

Zeitschrift: Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross
Herausgeber: International Committee of the Red Cross
Band: - (2000)

Rubrik: Asia and the Pacific

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Asia & the Pacific

*An unforgettable moment:
a family is together again,
thanks to ICRC/PMI cooperation.*



ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

South and Central Asia

ICRC delegations:

Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan

ICRC regional delegations:

New Delhi, Tashkent

South-East Asia and the Far East

ICRC delegations:

East Timor, Myanmar

ICRC regional delegations:

Bangkok, Jakarta, Manila

Staff

ICRC expatriates¹: 236

National Societies¹: 82

Local employees²: 1,968

Total Expenditure: Sfr 128,988,468.48

Expenditure breakdown:

Protection: 23,527,781.48

Assistance: 70,576,978.45

Preventive action: 12,873,369.58

Cooperation with

National Societies: 7,913,928.39

Overheads: 7,845,832.14

General: 6,250,578.04



⊕ ICRC regional delegation ⊕ ICRC delegation

The year 2000 saw the number of theatres of ICRC operations in Asia and the Pacific rise to 25, including 10 armed conflicts marked by regular or large-scale fighting. Some conflicts intensified or spread to neighbouring countries, as was the case in the Indonesian archipelago and the Philippines, Nepal and Central Asia. Others, such as those in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, became further entrenched, and new hotbeds of unrest flared up in the Melanesian States.

Mounting violence took a heavy toll in Indonesia, where large-scale population movements and a deterioration in already poor living conditions often required a rapid humanitarian response. The ICRC established a permanent pres-

ence in Ternate and Ambon in the Moluccas so as to reach as many victims of intercommunal strife as possible, to monitor the situation and to carry out immediate distributions of food, medical supplies and other items. In its operations conducted out of the Jakarta regional delegation, the ICRC worked in close cooperation with the Indonesian Red Cross Society.

The regional delegation in Manila saw its resources stretched to the utmost as it strove to meet the needs created by unexpected events in Mindanao, Fiji and the Solomon Islands. In most cases it managed to cover basic requirements and to maintain crucial access to prisoners and detainees.

¹ Average figures calculated on an annual basis.

² Under ICRC contract, as at December 2000.

Against this background the promotion of humanitarian principles became a matter of vital importance, and the ICRC worked steadily throughout the region to raise awareness of humanitarian law among people in a position to prevent or limit violence. The main targets for dissemination activities were groups operating in trouble spots. The ICRC also sought to maintain close contacts with all parties involved in conflict situations, for instance in Aceh and the Solomon Islands.

The calm that prevailed in East Timor allowed progress towards recovery from the previous year's upheaval, and the ICRC's assistance and protection programmes proceeded smoothly, many of them being completed before midyear. However, clashes which caused the death of two United Nations (UN) peacekeepers served as a grim reminder of the potential for destabilization. In addition, the situation of East Timorese refugees in West Timor remained precarious, especially after the suspension of activities there by all international humanitarian organizations, including the ICRC, following the brutal killing of three UN workers in Atambua.

In Nepal, the Maoist armed opposition extended its operations beyond its home base in the mid-western districts, and fighting intensified in some of the worst clashes since the insurgency began in 1996. The ICRC continued to conduct regular prison visits, focusing on districts affected by violence. It also started to spread knowledge of humanitarian law among the police, the force involved in counter-insurgency operations.

The rise of fundamentalism in Central Asia remained a source of constant tension throughout the region and led to armed clashes between the militants of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and government troops in Uzbekistan. The activities of armed Islamic fundamentalists led the countries of Central Asia to tighten regional security cooperation and to strengthen their ties

with China and the Russian Federation, leaving little room for compromise with Islamic movements and heightening tensions with Afghanistan. The ICRC continued its visits to detainees in Kyrgyzstan held in connection with the security situation and initiated talks with the authorities in Uzbekistan with a view to carrying out similar visits there. To establish a stronger presence in the Fergana valley, it opened an office in Osh which focused on broadening contacts and strengthening Red Crescent branches in the area. In Tajikistan, the security situation was still uncertain but the ICRC was able to scale down its activities as the country continued its slow progress towards post-war consolidation.

The conflicts in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka dragged on without any prospect of resolution, exacting a huge toll in both lives and resources.

The situation in war-ravaged Afghanistan was compounded by severe drought in 2000. To respond to this natural disaster, the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies initiated a joint plan of action. The ICRC also continued its efforts to restore self-sufficiency, especially that of families in Kabul headed by widows and disabled persons. Following the marked improvement in access to places of detention in 1999, in 2000 the ICRC, with the consent of the warring parties, monitored the living conditions of detainees throughout the country, paying special attention to women and minors.

In Sri Lanka, fierce fighting on the Jaffna peninsula between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam caused heavy losses among both combatants and civilians, and led to large-scale population movements. Acting as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC constantly reminded the warring parties of their obligations to comply with humanitarian law and protect the civilian population. It also stepped up its protection and assistance activities for the displaced.

In the northern Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, the conflict over the Line of Control in Kashmir persisted and the level of violence remained high, although at year's end both India and Pakistan were showing signs of restraint. In Pakistan, the ICRC continued to assist victims of fighting along the Line of Control. It pursued its protection activities in Jammu and Kashmir despite difficulties in maintaining systematic access to persons detained in connection with the situation. There were also clashes and acts of violence in India's north-eastern states.

In Myanmar sporadic armed clashes occurred along the country's eastern border. The ICRC focused on visits to detainees and consolidated its presence in the border states of Shan, Mon and Kayin through basic health programmes for resident and displaced populations.

The Asian region did, however, see some favourable trends in 2000. In humanitarian terms, the most promising developments occurred on the Korean peninsula. New initiatives that emerged from the North-South summit in Pyongyang in June raised hopes of at last restoring contact between family members separated for decades. Cambodia's continuing progress towards post-war recovery and the growth that confirmed several countries' emergence from the Asian economic crisis further consolidated the continent's security and stability. The ICRC's regional delegation in Bangkok stood ready to provide the National Societies of the Korean peninsula with technical assistance in restoring family links. Activities to promote incorporation of humanitarian law into training programmes for armed forces made considerable progress in a number of countries covered by the Bangkok delegation. The ICRC reduced its expatriate presence in Cambodia, and the delegation in Phnom Penh was turned into an office operating under the supervision of the regional delegation in Bangkok.

Access to places of detention

Following the marked improvement in access to places of detention in 1999, in 2000 the warring parties authorized the ICRC to visit detainees throughout the country. Delegates were therefore able to return to the Herat Central Prison and other places of detention in the south-west where access had been denied for an 18-month period. The ICRC continued to monitor the treatment received by detainees and their conditions of detention, and made the necessary representations to the authorities. Conditions for women and minors in detention continued to be a particular concern. The ICRC distributed non-food and medical assistance to detainees as needed and helped ensure that they had adequate drinking water and sanitation facilities.

Acting in its capacity as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC maintained relations with both sides, facilitating dialogue between the parties and the exchange of emissaries and the simultaneous release of prisoners.

Assistance for victims of war and drought

Food and other assistance, including wheat, rice, ghee, split peas, blankets, tarpaulins, cooking pots and tents, were distributed directly to some 180,000 families displaced by the conflict or by drought and to resident communities affected by the drought.

The ICRC gave aid to a further 71,000 families stricken by war or drought with a view to improving agricultural production and helping them regain their self-sufficiency. Wheat and vegetable seed, fertilizer and tools were among the items distributed. Also included in the agricultural programme were food-for-work projects aimed at rehabilitating more than 800 irrigation systems, which benefited 280,000 families. Thanks to these projects, more than 90,000 hectares of land were restored to agricultural production.

Smaller projects were set up to protect crops against insect infestation, and a number of seed-producing vegetable nurseries also received ICRC assistance. In Kabul, the Animal Vaccine Production Laboratory produced hundreds of thousands of doses of vaccine with help from the ICRC. A considerable quantity of the vaccines was sold to organizations running veterinary programmes.

Assistance for vulnerable city-dwellers

The ICRC continued its water-supply and sanitation programmes to improve health conditions in and around Kabul. The planned phase-out of direct aid to vulnerable families was postponed until 2001. To help improve the livelihood of families headed by widows and disabled people, a variety of vegetable seed was distributed for planting in kitchen gardens in the capital. This project was considerably expanded in 2000.

Medical help for the war-wounded

Assisting medical facilities caring for the war-wounded and other surgical patients continued to be one of the ICRC's major activities in Afghanistan. To improve the health services in areas controlled by the Northern Alliance, support for the surgical department at the Gulbahar hospital was increased, bringing it up to the level of ICRC-assisted hospitals in Kabul, Jalalabad, Ghazni and Kandahar. Throughout the country, large numbers of war-wounded were treated at first-aid posts and hospitals receiving ICRC assistance. Work was also carried out on the infrastructure of several hospitals. The ICRC continued its efforts to guarantee equal access for all patients to health facilities receiving its support.

Efforts to organize a round table with health authorities from all over Afghanistan in order to discuss health-related issues on the nationwide level were halted by the Taliban's summer offensive.

Responding to the danger and reality of mines

The five ICRC prosthetic/orthotic centres in Kabul, Herat, Jalalabad, Mazar-i-Sharif and Gulbahar continued to produce and fit artificial limbs and orthoses for mine victims and other disabled patients, including victims of poliomyelitis. In Kabul, the ICRC achieved good results in a project to monitor and provide home care for paraplegics.

ICRC mines staff continued to interview mine or unexploded ordnance (UXO) victims in hospitals and clinics throughout Afghanistan with a view to identifying high-risk areas. The information collected allowed specialized organizations to target their demining and mine-awareness activities more precisely, and helped improve planning for agricultural and resettlement projects. The data were entered into a special ICRC database and shared with the UN Mine Action Programme.

Cooperating with the National Society

The ICRC, the Afghan Red Crescent Society and the International Federation drew up a joint plan of action to respond to the needs arising from the drought. Under the plan the International Federation concentrated on activities related to basic health care and access to safe drinking water, while the ICRC, in cooperation with the National Society, expanded its food-for-work projects aimed at rehabilitating irrigation systems and wells.

The International Federation and the ICRC also worked with the Afghan Red Crescent to improve its operational capacity and independence of action. These efforts were consolidated when the highest Taliban authorities endorsed the Society's statutes. To ensure the best possible use of resources, the three organizations embarked on a new working relationship based on activity-related support for programmes and projects. Thanks to regular trilateral meetings on both working and leadership levels, coordination and consistency of approach were greatly improved and the management capacity of the National Society was strengthened.

The ICRC continued to support the Afghan Red Crescent's programmes in the areas of dissemination, tracing and conflict preparedness. Under a project delegated to the Netherlands Red Cross, the ICRC maintained its assistance to the National Society's home for the destitute (*marastoon*).

Spreading humanitarian values

Sessions on the ICRC and its fundamental principles and activities and on the basic rules of international humanitarian law were held for people bearing weapons, government officials, students, aid beneficiaries and the general public. The ICRC also produced a radio serial incorporating humanitarian messages to be broadcast in Mazar-i-Sharif.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- visited 7,029 detainees (2,702 for the first time), including 138 women (32 of them female minors) and 587 male minors in 72 places of detention;
- in various places of detention, distributed bedding, clothing and hygiene articles, and improved water supply, waste incineration and sanitation facilities;
- paid for 2,173 released prisoners to return home;
- distributed 4,226 family messages to detainees and collected 9,117 messages for delivery to their relatives;
- facilitated the exchange of emissaries between the parties and helped maintain a dialogue on humanitarian issues;



- with the Afghan Red Crescent Society, collected 8,329 Red Cross messages and distributed 7,563 to family members separated by the conflict;



- in Kabul, distributed more than 11,250 tonnes of food and 300 tonnes of other relief supplies to nearly 22,000 families headed by widows or disabled people and to institutions housing 2,236 orphans, and improved the livelihood of over 3,220 vulnerable families through a kitchen garden project;
- distributed more than 6,000 tonnes of food and 2,000 tonnes of other relief supplies to displaced and returnee families;

- distributed some 1,000 tonnes of wheat grain to people involved in food-for-work schemes under which 800 irrigation systems covering at least 90,000 hectares of arable land were rehabilitated, directly or indirectly benefiting 280,000 farmers;
- distributed over 1,180 tonnes of seed to farmers, and improved crop yields through pest-control and nursery projects;
- supported the Ministry of Agriculture's vaccine production laboratory which produced over 800,000 doses of livestock vaccine;



- financed surgical departments in 6 hospitals admitting 31,067 inpatients and giving more than 136,000 outpatient consultations;
- provided assistance for 22 other health facilities, including 9 hospitals;



- produced 4,600 prostheses, 6,360 orthoses, 10,681 pairs of crutches and 865 wheelchairs for amputees and other disabled people, and fitted 4,533 new patients with prostheses or orthoses;
- provided home care for over 900 paraplegics;



- improved water quality and sanitary conditions for 60,000 people in Kabul by building or repairing over 45 wells, 7,500 latrines and 30 refuse containers, and conducting health education sessions on their use;
- built or rehabilitated over 8,000 latrines and 30 wells and rehabilitated 4 peri-urban water schemes;



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



- set up a programme for the teaching of basic humanitarian principles in Koranic schools, giving 17 sessions for more than 2,000 participants;
- held 106 sessions on humanitarian law and the Movement for 2,185 bearers of weapons;



- collected information on mine injuries from ICRC-supported medical facilities and shared it with the UN Mine Action Programme.

PAKISTAN

PROTECTION

299,904

ASSISTANCE

776,455

PREVENTIVE ACTION

557,813

COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL SOCIETIES

471,465

OVERHEADS

477,115

GENERAL

178,219

TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 2,760,971

Pakistan's deeply troubled economy received a boost at the end of the year when the International Monetary Fund approved a US\$ 590 million credit, temporarily fending off a major financial crisis. Some of Pakistan's ills were associated with economic sanctions imposed in 1998 after it conducted nuclear tests.

On the political front, General Pervez Musharraf pardoned former president Nawaz Sharif before exiling him to Saudi Arabia. General Musharraf led the 1999 military *coup* against Mr Sharif in a move later validated by the Supreme Court, which gave the government until 12 October 2002 to complete its reforms, hold general elections and return the country to democratic rule.

More Afghans seek refuge in Pakistan

Up to 150,000 new Afghan refugees arrived during the year, most of them in the North-West Frontier Province, placing an additional strain on a region already sheltering between 1.2 and 2.4 million long-term refugees. The influx was due to appalling conditions in Afghanistan, where hundreds of thousands of people were displaced because of fighting, drought and hunger.

Support for the Afghan operation

The sub-delegation in Peshawar remained the logistic hub for operations in Afghanistan. More than 6,000 tonnes of medical and other supplies were shipped through Pakistan to Afghanistan during the year. In association with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, the ICRC delegation worked to restore family links between refugees in Pakistan and their relatives in Afghanistan. It also issued travel documents for refugees who were to be resettled in third countries.

Favourable trend in Jammu and Kashmir

During the last part of the year there were signs of restraint in the 50-year-old conflict over Jammu and Kashmir. Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee declared a unilateral cease-fire during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, then extended it until 26 January 2001. For its part, Pakistan pledged to withdraw some of its troops stationed along the Line of Control.

Assisting people along the Line of Control

The ICRC continued to monitor the humanitarian situation along the Line of Control, where exchanges of fire caused more than 100 civilian casualties during the first part of the year. There were fewer such exchanges during the last quarter and tension eased, although possibilities of access remained limited.

Relief supplies were distributed to people fleeing unsafe areas along the Line of Control in the Neelum valley, and the ICRC continued to discuss with the authorities ways of finding a more permanent solution for displaced people living in two camps in the area. The ICRC also provided the Pakistan Red Crescent with support in running mobile eye clinics for civilians in the valley. Over 17,000 patients were treated in the clinics during the year.

Access to detainees

The Pakistan authorities declined an ICRC offer to visit detainees.

Spreading humanitarian values

In line with its mandate to promote international humanitarian law and principles, the ICRC conducted a variety of dissemination activities for members of the military and for students in law faculties. It also supported the National Society in the production of magazines, posters, leaflets and a video about the goals and activities of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement.

Support for the National Society

The ICRC continued to support the Pakistan Red Crescent's Development and Cooperation Unit, which retained national responsibility for dissemination, tracing and disaster-preparedness activities. It also helped develop the National Society's capacity to manage programmes and activities at the national, provincial and district levels. The ICRC shared responsibility for this support with the International Federation.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, arranged for the exchange of 1,433 Red Cross messages between Afghan refugees

in Pakistan and their relatives in Afghanistan;

- issued travel documents for some 1,682 refugees, mainly Afghans, accepted for resettlement in third countries;



- provided relief supplies such as tents, blankets and plastic sheeting for 430 people who had fled to northern Pakistan to

escape fighting in Kashmir, and tents for some 3,000 displaced persons in the Neelum valley;

- transferred some 9,300 tonnes of relief supplies, medicines and medical equipment to Afghanistan;



- funded medicines and medical material for 9 Pakistan Red Crescent mobile eye clinics treating over 17,000 patients;

• supported the National Society in establishing a tracing and dissemination network in 20 districts and the 4 provincial branches, and provided training for 24 volunteer teams (120 volunteers);

• together with the International Federation, continued to provide financial, material and technical support for the National Society's Development and Cooperation Unit in order to strengthen national headquarters and provincial branches;



- worked towards including humanitarian law in training programmes for the Pakistan armed forces by

arranging for 2 senior army officers to attend the fourth Heads of Training Conference organized by the ICRC in Geneva;

• generated interest in the study of humanitarian law by sponsoring the participation of a first team of Pakistan law students in the Jean Pictet international humanitarian law competition in Sweden.

SRI LANKA

PROTECTION

6,826,136

ASSISTANCE

7,278,956

PREVENTIVE ACTION

1,169,592

COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL SOCIETIES

712,217

OVERHEADS

1,075,345

GENERAL

698,691

TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 17,760,937

Sri Lanka's 17-year conflict between government forces and the LTTE* continued to be fought on multiple fronts during the year, taking a heavy toll among both combatants and civilians. On the Jaffna peninsula some 165,000 people remained displaced from their homes, while in the Vanni most of the area's 300,000 inhabitants were living in precarious conditions.

The political tension surrounding the 1999 presidential elections persisted in 2000 with little prospect of a peaceful settlement in the foreseeable future. Discussions between the government and different opposition parties about

* LTTE: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam



⊕ ICRC delegation ⊕ ICRC sub-delegation ⊕ ICRC office

constitutional reforms and the devolution of power failed to yield the anticipated results. In August Parliament was dissolved, and new elections held in October were marred by more violence.

The southern part of the country also came in for its share of violence. During the first three months alone, some 50 people were killed and 350 wounded in 13 incidents including shootings, bomb explosions on public buses, and even a pitched battle between LTTE cadres and security forces in Colombo.

Later in October 29 inmates were massacred and several others wounded by a mob at Bindunuwewa rehabilitation centre housing former LTTE members. This event further inflamed ethnic strife

and did nothing to ease the already tense post-election climate.

The year also brought fresh attempts by the Norwegian government to revitalize the peace process, in deadlock because of the military situation.

Offensives on several fronts

There was fierce fighting on the Jaffna peninsula when the LTTE resumed its offensive code-named "Unceasing Waves III".³ In April, the LTTE won control of the Sri Lankan Army's military camp at Elephant Pass, the gateway to the peninsula, then continued its advance northwards. Fighting was reported close to

³ See the ICRC's 1999 *Annual Report*, p. 169.

Jaffna town, with heavy losses among combatants and many civilian casualties. The hostilities led to large-scale displacement of civilians, who again saw their livelihood disrupted. In May, a suicide bomber killed 24 people in Colombo. There was also sporadic fighting during the year in the Vanni and several clashes in the east of the country.

After a two-month lull, the conflict in the north resumed in September, with the Sri Lankan Army recapturing territory on the Jaffna peninsula. Once again, civilians were forced to flee their villages.

Concern about detainees

One of the ICRC's priority tasks during the year was visiting detainees arrested in connection with the conflict. Material and psychological conditions of detention were monitored, and representations – both written and oral – were made to the relevant authorities to remind them of their obligation to respect the dignity and guarantee the safety of detainees. The ICRC also delivered 1,100 Red Cross messages from detainees' relatives and met 85 detainees who were the subject of tracing requests. It helped finance family visits to detainees, and distributed toiletries and clothing to those unable to receive such visits.

For the first time in several years, the ICRC organized family visits in early 2000 for 15 servicemen held for long periods by the LTTE, which released four of them forthwith.

Acting as a neutral intermediary

In what is still characterized as a "no-mercy war", the ICRC continued to remind the parties of their obligations concerning the treatment of captured enemy combatants. In line with its role as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC submitted requests to the LTTE for information about members of the Sri Lankan security forces missing in action. The mortal remains of both Sri Lankan Army soldiers and LTTE fighters fallen in enemy territory were collected and transferred to their respective sides by the ICRC and the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, working separately or together.

Protecting the civilian population

Another of the ICRC's priority concerns was to gather information about violations of international humanitarian law by the warring parties. Each case was submitted to the relevant authorities with a reminder of their obligation to comply with humanitarian law and protect the civilian population.

Members of families split up by the conflict were able to keep in touch with their relatives in other parts of the country, either by means of written Red Cross messages or, in cases of emergency, by radio transmissions.

Safe passage through conflict zones

Both parties to the conflict recognized the ICRC's role as a neutral intermediary in matters of a humanitarian nature. In the Vanni, ICRC delegates maintained a daily presence on both sides of the front line (near Madhu Church) to help ensure the safe passage of food and other essential goods, civilians and humanitarian personnel.

In order to relieve the isolation of the population of the Jaffna peninsula and help maintain essential civilian services and activities, the ICRC-chartered vessel *Jaya Gold* (formerly the *Jaya Gulf*) sailed weekly between the Jaffna peninsula and Trincomalee, transporting medical cases with special needs, mail, and humanitarian personnel and their cargo. The vessel was the only safe and independent humanitarian transport between the Jaffna peninsula and the rest of the country. In addition, the ICRC provided protection for a passenger ferry shuttling civilians twice a week to and from the Jaffna peninsula. This action was taken at the request of the Sri Lankan government, after security guarantees for the operation had been obtained from the Ministry of Defence and the LTTE.

In November, the ICRC's *Jaya Gold* shuttle service linking Jaffna to the rest of the country was interrupted by the monsoon. Point Pedro was inaccessible because of poor weather conditions, and it took several weeks to obtain security guarantees from the warring parties for access to the port of Kankasanturai.

Assistance for families affected by fighting

The ICRC continued throughout the year to bring assistance to people driven from their homes or affected in other ways by the fighting. In April, a new office was opened in Tolpuram on the Jaffna peninsula to help the displaced in the area. In an endeavour to respond to the needs of the vast number of displaced people, the ICRC focused its efforts on providing safe water, sanitation facilities and essential household items for the destitute, in particular some 17,000 people sheltering in public buildings. The ICRC also gave support for a temporary mobile clinic run by the Sri Lanka Red Cross to provide basic health care for displaced people on the peninsula.

In the conflict areas, including those in the Vanni, the ICRC was limited in its ability to conduct health-care and water-supply programmes for civilians because of restrictions placed on the transport of medicines and of water-supply, sanitation and medical equipment into the area. At times, on the Jaffna peninsula, the ICRC was not allowed access to some places close to the fighting and was thus unable to help the civilians living there.

However, where possible the ICRC continued to install or improve water-supply and sanitation facilities, especially in welfare centres for newly displaced people. On the Jaffna peninsula, during the period of large-scale displacement, it also took a leading role in coordinating water and sanitation activities among humanitarian organizations and acted as a neutral intermediary in carrying out proxy monitoring of the World Bank-funded North-East Irrigated Agriculture Project. Implementation of the project began in Trincomalee and Ampara, and subsequently in Batticaloa.

Aid for victims of flooding

The island was struck by a series of natural disasters during the year. In the Eastern Province, particularly around Batticaloa and Trincomalee, floods and a typhoon forced many to leave their homes. The ICRC was able to respond rapidly to the needs of the victims because of its ongoing presence in the area. Together with the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, it rescued people from three villages marooned by floodwaters near Batticaloa and provided displaced families with relief supplies and medical attention.

Cooperation with the National Society

The ICRC continued to lend technical and financial support for selected activities of the Sri Lanka Red Cross, and also provided training for tracing and dissemination officers and basic first-aid courses for volunteers. It backed the National Society's approaches to parliamentarians, government officials and local authorities aimed at promoting the dissemination of humanitarian law and principles.

In August, the Board of Governors of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society was dissolved by the Minister of Social Services and an Interim Board of Management was established. Activities on the ground continued, however, with the support of the ICRC and the International Federation.

Promoting humanitarian principles

Sessions on humanitarian law were given for government officials and senior military and security personnel, and also for members of opposition groups and internally displaced people. The ICRC cooperated with the three branches of the security forces in training instructors and producing audiovisual and printed material on the basic rules of behaviour in combat. It also gave support for the production, translation and printing of pamphlets, posters, videos, a comic strip and other materials on the history of the Movement.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- visited 3,296 security detainees held under Sri Lankan government authority;
- organized and financed

955 family visits for these detainees and helped 711 released detainees return home;

- visited 33 persons held by the LTTE, organized family visits for 15 of them and assisted in the release and return home of 5;



- exchanged 10,392 Red Cross messages between family members separated by the conflict;
- opened 979 tracing files

for persons whose families had no news of them;

- resolved 273 tracing cases either by locating the missing persons or by giving news of their fate or whereabouts;
- organized 78 family reunifications for vulnerable individuals separated from their next of kin;
- facilitated the return to the respective warring parties of the mortal remains of 436 combatants fallen in enemy territory;



- distributed essential household items to over 3,700 vulnerable displaced persons in the Vanni and on the Jaffna peninsula;

- distributed school clothing to more than 1,400 children of widows or destitute families in the Vanni;



- provided an average of 20,000 consultations monthly in the Vanni through 5 mobile health teams and 27 primary

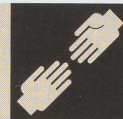
health centres run with the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society in a project delegated to the Canadian Red Cross, and in the Eastern Province through 2 ICRC mobile health teams;

- transported over 1,600 patients from Jaffna to Colombo for specialized medical treatment;



- on the Jaffna peninsula, improved water-supply and sanitation facilities in 133 welfare centres housing some 25,000 displaced people;

- through a project delegated to the Austrian Red Cross, rehabilitated 70 wells serving nearly 20,000 families and repaired 147 hand pumps serving about 45,000 people in the east of the country;



- trained more than 1,250 volunteers in basic first aid, and 325 new first-aid instructors;
- gave financial support

for the training of 20 tracing officers working at branch level;

- provided support for the training of 22 dissemination officers at branch level who then conducted 12 dissemination sessions for more than 1,200 people, including schoolchildren and young adults;



- carried out a dissemination programme on the law of armed conflict for the Sri Lankan army, reaching 6,925 officers;

- held 5 sessions on humanitarian law for a total of 330 members of other groups bearing weapons;
- held 54 sessions for 1,102 regional government and community representatives and 29 sessions for 2,607 civilians to explain the ICRC's role in the protection of civilians;
- promoted the study of humanitarian law by giving 3 presentations to a total of 123 law students, and provided law lecturers with audiovisual and printed material on the subject;
- mounted a media campaign during the Olympic Games entitled "There are rules in sport; there are also rules in war; the Geneva Conventions are the rules".

SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA TAJIKISTAN

TAJIKISTAN

Internal stability prevailed throughout the year in Tajikistan despite a daunting range of difficulties. The population of the country, one of the poorest in the world, continued to endure the effects of a stagnant economy and a soaring crime rate. The situation was compounded by the drought which devastated all of Central Asia, including large tracts of fertile land in Tajikistan.

Slow post-conflict progress

Following the constitutional amendments approved in 1999, Tajikistan acquired an elected President and a bicameral legislature. The new authorities were well aware of the country's most pressing need: stability, in order to foster economic development and in particular to attract foreign investment. There was appreciable progress in implementation of the 1997 peace agreement, but at the end of the year Tajikistan's strategic position and events in neighbouring countries still made it vulnerable to a variety of external and internal threats.

Destabilizing factors

Certain armed groups, particularly in the Karategin valley, remained reluctant to comply with the provisions of the peace agreement and clashed with government troops. Following renewed fighting between the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Uzbek and Kyrgyz government troops in August and September 2000, Uzbekistan announced the closure and mining of its borders with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to prevent further incursions. The ongoing hostilities in Afghanistan, for which there was no end in sight, continued to create apprehension about the possibility of a large influx of refugees and infiltration by armed groups.



⊕ ICRC delegation + ICRC office 🏠 ICRC warehouse

Aid for vulnerable groups

Even though some improvement was reported in terms of growth, inflation, privatization, tax collection and trade, the Tajik economy remained very weak and there was little prospect of change in the near future. This situation left large groups of people dependent on outside aid. The ICRC provided technical and financial support for assistance programmes run by the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan in the Karategin valley, and distributed food and material assistance to people forced to leave their villages because of clashes. Climatic conditions placed an additional burden on the economy. The drought led to

extensive crop failures, and emergency spending for grain imports was anticipated at the end of the year. Humanitarian aid became essential, and this was seen as a setback for the Tajik people's ambition to achieve self-sufficiency.

Distribution of medical supplies

In 2000 the ICRC continued to supply medicines and medical material to health facilities in the Karategin valley and to distribute surgical material to hospitals treating the victims of armed clashes. It also provided medical and material assistance for hospitals treating patients during outbreaks of communicable disease.

Improvements at prosthetic/orthotic centre

Under a project delegated to the Canadian Red Cross Society, prostheses were manufactured, staff were trained and repairs were carried out on the building housing the prosthetic/orthotic centre run by the Ministry of Social Security in Dushanbe. The project made good progress; thanks to additional training the staff were able to achieve the year's goal of fitting some 400 amputees.

No access to detainees

In spite of regular representations to the government requesting permission to carry out visits in accordance with its standard procedures, the ICRC was still unable to gain access to people deprived of their freedom in connection with past conflict or more recent armed clashes.

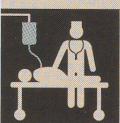
IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- with the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan, arranged for the exchange of 850 Red Cross messages between separated family members;



- distributed over 800 food parcels and 41.5 tonnes of bulk food to vulnerable groups, including the elderly, the disabled and orphans, in the Karategin valley;



- distributed medicines and medical supplies to 6 health facilities (total 240 beds) providing medical care for civilians in the Karategin and Tavildara valleys;
- provided the Hoit hospital with chlorine, soap, mattresses and blankets for 30 cases of typhoid fever, and the Sagirdasht hospital with basic drugs, soap, mattresses and blankets for 45 patients suffering from brucellosis;
- delivered surgical supplies to hospitals treating 41 victims of armed clashes;



- through a project delegated to the Canadian Red Cross, manufactured 397 prostheses and fitted 370 new patients, provided staff training and carried out building work at the government-run prosthetic/orthotic centre in Dushanbe;



- provided Tajik Red Crescent branches with support for programmes to distribute food to 290 vulnerable individuals

in the Karategin valley;

- produced, together with the National Society, a 2-monthly series of 20-minute radio programmes on the role and activities of the Movement in Tajikistan;
- held training sessions on the Movement and its principles for employees and volunteers of Tajik Red Crescent branches;



- gave 53 presentations on humanitarian law to more than 1,900 members of the armed and security forces;

- produced over 85,000 pamphlets in Tajik and Russian on the rules of behaviour in combat;
- gave 262 military instructors training in the law of armed conflict;
- taught 160 teachers to train and supervise their colleagues in the use of the secondary school teachers' manual;
- sponsored the attendance of 2 university students at the 18th course on humanitarian law organized jointly by the Polish Red Cross and the ICRC in Warsaw;
- gave a 1-day presentation for 30 students from Tajik law faculties taking part in a summer school on humanitarian law;
- printed 5,500 posters showing Tajik proverbs reflecting the humanitarian principles;
- sponsored a round table of Tajik officials involved in preparing a draft law on the emblem;
- completed the revision of the Tajik translation of the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols, due to be published in 2001.

NEW DELHI

Regional delegation

(Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal)

In 2000 the coalition led by India's Bharatiya Janata Party maintained a stable government as India began to emerge from its political and economic isolation. US President Clinton's visit to India in May was heralded as a rapprochement between the two countries, and the international community demonstrated its increased support in a series of talks between the Indian government and key world leaders.

Indo-Pakistan relations

Jammu and Kashmir was again the scene of attacks, clashes and massacres. Shelling and firing across the Line of Control continued to create insecurity and claim victims, in particular among civilians.

Tension eased somewhat when talks began between the government and a leading Kashmiri militant group, *Hizbul Mujaheddin*. The hopes raised by this development faded, however, when other groups opposed to such initiatives staged violent attacks, such as the killing in August of 100 mainly Hindu civilians and an attack on New Delhi's Red Fort. At the end of the year "maximum restraint" was being exercised by both India and Pakistan along the Line of Control.

The ICRC in Jammu and Kashmir

The ICRC continued to act as a neutral intermediary in Jammu and Kashmir and to carry out detention-related activities. In August, for the first time since commencing its work in the state, it issued a press release reminding "all those bearing weapons that the civilian population must be respected at all times".

The ICRC encountered mounting difficulties in maintaining systematic access to people detained in connection with the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. In February, at the ICRC's request, a round-table discussion was held with the Indian authorities to address questions relating to some aspects of implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1995, such as detention in states other than Jammu and Kashmir. A further round table was scheduled for early 2001 to clarify some remaining areas of misunderstanding.

Sporadic violence in north-eastern states

Efforts continued to accommodate the demands of the various tribal groups in India's north-eastern states, a region plagued by sporadic clashes and acts of violence. The ICRC concentrated its efforts in the states of Assam and Nagaland, where it worked to strengthen cooperation with branches of the Indian Red Cross Society.

Sri Lankan refugees

In January, with the cooperation of the Tamil Nadu state authorities, the deputy regional delegate visited 10 Sri Lankan refugees in a special camp in Vellore, southern India. Some of the refugees who were physically disabled expressed the desire to return to their country of origin, and two of them subsequently did so by their own means.

Political unrest in Bangladesh

The population of Bangladesh continued to suffer the effects of poverty, overcrowding and violent crime, exacerbated by the constant process of migration away from flood-devastated rural areas. Campaigns mounted by the oppo-

sition coalition with the aim of toppling the government prompted a series of national strikes, demonstrations and parliamentary boycotts. Some opposition sympathizers were arrested under the new Public Safety Act passed in January, but were quickly released.

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, frustration grew over the slow implementation of the 1997 peace agreement, and some deaths were reported as a result of clashes between supporters and opponents of the accord.

From its office in Bangladesh the ICRC continued to carry out dissemination and tracing projects in cooperation with the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, and monitored needs for humanitarian assistance in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In September, Bangladesh ratified the Ottawa treaty banning anti-personnel mines.

Clashes in Nepal

Nepal's relations with India were strained at the beginning of the year after the hijacking of an Indian Airways flight out of Kathmandu. There was no breakthrough in efforts to solve the problem of the 100,000 Bhutanese refugees remaining in Nepal.

In 2000 Nepal's Maoist armed opposition extended its "People's War" (*jana judha*) beyond its home base in the mid-western districts of Jajarkot, Rolpa and Rukum, and fighting intensified in some of the worst clashes since the beginning of the insurgency in 1996. The government stepped up operations to counter this trend, providing police in sensitive areas with additional training and equipment. The death toll rose sharply, with official figures showing 1,500 people killed in insurgency-related violence since February 1996. Development, health and educational activities were seriously disrupted in some districts, and violence and the collapse of public services forced many residents to move to safer areas.

The ICRC began visiting people detained in connection with the insurgency in Nepal in December 1998. Following the organization's standard procedures, delegates continued regular prison visits throughout 2000, focusing on districts affected by the violence. In April the ICRC presented the Nepalese authorities with the first comprehensive report on its findings during prison visits, and in June discussions were held with the Prime Minister with a view to obtaining access to people held in police custody.

The ICRC organized a seminar in April to spread knowledge of humanitarian law among the police, which was the force involved in counter-insurgency operations, and held discussions on similar training given to the Royal Nepalese Army.

It cooperated with the Nepal Red Cross Society in areas such as dissemination, the restoration of family links and the setting-up of a conflict-preparedness programme. In addition, it published a leaflet in Nepali describing the Movement, the ICRC's mandate and its activities in Nepal.

Visits to detainees in Bhutan

The ICRC continued its twice-yearly visits to places of detention in Bhutan. During the visits it collected Red Cross messages written by detainees for delivery to their relatives living abroad, in particular in refugee camps in Nepal.

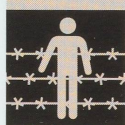
Dissemination for the police and armed forces

The ICRC continued to focus on dissemination of humanitarian law among the armed forces in the region. In a shift of policy, it started to concentrate on lending support to armed and security forces for incorporation of the subject in their own training programmes, rather than holding dissemination sessions itself. To this end delegates met with nearly every director of military training for the armed forces in the region, as well as with the police in Nepal.

Promoting humanitarian law in academic circles

In all the countries covered by the regional delegation, the ICRC worked to promote humanitarian principles and maintained contacts with law societies, universities and academic associations in order to encourage the teaching of international humanitarian law.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- visited 1,395 detainees (803 of them for the first time) in 23 places of detention in Jammu and Kashmir, and arranged for

the exchange of 768 Red Cross messages between them and their families;

- made 30 home visits in Jammu and Kashmir to check that former detainees had been freed;
- sent 333 letters to families to confirm the release of their relatives, and submitted the names of detainees to the authorities with a view to establishing their whereabouts;
- saw 10 former LTTE cadres interned in Tamil Nadu (India) to ascertain whether they wished to be repatriated to Sri Lanka;
- visited 106 detainees in 3 places of detention in Bhutan and collected 210 Red Cross messages for distribution to their families in refugee camps in Nepal;
- visited 453 detainees in 38 places of detention in Nepal;

Cooperation with National Societies

The ICRC provided support for the tracing and dissemination activities of the region's National Societies, and continued its financial support for the disaster-preparedness programme which the International Federation had handed over to the Indian Red Cross. Three first-aid training workshops were completed in Assam state in India, and a first-aid training programme was launched in cooperation with the Nepal Red Cross.



- in India, issued travel documents for 1,267 people;



- organized a national seminar in India on the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and another on the

Additional Protocols, and submitted a comprehensive memorandum on the Protocols to the Minister for Foreign Affairs;

- in India, gave 2 armed forces instructors training in humanitarian law, held 7 workshops for 285 military officers, and organized 11 courses on humanitarian law and human rights for 351 police officers;
- in Nepal, held workshops on humanitarian law for 362 officers of the armed forces and organized a 3-day seminar on humanitarian law and human rights for 20 senior members of the Nepal Police;
- organized, often jointly with universities and other academic institutions, courses, seminars and other activities to encourage the teaching of humanitarian law in India and Bangladesh.

TASHKENT

Regional delegation

(Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)

For hundreds of years Central Asia has been the traditional crossroads between East and West. It is at the strategic and geopolitical hub of a vast area encompassing China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan and India. Its wealth of natural resources includes not only oil and gas but also a vast variety of mineral and metal deposits, still largely unexplored.

The year 2000 was marked by a significant change in perspective for the Central Asian States, brought about on the one hand by the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and on the other by difficulties encountered with the gas and oil pipeline project through the Caspian Sea. These countries again came to see Russia as the only power that could really help them resist internal and external threats, such as Islamic fundamentalism and the repercussions of the conflict in Afghanistan. In Uzbekistan, the only country in Central Asia to retain most of its Soviet-style administrative and economic structures, the State continued to hold a decisive stake in all economic and agricultural activities and to maintain rigorous control over external trade.

Security concerns

During the year under review there was no open conflict in the countries covered by the regional delegation except for an incident in Uzbekistan in August, when a number of militants of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan entered the southern province of Surkhandarya and clashed with government forces. The movement conducted its first military operation in southern Kyrgyzstan in 1999 and returned to Uzbekistan from its bases in Tajikistan and Afghanistan in 2000. Countries resisting Islamic movements also regarded the presence of refugees from Afghanistan and Tajikistan as a factor heightening tension.

Office opened in Osh

The persisting tension in the Fergana valley, which runs through several countries of the region, prompted the ICRC to step up its presence in the area. In order to operate more efficiently it intensified contacts with local Red Cross/Red Crescent branches and opened an office in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, staffed by one delegate.

Visits to persons deprived of their freedom

Visits to detainees in Kyrgyzstan began at the very end of 1999, covering people held under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Security. In 2000 an agreement was reached to visit persons detained by the Ministry of the Interior as well. All the visits were carried out in accordance with the ICRC's standard procedures and detainees were given the opportunity to write Red Cross messages to their families. In Uzbekistan, the ICRC initiated talks with the authorities with a view to gaining access to detainees throughout the country, and a positive outcome was hoped for in 2001.

Promoting humanitarian law

Throughout 2000, the Tashkent regional delegation continued to promote international humanitarian law. Taking advantage of the fact that the countries in the region were undergoing a process of legislative reform, the ICRC worked to have humanitarian law incorporated into national legislation. It handed over reports on the status of humanitarian law in national legislation to the governments of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

ICRC delegates also held consultations with faculties of law, journalism and international relations to encourage the teaching of humanitarian law through national institutions.

Regional De Martens event

The De Martens competition, a moot court on humanitarian law for CIS* countries, was held for the first time on a regional basis, bringing together in Tashkent 11 teams from universities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Members of the jury included a professor at the Institute of Strategic Studies of Uzbekistan, an Italian professor of law and an ICRC jurist.

Teaching humanitarian principles in secondary schools

In an effort to instill humanitarian attitudes at an early age, the ICRC pursued the development of its "MinEduc" programme in secondary schools in Uzbekistan. Some 340,000 manuals for pupils 16-17 years of age and 12,000 for teachers were distributed up to September 2000. To ensure the programme's long-term impact, the ICRC held discussions with the Ministry of Education on incorporating the humanitarian rules and message into official secondary school curricula.

* CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States

Inclusion of the law of war in military training

To promote the incorporation of the law of armed conflict into military planning and operations at all levels, and to help the armed forces apply this knowledge in the conduct of hostilities, the ICRC organized seminars, sponsored courses and provided support for the production of comprehensive training programmes and manuals in all four countries of the region.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- in Kyrgyzstan, visited 19 detainees held for internal security offences;



- signed several cooperation agreements with the region's 4 National Societies;
- gave the Red Crescent

Society of Kyrgyzstan support for training staff of the newly established Bakten Oblast branch, and held 3 dissemination seminars for 130 National Society staff and volunteers and representatives of local authorities;

- sponsored the participation of a senior official of the Kazakh Red Crescent and Red Cross in the meeting of National Society legal advisers in Geneva, and had regular talks with staff on the third protective emblem and the recognition process for the Society;
- took part, together with the International Federation and the Spanish and Netherlands Red Cross, in a round table attended by the Presidents or Chairmen of the 4 National Societies to discuss cooperation and programmes in the region;

Cooperation within the Movement

In February and June 2000 the ICRC held two workshops in Tashkent for the four Central Asian National Societies, with the aim of promoting cooperation within the Movement and establishing a regional approach to dissemination. All the National Societies' dissemination and information officers took part in the workshops, which focused on topical humanitarian issues, such as the Ottawa treaty

- with the Red Crescent Societies of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, raised public and media awareness of the impact of war through a photo exhibition seen by over 17,000 people in the Fergana valley and 3,500 people in Ashgabad;



- trained 467 military instructors in the law of armed conflict, gave a presentation on the subject for military medical personnel, provided technical support for the drafting of military training manuals on humanitarian law, and arranged for the participation of senior officers in international courses, seminars and meetings on the subject;
- sponsored the attendance of 1 Kazakh, 2 Turkmen, 3 Kyrgyz and 2 Uzbek officials at the 6th course for civil servants on the incorporation of humanitarian law into national legislation organized by the ICRC's Advisory Service in Moscow;
- arranged for the participation of the legal adviser to the President and the Deputy Prosecutor General from Kazakhstan, and the Deputy Military Prosecutor General and a Supreme Court judge from Kyrgyzstan, in a 2-day international conference on the repression of war crimes organized by the ICRC's Moscow delegation;

banning landmines. All year long the ICRC organized or supported regional training programmes on tracing and dissemination activities. It also encouraged the National Societies to increase their youth activities in potential conflict areas.

- supported the preparation of a draft law on the use and protection of the emblem which was adopted by the Kyrgyz parliament and signed by the President in September;
- fostered academic interest in humanitarian law by organizing a De Martens humanitarian law competition in Tashkent, giving presentations and organizing seminars on humanitarian law for university students, sending students and professors to conferences, and supporting research on humanitarian law through internships, consultations and financial support;
- in a programme to promote the teaching of humanitarian principles in secondary schools run by the Uzbek Ministry of Education, trained teachers to use the students' manual, conducted an evaluation of the distribution and utilization of the manual, and sponsored a contest on themes related to course content for 318,000 young people taking part in the programme;
- produced a students' manual on the basic rules of humanitarian law for use in a secondary school course to be implemented by the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education.

EAST TIMOR

PROTECTION

1,666,375

ASSISTANCE

13,600,125

PREVENTIVE ACTION

158,450

COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL SOCIETIES

101,550

OVERHEADS

915,308

GENERAL

682,852

TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 17,124,660



+ ICRC delegation
 + ICRC sub-delegation
 + ICRC office

East Timor remained relatively calm throughout the first half of 2000. The multinational force INTERFET,* which had arrived in September 1999,⁴ was replaced by a smaller peace-keeping force under the authority of UNTAET.* UNTAET continued to develop administrative structures, gradually giving more power to Timorese officials, and a National Council was established in July with representatives from different sectors of East Timorese society.

* INTERFET: International Force for East Timor

⁴ See the ICRC's 1999 *Annual Report*, pp. 196-197.

* UNTAET: United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

In July and August, however, the situation deteriorated as pro-Indonesian militiamen infiltrated East Timor and carried out attacks on UN peace-keepers, killing two UNTAET soldiers. Three of the armed infiltrators were also killed. The clashes caused the displacement of several thousand people living in remote mountain areas and slowed the pace of repatriation of refugees from camps in West Timor.

In September, following the murder of three UNHCR* expatriates by pro-Indonesian militiamen in West Timor, all foreign humanitarian workers, including ICRC delegates, were evacuated from West Timor and ICRC field activities there were suspended.

* UNHCR: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The situation became more settled again by the end of the year. Preparations to elect a Constituent Assembly in 2001 were under way, but a number of challenges remained outstanding. These included the issue of the estimated 100,000 East Timorese refugees still in West Timor; the many people still unaccounted for; inadequate resources, particularly in the judicial and law enforcement domains; and high levels of unemployment in an economy dominated by foreigners.

In 2000, ICRC activities in East Timor focused on restoring family links, protecting detainees and civilians who might be at risk, and maintaining essential services, in particular medical care. The ICRC office in Darwin, run with the help of the Australian Red Cross, continued to provide logistic support for ICRC operations in East Timor.

Protecting the vulnerable

Throughout the year, the ICRC continued regular visits to detainees, checking on conditions of detention and making recommendations to the authorities. It also monitored the situation of released detainees and returnees whose alleged involvement in the upheaval of 1999 put them at risk. By the end of the year there were fewer arrests and more releases of people accused of militia-related crimes. The ICRC maintained contact with UNTAET in order to address any problems in this respect.

In May 2000, once population movements had stabilized, the ICRC began collecting data on persons still unaccounted for since the 1999 events; these will be added to allegations collected before the events to constitute a solid basis for tackling the issue of missing persons with the authorities concerned. Twenty-one ICRC tracing employees received instruction on how to collect allegations and were trained in dissemination techniques during a three-day session held in Dili in late November.

The number of Red Cross messages exchanged between separated family members decreased as more people returned home, and so did the number of requests for reunification of unaccompanied minors and vulnerable persons with their families. The September murders of humanitarian workers in West Timor forced the ICRC to shut down its tracing activities there completely.

Improving living conditions

The ICRC phased out its emergency relief activities in 2000. It completed its planned distributions of food, seed and material aid in Lautem, Ainaro and Ermera districts, and in March turned over maintenance of Dili's water-supply systems to the city water board, operating under the responsibility of UNTAET. Rural water projects interrupted by the 1999 events were also completed in Manuhafi and Liquisa districts and were officially handed over to the local communities. To ensure maintenance of the systems, the local water authorities were given basic tools and fittings. The ICRC also surveyed earlier water projects and carried out repairs on distribution systems extensively damaged by landslides during the rainy season, in particular in Ermera, Maubisse and Baucau districts.

The ICRC Emergency Shelter Programme, which started in December 1999, was completed in November, just in time for the beginning of the rains. The programme reached communities in six districts, with a special focus on Bobonaro and Ainaro districts. The vulnerable groups given priority attention were widows with children, the elderly, the physically disabled, and large families who had lost most of their belongings during the 1999 events. The total number of shelter units distributed amounted to 4,170.

Dili General Hospital

Between 1999, when the ICRC took over management of the Dili General Hospital, and the end of 2000, over 7,000 people from all over the country were admitted and more than 80,000 outpatients treated in this hospital, which remained the country's only referral facility. Paediatrics and surgery were the busiest units. Among the hospital's many activities, an immunization programme was set up on its premises in coordination with UNICEF.* Visits from expatriate specialist teams increased the range and volume of the hospital's surgical activities, and staff were trained in all areas, especially on the wards. The ICRC also carried out necessary repairs, renovation and maintenance work on the hospital buildings.

* UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

Promoting humanitarian principles

The ICRC initiated activities to promote respect for humanitarian law throughout East Timorese society, targeting the authorities; the general public, international forces and FALINTIL* troops. It also held a number of sessions to explain the fundamental Red Cross/Red Crescent principles and the ICRC's mandate and activities in East Timor. These sessions were given to 149 cadets of the UNTAET Police Training College, 112 primary school teachers within the framework of the UNTAET Teachers' Training Programme, and newly hired East Timorese hospital staff.

The delegation also produced and distributed dissemination materials in the Tetun language for East Timorese audiences.

Efforts to create a new Red Cross Society

In July 2000, a group was set up with a view to forming a new Red Cross Society for East Timor. In the spirit of the Seville Agreement, the ICRC supported the group by providing legal advice, facilitating meetings, and building the capacity of the East Timor Red Cross Preparatory Committee leadership.

* FALINTIL: Armed Forces of National Liberation of East Timor

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- regularly visited places of detention under the responsibility of the transitional authorities and ensured individual follow-up of 138 detainees held in connection with the violence of 1999;
- exchanged 1,759 Red Cross messages between inmates and their families;



- distributed 32,524 Red Cross messages to members of separated families in East and West Timor;
- reunited 111 vulnerable people (the elderly or sick, women alone with children) from refugee camps in West Timor with their families in East Timor;
- reunited 32 unaccompanied children who had been registered in West Timor's refugee camps with their families in East Timor;



- provided 1,504 tonnes of food and 123 tonnes of material assistance for some 100,000 people, with a focus on the most vulnerable;
- distributed 9 tonnes of seeds to over 10,000 families;
- provided materials for 4,500 families to build shelters;



- in the Dili General Hospital, provided treatment for 7,663 inpatients, gave 82,079 outpatient consultations, developed nursing guidelines for patient management and trained local hospital staff;



- distributed 250 hand pumps to families in Dili suburbs and in vulnerable communities;
- provided the training, tools and fittings needed to maintain safe water-supply systems in 33 rural communities;



- gave dissemination sessions for civilian leaders, members of international peace-keeping forces, FALINTIL troops, and hospital personnel;
- published and distributed leaflets on the basic rules of humanitarian law in the Tetun language;
- provided the UNTAET radio station with a series featuring civilians and combatants talking about their views on and experience of war, based on the ICRC's "People on War" project.

MYANMAR

PROTECTION

2,793,701

ASSISTANCE

1,873,599

PREVENTIVE ACTION

323,259

COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL SOCIETIES

13,925

OVERHEADS

326,920

GENERAL

212,618

TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 5,544,022

Sporadic armed clashes along Myanmar's eastern border, political tensions and the soaring cost of essential goods continued to beset the country in 2000. Health care and other social services remained sadly inadequate to meet the needs of all the population, especially people living in remote border areas.

In June 2000, the International Labour Organization voted to adopt measures against Myanmar if the government did not meet its obligation to eliminate the use of forced labour. The resolution entered into force in November.

Also during the year, the United Nations Secretary-General appointed a new Special Representative for Myanmar, who met government and opposition leaders in Yangon to encourage a process of reconciliation. The UN called on the international community to support this move.

The ICRC resumed its activities in Myanmar in 1998 after a three-year absence. It subsequently increased its field presence, focusing on visits to detainees, prosthetic/orthotic services,



⊕ ICRC delegation + ICRC office

and primary health care and sanitation projects along the Thai border.

Help for detainees

The ICRC continued its visits to detainees in prisons, labour camps and "guest houses" according to its standard procedures, which include private interviews with detainees of its choice. Delegates assessed the treatment of detainees and their material and psychological conditions of detention, thereafter engaging in a constructive dialogue with the authorities on any measures to be taken. Between May 1999, when the programme began, and the end of 2000, a total of 36 places of detention holding an estimated 36,000 inmates were visited.

Basic drugs and small items of medical equipment were given to prison medical services and to referral hospitals outside the prisons. This assistance was intended primarily for detainees unable to receive support from their families. Books and games were also distributed. For security detainees, monthly family visits were financed by the ICRC.

To enable detainees throughout the country to communicate with their families, the ICRC, in cooperation with the Myanmar Red Cross Society, further extended its Red Cross message network. The training programme set up to that effect reached National Society staff and volunteers from more than 100 townships.

Assistance for internally displaced people and vulnerable groups

In Kayin state, displaced families received agricultural tools, vegetable seed and other material assistance. Work was carried out to give some villages along the Thai border improved access to safe drinking water.

In Shan state, a pilot health promotion project implemented with the Danish Red Cross since 1999 continued. The emphasis was on community-based primary health care, mainly preventive measures and immunization programmes, and on providing access to safe water. Community health workers and auxiliary midwives were also trained.

Amputees from border areas were transferred to the prosthetic/orthotic workshops in Mandalay and Yangon, where they were housed and fitted with artificial limbs and other appliances. The workshops are run by the Ministry of Health with ICRC support. Most of the beneficiaries were mine casualties, but leprosy patients were also fitted. In addition, the ICRC ran training courses for prosthetic and orthotic technicians.

Spreading awareness of humanitarian law

The ICRC gave presentations to a number of state and township branches of the National Society in order to increase awareness of international humanitarian law. Audiences usually comprised representatives of most ministries as well as Red Cross volunteers.

Dissemination material on Red Cross principles and activities and the rules of behaviour in combat were produced in five national languages.

Working with the Myanmar Red Cross Society

In addition to its tracing and prosthetic activities carried out jointly with the Myanmar Red Cross, the ICRC worked to

support the Society's institutional development. Activities in this area were conducted together with the International Federation.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- visited on one or more occasions approximately 36,000 persons held in various places of detention, registering 1,295 security detainees;
- distributed recreational and educational items and, as needed, basic medicines to supplement the stocks of prison medical services and referral hospitals;
- arranged for the exchange of 7,941 Red Cross messages to help detainees restore contact with their families;
- financed transport for 3,847 people making family visits to detainees;



- provided vegetable seed, agricultural tools and other assistance for 200 internally displaced families along the Thai border in Kayin state;



- extended its health promotion project in Shan state, helping 500 families to build latrines, setting up systems to provide some 7,000 people with access to safe water, giving support for visiting midwives, building 2 health posts, developing an immunization programme, and organizing health education sessions in 7 villages in the east of the state;
- conducted surveys and prepared the ground for health promotion projects in Kayin and Mon states, and began water and sanitation work in Kayin state;



- provided equipment, supplies and financial and technical support for prosthetic/orthotic centres in Yangon and Mandalay

producing prostheses for civilian amputees;

- contributed to creating a pool of trained prosthetic/orthotic technicians in Myanmar;
- in a joint programme with the Ministry of Health and the Myanmar Red Cross, identified amputees in border areas, organizing their transfer to centres where they could be fitted with artificial limbs and providing accommodation and food during the treatment period;



- provided training for staff and volunteers of the Myanmar Red Cross Society in 110 townships with a view to establishing a sustainable network for the exchange of Red Cross messages between detainees and their families;



- gave a presentation on Red Cross principles and activities to all directors of prisons and labour camps in Myanmar, and gave several similar presentations to State Peace and Development Council representatives and the police force in Kayin and Mon states, and to Myanmar Red Cross staff and volunteers in Shan and Kayin states;
- funded the National Society's production of dissemination material.

BANGKOK

Regional Delegation

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

The region covered by the Bangkok delegation remained calm in 2000. There were encouraging economic developments in Taiwan, South Korea and China, and closer relations were established among countries within the region and beyond. Following unprecedented diplomatic overtures breaking the country's quasi-total isolation, the leader of North Korea visited China in May, and June saw an historic summit meeting between the leaders of North and South Korea. China also strengthened its strategic ties with Russia during the year, and relations with the United States after the 1999 NATO* bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade improved.

Promising developments on the Korean peninsula

There was a significant improvement in inter-Korean relations following the June summit in Pyongyang. Under agreements on humanitarian issues reached at the summit, the two governments and National Societies organized visits for selected groups of family members who had been separated since the 1950-53 conflict, and 63 "long-term unconverted prisoners" were repatriated to North Korea. The two Red Cross Societies subsequently began to explore ways of ascertaining the fate or whereabouts of the many other separated relatives and of exchanging news between family members. The ICRC's regional delegation maintained a regular dialogue with both National Societies and provided technical support and advice for their tracing activities.

* NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Cambodian Red Cross takes on new duties

The post-conflict phase in Cambodia proceeded fairly smoothly, with the occasional setback. In November, an attack on government buildings in Phnom Penh by an armed group left one police officer and seven of the attackers dead. The incident led to a number of arrests.

As Cambodia's political situation began to stabilize, the ICRC was able to reduce its expatriate presence in the country. At the beginning of the year the delegation in Cambodia became an office operating under the supervision of the regional delegation in Bangkok. Visits to the few remaining detainees of concern to the ICRC held under the authority of the Ministry of Interior continued throughout the year.

Responsibility for the ICRC's tracing service in Cambodia – including the Red Cross message network – was transferred to the Cambodian Red Cross Society. A two-year transitional agreement was signed between the two organizations in October.

By the end of the year, the prosthetic/orthotic programme was the primary focus of the ICRC's work in Cambodia. Its Phnom Penh workshop continued to produce components for distribution to the various fitting centres in the country. Landmine victims and poliomyelitis patients were fitted in the ICRC's Battambang centre as previously under a project delegated to the Japanese Red Cross.

Tracing data centralized in Bangkok

All tracing files and information relating to past conflict in Cambodia were centralized in the tracing agency at the ICRC's regional delegation in Bangkok. The agency continued to cooperate with the Cambodian Red Cross and other National Societies concerned, cross-checking and forwarding information when required.

Monitoring conditions on the Thai-Myanmar border

Negotiations conducted in the Thai capital with a view to gaining access to sensitive border areas were successfully concluded. In support of its work in Myanmar, the ICRC opened an office in Chiang-Mai, from which it established and maintained contact with Myanmar opposition groups in Thailand to explain the ICRC's work in Myanmar and disseminate the basic principles of humanitarian law.

Refugees in camps along the Thai-Myanmar border also benefited from the Red Cross message network: the ICRC was able to distribute some messages written by detainees it had visited in Myanmar. The ICRC continued to coordinate activities and share information with UNHCR, the Thai authorities and NGOs* working in the area.

Prosthetic/orthotic activities in Viet Nam

In Viet Nam, the ICRC carried out a technical review of components made at the Ho Chi Minh prosthetic/orthotic centre and continued to work with the government to improve their quality. Destitute amputees were fitted, prostheses, crutches and rubber feet were produced, and wheelchairs were donated to amputees who could not be fitted. Another prosthetic workshop was built in Kontum with the cooperation of the NGO *Nouvelle Planète*. That programme continued to receive financial support from the ICRC's Special Fund for the Disabled.

* NGOs: non-governmental organizations

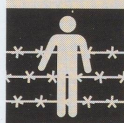
Cooperation with National Societies

The Bangkok delegation also continued to support the region's National Societies in their efforts to spread knowledge of humanitarian law. The "Dissemination China 2001" programme,⁵ in its second year, moved forward with the Macao and Hong Kong Red Cross branches facilitating nationwide training for Red Cross dissemination officers.

In Macao, the Centre for Promotion and Activities in International Humanitarian Law, established in cooperation with the ICRC, was officially inaugurated. In Mongolia, together with the Mongolian Red Cross Society, the ICRC backed the adoption of a Red Cross Act. The Lao Red Cross, with ICRC assistance, completed a plan for the dissemination of Red Cross principles and the basic rules of humanitarian law, and in the Republic of Korea the ICRC launched a programme to train disseminators. The ICRC also provided the National Societies of the region with material and technical support for the organization and implementation of their dissemination, tracing and first-aid programmes.

The International Federation transferred its regional delegation from Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok during the year, and working relations were established between the two regional delegations. In May, the ICRC took an active part in a meeting in Bangkok which was organized by the International Federation and brought together the leaders of all National Societies of the region together with their major partners in the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- paid follow-up visits to 23 security detainees in 10 places of detention in Cambodia;



- handled 17,099 Red Cross messages relating to past conflict in Cambodia;

- in Cambodia, resolved 387 tracing cases and opened 673 new ones;



- in Cambodia, manufactured 1,265 prostheses and 480 orthoses, fitted 861 new patients, and produced

over 8,199 orthopaedic components free of charge for use in 6 rehabilitation facilities run by the ICRC and other organizations;

- in Viet Nam, under a programme of the Special Fund for the Disabled, gave material and technical support to the prosthetic/orthotic workshop in Ho Chi Minh City, which fitted 1,006 destitute amputees, produced 1,024 prostheses, 937 pairs of elbow crutches and 969 rubber feet, and donated 15 wheelchairs to amputees who could not be fitted;



- gave support for training in humanitarian law, mainly for the armed forces in Thailand, China, Mongolia and Cambodia,

organizing workshops for 280 military personnel, providing training for 87 military instructors, and assisting in the development of training methods;

- held a regional conference on the implementation of humanitarian law;

- organized a regional briefing and debriefing for 12 military officers attending the San Remo course on the law of armed conflict;

- in Cambodia, sponsored a travelling exhibition on the Ottawa treaty;

- continued to provide an instructor and materials for a university course on humanitarian law in Phnom Penh.

⁵ See the ICRC's 1999 *Annual Report*, p. 193.

JAKARTA

Regional delegation

(Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore)

PROTECTION

1,271,779

ASSISTANCE

4,014,100

PREVENTIVE ACTION

1,401,403

COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL SOCIETIES

975,177

OVERHEADS

636,343

GENERAL

279,420

TOTAL EXPENDITURE Sfr 8,578,222

The work of the Jakarta regional delegation in 2000 centred on Indonesia, where continued violence in trouble spots, slow economic recovery and growing political opposition weakened the government led by President Abdurrahman Wahid.

Widespread violence in the Moluccas

At the beginning of the year violence escalated in the Moluccas as fighting spread throughout North Maluku province, killing hundreds and displacing tens of thousands. Large-scale riots and destruction of property forced an estimated 150,000 Moluccans, both Christians and Muslims, to flee their homes. After the declaration by the President of a state of civil emergency in mid-July, the conflict abated, but sporadic clashes between communities in the second half of the year and political discussions on the constitution of the new provincial parliament kept tensions high. At the end of the year, the authorities began repatriating displaced persons under heavy military guard.

In late December 1999, violence gripped Ambon (South Maluku province), spreading to neighbouring islands. There was renewed fighting in the provincial capital in May, June and November 2000.

Responding to the emergencies

In North Maluku, where the ICRC established a permanent presence in Ternate, the ICRC, together with the PMI,* strove to reach as many victims of the violence as possible. A PMI/ICRC team made a survey of the province, assessing the situation, identifying displaced persons needing assistance and carrying out immediate distributions of food and

other essential items. At the end of September an ICRC-chartered vessel, the *Bimo*, arrived in Ternate to help the team do its work in North Maluku and to ensure its safety and neutrality.

Following an upsurge in the violence in and around Tobelo (Halmahera island) in June, a helicopter leased by the ICRC flew in a medical team with a senior PMI representative to assess requirements. Urgently needed medical supplies were distributed to the hospitals in Tobelo and nearby Galela. In July, an PMI/ICRC team evacuated six wounded civilians from Tiley (West Morotai) to the Posi Posi health centre on Rau island. In North Maluku, PMI/ICRC health support teams delivered basic medical supplies to new villages that had been formed by displaced people and that were not covered by Ministry of Health services. Medical personnel were given refresher training and health information systems were set up in these newly formed settlements to ensure access to adequate health care. The teams also continued to monitor and assess health and living conditions in isolated areas of North Maluku, using the ICRC's vessel. In October, the ICRC established a permanent presence in Ambon. Working with the PMI, it focused on improving emergency assistance for the wounded: blood transfusion facilities were assessed and equipment provided to ensure a continuous source of safe blood, and Red Cross volunteers were trained to establish a first-aid service accessible to all sectors of the population.

In the Moluccas, the ICRC maintained and developed contacts with the different parties involved in the fighting, explaining its role and mandate and the basic rules of war to militia commanders.

* PMI: Palang Merah Indonesia (Indonesian Red Cross Society)

Intercommunal violence in Central Sulawesi

Violence also broke out between Christians and Muslims in Central Sulawesi. Clashes began in the town of Poso in April, then abated for a few weeks before flaring up again in late May and continuing through June. Over 150 people were killed and several thousand were forced to flee to nearby towns.

In late June, a joint PMI/ICRC team was able to complete a needs assessment, and around 4,000 displaced families received material assistance. As poor hygiene was found to be a major health hazard, a further distribution of hygiene kits was organized in October.

Separatist conflict in Aceh

In February, responding to numerous attacks on police stations and army posts, the Indonesian security forces launched a major police operation against the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), resulting in casualties on both sides. In June, however, the Indonesian authorities and GAM agreed to a six-month "humanitarian pause". Clashes decreased momentarily, but by September violence had escalated to the level seen prior to the signing of the agreement.

The ICRC continued to collect first-hand reports of arrests and subsequent disappearances in Aceh and to forward them to the security forces concerned. Delegates in the field made contact with military, police and civil authorities at the most senior levels in Aceh and Jakarta to urge the authorities to take further action.

The ICRC maintained close contacts in Banda Aceh with the Humanitarian Committee, a body established within the framework of the "humanitarian pause" and comprising representatives of the Indonesian government and GAM.

The ICRC and the PMI also continued to monitor the situation in camps for internally displaced persons in Aceh and provided assistance to improve water supplies and sanitation.

In November, Aceh was struck by the worst flooding in years. Wells, the main source of clean water, were polluted and latrines overflowed. Seepage into homes created a major health risk. The ICRC and the PMI set up a rapid assessment team to conduct a survey of the zones hardest hit, and relief supplies were given to thousands of families in the area. Garbage collection was organized to remove stagnant waste in the towns of Lhokseumawe and Banda Aceh. Staff from both organizations cleared waste to restore the flow of a river near the village of Bireuen, which was the water source for 400 families.

Rising tension in West Papua

In June, the Papua People's Congress issued a statement declaring the independence of the province, which had been under Jakarta's rule since 1969. Towards the end of the year, the separatist movement gained momentum and clashes between security forces and supporters of independence resulted in many casualties.

The ICRC delegation in Jakarta discussed with the PMI the possibility of dispatching a joint mission to the region in January 2001 to evaluate humanitarian needs and determine possible Red Cross response. The ICRC also had talks with the authorities in Jakarta with a view to beginning protection work in West Papua.

Activities in West Timor suspended

In 2000, the number of East Timorese refugees in West Timor was estimated to be between 90,000 and 130,000. In the first half of the year the ICRC, together with the PMI, continued to assist family members separated from their relatives, restoring family links through Red Cross messages and contributing to the reunification of families on both sides of the border with East Timor.⁶ In addition, the ICRC and the PMI ran six health posts in Atambua area and improved water and sanitation conditions in refugee camps.

On 6 September, three UNHCR expatriates working in Atambua were brutally assassinated. Conditions in the region were deemed too dangerous for international aid agencies, and the ICRC decided to suspend its activities in West Timor indefinitely.

Promoting humanitarian principles

The ICRC worked steadily throughout the region to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and principles among people in a position to prevent or limit violence. Dissemination activities targeted groups involved in Indonesia's trouble spots, especially battalions and mobile police brigades deployed in areas of unrest. To raise awareness of humanitarian law and human rights among police trainers and personnel operating in sensitive areas, the ICRC reached a new agreement with the Indonesian police and worked with the Indonesian Police School in Jakarta with a view to systematically including these subjects in its course for personnel from commands around the country.

⁶ See also pp. 116-117.

In June, the ICRC and the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs jointly organized a two-day seminar on the national implementation of international humanitarian law for South-East Asian countries. The participants included representatives of 10 countries and five National Societies, and representatives of 19 countries attended as observers.

Strengthening cooperation with the PMI

In February 2000, the new Chairman of the PMI made a first visit to the Geneva headquarters of the International Federation and the ICRC. He met the ICRC President and received briefings on the structure and functioning of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement from representatives of both organizations. With the aim of defining a general framework of cooperation between the three components of the Movement in Indonesia, several meetings were organized in Jakarta between staff from the ICRC and the International Federation's headquarters and the PMI leadership.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- opened 120 tracing enquiries in Aceh for families with members unaccounted for after arrest;



- with the Indonesian Red Cross Society (PMI), arranged for the distribution of 21,581 Red Cross messages to East Timorese refugees in West Timor, and established a Red Cross message network for family members separated by violence in the Maluccas;
- reunited 2 unaccompanied children from East Timor with their parents in West Timor;
- reunited 45 vulnerable East Timorese with family members in West Timor or other islands of the Indonesian archipelago;



- distributed more than 20,000 family kits, 3 tonnes of rice and 130 tonnes of material assistance to the displaced and resident population affected by violence in North Maluku and Sulawesi, and family parcels to refugees in West Timor;



- maintained 6 health posts and set up 21 "rehydration corners" in refugee camps in West Timor;
- delivered medicines and other supplies to medical facilities treating people wounded in an outbreak of violence in Tobelo, North Maluku;
- evacuated 6 wounded civilians from Tiley (West Morotai) to the Posi Posi health centre on Rau island;
- supplied equipment for the blood transfusion service in Ambon;



- in West Timor, distributed water in 6 refugee camps, completed the installation of 50 latrines and 3 large water tanks, and drilled 5 additional wells;



- provided the PMI with financial, material and technical support for its programmes for the wounded in situations of violence;
- supported the PMI in providing training for 120 volunteers in Aceh;
- organized a "train-the-trainers" course for 25 dissemination officers from PMI branches;



- organized workshops on humanitarian law for 109 officers of the armed forces, and gave courses in humanitarian law to 55 military legal officers and law instructors;
- conducted seminars on human rights and humanitarian law for 51 police officers;
- gave a presentation to around 50 NGO volunteers on the protection of humanitarian workers in situations of conflict in Aceh;
- held follow-up seminars on humanitarian law for a total of 63 law lecturers.

MANILA

Regional delegation

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

Volatile situation in the Philippines

A number of political and economic problems beset the Philippines during the year, among them a devalued peso, the mounting cost of fuel and other items, and threats to security by armed insurgents and criminal groups. The corruption proceedings against President Estrada undermined public confidence in his ability to lead the country.

The prospect of peace talks between the Philippine government and the MILF,* which were scheduled for May and expected to be completed by June, faded away as armed clashes escalated in Western Mindanao during the first months of the year, and tension increased following the spate of kidnappings carried out by the ASG.* In July the Philippine Armed Forces took the stronghold of the MILF in Mindanao, and by the end of September had captured over 40 of its encampments. Both sides suffered heavy casualties in the fighting, which also claimed many civilian lives and generated large-scale population movements.

The ICRC's office in Davao worked closely with the Philippine National Red Cross to assist some 13,000 families displaced by the fighting, supplying them with food and material aid, building latrines, rehabilitating water-supply systems and monitoring health conditions in some of the evacuation centres.

Taking advantage of the government's preoccupation with the MILF in Mindanao, the communist New People's Army and breakaway groups continued their struggle, stepping up small-scale attacks on police and military targets in Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao.

Following the series of kidnappings perpetrated by the ASG, in September President Estrada declared "all-out war" on the guerrilla group and a military campaign was launched against its members on the island of Jolo. Air attacks and heavy mortar shelling in rebel territory resulted in an unknown number of civilian casualties, and hundreds of civilians were displaced. Together with the Philippine Red Cross, the ICRC assisted about 1,000 families who took refuge in evacuation centres and public buildings on the island, distributing emergency shelter materials, digging garbage disposal pits and carrying out disinfection campaigns to ward off disease.

The ICRC also made regular visits throughout the country to persons detained for insurgency offences, assessing conditions of detention and registering new detainees in accordance with its standard procedures.

Red Cross response to the Fiji crisis

In Fiji, the Prime Minister and his government were taken hostage on 19 May in an attempted *coup* precipitated by tensions between indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians. Ten days later the Fiji Military Forces declared martial law and abrogated the 1997 Constitution. Members of the government were held hostage for 59 days before an agreement was reached between *coup* leader George Speight and the army for their release. Speight was subsequently arrested; an interim government was installed and a review was initiated in preparation for the drafting of a new constitution. However, the legality of the interim government was challenged by an Indo-Fijian in a case brought before the High Court; the Court ruled in favour of the plaintiff, but the government lodged an appeal. At the end of the year, the final decision remained pending and the constitutional review process had been suspended.

Following the release of the hostages in July most of them were handed over to the Fiji Red Cross Society for safe return to their families. Throughout their ordeal, the Fiji Red Cross provided the hostages with food and medical care and helped their families keep in touch with them. Both the ICRC and the International Federation gave support to the Fiji Red Cross through their offices in Suva. After the military crackdown on the *coup* leaders and supporters, the ICRC visited places of detention and registered detainees, and delivered Red Cross messages to their families.

* MILF: Moro Islamic Liberation Front

* ASG: Abu Sayyaf Group

In November, a mutiny took place at the Fiji military headquarters in Suva, involving a number of individuals who had also been implicated in the May events. The ICRC was given access to only some of the people arrested in connection with this incident. By the end of the year, negotiations for full access to the detainees remained deadlocked.

The delegation met the Ministers of Justice, Foreign Affairs and Home Affairs during the year to encourage ratification of the Additional Protocols. They also met government representatives and members of the armed forces to discuss the protection of detainees during periods of internal strife.

Widespread unrest in the Solomon Islands

In the Solomon Islands, indigenous Gwales and islanders of Malatian origin clashed during fighting which began in 1997 when 20,000 Malaitians were driven out of Guadalcanal. Two armed groups emerged – the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army (GRA), which later became the Isatabu Freedom Movement, and the Malatia Eagles Force (MEF) – each controlling one part of the island. There was renewed fighting in February 2000, and in June the MEF took over Parliament and compelled the Prime Minister to step down. The government subsequently collapsed, businesses closed, and the economy ground to a halt. Parts of the country became almost inaccessible and thousands were driven from their homes. In July, a new government was installed. Negotiations began between the warring factions and the government, and a peace agreement was brokered in Townsville, Australia, in October, although a splinter group of the MEF did not sign, feeling that its demands had not been met. Honiara was once again accessible, but at year's end the economy was still extremely fragile.

ICRC delegates remained in contact with all the groups involved in the conflict in order to gain access to civilians and evacuate them to safer areas. These contacts were also used to maintain a dialogue on the protection of civilians, the wounded and sick, and medical facilities. The ICRC, in cooperation with the Solomon Islands Red Cross, crossed front lines to deliver vital medical supplies and help ensure that patients with special medical needs received proper care. By August, some 2,400 displaced people had been driven from their homes by fighting in several parts of Guadalcanal province. The ICRC provided them with urgently needed shelter materials, food and other necessities. As part of the relief effort, ICRC delegates worked with staff and volunteers from the National Society to bring aid to displaced persons in remote settlements, chartering a vessel to transport staff and relief supplies across the notoriously rough seas off the southern coast of the island of Guadalcanal. These activities were ongoing at the end of the year. To ensure the maintenance of surgical services, the ICRC recruited an expatriate surgeon on the spot to cover needs throughout the country in the second half of the year.

Tensions persist in Papua New Guinea

In Papua New Guinea the peace process advanced, albeit with various setbacks, and was monitored by an unarmed UN contingent. Tension remained high along the border with Western Papua (Irian Jaya). Violence was rife in the cities, and tribal clashes continued in the highlands. The ICRC continued to carry out a variety of activities to raise awareness and spread knowledge of humanitarian law among armed and security forces.

Australia and New Zealand: advocates for humanitarian law

Through its office in Sydney, the ICRC continued to foster cooperation with the authorities, the Defence Forces and the National Societies of Australia and New Zealand, particularly in the areas of communication, dissemination and implementation of humanitarian law. In Australia, it co-organized with the Australian Red Cross a public conference on humanitarian law and human rights law, and a seminar on the protection of women in armed conflict. In both Australia and New Zealand it took part in various training exercises carried out by the respective Defence Forces.

⁷ See the ICRC's 1999 *Annual Report*, p. 201.

IN 2000 THE ICRC:



- in the Philippines, visited 273 persons detained for insurgency offences in 75 places of detention, distributed basic material assistance, and financed 235 family visits to detainees through the Philippine National Red Cross;

- in Fiji, visited 88 persons detained in connection with the political crisis and enabled them to stay in touch with relatives through Red Cross messages;
- in the Solomon Islands, made daily visits at the height of the crisis to protect and assist all 100 inmates at the Honiara prison, and continued to do so until they were released or transferred to safer areas;



- in cooperation with the Philippine Red Cross, supplied food and material aid to over 13,600 families displaced by the fighting in Mindanao;

- supported the National Society in Fiji in its work to assist persons held hostage during the *coup* attempt in early 2000, providing food and other necessities and enabling hostages to maintain contact with their families through Red Cross messages;

- together with the Solomon Islands Red Cross, evacuated people from areas of violence, provided them with rice and essential items such as soap, blankets tarpaulins, cooking utensils and fishing equipment, delivered urgently needed medicines across front lines to outlying clinics, and transported patients in need of specialized care across the lines to the central hospital in Honiara;



- In Mindanao, helped finance the treatment of more than 200 indigent war-wounded civilians;
- in the Solomon Islands,

ensured maintenance of surgical services in the second half of the year by recruiting an expatriate surgeon on the spot;



- provided financial, technical and material support for a Philippine Red Cross village-level dissemination programme

under which presentations were given to village (*barangay*) leaders, local officials and other leading figures;

- with the Philippine Red Cross and the International Federation, jointly sponsored a seminar on the Seville Agreement for all National Societies supporting or envisaging support for programmes in the country;



- with the Fijian Ministry of Justice, organized a seminar on the Additional Protocols for Ministry officials and members of

security forces;

- promoted ratification of humanitarian treaties by Pacific States;

- took part in the US Pacific Command conference on International Military Operations and Law, which brought together over 150 senior officers and academics from 30 countries throughout the Asia and Pacific region;

- in Vanuatu, held an instructors' course on human rights and humanitarian law for 60 police officers;

- provided material support and training to help the University of Papua New Guinea include humanitarian law in its curriculum, and presented the first mini-course in humanitarian law at the University of the South Pacific School of Law;

- with the Australian Red Cross, organized a public presentation on humanitarian and human rights law;

- took part in a training exercise with the New Zealand Defence Force in connection with its deployment in East Timor;

- in the Philippines, organized 3 workshops for 133 military officers and 7 workshops for 561 police officers.