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B. Heger/ICRC

To ensure security and access to beneficiaries, it is vital that the army and armed groups understand humanitarian law and the role of the Red Cross (Colombia).



C. Rios/ICRC

In the absence of roads, beneficiaries can only be reached via rivers (Colombia).



B. Heger/ICRC

Children make up a large proportion of internally displaced beneficiaries (Colombia).

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Delegations

- Brazil
- Colombia
- Mexico
- Peru

Regional delegations

- Buenos Aires
- Caracas
- Guatemala City



+ ICRC regional delegation
 + ICRC delegation

Expenditure (in Sfr)

Protection	7,528,800	
Assistance	17,497,838	
Preventive Action	11,306,582	
Cooperation with National Societies	3,248,684	
General	1,651,595	
Overheads	2,929,542	

44,163,042

In Latin America, economic considerations rather than ideological differences continued to be a crucial factor in the evolution of the few ongoing conflicts and in situations of internal disturbances and tension. In Colombia, the struggle for control of land and economic resources dominated the continent's only remaining large-scale conflict, while in several other countries social unrest and internal strife threatened to escalate in the near future.

Thanks to efforts made in the past to consolidate democratic institutions and political and social rights, all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean achieved a degree of political stability in 2001. Nevertheless, the economic and social gap between rich and poor continued to widen and, according to the World Bank, 35% of the region's inhabitants – some 177 million people – were living in poverty. Closely associated with poverty was crime, which increasingly plagued capital cities and other large urban centres to which many rural citizens migrated.



In December, Argentina's severe and long-standing economic crisis and its exponential indebtedness led to a major financial collapse and to the country's defaulting on its foreign debt, raising concerns about a possible spill-over into other Latin American countries. The crisis culminated towards the end of the year with the resignation of two consecutive Presidents, the abandonment of parity of the peso with the US dollar, and social protests in many cities, which left some 30 people dead.

Elsewhere, economic deprivation contributed to an increased politicization of ethnic differences, as indigenous people tended to make up a large proportion of the most disadvantaged groups. This held true whether they formed a majority of the population, as in Bolivia and Guatemala, a large minority, as in the Chiapas region of Mexico and in Ecuador, or a smaller minority, as in Colombia, Chile and Brazil. In several of these countries clashes occurred between politically organized indigenous groups and law-enforcement bodies.

The full spectrum of ICRC activities, from promoting international humanitarian law (IHL) to protecting and assisting victims of armed conflict, internal strife and tension, thus remained highly relevant in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Promotion of humanitarian law

The political conditions prevailing in Latin America during the previous decade were conducive to the ICRC's fulfilment of its mandate of preventive action and promotion of IHL. The ICRC maintained constructive relations with the political authorities, who readily turned to it for advice and technical assistance in the process of implementing IHL and adapting their national legislation accordingly. The organization's efforts in this domain yielded tangible results, as a growing number of countries acceded to and/or ratified humanitarian treaties and set up national committees for the implementation of IHL. Similarly, the armed, police and security forces, whose image had in some cases been tarnished by human rights abuses in the past, were keen to incorporate IHL and human rights standards into their training. A fruitful dialogue was established with the Peruvian armed forces, and prospects improved for cooperation with the Mexican armed forces. In October, the Pan-American seminar attended by the highest-ranking officers in charge of IHL training revealed a unanimous willingness to continue efforts to make IHL a permanent feature of military training programmes, procedures and manuals. The experimental programme developed by the Brasilia delegation to train police forces in aspects of human rights law pertinent to policing and in basic humanitarian principles, which was already under way in Brazil, was being adopted by other countries in the region, such as Venezuela, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru.

The ICRC's regional communication support centre in Buenos Aires ensured a coordinated approach to communication and promotion of IHL in the Latin American region. Its main target groups included decision-makers, the media and civil society. The centre also coordinated the regional implementation of specific programmes, such as the "Exploring Humanitarian Law" project designed to familiarize young people of secondary school age with the basic rules of IHL.

Cooperation with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

The ICRC maintained generally good working relations with the National Societies of the region in an effort to enhance their capacity to assist vulnerable groups. It cooperated closely with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies so as to boost synergy between the efforts of the two organizations to support the activities of National Societies.

Operational priorities

In addition to its IHL dissemination and cooperation programmes regionwide, the ICRC pursued operational objectives specific to the needs of the various countries.

In Colombia, the ICRC focused on conflict-related activities, emphasizing protection of and assistance to civilians, in particular internally displaced people (IDPs). In cooperation with the Colombian Red Cross, various components of the Movement and the relevant government agencies, the ICRC was able to meet most of the needs of recently displaced people in 2001. It also sought to enlist the support of other organizations in efforts to assist IDPs beyond the emergency phase, a cause for major concern as the needs of the long-term displaced in urban environments called for a decisively areas-oriented approach and were not yet being sufficiently addressed.

The ICRC continued to ensure access to basic health care for certain categories of victims in Colombia, including IDPs, residents of conflict areas and detainees. It also continued its visits to detainees throughout the country in order to monitor their conditions of detention. The ICRC remained the only humanitarian organization in Colombia that maintained contact with the leadership of all parties to the conflict, allowing it not only to ensure the security of its humanitarian operations on the ground, but also to promote respect for the lives and property of civilians, in accordance with the provisions of IHL. Regrettably, owing to the particular nature

of the long-running Colombian conflict, appalling violations of IHL continued to occur and, in retrospect, the ICRC's unremitting efforts with all armed groups in this regard should be considered a factor that helped prevent further deterioration.

In Peru, the ICRC worked with the authorities concerned to ensure proper treatment of detainees in terms of health care, maintenance of family links and improvement of general living conditions. The ICRC also addressed the lingering consequences of the armed conflict, such as the plight of the population in areas where insurgent groups were still active, and, more particularly, the issue of persons unaccounted for. Following the departure of former President Fujimori there was a considerable improvement in working relations with the new authorities, under both the interim administration and the ensuing elected government. This translated among other things into substantial headway being made in the integration of IHL into the training programmes and procedures of the armed forces and the development of courses for the police on human rights standards relevant to their work.

In 2001, the ICRC's regional delegation for Mexico, Central America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean was established in Mexico City as a result of the merging of the regional delegation previously based in Guatemala with the operational delegation for Mexico. The new regional delegation in Mexico City paid special attention to countries where disturbances or tensions already existed or were looming on the horizon. In Haiti, the ICRC worked closely with the authorities with a view to their assuming full responsibility for meeting the basic needs of detainees under their jurisdiction. Although consolidation of the peace process in Guatemala remained slow, the ICRC maintained contact with the authorities and civil society, especially indigenous organizations in rural areas. In the Mexican state of Chiapas, in the absence of a negotiated political settlement, the ICRC continued to provide assistance, in cooperation with the National Society, for the displaced and vulnerable communities, putting the emphasis on a gradual shift from emergency assistance to programmes designed to ensure self-sustainability. In Panama's Darién region bordering Colombia, working in cooperation with the National Society and UNHCR, the ICRC concentrated on providing Colombian refugees with material and medical assistance and offering them the opportunity to re-establish family links.


The regional delegations in Buenos Aires and Caracas monitored the situation in the countries they covered, maintained their efforts to promote IHL and maintained contacts with the relevant authorities and political actors in areas where the potential for internal disturbances was greatest. As regards the areas of Venezuela and Ecuador bordering Colombia, implementation of "*Plan Colombia*" did not result in a massive spill-over of refugees as had been feared a year earlier. Further south, the ICRC monitored the living conditions of security detainees in Bolivia, Paraguay and Chile. The ICRC police-training model developed by the Brasilia delegation was implemented in both Venezuela and Ecuador. The Brasilia delegation continued to train the military police forces in Brazil, while at the same time consolidating a pool of qualified instructors to support the training programme for the police in other Latin American countries.

BRAZIL

Personnel :
1 expatriate
8 locally hired staff

The ICRC delegation in Brazil serves as a resource and support centre for dissemination programmes targeting police forces in Brazil and other Latin American countries. It provides support and guidance for ICRC delegations and for police and security forces throughout the region by organizing training activities that promote compliance with human rights instruments relevant to police work and respect for the basic principles of international humanitarian law (IHL).



 ICRC delegation

CONTEXT

Brazil's economic growth was significantly slowed by three factors in 2001 : an energy crisis leading to a 20 % cut in electricity consumption nationwide; an economic downturn in Argentina, Brazil's main commercial partner; and the negative effects on the world economy of the 11 September attacks in the United States. As a result the growth rate, expected to be 4.5 %, shrank to 2.5 %.

The high crime rate persisted, and prison uprisings were a regular occurrence. Riots of unprecedented proportions erupted simultaneously in 29 prisons across the state of São Paulo in February. However, there were no longer any detainees within the ICRC's purview in the country.

In 2001 the ICRC achieved its main objectives relating to the dissemination of relevant human rights law within Brazilian police ranks. Meanwhile, the delegation continued to support dissemination programmes targeting police forces across Latin America.

Expenditure (in Sfr)



With the goal of incorporating IHL into relevant university programmes, the ICRC cooperated with Brazilian universities to hold a first course for 15 professors representing 11 universities in the second quarter of the year.

The ICRC made some headway in achieving the implementation of IHL and its incorporation into national legislation, including the completion of a study on the compatibility of national law and Brazil's obligations as a party to various IHL treaties. This report, conducted by an external consultant at the ICRC's request, was submitted to the Brazilian authorities concerned.

ICRC ACTION

AUTHORITIES

Although Brazil is party to a number of IHL treaties, its national legislation is not entirely in line with its obligations. The ICRC therefore encouraged the establishment of an interministerial committee on implementation of IHL. To achieve that objective, the ICRC met with law professors and representatives of government ministries, especially the Ministry of Justice and Foreign Affairs. The latter expressed the wish that the Brazilian Red Cross be included in the committee. Following the election of a new president and Central Committee of the National Society in November, progress was anticipated in this area.

In the meantime, a commission of jurists was created in the Ministry of Justice with the aim of determining the national measures that Brazil had to take to bring its internal system into line with IHL, once the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court had been ratified. The six members of the commission sought the ICRC's advice, and the ICRC was to take part in the commission as an observer when it began functioning in 2002.

Late in the year, the President of the Republic sent the Rome Statute to Parliament for ratification.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The ICRC's goal with regard to the armed forces was to maintain contacts and cooperation with the commanders of all three forces with a view to encouraging inclusion of IHL in their training programmes. Personnel from the Air Force Academy and the Military Academy attended courses given by the ICRC.

The ICRC was also involved with the Brazilian Military Police, an important component of the Brazilian security system comprising some 450,000 members. The ICRC's goal was to ensure that military police personnel complied with human rights instruments relevant to their activities and with the basic principles of IHL. Additional teaching material geared to the military police was produced, and an evaluation of the teaching took place. Members of the pool of ICRC-trained Brazilian police officers continued to give instruction to police forces of various other Latin American countries on the principles of IHL and human rights. Besides Brazilian police officers, officers from Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Guatemala, Panama and Mexico received training and a refresher course so that they in turn could become human rights instructors for their respective police forces.

During the year the ICRC considered the lessons to be learned from an evaluation carried out by the University of São Paulo Centre for the Study of Violence on the dissemination project for the police. Since the inception of the project in 1998, police authorities had become much more eager to include human rights provisions applicable to policing in training programmes for their contingents. Towards the end of the year, the project received more requests for instruction than it could meet. There were plans for enlarging the instructor pool to include 35 instructors from throughout Latin America in 2002.

CIVIL SOCIETY**Academic circles**

A number of university law professors were selected by the ICRC for specialized training in humanitarian law. In 2001, a specialization course in IHL was given to some 15 professors of IHL from 11 universities in an effort to implement and enhance IHL training in universities throughout Brazil.

At the Brasilia University Centre, IHL was a mandatory course for students of international relations and the ICRC gave several presentations during the year. In addition, the ICRC prepared the IHL entry on the university's "International relations" Web page, which received some 12,000 visitors in 2001.

In the latter part of the year, the Catholic University of Brasilia organized a "Rights Week", during which the ICRC gave talks on IHL.

Media

An effort was made to raise public awareness of IHL and of the ICRC's role through media coverage. Late in the year, the ICRC received much attention from the Brazilian media in relation to its work in Afghanistan. In particular, the ICRC's video on mines in Afghanistan was seen on television by hundreds of thousands of viewers.

The ICRC also targeted the Brazilian written press as a means of reaching political, intellectual and economic leaders. Early in the year there was wide newspaper coverage of ICRC activities in Macedonia and Colombia. Every week the *ICRC News* was translated into Portuguese and distributed to academics, political leaders, the media, the armed forces and the police. The ICRC met with journalists at press conferences and with journalism students on various occasions.

NATIONAL SOCIETY

The Brazilian Red Cross elections of November brought in a new governing board, and the General Assembly of December was attended by all branches. These developments marked the end of a decade-long crisis within the National Society. A renewed commitment to enhancing cooperation between the National Society, the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies was envisaged so as to support the new governing structure.

COLOMBIA

Personnel :
50 expatriates
201 locally hired staff

In Colombia the ICRC works to secure greater respect for international humanitarian law (IHL) by all armed groups and authorities, with particular regard to the protection of non-combatants, and provides emergency relief for internally displaced people (IDPs) and other victims of the armed conflict. It also strives to strengthen its role as a neutral intermediary, runs medical programmes in affected areas, visits detainees and spreads knowledge of the humanitarian rules and principles among all bearers of weapons.

Expenditure (in Sfr)

Protection	4,567,945
Assistance	13,035,135
Preventive Action	3,279,860
Cooperation with National Societies	878,579
General	960,165
Overheads	1,733,933

24,455,616



⊕ ICRC delegation ⊕ ICRC sub-delegation ⊕ ICRC office ⊕ ICRC presence

CONTEXT

In 2001, the armed conflict in Colombia increased in both intensity and territorial scope, despite efforts to advance the peace process. The international community became increasingly involved in arranging negotiations between the government and the two major guerrilla groups, the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC)¹ and the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN).²

Although peace negotiations between the government and the FARC suffered several set-backs and were temporarily suspended at the end of 2000, dialogue

resumed in February 2001, resulting in the extension until October of the *Zona de Despeje*,³ an area about the size of Switzerland over which the government had granted the FARC exclusive control. The resumption of talks led to an agreement resulting in the release in June of 69 military, police and guerrilla personnel detained by both parties. Subsequently the FARC unilaterally released 304 military and police personnel. In October, following intense negotiations, the *Zona de Despeje* was again extended, this time until 20 January 2002.

¹ Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces
² National Liberation Army

³ Demilitarized zone



The peace process with the ELN was set back by difficulties relating to the establishment of a *Zona de Encuentro*.⁴ In April, the ELN withdrew from the talks, alleging that the government was unwilling to proceed with the establishment of the area. Colombian President Pastrana announced the suspension of the process in August. In response, towards the end of the year several meetings were held abroad between high-level representatives of the Colombian government and the ELN, and by December the government was officially calling for a resumption of talks.

Clashes between the warring factions continued and spread to areas which had been unaffected or little affected by the conflict in the past. The fighting took place mainly to gain control over territories of military or economic interest. The armed forces carried out a number of offensives and conducted several operations against guerrilla groups, and to a lesser extent against the paramilitary groups known as the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*.

Implementation by the government of the antidrug campaign "*Plan Colombia*" had started at the end of 2000 with the spraying of coca and poppy plantations, believed to be one of the main sources of financing for the FARC and the paramilitary. The operation was launched in the south of the country and extended progressively to other areas. The large-scale population displacements, both within Colombia and across the border into neighbouring countries, which had been feared had not materialized by the end of the year.

Colombia's armed conflict continued to take a heavy toll on civilians, with the rules of IHL being continually flouted. Violations included summary executions, abductions by armed groups, and attacks or threats against civilians. Medical personnel and wounded combatants also came under attack. Violence or fear of violence prompted tens of thousands of people to flee their villages. By the end of the year the ICRC had assisted over 114,000 IDPs, of whom over half were children under 18 and a quarter were women. On many occasions, the ICRC worked together with the Colombian Red Cross to meet priority needs through programmes focusing on but not limited to emergency needs.

ICRC ACTION

CIVILIANS

Serious violations of IHL in Colombia remained a constant concern. The ICRC maintained contact with all the parties to the conflict in an effort to ensure respect for humanitarian law. It collected allegations regarding disappearances, summary executions and other serious violations and passed on these reports to all the warring parties, reminding them of their obligations under Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol II. During 2001 it recorded 552 summary executions, 348 people reported missing after having been taken by armed groups, 39 civilians wounded, and 162 threats made against civilians.

The issue of missing persons and the return to their families of the remains of those who had been killed was regularly raised with the various parties. Although armed groups remained reluctant to return the bodies of people reported missing, in a few cases there was a response to these requests and bodies were handed over via the ICRC to the relatives of the deceased.

The ICRC was called in frequently by families, embassies and the hostage-taking groups themselves to serve as a neutral intermediary in the release of hostages.

It was often the only organization able to reach remote rural areas in order to address needs in terms of protection as well as assistance. People having received direct threats against their lives and wanting to relocate to safer areas were given bus tickets and temporary accommodation paid for by the ICRC. In 2001, a total of 1,562 people were helped in this way.

In addition, emergency food and other aid was given to 2,035 residents in these remote conflict-affected areas.

⁴ A geographical area which was supposed to serve a purpose similar to that of the *Zona de Despeje*.

Internally displaced people, returnees and resettled civilians

Throughout the year the ICRC carried out protection, assistance and rehabilitation activities for IDPs, who accounted for over 95% of beneficiaries, and for residents, returnees and people who had been resettled. It remained the main organization in Colombia providing emergency assistance for IDPs. Often working with local branches of the Colombian Red Cross, the ICRC was able to respond to humanitarian needs in most cases of large-scale population movements, which mainly occurred in rural areas, within the crucial first three months following displacement.

The ICRC stepped up its cooperation with the Social Solidarity Network (SSN), the body designated by the Colombian government to assist IDPs. At the end of April, the two organizations signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at increasing coordination between them at central and local levels. As a result, roles were clarified: the ICRC was to concentrate on covering emergency needs in the event of mass displacements, while the SSN was to focus on providing emergency assistance for IDPs who had moved to cities, the strengthening of community structures and rehabilitation. Under the terms of the memorandum, the ICRC continued to give technical support to the SSN's *Unidades de Atención y Orientación*⁵ and to the NGOs involved in providing part of this assistance. Implementation of the memorandum resulted in improved coordination, a higher quality of humanitarian assistance and better coverage of the beneficiaries' needs.

Whereas emergency assistance was intended to cover needs for up to three months, other programmes such as Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and agricultural and income-generating programmes were extended where necessary for up to 12 months.

In 2001, more than 21,000 people in 23 communities benefited from QIPs. Since mid-1999, these projects had proved to be an effective means of improving the socio-economic conditions of communities affected by the conflict and of enhancing community solidarity. They mainly comprised such projects as building schools and community centres, health centres and bridges, but also included some income-generating agricultural projects.

A further 2,128 people received assistance through agricultural and income-generating programmes, the latter being mainly small-scale pilot projects in cities.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Overcrowding, internal violence and poor medical conditions due to limited funding were major concerns in Colombia's prisons. The ICRC continued to monitor all places of detention in order to ascertain whether the conditions of detention and treatment complied with the provisions of humanitarian law. Occasionally, it acted as an intermediary between prison authorities and detainees in crisis situations. In 2001, the ICRC monitored the situation of approximately 4,000 detainees. Delegates carried out visits to 159 detention centres throughout the country, seeing 2,406 detainees individually. Of these, 1,189 were visited for the first time. The ICRC provided medical follow-up for over 1,000 detainees. In addition, it cooperated with the National Penitentiaries and Prisons Institute (INPEC) and the Foundation for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled in setting up a centre for the disabled in one of Colombia's major prisons. In cooperation with the University of Pereira Faculty of Medicine, the ICRC assisted INPEC with a community health project for early detection of breast cancer which involved 60% of the female prisoners in Colombia.

To maintain family links, the ICRC paid for bus tickets to allow detainees' family members to visit their relatives in detention, and facilitated the exchange of Red Cross messages. In total, 221 messages were distributed.

Where necessary, the ICRC also provided material assistance to improve conditions of detention.

Visits were carried out to centres of the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare to monitor the cases of 132 detained minors. In this regard, the ICRC focused on restoring family links by facilitating family visits.

⁵ Reception centres offering comprehensive assistance and guidance.

In 2001, the ICRC was repeatedly called upon to act as a neutral intermediary in release operations. In June, it took part in a three-week operation involving the FARC and the government, which was the major such operation of the year. Medical examinations were carried out and private interviews held with 373 detainees about to be freed. The ICRC delegates then accompanied them from the place of release to reception sites where relatives were awaiting them.

WOUNDED AND SICK

The ICRC continued urging that civilians should have access to medical services to which they were entitled by law. It also made strong appeals for respect for medical personnel and activities.

In remote conflict-affected areas, the ICRC's four mobile health units continued to provide primary health care. These units were run as delegated projects financed by the Canadian, German, Norwegian and Swedish Red Cross Societies, which seconded the necessary medical personnel to the ICRC. With emphasis on maternal and child health, the units provided medical and dental treatment, vaccinations for children and women of childbearing age, health education and water-supply and sanitation facilities. During 2001 a total of 14,649 medical and 3,571 dental consultations were given and 15,733 people were vaccinated. Despite security constraints, the ICRC increased the geographical coverage provided by its mobile units.

Furthermore, in line with a new flexible approach, the ICRC began accompanying Colombian Ministry of Health medical teams in an effort to increase and enhance medical coverage in regions lacking permanent medical personnel and infrastructure because of the conflict.

Following three deplorable incidents during which wounded combatants were executed while being evacuated, the ICRC was obliged to put its medical evacuations on hold. At the end of the year, the parties to the conflict had still not met the ICRC's security requirements for resumption of this activity.

AUTHORITIES

In an effort to enhance implementation of IHL and to encourage the adaptation of national legislation to its provisions, the ICRC maintained contact with relevant government bodies. It took part in workshops, gave presentations, developed modules and provided technical support when requested. It also supported parliamentary commissions working on the integration of international humanitarian treaties (the Ottawa Convention and the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in particular) into national legislation.

Contacts were strengthened with the bodies serving as a check on State institutions, in particular the *Defensoría del Pueblo*⁶ and the *Procuraduría*,⁷ with seminars being organized at central level. The ICRC also strengthened its contacts with the Colombian High Commission for Peace with a view to acting as neutral intermediary in humanitarian operations such as releases of civilians, military and police personnel and the return to families of the remains of those who had been killed.

⁶ Ombudsman's office

⁷ Attorney-General's office

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The ICRC met with all services of the armed forces and of the police, which often took part in military operations in Colombia, and leaders of the major armed factions in an effort to ensure respect for humanitarian law. The integration of humanitarian law into training programmes was addressed in seminars and training sessions with the armed and police forces, and dissemination of IHL among both guerrilla forces and paramilitary groups continued.

Armed and police forces

To encourage the incorporation of IHL into tactical manuals, the ICRC provided reference materials for military instruction. Except for the Superior School of War in Bogotá, all military academies in Colombia had included IHL in their curricula by the end of 2001. A further important step was the holding of seminars for instructors from six navy and army schools with a view to integrating IHL not only into the curricula but also into practical instruction.

Two high-ranking Colombian military officers took part in the Pan-American seminar on integration of IHL into military training, held in Ecuador.⁸

As was the case for the military, IHL was incorporated into tactical manuals and training programmes for the police.

Altogether, 205 dissemination and training sessions led by the ICRC were held for 9,276 armed forces and police instructors and officers at division, brigade and battalion level.

⁸ See *Caracas regional delegation*.

Other bearers of weapons

The issue of making a distinction between civilians and combatants continued to be the main challenge as far as armed opposition groups were concerned. The other major difficulty was to induce the guerrillas as well as the paramilitary to accept their obligation to respect IHL without politicizing its interpretation. Nevertheless, during the year the ICRC noted a more open attitude towards dissemination of IHL. In 129 sessions held for armed opposition groups, the ICRC reached a total of 2,734 people.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The ICRC continued to promote awareness of IHL and ICRC activities among leaders and opinion-makers, including representatives of the private sector, which was becoming increasingly important in the country's socio-economic and political spheres.

Much exposure was achieved through the media. Particular attention was paid to informing the international media of ICRC activities and the precarious humanitarian situation in Colombia. Through its Spanish-language Website the ICRC shared its activity reports, documents relating to the campaign for protection of civilians, statistics concerning assistance to victims of the conflict and overviews of the QIPs.

The ICRC met frequently with journalists from various cities in Colombia with a view to strengthening its relationship with the media and explaining the basic principles of IHL.

The ICRC's campaign for the protection of civilians, which was launched on 25 April, received substantial regional and national support from the media – radio, television and written press. In addition, a widely read Colombian magazine, *Semana*, published a comprehensive report on the ICRC's operational activities in Colombia. This was the first time the magazine had given such extensive coverage to a humanitarian organization.

As for academic circles, after a wide-ranging survey showed that very few universities had included IHL in their curricula, a seminar for some 25 faculty members from 11 universities was organized to boost this process. Furthermore, for the first time in Latin America, a university offered a specialized course on IHL. The course started in the second half of the year at the *Universidad Externado de Colombia*. The ICRC assisted in the teaching of the course, which continued into 2002.

In 2001, the ICRC was involved in 63 seminars attended by 3,796 students and professors who were being trained in IHL, including some 500 communication students.

NATIONAL SOCIETY

Cooperation with the Colombian Red Cross continued throughout the year. A milestone was reached in October with the signing of a framework agreement for coordination between the National Society and the ICRC. The agreement was intended to enhance the efficiency of Red Cross activities through coordination mechanisms and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the two organizations. It also provided for mechanisms to ensure coordination in security matters among all components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in Colombia.

The National Society received ICRC assistance in holding two security workshops for some 50 National Society staff and volunteers.

In three joint ICRC-National Society tracing seminars, a total of 68 National Society staff and volunteers received training designed to improve tracing services for people affected by the armed conflict.

The Colombian Red Cross and the ICRC held a specialized two-week course on IHL for 31 National Society dissemination officers. In addition, the National Society and the ICRC jointly organized four courses for the police on IHL and Red Cross principles and activities. Besides the ad hoc dissemination activities taking place daily all over Colombia, five sessions on IHL were organized jointly for the general public in conflict-affected and conflict-prone areas. Furthermore, four training workshops were held for 118 National Society youth trainers with the aim of enhancing knowledge of the Red Cross principles and IHL among children and young people.

MEXICO

Personnel :
6 expatriates
32 locally hired staff

In Mexico the ICRC focuses on providing assistance for internally displaced people and residents affected by the situation in Chiapas and protection for people who have been deprived of their freedom. It also promotes the permanent incorporation of international humanitarian law (IHL) into the teaching programmes of armed and security forces and relevant academic institutions. The ICRC's regional delegation for Central America and part of the Caribbean was moved from Guatemala City to Mexico City in July 2001. Earlier, in March, responsibility for ICRC activities in the English-speaking Caribbean countries had been transferred to the Caracas regional delegation.



⊕ ICRC delegation ⊕ ICRC sub-delegation

Expenditure (in Sfr)

Protection	420,070
Assistance	2,878,814
Preventive Action	929,113
Cooperation with National Societies	174,327
General	71,704
Overheads	251,746

4,725,774

CONTEXT

Normalization of the situation in the Mexican state of Chiapas remained one of the main issues tackled by the government of President Vicente Fox in 2001. By the end of March, government troops had withdrawn from seven military bases surrounding the *selva lacandoña* conflict zone and no clashes had been reported since the beginning of the year. In addition, by the end of March the government had released over 100 Zapatista detainees.

A further measure consisted in the adoption of a bill granting constitutional rights to indigenous groups, as agreed upon in 1996 by the *Comisión de Concordia y Paz* (COCOPA) and the Zapatistas. To promote their demands for the recognition of indigenous rights, in February and March commanders of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) had organized a march through 12 Mexican states to Mexico City culminating in a meeting with the Mexican Congress. However, the bill was not accepted by Congress in its original form. The EZLN responded by suspending indefinitely all dialogue with the government.

ICRC ACTION

CIVILIANS

The ICRC was the main international humanitarian organization working in the conflict-prone zones of Chiapas, and one of the few organizations providing substantial aid for thousands of displaced people. It was primarily concerned with displaced and resettled people and residents suffering the effects of the tension in the most severely affected areas of the state of Chiapas, namely Los Altos and Las Cañadas. In Los Altos, the ICRC provided assistance on a monthly basis for some 8,000 people (displaced, resettled and resident) living in 12 camps and eight communities. In Las Cañadas, the ICRC assisted some 1,500 people until the middle of the year.

In the first half of the year, groups of Zapatistas totalling 513 people peacefully and safely returned to their homes in Los Altos. During the second part of the year, a further four groups belonging to the Las Abejas community, totalling 1,258 people who had been displaced since 1997, returned at different times. The return of the Las Abejas community was facilitated by the ICRC and the Mexican Red Cross. Wide media coverage was given to these events.

The ICRC's assistance programme consisted in meeting nutritional needs, providing health services and ensuring satisfactory security conditions for the return of internally displaced people (IDPs) to their homes. It achieved notable success in its goal of helping the indigenous communities concerned to become more self-sufficient in agricultural production. In cooperation with the Mexican Red Cross, the ICRC was also particularly active in the area of health care. In 2001, it adjusted its health and nutritional services to tailor them more closely to the needs of the beneficiaries.

From January to July, the German and Spanish Red Cross Societies worked in Los Altos, distributing food, monitoring nutritional needs, building ovens, financing health posts, rehabilitating homes, planting trees and gardens, and assisting with water projects. The ICRC took over these activities after the teams from the two National Societies left.

Agricultural projects

Agricultural projects were geared towards ensuring self-sufficiency and decreasing dependence on food aid. They included helping some 7,500 farmers to plant vegetable gardens and to start and maintain chicken, rabbit and fish farms. To diversify food sources, trials were undertaken with potatoes, soybeans, cassava and amaranth, crops not previously grown in the area. Groups of farmers attended regular courses on soil fertility, vegetable gardening, grain conservation and food preparation, and took part in workshops on nutrition.

In Los Altos, the ICRC distributed 40,000 saplings supplied by the Ministry of the Environment for reforestation. Thanks partly to technical advice on planting methods provided by the ICRC, the saplings showed a 90% rate of survival.

Health

In cooperation with the Mexican Red Cross, the ICRC engaged in various medical activities ranging from consultations to hospital transfers. Six health centres received support on a monthly basis. These health centres served a population of some 25,000 and gave up to 6,800 consultations per month. Vaccination projects were an integral part of the health programme. As some isolated communities refused the services provided by the government, the ICRC maintained its cooperation with National Society medical teams running a mobile health unit programme.

In Los Altos and Las Cañadas, training courses were held for some 75 health workers in communities and camps. The courses covered water treatment, sanitation and general health maintenance; some of the sessions were given jointly by the ICRC and the Mexican Red Cross. Workshops were also organized on such subjects as pregnancy, malaria and waste disposal.

The ICRC was involved in various construction projects. It produced improved ovens for indigenous homes in order to reduce carbon monoxide pollution and wood consumption, and built two permanent medical posts with 24-hour service. Water pipelines and distribution systems were installed and/or rehabilitated, latrines were built, and metal sheeting and wooden planks were distributed to repair houses. A total of 13,404 people benefited from these projects.

In Polhó, the ICRC built a centre for displaced women in the area. The centre, regularly visited by over a hundred women, provided a place for training courses, meetings, prenatal consultations and even deliveries. Two courses on midwifery were given during the year, the second course being considerably enhanced by the experience gained from the first.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

In relation to the 8 August bomb explosions in Mexico City, the ICRC visited five detainees, allegedly members of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias del Pueblo*.

During the first part of the year, all but a handful of the approximately 100 EZLN detainees were released. Nevertheless, the ICRC continued to cover transport costs for some families to visit their relatives in prison in the Chiapas state capital of Tuxtla Gutiérrez every three months.

AUTHORITIES

The ICRC's relations with the authorities focused on two main issues: concerns relating to the displaced population in Chiapas, and implementation of IHL on the national level.

As regards Chiapas, the ICRC maintained regular contact with national and municipal authorities in an effort to ensure respect for and implementation of relevant principles of IHL, and to pursue ICRC assistance programmes.

Although the national interministerial committee on implementation of IHL still had not been established by the end of 2001, several positive developments did take place in this area. The Senate adopted or ratified a number of humanitarian treaties and put the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on its agenda.

In July, the ICRC took part in a seminar on the ICC, organized by the Ibero-American University and attended by members of the executive, legislative and judicial branches. It also provided input for discussions within the Commission for International Relations on ways of implementing IHL.

A headquarters agreement formalizing the ICRC's status in Mexico and regulating its relations with the Mexican State was signed on 20 July by the ICRC and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was scheduled to be submitted for approval to the legislative authorities during the first half of 2002.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Training in IHL throughout the Mexican armed forces was only at an embryonic stage, but several favourable developments were noted in 2001.

Armed forces

In 2001, in cooperation with the National Human Rights Commission, the ICRC gave 11 basic courses on IHL for a total of 388 officers and non-commissioned officers based in Chiapas state.

Mexican military officers regularly took part in regional IHL events organized or attended by the ICRC. These included the regional meeting of the Organization of American States (OAS) (Costa Rica, June), during which several resolutions on human rights were adopted; an international course on IHL in armed conflict (Guatemala, July), during which 22 naval officers were trained to become IHL instructors; and the annual regional meeting of officers in charge of introducing IHL into training programmes for the armed forces (Honduras, September), which brought together members of the military from nine countries and which was attended for the first time by representatives of the Mexican armed forces.

Mexico was also represented at the seminar held in Otavalo, Ecuador, on the incorporation of IHL into military training; this seminar was attended by military and security forces delegations from some 20 Latin American countries. On the basis of their shared experience, the participants adopted conclusions and recommendations aimed at facilitating the integration of IHL into instruction programmes for the armed forces at all levels. These conclusions and recommendations were subsequently forwarded to the respective ministries of defence.

At the national level, the ICRC was invited to attend the armed forces' National Congress in May and to give a presentation on IHL to the 650 participants, most of them Mexican army officers. In September, 15 Mexican legal officers attended an ICRC seminar on the ICC.

Police

Training for instructors in the human rights standards relevant to policing was organized in 2001 for members of both the *Procuraduría General de la República*¹ and the Federal Preventive Police (FPP).

For the *Procuraduría*, a first two-week training course comprising both theory and practical exercises was conducted in September and October for 22 participants. One third of the 2001 class qualified as human rights instructors and would be available to teach future *Procuraduría* classes.

The first course on human rights standards for the FPP had taken place in 2000; some graduates of that course were able to lead parts of the 2001 course, attended by 18 participants. This October course was similar to the *Procuraduría* course, except that it emphasized practical aspects of the rules and principles to be respected during arrest, detention, use of firearms, etc.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The ICRC and IHL in general were not widely known in Mexico. To raise awareness of key IHL issues and principles and of the ICRC and its mandate, the ICRC concentrated on publishing news items for the general public via the national and local media, while more focused and comprehensive topics were raised in university settings and in Chiapas state.

Media

Much of the ICRC's media exposure depended on radio. Throughout the year, six-minute interviews in Spanish were aired during the evening news programme, and informative spots were broadcast four times a day for Tzotzil-language listeners.

Universities

During 2001, the ICRC was involved with several universities in Mexico. For example, it continued to work with the National Association of Universities and Institutions of Advanced Studies (134 member universities) in order to offer professors training in IHL. At the Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), it gave various courses on IHL and the ICC during the year.

In November, a first 15-hour seminar on human rights and IHL organized by the ICRC brought together some 20 professors from several universities. In December, the ICRC took part in a colloquium on international law organized by the OAS and UNAM, giving a presentation on women and war to several hundred participants.

Chiapas

In Chiapas, the ICRC held two training seminars in IHL for an NGO – the Chiapas Commission of Human Rights – which involved a total of 50 participants.

The ICRC organized several puppet shows in the Tzeltal and Tzotzil indigenous languages for EZLN or Las Abejas communities. The shows illustrated Red Cross principles and gave public health information.

NATIONAL SOCIETY

The ICRC's support for the Mexican Red Cross focused on the following areas: providing medical care and health prevention training for inhabitants of Chiapas, strengthening dissemination programmes and assisting tracing activities.

The ICRC supported the National Society's dissemination activities by training a national network of dissemination workers and familiarizing them with the "Exploring Humanitarian Law" educational project designed for secondary school students. In August, the ICRC was asked to supervise and evaluate the National Society's dissemination workshop for members of its Federal District Youth Committee.

Furthermore, to strengthen the National Society's disaster preparedness, the ICRC provided funds to allow three National Society volunteers to attend the ICRC's "Health Emergencies in Large Populations" (HELP) course given in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in October.

Two events helped to consolidate cooperation between the National Society, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the ICRC. At a joint Federation-ICRC seminar held for the first time in June, 15 National Society officials outlined and explained their various activities. In September, the ICRC described its activities at the Red Cross convention for the state (*estado*) of Mexico which was attended by 250 National Society volunteers.

¹ Attorney-General's office

PERU

Personnel:
8 expatriates
36 locally hired staff

In Peru, the ICRC concentrates on alleviating the remaining consequences in humanitarian terms of the years of armed confrontation between the State and insurgent groups. In particular, it monitors the conditions of detention of people deprived of their freedom, seeks to ascertain the fate of persons unaccounted for and assists the population in areas still affected by insurgency. Furthermore, the ICRC supports the process of permanent integration of international humanitarian law (IHL) into the teaching programmes of armed and security forces and of academic institutions and works to raise awareness of humanitarian principles in other sectors of society.



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

CONTEXT

In 2001, Peru continued to cope with the consequences of the political events that had occurred during the previous year. In 2000, President Fujimori fled the country after the questionable activities supported by his adviser and strongman Vladimiro Montesinos had been disclosed. The deposed President stayed in Japan, while former intelligence chief Montesinos was returned from Venezuela to Peru where he was charged and detained.

Alejandro Toledo was sworn in as President in July 2001, replacing a transitional government that had been in power for eight months. His administration called for an overhaul of State institutions, including reform of the educational system, the army and the police. Decentralization was another priority.

A Truth Commission was set up in June to investigate abuses committed during the internal conflicts from 1980 to 2000, reflecting the transitional government's commitment to respect for human rights and national reconciliation.

Expenditure (in Sfr)

Protection	1,914,410
Assistance	1,010,550
Preventive Action	937,664
Cooperation with National Societies	148,983
General	170,236
Overheads	337,665

4,519,509

Throughout 2001 insurgency-related incidents continued to occur, although less regularly than in previous years. Clashes took place mainly in the Alto Huallaga and Río Ene/Apurímac regions, where the Shining Path opposition movement had an armed presence. The ICRC maintained staff in and around the affected areas to assess the situation and to distribute assistance to the most vulnerable groups among the population.

The ICRC continued to monitor the living conditions and the treatment of security detainees in prisons all over the country. It maintained a regular and intensive dialogue with the authorities concerned – the Ministry of Justice and the National Penitentiary Institute (INPE) – in order to ensure that material conditions of detention and the treatment of detainees were consistent with international humanitarian standards.

ICRC ACTION

CIVILIANS

The ICRC maintained a presence in the areas still affected by insurgency to promote respect for civilians by all bearers of weapons. In the Alto Huallaga and Río Ene/Apurímac areas, the ICRC carried out field visits to meet people bearing weapons, local authorities and civilians directly affected by the violence. Information on alleged violations of IHL was collected and submitted to the alleged perpetrators with a view to seeking corrective measures and preventing any recurrence.

Food and other supplies (blankets, clothing, kitchen sets) were distributed to up to 24,000 resident or displaced civilians in the affected communities.

Missing persons

The ICRC worked to keep the issue of missing persons on the agenda of the relevant authorities. Dialogue was strengthened with the *Defensoría del Pueblo*,¹ and relations were established with the recently created Truth Commission. The ICRC cross-checked the names on the Ombudsman's lists of forced disappearances against its own lists of missing persons, and helped supplement the information in the possession of the Ombudsman and the Truth Commission whenever confidentiality permitted. Despite these promising first steps, the process of ascertaining the fate of missing persons could only be expected to be long and arduous.

¹ Ombudsman's office

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

The ICRC continued its efforts to ensure that the conditions of detention and treatment of detainees in Peru complied with internationally recognized humanitarian standards.

In 2001, it carried out 158 visits to temporary places of detention, police stations, military bases and civilian prisons holding a total of 2,494 detainees. During its visits the ICRC distributed such items as hygiene kits, blankets, clothes and reading material, and supplied books and other reading material for prison libraries. In addition, food, clothing and blankets were given to released detainees and some relatives of security detainees. As well as delivering assistance, the ICRC gave training courses for penitentiary personnel covering such topics as administration, management of workshops and health-related issues (mainly preventive measures).

There were several positive developments in early 2001. The interim government issued a decree relaxing the regime for security detainees; this facilitated the organization of family visits. The authorities also took steps to give detainees easier access to legal counsel.

Maintaining family links

The ICRC worked to restore and maintain family contacts for security detainees whenever possible. It paid transport costs to allow 7,491 family members to visit relatives who were held in remote locations, and facilitated the transfer of some 300 security detainees to places of detention closer to their families' places of residence.

The ICRC also exchanged 81 Red Cross messages between detainees and their families and paid for detainees' telephone calls to relatives.

Health conditions

Health conditions in places of detention continued to give the ICRC cause for concern. Towards the end of the year, the ICRC submitted to the Ministry of Justice a comprehensive report and recommendations on health in Peruvian penitentiaries.

The ICRC medical team conducted regular visits to detention centres to discuss hygiene and sanitation issues with the authorities. The ICRC donated medical supplies and medicines to 11 prisons and to the Central Pharmacy of INPE. It regularly paid for outpatient and hospital care for 31 detainees; covered the cost of dental material and equipment, spectacles and crutches; and successfully completed a pest-control campaign in one of Lima's prisons.

WOUNDED AND SICK

The families of people wounded by mines or other weapons in areas formerly or still affected by armed clashes were often unable to pay for treatment and rehabilitation. In such cases the ICRC made representations on behalf of the victims to ensure that they received the necessary medical attention. The majority of those injured by mines were children.

In 2001, the ICRC met the medical expenses (consultations, hospital treatment or surgery) of 21 people, six of whom had been injured by mine/ordnance explosions.

AUTHORITIES**National implementation of international humanitarian law**

The ICRC encouraged the Peruvian government to establish an interministerial committee with the mandate to bring national legislation in line with IHL treaties and to adopt corresponding implementation measures. A National Committee for the Study and Application of IHL was officially established in June, with the ICRC attending its meetings as an observer.

Representatives of the Peruvian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Justice attended the conference organized jointly by the ICRC and the Organization of American States (OAS) in Costa Rica in March to promote national implementation of IHL among OAS member States.

The ICRC held meetings with representatives of the External Affairs Commission, Justice Commission and Human Rights Commission with a view to promoting IHL and related issues. In October, it invited an international expert on IHL and international human rights law for one week of debates and conferences with different authorities (Parliament, Academy of Diplomacy, Truth Commission).

The Supreme Council for Military Justice submitted a proposal for the amendment of the Military Penal Code to the ICRC for expert advice. In May, the ICRC met representatives of the Council to discuss its observations and recommendations on the IHL-related provisions of the draft proposal.

1980 Conventional Weapons Convention

In mid-August, the ICRC organized a conference focusing on the preparation of the second Review Conference of the 1980 Conventional Weapons Convention, which was held in Geneva in December. It was attended by 35 representatives of civil society, of political authorities and of military and police forces.

Similar issues were addressed at a conference in November, organized jointly by the UN Centre for Disarmament, Peace and Development and the ICRC and attended by members of the diplomatic community and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NGOs, the army and the police.

Mine awareness

The ICRC encouraged the authorities to establish a formal mine-clearance policy. It laid the groundwork by undertaking mine-awareness activities aimed at the police and the general public. In September, the ICRC took part in a national radio programme to draw attention to the problem of landmines and ICRC action in that regard.

During the year the ICRC attended five demonstrations of destruction of anti-personnel mine stockpiles, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the army.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The ICRC consolidated its contacts with both the armed forces and the police in order to promote the inclusion of humanitarian law and human rights provisions applicable to police work in their respective training programmes.

Armed forces

The ICRC, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Joint Command and the head of the Human Rights and Internal Affairs Division of the same Command worked together to set up a pool of instructors. Plans called for the creation of a Centre of Expertise in IHL for the armed forces.

Also in the framework of officer training, three military officers from the navy, army and air force (including the head of the Human Rights Division) attended the 87th course for military officers at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy. The course took place in March.

Working sessions involving the ICRC and the military took place throughout the year in order to prepare tactical and operational manuals and the IHL component of military training programmes. The ICRC manual *Fight it Right* was used as a reference document.

Finally, 23 dissemination sessions covering the basic principles of IHL and ICRC activities were held for military personnel. The sessions were attended by 4,719 soldiers and officers in Lima and in the provinces.

Police

As it did with the armed forces, the ICRC worked with the Peruvian National Police (PNP) to create a pool of qualified instructors, in this case instructors in human rights standards pertinent to police work. The ICRC dissemination model for human rights and humanitarian principles that was developed in Brazil was used, and practical exercises were also carried out. An agreement between the ICRC and the PNP was signed at the end of July, and at a first course held later in the year 17 police officers qualified as instructors.

Several other courses on IHL and human rights took place during 2001. Eight three-day refresher courses in IHL were organized, in Lima and in the field, by the ICRC and the Ombudsman's office for 332 police officers from different PNP units and regions. In March, the *Escuela Técnica Superior*² in Lima held two different courses for its instructors, during which the ICRC gave a presentation on IHL and its own activities. Another seminar for 30 police officers of the Criminal Investigation Department was organized in December, and the ICRC also took part in a four-month course at the Police Academy.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Media

The ICRC regularly provided the national and local press with items of humanitarian interest, and its activities featured regularly in the media. About 20 interviews on topics of humanitarian concern were carried by the press, radio and television; these were followed up by a conference attended by 200 university representatives.

Universities

The ICRC maintained close contacts with several Peruvian universities to promote the teaching of IHL. Its efforts in this regard led to the formal inclusion of an IHL course in the degree programme of the University of Lima Faculty of Law. In November, the San Marcos University, also located in Lima, officially announced the launch of an optional IHL course in its Law Faculty curriculum.

The ICRC gave 22 presentations and talks on IHL and related topics, such as new types of armed conflict, to 613 students at the Universities of Lima, San Marcos and Huánuco during the year. A conference was held for all 40 students of the Academy of Diplomacy on new types of conflict and the role of IHL in conflict situations.

² Technical college

NATIONAL SOCIETY

Because of delays connected with the election of its President, some of the activities of the Peruvian Red Cross were put on standby. Nevertheless, at the end of September, the National Society's new Director of Public Relations and Dissemination met ICRC representatives to discuss activities and programmes assisted and sponsored by the ICRC. Dissemination sessions finally took place later in the year: five sessions on the basic rules of IHL, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and ICRC activities were given for 181 volunteers from the Lima branch, and basic IHL sessions were held for 40 volunteers of the Pucallpa branch. To promote the National Society's activities, the ICRC financed six of its newsletters.

In the aftermath of the earthquake that struck the south of the country at the end of June, the ICRC offered the National Society immediate support in coordination with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The ICRC repaired the radio communication network around the Arequipa branch and other branches in the stricken area, provided logistic support and helped dispatch 11,500 kg of assistance to the Arequipa branch, where the relief operation was being coordinated.

Finally, in November, the ICRC assisted the National Society's Pucallpa branch by covering the cost of medicines for 66 people injured by acts of violence that occurred in connection with a regional strike.

BUENOS AIRES

Regional delegation

Countries covered :


Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay

Personnel :

3 expatriates
10 locally hired staff

The regional delegation in Buenos Aires centres its activities on spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law (IHL) in the various countries of the region, promoting its incorporation into their national legislation and into the teaching programmes of armed forces and academic institutions, and conducting dissemination activities for political authorities, schools and the media. The ICRC also works to strengthen the capacity of the region's National Societies and assists them in their humanitarian tasks.



 ICRC regional delegation

Expenditure (in Sfr)

Protection	46,349
Assistance	13,473
Preventive Action	1,385,887
Cooperation with National Societies	342,141
General	125,953
Overheads	125,548

2,039,350

CONTEXT

With the exception of Chile, the countries of the region have endured economic recession for about three years, resulting in occasional political and social unrest.

The grave social and economic crises gripping Argentina took a violent turn at the end of December. In some ten provinces supermarkets were looted, and rioting left at least 30 people dead and 150 injured. The popular protests were sparked by ongoing austerity measures in a country that had to spend a quarter of its funds to pay back loans of about 170 billion US dollars. The President resigned, to be succeeded in the space of two weeks by two other Presidents. By the

end of the year, the official one-to-one pegging of the Argentine peso to the US dollar had been abandoned to permit devaluation of the peso.

In Bolivia, economic difficulties led to mass demonstrations which brought the country close to paralysis. In the Chapare lowlands region, coca leaf growers increased their opposition to official eradication policies; several armed incidents took place during the year resulting in some deaths and injuries among both unionized farmers and security forces.

The ICRC's efforts over the past few years to promote accession to and ratification of humanitarian treaties in the region were bearing fruit. The existence of interministerial committees on the implementation of IHL in several countries was instrumental in the drafting of new laws and in ensuring that IHL remained on the political agenda. The ICRC held several special meetings with these committees in order to advise their members on specific issues such as landmines and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The regional delegation significantly increased its activities in the field of communication, targeting the general public, political leaders and the media.

The ICRC continued to enjoy the support of all the governments in the region, expressed notably in resolutions adopted by the Organization of American States (OAS) urging respect for and implementation of IHL.

ICRC ACTION

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

In Bolivia, Chile and Paraguay the ICRC visited detainees within its purview to ensure that their living conditions and treatment conformed to international standards.

In Paraguay, the delegation maintained contact with government ministries, legislative bodies and the police to ensure that IHL was disseminated among and understood by their personnel. A general agreement on prison visits was signed with the government in October. Delegates visited a total of 54 detainees, many of whom were held in connection with the attempted military *coup* of May 2000. Besides monitoring their conditions of detention and treatment, the ICRC provided them with specific medication as needed.

In Bolivia, delegates visited 20 detainees, some of whom were given medical check-ups.

The ICRC also monitored developments in three Chilean detention centres, where 43 security detainees were visited.

AUTHORITIES

The countries in the region demonstrated increasing interest in and respect for IHL implementation. They were well advanced in terms of participation in IHL treaties and had all set up interministerial committees for national implementation. The ICRC continued to encourage adherence to all IHL instruments and adoption of national legislative and administrative measures, and offered advice in this respect. It also worked to raise the authorities' awareness of humanitarian issues and activities.

During the year the ICRC was involved in many regional gatherings that aimed at promoting understanding and application of IHL. For example, at the Conference on the National Implementation of IHL and Related Inter-American Conventions, organized jointly by the ICRC and the OAS in Costa Rica in March, four of the five countries of the region officially reported on the status of implementation in their respective national contexts. Further, the regional seminar on the ICC, hosted by Argentina in June and attended by representatives of government, civil society and academics from 23 countries, assessed the ratification process across the continent of the Rome Statute of the ICC. The ICRC gave presentations at the seminar. In August a regional seminar co-sponsored by the ICRC and the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs brought together 140 participants from interministerial committees, representatives of State parliaments, the judiciary, academic and diplomatic circles and the military to discuss IHL issues, including the use of weapons and international criminal justice. In October, the ICRC took part in a Latin American interparliamentarian meeting held in Buenos Aires to promote the Rome Statute.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The next step in the ICRC's endeavour to have IHL incorporated into armed forces training programmes was to promote and consolidate the teaching of IHL by the armed forces themselves, as this was ultimately their responsibility. In 2001 various dissemination programmes took place on a regional basis. Early in the year the *Estado Mayor* programme of the Naval War College in Buenos Aires involved 60 participants, including officers from other countries in the region. A mid-year international conference on standards of conduct in military operations took place in Chile; 16 countries, along with the ICRC, were represented. Regular instruction took place at Argentina's Joint Peacekeeping Operations Training Centre (CAECOPAZ), with the participation of members of the region's armed forces. The ICRC also took part in the "Cabañas 2001" military manoeuvres for the region's armed forces later in the year. At the Naval War College in Buenos Aires, the ICRC supplied the IHL learning component of a regional "war game". With ICRC support, officers from all parts of the region attended courses at the San Remo International Institute of Humanitarian Law in Italy, and in Toronto, Canada.

All five countries covered by the delegation sent representatives to the Pan-American Seminar on IHL for the armed forces in Otavalo, Ecuador.¹

In Argentina, numerous presentations on ICRC activities and selected IHL topics were given to army officers, including those from the Superior School of War. The ICRC also contributed to a basic course for 23 officers of the three armed forces and the coastguard.

In Bolivia, basic IHL courses were held for members of the navy, the Command School and *Estado Mayor*, the National Army School and the Sergeants' Military School.

In Paraguay, 30 officers of the three armed forces attended a basic instructors' course in IHL. In 2001 Paraguay established an office of human rights and IHL, which liaises with the ICRC.

In Uruguay, basic IHL training was provided for 40 military cadets and civilian employees of government institutions. The ICRC took part in the instruction.

Although the ICRC was directly involved in many training programmes, responsibility for these courses was increasingly assumed by the armed forces themselves. Training courses for instructors were held in Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Media

Recognizing that media coverage of ICRC activities and matters of concern to the ICRC was an important tool for disseminating humanitarian law, the ICRC maintained regular contact with journalists and editors during 2001. Interest in the ICRC and IHL issues increased considerably as a result of the Afghanistan crisis.

The ICRC implemented several regional projects during the year. The ICRC's Spanish-language Website, illustrated with photographs, provided regional and international news and information. From November, an on-line interactive course for journalists developed by the regional delegation in Buenos Aires could be accessed on the Internet. It covered the ICRC, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, IHL, and the role of journalists in conflict situations. The ICRC organized a contest for humanitarian journalism (whose deadline was the end of January 2002), and produced a promotional TV spot on IHL which was broadcast in the five countries.

¹ See *Caracas regional delegation*.

Academic circles

Academic circles were another target for dissemination activities. The number of participants doubled in the programme designed to keep professors throughout the region up to date on developments in IHL. In late September, the ICRC contributed to an international seminar on peace-keeping which was organized by the Argentine Council for International Relations and attended by university professors from Argentina, Spain and Switzerland and representatives of Argentine diplomatic and military circles. Further, in Argentine and Uruguayan university settings, the ICRC gave several presentations on its mandate and activities. At the University of Buenos Aires law school, two conferences were held on IHL and the ICRC's role in monitoring its implementation; 150 students attended.

Secondary schools

Chile's successful "Exploring humanitarian law" (EHL) programme in secondary schools explained the principles of IHL in situations of armed conflict and internal violence. The teaching programme, which comprised written texts and videos, was being developed for other Latin American countries, the next in line being Uruguay. It was supported by the Ministry of Education and the National Society and was administered by the ICRC. In November, in Santiago, a first national workshop was held for 25 teachers who were due to introduce EHL in 35 schools from March 2002.

NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The ICRC met frequently with National Society staff throughout the region, in cooperation with International Federation officials, with a view to strengthening the National Societies' organizational and operational capacity, internal training, dissemination projects and related humanitarian activities. The delegation consistently supported the National Societies' dissemination and communication departments, for example by providing assistance for the publication of their quarterly magazines and the development of their own Websites. There were positive developments in the area of communication, and moderate growth was noted in internal training.

In Argentina, the ICRC contributed to the national youth workshop for 80 volunteers from throughout the country, at which the basic rules of IHL were explored. In October, an extraordinary assembly of the Argentine Red Cross was convened in order to start work on statutory reforms. Furthermore, the ICRC was asked to help the National Society improve its response to the needs of victims of internal violence; ICRC preparedness and response workshops were planned for 2002.

In Bolivia, the ICRC offered the National Society financial support to allow it to provide basic assistance in the event of a conflict situation. In July, it held a training course for the dissemination and information departments of the Bolivian Red Cross.

In Chile, at the annual national training meeting for youth, attended by 230 volunteers, the ICRC gave an overview of the legal and institutional activities of the ICRC and the Movement. In June, it organized a training seminar on institutional doctrine for 75 relief workers of the Chilean Red Cross.

CARACAS

Regional delegation

Countries covered:

Venezuela, Ecuador, Guyana, Suriname, Belize and the 11 English-speaking Caribbean countries

Personnel:

1 expatriate
3 locally hired staff

Since July 2001, in addition to Venezuela, Ecuador, Guyana, Suriname, and Belize, the regional delegation in Caracas has covered the 11 English-speaking Caribbean countries. In all the countries covered, the ICRC focuses on spreading awareness of international humanitarian law (IHL) among the armed and security forces as well as civil society. It promotes ratification of the humanitarian treaties and the adoption of national implementation measures. The ICRC also contributes to strengthening the response capacity of National Red Cross Societies throughout the region; particular attention is paid to preparing for the humanitarian needs that might arise in the event of internal strife and tensions resulting from a spill-over of the conflict in Colombia.



ICRC regional delegation ICRC office

Expenditure (in Sfr)

Protection	48,678
Assistance	0
Preventive Action	611,540
Cooperation with National Societies	685,537
General	94,598
Overheads	79,671

1,520,024

CONTEXT

Venezuela's economic situation continued to give cause for concern during 2001. The population suffered the effects of high inflation, accompanied by considerable price hikes. The fall in oil prices was particularly detrimental to an economy heavily reliant on oil exports. The uneven distribution of wealth continued to deepen the divide between rich and poor, and unemployment was estimated at 13.5% at the end of the year. Urban crime rates continued to rise. In the border states with Colombia, growing insecurity led the local population to request a greater military presence for their protection.

Venezuela's political situation, which had remained calm for most of the year, deteriorated towards the end of 2001, when social unrest led to public demonstrations.

As in Venezuela, the economic situation in Ecuador was severe. Consumer prices soared by as much as 50%. As economic disparities grew wider, the discord between the government and the main coalition of indigenous groups, the *Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador* (CONAIE), intensified. The economic and social demands of this opposition movement, accompanied by rising tensions, challenged the government on several occasions.

The spill-over of the internal Colombian conflict remained a concern in border regions, but the numbers of Colombian refugees crossing into Ecuador were not as large as anticipated and remained within the low hundreds.

In the States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the general situation remained calm. An exception was Jamaica, where riots took place in July and November, resulting in several deaths. The Jamaican Red Cross provided humanitarian assistance for civilians directly affected by the unrest. Border disputes between Belize and Guatemala on the one hand and Guyana and Venezuela on the other continued to sour relations between those States, despite ongoing efforts to find a political solution.

The 11 September attacks in the United States further aggravated the economic situation throughout the region covered by the Caracas delegation – the CARICOM countries, where tourism remained a major source of revenue, being particularly hard hit.

To enhance general awareness and acceptance of the ICRC's mandate and of IHL, the regional delegation continued to give priority to the dissemination of humanitarian principles and programmes aimed at promoting IHL among government authorities, the armed and security forces and civil society.

ICRC ACTION

CIVILIANS

In Venezuela and Ecuador, the ICRC increased its cooperation with the two National Societies and coordination with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and UNHCR in order to prepare for a possible influx of Colombians fleeing the internal conflict in Colombia. With the adoption by the Venezuelan National Assembly of a new "Refugee Outline Law", Colombian refugees were guaranteed refugee rights and protection.

The ICRC carried out regular assessments in areas of Venezuela and Ecuador bordering Colombia. These showed that there were no major humanitarian needs, and that the number of Colombian refugees remained low, with only a few hundred seeking protection over the borders. In Ecuador, people in need were taken care of by UNHCR and the Church, assisted by the Ecuadorean Red Cross branch in Sucumbios, while Colombian refugees in Venezuela could count on similar support.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

In Ecuador, there were only four detainees within the ICRC's purview. They were all visited by the delegation and two received medical assistance. In Venezuela, the ICRC followed up the cases of 30 detainees who had been visited by the ICRC in the past. They had all been freed, so by the end of 2001 there were no longer any detainees of concern to the ICRC in Venezuela.

AUTHORITIES

The ICRC worked with government authorities in all of the countries of the region in an effort to have IHL incorporated into national legislation.

Ecuador

In March, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs delegated four representatives to attend the Conference on the National Implementation of IHL and Related Inter-American Conventions, organized by the ICRC and the Organization of American States (OAS) in San José, Costa Rica, with the support of the governments of Canada and Costa Rica. More than 100 participants, mostly senior government officials and legal experts, from 28 countries attended the event. The Conference's main objectives were to promote implementation and offer technical assistance in this respect, and to share information on recent developments, particularly regarding the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. In December, the Ecuadorean Congress ratified the Rome Statute.

CARICOM

The newest regional organization within CARICOM, the Association of Caribbean States, started promoting activities of a humanitarian nature. Progress was slow, however, in setting up national interministerial committees on IHL in the various CARICOM States.

Several events advocating full respect for IHL took place in the CARICOM region in 2001. In February, two workshops were held in Trinidad and Tobago, focusing on the Rome Statute and the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. By the end of the year the latter had not been ratified by any CARICOM State.

In May, Trinidad and Tobago became the last CARICOM State to accede to Protocols I and II additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

In August, St Vincent and the Grenadines ratified the 1997 Ottawa Convention on landmines, leaving Guyana and Suriname as the only CARICOM States not yet party to the treaty.

Finally, two States became party to the Rome Statute: Dominica in February and Antigua and Barbuda in June.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Throughout the region, after years of IHL dissemination, the ICRC focused on the incorporation of IHL and human rights law into the decision-making process, practical procedures and tactical manuals of defence and police forces. Instructors in both the armed and the police forces were trained by the ICRC to carry out dissemination activities within their respective services. By the end of 2001, IHL was included in the curricula of most military and police academies, and efforts were under way to incorporate it into practical training and military procedures.

Armed forces

Three regional IHL-related activities took place during the year: a multinational field exercise in Ecuador, involving 574 participants, observers and high-level representatives and focusing on the inclusion of IHL in tactical manuals; the Defence Force Course in Jamaica, also involving a field exercise; and the Pan-American Seminar on instruction in and incorporation of IHL, which took place in Otavalo, Ecuador, with participants from 20 countries including Canada and the USA.

The Otavalo seminar, organized by the ICRC with assistance from the Ecuadorean Red Cross, resulted in a set of conclusions and recommendations which the ICRC forwarded to the Ministries of Defence of the 18 participating countries in Latin America and to the security forces of Panama and Costa Rica. One of the key recommendations concerned the integration of IHL into military doctrine. Others concerned practical measures to foster the permanent incorporation of IHL into instruction programmes for the armed forces and, where appropriate, the security forces. Further recommendations related to the planning and decision-making processes at the strategic level as well as at the tactical and operational levels.

Venezuela

In Venezuela, four basic IHL courses for the armed forces plus the National Guard took place as planned. The participants were all senior officers: 13 from the army, 19 from the navy, 19 from the air force and 28 from the National Guard. In addition, the Venezuelan Red Cross and the ICRC held lectures on IHL at the Military Academy and the School of Military Aviation for 248 and 300 military personnel respectively.

Ecuador

In Ecuador, training activities with the armed forces were carried out as planned. They included basic training courses on IHL for senior officers, train-the-trainers courses, and special lectures for future generals and staff officers at the National War College.

Police and security forces

Venezuela

In Venezuela, the ICRC continued its train-the-trainers courses with a view to phasing out its dissemination activities and instead helping the police to include in their training programmes both IHL and international human rights standards that are pertinent to their work. Owing to the scarcity of training facilities, one of the four planned courses had to be postponed until early 2002. Once the courses have been completed, police personnel of all 23 Venezuelan states will have been trained and will be able to provide training in their turn. Initial results were encouraging: a deputy superintendent who had taken part in a train-the-trainers course organized over 20 human rights/IHL courses for more than 1,500 police officers. In four different police schools, former participants in the train-the-trainers course taught a total of 1,721 personnel.

In cooperation with the new national police coordinator, an assessment of the ICRC training programme for 2001 was completed and a plan of action was prepared for 2002, demonstrating the central authorities' firm intention to continue training activities.

Ecuador

In Ecuador, the cooperation agreement signed by the ICRC and the police forces was not implemented as scheduled. Because of social unrest in some parts of the country, police operations were stepped up and there was less availability for training. The number of train-the-trainers courses was therefore reduced to four, with a total of 69 future police instructors being trained jointly by the ICRC, Ecuadorean police instructors who had undergone training in the past and the Ecuadorean Red Cross. A separate course, based on the ICRC train-the-trainers model, was held for 40 officers of the national police staff college. A total of 4,000 police personnel took part during the year in first-aid courses sponsored by the ICRC and given by the Ecuadorean Red Cross and Red Cross-trained Ecuadorean police instructors.

CARICOM

Police officers from the CARICOM States attended two regional police courses. In Grenada in July, 17 police officers took part in a human rights course organized by the Regional Security System, a common defence structure using both military and police assets. In Jamaica in August, 13 officers from the CARICOM States attended the Third Course for Police Forces on Human Rights.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Schools and universities

In Venezuela, a premilitary programme to promote awareness of IHL and humanitarian principles among students aged 15 to 17 through their teachers was launched in 2000. The programme was a joint venture involving the Ministries of Education and Defence, the Venezuelan Red Cross and the ICRC. Mid-year, the National Society conducted an evaluation of the programme, finding that the training methods used were appropriate and effective and that the subject was well received by both teachers and students. On the basis of these encouraging results, the ICRC made plans to limit its own role and that of the National Society to providing technical support, while building the capacity of the Ministries of Defence and Education to run the programme independently in the future.

In Ecuador, preparatory work began with the Secretary General of the Law Faculty Association of the Ecuadorean Universities with the aim of including IHL teaching in the curricula of various law faculties in the country.

Indigenous communities

Both the ICRC and the Ecuadorean Red Cross maintained contact with the leaders of CONAIE – the main opposition movement in Ecuador – in an effort to promote knowledge of IHL and the ICRC's mandate, principles and activities. A planned training session for CONAIE leaders had to be postponed owing to a change in the presidency of the organization. Resumption of the sessions with the new presidency was planned for 2002.

NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The ICRC continued to support the National Societies' efforts to strengthen their operational capacity. The aim was to prepare them to respond to humanitarian needs arising from natural disasters, internal social unrest, or a possible spill-over of the Colombian conflict in border areas. Both the Venezuelan and Ecuadorean National Societies, with the cooperation of the ICRC and the International Federation, developed contingency plans for a possible influx of Colombian refugees.

Venezuela

The Venezuelan National Society initiated a modernization process, involving the revision of its statutes in order to streamline its management and consolidate its relationship with its 23 branches at both operational and administrative levels. With the support of the ICRC, it continued to carry out dissemination and training activities at its headquarters and in some provinces. The National Society organized a six-month-long postgraduate IHL course, during which the ICRC gave two presentations on the principles of IHL and ICRC activities to some 100 students, diplomats, government officials and military and police officers.

Ecuador

The Ecuadorean Red Cross had well-developed programmes in the areas of emergency preparedness and response, and of dissemination of IHL principles. It enjoyed a high profile and a positive image owing to its excellent relations with the media and an efficient communication policy. Several of its programmes were co-financed by the ICRC.

The National Society's response capacity was strengthened further in 2001. Its branch in Sucumbios province adjacent to Colombia was given special support to prepare for the possible arrival of Colombian refugees. While the branch's infrastructure was improved with the help of the Spanish Red Cross, the ICRC gave training sessions for volunteers in tracing, emergency assistance, health, first aid and security procedures.

The Ecuadorean National Society, having achieved autonomy in the field of dissemination, held several training sessions for military officers on IHL, human rights and the Red Cross Movement.

In an effort to further improve the services of the Ecuadorean Red Cross, a joint ICRC/International Federation/National Society meeting was held in Quito in December, resulting in the drafting of a common plan of action.

CARICOM

In the CARICOM region, the ICRC continued its support for National Societies, with particular emphasis on dissemination of IHL and disaster preparedness.

From 30 May to 2 June, the ICRC took part in the sixth Biennial Regional Meeting of the Caribbean National Societies, an event co-hosted by the International Federation and held in the Dominican Republic.

The ICRC maintained contact with several regional youth camps where volunteers were familiarized with the history of the Movement, the emblem, Red Cross activities and first aid; several of the activities were co-financed by the ICRC.

GUATEMALA CITY

Regional delegation

Countries covered:

Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama

Personnel:

6 expatriates
27 locally hired staff

The ICRC's regional delegation in Guatemala City, its mission in Haiti and its office in San José, Costa Rica, cover a total of nine countries in Central America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. They focus mainly on humanitarian diplomacy and the dissemination of international humanitarian law (IHL), although some operational activities continue in Haiti and Panama's Darién province. The ICRC moved the main office of its regional delegation from Guatemala City to Mexico City in July 2001. ICRC activities in the English-speaking Caribbean countries had been transferred to the Caracas regional delegation in March.



⊕ ICRC regional delegation ⊕ ICRC mission + ICRC office

Expenditure (in Sfr)

Protection	526,429
Assistance	559,866
Preventive Action	2,950,507
Cooperation with National Societies	1,008,247
General	196,376
Overheads	319,694

5,561,119

CONTEXT

Overall, the Central American countries continued to be affected by an economic downturn, with adverse consequences for their populations.

In Guatemala, the Historical Clarification Commission reported that the internal conflict had resulted in the deaths of 200,000 people, of whom 40,000 were victims of forced disappearances. This commission was set up by the government in 1994 in response to the demand of victims' relatives that the fate of the missing be ascertained and that justice be done. Its mandate was to provide answers and offer compensation to the families of

the missing. In December, financial reparation was pledged for 176 families in connection with the Dos Erres massacre of 1982.

The growing incidence of violence, whether political or criminal, was highlighted by 40 cases of lynching in early 2001. At the end of June, the Guatemalan government declared a national state of emergency for two months following the mass escape of more than 70 detainees from a high-security prison and violent street protests in response to a tax hike.

In Guatemala, the trial of the defendants charged with the 1998 killing of Bishop Juan José Gerardi began early in the year. It was hampered by the attempted killing of the judge and threats against witnesses. In June, four people were convicted of Bishop Gerardi's murder: three were sentenced to 30 years in prison and one to 20 years.

Neighbouring countries were also prey to violence. In the North Atlantic Region of Nicaragua, an armed group, the *Frente Unido Andres Castro* (FUAC), remained active, attacking several police and army posts in June and July. In Honduras, several skirmishes pitted police against demonstrators and striking peasants.

In Haiti, tensions between the ruling party and the opposition *Convergence* continued throughout the year despite repeated efforts by the Organization of American States (OAS) to bring the parties to a compromise. In July, a concerted attack took place on the Police Academy and police stations throughout the country, resulting in arrests, reprisals and accusations. On 17 December, commandos attacked the presidential palace in an apparent attempt to pull off a *coup d'état*. The attack was thwarted, but tension remained high during the following days with episodes of burning and looting in the capital and other parts of the country.

As Haiti's economic situation worsened, international assistance continued to be withheld, as it had been since the controversial legislative elections of May 2000.

ICRC ACTION

CIVILIANS

Nicaragua

Nicaragua continued to be plagued by the large number of unexploded landmines scattered in the countryside. Red Cross ambulances and first-aiders accompanied army demining teams, and the ICRC continued to provide Nicaraguan Red Cross medical personnel with financial support. The mine-awareness programme "*De Niño a Niño*", run by the National Society and supported by the ICRC, targeted children of school age. Thirty-three young people were trained under this programme to lead dissemination sessions in schools in the North Atlantic Region, where the army's mine-clearance activities were taking place.

In Managua, the prosthetic/orthotic centre, set up during the conflict in the 1980s, continued to operate with support from the ICRC Special Fund for the Disabled (SFD). Benefiting from the expertise provided by a SFD expatriate prosthetist, the centre manufactured 1,524 prostheses and orthotic appliances for amputees and paralysed patients in 2001.

In July, the SFD and the Ministry of Health agreed to establish a special foundation to ensure the future management and financing of the prosthetic/orthotic centre.

Panama's Darién province

The ICRC provided assistance and protection for Colombian civilians who had settled in Panama after fleeing internal violence in their own country. The Red Cross Society of Panama, with ICRC support, met the needs of the refugees, who numbered some 900. The supplies distributed included food, kitchen items, clothing, boots, blankets, mattresses, hygiene products, seed, agricultural tools, school materials and children's games. In addition, 500 medical and dental consultations and 120 vaccinations were given.

Cuba

The ICRC continued to offer the Cuban Red Cross support in its efforts to provide shelter and food for Haitians who had become stranded in Cuba while attempting to travel clandestinely to the USA. The ICRC also assisted the Cuban and Haitian governments with the repatriation process in order to ensure that it took place in satisfactory conditions. In the course of 2001, 180 Haitians were repatriated under this programme.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Except for Panama, where three detainees were followed up during the year, all the ICRC's activities on behalf of detainees in 2001 took place in Haiti. The ICRC carried out 113 visits to the country's 19 detention centres, where it monitored the living conditions of the detainee population (estimated to average 4,000). Although there were few detainees falling within the ICRC's traditional purview in Haitian jails, because of the acute problems relating to conditions of detention the ICRC continued to assist the authorities in upgrading the prison health system, improving nutrition and providing organizational advice for medical personnel.

The ICRC had regular meetings with Haiti's *Direction de l'Administration Pénitentiaire* (DAP), officials of the National Penitentiary and the health staff of detention centres. The DAP was given both technical and material assistance. In 2001, the ICRC sponsored disinfection of detainee's living quarters, rehabilitated buildings and water and sanitation systems in various prisons, supplied cooking utensils and financed medical treatment (including surgery) for detainees. Nursing staff had monthly meetings with ICRC health delegates during which nurses were trained in laboratory techniques to detect tuberculosis and AIDS. In addition, as recommended by the ICRC, the prison authorities reorganized the food storage and distribution system during the year.

While working to improve nutritional and health-related problems in prisons, the ICRC also proceeded with the gradual phasing-out of its assistance programme in the penitentiary system.

On 16 November, a bloody uprising in the National Penitentiary centre resulted in five deaths, 15 gunshot wounds and some 50 injuries from other sources. The dispensary was looted, all the medicines were burned, rooms were destroyed and records lost. The ICRC provided emergency aid for the victims, including personal effects for hospitalized detainees. The DAP was able to reinstate tuberculosis treatment and provide essential medicines, blankets and furniture.

AUTHORITIES

The ICRC pursued its dialogue with the authorities of the countries of the region with a view to promoting better knowledge and acceptance of IHL and creating the conditions necessary to ensure respect for its provisions in all circumstances. ICRC legal staff continued to help most of the countries of the region to incorporate the rules contained in the humanitarian treaties into their national legislation, focusing primarily on national criminal legislation, regulations protecting the red cross emblem and laws banning anti-personnel mines. Panama adopted a new law on protection of the emblem, and draft laws were prepared in Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. Amendments to national criminal legislation to include sanctions for breaches of IHL were drawn up with ICRC legal support in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Costa Rica and El Salvador also prepared draft laws to implement the Ottawa Convention prohibiting anti-personnel mines. Many of these countries also made significant progress towards adherence to some of

the treaties to which they were not yet party, in particular the 1980 Conventional Weapons Convention and its Protocols (Guatemala) and instruments on the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict (El Salvador, Nicaragua and Panama).

Throughout the year, the ICRC maintained a close working relationship with the national IHL committees of the countries of the region (El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua).

In order to develop inter-institutional cooperation in common fields of interest, the ICRC's Advisory Service, working out of its office at the Guatemala City regional delegation, shared information pertaining to national legislative and regulatory measures for the implementation of international humanitarian and human rights law with inter-American bodies such as the OAS and other relevant regional organizations and academic institutions. A first conference of government experts from OAS member States on national implementation of humanitarian law and related inter-American conventions was held in Costa Rica from 6 to 8 March and attended by over 100 high-ranking officials from 29 countries.

Contacts with the Inter-American Court for Human Rights were further developed in the framework of the agreement on technical cooperation concluded between the Court and the ICRC in 2000. A one-day academic workshop on topical issues relating to IHL was conducted by the ICRC for the judges and staff of the Court on 5 December.

The ICRC was also involved in training sessions on humanitarian law for magistrates organized by the UN Latin American Institute for Crime Prevention and Treatment of Offenders (ILANUD) in several Central American countries (Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala).

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Armed forces

While some armed forces of the region had already taken steps towards permanent integration of IHL into their training programmes, other countries demonstrated willingness to follow suit.

The armed forces of Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic themselves organized training courses for IHL instructors. An average of 50 officers in each of these countries was trained in 2001 to teach IHL in their respective forces.

In July, Guatemala hosted the first regional IHL training course for armed forces instructors. It was attended by 22 instructors from the navies of Central America, Colombia, the US, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean.

Other regional meetings focusing on IHL took place in the Dominican Republic and Honduras. In the Dominican Republic, the ICRC conducted a course on IHL for 31 senior officers from the Caribbean and Central America. In Honduras, the fifth meeting of heads of military instruction brought together representatives of the armed and security forces of nine countries of the region. On the agenda were incorporation of IHL into training programmes, a presentation on the ICRC model manual *Fight it Right*, and the planning of common activities for 2002.

There was also regional representation at the seminar for military and security forces on the inclusion of IHL in training programmes held in Otavalo, Ecuador, in October.¹

¹ See *Caracas regional delegation*.

Police

On the basis of the programme developed by the ICRC delegation in Brazil, training courses were organized in the region on international human rights standards applicable to police work, with particular reference to arrest and detention.

Another regional meeting, the third international course on human rights and humanitarian principles for law enforcement officials, took place in Costa Rica from 11 to 15 June. It was attended by 22 police academy instructors, directors and assistant directors from Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and El Salvador. The course was organized by the regional delegation of Guatemala with instructional support from the Brazilian delegation.

In December, the ICRC and the Red Cross Society of Panama organized a first training course for 21 police officers on human rights, IHL and Red Cross activities. The course focused on the Darién area where Panamanian security forces were occasionally involved in military operations against armed groups crossing the border from Colombia.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Universities

The ICRC provided assistance for various university faculties throughout the region that were in the process of incorporating IHL into their courses on a permanent basis.

On the regional level, the ICRC held an IHL course from 17 to 19 September for law professors from Mexico and Central America and from Haiti, Venezuela and Colombia. The course, organized in cooperation with the Cuban Red Cross and the National Union of Jurists of Cuba, took place in Havana, Cuba, and was attended by 24 professors and nine students.

During the following three days, the National Union of Jurists of Cuba held a seminar featuring experts from different countries who gave lectures on the humanitarian treaties. This seminar was attended by the participants in the preceding IHL course as well as some 100 more people from the region and beyond.

Media

The media continued to be used as a means of promoting awareness and understanding of humanitarian law, Red Cross activities and the ICRC's role in the region. Events in 2001 included the broadcasting of a publicity spot throughout the year on Spanish CNN and Telemundo and four Guatemalan channels; the production, together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, of eight radio programmes on IHL and the Red Cross in general for community-based radio stations; the successful completion of the Henry Dunant and Jean Pictet competitions for journalists and law students; and a photo exhibition on ICRC activities during the Catholic Fair in Guatemala from 3 to 11 March, attended by some 80,000 people. National Societies throughout the region assisted the ICRC to present seminars and workshops for some 89 journalists; the theme of the journalistic programme was "Mission and Responsibility of Journalists in Times of War".

The ICRC regional publication *Región*, appearing three times a year, reached a readership of approximately 4,000 people. Feedback indicated that the publication was well received.

Opinion-leaders in Guatemala

The goal of the ICRC in Guatemala was to develop knowledge of IHL and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement among opinion-leaders with a view to having IHL included in educational programmes run by national human rights organizations.

Throughout the year, 78 workshops were organized for municipal officials, instructors from the Ombudsman's office and teachers. A play about conflict in which the behaviour of armed forces and guerrilla groups was scrutinized in the light of IHL was performed in different regions of the country.

NATIONAL SOCIETIES

In cooperation with the International Federation, the ICRC assisted the region's National Societies primarily in the areas of dissemination, tracing and conflict preparedness. It also offered them support in strengthening their internal structures and external networks, in raising their profile and in promoting awareness of their activities among the general public.

To boost the National Societies' capacity for dissemination work, the ICRC presented National Society directors with a new handbook on the subject.

As for tracing, seven two-day training sessions sponsored by the ICRC and involving the National Societies of Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama were held to strengthen the tracing networks in those countries. On the basis of proposals made during the seminars, national tracing representatives established a plan of action in the event of disaster and guidelines for handling tracing requests.