

An exceptional year

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AN EXCEPTIONAL YEAR

While 1998 was the year of putting the ICRC's Avenir project into practice, 1999 was that of getting things done. New challenges had to be faced in the field just as new management systems were being introduced.

This was the year of Kosovo and East Timor, two small territories where major political change occurred at the price of suffering on a truly inhuman scale. In both cases access to the victims was momentarily denied, in violation of the rules of international humanitarian law.

By and large, 1999 was an exceptional year for the ICRC. It was exceptional because of the number and extent of operations carried out and the expenditure involved, but also because of the generosity of donors, whose contributions covered the cost of operations in full.

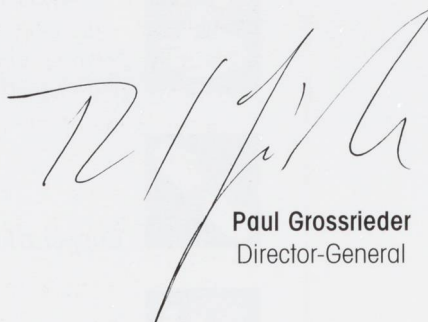
A turning point was reached in the ICRC's cooperation with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The Integrated Appeal, launched with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in response to the crisis in the Balkans, was a milestone in the international history of the Movement. To be sure, major technical difficulties had to be overcome, but the policy decision to cooperate in order to give substance to the humanitarian force represented by the Red Cross and Red Crescent was the right one.

Kosovo was also the scene of intensive cooperation between the ICRC and the participating National Societies, which ran a record number of delegated and bilateral projects—21 in all.

One of the main conclusions of the Avenir project was that the way to strengthen the Movement as a whole was by strengthening its components. The large-scale operational deployments of 1999 did not interfere with this process.

Implementation of the analytical accounting system continued, the fund-raising strategy was reviewed, and the new comprehensive approach to assistance (medical and material) was put into practice. The project to integrate management of information systems met with some difficulties, however, as the various units had become used to working in a compartmentalized way. Apart from some modest achievements in the Department of Operations, the "decentralization" project made no progress. In the area of human resources, on the other hand, a new, more flexible and more adaptable remuneration system was developed. The personnel policy in general remains in many respects an open question, as can be seen from the growing involvement of our local staff and the internationalization of staff in general.

Thanks to the new management tools already in use and those now being developed, the ICRC will be able to function in a more professional manner and thus maintain a predominant position among independent humanitarian organizations.



Paul Grossrieder
Director-General

SYMBOLS

The following symbols are used in the coloured boxes giving facts and figures about ICRC activities in 1999



Activities to protect people deprived of their freedom in connection with a conflict or situation of violence



Protection of the civilian population



Restoration of family links



Relief activities



Medical activities



Prosthetic/orthotic activities



Water and habitat programmes



Cooperation with National Societies



Dissemination and information



Mine-awareness programmes

THE ICRC AROUND THE WORLD IN 1999

