

Zeitschrift: Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross
Herausgeber: International Committee of the Red Cross
Band: - (1999)

Rubrik: International law, communication and the Movement

Nutzungsbedingungen

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

Conditions d'utilisation

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

Terms of use

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

Download PDF: 07.02.2026

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

A year marked by the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions

The year under review marked the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. While obviously not an occasion for lavish celebration - what delight can there be in commemorating treaties that simply alleviate certain effects of conflict, without actually eradicating the horrors of war - the anniversary nevertheless prompted much-needed thought on the Conventions, their relevance to modern-day conflict, ways to improve compliance and their possible development. The ICRC carried out two major projects aimed at encouraging reflection on these issues.

The first project offered people directly or indirectly affected by armed conflict the opportunity to speak about their perception of war and the rules of humanitarian law. Those interviewed were also asked to share their views on why those rules were violated and how to prevent such violations. The project, entitled "People on War", was undertaken in twelve different countries and provided valuable insights for the ICRC's ongoing consideration of what needs to be done to ensure that humanitarian law is more fully understood, accepted and respected.

The second project aimed to clarify the provisions of customary international humanitarian law. How do States understand and fulfil their treaty-based obligations? By which rules do they feel legally bound above and beyond these obligations? How do they apply those rules on the ground? The research carried out systematically since 1997 in all regions of the world was completed, as was the thematic consolidation phase conducted with the assistance of international lawyers from around the world. The results, which will be published in 2000, will no doubt make it possible, through a better understanding of the current situation, to identify courses of action that will lead to improved compliance and to the development of humanitarian law in the future.

The year under review provided an ideal platform for this reflection, since it was also the year in which the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent was held, bringing together the States party to the Geneva Conventions, the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the ICRC. The International Conference, which dates back to 1867 and is held in principle every four years, had been somewhat undermined by the political setbacks encountered in 1986 and the cancellation of the Conference that should have been held in 1991. The success of the 1995 Conference therefore needed to be reconfirmed, and it was. The political difficulties inherent in such meetings were overcome, and the Conference took place in a positive and constructive atmosphere. The opening of the Conference to all major governmental and non-governmental organizations active in humanitarian emergencies, the organization of workshops open to the public, the call on participants to make specific individual pledges and the adoption of a Plan of Action to be used to measure progress, enabled the Conference to fulfil its role as a major world forum on humanitarian issues. A tradition that has proved its value and that should be maintained has therefore been reinforced.

Conflicts and the effects of war not only on countries that are the theatre of hostilities, but also on neighbouring countries that are often affected by an influx of

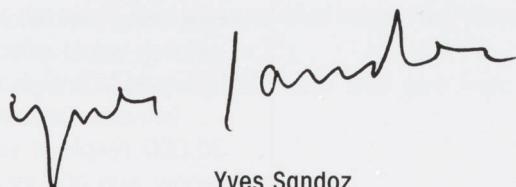
INTERNATIONAL LAW, COMMUNICATION AND THE MOVEMENT

refugees, required increasingly intensive action by the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This put to the test the Agreement adopted in Seville at the end of 1997 governing the organization of the Movement's international activities. That the coordination of such activities and the spirit in which they are carried out have already improved is beyond dispute, even though much remains to be learned from these new experiences. Of all the tragic events that occurred during the year, the Balkans conflict, which received a disproportionate amount of media coverage in comparison to other dramatic situations, raised essential questions concerning the legality of the use of force and the interpretation of certain rules of international law. The ICRC has initiated a dialogue to discuss these issues, particularly in military circles, which it should no doubt pursue and strengthen in the years to come.

On 12 August 1999, the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, fourteen people of international repute, including the Secretary-General of the United Nations, met in Geneva at the invitation of the ICRC. They launched a solemn appeal underlining how important they consider the Conventions to be and expressing their conviction that the Conventions remained as valid and relevant as ever. In particular, they called on the peoples of the world to respect at all times the fundamental principles on which the Conventions are founded:

- respect for human dignity in all circumstances;
- compassion for those who suffer;
- solidarity.

May their appeal be heeded.



Yves Sandoz
Director for International Law and Communication

world-wide consultation

50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1949 GENEVA CONVENTIONS

People on war

The 50th Anniversary of the Geneva Conventions provided the ideal opportunity to begin this process and to raise public awareness and further debate on the limits on war, and the "People on War" project, which came into full swing in 1999, the best means of doing so. Central to the project was a world-wide consultation aimed at helping people "in" war by listening to people "on" war. Civilians and combatants alike were asked to share their experiences, express their opinions on the basic rules that should apply in war, discuss why those rules were sometimes broken and look at what the future held. What better way to help determine the shared human principles that formal law and military practice should build on; to establish how far the limits on war correspond to human nature and desires; to gain insight into the complex dilemmas facing people in the midst of conflict; and to gather the suggestions of war victims on ways to achieve greater humanity in conflict?

The ICRC commissioned Greenberg Research, Inc. to design the research programme and guide the ICRC staff and Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers who carried out the consultation in 12 countries affected by war: Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Colombia, El Salvador, Georgia/Abkhazia, Israel/the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, Lebanon, Nigeria, the Philippines, Somalia and South Africa. In all these countries, staff conducted face-to-face interviews, group discussions and national public opinion surveys on the basis of statistical questionnaires. National surveys were also conducted in France, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States, so that the consultation would reflect the perceptions of people who had not been directly affected by war in recent years as well.

Between October 1998 and September 1999, the ICRC thus enabled over 20,000 people to voice their views in over 14,000 hours of interviews: ordinary people who had lost their homes, soldiers, doctors and prisoners of war, people whose loved ones had gone missing, guerilla fighters and members of paramilitary groups, NGOs and international peace-keepers. About 20,000 questionnaires were collected and processed, and over 250 individual and 100 focus-group discussions were recorded and transcribed, yielding one of the biggest and most innovative bodies of social research on war ever compiled.

The survey gave a voice to people as individuals, with their hopes and dignity, their vast and valuable experience, and the potential to shape their own future. It will allow for a much more subtle appreciation of what really happens and matters in societies devastated by war, and will help to have a greater influence on the conduct of war and the fate of its victims in the years to come.

As planned, the final "People on War" report was presented to the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, on 1 November 1999. The consultation was made public in the hope that it would stir local and international debate on the humanitarian aspects of war - a debate that should be joined by the major political players, international and non-governmental organizations and

Solemn Appeal and Signatories

The universally recognized Geneva Conventions were adopted in this city 50 years ago today. The States Parties thereby declared their refusal to see the unprecedented horrors of the Second World War repeated.

Since then, these treaties have helped to alleviate much suffering but have not been able to prevent millions of innocent people from falling victim to the conflicts that have ravaged our planet.

Although they are often breached, the Geneva Conventions and the principles on which they are founded remain as valid and relevant as ever.

That is the opinion of thousands of individuals across the world who bear the physical and mental scars of war. Men, women and children have all talked about their experiences, their fears and their expectations. They are the voices of war, and we are convinced that these expectations can be met.

We have come together in Geneva to make a solemn appeal to all peoples, nations and governments. We call on the world:

- to reject the idea that war is inevitable and to work tirelessly to eradicate its underlying causes;
- to demand of all those involved in armed conflicts and all who are in a position to influence the course of such conflicts that they respect the essential humanitarian principles and the rules of international humanitarian law;
- to spare civilians the agony of war;
- to foster relations between individuals, peoples and nations on the basis of the principles that inspired the Geneva Conventions, namely,
 - respect for human dignity in all circumstances;
 - compassion for those who suffer;
 - solidarity.

We are convinced that disregard for these principles sets the stage for war and that respecting them during wartime facilitates the restoration of peace.

On the eve of a new millennium, let us all undertake to defend these principles and thus give hope to future generations.

The Signatories of the appeal were:

H.H. Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan

Mr Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Ms Shabana Azmi, India, actress

H.R.H. Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan

Ms Geraldine Chaplin, United Kingdom, actress

Ms Fayrouz, Lebanon, singer and poet

Mr Serge Klarsfeld, France, historian, President of the Association Fils et Filles des Déportés Juifs de France

Mr Chris Moon, United Kingdom, former deminer, supporter of organizations for the disabled

Mr Jean Pictet, Honorary Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

Mr Vladimir Pozner, Russian Federation, journalist

H.E. Mr Mario Soares, former President of Portugal

H.E. General Amadou Toumani Touré, former President of Mali

Ms Marian Wright Edelman, United States, President of the Children's Defense Fund

Mr Zhang Yuan, China, film director

dedicated Website

aid specialists.

To support these public efforts, a Website dedicated to the project (<http://www.onwar.org>) was launched in May 1999. It featured background information on the consultation, stories and testimony gleaned in the field, photographic portfolios, an on-line questionnaire based on the actual questionnaire used by the consulting staff, as well as the final and country reports. A key part of the site was an interactive multimedia piece, called "Cross Fire", that used video material shot during the campaign. The piece addressed issues concerning the application of humanitarian law by taking the user through some of the dilemmas faced by both victims and combatants on the battlefield.

The data gathered in this first stage of the project will be analysed and put to tangible use by the ICRC and external specialists in the months and years to come.

12 August 1999

The 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions was marked by a special event held on 12 August 1999 in Geneva and attended by a group of people of international repute. The event included the inauguration of an exhibition of 50 giant banners on humanitarian law in the streets of the city, and the adoption of a solemn appeal calling on the international community to respect the rules of and limits to warfare and reflecting the concerns of those affected by war. The appeal was read by the ICRC President before being signed and adopted by the group of prominent world figures, led by the UN Secretary-General, in the Alabama Room of the Geneva Town Hall, where the Conventions had been signed 50 years earlier. A charity concert by world famous violinist Vanessa-Mae followed.

IMPLEMENTATION OF AND RESPECT FOR THE LAW

Through its humanitarian work, the ICRC endeavours to provide protection and assistance to victims of armed conflict. Its role is also "to work for the faithful application of international humanitarian law" and "to prepare any development thereof".¹

The ICRC constantly strives to ensure that belligerents respect their humanitarian commitments. Whenever the situation warrants, the institution may also appeal to all the members of the international community to urge the warring parties to meet their obligations.

By the same token, the ICRC keeps a close watch not only on methods and means of combat in order to assess their consequences in humanitarian terms, but also on any other developments that have a bearing on international humanitarian law, so as to prepare for the adoption, whenever necessary, of new rules of that law. Its role consists, especially on the basis of its observations in the field, in gathering relevant information, organizing consultations with experts, and monitoring and fostering debate on the evolution of humanitarian issues.

Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law

In order to strengthen respect for the law, the ICRC set up a unit in charge of providing national authorities with assistance in acceding to humanitarian law treaties and implementing that branch of law within the State's domestic legal system. Called the Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law, the unit helps carry out the major and urgent task which consists in promoting respect for humanitarian law and its implementation at national level. To that end, it works in close cooperation with governments, the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, international organizations and specialized institutions.

The Advisory Service organized a series of national and regional seminars throughout the year in order to promote the broadest possible discussion of topics relating to the national implementation of humanitarian law. The seminars were attended by representatives of Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Defence, Health and the Interior, by parliamentarians and members of the armed forces and civil defence bodies, and by representatives of academic circles and other interested spheres. They were often held under the auspices of the government of the country in which they took place and were generally organized in close cooperation with the National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society of the host country. They provided an opportunity to present the work carried out in the field of implementation in other regions. In 1999, national seminars were held in the following countries: Benin (August¹), Burkina Faso (May, July and November), the Dominican Republic (August), Gambia (November and December), Georgia (March), Guatemala (March), Kenya (June), Kyrgyzstan (March and June), Lithuania (June), Malawi (February), Mali (February), Nicaragua (May and November), Niger (July), Panama (May and July), the Russian Federation (February), Sri Lanka (July), Tajikistan (February), Togo (August), Turkmenistan (May) and Uzbekistan (September).

¹ Article 5.2 (c) and (g) of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

*ensuring greater respect
for humanitarian law*

seminars on humanitarian law

*cooperation
with other organizations*

advice on national legislation

*analysis of legislation
and case-law*

*repression of war crimes
at national level*

Regional seminars were held in El Salvador (June) and Lithuania (November). International humanitarian law and its national implementation were also the subject of several courses and conferences in CIS* countries, and two regional courses were organized for officials from those countries in Moscow in May and October.

In order to achieve its objectives more effectively, the Advisory Service cooperates with various organizations interested in the national implementation of international humanitarian law either in general or in respect of specific aspects thereof. Representatives of the Advisory Service were involved in particular in the proceedings of the special meeting of the OAS* Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs on the implementation of humanitarian law (16 March) and in the growing cooperation with the OAS Technical Cooperation Department. They continued to exchange views with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, with which a handbook for parliamentarians was published jointly.¹ Contacts were established with UNESCO representatives in Paris with a view to developing the work of the Advisory Service concerning the national implementation of treaty-based norms relating to the protection of cultural property. The Advisory Service also attended the meeting of Commonwealth Justice Ministers (Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 5-7 May), and exchanged views with the CIS and its Inter-Parliamentary Assembly on model laws and recommendations for the implementation of humanitarian law.

The enactment of national legislation to punish war crimes and to prevent misuse of the red cross, red crescent and other emblems (civil defence and cultural property, for example) is central to ensuring full respect for humanitarian law. In 1999, the Advisory Service provided technical assistance and advice on the drafting, adoption and amendment of such legislation in the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova, Mozambique, Nauru, Nicaragua, Niger, Panama, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

The Advisory Service gathers and analyses all information relating to new national legislation and case-law. In 1999, for example, a law on the protection of the red cross and red crescent emblems was adopted in Ukraine (August), and Belgium amended its legislation on the repression of serious violations of international humanitarian law (February). The penal codes of Belarus and Georgia were brought in line with humanitarian law, and legislation relating to anti-personnel mines was enacted in Germany (July) and Cambodia (April).

A meeting on the incorporation of the repression of war crimes into national legislation was organized in Madrid from 10 to 12 March in cooperation with the Madrid Bar Association and the Spanish Red Cross Centre for the Study of International Humanitarian Law. It followed on from meetings of experts organized in 1997 (civil law States) and 1998 (common law countries).² A dozen or so Spanish-speaking countries were represented by senior government officials (civilian and military), members of national committees, university lecturers, lawyers and

* CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States

* OAS: Organization of American States

¹ "Respect for International Humanitarian Law - A Handbook for Parliamentarians", ICRC and Inter-Parliamentary Union (eds.), Geneva, 1999, 104 pages.

² See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, pp. 311-312.

national committees

publications

working to promote ratification

diplomats. The aim was to set out the penal-law obligations binding on States party to humanitarian law treaties and to discuss fundamental matters of law and questions of procedure and legislative technique relating to the incorporation into national legislation of punishment for violations of humanitarian law. The meeting also examined the international mechanisms for repressing crimes under international law. The meeting's conclusions will be published, as were those of the two earlier meetings.

The establishment of national committees for the implementation of humanitarian law, comprising representatives of ministries and national bodies responsible for implementation, constitutes an effective means of promoting compliance with the law at the national level. In 1999 such committees were set up in the Dominican Republic, Gambia, Iran, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Mali,³ Nicaragua, Slovenia, Tajikistan and the United Kingdom, bringing the number of operational national committees to over 50. Other countries considering setting up their own committees included Armenia, Burkina Faso, Croatia, Egypt, Guatemala, Jordan, Luxembourg, Mozambique, Niger, Poland, the Russian Federation, Uganda, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Together with the Belgian Interdepartmental Commission for Humanitarian Law, the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Belgian Red Cross, the ICRC organized a European meeting of committees and other national humanitarian law bodies that was held in Brussels on 19 and 20 April. The aim of the meeting was to exchange experience and information relating to the implementation of humanitarian law and to bring to light any areas of common thought. Bilateral contacts between national committees were also encouraged. A second meeting between the Chilean and Argentine committees was held in October. In addition, numerous contacts were forged between Advisory Service staff and representatives of existing bodies with a view to supporting the activities of the latter.

In 1999 the Advisory Service published its third annual report,⁴ which outlined recent developments regarding national implementation of humanitarian law. It added to the corpus of information on the topic by creating fact sheets on questions of implementation. The report on the 1997 meeting of experts on the national repression of violations of humanitarian law in civil law States was published early in the year.⁵ The Advisory Service also went on-line, making its database containing examples of national legislation and case-law relating to the implementation of humanitarian law available on the ICRC Website.

International Criminal Court

The Statute for an International Criminal Court (ICC), adopted on 17 July 1998 in Rome, will enter into force once it has been ratified by 60 States. Given that many States will have to enact national legislation or even amend their constitutions before ratification to meet the terms of the Statute, it is unlikely that there will be 60 ratifications in the short term. The ICRC has decided to promote ratification actively, and in particular to secure the Statute's entry into force as rapidly as possible. By

³ The Mali National Committee was in fact set up in December 1998.

⁴ International Committee of the Red Cross, "National implementation of international humanitarian law, Annual Report 1998 of the Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law", Geneva, 1999.

⁵ "Repression nationale des violations du droit international humanitaire (systèmes romano-germaniques): rapport de la réunion d'experts, Genève, 23-25 septembre 1997", Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law, ICRC, Geneva, 310 pages.

important tasks incumbent on the Preparatory Commission

right to non-disclosure in judicial proceedings

need for national implementation

31 December 1999, six States (Fiji, Ghana, Italy, San Marino, Senegal and Trinidad and Tobago) had ratified and 91 had signed the Rome Statute.

Much remains to be done before the Court becomes fully operational. A Preparatory Commission has been mandated to draft the Rules of Procedure and Evidence and the Elements of Crimes by 30 June 2000. It is understood that existing international humanitarian law must be properly reflected in these instruments. With a view to furthering this aim, the ICRC prepared an extensive study on relevant international and national case-law on the elements of war crimes. The study was submitted to the Preparatory Commission by a group of seven States as background information to facilitate the negotiations, during which it was extensively used.

In a recent decision of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (27 July), the Trial Chamber held that under customary international law the ICRC enjoys a right to non-disclosure in judicial proceedings of information relating to its work. The Trial Chamber stressed that preserving confidentiality is absolutely essential to the performance of the ICRC's mandate. On the basis of these legal arguments, the ICRC worked to have this rule of customary international law reflected in the ICC's Rules of Procedure and Evidence.

Despite the establishment of the ICC, States will continue to have a duty to exercise their domestic criminal jurisdiction over persons alleged to have committed international crimes, as the Court has jurisdiction only when a suspected criminal has not been tried in a national court. This is likely to encourage States to put in place national implementation measures or to improve upon existing legislation. In this context, the ICRC Advisory Service will continue to assist States in the adoption and implementation of national legislation for the prosecution of war criminals, taking into account the Rome Statute.

Observance by United Nations forces of international humanitarian law

In order to define the principles and rules applicable to peace-keeping forces more clearly, the ICRC convened a symposium in 1994 and two meetings of experts in 1995 attended by UN representatives. The meetings resulted in the drafting of guidelines which were communicated to the United Nations Secretary-General, who on 12 August 1999 promulgated the text entitled "Observance by United Nations forces of international humanitarian law" in the Secretary-General's Bulletin.⁶ The guidelines entered into force on 12 August, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. The ICRC is pleased that the legal situation concerning the law applicable to peace-keeping forces is thus clarified, a step that will allow for more effective teaching of the law to those forces.

The guidelines deal with the fundamental principles and rules of humanitarian law applicable to United Nations forces conducting military operations under UN command and control in situations of armed conflict.

⁶ Bulletin ST/SGB/1999/13 of 6 August 1999.

Centenary of the First International Peace Conference in 1899

The ICRC took an active part in the various events to mark the centenary of the First International Peace Conference in 1899, during which humanitarian law underwent significant development. During governmental meetings in The Hague (18 and 19 May) and St Petersburg (22 to 25 June), the provisions and implementation of humanitarian law, disarmament and the peaceful settlement of disputes were the subject of in-depth consideration and fruitful debate. The ICRC was represented at the meetings by its President and Vice-President respectively. As a member of the "Friends of 1999",⁷ the ICRC helped prepare the commemoration of this important event. It also participated in the Hague Appeal for Peace conference for members of civil society (The Hague, 11-15 May), holding several workshops on humanitarian law.

27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

Humanitarian law was the subject of in-depth debate during the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,⁸ held in Geneva from 31 October to 6 November 1999.

That debate took several forms. On the one hand, the Plenary Commission devoted considerable time to the topics of protection of victims of armed conflict through respect for international humanitarian law and humanitarian action in the event of armed conflict or other disasters. On the other, the Conference adopted a Plan of Action for the years 2000 to 2003 which reiterates the principal obligations stemming from humanitarian law (in particular, respect for that law by States and armed groups, the responsibility of States in the event of grave breaches of humanitarian law, the ICRC's role to protect and assist, the recruitment and participation of children in hostilities, the repression of war crimes, the ratification of instruments of humanitarian law, national implementing measures, the teaching of humanitarian law, the consistency of arms with humanitarian law, the prohibition of anti-personnel mines, the problem of arms transfers, activities for certain categories of victims such as refugees and people displaced within their own countries, and the protection of humanitarian personnel).

The participants undertook to implement the Plan of Action and to honour the many individual pledges they made during the Conference. The Plan of Action was accompanied by a solemn declaration recalling in particular the collective commitment to humanitarian law.

⁷ A group of about twenty States and international organizations invited by the Conference organizers (the Netherlands and the Russian Federation) to participate in the preparations for the events to commemorate the centenary of the First International Peace Conference.

⁸ See also pp. 376-377.

STRENGTHENING AND DEVELOPING THE LAW

Study on customary rules of international humanitarian law

In December 1995, the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent formally invited "the ICRC to prepare, with the assistance of experts on IHL representing various geographical regions and different legal systems, and in consultation with experts from governments and international organizations, a report on customary rules of IHL, applicable in international and non-international armed conflicts, and to circulate the report to States and competent international bodies". A Plan of Action was drawn up in 1996 by the study's Steering Committee, which is composed of eminent academic experts in humanitarian law, and research started in late 1996. The study covers six areas of humanitarian law: the principle of distinction, methods of warfare, use of weapons, specific protection regimes, treatment of persons and human rights law applicable in armed conflict, and accountability and implementation.⁹

In 1999, the Steering Committee submitted its first assessment of the customary nature of the rules covered by the study to a group of governmental experts for review. More than thirty experts analysed the assessment during two week-long meetings in January and May 1999. In general, the study was well received and the method largely approved. In the second half of 1999, the ICRC started drafting the final report, taking into account the opinions of the experts consulted. In addition, the consolidated practice reports were being edited and updated so as to reflect State practice up until December 1999.

Protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict

The Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict was adopted on 26 March 1999 after two weeks of negotiations at a diplomatic conference in The Hague. The ICRC played an active role in the drafting of this new treaty, both before and during the diplomatic conference. Its aim was to ensure that the new treaty reflected modern humanitarian law and, if possible, developed it further. The ICRC contributed during the actual conference in three ways: its legal expertise was sought by many delegations, it was an active participant in the various working groups, and it submitted a number of proposals in close cooperation and consultation with government delegations. The Second Protocol has four main features.

The 1954 Convention was adopted well before the 1977 Additional Protocols. It was drafted against the background of the Second World War at a time when it was still considered inevitable that entire cities would be attacked. The 1954 Convention sought to protect valuable cultural property in the event of such a war. It provides that cultural property can be attacked only in case of "imperative military necessity", without defining this exception. In 1977, Additional Protocol I did away with this approach. Henceforth, only military objectives – more clearly defined and more carefully selected – could be made the object of attack. It appeared self-evident that any improvement of the 1954 Convention should reflect this modern approach: cultural

⁹ See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 315, for a discussion of the study method.

final report in preparation

basic protection

enhanced protection

enforcement

scope of application

property is civilian property and it should not be attacked unless it becomes a military objective. In addition, cultural property can only be attacked when there is no other feasible alternative. The updating of the 1954 Convention in the light of Additional Protocol I also led to the inclusion of rules concerning precautions in attack that are to be found in the Protocol.

Given that the 1954 system of cultural property under special protection never functioned well, the Second Protocol establishes a new system. Cultural property of the greatest importance for humanity can be placed under enhanced protection provided it is adequately protected by domestic law and not used for military purposes or to shield military sites. Enhanced protection is granted from the moment the property is entered on the List of Cultural Property Under Enhanced Protection. The decision to list a cultural property is taken by the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, an intergovernmental committee established under the new Protocol.

Another development reflected in the new Protocol is the increased effort to fight impunity through effective criminal prosecution of war criminals. The Protocol specifically defines five serious violations for which it establishes individual criminal responsibility. States undertake to adopt appropriate legislation to make these violations criminal offences under domestic law, to provide appropriate penalties and to establish jurisdiction over these offences, including universal jurisdiction for three of the five serious violations. The list of serious violations goes well beyond existing law.

The Second Protocol applies equally to international and non-international armed conflicts. The extension of application to non-international armed conflicts is essential.

Protection of displaced persons

International humanitarian law provides extensive protection against arbitrary displacement. By working for the faithful implementation of the law, notably by reminding parties of their obligations towards civilians and by providing relief assistance, the ICRC helps to maintain a basis for subsistence and a minimum of safety, both of which are essential if people are to remain in their homes.

While in the majority of cases the ICRC acts in the light of humanitarian law alone, its delegates have also referred to the "Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement", for instance when humanitarian law is implicit only or no longer applicable. The ICRC also continued to participate in inter-agency discussions on how the protection and assistance needs of uprooted populations could best be met, both at the policy level and in the context of specific conflict situations.

Protection of children in armed conflicts

In recognition of the extremely difficult situation faced by millions of war-affected children, the ICRC pursued its dual strategy of combining protection and assistance activities in countries affected by armed conflicts or other forms of violence with efforts to enhance the legal protection of children. At the operational level, ICRC delegates spread knowledge of humanitarian law and interceded with the parties to armed conflicts to encourage respect for its provisions.

Further to the Plan of Action adopted by the 1995 Council of Delegates, the ICRC also promoted the principle of non-recruitment and non-participation in armed conflict of children under the age of 18. It did so notably by participating in the UN Working Group established to draft an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and by maintaining regular contact with those associated with its work. It also made its views known in various international fora, including regional meetings organized by States and NGOs.

Fundamental standards of humanity

The ICRC continued to participate actively in the debate on fundamental standards of humanity taking place within the UN Commission on Human Rights. Pursuant to the relevant Commission resolution, the ICRC provided comments on two reports by the UN Secretary-General examining the need to draft fundamental standards of humanity and the potential legal and practical implications thereof. The ICRC also contributed to informal discussions of fundamental standards of humanity organized between governments and NGOs. The ICRC's forthcoming study on customary rules of international humanitarian law will be particularly relevant to further discussions of the standards.

Repression of international terrorism

In recent years, the ICRC has been closely following efforts by the international community to draft international legal instruments for the repression of terrorism. In the framework of the United Nations, the ICRC has participated as an observer in the negotiations on the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1997), in the drafting of an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism (not yet finalized) and in the discussions on the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (adopted in 1999). The ICRC also followed similar developments in the context of regional organizations.

The role of the ICRC in these fora has been one of expert, in line with its internationally recognized mandate as promoter and guardian of humanitarian law. Its advice has been sought by a growing number of State representatives with a view to ensuring that new instruments do not undermine existing norms of the law. Indeed, some aspects of the repression of terrorism touch upon humanitarian law, and in the case of the Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, upon humanitarian action.

Reparation for victims of violations of humanitarian law

The ICRC is actively involved in the establishment of basic principles and guidelines on the right to a remedy and reparation for victims of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. The principles and guidelines are currently being developed by an independent expert, Professor Cherif Bassiouni, who was appointed for this purpose by the Commission on Human Rights in 1998. The ICRC has kept abreast of the project since its inception and since the first drafts produced by the initial independent expert, Professor Theo Van Boven. In 1999 it twice sub-

fastest entry into force ever

working for universal ratification

mitted its comments on the draft basic principles and guidelines, at the invitation of the independent expert. The draft basic principles and guidelines will be submitted to the Commission on Human Rights in 2000.

REGULATIONS ON WEAPONS

The Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines

In 1999, a number of major developments brought the world closer to ending the scourge of anti-personnel landmines. In March the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines (the Ottawa treaty) entered into force. By obtaining the requisite 40 ratifications only 16 months after its signature, the Ottawa treaty marked the fastest entry into force ever for a multilateral arms-related agreement. The first meeting of States Parties was held soon after entry into force, from 3 to 7 May. The meeting resulted in the creation of an ongoing process to promote implementation between annual meetings of States Parties, and in the establishment of Standing Committees of Experts to address issues related to mine clearance, stockpile destruction, mine-victim assistance, mine awareness, the development of technologies in mine action and the general status and implementation of the treaty. Work in these groups began in the second half of 1999 and involved governments, United Nations agencies, the ICRC, NGOs and others interested in mine-related action.

The prohibition of anti-personnel landmines continued to gain acceptance as the new norm of humanitarian law governing these weapons. With the entry into force of the Ottawa treaty, the number of signatories was closed at 133. By the end of 1999, a total of 90 countries had formally ratified the treaty's provisions and 13 States Parties had announced the total destruction of their stockpiles of anti-personnel mines. In another significant development, 15 States had also passed national laws prohibiting the weapons and criminalizing violations.

In addition to participating in the first meeting of States Parties and the Standing Committees of Experts, the ICRC continued to promote ratification, membership in and implementation of the Ottawa treaty. Most of its efforts were directed at regions of the world where ratifications have thus far been few. In addition to regular representations by its delegations around the world, in 1999 the ICRC organized meetings on anti-personnel landmines in Colombo, Sri Lanka (for military and foreign affairs representatives of South Asia) and Nairobi, Kenya (for Kenyan government officials). The Colombo meeting was the first time that officials from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka had gathered to discuss the landmines issue on a regional basis.

ICRC representatives also participated in major regional meetings on the landmines issue organized by governments and NGOs in Mexico City (Mexico), Tunis (Tunisia), Beirut (Lebanon), Zagreb (Croatia), Abuja (Nigeria) and Tbilissi (Georgia). In addition to providing expertise, the ICRC made available documentation, videos and in several cases its traveling exhibitions on the Ottawa treaty.

The ICRC also produced a 14-minute teaching video in 1999 on the Ottawa treaty. Available in seven languages, the video is to be used with parliamentarians, mine-clearance staff, armed forces members, health workers and other groups who will be involved in implementing the treaty. The ICRC also produced three travelling

exhibitions on the Ottawa treaty, in English, Spanish and Arabic; they are available for national and international events.

1980 Conventional Weapons Convention

By the end of 1999, 75 States were party to the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW), which regulates the use of certain weapons which may be deemed to cause unnecessary suffering or to have indiscriminate effects. Tajikistan was the only State to ratify in 1999. With regard to the three original protocols, 73 States Parties have now ratified Protocol I (on undetectable fragments), 68 Protocol II (mines, booby-traps and other devices) and 70 Protocol III (incendiary weapons). The two protocols adopted at the 1996 Review Conference, Protocol IV (blinding laser weapons) and amended Protocol II (mines, booby-traps and other devices), continued to garner ratifications. An additional 16 States ratified Protocol IV in 1999, bringing the total number of ratifications to 45, and 11 States ratified amended Protocol II, increasing the overall number to 44.

Amended Protocol II and Protocol IV address two issues with which the international community has been concerned in recent years, namely the problem of landmines and the development of new weapons. Despite the entry into force of the Ottawa treaty banning anti-personnel mines, amended Protocol II remains an important instrument as it regulates anti-vehicle mines, booby-traps and other devices not covered by the Ottawa treaty and which often threaten civilian populations in today's conflicts. Protocol IV bans the use of laser weapons causing permanent blindness, devices which have not yet been widely produced or deployed. It marks the first time that a weapon has been outlawed before its use on the battlefield. Throughout the year, ICRC delegations and National Societies encouraged States to ratify and implement both Protocols.

Arms availability

In June 1999 the ICRC published a major study, commissioned by the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (1995), on "Arms availability and the situation of civilians in armed conflict". The study describes the institution's field experience concerning the effects of arms availability on civilian populations in two case studies analysing information drawn from the ICRC's extensive medical database on patients treated in ICRC hospitals and by its medical teams. These provide unique insights into the nature of arms-related casualties in two contexts in which the ICRC has worked. To the ICRC's knowledge, these are among the few systematic studies which have been published on the nature of arms-related casualties among the local population in war-torn societies and mark the first time a major humanitarian agency has produced a report of this type based on its field experience.

In addition, the ICRC carried out a survey of its delegates with experience of conflict and post-conflict settings. The objective was to gather the perceptions of ICRC staff on the availability of arms within various segments of given populations, the nature of arms-related incidents involving civilians and the direct impact of arms availability on ICRC field operations.

ICRC study

*a matter of urgent
humanitarian concern*

humanitarian law considerations

The ICRC study highlights the high price civilian populations have paid in recent conflicts. Civilian casualties outnumber those of combatants in many internal and ethnic conflicts and have increased throughout the century, in parallel with the development of new military technologies.

Although the ICRC study does not suggest that arms availability is the sole cause of violations of international humanitarian law or a deterioration in the situation of civilians, it indicates that the unregulated transfer of weapons and ammunition can increase tension and the number of civilian casualties and prolong the duration of conflicts. One of the central conclusions is that the current pattern of transfers of small arms, light weapons and related ammunition, because it falls largely outside international control, should be a matter of urgent humanitarian concern. While the primary responsibility for compliance with international humanitarian law falls upon users of weapons, States and enterprises engaged in production and export bear a degree of political, moral and, in some cases, legal responsibility to the international community for the use made of their weapons and ammunition. At the same time, efforts to teach and promote humanitarian law must be redoubled so that arms bearers understand its basic norms and are expected by their own communities to respect it.

The ICRC study encourages governments, regional organizations and NGOs involved in the development of arms transfer limitations to recognize that international humanitarian law is often the body of law most relevant to the stated purpose for which military-style arms and ammunition are transferred. It proposes that criteria based on humanitarian law considerations should become an important component of any new limitations on arms availability developed in the coming years.

In October 1999, the Council of Delegates¹⁰ adopted the overall analysis and conclusions of the ICRC study as the Movement's position on this issue. It encouraged National Societies to work to raise public awareness of the human costs of widespread arms availability and to promote the inclusion of humanitarian law considerations in national policies on arms availability. In November 1999, the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent¹¹ also addressed this priority issue. The Conference called for strengthened controls on arms availability and transfers and asked States to look for ways to integrate respect for humanitarian law into national decision-making processes governing arms transfers.

The SIRUS Project and reviewing the legality of new weapons

In addition to the development of new norms, the ICRC is equally concerned with the faithful application of existing international humanitarian law governing the use of weapons. In recent years the ICRC's medical personnel, together with a wide range of military and civilian medical professionals, have developed a tool to assist States in fulfilling their obligation to assess the legality of weapons before their deployment (Article 36 of Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions). The SIRUS Project, now endorsed by 15 national medical associations, collects hospital and casualty data on injuries sustained in conflicts over the past 50 years in order to identify and quantify the types of injuries and suffering resulting from the use of weapons in these situations.

¹⁰ See pp. 375-376.

¹¹ See pp. 376-377.

The ICRC has proposed that the data on arms injuries gathered by the project be taken into account in determining which weapons may cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering (SIrUS). Under existing law, all new weapons must be reviewed to establish whether by their nature or design they inflict such injury. The ICRC considers that the information provided by the SIrUS Project provides a tool for more objective discussion and decision-making regarding new weapons. It does so by pinpointing the injuries which have most often been sustained in conflicts over the past few decades and those which have been relatively rare. It does not define superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering.

In May 1999, the ICRC hosted a meeting of government medical and legal experts to consider and help refine its proposals to the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent on the basis of the SIrUS Project. The Conference itself encouraged the many States which have not yet done so to establish mechanisms, in accordance with Article 36 of 1977 Protocol I, to determine if the use of a proposed new weapon is consistent with the requirements of international humanitarian law. It also supported consultations between the ICRC and States on how the approach outlined by the SIrUS Project may be used in such weapon reviews.

Other weapons

The ICRC continues to be active in monitoring developments regarding new weapons and problems posed by existing weapons in the light of humanitarian law. In 1999 efforts focused in particular on the 1868 St Petersburg Declaration, which established the principle that weapons which inflict more suffering than is required to take a soldier out of action are contrary to the laws of humanity and on this basis specifically prohibited exploding bullets. The ICRC had learned that in recent years bullets capable of exploding on impact with a human body have been produced, sold and used. In early 1999, it hosted a meeting of technical and legal government experts which reaffirmed that the proliferation of such bullets was a serious problem and undermined the very purpose of the St Petersburg Declaration. The meeting urged all States to refrain from the production and export of such bullets and those that possess them strictly to prohibit their use against persons, a practice which violates existing law. The ICRC expects to report on this problem and seek appropriate action during the 2001 Review Conference of the Conventional Weapons Convention.

The institution also continued to follow with concern the possible health effects of so-called "non-lethal" weapons, specifically those related to certain directed energy weapons. It stressed the need for careful review of all new weapons on the basis of the requirements of humanitarian law, regardless of whether they are described as "lethal" or "non-lethal".

Chemical and biological weapons

Recent reports, including those published by the British Medical Association in early 1999, have highlighted the potential for misuse of the remarkable and rapid advances in the fields of microbiology, genetic engineering and biotechnology. The ICRC, in its statement to the UN General Assembly in October 1999, expressed concern that exploiting such advances for hostile purposes would clearly violate both ancient taboos and twentieth century legal prohibitions on the use of biological weapons. Yet if existing norms are to be maintained, an effective monitoring system is urgently needed to help ensure that knowledge in these fields, which should benefit humanity, is not turned against it. The ICRC has therefore called on States to spare no effort in concluding negotiations on an effective monitoring regime for the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention.

LEGAL STATUS AND HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENTS

The ICRC is traditionally described as the guardian of international humanitarian law. It enjoys unique status under international law. Its mandate and recognized role as a neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian organization can be inferred from the numerous tasks it has been given by States under various humanitarian law instruments and in the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. To some extent, the status enjoyed by the institution and its staff under international law is also derived from the practice the ICRC has developed with States in the course of its activities.

The ICRC is recognized as possessing international legal personality, and in order to facilitate its efforts to bring protection and assistance to victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence, more than sixty States have concluded explicit agreements with it. The purpose of these agreements, in which immunities and privileges are granted to the organization and its staff, is to facilitate the independent action of ICRC delegates, and consequently that of the ICRC itself. In 1999, the ICRC concluded headquarters agreements with Belgium, Cameroon (replacing a previous agreement concluded in 1972), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Guinea.

UNIVERSAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS AND THEIR ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS

In 1999 a total of 188 States were party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions. During the year three States acceded to the two 1977 Protocols additional to the Conventions: Kenya (23 February), Ireland (19 May) and Nicaragua (19 July); one acceded to Protocol II: Cuba (23 June). This brought the number of States party to Additional Protocol I and Additional Protocol II to 155 and 148 respectively.

Article 90 of Additional Protocol I provides for the establishment of an International Fact-Finding Commission to enquire into allegations of serious violations of humanitarian law. In 1999 the United Kingdom (17 May), Ireland (19 May), Panama (16 October) and Costa Rica (2 December) filed declarations recognizing the competence of the Commission, bringing the number of States which had done so to 57.

STATES PARTY TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS AND THEIR ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS

This map shows which States were party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and to their 1977 Additional Protocols, as at 31 December 1999. It also indicates which States had made the optional declaration under Article 90 of 1977 Additional Protocol I, recognizing the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission.

N.B.: The names of the countries given on this map may differ from their official names.

	States party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions:	188
	States party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and to 1977 Additional Protocol I:	155
	States party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and to 1977 Additional Protocol II:	148
	States party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and to both Additional Protocols:	146
	States having made the declaration under Article 90 of 1997 Additional Protocol I:	56
	States not party to the Geneva Conventions and Protocols	



STATES PARTY TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS AND THEIR ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS



Tables

The following tables show which States were party to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and to the two Additional Protocols of 1977, as at 31 December 1999. They also indicate which States had made the optional declaration under Article 90 of 1977 Protocol I, recognizing the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission. The names of the countries given in the tables may differ from their official names.

The dates indicated are those on which the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs received the official instrument from the State that was ratifying, acceding to or succeeding to the Conventions and Protocols or accepting the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission. Apart from the exceptions mentioned in the footnotes at the end of the tables, for all States the entry into force of the Conventions and of the Protocols enter into force six months after the date given in the present document; for States making a declaration of succession, entry into force takes place retroactively, on the day of their accession to independence.

Abbreviations

Ratification (R): a treaty is generally open for signature for a certain time following the conference which has adopted it. However, a signature is not binding on a State unless it has been endorsed by ratification. The time limits having elapsed, the Conventions and the Protocols are no longer open for signature. The States which have not signed them may at any time accede or, in the appropriate circumstances, succeed to them.

Accession (A): instead of signing and then ratifying a treaty, a State may become party to it by the single act called accession.

Declaration of Succession (S): a newly independent State may declare that it will abide by a treaty which was applicable to it prior to its independence. A State may also declare that it will provisionally abide by such treaties during the time it deems necessary to examine their texts carefully and to decide on accession or succession to some or all of the said treaties (declaration of provisional application of the treaties). At present no State is bound by such a declaration.

Reservation/Declaration (R/D): unilateral statement, however phrased or named, made by a State when ratifying, acceding or succeeding to a treaty, whereby it purports to exclude or to modify the legal effect of certain provisions of the treaty in their application to that State (provided that such reservations are not incompatible with the object and purpose of the treaty).

Declaration provided for under Article 90 of Protocol I (D90): prior acceptance of the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission.

INTERNATIONAL LAW, COMMUNICATION AND THE MOVEMENT

COUNTRY	GENEVA CONVENTIONS		PROTOCOL I			PROTOCOL II	
	R/A/S	R/D	R/A/S	R/D	D90	R/A/S	R/D
Afghanistan	26.09.1956	R					
Albania	27.05.1957	R	X	16.07.1993	A		16.07.1993
Algeria	20.06.1960; 03.07.1962	A		16.08.1989	A	X	16.08.1989
Andorra	17.09.1993	A					
Angola	20.09.1984	A	X	20.09.1984	A	X	
Antigua and Barbuda	06.10.1986	S		06.10.1986	A		06.10.1986
Argentina	18.09.1956	R		26.11.1986	A	X	26.11.1986
Armenia	07.06.1993	A		07.06.1993	A		07.06.1993
Australia	14.10.1958	R	X	21.06.1991	R	X	21.06.1991
Austria	27.08.1953	R		13.08.1982	R	X	13.08.1982
Azerbaijan	01.06.1993	A					
Bahamas	11.07.1975	S		10.04.1980	A		10.04.1980
Bahrain	30.11.1971	A		30.10.1986	A		30.10.1986
Bangladesh	04.04.1972	S		08.09.1980	A		08.09.1980
Barbados	10.09.1968	S	X	19.02.1990	A		19.02.1990
Belarus	03.08.1954	R	X	23.10.1989	R		23.10.1989
Belgium	03.09.1952	R		20.05.1986	R	X	20.05.1986
Belize	29.06.1984	A		29.06.1984	A		29.06.1984
Benin	14.12.1961	S		28.05.1986	A		28.05.1986
Bhutan	10.01.1991	A					
Bolivia	10.12.1976	R		08.12.1983	A		08.12.1983
Bosnia-Herzegovina	31.12.1992	S		31.12.1992	S		31.12.1992
Botswana	29.03.1968	A		23.05.1979	A		23.05.1979
Brazil	29.06.1957	R		05.05.1992	A		05.05.1992
Brunei Darussalam	14.10.1991	A		14.10.1991	A		14.10.1991
Bulgaria	22.07.1954	R		26.09.1989	R		26.09.1989
Burkina Faso	07.11.1961	S		20.10.1987	R		20.10.1987
Burundi	27.12.1971	S		10.06.1993	A		10.06.1993
Cambodia	08.12.1958	A		14.01.1998	A		14.01.1998
Cameroon	16.09.1963	S		16.03.1984	A		16.03.1984
Canada	14.05.1965	R		20.11.1990	R	X	20.11.1990
Cape Verde	11.05.1984	A		16.03.1995	A		16.03.1995
Central African Republic	01.08.1966	S		17.07.1984	A		17.07.1984
Chad	05.08.1970	A		17.01.1997	A		17.01.1997
Chile	12.10.1950	R		24.04.1991	R		24.04.1991
China	28.12.1956	R	X	14.09.1983	A	X	14.09.1983
Colombia	08.11.1961	R		01.09.1993	A		14.08.1995

COUNTRY	GENEVA CONVENTIONS			PROTOCOL I			PROTOCOL II	
	R/A/S	R/D	R/A/S	R/D	D90	R/A/S	R/D	
Comoros	21.11.1985	A	21.11.1985	A		21.11.1985	A	
Congo	04.02.1967	S	10.11.1983	A		10.11.1983	A	
Congo (Dem. Rep.)	24.02.1961	S	03.06.1982	A				
Costa Rica	15.10.1969	A	15.12.1983	A	02.12.1999	15.12.1983	A	
Côte d'Ivoire	28.12.1961	S	20.09.1989	R		20.09.1989	R	
Croatia	11.05.1992	S	11.05.1992	S	11.05.1992	11.05.1992	S	
Cuba	15.04.1954	R	25.11.1982	A		23.12.1999	A	
Cyprus	23.05.1962	A	01.06.1979	R		18.03.1996	A	
Czech Republic	05.02.1993	S	X	05.02.1993	S	02.05.1995	05.02.1993	S
Denmark	27.06.1951	R	17.06.1982	R	X	17.06.1982	17.06.1982	R
Djibouti	06.03.1978	S	08.04.1991	A		08.04.1991	A	
Dominica	28.09.1981	S	25.04.1996	A		25.04.1996	A	
Dominican Republic	22.01.1958	A	26.05.1994	A		26.05.1994	A	
Ecuador	11.08.1954	R	10.04.1979	R		10.04.1979	R	
Egypt	10.11.1952	R	09.10.1992	R	X	09.10.1992	R	X
El Salvador	17.06.1953	R	23.11.1978	R		23.11.1978	R	
Equatorial Guinea	24.07.1986	A	24.07.1986	A		24.07.1986	A	
Estonia	18.01.1993	A	18.01.1993	A		18.01.1993	A	
Ethiopia	02.10.1969	R	08.04.1994	A		08.04.1994	A	
Fiji	09.08.1971	S						
Finland	22.02.1955	R	07.08.1980	R	X	07.08.1980	R	
France	28.06.1951	R				24.02.1984	A	X
Gabon	26.02.1965	S	08.04.1980	A		08.04.1980	A	
Gambia	20.10.1966	S	12.01.1989	A		12.01.1989	A	
Georgia	14.09.1993	A	14.09.1993	A		14.09.1993	A	
Germany	03.09.1954	A	X	14.02.1991	R	X	14.02.1991	R
Ghana	02.08.1958	A	28.02.1978	R		28.02.1978	R	
Greece	05.06.1956	R	31.03.1989	R	04.02.1998	15.02.1993	A	
Grenada	13.04.1981	S	23.09.1998	A		23.09.1998	A	
Guatemala	14.05.1952	R	19.10.1987	R		19.10.1987	R	
Guinea	11.07.1984	A	11.07.1984	A	20.12.1993	11.07.1984	A	
Guinea-Bissau	21.02.1974	A	X	21.10.1986	A		21.10.1986	A
Guyana	22.07.1968	S	18.01.1988	A		18.01.1988	A	
Haiti	11.04.1957	A						
Holy See	22.02.1951	R	21.11.1985	R	X	21.11.1985	R	X
Honduras	31.12.1965	A	16.02.1995	R		16.02.1995	R	
Hungary	03.08.1954	R	X	12.04.1989	R	23.09.1991	12.04.1989	R
Iceland	10.08.1965	A	10.04.1987	R	X	10.04.1987	10.04.1987	R

INTERNATIONAL LAW, COMMUNICATION AND THE MOVEMENT

COUNTRY	GENEVA CONVENTIONS		PROTOCOL I			PROTOCOL II	
	R/A/S	R/D	R/A/S	R/D	D90	R/A/S	R/D
India	09.11.1950	R					
Indonesia	30.09.1958	A					
Iran (Islamic Rep.of)	20.02.1957	R	X				
Iraq	14.02.1956	A					
Ireland	27.09.1962	R	19.05.1999	R	X	19.05.1999	19.05.1999
Israel	06.07.1951	R	X				
Italy	17.12.1951	R	27.02.1986	R	X	27.02.1986	27.02.1986
Jamaica	20.07.1964	S	29.07.1986	A			29.07.1986
Japan	21.04.1953	A					
Jordan	29.05.1951	A	01.05.1979	R			01.05.1979
Kazakhstan	05.05.1992	S	05.05.1992	S			05.05.1992
Kenya	20.09.1966	A	23.02.1999	A			23.02.1999
Kiribati	05.01.1989	S					
Korea (Dem. People's Rep.)	27.08.1957	A	X	09.03.1988	A		
Korea (Republic of)	16.08.1966	A	X	15.01.1982	R	X	15.01.1982
Kuwait	02.09.1967	A	X	17.01.1985	A		17.01.1985
Kyrgyzstan	18.09.1992	S	18.09.1992	S			18.09.1992
Lao People's Dem. Rep.	29.10.1956	A		18.11.1980	R	30.01.1998	18.11.1980
Latvia	24.12.1991	A		24.12.1991	A		24.12.1991
Lebanon	10.04.1951	R		23.07.1997	A		23.07.1997
Lesotho	20.05.1968	S		20.05.1994	A		20.05.1994
Liberia	29.03.1954	A		30.06.1988	A		30.06.1988
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	22.05.1956	A		07.06.1978	A		07.06.1978
Liechtenstein	21.09.1950	R		10.08.1989	R	X	10.08.1989
Lithuania	03.10.1996	A					
Luxembourg	01.07.1953	R		29.08.1989	R		29.08.1989
Macedonia	01.09.1993	S	X	01.09.1993	S	X	01.09.1993
Madagascar	18.07.1963	S		08.05.1992	R		27.07.1993
Malawi	05.01.1968	A		07.10.1991	A		07.10.1991
Malaysia	24.08.1962	A					
Maldives	18.06.1991	A		03.09.1991	A		03.09.1991
Mali	24.05.1965	A		08.02.1989	A		08.02.1989
Malta	22.08.1968	S		17.04.1989	A	X	17.04.1989
Mauritania	30.10.1962	S		14.03.1980	A		14.03.1980
Mauritius	18.08.1970	S		22.03.1982	A		22.03.1982
Mexico	29.10.1952	R		10.03.1983	A		
Micronesia	19.09.1995	A		19.09.1995	A		19.09.1995
Moldova (Republic of)	24.05.1993	A		24.05.1993	A		24.05.1993

COUNTRY	GENEVA CONVENTIONS		PROTOCOL I			PROTOCOL II	
	R/A/S	R/D	R/A/S	R/D	D90	R/A/S	R/D
Monaco	05.07.1950	R					
Mongolia	20.12.1958	A	06.12.1995	R	X	06.12.1995	06.12.1995
Morocco	26.07.1956	A					
Mozambique	14.03.1983	A	14.03.1983	A			
Myanmar	25.08.1992	A					
Namibia	22.08.1991	S	17.06.1994	A		21.07.1994	17.06.1994
Nepal	07.02.1964	A					
Netherlands	03.08.1954	R	26.06.1987	R	X	26.06.1987	26.06.1987
New Zealand	02.05.1959	R	X	08.02.1988	R	X	08.02.1988
Nicaragua	17.12.1953	R					
Niger	21.04.1964	S	08.06.1979	R			08.06.1979
Nigeria	20.06.1961	S	10.10.1988	A			10.10.1988
Norway	03.08.1951	R	14.12.1981	R		14.12.1981	14.12.1981
Oman	31.01.1974	A	29.03.1984	A	X		29.03.1984
Pakistan	12.06.1951	R	X				
Palau	25.06.1996	A	25.06.1996	A			25.06.1996
Panama	10.02.1956	A	18.09.1995	R		26.10.1999	18.09.1995
Papua New Guinea	26.05.1976	S					
Paraguay	23.10.1961	R	30.11.1990	A		30.01.1998	30.11.1990
Peru	15.02.1956	R	14.07.1989	R			14.07.1989
Philippines	06.10.1952	R					11.12.1986
Poland	26.11.1954	R	X	23.10.1991	R		02.10.1992
Portugal	14.03.1961	R	X	27.05.1992	R		01.07.1994
Qatar	15.10.1975	A	05.04.1988	A	X	24.09.1991	
Romania	01.06.1954	R	X	21.06.1990	R		31.05.1995
Russian Federation	10.05.1954	R	X	29.09.1989	R	X	29.09.1989
Rwanda	05.05.1964	S	19.11.1984	A		08.07.1993	19.11.1984
Saint Kitts and Nevis	14.02.1986	S	14.02.1986	A			14.02.1986
Saint Lucia	18.09.1981	S	07.10.1982	A			07.10.1982
Saint Vincent Grenadines	01.04.1981	A	08.04.1983	A			08.04.1983
Samoa	23.08.1984	S	23.08.1984	A			23.08.1984
San Marino	29.08.1953	A	05.04.1994	R			05.04.1994
Sao Tome and Principe	21.05.1976	A	05.07.1996	A			05.07.1996
Saudi Arabia	18.05.1963	A	21.08.1987	A	X		
Senegal	18.05.1963	S	07.05.1985	R			07.05.1985
Seychelles	08.11.1984	A	08.11.1984	A		22.05.1992	08.11.1984
Sierra Leone	10.06.1965	S	21.10.1986	A			21.10.1986
Singapore	27.04.1973	A					

INTERNATIONAL LAW, COMMUNICATION AND THE MOVEMENT

COUNTRY	GENEVA CONVENTIONS		PROTOCOL I			PROTOCOL II	
	R/A/S	R/D	R/A/S	R/D	D90	R/A/S	R/D
Slovakia	02.04.1993	S	X	02.04.1993	S	13.03.1995	02.04.1993
Slovenia	26.03.1992	S		26.03.1992	S	26.03.1992	26.03.1992
Solomon Islands	06.07.1981	S		19.09.1988	A		19.09.1988
Somalia	12.07.1962	A					
South Africa	31.03.1952	A		21.11.1995	A		21.11.1995
Spain	04.08.1952	R		21.04.1989	R	X	21.04.1989
Sri Lanka	28.02.1959	R					
Sudan	23.09.1957	A					
Suriname	13.10.1976	S	X	16.12.1985	A		16.12.1985
Swaziland	28.06.1973	A		02.11.1995	A		02.11.1995
Sweden	28.12.1953	R		31.08.1979	R	X	31.08.1979
Switzerland	31.03.1950	R		17.02.1982	R	X	17.02.1982
Syrian Arab Republic	02.11.1953	R		14.11.1983	A	X	
Tajikistan	13.01.1993	S		13.01.1993	S		13.01.1993
Tanzania (United Rep.of)	12.12.1962	S		15.02.1983	A		15.02.1983
Thailand	29.12.1954	A					
Togo	06.01.1962	S		21.06.1984	R		21.06.1984
Tonga	13.04.1978	S					
Trinidad and Tobago	24.09.1963	A					
Tunisia	04.05.1957	A		09.08.1979	R		09.08.1979
Turkey	10.02.1954	R					
Turkmenistan	10.04.1992	S		10.04.1992	S		10.04.1992
Tuvalu	19.02.1981	S					
Uganda	18.05.1964	A		13.03.1991	A		13.03.1991
Ukraine	03.08.1954	R	X	25.01.1990	R		25.01.1990
United Arab Emirates	10.05.1972	A		09.03.1983	A	X	09.03.1983
United Kingdom	23.09.1957	R	X	28.01.1998	R	X	28.01.1998
United States of America	02.08.1955	R	X				
Uruguay	05.03.1969	R	X	13.12.1985	A		13.12.1985
Uzbekistan	08.10.1993	A		08.10.1993	A		08.10.1993
Vanuatu	27.10.1982	A		28.02.1985	A		28.02.1985
Venezuela	13.02.1956	R		23.07.1998	A		23.07.1998
Viet Nam	28.06.1957	A	X	19.10.1981	R		
Yemen	16.07.1970	A	X	17.04.1990	R		17.04.1990
Yugoslavia	21.04.1950	R	X	11.06.1979	R	X	11.06.1979
Zambia	19.10.1966	A		04.05.1995	A		04.05.1995
Zimbabwe	07.03.1983	A		19.10.1992	A		19.10.1992

Palestine

On 21 June 1989, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs received a letter from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations Office at Geneva informing the Swiss Federal Council "that the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, entrusted with the functions of the Government of the State of Palestine by decision of the Palestine National Council, decided, on 4 May 1989, to adhere to the Four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the two Protocols additional thereto".

On 13 September 1989, the Swiss Federal Council informed the States that it was not in a position to decide whether the letter constituted an instrument of accession, "due to the uncertainty within the international community as to the existence or non-existence of a State of Palestine".

1. Djibouti's declaration of succession in respect of the First Convention was dated 26 January 1978.
2. On accession to Protocol II, France made a communication concerning Protocol I.
3. Entry into force on 7 December 1978.
4. Entry into force on 7 December 1978.
5. Entered into force on 23 September 1966, the Republic of Korea having invoked Art. 62/61/141/157 common respectively to the First, Second, Third and Fourth Conventions (immediate effect).
6. An instrument of accession to the Geneva Conventions and their additional Protocols was deposited by the United Nations Council for Namibia on 18 October 1983. In an instrument deposited on 22 August 1991, Namibia declared its succession to the Geneva Conventions, which were previously applicable pursuant to South Africa's accession on 31 March 1952.
7. The First Geneva Convention was ratified on 7 March 1951.
8. Accession to the Fourth Geneva Convention on 23 February 1959 (Ceylon had signed only the First, Second and Third Conventions).
9. Entry into force on 21 October 1950.
10. Accession to the First Geneva Convention on 17 May 1963.

ICRC ACTION WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

ACTIVITIES OF THE STATUTORY BODIES

Work of the Standing Commission

The ICRC's two representatives on the Standing Commission actively participated in all the work carried out by the Commission in 1999, essentially preparations for the statutory meetings of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, that is to say the Council of Delegates and the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. In that connection, the Standing Commission again benefited from the opinions of eminent members of National Societies taking part in the ad hoc working groups making preparations for those meetings.

Although the issue of the emblem was dealt with at the Council of Delegates and, more briefly, at the Conference, it is one aspect of the Commission's work that warrants particular mention. The Commission had already presented its report on the matter to the 1997 Council of Delegates and continued its search for a solution. It organized consultations with legal and diplomatic experts in January 1999 to find a comprehensive solution, in addition to the present options, which would satisfy both the States and National Societies keen to retain the red cross and red crescent emblems and those which wished to see the introduction of a new emblem, or another solution equally acceptable to them all. The Commission submitted its proposals to a new group of experts, made up on this occasion of government representatives, which met in Geneva at the end of August 1999. On the basis of those various consultations, the Commission deemed it possible and desirable to involve the States in the process and proposed to the Council of Delegates, and subsequently to the International Conference, that they should so decide. The International Conference consequently adopted a resolution which called upon the Commission to pursue its work in association with the National Societies and States.

Council of Delegates

The Council of Delegates, which brings together representatives of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the National Societies, the ICRC and the Federation), met in Geneva from 28 to 30 October 1999 at the invitation of the ICRC and the Federation. In addition to preparations for the International Conference, the Council of Delegates devoted particular attention to the points set out below.

Since its adoption by the Council of Delegates held in Seville in November 1997, the Agreement on the organization of the international activities of the Movement's components has fostered a constructive working climate and succeeded in strengthening the unity of the Movement's work and its external image. Much remains to be done, however, to improve further the coordination and effectiveness of operations in emergency situations, principally as regards assistance. It was therefore decided that the Standing Commission would set up a working group responsible for drawing up proposals aimed at developing an overall strategy for the Movement.

Following the debate on public advocacy that took place during the 1997 Council of Delegates, the Movement felt it necessary to adopt a general policy on the

*implementation
of the Seville Agreement*

Movement policy on advocacy

adoption of a Movement mines strategy

Henry Durant Medal

matter and a shared definition of the term "advocacy". The 1999 Council therefore debated and adopted criteria for the launch of public campaigns by one or more of the Movement's components. The criteria lay down the framework for national, regional or world-wide campaigns by establishing rules on coordination within the Movement.

After having spared no effort in the campaign to ban anti-personnel mines, which culminated in the signing of the Ottawa treaty, the Movement's next step was to adopt a strategy to promote implementation of the measures set forth in the legal texts and resolutions adopted by the international community. The Movement's strategy sets out the measures to be taken and lays down a long-term framework for successfully harnessing energies and resources in this field. It clearly defines the role of each of the Movement's components (with the ICRC assuming a lead role) and encourages a greater effort to exchange information.

The Council of Delegates examined other subjects more briefly: the prevention of conflicts, children affected by armed conflict, street children, the promotion of the International Criminal Court, arms availability and respect for international humanitarian law; some of them are described in detail in this report. The Council of Delegates was chaired by Cornelio Sommaruga, the President of the ICRC, for the fifth and final time, since Mr Sommaruga came to the end of his presidential mandate at the end of 1999. It took place in a studious working environment and benefited from substantial contributions from many National Societies.

Four people were awarded the Henry Durant Medal, two of them posthumously, for their personal commitment and significant contributions to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. They were:

Ms Ute Stührwoldt, a paediatric nurse from the German Red Cross;
Mr Donald Tansley, former Vice-President
of the Canadian International Development Agency;
Dr Byron R.M. Hove, Chairman of the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society,
who died in 1998;
Dr Guillermo Rueda Montaña, President of the Colombian Red Cross,
who died in 1998.

27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

The 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent was held in Geneva from 31 October (evening) to 6 November 1999. Chaired by Dr Mamdouh Gabr, the Secretary General of the Egyptian Red Crescent, the Conference went extremely well and broke ground in several areas in order to avoid a diplomatic routine likely to impair the dynamic approach required for a meeting dealing with humanitarian affairs.

Innovations were made both in the conduct and output of the Conference. The constructive atmosphere which prevailed during the debates and proceedings had a favourable effect on the results. The innovations included:

- the organization at the opening of the Conference of a cultural show open to the public, which brought together artists from around the world, on the subject of "The power of humanity", the Movement's key words for the years 1999-2000;

- the conduct of debates in a single commission, which met in plenary session and was open to the press, and during which 180 people spoke on three successive subjects: protection of victims of armed conflict through respect for international humanitarian law; humanitarian action in the event of armed conflict or other disasters; a strategic partnership to improve the lives of vulnerable people;
- the drafting of a Plan of Action for the years 2000 to 2003 by a drafting committee chaired by Philippe Kirsch, the Canadian Ambassador. The Plan of Action was adopted by the Conference and set out a humanitarian agenda for the governments and components of the Movement in the areas dealt with by the Plenary Commission;
- the adoption of a Conference Declaration, a short text expressing the commitment of the Conference members to implement in full the resolutions adopted;
- the submission of 350 individual pledges by National Societies, governments, the ICRC, the Federation and certain observers; the pledges demonstrate the willingness of the Conference members to take new, specific and dynamic action on a subject in a particular area of the Plan of Action;
- the organization of 14 informal workshops designed to examine a particularly complex problem or to facilitate debate on a topic upon which the Conference members were unable to reach a consensus or adopt a decision.

The Conference also took other decisions worthy of note: it revised the Regulations for the Empress Shōken Fund, thereby allowing greater flexibility in its use; it endorsed the Appeal of 12 August 1999¹² launched by fourteen international figures to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Geneva Conventions; it adopted the Council of Delegates' proposal to set up a working group bringing together the States and the Movement's components to continue the search, under the aegis of the Standing Commission, for an overall solution to the issue of the emblems.

The Conference elected the Standing Commission members. The following candidates, presented by their National Society, were thus elected until the 28th International Conference:

- Princess Margriet of the Netherlands (also elected Chairwoman of the Commission);
- Christina Magnuson (Sweden);
- Tadateru Konoe (Japan);
- Mohammed Al-Hadid (Jordan);
- Abdul Rahman Al Swailen (Saudi Arabia).

The other members of the Commission are:

- the President of the ICRC, Cornelio Sommaruga (as of 1 January 2000, Jakob Kellenberger);
- Yves Sandoz, director at the ICRC (as of 1 January 2000, François Bugnion);
- the President of the Federation, Ms Astrid Heiberg;
- George Weber, Secretary General of the Federation (as of 1 January 2000, Didier Cherpitel).

¹² See p. 349.

FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ICRC AND THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

Consultation and coordination mechanisms in Geneva

The three principal consultation and cooperation mechanisms between the Federation and the ICRC, as revised and adapted pursuant to the Seville Agreement, continued to function. These mechanisms, which are designed to enable the Movement to meet the new challenges it faces more effectively, are described below.

Senior management meetings, usually held every six or seven weeks, bring together the Secretary General and Under Secretaries General of the Federation and the ICRC Directors. They are designed to encourage innovative cooperation and promote better understanding of the essential problems and priorities of each institution and therefore dealt with topics such as the Seville Agreement, strategies for the future and specific operational contexts.

The Joint ICRC/Federation Commission, which oversees cooperation between the two organizations in general, not including operational activities, meets on average three times a year. Its work focuses on preparations for the Movement's statutory meetings, communication, upholding and disseminating the Fundamental Principles, promoting international humanitarian law and protecting the integrity of the National Societies. The Joint Commission met on five occasions in 1999 and dealt in particular with the preparations for the Council of Delegates, the 27th International Conference and other meetings organized on the sidelines of those events, such as the meeting of Ambassadors.

The mandate of the Joint Commission for National Society Statutes - set out in Resolution VI of the 22nd International Conference (Tehran) and Resolution XX of the 24th International Conference (Manila) - remained unchanged. The Commission issues recommendations on the recognition and admission of new National Societies and on amendments to the statutes of recognized Societies. In 1999 the Commission held five meetings during which the statutes of some thirty National Societies were revised or approved and the applications of four emerging Societies were closely scrutinized.

In fact, cooperation between the ICRC and the Federation is wide-ranging and not limited to the structured mechanisms described above. The two presidents meet regularly, as do the directors of operations, the latter to study in particular the possibility of launching or developing new initiatives relating to functional cooperation, to provide one another with information on the problems and issues which arise, and to attempt to resolve them together. Such exchanges are complemented by a similar process of contact and dialogue between each of the regional departments and geographic zones and in the field. Cooperation within the ad hoc groups set up by the Standing Commission constitutes a useful additional means of promoting mutual understanding and respect between the two institutions.

senior management meetings

Joint ICRC/Federation Commission

*Joint Commission
for National Society Statutes*

ICRC CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The aim of ICRC cooperation activities is to help each National Society increase its capacity to meet its specific responsibilities as a Red Cross or Red Crescent institution in areas of common concern such as the promotion of humanitarian law and the Movement's Fundamental Principles, the re-establishment of family links, conflict-preparedness, especially in the health sector, and the development of telecommunication networks. The ICRC also provides legal assistance to National Societies for the establishment or revision of their statutes and the implementation of national legislation pertaining to humanitarian law.

In 1999, the ICRC budgeted 57.7 million Swiss francs for cooperation activities comprising support for:

- the dissemination and information activities of 136 National Societies;
- the tracing activities of 89 National Societies;
- the conflict-preparedness activities of 70 National Societies;
- legal assistance for 22 National Societies.

These activities were carried out in close consultation and coordination with the Federation, the long-term goal being to build each National Society's capacity as a part of its institutional development process. In a cooperation programme, the National Society of a given country, together with the ICRC, defines its objectives and plan of action. The National Society manages, implements and monitors the programme's activities and reports back to the ICRC on their implementation.

The ICRC's cooperation activities are also carried out for the broader purpose of reinforcing the work of the Movement as a whole and achieving greater coherence in operations involving more than one component of the Movement. To this end, the ICRC deployed 42 delegates specifically in charge of cooperation activities with National Societies and reinforced the corresponding unit at headquarters. It organized three seminars in 1999 for all cooperation delegates in the field, focusing on National Society policy matters, capacity building and project management.

MEETINGS WITH NATIONAL SOCIETIES

On 14 May 1999, the ICRC organized a meeting during which the Movement's components gathered in working groups to discuss the implementation of the Seville Agreement and other topics concerning points on the agenda of the Council of Delegates and the Plan of Action of the 27th International Conference. Some thirty senior officials of 28 National Societies (vice presidents or members of the Federation Executive Board) attended the meeting, as did the presidents of the ICRC and the Federation, accompanied by their staff, and members of the International Committee.

In 1999 the ICRC was represented by its President and other members at a number of key events, including those listed below.

- 17-19 March: General Assembly of ACROFA (Association of French-speaking National Societies in Africa), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso);
- 26-30 April: first Central European forum for cooperation with National Societies, Cavtat (Dubrovnik, Croatia);

consultation and coordination with the Federation

meeting of 14 May 1999

regional conferences and meetings

*regional seminars organized
by National Societies
or with their cooperation*

*participation in General
Assemblies of National Societies*

National Society anniversaries

- 2-4 June: 16th Inter-American Conference of Red Cross Societies, Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic);
- 23-30 July: "Youth Power 99", Stockholm (Sweden);
- 23-27 October: 12th session of the Federation's General Assembly, Geneva (Switzerland).
- 24-25 February: constituent meeting of the "Lomé Group", Lomé (Togo);
- 12-13 April: meeting of the secretaries general of the National Societies in the Indian subcontinent, Islamabad (Pakistan);
- 26-29 May: fourth workshop of the "Group de Praia", Dalaba (Guinea);
- 18-25 June: sixth workshop for officials of the dissemination and communication departments of the National Societies in Central America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, Guatemala City (Guatemala);
- 21-23 June: annual discussion meeting with the six National Societies in Central Africa, Libreville (Gabon);
- 23-25 June: fifth annual dissemination seminar for the five Central Asian National Societies, Khudzhand (Tajikistan);
- 13-14 July: first meeting of the presidents of the five Central Asian National Societies, Tashkent (Uzbekistan);
- 21-25 July: second international summer camp for Red Cross Youth, Da Nang (Viet Nam);
- 15-27 August: sixth Arab seminar for first-aid workers, Qarqanah (Tunisia);
- 4-6 October: round table for the tracing services of six Central European National Societies, Prague (Czech Republic);
- 5-6 October: workshop for the nine West African National Societies on "The humanitarian challenge posed by the proliferation of small arms", Bamako (Mali);
- 26-28 October: regional tracing workshop, Harare (Zimbabwe);
- 19-20 October: meeting of the presidents of Spanish-speaking National Societies, Madrid (Spain);
- 22-23 November: fourth annual round table for the tracing services of the fifteen National Societies of the former Soviet Union, Moscow (Russian Federation);
- 24-26 November: workshop for information department heads of southern African National Societies, Harare (Zimbabwe);
- 6-10 December: fourth Asian workshop on first aid in the community, Yangon (Myanmar).
- 25-28 August: Finnish Red Cross;
- 30 September - 1 October: Norwegian Red Cross.
- 30 June - 2 July: 60th anniversary of the Mongolian Red Cross Society;
- 3-4 May: 80th anniversary of the Czech Red Cross;
- 10-11 May: 80th anniversary of the Slovak Red Cross;
- 10 December: 75th anniversary of the Icelandic Red Cross.

recognition of a National Society

*National Society representatives
received at headquarters*

Florence Nightingale Medal

Empress Shôken Fund

Maurice de Madre French Fund

On 19 August 1999, the ICRC Assembly recognized, on the recommendation of the Joint Commission for National Society Statutes, the Gabonese Red Cross Society.

At the request of the National Societies or having itself issued invitations, the ICRC organized 53 visits for 137 National Society leaders, managers, senior officials and staff. The visits, whose purpose is to enhance knowledge of the ICRC, the way it functions and its activities throughout the world, also offer an opportunity for discussions on matters of common interest, promote mutual understanding and provide an opportunity to strengthen the Movement's unity.

FUNDS AND MEDALS

On 12 May 1999, the ICRC announced to the Central Committees of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies the recipients of the 37th award of the Florence Nightingale Medal. Twenty-one award winners from the following countries were thus honoured: Austria, Chile, China, Denmark, Japan, (the Republic of) Korea, Lebanon, Mongolia, New Zealand, Poland, Thailand and the United States.

The Empress Shôken Fund was created in 1912 by a gift from the Empress of Japan to support the work carried out by the National Societies in time of peace. At the end of the 1998 financial year, the Fund was worth 7.1 million Swiss francs. The revenue is used to fund projects carried out by the National Societies in the following areas: disaster preparedness, health, youth activities, blood transfusion services, social welfare and the dissemination of the humanitarian ideals of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

The Joint Commission which administers and supervises the financial management of the Fund awarded grants on 11 April, the anniversary of the death of Empress Shôken, as it does every year. In 1999 those grants amounted to 339,600 Swiss francs and were awarded to the National Societies of the following countries: Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominica, Grenada, the Cook Islands, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Pakistan, Poland, São Tomé and Príncipe, Ukraine and Uruguay.

After examining the trends observed over the last ten years and consulting representatives of the Japanese Red Cross and government, the Joint Committee approved a minor amendment to Article 3 of the Fund's Regulations, thereby allowing the release of the maximum amount of resources for projects while at the same time keeping the capital intact. The new wording was adopted by the 27th International Conference.

The Maurice de Madre French Fund was established thanks to the generosity of Count Maurice de Madre, who died in 1970 and bequeathed part of his property to assist staff members of National Societies, the Federation or the ICRC who are injured, fall ill or are the victim of accidents while in the service of the Movement or, in the event of their death, to assist their families. By way of an exception, awards may be made even where the illness, accident or death is not directly related to activities within the Movement. The Fund may also contribute to the training of recipients and/or to help them to return to their professions.

In 1999 the Fund's Board met on two occasions, 16 March and 14 September. It considered applications totalling 81,300 Swiss francs relating to Movement staff members or their relatives in the following countries: Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burundi, Colombia, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the

Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mexico, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Viet Nam, Yugoslavia and Zambia.

ICRC POLICY GUIDELINES

ICRC policy is based on a series of guidelines on the nature and implementation of the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and on the general principles of international humanitarian law. Those guidelines are extremely relevant to the ICRC in situations of armed conflict since they help the organization promote the application of humanitarian law. They are particularly pertinent in situations of internal unrest or internal tension, because the best argument the ICRC has to persuade a government to accept an offer of services based on its right of humanitarian initiative lies in how scrupulous it is in carrying out its work in compliance with the Fundamental Principles and the guidelines derived from them.

ICRC study on women affected by armed conflict

In the course of its activities to assist and protect women specifically, the ICRC realized that it needed to know more about the many ways women are affected by armed conflict and cope with such situations. In 1998 it decided to draw up a position paper on this issue and to include an overview of its activities for women. It embarked on a study whose purpose was to draw on the lessons of the past and present with a view to improving the quality, relevance and impact of ICRC services.

Throughout 1998 and 1999, all the ICRC's delegations were asked to provide detailed information on their activities to assist and protect women affected by armed conflict. A comprehensive internal paper was drafted on the needs of women in wartime and on the activities undertaken in this respect. This information, together with that gathered from women themselves in the framework of the "People on War" campaign, is being used to analyse the impact of ICRC activities on women. The ICRC is also examining whether humanitarian law provides adequate coverage of women's needs in situations of armed conflict.

All these efforts will go towards implementing the pledge made by the ICRC in 1999 at the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, at which the ICRC stated that it was deeply concerned by the occurrence of sexual violence in armed conflicts. Sexual violence, in all its forms, is prohibited under international humanitarian law and vigorous action should be taken to prevent it.

The study will be concluded in 2000 and the results presented at a meeting of other humanitarian organizations so as to obtain their input. The ICRC will use the study to draw up a set of guidelines aimed at enhancing the assistance and protection afforded to women affected by armed conflicts.

The ICRC pledged:

- *to emphasize respect for women and girl children in all its activities, focusing on active dissemination among the parties to armed conflicts of the prohibition of all forms of sexual violence;*
- *to ensure that the specific protection, health and assistance needs of women and girl children affected by armed conflicts are appropriately assessed in its operations for the purpose of alleviating the plight of the most vulnerable.*

*the changing context
of humanitarian action*

Fundamental Principles

The ICRC also carried out a review of the meaning and value of the Movement's Fundamental Principles, in particular the principle of neutrality, in order to adapt their definitions to contemporary contexts and challenges.

As part of the "Avenir" project, the ICRC analysed the changing nature of the conflicts and situations in which it and other humanitarian organizations worked in the late 1990s. The study highlighted a number of trends. For example, the end of the struggle between the dominant ideologies and the collapse of one of the two blocs has made conflicts more unpredictable and rendered it more difficult to identify their goals; the implosion and bankruptcy of certain States has created areas where law and order no longer applies or where various armed and/or criminal groups impose their own rules; and armed opposition groups are tending to become criminalized, thereby reducing the scope for dialogue, in particular in terms of safeguarding the humanitarian interests of the civilian population. On the basis of these findings, the ICRC carried out various studies in an attempt to gain a better understanding of the environment in which humanitarian organizations now act and to adapt its operational policy.

DISSEMINATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND COMMUNICATION

Events in 1999 underscored the importance both of promoting knowledge of international humanitarian law and principles, and of translating that knowledge into action in times of conflict. It was with this in mind that the ICRC's new Communication Division, bringing together traditional dissemination and communication functions, got down to work. The Division's mission, adopted in December 1998, is to provide the ICRC with the expertise and means to make an impact on the attitudes and behaviour of those who determine the fate of war victims and those who can obstruct or facilitate ICRC action, and to ensure a strong corporate identity and image to support the organization and its operations overall.

It is clearly first and foremost the responsibility of States to respect and ensure respect for humanitarian law and to spread knowledge of its rules. However, the number of ongoing conflicts and the amount of suffering they caused, in particular among non-combatants, did not diminish in 1999; indeed, new crises arose involving the international community and calling for reminders of both the rules applicable to and the roles of military action and independent humanitarian activity. For this reason, the Division made armed and security forces and key players in civil society priority target groups, working to improve its understanding of each group's attitudes and perceptions as a basis for more effective communication.

PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

During 1999, programmes and specific projects of preventive action designed for established structures such as armed and security forces, universities and schools were carried out from the ICRC's field delegations and its Geneva headquarters.

The armed forces

The ICRC maintained its efforts to promote the incorporation of international humanitarian law into armed forces command procedures and military instruction programmes. The setting up of a centre of military expertise as part of the new Communication Division and the sustained commitment of the multinational network of humanitarian law training officers enabled the 22 delegates to armed and security forces in the field to work even harder to professionalize the instruction and education of service personnel. The delegates also participated in multinational military exercises and fostered dialogue between civil society and the military in order to clarify the respective roles of the military, political and humanitarian spheres in resolving complex crisis situations.

With this in mind, the ICRC cooperated closely in 1999 with UN and NATO military representatives on the concept of civil-military cooperation (CIMIC). The aim is to establish a concept of cooperation between the armed forces, politicians and humanitarian practitioners that is acceptable to the principal parties involved in a crisis situation, thereby making it possible to incorporate humanitarian law into operations and better distribute roles among the parties concerned.

*facilitating management
of complex crises*

creating the humanitarian "reflex"

military instruction

*setting up a pool of military
instructors*

"training the trainers"

ICRC specialists established strategic contacts with various armed forces. For example, they participated in five major NATO exercises in order to ensure they took account of humanitarian law and humanitarian action. They also organized four briefings on the ICRC's principal activities and humanitarian objectives for defence attachés accredited in Switzerland.

The ICRC continued its crisis management training project INTACT (Interactive Crisis Management Training), which was launched in 1998 in cooperation with the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. The project's fifth and final module, "Peace-keeping operations", was tested during an international course organized by the Centre. The project is aimed at middle management personnel in military and diplomatic spheres whom it provides with training in the strategic management of situations of peace, tension, non-international and international armed conflict, and peace-keeping or peace-restoration operations.

The ICRC presented a model handbook on the law of armed conflict for armed forces¹³ to the international community at the 27th International Conference (in accordance with the mandate given to it by the 26th Conference). Governments were requested to adopt the manual, to use it as a reference document and to draw on it in producing their own manuals or national programmes of military training.

Finally, specialists from the Division maintained regular contact with the management bodies of internationally renowned military academies such as the NATO Defence College in Rome, the "Collège Interarmées de Défense" in Paris, the "Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr" in Hamburg and the "Landesverteidigungsakademie" in Vienna, where future senior armed forces officers are trained. In that context, they presented a new training film, "Fighting by the rules".

In order to enhance its ability to intervene judiciously in the instruction of military personnel, the ICRC trained 19 new military instructors in the law of armed conflict. It thus expanded its reservoir of experts upon whom the ICRC's permanent delegates can call to carry out training activities or make replacements.

Police and security forces

The ICRC stepped up its efforts to provide adequate training for police and security forces in the rules and principles of humanitarian law and human rights. The increasing involvement of these forces in situations of internal strife or conflict had prompted the ICRC regional delegation in Brazil to develop a pilot project in 1998 to train Brazilian military police instructors, so that they could in turn provide instruction in local academies.¹⁴ In view of the success of the project, the ICRC deployed three additional police and security forces delegates in 1999, in Brasilia, Kiev and Pretoria. An initial pool of 15 police instructors was also created by the ICRC, in order to support its staff when necessary.

As a result, training for police and security forces was carried out on all continents during the year. A seminar was held for senior police officers in Uganda, and police instructors were trained in Uganda and Indonesia. Other seminars or courses were conducted in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, India, Jamaica, Lesotho, Mexico, Moldova, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, the Solomon Islands and Ukraine.

¹³ "Fight it Right: Model Manual of the Law of Armed Conflict for the Armed Forces", ICRC, 1999.

¹⁴ See the ICRC's 1998 Annual Report, p. 148.

pilot project evaluation

Since many organizations are active in police training, the ICRC took steps to avoid duplication of efforts. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, for example, discussions were held with the IPTF* to ensure the complementarity of training programmes, while in Uganda, work with the police force was designed to complement programmes undertaken by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute at the University of Lund and the Danish Centre for Human Rights.

The initial pilot project with Brazil's military police continued under the supervision of a senior Brazilian police officer seconded to the ICRC delegation in Brasilia.¹⁵ In view of the project's importance, the University of São Paulo was asked to carry out an independent evaluation of it. The evaluation should provide critical insight into the method used and the project's impact, and will serve to prepare future police training programmes.

Humanitarian law and the academic world

In 1999, the ICRC stepped up its programmes to promote international humanitarian law in universities and other institutions of higher education. Its programmes were conducted by some fifteen specialized delegates in the field and coordinated by the delegate for academic circles based at the Communication Division. They aimed specifically:

a) to promote the systematic introduction of the teaching of humanitarian law into the curricula of the world's leading universities

To that end the ICRC cooperated even more closely with other institutions active in the dissemination of humanitarian law, such as the San Remo International Institute of Humanitarian Law, DI 90* and UNITAR.* It also drew up plans for standard courses and approached the competent authorities in many countries.

b) to make available to the lecturers concerned documents and teaching aids specially adapted to meet their needs

The ICRC published a reference work for the dissemination of international humanitarian law in the academic world. The first of its kind, "How does law protect in War?",¹⁶ provides the lecturers and students concerned with almost two hundred practical cases taken from recent case-law and practice and contains proposals on study programmes intended for faculties of law, political science and journalism.

The aim of the book is to demonstrate that humanitarian law is applicable in contemporary practice and that it sets out criteria for responding to the legal issues which arise during armed conflicts.

By publishing the book, the ICRC hopes primarily to encourage universities to introduce a dynamic approach to the teaching of humanitarian law. It also seeks to make available to the lawyers concerned a reference tool on the case-law of humanitarian law.

c) to train lecturers specializing in human rights, international public law, political science and communication in the teaching of humanitarian law

* IPTF: United Nations International Police Task Force

¹⁵ See pp. 220-221.

* DI 90: "Droit international" 90

* UNITAR: United Nations Institute for Training and Research

¹⁶ Marco Sassoli and Antoine Bouvier, "How Does Law Protect in War?", ICRC, Geneva, 1999, 1492 pages.

INTERNATIONAL LAW, COMMUNICATION AND THE MOVEMENT

The ICRC pursued its training programmes for lecturers, in particular in the Russian Federation, Central Asia, Nigeria and Kenya.

d) to set up and run specialized courses aimed at advanced students or lecturers regardless of whether they are established or at the start of their careers

This area of activity was substantially developed in 1999. For example, the ICRC set up and ran three similar courses aimed at students and young lecturers from Europe, North America and South Asia. The courses were organized with the support of the Polish Red Cross, the Belgian Red Cross and the University of Bangalore respectively; they were attended by over 60 advanced students and, for the first time, some 40 young lecturers and specialized staff members from the ICRC and National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies.

In addition, the ICRC took an active part in the first courses under the multi-faculty humanitarian action programme set up by the University of Geneva, and increased its participation in several European training programmes (NOHA,* European Higher Diploma in Human Rights and Democratization, etc.).

Finally, it again organized a moot-court competition for students from the former Soviet Union and actively supported the 11th Jean Pictet International Humanitarian Law Competition.

Programmes for young people

The interest shown by young people and their teachers in the problems associated with conflict situations was demonstrated on many occasions in 1999. The sessions which ICRC delegates organized in various regions of the world revealed that despite the stream of information broadcast by the media, young people wanted to gain a better understanding of events connected with armed violence both near and far and to be better acquainted with the means available to safeguard human dignity in all circumstances. The sessions were organized around various projects.

This first year of the "Let's Explore IHL" project, which was launched in 1998, was given over to a critical examination of the various teaching materials and documents which exist at present and to producing a first trial education module. The National Societies in a dozen countries of Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas and the Middle East cooperated in the exploratory phase, in particular by organizing discussion meetings with groups of young people at which the major concerns and dominant perceptions of the participants were noted and understood. The discussions were analyzed and the relevant aspects will be incorporated into future modules.

The project, which is being conducted with the assistance of outside experts, is targeted at adolescents. It centres on the use of teaching modules aimed at getting young people to think about the need to limit, in accordance with humanitarian law, the means and methods used in armed conflict.

The aim of the teaching module, "The violence of exploitation, the exploitation of violence", devised jointly by the ICRC and UNICEF, is to deal with the problems of violence and exploitation by considering the extreme situations experienced by child soldiers and child workers, to reveal the mechanisms behind them, to offer possible courses of action and to reaffirm the relevant provisions of international treaties.

* NOHA: Network on Humanitarian Assistance

"Let's Explore IHL"

joint ICRC-UNICEF project

support for delegations

In 1999, about 1,000 copies of the module, including two short films and teaching files, were distributed through the Red Cross/Red Crescent network and national committees for UNICEF in English- and French-speaking countries.

An initial evaluation of the project will be carried out in 2000 to determine how it should be followed up, including its adaptation with a view to greater distribution in non-Western countries.

The programmes for young people drawn up by the ICRC delegations in various contexts received the backing of the Communication Division's Education and Behaviour Unit. Particular care is taken to ensure that programmes do not vary from one country to another, and the programmes drawn up in the CIS for secondary school children were thus especially closely observed in 1999. Four CIS countries (Georgia, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) published new manuals, while two others (Azerbaijan and Armenia) tested experimental versions. All of them paid particular attention to the training of teachers by means of seminars.¹⁷

SUPPORT FOR DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD

In order to provide the necessary backing for the work of about 70 delegates and 200 local staff in charge of communication in the field, the Communication Division set up an operational support unit comprising a dozen people at headquarters. The unit also liaises between the delegations and ICRC headquarters in connection with all matters relating to communication.

In 1999, around two-thirds of the staff responsible for dissemination and communication programmes were operating in conflict situations. Through their public relations work they helped ensure better protection for victims, facilitated ICRC access to conflict areas and improved the security of personnel in the field.

The conflicts in Kosovo, East Timor and Chechnya presented the ICRC with major challenges in 1999. Those conflicts, from which humanitarian organizations were kept away during crucial periods, posed risks to the security of humanitarian personnel and necessitated great care in communication. Moreover, the speed with which they developed required the immediate organization of communication teams and programmes.

In Kosovo and East Timor, the ICRC felt obliged by the involvement of NATO and INTERFET* in certain matters of humanitarian concern and the increased role of the Military Liaison Office in civilian matters to appoint a liaison delegate to those organizations.

However, those crises, which were the focus of sustained media attention, should not be allowed to eclipse the humanitarian programmes carried out in conflicts affecting Africa, Afghanistan and Latin America, for example. Nor should they obscure the fact that communication efforts are made at the height of war and in the face of combatants for whom the mere presence of humanitarian organizations is difficult to accept.

In that context, the ICRC pursued the approach it adopted in the early 1990s and which consists in using local relays to make its humanitarian message understood

¹⁷ See pp. 176, 184, 270, 281 and 287.

* INTERFET: International Force for East Timor

and in adapting its products and arguments to local contexts and cultures. That approach, which was reinforced by consultations conducted in 1999 in 17 countries as part of the "People on War" project,¹⁸ led to the creation of new communication programmes both in terms of the consultation methods used and the nature of the messages.

Finally, the ICRC stepped up its efforts to train local staff members, thereby creating a pool of over 80 qualified dissemination and communication employees in 1999.

RELATIONS WITH THE MEDIA

Although humanitarian operations remained in the media spotlight throughout much of 1999, journalists' interest tended to be sharply heightened during high-profile humanitarian emergencies and to dip during less obviously traumatic times. One of the ICRC's greatest challenges is to supply the media with the information required to keep the world's attention focused on the fate of the victims of conflict.

In 1999, the ICRC was more determined than ever to improve the level of public debate on humanitarian affairs and to move humanitarian matters higher up on the public agenda. This is often most effectively done by describing the very real and often difficult "dilemmas" faced by ICRC staff.

ICRC press officers sought to strike a balance each and every day between a strong and coherent public image and the requirements of sensitive field operations. Despite the constraints, the ICRC was able to produce a wide range of quality products and to make meaningful contributions to the written, broadcast and digital media.

One of the ICRC's strengths was its capacity to draw on the world-wide network of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This was particularly true in terms of the media. The organization placed greater emphasis in 1999 on maintaining good channels of communication with press officers from across the Movement.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

The ICRC's presence on the Web was further expanded in 1999 thanks in particular to the creation of a site on the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions (see above), the development of the ICRC's main site (www.icrc.org) and the ICRC's involvement in the preparation and launch of the Movement's site, intended primarily for the National Societies.

The number of hits on the main ICRC site, which can be consulted in English, French and Spanish, increased by 17% between June and November alone. The site's graphic design was remodelled to provide greater visual coherence among all the ICRC's Websites and pages.

The main site was expanded over the year by the opening during the Kosovo crisis of a modified page on the restoration of family ties and a section containing information on national measures to implement humanitarian law. The aim of the latter is to support State efforts to promulgate appropriate implementing legislation.

¹⁸ See pp. 348-350.

ICRC Websites

publications

The Movement Website was launched for the opening of the 27th International Conference at the end of October. The site is a joint venture between the Federation and the ICRC, and was sponsored by the Reuters Foundation (London); it aims to serve as a window on the humanitarian work of the Movement's various components and to support capacity-building within National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

ICRC headquarters continued to produce periodicals such as the "International Review of the Red Cross", which was given a new look and format, the "Red Cross, Red Crescent" magazine (published jointly with the Federation) and the "Annual Report"; it launched "Forum", a collection of writings by people actively involved in complex emergencies that is to appear regularly. The contributors to the 1999 issue presented a variety of standpoints on water and war.

Other key ICRC publications issued in 1999 included: "Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict";¹⁹ "Staying Alive", a paperback providing safety and security guidelines for humanitarian volunteers in conflict areas; "Respect for International Humanitarian Law", a handbook for parliamentarians published jointly with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the French version of "Hard Choices: Moral Dilemmas in Humanitarian Intervention".²⁰

Links continued to be forged with broadcasters and producers to encourage transmission of news, features and documentaries on humanitarian issues of concern to the ICRC. In cooperation with the European Broadcasting Union in Geneva and TV news agencies, television footage of ICRC activities in, for example, the Balkans, East Timor, Liberia and on the Ingushtetia/Chechnya border were distributed to broadcasters around the world. Where possible, broadcasters covering humanitarian issues were given assistance in the field. Co-productions completed in 1999 included programmes for BBC World, APTN's "Roving Report", UNDP's* "Azimuths" and Euronews.

A variety of multimedia, video and radio material was also produced in 1999 for use in the "People on War" campaign to mark the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. In addition, a number of short films were shot to meet institutional needs in terms of dissemination and training, "The Ottawa Treaty" was produced to explain the terms of the ban on anti-personnel landmines, and the video version of "Panorama" was made available to a wide audience in nine languages.

A new project was launched in 1999 to restore the ICRC's collection of old film material, dating from the First World War to the end of the 1950s. The material, which is extremely useful to understanding the ICRC's work during that period, cannot be made public on account of its poor state of preservation. The aim of the project, which is supported by the "Association Memoria pour la sauvegarde de la mémoire audiovisuelle suisse", is to make all that material available to researchers and film producers.

¹⁹ See pp. 360-361.

²⁰ Jonathan Moore, "Des choix difficiles : les dilemmes moraux de l'humanitaire", Gallimard, Paris, 1999, 459 pages.

* UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

Historical research

The ICRC continued to do historical research, in particular for internal purposes. Its researchers also dealt with outside requests relating to matters subject to a 50-year waiting period, the archives on which are consequently not open to the public. They continued compiling a history of the ICRC during the periods from 1945 to 1955 and 1956 to 1965, and to supply the ICRC's history page on the Web with material. Contacts were maintained with former delegates to record their accounts of past events.

INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE

The origin of the International Tracing Service (ITS) goes back to 1943, when the Allied powers set up a central tracing bureau at the British Red Cross in London. Its aim was to coordinate international tracing activities with regard to missing civilians and those deported by the National Socialist regime.

After changing its headquarters and administration on several occasions, the ITS moved to Bad Arolsen in Germany. Ten countries now assume responsibility for it: Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States. Poland was admitted in 1998 but has yet to ratify its membership. The member countries set up the ITS International Commission, a supervisory authority comprising their representatives, which meets at least once a year and approves the annual report and the objectives and budget for the following year. Under the Bonn Agreements signed by the Allied powers and the Federal Republic of Germany in 1955, the member states entrusted responsibility for the management and administration of the ITS to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The mandate of the ITS is to collect, file, preserve and retrieve personal documents concerning civilian victims of persecution under the Third Reich. In 1998 the Commission decided to open up the ITS's documents to historical research in accordance with procedures which are still under consideration.

A particular effort was made in 1999 to digitalize the ITS documents. Work on the central card file, started in 1998, was completed as planned by the end of 1999. About 47 million cards were processed. This should make it possible to respond more quickly (within about six months) to all applications made to the ITS, assuming that a response is based solely on the information contained in the central file. Since it is essential to supply information quickly to the former victims of persecution who apply to the ITS and who are now very old, the ITS will continue to do its utmost to persuade those who grant funds to accept such information as a working basis.

At the same time, the ITS pursued its efforts to acquire documents in order to obtain the most complete collection possible and thus to provide the maximum amount of information to the former victims of persecution applying to it. In 1999, it focused on the archive services of the towns, municipalities, administrative districts, and prisons of the federal states of Germany, and on the companies doing business during the relevant period. The states' various data protection laws pose an obstacle which has yet to be overcome and to which the ITS is continuing to look for solutions.

In 1999, over 250,000 responses were given to former victims of persecution. That number is slightly lower than the 1998 figure on account of the efforts made to prepare for digitalization, but the shortfall should be largely offset by the advantages digitalization will provide.

In addition, the ITS conducted an in-depth examination of the state of its documents, some of which are on paper that has become extremely brittle. It will continue that examination with a view to taking all appropriate measures to preserve the documents in the best possible condition.

Finally, the International Commission of the ITS began studying new access procedures for historical research, thus implementing the decision adopted in 1998. This task is complicated because it has to take account of all the aspects of the problem, in particular document security and protection of individual data. Initial conclusions are to be presented at the next meeting of the International Commission in May 2000.

