints and on villages that straddled the border with Kosovo and Serbia. Many uprooted families arrived in poor physical condition and in need of medical care, particularly in the Tetovo region. Delegates worked round the clock with the National Society to transport the wounded and ill to medical NGOs, and to provide food, water and blankets to exhausted new arrivals.

Twentieth century technology set the Kosovo conflict apart from the many others that had preceded it. For the first time in the history of war, refugees had the use of cellular phones and the Internet. A few days after the crisis broke out, the ICRC, in cooperation with the American Red Cross, set up tents in each of the seven camps and opened tracing offices in Skopje and Tetovo. Delegates quickly adapted traditional methods of re-establishing links between families who had become separated: mobile and cellular phones were used as well as Red Cross messages, and for the first time, a specific Web site was set up. Thousands of refugees were able to communicate with relatives who had been left behind in Kosovo, or were in third countries. The new communication network also made it possible to reunite the most vulnerable - unaccompanied children and elderly persons - more quickly with their families.

In June, hostilities ceased after the signing of the Military Technical Agreement by the Yugoslav armed forces and NATO. This resulted in a mass displacement of Kosovar Albanians back to their homes, but at year's end 20,750 refugees remained in the country and gave cause for concern. The numbers included Albanians who knew that their homes in Kosovo had been destroyed, groups of Roma who feared that they might be targeted for reprisal if they returned to Kosovo, and Serbian refugees. The National Society conducted tracing activities on their behalf, while an ICRC delegate regularly visited the eight collective centres in which they were housed.

PROTECTION	2,609,719
ASSISTANCE	4,072,484
PREVENTIVE ACTION	272,491
COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY	172,907
OVERHEADS	361,695
GENERAL	482,934
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	Sfr 7,972,229

IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- established a communication network in seven camps, including a special tracing Web site, allowing some 160,000 refugees to contact relatives in third countries;
- facilitated 7,764 telephone calls and handled 13,370 Red Cross messages;
- broadcast a weekly list of names on international and local radio stations;
- opened 1,670 tracing requests concerning vulnerable people and unaccompanied children/parents seeking their children;
- reunited 399 families;



- as part of the Movement's integrated and regional strategy in response to the Balkans crisis, distributed food and other supplies in cooperation with Red Cross volunteers to refugees stranded on the border;
- helped speed up the entry procedure for vulnerable people and provided the same assistance to refugees returning to Kosovo;



- closely monitored the quality of health care for refugees at the Tetovo hospital, in camps and other facilities;
- provided 12 medical kits to small clinics and National Society branches;



- organized three presentations on the law of armed conflict and on the ICRC's mandate and activities for NATO troops based in Macedonia; the first presentation was held for CIMIC (civilian-military cooperation) officers from all five brigades prior to their mission in Kosovo, the second was given to senior officers from the French brigade in Kumanovo, and the third course was attended by 17 officers of the Macedonian armed forces;



- translated 20,000 leaflets on mine-awareness into Albanian and Serbian and distributed leaflets produced by UNICEF.

TURKEY

The ICRC held talks with the Turkish authorities on several occasions in 1999, relaunching discussions on cooperation with the military authorities to promote international humanitarian law among the armed forces. It also made plans to develop humanitarian law programmes for universities and to further strengthen cooperation with the Turkish Red Crescent Society, particularly in the fields of dissemination and tracing.

In February, the Deputy Delegate-General for Europe and North America travelled to Ankara for talks at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Delegates also held fruitful discussions with the President, Vice-President and Director General of the Turkish Red Crescent. From April onwards, an ICRC cooperation delegate returned to Turkey on several extended missions, where he met with the authorities, the National Society and academic circles for further dialogue on dissemination activities.

BUDAPEST

Regional delegation

(Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia)

delegates continue existing dissemination programme

Over the course of the year, as events unfolded dramatically in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, some of the countries covered by the regional delegation found themselves unwillingly drawn into the conflict. The Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary became full members of NATO in March, and two weeks later the air campaign against Yugoslavia forced the Hungarian government to perform a delicate balancing act. As the only member of the Alliance to share a border with Yugoslavia, the authorities in Budapest provided limited logistical support to NATO forces, fearing possible retaliation on the ethnic Hungarian minority in Vojvodina in northern Serbia. In view of the situation in Yugoslavia and the subsequent influx of refugees into Hungary, the ICRC worked directly with the Hungarian Department of Refugees to facilitate the issuing of travel documents for persons wishing to join their families in third countries.

After a lengthy period of friction, the arrival of a new government in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia brought a change for the better in relations between Skopje and Sofia. The Bulgarian government continued to steer a course towards integration in the European Union and NATO, and gave its approval for the newly-established Balkan peacekeeping force to be based in Plovdiv for the coming four years.

As attacks on members of Roma communities increased over the year, the regional delegation continued to keep a close watch on this vulnerable ethnic minority, present in all the countries covered, bar Poland. Otherwise, the delegation focused on implementation of its dissemination programme. To this end, delegates fostered contacts with National Societies, government and media circles so as to promote knowledge of international humanitarian law and its incorporation into national legislation. By year's end, a working group set up in tandem with the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had completed a study of national legislation with a view to the incorporation therein of humanitarian law, while in all the other countries covered, substantial progress was achieved on implementation of the law. The ICRC President paid an official visit to Bratislava in February, at the invitation of the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the visit, a cooperation agreement was signed on the dissemination of humanitarian law to the Slovak armed forces. During another presidential mission to Prague in May, a similar agreement was signed on the dissemination of humanitarian law to the Czech armed forces. At the end of May, the President visited Warsaw, where he discussed humanitarian issues with the President of the Republic, the Speaker of Parliament, the Prime Minister and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence.

In the drive to spread knowledge of humanitarian law, numerous seminars were held for the region's armed and police forces. The delegation organized a two-week training session for senior officers at the Bulgarian police academy, held discussions with officials of the Czech Ministry of Defence and the armed forces with a view to organizing seminars and courses on the law of armed conflict, and in Hungary, at the third international course for military observers organized by the Hungarian Operational Centre, gave a presentation on compliance with humanitarian law during peacekeeping operations. A one-day seminar was held in March for generals and other senior officers of the Polish armed forces and for legal experts. Topics dealt with included the law of armed conflict and its incorporation in the training of armed

contacts with academic circles

*cooperation
with National Societies*

forces. In November, a regional seminar on the same subjects was organized in Warsaw with the support of the Polish military authorities. The seminar was attended by deputy chiefs of staff and heads of the training departments of the armed forces of Belarus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Ukraine.

Delegates met regularly with officials of the Slovak Ministry of Defence and with representatives of the Slovak armed forces. Their discussions culminated in a course being held in September for senior lecturers at the Liptovský Mikuláš Academy. Training sessions for instructors were held for senior officers of military academies in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia.

Over the year, delegates visited universities in the capitals of the seven countries covered. In February, the delegation was invited to give a presentation on humanitarian law for representatives of journalism schools in central and eastern Europe, while in March the regional legal adviser was a member of the jury of an international moot court competition held at the Faculty of European Studies, Cluj-Napoca University, Romania. In cooperation with the Romanian Association of Humanitarian Law, the legal adviser gave a talk on humanitarian law for State employees, and in July delivered the opening lecture at the Warsaw summer course on international humanitarian law, organized by the Polish Red Cross and the ICRC.

Close contacts were maintained with the National Societies of all the countries covered, with the aim of developing their dissemination programmes. The ICRC provided computer equipment and assistance for the tracing department of the Bulgarian Red Cross, financial and technical support to the Slovak Red Cross, and helped the Czech Red Cross to finalize a dissemination programme for secondary schools, based on the "People on War" project.¹² It backed the initiative of the Hungarian Red Cross to publish a brochure on humanitarian law in the country's official language. In partnership with the German Red Cross, the Romanian Red Cross organized a series of leadership seminars, for which the ICRC financed the translation into the official language of training information on dissemination. In October, a round table on tracing activities was held in Prague for National Societies from the region. Discussions at the round table enabled officials from National Societies of the former Soviet republics and Eastern European countries to forge closer ties with each other, so as to build up a broad network for tracing activities.

¹² See pp. 348-350.

KYIV

Regional delegation

(Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Ukraine)

The year under review saw a number of significant changes in the political and economic landscape of the countries covered by the Kyiv regional delegation. The Ukrainian president was re-elected to another five-year term of office and promised to push crucial economic reforms through parliament, to continue building a democratic society and to develop international relations based on principles of international law. He also reiterated that his country supported a common European security system, and would continue to participate in peacekeeping operations. The Crimea, an area of potential trouble that was particularly badly hit by the economic crisis affecting the country, inched its way towards greater stability. The three Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, continued to press for membership in the European Union and NATO. Belarus concluded a treaty with the Russian Federation on the creation of a single economic, social and legal zone in the form of a union state, and the two countries also pledged to coordinate their military and foreign policies. Moldova underwent a political crisis when its coalition government, committed to reform, resigned. The country's new government was confronted with an economy in the doldrums, a huge external debt and a long-running constitutional dispute with the self-proclaimed Moldovan Republic of Dniestr (Transdnistria). Ukraine actively stepped up its efforts to mediate a solution to the problem of territorial settlement in Moldova. At the OSCE summit in Istanbul, Russia pledged to withdraw its troops and ammunition from the territory of the self-proclaimed Moldovan Republic of Dniestr by the end of 2002.

The ICRC continued to enjoy good relations and to develop greater ties of cooperation with the authorities of the countries covered by the regional delegation. ICRC offers of assistance were accepted, and delegates pursued the organization's programmes to promote humanitarian law. Considerable progress was made in incorporating humanitarian law into national legislation in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. Broader public understanding of the principles of the law contributed to a rise in the delegation's activities.

The plight of security detainees, notably those held in the self-proclaimed Moldovan Republic of Dniestr in connection with events that took place in 1992, remained a cause for concern. The ICRC continued to negotiate with the authorities in Tiraspol regarding access to the security detainees of the "Ilascu group", and met with the Deputy State Security Minister to clarify the purpose of visits to detainees and standard procedures for such visits. Negotiations with the authorities did not, however, yield any tangible results.

The ICRC helped reunite a Georgian citizen, a resident of Abkhazia, with his family in Ukraine.

The delegation continued to provide advice and technical support for the incorporation of international humanitarian law into national legislation. To this end, delegates met regularly with the national committees for the implementation of humanitarian law in Belarus and Moldova, and in the countries where such committees had not yet been established, with State officials and groups working on the implementation of this body of law, to chart their progress and make recommendations. The publication, with ICRC assistance, of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols in Estonian and the official language of Moldova considerably facilitated the task of the authorities responsible for the incorporation of humanitarian law into

visits to detainees stymied

*incorporating humanitarian law
into national legislation*

working with Defence Ministries

national legislation. In Lithuania and Latvia, the ICRC presented the authorities with its comments and recommendations on the penal code, with particular emphasis on the section dealing with war crimes and the law on the protection and use of the red cross and red crescent emblems. With ICRC support, Lithuania carried out a study on the state of national legislation in the light of humanitarian law. A penal code incorporating recommendations made by the ICRC on the repression of war crimes was adopted in Belarus. Ukraine and Moldova adopted legislation on the protection and use of the red cross and red crescent emblems, that complied with the Geneva Conventions. Discussions continued with the Ukrainian authorities to speed up the establishment of a national structure to coordinate the implementation of humanitarian law. Of particular note was a seminar on the implementation of humanitarian law held in Lithuania and attended by high-level representatives of Baltic and Central European States. Countries which had not yet adhered to certain international treaties, such as the Ottawa treaty or the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, were encouraged to do so.

Promoting knowledge of humanitarian law among the region's armed forces remained a matter of particular importance to the Kyiv regional delegation, which followed up on the progress made in making the law a part of military training programmes. Within the framework of the cooperation agreements signed with the Ministries of Defence in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, a number of presentations, seminars and courses were conducted to help the armed forces incorporate this subject into training programmes.

Senior military commanders from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine, together with officers from central European States participated in the Central and Eastern European seminar on the law of armed conflict organized by the ICRC in Warsaw from 23 to 25 November. The aim of the seminar was to focus attention on the responsibility of States to teach the law of armed conflict, to integrate this body of law into training programmes and to foster regional dialogue on the topic. The officers present showed an encouraging degree of interest and commitment, and acknowledged the ICRC's role in support of national efforts to incorporate the law of armed conflict into training programmes. Three senior officers from the Ministries of Defence of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova respectively took part in the third Russian-language course on the law of armed conflict held at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy.

The delegation widened its contacts with the Joint Baltic Defence College in Estonia, established to train future officers from the Baltic States. The teaching of humanitarian law is a basic course module, and the ICRC pledged to help develop training programmes and to train instructors in the subject.

In accordance with an agreement signed with the Estonian Ministry of Defence, the ICRC financed the translation into Estonian of its "Handbook on the law of war for armed forces". It also provided for the preparation of handbooks for the armed forces in Ukraine and Moldova.

The ICRC participated in the annual international peacekeeping exercise, "Amber Hope", which in 1999 was organized by the Lithuanian Ministry of Defence. The exercise provided an opportunity to put into practice the basic principles of the law of armed conflict and to enhance cooperation with other international organizations, such as UNHCR.

The ICRC and the Moldovan Ministry of Defence together reviewed and evaluated their existing cooperation programme. The growing ability of the armed forces to provide their own, ICRC-trained instructors in the law of armed conflict was particularly encouraging. A deputy chief of the Moldovan armed forces general staff participated in an ICRC course for Romanian officers, held in Bucharest in December, an event which provided an opportunity for the armed forces from both countries to strengthen their contacts.

In Ukraine, a significant change occurred when the Ministry of Defence established a working group to coordinate the dissemination of the law of armed conflict to the Ukrainian armed forces. The ICRC stepped up its contacts with this group.

In 1999, the ICRC launched a programme to spread knowledge of humanitarian law among the region's police and security forces. Initial contacts were established with the Ministries of the Interior of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. Information seminars were organized for the police academies in all three countries. Contacts were reinforced, the objectives of the programme presented, and a number of training courses drawn up. At the end of the year the Ministries of the Interior concerned were studying an ICRC proposal to conclude agreements in the sphere of humanitarian law.

Interest in humanitarian law also ran high in academic circles, and the ICRC continued to offer its assistance to incorporate study of the law into university curricula. It also organized seminars and supported the distribution of teaching materials and the exchange of information on the topic. In preparation for the introduction of humanitarian law as a subject in all universities for the next academic year, the ICRC helped produce a textbook on the law, the first of its kind, in Belarus.

The ICRC continued to give the region's National Societies technical and financial assistance for their training, dissemination and communication activities. In addition, it carried out joint relief activities with the Ukrainian Red Cross branch in the Crimea, providing support for a full range of assistance programmes for vulnerable people in this unstable part of the world. The ICRC provided basic medicines and emergency materials for first-aid centres and for the visiting nurses programme, and financed hot lunches served in a canteen in Simferpol. The programmes helped bolster the long-term position in the region of the Crimean branch of the Ukrainian Red Cross Society.

cooperation with police forces

dissemination at universities

*cooperation
with National Societies*

IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- pursued negotiations with the authorities in an effort to gain regular access to security detainees, held since 1992 in Tiraspol, in the self-proclaimed Moldovan Republic of Dniestr;



- in the Crimea, financed 6,680 hot lunches in a Simferopol canteen for 600 beneficiaries, including elderly and displaced persons;
- provided equipment and basic medicines for 81 Red Cross visiting nurses, who delivered lunches to 100 housebound people and dispensed medical and social services;



- provided medical assistance to 26 first-aid centres in settlements for 26,000 "formerly deported people" and other beneficiaries in the Crimea;
- established 22 medico-social rooms in the Crimea for some 60,000 beneficiaries;



- provided financial and material support to the tracing services of the region's Red Cross Societies (in March, a Moldovan Red Cross tracing officer went to Romania to train Romanian Red Cross tracing staff);
- provided support for the publication of Red Cross bulletins, calendars and other printed and video materials;
- strengthened the National Societies by training and assisting dissemination officers (two training sessions were organized for Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Ukrainian officers in May);
- provided support for two dissemination seminars organized by the Lithuanian Red Cross, in Vilnius and Kaunas;
- with the Federation, helped the Latvian Red Cross organize a seminar for journalists in the town of Jurmala, near Riga;
- with the Federation, conducted a workshop on the principles and implementation of the Seville Agreement, for the Ukraine Red Cross Society;
- with the Ukrainian Red Cross, held seminars on humanitarian law in Chernigov, Poltava, Lutsk, Odessa, Donetsk and Ternopil (representatives from both Chisinau and Tiraspol were invited to the Odessa seminar);
- participated in seminars on population movements given by the Ukrainian Red Cross in Simferopol and Lviv;
- assisted the Crimean branch of the Ukrainian Red Cross to conduct seven seminars for local authorities, teachers and Red Cross staff;
- contributed to the celebration of International Red Cross and Red Crescent Day in Minsk, organized by the Belarusian Red Cross;
- supported the Belarusian Red Cross in the organization of a seminar in Vitebsk for dissemination officers and teachers working as Red Cross volunteers;
- assisted the Belarusian Red Cross in organizing a youth camp for Red Cross volunteers;
- with the Belarusian Red Cross, organized a training seminar for Red Cross staff from Minsk;
- in tandem with the Federation, held talks with the National Society in Moldova on its reconstitution and established contact between the Chisinau headquarters and the Red Cross branch in Tiraspol;



- continued to back the publication of "Justice of Belarus", a legal journal which also covers humanitarian law;
- contributed to the publication of the book "Human Rights in the Republic of Moldova" in English and Moldovan;
- supported the participation of representatives of the Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan governments at ICRC courses held for CIS officials responsible for the implementation of humanitarian law;
- arranged for the participation in Brussels of the national committees for the implementation of humanitarian law of Belarus and Moldova at the first meeting of the European committees and other bodies dealing with this issue;
- supplied the region's armed forces with training material;
- in Ukraine, held seminars for senior Ministry of Defence staff, conducted a seminar for 44 officers of the Dnepropetrovsk Division, held a seminar in March on the teaching of the law of armed conflict for 25 lecturers from Ukrainian military schools, and held seminars for 19 officers of the South Operational Command in Odessa, for 30 Ukrainian naval officers in Sevastopol, for 35 officers from the Ivano-Frankovsk army corps in western Ukraine, for 24 staff officers of the Zhitomir Corps, and for 28 officers of the Simferopol Army Corps;
- gave a presentation in Kyiv in October for 31 officers from peacekeeping units;
- in November, held an information seminar for 156 staff members of the Central Scientific and Research Institute of the Ukrainian armed forces in Kyiv;
- conducted a seminar for 36 medical officers from the Belarus Military Medical Institute in Minsk in November, as part of the cooperation programme carried out by the ICRC and the Belarusian Ministry of Defence to promote the incorporation of the law of armed conflict into military training programmes;
- in Belarus, conducted a joint seminar for 17 officers at Air Force Headquarters in Minsk on 26 and 27 May;
- in Moldova, conducted a seminar for instructors and cadets at the armed forces training centre in September, organized a seminar for 29 officers from the Chisinau garrison, gave two presentations on the law of armed conflict for 141 Ministry of Defence officers, and held training sessions for 43 instructors;
- conducted an information seminar for 28 officers and civilians from the Estonian Ministry of Defence;
- in Belarus, held a seminar on law enforcement bodies in democratic States for 90 officers from the Police Academy in Minsk, organized a seminar in November on humanitarian law, juvenile delinquency and the use of force and firearms for 57 police and security officers and instructors in Minsk, gave three presentations on the ICRC's mandate and humanitarian law to 160 officers and cadets of the Police Academy of Belarus, spoke about effective presentation techniques for the teaching of humanitarian law and human rights to 250 teachers of the Police Academy of Belarus;
- held a pilot seminar for 30 teachers and staff members of the Police Academy of Ukraine on humanitarian law;
- gave a presentation to 180 graduates of the Moldovan Police Academy on humanitarian law and human rights;
- provided financial support for four students, three from Belarus and one from Lithuania, to take part in courses on humanitarian law in Warsaw and Namur (Belgium);

- in May, held the third De Martens International Moot Court Competition in Minsk, in which teams from Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova participated;
- supported the participation of eight people from Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova at the CIS regional seminar for university teachers of humanitarian law;
- in Belarus, helped publish a university textbook on international humanitarian law in Russian;
- participated in a press conference with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ukrainian Red Cross on the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions; Ukrainian and international mass media were present at the event, and broadcast commentaries on the history and development of humanitarian law and on the problems encountered in its implementation;
- at the first international book fair in Kyiv, displayed all ICRC publications available in Russian, and the main publications in French and English.

MOSCOW

Regional delegation

(Russian Federation, with specialized services for all the countries in the region)

promoting universal humanitarian standards

working with the Ministries of Defence and the Interior

PROTECTION

91,780

ASSISTANCE

9,893,444

PREVENTIVE ACTION

4,331,972

COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

2,018,009

OVERHEADS

988,017

GENERAL

2,290,631

TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 19,613,854

On 31 December, President Boris Yeltsin unexpectedly resigned and the prime minister, Vladimir Putin, was appointed acting president. During the year, the Russian Federation had continued the painful transition from a centrally-planned economy to a free market democracy and witnessed a resumption of hostilities in the northern Caucasus. The new leader inherited a lacklustre economy, high unemployment and uncertainty caused by the humanitarian and financial costs of the conflict in Chechnya. Earlier, tensions in the Balkans had repercussions far beyond the confines of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; Russian leaders were sharply critical of NATO air strikes, although efforts were subsequently made to heal the rift with NATO member countries.

Political change and judicial reform permeated all layers of society in Russia, in the CIS countries, and in the Baltic States. For the ICRC, these sweeping reforms presented a unique opportunity to have universal humanitarian standards built into the foundations of society. Dissemination of the principles of international humanitarian law and knowledge of the ICRC's specific mandate therefore continued to be issues of particular concern to the regional delegation in Moscow, which served as the focal point in terms of both human and material resources for activities carried out in CIS countries and the Baltic States. Its tasks in the region were many and varied - for example, legal studies on the incorporation of humanitarian law into national legislation were submitted to the governments of Armenia, Georgia and Turkmenistan respectively, and training programmes on its implementation were run for officials from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.

In the light of the heightened tensions resulting in armed conflict in the northern Caucasus, steps to promote the incorporation of humanitarian law into training programmes for armed and security forces assumed particular importance. In accordance with cooperation agreements signed with the Russian Ministries of the Interior and Defence and with the federal border guard service, numerous presentations and seminars on the law of armed conflict were organized for senior officers at the Centre for General Staff in Moscow, for Russian officers deployed on the border with Tajikistan, and for troops from the (northern Caucasus) Nalchik section of the Ministry of the Interior. The delegation produced a training video on the law of armed conflict, designed to address the needs of troops deployed on the borders of the Russian Federation. A presentation on the importance of specific training on the rules governing the conduct of hostilities was given at the Suvorov Combined Arms Academy. Of particular significance was the ICRC-organized conference on the law of armed conflict attended by senior officers and teaching staff of the Ministry of Defence. Pursuant to a conference decision, a manual on this body of law was drafted for the Russian armed forces, by the ICRC and the Ministry of Defence. A series of presentations on the need to comply with humanitarian law during peacekeeping operations was organized in Kosovo for Russian troops deployed there.

The ICRC pursued its efforts to have international humanitarian law included in the academic curricula at faculties of law, international relations and journalism in the CIS countries. ICRC staff attended conferences and seminars on the subject throughout Russia, and gave presentations on topics related to the law. Advanced seminars continued to be organized in the Moscow region for junior lecturers from faculties of law and international relations. The ICRC organized a seminar on

*teaching international
humanitarian law*

ICRC schools programme

*cooperation
with the National Society*

"International Humanitarian Law in the Professional Training of Journalists". Held in Snegiri, outside Moscow, the seminar was attended by deans and heads of departments of faculties of journalism in CIS countries. The third De Martens Moot Court Competition took place in May in Belarus; participants came from the law faculties of universities in Russia and neighbouring States. During the competition, they were asked to work on diverse humanitarian law problems arising from an imaginary conflict situation. A special edition of the "Moscow Journal of International Law" was finalized in time for the 50th anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

The ICRC schools programme entered its fourth year. The programme was designed to familiarize young people with the principles underlying humanitarian law and the mandate and activities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. In 80 regions across the vast Russian Federation, over two million textbooks have been distributed to fifth-grade students and 1.8 million books went to sixth-graders. The books contain texts and exercises showing that there are limits to violence, even in extreme situations such as war. Over the course of the year, delegates organized seminars for teachers, met with heads of local departments of education, and trained regional coordinators. With the help of local Red Cross branches, the ICRC also carried out evaluations on the use of the fifth- and sixth-grade textbooks. Feedback from teachers was extremely positive, while 98% of seventh-grade students who used the ICRC trial textbook indicated that they wished to continue using it in the eighth grade.

Despite security constraints, ICRC activities in the northern Caucasus were stepped up to respond to the humanitarian needs arising from the crisis in the region. On 30 October, the ICRC, the Russian Red Cross Society and the Federation agreed on a joint plan of action with regard to the conduct of subsequent operations. In accordance with the provisions of the Seville Agreement, the ICRC assumed the role of lead agency and worked to mobilize the Movement's human, material and financial resources as quickly and efficiently as possible.¹³

The delegation in Moscow continued to cooperate with the Russian Red Cross on tracing matters. In early October, the heads of the Russian and Ukrainian Red Cross tracing services and the ICRC cooperation delegate in Moscow participated in Prague in the first round table for the tracing services of Central European countries. Topics under discussion dealt mostly with matters relating to the Second World War and gave rise to fruitful exchanges on numerous bilateral issues between National Societies of the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries.

At the end of November, the regional delegation organized in Moscow the fourth annual round table for tracing services of the CIS and Baltic National Societies. The event provided an opportunity to establish a network amongst archivists from the various National Societies. High on the agenda was compensation for victims of the Second World War to be paid by the German government on the basis of certificates delivered by the Red Cross tracing services, and the declassification of archives containing information on Soviet soldiers missing in action on the territory of the former East Germany and in central Europe. The lack of documents and guidelines on appropriate steps to take in the event of a natural disaster was also discussed.

¹³ See pp. 272-277 for a complete description of ICRC activities in the northern Caucasus.

IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- gave 12 presentations on humanitarian law for 967 members of the armed and security forces;
- coordinated the organization of a regional workshop in Lithuania on the implementation of humanitarian law for officials from Baltic and central European States;
- under the schools programme, held 18 seminars to train 684 teachers in the use of ICRC textbooks;
- completed an impact evaluation of the fifth-grade textbook;
- printed and distributed 92,000 copies of the definitive sixth-grade teachers' manual, and 1.8 million textbooks for sixth-graders;
- received the results of the trial phase of the seventh-grade textbook;
- took part in 14 regional academic conferences on human rights, humanitarian law and conflict resolution across the Russian Federation;



- financed five issues of the Russian Red Cross Magazine, which was produced entirely by the National Society and distributed to subscribers throughout the country;
- supported Russian Red Cross headquarters and its regional representatives in the northern Caucasus and southern Russia, with a view to reinforcing management skills to enable local staff to run operational activities on their own;
- organized the fourth annual round table for tracing officers from CIS countries and the Baltic States.

Northern Caucasus



The year under review witnessed a fresh outbreak of hostilities in this volatile region. Although tensions in Chechnya dominated the headlines, sporadic clashes occurred throughout the other northern Caucasus republics as well. Seven years after fighting began between Ingush and Ossetians in the Prigorodny district in North Ossetia, ongoing negotiations between the governments of Ingushetia and North Ossetia remained inconclusive. In Prigorodny, resentment simmered as thousands of Ingush were unable to return to their homes there, and Ingush houses in the region were the target of arson attacks. In March, a bomb explosion in Vladikavkaz, the capital of North Ossetia, left 64 people dead and over 120 wounded. In the republic of Daghestan, two earthquakes caused severe damage in the western district of Kizliar early in the year, while the political landscape was marred by confrontations and protest marches. In the republic of Karachayevo-Cherkesskaya, clashes erupted after the results of the presidential elections were challenged, and the prime minister was forced to declare a state of emergency.

The long, chequered history of the Chechen-Russian conflict reached a turning point at the beginning of August. Armed insurgent groups, a majority of whom were

Chechnya

abduction of an ICRC medical delegate

humanitarian consequences of the fighting

Chechens, seized control of several villages in Daghestan and declared it to be an independent Islamic state. A series of bomb explosions in August and September in Buinaksk, Volgodonsk and Moscow itself left more than 300 people dead, hundreds wounded, and entire blocks of flats pulverised. One month later, with the declared intention of preventing the armed groups from repeating their attacks, Russian federal forces regained control of the Daghestani villages and hostilities began on Chechen soil. Air attacks were launched on Chechnya and by December, the federal forces had taken back most of the region, while the bitter battle for Grozny raged unabated.

The volatile security situation in the region precluded the permanent presence of ICRC expatriate staff in Chechnya, Daghestan, Ingushetia and North Ossetia. However, five small offices staffed by local employees continued to operate in Grozny, Khasavyurt, Nazran, Vladikavkaz and Stavropol, so that ICRC operations in seven republics and in Krasnodar and Stavropol districts could be efficiently supervised and monitored, albeit at a distance. The situation took a dramatic turn for the worse, however, when an ICRC medical delegate was abducted in Nalchik (Kabardino-Balkaria) on 15 May. To limit security risks, the number of expatriate staff based in the northern Caucasus was immediately reduced from eleven to the operational minimum of three, and the ICRC completely suspended some of its assistance programmes and curtailed others. The delegate was released on 20 July.

After the first clashes between Russian federal forces and the insurgents, some 30,000 people were displaced within Daghestan. When fighting began in Chechnya itself, the military operations, which included air and artillery attacks, drove over 250,000 mainly Chechen civilians, including elderly people, women and children, to abandon their homes within the space of a few weeks. Most fled to Ingushetia, swelling the ranks of those displaced by the earlier Chechen-Russian conflict (1994-1996) and the Ingush-North Ossetia hostilities, while another 20,000 managed to reach the Khasavyurt region in Daghestan. By the end of December, however, the difficult conditions in Ingushetia, coupled with declarations from the Russian authorities that they would facilitate the resettlement of the internally displaced in Chechnya, had prompted about 70,000 people, according to government estimates, to return to their villages and to towns and districts under federal control. The fate of the civilian population within Chechnya, those stranded in the southern mountains and the 30,000 to 40,000 people thought to have stayed on in Grozny, was a cause for serious concern.

Despite the appalling security conditions, ICRC operations continued in Daghestan, Ingushetia and Chechnya. From 6 November onwards, security constraints forced the ICRC and the Chechen branch of the Russian Red Cross to leave Chechnya and redeploy in Ingushetia. The Russian authorities, the ICRC, local branches of the Russian Red Cross and the UN supplied the bulk of the emergency supplies needed for the people pouring out of Chechnya. Acting as the lead agency for the Movement's components, the ICRC launched a five-month plan of action in November for relief activities for a target population of 150,000 displaced people. This figure encompassed 100,000 beneficiaries in the republics of Daghestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia, 30,000 beneficiaries in Chechnya, and 20,000 displaced people who had resettled in various regions of the Russian Federation other than the northern Caucasus.

ICRC response

In November, ICRC delegates from headquarters in Geneva met with high-ranking officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence in Moscow. Delegates also held talks with officials from the Ministries of the Interior and of Nationalities. Discussions focused on the conduct of hostilities, the plight of the victims, and the situation of displaced people, the wounded and detainees. Accompanied by the vice-president of the Russian Red Cross, delegates later went to the northern Caucasus, where they reviewed the Red Cross emergency operation and evaluated security conditions.

At year's end, the relief operation in the northern Caucasus was being coordinated by a team of six ICRC expatriate staff permanently based in Nalchik, with assistance from the ICRC delegation in Moscow, and medical, relief, water and habitat and logistics experts from headquarters in Geneva. Expatriate delegates worked together with some 200 national staff in seven republics and in the Stavropol and Krasnodar districts, while staff formerly based in Grozny who were forced to leave on 6 November were redeployed to Ingushetia.

Following the outbreak of hostilities first in Daghestan, then in Chechnya, the ICRC initiated a dialogue with the parties involved in the hostilities on respect for international humanitarian law. It also requested access to all those arrested and detained in relation to the conflict. Throughout the year, the ICRC continued to support local Red Cross branches in the northern Caucasus in their efforts to restore family links. Until the end of October, it was possible to transmit Red Cross messages to and from Chechnya. After October, messages were sent to Ingushetia, from where most of them were forwarded to the CIS countries.

The ICRC worked with Russian Red Cross branches and with local staff to provide ongoing assistance to orphanages, psychiatric hospitals and homes for the elderly, as well as to the most vulnerable groups throughout the region. After the kidnapping of the ICRC delegate in May, however, most relief and health activities, including assistance for civilians and institutions, were suspended.

In cooperation with the Chechen branch of the Russian Red Cross, the ICRC continued its bread programme in Grozny and in four other urban areas, providing mostly elderly people with 12 loaves per month. Direct assistance was also given to beneficiaries in institutions such as orphanages, psychiatric hospitals and homes for the elderly, and supplies were donated to the blood bank, rehabilitated by the ICRC in 1998, and to four main hospitals in Grozny. Tanker trucks donated by the ICRC distributed water throughout Grozny, while the only pumping station for chlorinated and safe drinking water, managed by the ICRC, provided water for the Chechen capital. All activities were suspended after the withdrawal of ICRC and local Red Cross staff in November.

To cope with the influx of displaced people from Chechnya, host families provided accommodation, and the Russian authorities built seven camps in Ingushetia for some 25,000 people. The ICRC provided water and sanitation assistance to the camps, while the Ingush branch of the Russian Red Cross distributed 10,000 loaves of bread daily. The displaced in host families and those in large, spontaneously formed settlements in areas including the Sunzhenski district also received family parcels, blankets, cooking utensils and clothes. Meals were provided for beneficiaries in Nazran and Sleptsovskaya, while in November and December, the ICRC

ensuring protection for the victims

*assistance to civilians throughout
the northern Caucasus*

relief activities in Chechnya

the displaced in Ingushetia

new arrivals in Daghestan

displaced Chechens in North Ossetia and Kabardino-Balkaria

visiting nurses programme

promoting knowledge of humanitarian law

supplied Ingushetia's five hospitals with medical material and medicines enabling them to treat hundreds of war-wounded, purchased two ambulances which were used as mobile medical units, and provided drinking water to the main camps in the Karabulak region.

After the earthquakes at the beginning of the year, delegates carried out two rounds of distributions to assist villagers in the regions most badly hit, while the Daghestani branch of the Russian Red Cross provided food parcels, blankets and tents. In August and again later in the year, convoys of relief supplies were dispatched by the sub-delegation in Nalchik within 48 hours of the onset of hostilities to assist the people forced to flee.

In the aftermath of the bomb explosion in Vladikavkaz at the beginning of the year, the ICRC provided four hospitals in the region with emergency medical material to cope with the injured. Ad hoc assistance was later given to displaced Chechens in North Ossetia and in Kabardino-Balkaria, while military hospitals in Nalchik, Mozdok and Kislovodsk received emergency assistance for the war-wounded.

As in 1998, the ICRC provided financial and material support throughout the year for the visiting nurses programme managed by local branches of the Russian Red Cross in eight republics and two districts. Under the programme, elderly and house-bound people were visited in their homes by a network of 160 nurses who dispensed medical care, hot meals and food parcels. The ICRC also supported the social welfare programmes of nine Russian Red Cross branch committees with food and non-food items. The social welfare programme was suspended after the May kidnapping, and the visiting nurses' programme came to an abrupt halt in Chechnya at the end of October.

Under the coordination of the Moscow delegation, ICRC field officers throughout the northern Caucasus continued to promote knowledge of humanitarian law among the armed forces. Seminars were given to troops from the Ministries of the Interior and Defence and to border guards.



IN 1999 THE ICRC:

- delivered 132 Red Cross messages from Chechnya to other destinations, mainly in the CIS countries, and forwarded 104 messages to Chechnya for distribution by the local Red Cross;



- contributed 275 tonnes of relief supplies (comprising one food parcel, one hygiene kit and 5 kg of wheat flour per person) to the social welfare programmes of eight Russian Red Cross committees in the republics, for monthly distributions to 4,164 vulnerable people;

- distributed 29 tonnes of relief supplies for 6,000 beneficiaries every three months in the Krasnodar and Stavropol districts;

- distributed 3.4 tonnes of relief supplies every six months in Kalmykia for 1,600 beneficiaries;

- in Chechnya, supplied 1,530 tonnes of wheat flour for the bread programme, enabling 12,000 beneficiaries to collect 12 loaves of bread per month from State bakeries;

- in Chechnya, provided direct assistance to 1,000 beneficiaries in institutions such as orphanages, psychiatric hospitals and homes for the elderly, as well as to the most vulnerable groups;

- following fighting along the border between Daghestan and Chechnya and within Chechnya, provided relief supplies to some 27,000 displaced people in Daghestan;

- distributed emergency supplies including food parcels, jerry cans and kitchen sets to 2,320 beneficiaries after Daghestan was hit by earthquakes;

- in Ingushetia, assisted 143,000 internally displaced people from Chechnya in 24 different localities, distributing relief supplies that included 33,672 family parcels, 364 tonnes of wheat flour, 30 tonnes of high-protein biscuits, 37,273 hygiene kits, 59,146 blankets;

- carried out one-off food and non-food distributions to the psychiatric hospital in Psedakh in Ingushetia for 300 beneficiaries;



- immediately after the bomb explosion in Vladikavkaz, provided four hospitals with enough emergency medical material (dressing and suture sets, intravenous fluids) to treat 180 war-wounded;

- supported the visiting nurses programme run by local Red Cross committees, under which 2,304 beneficiaries received home care;

- provided large quantities of testing material and blood bags for the blood bank in Grozny;



- supplied equipment for the water-distribution network in Grozny, thus allowing 50,000 inhabitants to be provided with clean water daily until November;



- held 86 seminars on humanitarian law for 8,898 members of the armed and security forces;
- held seminars on humanitarian law for adults and young people across the northern Caucasus, reaching 772 people;
- organized three exhibitions in the towns of Cherkessk, Krasnodar and Stavropol on international humanitarian law and the history of the ICRC, the Movement, and its activities; another exhibition, entitled "Humanity in War" attracted over 9,000 people – the exhibitions were aimed at secondary school pupils, students from vocational colleges and law faculties, and servicemen from the various military units deployed in the northern Caucasus;
- as part of the schools programme coordinated by the Moscow regional delegation, held 13 seminars for 705 teachers, and visited 107 schools in Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachayev-Cherkesskaya, Kalmykia, Dagestan, Ingushetia and North Ossetia.

ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN

ARMENIA

PROTECTION

390,697

ASSISTANCE

1,574,729

PREVENTIVE ACTION

558,114

COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

115,514

OVERHEADS

159,053

GENERAL

369,710

TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 3,167,816

AZERBAIJAN

PROTECTION

348,551

ASSISTANCE

2,456,096

PREVENTIVE ACTION

591,222

COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

50,248

OVERHEADS

228,232

GENERAL

455,690

TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 4,130,038



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

The year under review saw little progress towards a settlement in the 10-year-old dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno Karabakh. The 1994 cease-fire was generally respected, but a permanent solution to the conflict remained elusive, as fresh proposals made by the OSCE Minsk group failed to bring the parties closer to a definitive settlement. High unemployment and the consequences of the crisis in Russia caused Armenian living standards to deteriorate even further. A new government, elected in June, approved a plan to reduce the budget deficit, while negotiations with the IMF* and the World Bank continued. These tentative steps towards economic reform were overshadowed by the assassination in October of the prime minister and several other political figures. In Azerbaijan, hopes that leading oil companies would continue to tap reserves in the Caspian Sea were dashed when two large petroleum consortia were disbanded, and acts of sabotage blocked the pipeline through Chechnya to the Black Sea.

In keeping with its mandate, the ICRC focused in Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh on access to and protection of persons held in relation to the conflict, while

* IMF: International Monetary Fund

unresolved tracing requests

in Azerbaijan negotiations were pursued with the authorities on visits to security detainees. Tuberculosis continued to ravage the prison population throughout the region. Concerned about the scope of the problem and the threat it implied for the population at large, ICRC doctors worked together with the Azeri and Armenian authorities to bring the situation under control.

Many families still had no information about relatives who had disappeared during the conflict. The delegations in Baku and Yerevan and the Stepanakert office in Nagorny Karabakh pursued their efforts to ascertain the fate of more than 2,500 people who were still missing. The ICRC repeatedly raised the matter with the relevant authorities, reminded them of their responsibilities towards the families concerned, and intervened in specific cases. Delegates also maintained contact with the families of the missing and with the organizations representing them.

In Armenia and Azerbaijan, delegates continued to collect new tracing requests for people reported missing. As had been the case during the years of conflict, Red Cross messages were often the only means of communication, especially between detainees visited by the ICRC and their families.

access to detainees

Throughout the year, the ICRC visited persons held in relation to the conflict in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh. By the end of September, all persons visited by the ICRC in Azerbaijan in this connection had been released and repatriated. In Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC was also able to visit security detainees. In Azerbaijan, however, negotiations with the authorities to gain access to security detainees had made little progress by year's end.

switching the focus to longer-term objectives

To promote agricultural rehabilitation and stimulate the local economy throughout the region, the ICRC continued its vegetable, potato, and wheat seed distribution programmes. By and large, the food security situation had improved to the point where the ICRC was able, as planned, to terminate its programmes in November. Activities shifted towards long-term objectives rather than direct distributions of food supplies. To reflect this new slant, information sessions were held for farmers in Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh on topics such as natural pest control, crop rotation and fertilization techniques.

In March, a new public health care programme, delegated to the American Red Cross, was launched in Nagorny Karabakh. The programme's principal objectives included the establishment of a basic health information system, the rehabilitation of selected health centres and polyclinics, and the training of health authorities in management skills and data analysis. One crucial, time-consuming component of the programme was the adaptation of national guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of the 10 most prevalent diseases in the area. The inception of the new public health care programme meant that the highly successful ICRC medical assistance programme to 16 health centres in the north-eastern and southern Hadrut and Mardakert regions was ended in March as planned.

Work continued to alert populations living in front-line areas in Nagorny Karabakh to the dangers of mines and unexploded ordnance. ICRC mine-awareness activities over the year focused on preventive rather than emergency assistance, and a brochure explaining this change was produced in English and Armenian and distributed to the media. Over 50,000 mines of various types were laid during the conflict, and a preliminary survey showed that the region had one of the world's highest

mine-awareness in Nagorny Karabakh

rates of mine-blast injury. A mine-awareness programme was launched in March, and a working group made up of representatives of the Ministries of Defence, Health and the Interior, various NGOs and the ICRC was set up in Stepanakert. The group met monthly to establish ways of increasing mine-awareness and reducing mine-related casualties. A mine-awareness delegate undertook a six-week mission to help implement and develop the programme, while a centralized system of gathering data on all mine incidents affecting the civilian population was put in place at the beginning of the year. The system involved the use of a reporting form developed by the ICRC and the United Nations Mine Action Working Group. The new reporting system functioned well and revealed the extent to which the incidence of mine-related injuries had been underreported in the past.

In Azerbaijan, the school mine-awareness training programme was extended to include schools in occupied areas and classes for the internally displaced throughout the country. Information and training seminars were held for teachers and members of NGOs.

Given the magnitude of the tuberculosis (TB) problem in Armenian prisons, the ICRC continued to work with the authorities with a view to setting up a treatment programme. It assessed the prevalence of TB in two prison colonies, and presented the results and recommendations to representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

tackling tuberculosis

In Azerbaijan, the ICRC maintained its treatment programme in a prison compound for TB patients, Penal Colony No. 3, run by the Ministry of Justice in Baku. Since the inception of the programme in 1995, the ICRC has been responsible for the quality of the treatment, for providing technical assistance to facilitate proper implementation of WHO's recommended DOTS* strategy, and for exercising strict control over the use of the TB medicines it provided. The cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice and the ICRC expired on 11 August, although the ICRC continued to supply DOTS medicines and laboratory supplies and to support the treatment of patients already included in the programme, until the end of the year, under the supervision of the coordinator of the ICRC TB programme for the southern Caucasus.

In cooperation with the Azeri Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, work continued at the ICRC prosthetic/orthotic centre for war amputees in Baku. ICRC specialists held training courses for local staff, fitted patients with prostheses, orthoses and crutches free of charge, and paid transport costs to the centre for those who could not afford to do so.

rehabilitating the war-disabled

promoting knowledge of humanitarian law

The ICRC pursued its brief to spread knowledge of humanitarian law. Azeri translations of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols were presented to the authorities in August, and the ICRC's Advisory Service commented on the draft penal code and proposed changes to ensure that it was in line with humanitarian law, particularly with regard to war crimes; comments were presented to the authorities in December. In Armenia, the ICRC submitted a translation into Armenian of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols to the Vice President of the Constitutional Court.

* DOTS: Directly observed treatment, short course strategy

armed forces

In April, the ICRC organized a course on the incorporation of humanitarian law into national legislation for lawyers from several government bodies in Azerbaijan. At the end of the year, the Armenian Association of International Law and the ICRC held a conference on the implementation of humanitarian law that was attended by representatives of the judiciary, the Ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs and the Interior, Yerevan State University and the ICRC's Moscow delegation. Topics on the conference agenda included the incorporation of humanitarian law into the Armenian penal code, national measures of implementation in CIS countries, and the International Criminal Court.

Courses on the law of armed conflict were organized regularly in 1999 for the armed forces in Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh. Presentations were given to units under the jurisdiction of the Ministries of the Interior and Defence in Azerbaijan, while texts were distributed to all military regiments in Nagorny Karabakh. In Armenia, senior officers attended a training session for instructors. Officers who participated in a similar session in 1998 subsequently introduced the law of armed conflict to recruits, using ICRC reference texts as a basis for their courses.

For the third consecutive year, the Armenian Ministry of Defence and the ICRC continued to cooperate under an agreement making humanitarian law part of military training. Contacts were maintained with the head of the Azeri military academy for senior officers, who confirmed that this body of law had been incorporated into the compulsory curriculum, as part of the component in courses given by the Academy's Humanitarian Department and in its module on NATO.

The ICRC continued to foster contacts with university lecturers and students, with a view to the incorporation of humanitarian law into the curricula of leading academic institutions, in particular law and journalism faculties. The International Relations Faculty at Yerevan University inaugurated a 48-hour humanitarian law course for 20 graduate students, using the Armenian translation of an ICRC publication on humanitarian law as a textbook. The university also hosted a conference on the teaching of humanitarian law, organized by the Armenian Association of International Law and the ICRC for members of law, history and political science faculties. In Nagorny Karabakh, ICRC publications on humanitarian law were distributed to six universities, and in December, a group of students from Baku University spent a training period at the delegation. They gained insight into ICRC activities in Azerbaijan and around the world, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and humanitarian law. In May, a professor and three students from the High Diplomatic College participated in the De Martens International Moot Court competition organized by the ICRC in Minsk.

In January, a cooperation agreement was signed with the Armenian Red Cross covering tracing, dissemination and information, emergency-preparedness and relief programmes. Armenian Red Cross branches set up a dissemination network, with the ICRC providing financial and technical support.

With the help of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, the Armenian Red Cross organized a number of events to inform the public of its activities. Two such events included a first-aid competition held in Yerevan in June, and a demonstration of a mountain rescue, held on the 140th anniversary of the Battle of Solferino. Three workshops were organized during the year to train staff from 10 local Red Cross

dissemination in academic circles

cooperation with National Societies

branches. The presentations covered basic aspects of humanitarian law, protected categories of people, and dissemination activities, methods and procedures. When the head of the National Society branches in the Gegharkunik and Tavush regions indicated a need for humanitarian assistance in north-eastern villages, the ICRC and the Armenian Red Cross carried out a joint assessment of the situation. By year's end, three projects - the rehabilitation of the water supply system in Verin Chambarak (Gegharkunik), of an irrigation system in Kirants village (Tavush), and the renovation of the first floor of a kindergarten in Vazashen had been completed.

In Azerbaijan, regular coordination meetings were held with the National Society and the Federation. The ICRC continued to provide training and material support for the tracing service of the Azeri Red Crescent Society, which re-established family links in cases unconnected with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict and helped families keep in touch by means of Red Cross messages.

Karabakhi rescue workers attended a 64-hour training course given by the Armenian Red Cross. The course was financed by the ICRC, and included topics such as basic mine clearance and rescue work in the event of a disaster.

IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- visited 54 detainees held for conflict-related reasons in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh;
- regularly visited 19 detainees held for security reasons in Armenia;
- visited 22 places of detention in Armenia and Azerbaijan;



- opened eight new tracing requests relating to people who went missing in relation to the conflict;
- handled 4,516 Red Cross messages exchanged between detainees and their next-of-kin;



- under the agronomy programme in Armenia, distributed 3,300 vegetable seed kits and information leaflets to some 11,200 people;
- provided spare parts for the repair of 21 combine harvesters and 38 tractors, for 10,500 beneficiaries in Nagorny Karabakh;
- supplied livestock for 421 families in eight villages in Nagorny Karabakh;
- until the agronomy programme ended in November, distributed 2,200 vegetable seed kits and 18.8 tonnes of seed potatoes to 9,200 beneficiaries in Nagorny Karabakh, wheat seed and eight tonnes of fertilizers and pesticides;



- completed repairs on 18 health facilities in the Martouni region of Nagorny Karabakh; these facilities provided 23,000 people with primary health care and maternity services;
- until August, integrated an average of 366 new patients per month in the ICRC-run TB treatment programme in Baku prison hospital;



- at the ICRC centre for amputees in Baku, manufactured 442 prostheses, 109 orthoses and 769 pairs of crutches, and fitted 196 patients with artificial limbs;



- in Azerbaijan, gave eight presentations on international humanitarian law to military personnel;
- conducted a dissemination seminar for 20 members of the teaching staff of the Armenian Military Academy;
- in Armenia, gave a two-day presentation on humanitarian law as part of a human rights seminar for 30 participants;
- distributed 3,050 ICRC supplementary textbooks relating to humanitarian law for fifth-grade pupils in Nagorny Karabakh, and 217 teachers' manuals; in both Armenia and Azerbaijan, the sixth-grade textbooks were tested in schools;



- developed mine-awareness programmes in schools for displaced children and other schools in Azerbaijan, including Nagorny Karabakh;
- held training seminars on mine-awareness for 6,207 teachers and 511 members of NGOs;
- distributed 50,000 exercise books, helping to alert people to the dangers of land-mines.

Several thousand people nevertheless returned to the Gali region in early 1999, mainly to cultivate their fields, despite the absence of safety guarantees and in the face of opposition from government circles. In Gali, violent incidents such as mine blasts, assassination attempts and shootings continued to take a weekly toll of casualties. Meanwhile, living conditions in Abkhazia did not improve owing to the economic embargo imposed by Russia at the end of 1994, which had led to a disruption of the social welfare system. Unfettered crime and violence fomented further turmoil.

The conflict and the resulting upheaval in the northern Caucasus heightened tensions between Russia and Georgia. Over the year, Russian border guards were replaced by Georgians, and discussions continued on the removal of four Russian military bases located on Georgian soil. In November, relations between the two countries hit an all-time low when Russia accused Georgia of serving as a transit point for Chechen fighters, introduced visa requirements and sealed its southern borders.

Families separated as a result of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict in 1992 and 1993 continued to exchange news through the extensive Red Cross message network. In the absence of postal services, this network often remained the only way for people living in Abkhazia to maintain contact with relatives in Georgia, the Russian Federation and other CIS countries. A delegate was flown by UN helicopter to the isolated Kodori valley in the mountainous north of Abkhazia, and was therefore able to restore the Red Cross message network there. Since the only road to this region had been destroyed, no Red Cross messages had reached or come out of the valley for the previous two years.

Members of families separated by the conflict continued to request ICRC assistance in reuniting them. Reunification mostly concerned elderly people living on their own in Abkhazia who wished to spend their remaining years with their relatives.

Vulnerable people, particularly those of Georgian and Russian origin in Abkhazia, remained a source of deep concern. The ICRC closely observed the situation of these non-Abkhaz minorities, particularly in the Gali and Ochamchira regions in southern Abkhazia, where they were often the targets of violent criminal attacks.

ICRC delegates carried out visits to people detained throughout Georgia and Abkhazia, and comprehensive reports on detention centres in both regions were submitted to the relevant authorities. The ICRC continued to negotiate with the Abkhaz authorities for the allocation of more funds to meet detainees' basic material needs. In December, it obtained a written authorization from the Prosecutor General and the Minister of Internal Affairs, granting it unrestricted access to detainees and detention centres in Abkhazia. Until then, the ICRC had only had a verbal authorization to visit detainees.

Hostage-taking remained chronic on both the Georgian and Abkhaz sides of the frontline and continued to preoccupy the ICRC, at times becoming an issue that had significant political overtones. As in the past, the ICRC reminded the authorities that under international humanitarian law it was the State's responsibility to put an end to this practice.

As in previous years, the ICRC ran food assistance programmes that gave full or partial food coverage to a targeted segment of the population. In addition, the

Red Cross messages reach Kodori

people deprived of their freedom

*relief programmes concentrate
on Abkhazia*

agronomy programme provided farming inputs and technical support to rural families who no longer received food assistance. At the beginning of the year, the ICRC redefined its criteria so as to target beneficiaries more accurately. In conjunction with the Abkhaz authorities, programmes were monitored and evaluated throughout the year.

As in 1998, the community kitchen programme delegated to the Finnish Red Cross provided vulnerable people in urban locations in Abkhazia with one hot meal a day, while home visits were carried out jointly by ICRC/Finnish Red Cross teams and the local authorities. The Red Cross home assistance programme, delegated to the Swedish Red Cross, continued to send a helper to visit elderly housebound beneficiaries, who were given basic hygienic care and a hot meal provided either by one of the Finnish Red Cross community kitchens or by the Spanish branch of Action Against Hunger canteens.

The partial assistance programme covered 30 percent of basic food needs for urban dwellers who were deemed eligible for such help by the ICRC and the Abkhaz authorities, while the destitute assistance programme was implemented by the ICRC's local field officers, who made distributions every three months to the most vulnerable beneficiaries in rural areas. The fact that the distributions were carried out by field officers gave the ICRC invaluable information on people from ethnic minorities who required follow-up from protection staff.

Food preservation kits were distributed in rural areas to beneficiaries and their families to help them contribute towards their own food security.

As tuberculosis remained the main health problem in Georgian prisons, ICRC medical teams, working together with the Ministry of Health and with the administrative authorities responsible for the prison system, continued their efforts to fight the epidemic.¹⁴ By year's end, the tuberculosis programme in Georgia was considered a qualified success - the problem of tuberculosis in the penitentiary system was tackled as a whole, since the ICRC was given access to all prisons. A national tuberculosis programme based on the WHO-recommended DOTS strategy began in selected pilot areas, and the cure rate for the penal population was considered satisfactory. In Georgia, the ICRC worked on the basis of early detection of cases and the prompt transfer of infectious patients to a tuberculosis colony hospital, where they were isolated for the full term of their treatment. A health education campaign was established whereby patients were informed about the dangers of the disease before being included in the programme. Those who, post-treatment, received a clean bill of health and were about to leave the penal system, were informed as to how the disease was transmitted. Health education sessions were also held for patients' families and for guards and administrative personnel.

The ICRC continued to provide medical supplies to facilities treating war-related casualties and other emergency surgical cases. It also made an ad hoc distribution of surgical assistance to Russian peacekeeping forces in Abkhazia. Following a visit by the health delegate, first-aid assistance was provided to Gali hospital. Until 1999, this hospital had had no surgeons, and most cases had been transferred across the security zone to Zugdidi hospital for treatment. During the year under review, how-

tuberculosis programme a success

medical assistance

¹⁴ See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 238.

Chechen refugees

*tribute to the 50th anniversary
of the Geneva Conventions*

*promoting international
humanitarian law*

*humanitarian law in universities
and schools*

ever, surgeons began operating at the hospital, and the ICRC decided to provide assistance for surgical emergencies.

In early December, the Georgian Ministry of Health requested ICRC assistance for Chechens who had arrived in Georgia. The ICRC subsequently delivered three batches of medical and surgical supplies to a hospital in Tbilisi. In mid-December, ICRC delegates carried out an assessment of the needs of 5,000 refugees arriving from the Chechen republic in the Pankissi valley in eastern Georgia. A comprehensive programme was subsequently launched for the construction of communal latrines, bathing and washing areas, and a water-supply system for the village of Jokholo.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, members of the Georgian Red Cross and ICRC delegates climbed to the summit of a 4,000-metre hitherto unnamed mountain in the Great Caucasus. Red Cross and Red Crescent flags were planted, the summit was baptized "Geneva Conventions Peak" and the event was registered by cartographers of the Georgia Mountaineering Federation. Georgia had been selected as one of the countries for the ICRC's "People on War" project,¹⁵ and in-depth interviews were conducted with persons involved on both sides of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.

Efforts continued to spread knowledge of and improve compliance with humanitarian law. The study of the Georgian penal code in the light of humanitarian law was finalized and handed over to the relevant authorities in Tbilisi. Work also continued on the revision of the translation of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols.

The ICRC regional delegate for the armed and security forces in the southern Caucasus established initial contacts with the Abkhaz armed forces and police officers on combat missions in Abkhazia, with a view to obtaining more systematic instruction in the law of armed conflict and ultimately making it an integral part of military training. The delegate gave a presentation on the incorporation of the law of armed conflict in combat training for high-ranking officers of the Abkhaz Ministry of Defence.

The inclusion of humanitarian law in the curricula of faculties of law, international relations and journalism remained a priority. To this end, ICRC delegates gave three presentations at three different institutions of higher education in Tbilisi. By December, five humanitarian law courses were being taught in four Georgian universities, three Georgian university lecturers had participated in a seminar organized by the Moscow delegation on this body of law, and ICRC texts on humanitarian law had been published in the national language.

Work also continued on the schools programme, carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. The seventh-grade textbook was distributed in the autumn in eastern and western Georgia. Teaching materials were also distributed, and seminars were held for teachers.

The ICRC kept up its support for a youth programme designed to raise young people's awareness of the organization and humanitarian law. Nine information sessions were held in western Georgia and Abkhazia for pupils in their final years of secondary school, and five regional field officers took part in a training week on humanitarian law and presentation techniques.

¹⁵ See pp. 348-350.

*cooperation
with the National Society*

In cooperation with the Federation, the ICRC maintained its technical and financial support for the dissemination, tracing and information services of the Red Cross Society of Georgia. From March onwards, the head of the Georgian Red Cross Dissemination Department and ten regional instructors conducted seminars for secondary school pupils in Tbilisi and ten other regions, and another Red Cross branch was set up in the Samtshe-Djavakheti region of Georgia.

A tracing seminar for regional tracing officers was held in November. The seminar's primary purpose was to assess tracing activities in the regions where the Red Cross message network had been established, particularly in Ajaria, and to draw up a blueprint for the Georgian Red Cross tracing service for the year 2000. At the end of November, the head of the tracing service participated in the ICRC's annual tracing round table in Moscow.

In a move to stamp out misuse of the red cross emblem, a mobile team of Red Cross Youth volunteers approached pharmacists in all ten districts of Tbilisi and received permission to repaint the red cross signs used by them in green.

IN 1999 THE ICRC:



- conducted regular visits to 173 detainees (including 26 registered for the first time) in 39 places of detention run by the Georgian authorities;
- regularly visited 27 detainees (including 14 registered for the first time) in 9 places of detention run by the Abkhaz authorities;



- in Georgia, collected 10,136 Red Cross messages and distributed 12,154 messages;
- collected 10,622 Red Cross messages and distributed 9,427 in Abkhazia;
- reunited 27 persons with their families (this mainly involved transfers of people from Abkhazia to other areas of Georgia, the Russian Federation or Ukraine);



- in Abkhazia, provided some 20,000 beneficiaries in 19 towns and 1,200 beneficiaries in 32 villages with wheat flour, sugar, vegetable oil, yeast, soap and individual parcels every three months;
- supplied 1,533 tonnes of food for the 19 canteens run by the Finnish Red Cross in Abkhazia, which provided about 5,570 people with one hot meal per day;
- helped 845 elderly housebound people in Abkhazia through the Swedish Red Cross home assistance programme;
- as part of the agronomy programme, distributed 439 tonnes of fertilizer and pesticides to beneficiaries in 20 villages;



- assisted five surgical facilities in western Georgia and Abkhazia;
- with the support of the Hellenic Red Cross, assisted three polyclinics and a dispensary in the Sukhumi district by providing medical supplies;
- provided treatment to 862 patients enrolled since June 1998 in the ICRC-run tuberculosis treatment programme for detainees in Tbilisi;
- fitted 463 new patients and produced 623 prostheses and 393 orthoses at its centres for war amputees in Tbilisi and Gagra (Abkhazia);
- delivered three batches of medical and surgical supplies to Tbilisi Hospital No. 5, for persons who had arrived from Chechnya;
- gave medical supplies to the Chatili health centre;



- completed repairs on the Geguti 10 and the Sagarejo 3 penal colonies, and the conversion of two rooms into a laboratory at the penitentiary hospital Respublika 15;
- in June, began repairs to improve hygiene conditions in the Rustavi 1 colony;
- finished rehabilitation work in the Ksani 9 prison for tuberculosis patients;
- launched a programme for the construction of 50 communal latrines, two bath houses, two washing areas and a water supply for Jokholo, to cope with the arrival of 5,000 Chechen refugees;



- in cooperation with Georgian national television, produced a 30-minute documentary designed to raise awareness of the activities of the Georgian Red Cross;



- carried out the consultation phase of the "People on War" project, during which 1,000 people in Georgia and Abkhazia were asked to share their experiences and opinions on limits in war;
- published 70,000 copies of the Georgian version of the seventh-grade school textbook and 17,000 teachers' manuals; held 75 training seminars for 514 teachers in 75 regions;
- held seven seminars on humanitarian law and Red Cross themes for representatives of the authorities, university and high school students, and the armed forces;
- held 16 information sessions for potential bearers of weapons, reaching 564 teenagers in their last years of compulsory schooling in Abkhazia;
- conducted one dissemination session for 35 customs officials stationed at border posts.

WASHINGTON

Regional delegation
(Canada, United States)

*focus on the promotion
of humanitarian law*

*liaising with international
organizations*

The year under review saw the regional delegation step up its contacts with members of the United States government, largely in connection with the Kosovo conflict and subsequent NATO air strikes in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Discussions were held, for example, with staff of the National Security Council concerning humanitarian aid during the crisis. In addition, the regional delegation gave numerous interviews to the US media when the ICRC resumed its activities in Kosovo.

Cooperation between the Washington regional delegation and the American Red Cross Society was close throughout the year. The American Red Cross was instrumental in helping to obtain a Presidential Statement to mark the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions and a Congressional Resolution on the subject. In December, the ICRC's Director of Operations met with US government officials and with the new president of the American Red Cross and her senior advisor.

In Canada, the regional delegation kept up a constant dialogue with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense, and with the Canadian International Development Agency. For the second year running, the ICRC seconded a delegate experienced in dissemination and communication techniques to the Canadian Red Cross Society.

The focus of the regional delegation's activities nevertheless remained the promotion of international humanitarian law. To this end, delegates gave presentations on humanitarian law at the Inter-American Defense College in Washington, the US National Defense University, the Naval War College in Newport, and the Canadian International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Nova Scotia.

Part of the delegation's role was to liaise with international organizations, in particular with the OAS.* Discussions with OAS representatives focused on increasing understanding and support for ICRC operations and its work to promote humanitarian law in Latin America. In March, the ICRC President presented a report on the promotion of and respect for international humanitarian law to the OAS Permanent Council's Committee on Political and Juridical Affairs. On that occasion, the President reiterated his call for States and intergovernmental organizations to renew their humanitarian commitment by adhering to treaties to which they were not yet party, such as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Ottawa treaty banning landmines. The ICRC also took part in the OAS General Assembly in Guatemala City, which adopted a resolution supporting ICRC activities and respect for humanitarian law. The OAS and the regional delegation made joint arrangements for a humanitarian law seminar held for diplomats in Washington and gave lectures on the law of armed conflict at courses organized by the OAS Secretariat's legal department in Rio de Janeiro and Panama.

The regional delegation also strengthened its working relations with its principal contacts in the World Bank, and took part in the 1999 World Bank/IMF annual meeting, a Harvard/OCHA* seminar on protected areas, and the annual meeting of the American Society of International Law.

* OAS: Organization of American States

* OCHA: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

