This report is primarily an account of the ICRC’s work in the field and its activities to promote international humanitarian law. Mention is made of some of the negotiations entered into with a view to bringing protection and assistance to the victims of international and civil wars and internal disturbances and tension. Other negotiations are not mentioned, since the ICRC feels that any publicity would not be in the interest of the victims. Thus, this report cannot be regarded as covering all the institution’s efforts worldwide to come to the aid of the victims of conflict.

Moreover, the length of the text devoted to a given country or situation is not necessarily proportional to the magnitude of the problems observed and tackled by the institution. Indeed, there are cases which are a source of grave humanitarian concern but on which the ICRC is not in a position to report because it has been denied permission to take action. By the same token, the description of operations in which the ICRC has great freedom of action takes up considerable space, regardless of the scale of the problems involved.

Maps in this report have no political significance.

All figures in this report are in Swiss francs (Sfr). On 31 December 1996, the average exchange rate was approximately: Sfr 1.23 to US$ 1.
CONTENTS

Message from the President ....................................... 4
Legal bases.................................................................. 6
The ICRC and the Movement ..................................... 7
The ICRC in action ................................................... 8

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Introduction .............................................................. 16

AFRICA ................................................................. 37
West Africa ............................................................ 40
Liberia ........................................................................ 40
Regional delegations:
  Abidjan............................................................... 43
  Dakar...................................................................... 46
  Lagos ..................................................................... 49

Central Africa ............................................................ 51
Burundi ....................................................................... 51
Rwanda .................................................................... 55
Zaire ......................................................................... 62
Congo ........................................................................ 69
Regional delegation:
  Yaoundé ................................................................ 70

Southern Africa .......................................................... 74
Angola ....................................................................... 74
Regional delegations:
  Harare .................................................................. 79
  Pretoria .................................................................. 82

East Africa ................................................................. 86
Eritrea ........................................................................ 86
Ethiopia .................................................................... 86
Somalia ...................................................................... 90
Sudan ......................................................................... 95
Regional delegation:
  Nairobi ................................................................ 101

THE AMERICAS ....................................................105
Colombia ................................................................. 108
Haiti .......................................................................... 113
Peru .......................................................................... 115

Regional delegations:
  Brasilia .................................................................117
  Buenos Aires ........................................................119
  Guatemala City ........................................................121
  Washington ...........................................................124

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC ........................................127
Indian sub-continent and Myanmar .........................130
Afghanistan ................................................................130
Pakistan ....................................................................138
Sri Lanka ..................................................................140
Regional delegations:
  New Delhi ................................................................145

South East Asia and Far East ......................................148
Cambodia ..................................................................148
Regional delegations:
  Bangkok ................................................................152
  Jakarta ...................................................................155
  Manila ....................................................................158

WESTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE AND THE BALKANS ........................................163
Western Europe ........................................................166
European Union ........................................................168
The Former Yugoslavia ..............................................169
Bosnia and Herzegovina ..........................................172
Croatia ....................................................................181
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia .................................184
Central Europe and the Balkans .................................192
Regional delegation:
  Budapest ................................................................186
  Turkey ....................................................................187

EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA ..............................189
Eastern Europe ........................................................192
Regional delegations:
  Kyiv ....................................................................192
  Moscow ................................................................195
STATES PARTY TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS AND THEIR ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS

PROMOTION AND DISSEMINATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

ICRC ACTION WITHIN THE MOVEMENT
Statutory meetings
Relations with the other components of the Movement

THE INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

COMMUNICATION

ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

HUMAN RESOURCES

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

FINANCE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

FINANCIAL TABLES

Auditor’s letter

SPECIAL FUNDS

RELIEF AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TABLES

Committee
Organizational chart
International advisers
Mission statement
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The year 1996 has been full of suffering but also full of hope, both for action in aid of conflict victims and for international humanitarian law. There was:

♦ the continuing tragedy of the hundreds of thousands of civilian victims in the Great Lakes region of Africa;
♦ the suffering caused by so many conflicts which have so far defied any peaceful solution, such as those in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka;
♦ the silent but all too real suffering of the victims of forgotten conflicts, such as the prisoners of war still held in Iran and Iraq;
♦ the suffering — irremediable as yet — of those victims who remain inaccessible despite the repeated efforts made in several internal conflicts, particularly in Tajikistan;
♦ the suffering of so many families in Bosnia, in Chechnya, in Kuwait and elsewhere, who are still without news of people near and dear to them;
♦ the growing dangers that have to be faced by staff engaged in humanitarian operations: for the ICRC, 1996 was overshadowed by the murder of several of its delegates — three in Burundi in June and six in Chechnya in December — and by abductions in Sudan and Chechnya.

But there was also hope:

♦ the hope raised by the International Strategy Conference for the elimination of anti-personnel landmines (Ottawa, 3-5 October), and by the ongoing international campaign for a total ban on such weapons;
♦ the hope that a relationship of mutual trust and cooperation will be developed with many senior military personnel, although a clear distinction between military operations and humanitarian activities must nonetheless be maintained at bilateral and regional levels and in United Nations peace-keeping operations. Military person-
nel and humanitarian workers are together in the field; even though their tasks differ, their procedures need not necessarily be contradictory. The ICRC accordingly submitted a set of guidelines to the United Nations this year to facilitate compliance by peacekeeping forces with international humanitarian law;

♦ the hope that the ICRC’s Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law will be steadily extended, in accordance with the resolution adopted by the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Geneva, December 1995);

♦ the hope that the growing synergy in the field of humanitarian endeavour will be steadily enhanced by trusting and constructive dialogue between the ICRC and the other components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and with the United Nations, UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, non-governmental organizations and leading opinion-makers;

♦ the hope that the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, to be held in Geneva in 1999, will be a milestone event to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Geneva Conventions and the centenary of the First International Peace Conference in The Hague.

It is only with the help of the men and women who understand, support and share its mission that the International Committee of the Red Cross can take up the challenge of all this suffering and all these hopes. On behalf of the ICRC, I wish to thank them all most warmly.

Cornelio Sommaruga
President of the ICRC
LEGAL BASES

The work of the ICRC is based upon the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and the resolutions of International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

It was at the prompting of the ICRC that governments adopted the initial Geneva Convention in 1864. In the years since, the ICRC, with the support of the entire Movement, has put constant pressure on governments to adapt international humanitarian law to changing circumstances, especially developments in methods and means of warfare, in order to provide more effective protection and assistance for the victims of armed conflicts.

Today almost all States are bound by the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, which, in times of armed conflict, protect wounded, sick and shipwrecked members of the armed forces, prisoners of war and civilians.

Moreover, two Protocols additional to these Conventions were adopted in June 1977. Protocol I protects the victims of international armed conflicts, while Protocol II protects the victims of non-international armed conflicts; in particular, these Additional Protocols have codified the rules which protect the civilian population against the effects of hostilities. Almost two-thirds of all States are now bound by the Protocols.

The legal bases of any action undertaken by the ICRC may be summed up as follows:

♦ In the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Additional Protocol I, the international community gave the ICRC a mandate in the event of international armed conflict. In particular, the ICRC has the right to visit prisoners of war and civilian internees. The Conventions also confer on the ICRC a broad right of initiative.

♦ In situations of armed conflict which are not international in character, the ICRC also has a right of initiative recognized by the States and enshrined in the four Geneva Conventions.

♦ In the event of internal disturbances and tension, and in any other situation which warrants humanitarian action, the ICRC has a right of humanitarian initiative which is recognized in the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and allows it to offer its services to a government without that offer constituting interference in the internal affairs of the State concerned.
THE ICRC AND THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is made up of the National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Although each of the Movement's components engages in different activities, they are all united by the same Fundamental Principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.

As its founding institution, the ICRC has certain statutory responsibilities towards the Movement. In particular, it is responsible for ensuring respect for and promoting knowledge of the Fundamental Principles, recognizing new National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies which meet the current conditions for recognition, and discharging the mandates entrusted to it by the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The ICRC takes an active part in the Movement's statutory meetings, which it often organizes jointly with the Federation.

In accomplishing these tasks the ICRC maintains close relations with the National Societies, cooperating with them in areas of mutual interest such as preparedness for situations of armed conflict, development and ratification of and respect for the Geneva Conventions, and dissemination of humanitarian law and the Fundamental Principles. It also assumes the general management and coordination of international relief operations conducted by the Red Cross and Red Crescent in situations of armed conflict.

Finally, while fully respecting the Federation's competence in the matter, the ICRC cooperates actively in the development of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in particular through technical and legal assistance, by supporting the National Societies' dissemination programmes and by contributing to the training of their staff in areas that fall within its mandate.
By virtue of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols, and on the basis of the Movement’s Fundamental Principles, the ICRC seeks to provide protection and assistance to victims of armed conflicts. It takes direct and immediate action in response to emergency situations, at the same time promoting preventive measures by developing and spreading knowledge of humanitarian law.

Activities for people deprived of their freedom

The ICRC visits persons deprived of their freedom in international armed conflicts (prisoners of war within the meaning of Article 4 of the Third Geneva Convention and Article 44 of Protocol I) and persons protected under the Fourth Convention (civilian internees, persons arrested by the Occupying Power and penal-law detainees in enemy hands).

In the event of non-international armed conflict, covered by Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Protocol II of 1977, the ICRC endeavours to come to the aid of persons deprived of their freedom in connection with the conflict.

In situations of internal disturbances and tension which are not covered by humanitarian law, the ICRC has a statutory right of initiative entitling it to offer its services to visit people detained in connection with the events.

The purpose of ICRC visits is purely humanitarian; ICRC delegates observe the material and psychological conditions of detention and the treatment accorded to detainees, provide them with relief supplies if required (medicines, clothing, toilet articles) and ask the authorities to take any steps deemed necessary to improve the detainees’ treatment.

ICRC visits to places of detention, whether pursuant to the Geneva Conventions or outside the field of application of humanitarian law, are carried out according to specific criteria. Its delegates must be allowed to see all the detainees and talk freely to them without witnesses, to have access to all premises used for detention and to repeat their visits, and must be provided with a list of the persons to be visited (or be permitted to draw up such a list during the visit).

Before and after these visits, discussions at various levels are held with the people in charge of the detention centres. Confidential reports are then drawn up. In the case of international armed conflict, these reports are sent to both the Detaining Power and the Power of Origin of the prisoners of war or civilian internees, while in other cases they are sent only to the detaining authorities.
These confidential reports are not intended for publication. In its public statements the ICRC confines itself to releasing the number and names of the places visited, the dates of the visits and the number of people seen. It does not express an opinion on the grounds for detention and does not publicly comment on its findings with regard to material conditions and treatment. If a government should publish incomplete or inaccurate versions of ICRC reports, the institution reserves the right to publish and circulate them in full.

Protection of the civilian population

International humanitarian law is based on the principle of the immunity of the civilian population: civilians taking no part in the hostilities must on no account be the object of attacks but must be spared and protected. The Geneva Conventions, and especially their Additional Protocols, contain specific rules intended to protect civilians and civilian property. The ICRC makes representations to remind parties to conflict of their obligation to respect and protect the civilian population, and takes action whenever the rules protecting civilians are violated.

Restoration of family links

The ICRC’s Central Tracing Agency (CTA) came into being during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. Since then it has worked incessantly to facilitate the restoration of family links between conflict victims separated by the events. It symbolizes, by its work and its presence in every ICRC delegation, the importance that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement attaches to alleviating mental and psychological suffering, in addition to the nutritional and medical assistance that the ICRC provides to victims.

On the basis of the ICRC’s obligations under the Geneva Conventions and the institution’s right of humanitarian initiative, the Agency’s main tasks are as follows:

♦ to arrange for the exchange of family correspondence in the form of Red Cross messages when the usual means of communication have been disrupted;
♦ to obtain, centralize and, where necessary, forward any information that might help to identify the people on whose behalf the ICRC works and who are in particular need of protection;
♦ to help trace persons reported missing or who have lost touch with their families;
♦ to arrange for transfers and repatriations and to reunite dispersed family members;
to issue, for a limited period and a single journey, ICRC travel documents for persons without identity papers, in order to enable them to return to their own country or to enter the host country of their choice;

♦ to issue certificates of captivity, hospitalization or death for former detainees, prisoners of war or their rightful claimants.

These tasks are usually carried out in close cooperation with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which together with the CTA form a unique network of solidarity and action. Where necessary the CTA organizes training courses, usually on a regional basis, to help the National Societies increase their efficiency in both operational and technical terms.

Assistance

The ICRC provides assistance for the direct and indirect victims of armed conflict and other violent situations. It does so by virtue of its mandate as set out in the Geneva Conventions, its right of initiative in humanitarian matters, the victims’ right to assistance, and the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

The ultimate aim of the ICRC’s assistance activities is to preserve the lives, alleviate the suffering and maintain or restore the health of conflict victims. The protection of health by providing assistance is part of the more general protection, under international humanitarian law, of the fundamental rights and dignity of people caught up in armed conflicts.

The ICRC’s first priority is to provide assistance for the direct victims of conflicts: the wounded, the disabled, the sick, prisoners, displaced people and civilians in conflict areas and occupied territories.

In practice, and especially during prolonged conflicts, the entire population of the affected countries suffers; the distinction between direct and indirect victims of the situation tends to become blurred and assistance has to be adapted to the growing needs of an ever-increasing number of vulnerable groups.

The ICRC provides assistance to the best of its ability, and in acceptable security conditions, in situations of armed conflict or internal violence:

♦ it makes on-the-spot assessments of the type, extent and urgency of needs, and

♦ defines and plans its assistance independently, controls distribution of it and supervises its programmes so as to guarantee at all times that the assistance actually reaches the intended beneficiaries and meets their priority needs.

In order to preserve the health of individuals and communities, their access to preventive and curative health services must be ensured. These services must be kept operational and be provided with the requisite medicines and other
medical supplies and equipment. But above all, access must also be ensured to
the essentials of survival (drinking water and food), protection against the
elements (shelter and heating) and facilities for personal hygiene (water for
domestic use) and environmental hygiene (control of disease vectors and
disposal of waste).

All this entails a very wide variety of activities which are conducted under the
responsibility of the General Relief Division and the Health Operations
Division, which are both attached to the Department of Operations. This
structure facilitates the technical coordination of the various aspects of
assistance and its integration in overall ICRC protection policy.

According to circumstances, the National Red Cross and Red Crescent
Societies take part in these activities in diverse ways (for instance, by making
personnel available or carrying out delegated projects).

On the basis of needs and priorities, the ICRC may therefore carry out any
number of programmes: these include emergency food aid, nutritional
rehabilitation, agricultural, veterinary and fishery programmes, distribution of
clothing, blankets and tents, setting up of camps for displaced persons,
construction or repair of shelters, dispensaries and hospitals, emergency
supplies of water or repair of water treatment and distribution systems,
sanitation work, vaccination campaigns, medical supplies for dispensaries and
hospitals, organization of systems for first aid and to evacuate the wounded,
dispatch of surgical teams, establishment of hospitals for war surgery and
installation of prosthetics workshops to provide amputees with artificial limbs
and therapy or of special centres for the treatment of paraplegics.

Assistance may consist either of direct aid to people in distress or of support
for community services partly or completely disrupted by conflict.

Increasingly often, ICRC assistance is not restricted to the initial emergency
phase alone but has to be continued during the post-conflict period until the
activities interrupted by the conflict can be resumed, possibly with the help of
other organizations. In some cases, the ICRC's position as a neutral
intermediary enables it to provide humanitarian aid in countries where
multilateral sanctions are still in force after hostilities have ended.

The training of technical, medical and paramedical personnel, both
expatriate and local, also forms part of this whole range of assistance activities.

The constant assessment of assistance operations and their impact is
increasingly important to the ICRC. It is one of the priority tasks of the General
Relief Division and the Health Operations Division, and is needed to enhance
communication with donors, to ensure the quality of assistance and to provide
a sound basis for the training of personnel responsible for carrying out such
activities.
Development of and respect for international humanitarian law

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

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

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

Dissemination and promotion of international humanitarian law and of the Movement’s principles and ideals

By becoming party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and to their 1977 Additional Protocols, the States have undertaken to respect and to ensure respect for humanitarian law and to spread knowledge of its provisions. Accordingly, they bear the primary responsibility for raising awareness of its rules, particularly among their armed forces and all those who may be called upon to implement them.

The ICRC’s dissemination activities are based on the responsibility in this regard conferred upon the institution by the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The Statutes specify that the role of the ICRC is, in particular:

♦ to maintain and disseminate the Fundamental Principles of the Movement, namely humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality;

1 Article 5, paras 2 (c) and (g), of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
to work for the understanding and dissemination of knowledge of humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts and to prepare any development thereof.\footnote{Article 5, paras 2 (a) and (g), of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.}

Assisted in this task by the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and by their Federation, the ICRC focuses on training disseminators in the different countries. In particular, it helps train national instructors within the armed forces and dissemination officers within the National Societies. Certain target groups — government and academic circles, youth, and the media — are also given special attention.

The adoption of the Additional Protocols in 1977 represented a decisive step towards greater awareness of the importance of dissemination.\footnote{Resolution 21 of the Diplomatic Conference of 1974-1977.}

Since then, innumerable activities have been undertaken throughout the world every year to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and of the Movement’s principles, ideals and work. The aims of these dissemination efforts are:

\begin{itemize}
  \item to limit the suffering caused by armed conflicts and situations of disturbances and tension through improved knowledge of and greater respect for humanitarian law;
  \item to ensure the security of humanitarian operations and the safety of Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel so that help can reach the victims;
  \item to strengthen the identity and image of the Movement, and to contribute to its unity through greater awareness and understanding of its principles, history, workings and activities;
  \item to help propagate a spirit of peace.
\end{itemize}

Today’s combatants are all too often ignorant of the rules of international humanitarian law. By the same token, journalists and the public tend to become aware of humanitarian law and its applications only in the wake of tragedy.

People must know about humanitarian law if they are to respect it, and they must understand Red Cross and Red Crescent activities if they are to accept and support them. Civilians are frequently unaware of their rights and obligations under humanitarian law. When they benefit from the protection and assistance of the Movement, they should be better informed as to the mandate, role and ethical considerations which govern the work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.
Humanitarian diplomacy

In everything it does the ICRC seeks to safeguard the victims of international conflict, civil war and situations of internal violence, whether by bringing them protection and assistance, by taking preventive action such as spreading knowledge of humanitarian law and promoting its development, or by contributing to the growth of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Its work is therefore not limited to the theatres of armed conflict, even though the major — and most visible — part of that work is carried out in war-torn countries, for the ICRC has to maintain close relations with all governments and National Societies.

To supplement the contacts established at headquarters and the activities conducted by its delegates in conflict-stricken parts of the world, the ICRC has set up a network of regional delegations covering practically all countries not directly affected by armed conflict. In addition, it has an office in New York, which remains in close contact with the United Nations and cooperates with regional organizations.

The regional delegations have specific tasks which concern operational activities on the one hand, and humanitarian diplomacy on the other.

In the operational sphere, regional delegates respond to emergencies in the countries they cover, such as outbreaks of violence, sudden heightening of tension or the onset of an armed conflict. They may be called upon to provide logistic support for operations in nearby countries or even to conduct limited emergency operations, especially in the event of conflict. In the countries under their responsibility they also visit security detainees and provide services designed to help restore family ties.

Regional delegations have a major role to play in the sphere of humanitarian diplomacy, particularly in establishing and maintaining regular contacts with governments, regional organizations, and so on. Moreover, they are in a privileged position for sustained dialogue with the National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in each of the countries concerned. Finally, all regional delegations actively promote the dissemination of humanitarian law and foster cooperation — which varies in form depending on needs and priorities — with the National Societies.
The ICRC around the world in 1996
The cruel tide of war sweeps through, leaving countless men, women and children bereft and alone, far from their homes and families. The ICRC seeks to alleviate their suffering and restore hope. In 1996, it was working in more than 50 different countries.
The past year was a tragic one for the ICRC — tragic because nine delegates died, cold-bloodedly killed while on mission to Burundi and Chechnya. They were committed to serving their fellow human beings, to helping the victims of extreme violence which threatened them too. A senseless violence which did not spare them.

Five of the slain staff members had been seconded by their respective National Societies (Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand and Norway) and the other four were delegates under contract to the ICRC. For all of them, their commitment was an expression of the solidarity of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement with the victims of conflict.

Although such violence is an integral part of the environment with which each and every ICRC delegate has to contend, owing to the very nature of their mission, the serious incidents in Burundi and Chechnya have left our institution deeply scarred. For those who lost their lives were more than colleagues and friends with whom we had shared our joys, our worries and our frustrations. They were also and above all delegates who had voluntarily placed their knowledge and experience at the ICRC’s disposal to implement the first Fundamental Principle of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, namely: “...to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found”.

Yet those events, tragic though they were, must not lead us to forget the wanton violence of which the civilian population and especially the most vulnerable groups — primarily women, children and the elderly — are the main victims in many present-day conflicts. The ICRC has seen for itself the suffering and humiliation inflicted on civilians. It has also often come up against the limits imposed on humanitarian action in situations such as those in Liberia and Kivu.

For there are indeed situations in which, for lack of a minimum of order and stability, effective humanitarian action on the victims’ behalf is clearly no longer possible. Such is the case when the institutions of State are so disrupted by non-international armed conflict that it becomes extremely difficult to identify any authority. Moreover, in conflicts to assert group identity, the objectives pursued by the belligerents are inherently incompatible with the basic principles of international humanitarian law. Such conflicts tend to create a very unpredictable environment and call for continuous evaluation of the extent to which an institution such as the ICRC can take action; it may even require the suspension, though generally temporary, of activities.

The desperate plight of all too many victims of conflict cannot be ignored. We must heed their cry for help. Despite the setbacks experienced by the ICRC during the year, its determination to continue its work for all victims of conflicts is undiminished. Thorough consideration has therefore begun of all factors which have a bearing upon the security of humanitarian action. After its withdrawal from Liberia, the ICRC furthermore called upon the international community to examine
ways of ensuring that scope for such action is preserved. It also followed and took part in discussions on the deployment of external armed forces in certain situations of conflict; in doing so, it saw what great difficulties of all kinds such interventions entailed. The implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution on the Great Lakes is only one illustration of their complexity.

Confronted by these new types of conflict, the ICRC is convinced that the role a specifically neutral and impartial institution can play as an intermediary between warring parties, whatever form that role may take, is as essential as ever to reduce the tragic consequences of conflict to a minimum. With the assistance of the States party to the Geneva Conventions and in cooperation with the other humanitarian agencies, it intends to help define courses of action that will enable it to continue to fulfil its mandate.
Protection of the civilian population

Respect for the immunity of civilians and other people not, or no longer, taking direct part in hostilities is one of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and customary law. On the basis of observations made by its delegates in the field, the ICRC stepped up its confidential and public representations on this issue to the various parties.

In southern Lebanon, in connection with Operation Grapes of Wrath, the attention of the Israeli authorities and the Hezbollah leadership was drawn to problems concerning the conduct of hostilities. In Chechnya (Russian Federation), Afghanistan and northern Iraq, the ICRC repeatedly urged the forces involved not to use the general population as a pawn in their armed struggle, but to keep it clear of the fighting. Whenever the occasion arose, it called on the parties to take the necessary precautions to restrict as far as possible the effects of the hostilities upon civilians. In Sri Lanka, the ICRC monitored the situation of the civilian population closely throughout the year, especially during the government army and LTTE separatist movement offensives in the north of the Jaffna peninsula.

As well as the traditional type of military operation, the ICRC is increasingly faced with situations in which the obviously tenuous distinction between civilians and soldiers in internal armed conflicts is made even more complex by the emergence of new protagonists.

Violence of political origin or perpetrated by guerrilla movements or recognized groups is now often accompanied by lawlessness encouraged by the prevailing chaos and plunging the population into a permanent state of insecurity: hostage-taking, looting and murder have become routine methods of combat.

In Colombia, the civilian population is often caught in a vice between government or paramilitary forces, guerrilla movements and small groups connected with drug trafficking. Contacts consequently had to be built up on the spot and diverse steps taken there in order to curb the abuses committed by the various sides.

Lastly, the defenceless civilian population is all too often the declared target of those who are responsible for protecting it. The Great Lakes crisis and the plight of the many civilians who sought refuge in eastern Zaire are a clear reminder of this sorry state of affairs.

An increasingly difficult task

The rules governing conflicts, particularly those relating to the treatment of prisoners, apply universally. Certain conflicts taking place outside the international community’s field of vision are still going on, even though they no longer
hit the headlines. Only relatively few people are aware that thousands of people, civilians and soldiers, are held by one party or another, whether formally constituted governments or obscure guerrilla groups. These detainees, both men and women, are particularly at risk and must therefore must be visited wherever they are held, and whatever efforts are required to reach them. Moreover, it is vital to remind anyone holding prisoners that even if they were captured bearing weapons, they have rights which must be observed. It is sometimes far from easy to ensure that those rights are respected, owing to the reluctance shown by the detaining authorities themselves during negotiations or to the very nature of the conflict, its geographical isolation or poor security conditions. Yet the ICRC considers that no effort should be spared to establish contact or start negotiations, even in the most remote places, so that the aforesaid principles are put into practice in the field. By adopting this approach it has been able, despite particularly difficult working conditions, to pursue its activities in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Iraqi Kurdistan.

However, indifference and the lack of media interest or political resolve all serve to undermine the universal humanitarian principles enshrined in international humanitarian law.

So that the law of the jungle does not prevail as the sole means of settling conflicts, it is imperative that standards be maintained and that the victims be protected in all circumstances. Unfortunately security problems or the unpredictable nature of certain fighting forces now make it impossible, in some cases, to envisage protection activities in acceptable conditions or collect reliable information on the situation of such population groups, whether or not they are in captivity. The ICRC must overcome that crucial challenge in order to carry out its impartial mission for all victims of conflict.

Activities for people deprived of their freedom

Key examples

The year 1996 brought a marked increase in the number of visits to prisoners throughout the world, due primarily to the continuing extensive arrests in Rwanda of people suspected of involvement in the 1994 genocide. By the end of the year, 89,000 people there were deprived of their freedom, about 30% more than in 1995. This exceptional situation forced the ICRC, in the absence of a truly functional judicial system, to maintain a very substantial apparatus and assistance programmes to ensure that they received decent treatment and material conditions of detention.

Besides Rwanda, the ICRC continued its activities wherever its presence was needed, and thus worked in 52 different conflict situations. This was particu-
larly the case on the Indian subcontinent where, under an agreement concluded with the Indian government in 1995, it ran a large-scale programme for people arrested in connection with the situation in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Its continuing commitment in Sri Lanka, the turning point reached in some countries of the southern Caucasus where visits to security detainees became possible, and the watch it kept over people held by various factions in Colombia are only a few examples of the protection activities carried out by the ICRC in 1996.

These examples must not, however, obscure the very worrying reality in terms of the needs of people held in connection with situations of conflict, and the risks to which they are exposed.

An effective campaign against ill treatment, torture and forced disappearances requires not only the appropriate political will on the part of the authorities concerned, but also — for the ICRC — the possibility to have access to all detainees and monitor their situation individually until their release. To do so, it once again deployed very considerable human and material resources in the field. Apart from making visits and approaching the authorities concerned, the ICRC also registered and processed several hundred thousand items of information on people detained or presumed detained, and kept their situation under constant surveillance.

Global strategy for a protection-friendly environment

Besides responding to emergencies, the ICRC also takes action to avoid a repetition of violations of international humanitarian law or the fundamental humanitarian principles. Such action consists mainly of approaches to the authorities, on the basis of its observations. In detention-related work, prison visits constitute not only a means of preventing abuses but also an opportunity to engage in dialogue with the detaining authorities.

The complexity of conflicts and their effects is such that no factor likely to enhance the protection of conflict victims must be overlooked. The lack of understanding, scarcity of resources, penury and disorganization of certain States or parties, their occasional reluctance to take the necessary steps and the disintegration of the chain of command are all factors which compel the ICRC to diversify its approach, take up an ever-growing number of contacts and devise new ways of getting through to the potential perpetrators of violence or those who control them. Modern conflicts increasingly call for action taking all cultural and social aspects into account, together with the professional expertise which can modify inappropriate behaviour. To meet this constant challenge, the ICRC continued its efforts to create for each type of situation a whole range of activities and initiatives designed to support its work of monitoring
places of detention and its measures to ensure respect for the civilian population:
- special training for the police and the armed forces;
- assistance for the prison administrations;
- programmes to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and principles in civil society, and work in close cooperation with the local media;
- an increased presence at all structural and decision-making levels.

*Inability of certain States or parties to safeguard the physical integrity of people deprived of their freedom*

The conflict or violence rife in some States has profound and lasting economic effects upon their entire infrastructure, and particularly the prison system. Whereas people arrested in connection with a situation of violence run a number of specific risks, the conditions of detention of all prison inmates are clearly affected by it. Indeed, its repercussions are felt by many more prisoners than only those subjected to the direct effects of a repressive policy, for they no longer all receive the minimum humanitarian protection which they have the right to expect of the detaining authority.

More and more often, the ICRC comes up against the declared inability of certain States to maintain decent conditions of detention. Although by vocation and under the mandate conferred on it by the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC is not in principle concerned with penal law detainees, the magnitude of humanitarian needs in places of detention has induced it to widen its criteria for intervention considerably in countries where it was already carrying out its activities.

In order to respond to those needs, the ICRC took the weighty decision to act as a substitute, either partially or completely and on a lasting basis, for the detaining authorities. In order to ensure the survival of the prison population, it had to launch or maintain very extensive programmes in Zaire, Rwanda, Yemen and Haiti to provide food and medical assistance and to repair and renovate the existing facilities. In Azerbaijan, the ICRC set up an ambitious anti-tuberculosis campaign. In view of the disquieting situation in the southern Caucasus, this campaign should be extended to all the republics in that region.

The ICRC furthermore reached the conclusion that to avoid a higher mortality rate in places of detention, it had no alternative but to provide humanitarian aid on a large scale, even though negotiations for access to certain categories of detainees specifically covered by its mandate had not yet been successful. It did so particularly in Tajikistan, where it is still not authorized to visit security detainees in accordance with its customary procedures, by launching an emergency food aid programme for some 7,000 prison inmates, mostly
penal law prisoners, who were on the verge of starvation. But for the prompt action taken, several dozen of them would undoubtedly have died.

**Promising new developments**

Progress was made in 1996 in the ICRC’s various theatres of operation. In response to the various steps it took and its work of humanitarian diplomacy, it was authorized to carry out its activities in five new contexts. Besides having access to people in detention, it also supervised the release and repatriation of hundreds of prisoners, some of whom had been held for many years. The main developments were as follows:

- in its capacity as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC was able to repatriate over 200 Sahrawi prisoners and Moroccan soldiers held by the Polisario Front and the Moroccan authorities;
- in Bosnia, the ICRC supervised the release of more than 1,100 civilians and combatants held by the various parties to the conflict. By mobilizing all the signatories and guarantors of the Dayton Agreement, the ICRC helped to prevent this simultaneous release from being hindered by the imposition of conditions of reciprocity;
- in Guatemala, access to certain security prisoners was finally made possible after more than 30 years of war between the opposition and the government;
- in Armenia, the ICRC was able to have access to all those arrested for participation in illegal political activities;
- in the context of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, the ICRC supervised, with Russian diplomatic support, the release and repatriation of the last remaining prisoners;
- in April, the ICRC signed an agreement on inspection of the conditions of detention of people awaiting trial and held under the authority of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda;
- in Senegal, after its first visits in June 1996 to prisoners arrested in 1994 in connection with clashes in the southern province of Casamance, the ICRC was able to discuss all questions concerning the prison system with the Senegalese government, particularly those relating to the treatment of the aforesaid prisoners;
- in October, the government of the State of Bahrain gave permission for visits to prisoners held in connection with the tension reigning there;
- after over a year’s standstill with regard to the application of its visiting conditions, the ICRC concluded an agreement with the Palestinian Authority to resume visits to security detainees in the autonomous territories;
- in South Africa, the ICRC obtained an updated agreement on visits by it, allowing it to visit without delay all people held in prisons and to be notified of all arrests in connection with the political violence in KwaZulu/Natal.
**Stalemate**

In accordance with its role as promoter of international humanitarian law and its right of initiative that entitles it to take up any humanitarian issue that it considers comes within its sphere of competence, the ICRC offered its services in a number of countries.

Despite its various attempts and approaches, the ICRC had difficulty in gaining acceptance for its offers, although needs are obvious. In the southern Caucasus, for instance, it is still awaiting the green light for visits to security detainees in Azerbaijan, although it has received the consent of the other neighbouring republics.

The ICRC has made no headway in its discussions with the Turkish government on the principle of visiting people deprived of their freedom or the possibility of assessing the situation of the civilian population in the east of the country.

Eight years after the end of hostilities in the Iran/Iraq war, and despite the ICRC’s efforts to resolve the problem once and for all, between 18,000 and 19,000 prisoners of war registered by it during that conflict are still awaiting their release under Article 118 of the Third Geneva Convention.

The countries to which the ICRC offered its services to visit detainees, but did not receive a favourable reply in 1996, also include China, Cuba, Myanmar, Syria and Algeria.

**Restoration of family links**

To restore contact between members of families split apart by armed conflicts is the main task of the Central Tracing Agency. It also keeps track, on an individual basis, of people deprived of their freedom whom the ICRC considers warrant special attention to ensure that they have the protection they need.

Other activities under this heading are those to facilitate the tracing of people whose fate and whereabouts are unknown, despite numerous attempts to locate them, and to help others to take up contact again with their families, particularly through the Red Cross message network and ICRC delegates’ visits to places of detention.

The ICRC was particularly active in this respect, above all in connection with the former Yugoslavia.

**All-out efforts**

As early as 1995, during elaboration of the Dayton Agreement that was to end active hostilities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the ICRC took special care to see...
that the question of persons unaccounted for was included as an integral part of the section relating to the civilian population.

In 1996, efforts were made to implement means of shedding light on the fate of the many missing people of whom their relatives had had no word for months, or even years.

Under international humanitarian law, States have the obligation to provide families with all information they possess about any civilians or soldiers in their power as the result of armed conflict. In recent conflicts, this treaty-based system has only rarely yielded the anticipated results.

In the case of the former Yugoslavia, the ICRC decided to focus on the family unit and to foster particularly close contacts with families. On the basis of information supplied by them, the ICRC drew up tracing requests which it then passed on to the party most likely to provide reliable replies.

A list of these requests was compiled and widely publicized. Anyone who could supply credible data about any missing persons was encouraged to do so. The tracing requests could also be consulted on the Internet, ensuring that they could be accessed by the largest possible number of people who might have useful information.

This threefold approach — transmission of requests to the parties concerned, compilation of a list of requests and publication of computerized data on the Web site — was a new venture for the ICRC, showing its determination to use the most efficient and up-to-date methods for families to obtain information about the fate of their missing relatives.

For that reason 1996 was a milestone in this very important sphere of ICRC activities.1

**Assistance and health**

Faced with the manifold consequences of conflicts and the post-conflict phase, whose common denominator is the undermining of individual and general health, the ICRC had to provide very diverse forms of assistance in 1996 for a wide variety of groups, adapting its strategies to the different situations.

It should be noted that health protection also implies food security, protection against the elements, access to drinking water and the maintenance of a healthy environment, as well as medical and surgical services and rehabilitation of the disabled.

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1 See *Western and Central Europe and the Balkans*, pp. 172-180.
Food security for families

Conflicts affect first and foremost the food security of families which have to flee from violence or which, even if they are not displaced, are all too often incapable of providing for their basic needs since the hostilities have destroyed or sharply reduced their means of production. Direct distributions in the form of food rations or through community kitchens enable them to survive in the short run. While this type of assistance is widely covered by the media, the ICRC’s increasing efforts in the rehabilitation sector, which are often much less well known to the public, merit closer consideration.

The affected families sell their belongings and means of production (livestock, seed stocks, etc.) in order to survive; they thus become dependent on assistance. Support programmes to avoid this destitution are therefore essential. Their purpose is to restore a near-normal food supply and back up any steps taken to promote economic recovery. Agricultural, veterinary or fishing programmes (distribution of seed and farm implements, livestock vaccination campaigns and distribution of fishing tackle) make the families more self-sufficient in terms of food.

The ideal would be to launch such activities preventively, but owing to external constraints the ICRC can all too often act only once destitution has become a reality. Nonetheless, the methods and objectives remain the same, i.e. a detailed analysis of the evolution of all micro-economic parameters and active coordination with the target populations in order to set up programmes apt to restore as much self-sufficiency as possible. But more substantial resources over a longer period are then required, as one crop season will not be enough to redress the situation. It goes without saying that if the conflict persists (for example, arable land transformed into minefields, production impeded by the prevailing insecurity, continual destruction of productive resources), the initial objectives will be only partially attained.

Protracted conflicts, often at a low level of intensity or in the form of economic embargoes, have become more and more frequent. The ICRC has therefore diversified and adapted its rehabilitation programmes accordingly, with the consistent aim of stimulating economic production for the direct benefit of the individuals or households affected. In 1996, the following programmes were carried out: renovation of irrigation systems covering over 33,000 hectares and production of farm implements by local blacksmiths from the metal debris of weapons and military equipment in Afghanistan; the production of fishing nets, by displaced families, for distribution to fishermen in Somalia; and finally, in the transition from the former planned economy to liberalization (for example, in the southern Caucasus), relatively sophisticated activities such as granting peasant farmers small loans (repayable at harvest

In 1996 the ICRC:
- dispatched 78,000 tonnes of relief supplies worth 12 million Swiss francs to 45 countries (including 25,000 tonnes received as donations in kind);
- distributed 85,000 tonnes of relief supplies
- distributed 6,735 tonnes of seed and farm implements worth 6.5 million Swiss francs.

Tables showing details of relief supplies dispatched and distributed, contributions received in kind and purchases made by the ICRC in 1996 appear on pp. 344-347.
time in the form of flour for distribution to displaced families) and support for seed production at a regional level.

Emergency shelter and heating: assistance strategies better adapted to environmental constraints

Assistance operations for conflict victims can have serious side-effects, which can be kept to a minimum by appropriate strategies.

When food aid distributions in the form of dry rations are unsuitable, the ICRC sets up “kitchens”. This type of food aid attracts large numbers of people, resulting in slow deforestation around the provisional facilities since wood is frequently the sole fuel available. In many cases the use of low-consumption cookers and stoves, which can be made cheaply in Switzerland or on the spot, reduces the amount of fuel needed by 90% as compared with the use of charcoal (Rwanda, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia), an energy source for which a substitute must certainly be found. The ICRC is trying to develop a new appreciation of energy sources such as physical effort by humans and animals, coal, firewood and water, to diversify mineral resources and to use often dual-purpose appliances with optimum energy yield for heating and cooking. Fuel oil, which is universally available for vehicles, is ideal for those purposes. Waste engine oil is an interesting proposition in more ways than one; research has led to the development of a combined stove and cooker entirely consuming the residue and providing high energy, which has been used in the Caucasus, Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Natural gas, which is sometimes denigrated because of the technical facilities it requires, may for example also be used effectively and at a reasonable price in the northern Caucasus.

In supplying heating and cooking appliances, priority is given to hospitals, dispensaries and communal premises, as well as groups of displaced families.

The need to meet the emergency requirements of displaced people or refugees and to establish a logistical infrastructure often leads to camps being situated in places where their long-term environmental impact may be catastrophic. It is therefore important to take into account data such as that from a forest-survey register indicating the exact area in which wood cutting is permissible.

Whenever possible, the ICRC tries to use the existing infrastructure, concentrating mainly on access to usable or refurbishable local facilities. By respecting local cultural practice and regulations, installations which are not in keeping with traditional systems can be avoided (as in the southern Caucasus and Tajikistan). In this way, a moderate and suitably adapted boost is given to the economy.

Finally, when thousands of families return home to dwellings that are often over 80% destroyed and try above all to settle down there again, the
appropriate assistance strategies will be determined by the rate of returns, the materials available, the economic conditions and the local logistical capacity.

Access to water, and environmental sanitation

For several years, the ICRC’s activities in this field have been steadily increased and diversified. Several major water and sanitation programmes were carried out in 1996, especially in Iraq, Chechnya (southern Russia), Bosnia, Rwanda, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh, and Somalia.

In Iraq, owing to the international sanctions imposed since the Gulf War, there is a risk of water-treatment plants, drinking water storage and distribution systems and drainage systems breaking down for want of maintenance and spare parts. The ICRC imports the necessary parts and supervises repairs to the threatened facilities, in cooperation with the local technical services. In 1996, over 60 installations throughout the country were dealt with under this programme.

In Bosnia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC’s sanitary engineers, sometimes with the help of participating National Societies and through projects delegated to them, are trying to repair the damage to water supply systems caused by the recent conflicts and to ensure that waterworks receive the chemicals needed for water purification.

In Rwanda, the ICRC’s water and sanitation projects (also carried out with the help of participating National Societies taking on projects delegated to them) are centred on restoring drinking water distribution systems for displaced people and refugees who have returned to their home towns and villages. Prisons are another focal point for such work: since they are overcrowded, their supply of drinking water must be increased and stringent measures must be taken to improve hygiene and thus avoid epidemics. In Zaire, water supply and hygiene conditions in 25 prisons were improved under a similar programme.

In Chechnya, the fighting in Grozny, Gudermes and elsewhere deprived the townspeople of drinking water. Emergency distributions of water by tankers were organized, then emergency repairs to pumping stations were carried out. Similar work was effected in villages in the conflict zone and in neighbouring Daghestan for people displaced by the Chechen conflict.

Support for medical services and care for the wounded and war-disabled

Situations of conflict always disrupt medical and surgical services and reduce their operational capacity at the very time they are in greater demand. It is therefore not surprising that all the ICRC’s assistance activities consist, to a greater or lesser extent, of support for local medical facilities. This support may range from supplying basic equipment and unavailable essential medicines to
sending medical and surgical staff or setting up hospitals to treat the wounded. Medical assistance may also be provided for prisoners: the pilot programme for the treatment of tubercular detainees in Azerbaijan is a good example.

In 1996, the ICRC continued to provide substantial support in the form of medicines and other medical supplies to hospitals or health centres in many areas of conflict, particularly in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Bosnia, Somalia, the Sudan, Angola, Sierra Leone and Iraqi Kurdistan.

A surgical unit was opened at the Mirwais hospital in Kandahar (Afghanistan) in June, just in time to admit many casualties of the intensified fighting south of Kabul. This new transfer of surgical activities to Afghanistan enabled the ICRC hospital at Quetta (Pakistan) to be closed down in October, after 13 years of constant work during which almost 20,000 wounded were treated there.

In Chechnya (southern Russia), the ICRC opened a surgical hospital in Novye Atagi, to the south of Grozny, on 2 September. By taking over the treatment of war casualties, it was intended to ease the strain on the other hospitals and enable them to provide surgical services for the civilian population. It also set a tangible example of the neutrality that should prevail in a medical facility. In addition, Chechen doctors were to be given training there in war surgery. Unfortunately, the brutal murder of six members of the ICRC medical team forced the institution to withdraw its expatriate staff in December.

The Sudanese conflict resulted in a steady influx of casualties at the ICRC surgical hospital in Lokichokio (Kenya), which has worked non-stop since it was established in 1987, despite the difficulties encountered in evacuating them from the combat areas and repatriating them after treatment: the ICRC has to fly them out and many obstacles have to be overcome to do so, such as bad weather and problems in obtaining flight authorizations.

The provision of artificial limbs for war amputees, often victims of anti-personnel mines, is one of the long-term problems which the ICRC is trying to solve by setting up prosthetic/orthotic workshops in the countries affected by that scourge. Since 1979 no fewer than 46 projects have been carried out in 23 countries, allowing over 70,000 amputees to be fitted. Thirteen programmes have been handed over to various partners and are continuing their work. In 1996, the ICRC launched three new projects: in Arbil (in Iraqi Kurdistan), Grozny (Chechnya) and Gatagara (Rwanda).

But it is not enough to fit war amputees with artificial limbs; they must have further rehabilitation enabling them not only to walk again but to resume work as well. For the first time, the ICRC helped disabled youngsters with no family backing to learn a trade. Twenty young people treated at the Kabul limb-fitting centre were trained in various agricultural techniques such as grafting and
pruning fruit trees, skills which are in great demand by growers. Limited though it is, this project should serve as an example.

**Evaluation and training: the key to responsible humanitarian work**

The need for emergency action must not be invoked by the humanitarian organizations as a reason for intervening without considering and trying to assess the positive or negative consequences of the action they take. Similarly, good intentions must not take the place of professionalism. The ICRC has long been aware of these requirements and endeavours to evaluate the results of its activities, to structure the experience acquired and to pass it on by means of courses, seminars and publications, or by taking part in international congresses on the various problems of humanitarian action.

In 1996 the ICRC strengthened its evaluation and training capacity in health matters by creating a special unit for this work, under the authority of its Chief Medical Officer.

Thorough assessments were made of the functioning of ICRC-supported dispensaries in Angola and of public health needs in Bosnia.

A major publication by the ICRC entitled *Handbook on war and public health* presents the whole range of its assistance methods and strategies as taught since 1985 in the HELP* courses. Intended as an aid in decision-making, it also includes chapters on development and humanitarian interventions (particularly the link between emergency and development), the protection of victims of armed conflict and an introduction to humanitarian ethics. Another more technical publication covers the treatment of war wounds with fractures. In addition, ICRC specialists participated, under WHO auspices, in drafting directives for donations of medicines and the standardization of medicines and other medical supplies intended for emergency humanitarian aid.

The ICRC again organized HELP courses in 1996, as it has done since 1985. They took place in Geneva, Brussels, Hawaii and Budapest. In addition, a seminar on war surgery was held in Geneva and a training seminar for prison medical staff in Georgia, to mention only the most important such events.

Lastly, to mobilize expert opinion on a major problem and examine its ethical implications, a symposium on the medical profession and the effects of weapons was held in Montreux in March 1996.

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*HELP: Health Emergencies in Large Populations*
Operational cooperation with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Throughout 1996, the ICRC and the National Societies continued to strengthen and extend their operational cooperation in various forms. The number of delegated projects and bilateral projects increased considerably and 52 projects were in progress in 1996, still under the ICRC’s general coordination. This cooperation has proved very valuable both for the ICRC and for the National Societies carrying out such projects, but above all it allows greater assistance to be provided for conflict victims, particularly in fields requiring technical expertise. In addition, National Societies again made several hundred people available, supplied equipment and food and supported the ICRC’s work financially. In 1996, the financial contributions enabled almost 10% of the ICRC’s total expenditure to be covered.

Projects delegated to a National Society by the ICRC are an integral part of the objectives and budget set by the latter for the conflict region concerned and are generally based on the concept of continuity between emergency activities and development programmes. They consist mostly of medical, prosthetic/orthotic, sanitation or relief distribution programmes. Fourteen programmes for the construction or repair of drinking water sources or supply systems were thus taken on by National Societies, particularly in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. They are, however, progressively extending their scope to take on projects such as an information campaign on the dangers of anti-personnel mines in Armenia and Azerbaijan and the dissemination of humanitarian law to the armed forces in Latin America.

Bilateral projects help to improve the daily lives of victims in the post-conflict phase. They are not operational objectives for the ICRC, but they do meet real needs on the borderline of its traditional criteria for action. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, an old people’s home, a psychiatric hospital and a school for children in difficulty were renovated, and in the occupied and the autonomous territories a development programme was set up for women victims of the Intifada.

All these projects enabled the ICRC and the National Societies to forge ever-closer links both between the various governing bodies and in the field, and to share their experience and know-how in the various areas of cooperation.

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2 See External Resources, pp. 319-320.
3 See Financial Tables, pp. 329 and 333.
Relations with the international organizations

Today, more than ever, humanitarian action is thought of in terms of dialogue, consistency and concerted action by the various players on the international scene in order to respond as effectively as possible to the needs of conflict victims for protection and assistance. Enhanced respect for and implementation of international humanitarian law are a sine qua non for that protection. The ICRC’s relations with the international organizations (the United Nations and its agencies and specialized programmes), regional organizations and non-governmental organizations are of ever-increasing importance in accomplishing this dual objective. The International Organizations Division therefore intensified such contacts in 1996 and, from Geneva, New York and Addis Ababa, attended many international meetings and conferences in order to uphold the victims’ cause and that of humanitarian law and to draw the ICRC’s attention to any new developments. For this purpose, the Division also kept in close touch with the ICRC regional delegations in Washington and Kuwait to follow up relations with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) respectively.

The mobilization of support for humanitarian objectives continued: the ICRC’s firm commitment to bring about a total ban on anti-personnel landmines was reflected in systematic attempts by delegates from the Division to ensure that progress was made on this subject in international and regional fora. The results are encouraging, to judge by the number of resolutions and declarations adopted in 1996. They include:

♦ the resolution adopted at the 26th OAS General Assembly in Panama (June 1996), entitled “The Western Hemisphere as an Anti-personnel-landmine-free Zone”;
♦ the resolution adopted at the 64th session of the OAU Council of Ministers and at the 32nd OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, in Yaoundé (July 1996);
♦ the joint action on anti-personnel landmines adopted by the Council of the European Union (September 1996);
♦ the resolution on anti-personnel mines adopted at the 96th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Beijing (September 1996);
♦ the resolution on an “International agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines”, adopted at the Fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly (51/45S).

The ICRC also expressed its views for the first time on 15 August before the United Nations Security Council, which was holding a debate on mine clearance in the context of peace-keeping. The ICRC head of delegation in
New York underscored the great human suffering and harm caused by these insidious weapons.

The ICRC’s concerns with regard to landmines were likewise taken into account in the World Action Plan adopted at the close of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in Istanbul in June 1996, and in the Final Declaration of the 6th Ibero-American Summit (Santiago de Chile), at which the ICRC was represented.

Throughout the year, the ICRC took the opportunity at major multilateral gatherings to intensify its dialogue with States in order to defend the principle of independent and impartial humanitarian action and to obtain increased support for its field operations. To this end, the head of delegation in New York regularly informed successive Security Council Presidents about its activities and concerns.

During the year, the ICRC continued and stepped up the dialogue it had initiated with United Nations agencies and programmes. Some examples are:
- the fourth high-level meeting with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR);
- the second high-level meeting with the World Food Programme (WFP), which ended with an exchange of letters laying down basic principles for relief operations in situations of conflict and defining terms of cooperation (Florence, 2 September);
- the first structured dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, accompanied by his senior staff, to clarify complementary working methods;
- the first meeting of the same kind with UNICEF;
- the fruitful contacts established with the World Bank in seeking practical forms of action linking emergency activities, rehabilitation and development.

The purpose of these bilateral steps was to enhance mutual understanding and to strengthen coordination and sectorial cooperation. This pragmatic approach is in no way prejudicial to the ICRC’s participation as an “active observer” in United Nations coordination systems in order to help promote concerted and consistent action by the international community. This participation continued throughout the year.

The World Food Summit held from 13 to 17 November in Rome, at which the ICRC was also represented, was an opportunity for it to make known its approach and experience on the subject of food security in armed conflicts.

For the third time, the ICRC mission to the OAU organized a seminar on the subject “Water and armed conflicts” for the ambassadors accredited to that organization. The seminar gave rise to the “omnibus” resolution adopted by the OAU Council of Ministers in July 1996, in which it appeals to the member States for an absolute protection of water sanitary installations and personnel in charge of maintaining and repairing these installations in armed conflicts. It
also reaffirms the common African stance in support of a total ban on anti-personnel mines.

In the spring, the ICRC President addressed the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe during a debate on a report concerning the ICRC's activities. The debate led to a very firm resolution on respect for and implementation of international humanitarian law.

The year 1996 was also characterized by a strengthening of relations with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The ICRC President was invited to address its Permanent Council in February and the ICRC took part in the work of the OSCE Review Meeting held from 4 to 22 November in Vienna, at which its representative spoke on a number of occasions. For the first time, the ICRC was invited to attend an OSCE summit, which was held in Lisbon.

Contacts with non-governmental organizations were increased and strengthened in 1996, both at headquarters and in the field. So as to share in major deliberations on fields related to its own area of activity, the ICRC took part in many international fora which were devoted not only to a whole range of operational and legal matters, but also to consideration of issues such as ethical criteria for humanitarian action, the protection of displaced persons and the prevention of conflicts.

The ICRC itself held a workshop on international humanitarian law and protection (18 to 20 November) which was attended by 22 non-governmental organizations, and by UNHCR and UNICEF as observers. The participants discussed all aspects of the problem raised, with regard to the application of humanitarian law, by the proliferation of humanitarian agencies engaging in protection activities. Besides making a comparison of working methods, they considered inter alia the advisability of basing action on common ethical criteria, and ways of enhancing the implementation of humanitarian law and strategies to promote complementarity.
Over the years the ICRC has flown thousands of war casualties to its hospital in Lokichokio (Kenya), mostly from southern Sudan. It was opened in 1987 and now has more than 500 beds. A limb-fitting centre for amputees was set up there in 1992.
West Africa
**ICRC delegation:**
Liberia
**ICRC regional delegations:**
Abidjan, Dakar, Lagos

Central Africa
**ICRC delegations:**
Burundi, Rwanda, Zaire
**ICRC regional delegation:**
Yaoundé

Southern Africa
**ICRC delegation:**
Angola
**ICRC regional delegations:**
Harare, Pretoria

East Africa
**ICRC delegations:**
Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan
**ICRC regional delegation:**
Nairobi

Staff
ICRC expatriates\(^1\) 361
National Societies\(^1\) 104
Local employees\(^2\) 3,017

Total expenditure
Sfr 225,716,420

**Expenditure breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td>Protection/tracing</td>
<td>61,148,416</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health activities</td>
<td>34,820,035</td>
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<td>Cooperation with National Societies</td>
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<td>Dissemination/promotion</td>
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<td>Operational support</td>
<td>18,210,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overheads</td>
<td>12,396,183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Average figures calculated on an annual basis.

\(^2\) Under ICRC contract, as at December 1996.
Some of the conflicts affecting several countries in sub-Saharan Africa in 1996 left little scope for humanitarian values. In Liberia, which fell prey to numerous marauding factions, and in Burundi and eastern Zaire, wracked by conflicts to assert group identity, chaos and extreme intolerance prevailed. In north-western Uganda, armed opposition movements intensified their guerrilla activities. In Somalia and the Sudan, the living conditions of the civilian population continued to decline as a result of the hostilities. In Sierra Leone, despite the cease-fire and the signing of a peace agreement, the civilian population continued to suffer from the effects of the conflict. At the beginning of the year, the border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi peninsula flared again in clashes between the Nigerian and Cameroonian armies. In Guinea and the Central African Republic, mutinies by soldiers led to outbreaks of violence claiming civilian victims as well. Finally, the situation remained unstable in certain countries, for example in northern Mali where most of the civilian population and thousands of demobilized soldiers were still awaiting the benefits of peace, and even more so in Rwanda, deeply scarred by the aftermath of the 1994 genocide.

In contrast, the countries of southern Africa enjoyed a year of relative stability. In Angola, the peace process launched in 1994 entered its final phase. South Africa pursued the course set after the demise of apartheid in 1994, and acts of political violence were largely limited to KwaZulu/Natal.

The main challenge facing the ICRC in 1996 was to overcome the various difficulties restricting its access to victims, particularly in Liberia, Burundi and eastern Zaire.

In Liberia, the complete breakdown of law and order in April, and the subsequent looting by armed groups of the humanitarian organizations’ logistical resources and relief supplies, forced the ICRC to relocate its expatriate staff outside the country for the fourth time since starting its activities there in 1989. This time the ICRC alerted the international community, pointing out that large-scale humanitarian operations, which the diverse armed groups were ultimately turning to their own account, could no longer be continued in Liberia. Besides opening this debate, the ICRC tried to find practical ways of continuing at least a minimum of humanitarian activities through its local employees and the Liberian Red Cross, and by means of regular visits that were made by its delegates to Monrovia from Freetown (Sierra Leone).

In Burundi, the deliberate killing of three ICRC delegates on 4 June and the ensuing threats to the delegation forced the institution to suspend its operations indefinitely. At the end of the year, despite an on-going dialogue with the authorities, the prospects of renewed scope for humanitarian action to provide neutral and impartial protection and assistance were slim.

In eastern Zaire the security conditions deteriorated to such an extent, mainly because of the behaviour of the routed Zairian armed forces, that the
expatriate staff of all humanitarian organizations working there, including the ICRC, were withdrawn at the beginning of November. The ICRC was later able to resume its activities in Bukavu, Goma and certain areas on the edge of the conflict zone.

In general, the ICRC constantly strove to adapt its approach to the specific characteristics of each situation so as to be able to protect and assist conflict victims as effectively as possible.

Particular emphasis was placed on activities to protect detainees and on tracing and the restoration of family links. In 1996, the ICRC visited over 100,000 detainees in 22 different countries and forwarded more than three million Red Cross messages between members of dispersed families and between detainees and their relatives. Various forms of assistance were provided for detainees, according to the needs observed. In some cases — especially in Rwanda, but also in Zaire, Madagascar and Ethiopia — the humanitarian needs and the difficulties encountered by certain States in maintaining minimum living conditions in places of detention were so great that the ICRC had to intervene on a broader basis and conduct large-scale food aid, medical and sanitation programmes.

Besides distributions of emergency supplies to particularly vulnerable groups, ICRC assistance continued to be geared as far as possible to rehabilitating means of production to enable conflict-stricken civilian populations to regain self-sufficiency in terms of food. Of particular note were the agricultural, veterinary and fishing programmes, as well as programmes to support local artisan trades and those carried out by the ICRC in the Sudan, Somalia and Mali to get irrigation systems working again.

The diverse situations mentioned above highlighted the need for the ICRC to step up its promotion of international humanitarian law, not only to increase knowledge and acceptance of that law and compliance with it, but also to facilitate access to victims. The advisory services on humanitarian law provided for States (via a specialized delegate newly based in Abidjan), the continued courses (with the assistance of a specialized delegate in Nairobi) for armed forces and other bearers of weapons, and also the development of relations with the media (by means of specialized delegates in Abidjan, Kigali, Kinshasa, Nairobi and Pretoria) were all part of this general campaign to promote international humanitarian law.

Last but not least, the ICRC continued its cooperation programmes with the African National Societies, mainly to strengthen their ability to cope with a variety of emergency situations such as those resulting from the mutinies in Guinea and the Central African Republic or the cholera epidemics in Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Chad.
From late December 1995, when members of the Krahn wing of ULIMO* attacked an ECOMOG* base at Tubmanburg, the relative stability which had followed the signing of a new peace agreement in Abuja (Nigeria) in August 1995 was gradually eroded. From then on, tension steadily increased between the various Liberian factions and reached flashpoint on 6 April when violent clashes broke out in Monrovia even between the NPFL,* an ally of the Mandingo wing of ULIMO, and the latter's Krahn faction. A large number of civilians fled the fighting and the general looting which accompanied it, and sought refuge outside the capital. Several thousand of them also left Monrovia by sea for Ghana, Guinea and Sierra Leone, where they were received by the various National Societies. The humanitarian organizations in Liberia, including the ICRC, were not spared by the looting, and their expatriate staff were forced to withdraw from Monrovia when law and order broke down almost completely. Although relative calm began to return in June, the fundamental problems remained unresolved. At the end of the year, implementation of the provisions agreed by the parties in Abuja in August 1995 and confirmed at another meeting in August 1996, also in Abuja — in particular, the demobilization and disarming of combatants — was still well behind schedule.

Until April, the ICRC delegation had been able to carry out activities in Monrovia and certain accessible parts of the country (on the main roads to Buchanan and Gbarnga). They included visits to persons detained by ECOMOG and by the NPFL, the distribution — in cooperation with the

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* ULIMO: United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia
* ECOMOG: Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
* NPFL: National Patriotic Front of Liberia
National Society — of material assistance to some 10,000 newly displaced people left to fend for themselves, the maintenance of wells and pumps supplying Monrovia with drinking water, support for several medical facilities run by the National Society in Buchanan, Dolo (Grand Bassa county), Gbarnga and Gbatala, and the forwarding of Red Cross messages between members of dispersed families living in Liberia and abroad.

Following the events in April, the ICRC publicly deplored the serious and systematic violations of the most basic rules of international humanitarian law and of the fundamental humanitarian principles that had occurred since the beginning of the conflict in 1989. In taking this public stance, the ICRC furthermore called on the international community and the humanitarian organizations to make a thorough reappraisal of the manner in which operations to provide humanitarian assistance in Liberia were being conducted, for it was clear, from the circumstances in which the humanitarian organizations had to withdraw from the country once again in April 1996, that their considerable logistical resources to carry out their programmes had become the looters’ favourite target and were being used to boost the warring factions’ operational capacity. It was also clear that looting as a means to that end had been extended to the civilian population, and that those groups of civilians receiving emergency aid for their survival were being held hostage by the various combatants, who were living at their expense. The ICRC therefore decided that large-scale humanitarian operations in Liberia could no longer be automatically continued and that a genuine effort must be made to reach an overall political solution: decision-making, diplomatic approaches and practical measures were necessary to restore law and order in the country. Only then could humanitarian activities be resumed without having their previous adverse effects.

Thereafter the ICRC head of delegation “in exile” in Freetown (Sierra Leone) travelled regularly to Monrovia to monitor developments on the spot by maintaining regular contact with all the Liberian factions represented on the Disarmament and Demobilization Committee and with ECOMOG, UNOMIL* and UNHACO,* and to assess the possibility of a gradual return by the ICRC. At the end of the year, the ICRC considered that the requisite conditions for it to resume its large-scale operation in Liberia had not yet been fulfilled.

At the same time local ICRC employees and National Society volunteers, with the help of the head of the delegation and a medical delegate who both came regularly from Freetown, continued their activities — mainly medical

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* UNOMIL: United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia
* UNHACO: United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Office in Liberia
assistance and sanitation — from April onwards and throughout the year in Monrovia and in certain accessible areas of the country.

In late 1996 several thousand people, including many former RUF* fighters, fled from eastern Sierra Leone to Liberia, where they gave themselves up to the Mandingo wing of ULIMO. At this faction’s request, the ICRC began visiting them; 1,469 had been registered by the end of the year. They were given medical and material assistance in accordance with their needs.

* RUF: Revolutionary United Front

IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- until April, visited 8 people held by ECOMOG and 10 people held by the NPFL; some of them were released in February and the others during the events in April. They were given assistance (medical care and basic necessities) in cooperation with the National Society;
- registered, from late November on, 1,469 people who had fled from eastern Sierra Leone and given themselves up to the Mandingo wing of ULIMO. They received medical and material assistance.

- helped to restore and maintain contact between Liberian refugees outside the country and their families by means of a Red Cross message network run in cooperation with the Liberian Red Cross Society and the National Societies of the host countries.

- supported the clinics run by the Liberian Red Cross Society in Buchanan, Dolo, Gbarnga and Gbatala by providing them with medicines and other medical supplies and by paying the salaries of National Society volunteers;
- set up a mobile clinic, in cooperation with the National Society, for people displaced by the fighting in and around Monrovia in April and May. The clinic gave an average of 2,000 consultations a week.

- supervised maintenance work on more than 1,000 wells and pumps supplying drinking water to Monrovia;
- gave constant support to the National Society, after seeing that only Liberian nationals and Liberian Red Cross Society staff were able to continue carrying out humanitarian activities in the particular situation resulting from the events in Monrovia in April and May.

- gave numerous ad hoc briefings at the checkpoints set up by ECOMOG and the various Liberian factions in order to explain the ICRC’s activities and mandate, make known the humanitarian principles and the basic rules of humanitarian law, and promote respect for the red cross emblem.
ABIDJAN
Regional delegation
(Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Togo)

The countries covered by the Abidjan regional delegation were relatively stable in 1996.

However, the situation in Sierra Leone, where the civilian population continued to suffer from the effects of the conflict despite the peace negotiations between the government and the RUF,* and to a lesser extent in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire was a particular source of concern to the ICRC during the year.

As in 1995, the presence in western Côte d'Ivoire of large numbers of refugees from Liberia gave rise to tension between them and the police. Similar tensions involving refugees from Sierra Leone arose in Guinea. Since these refugees were covered by UNHCR's mandate, the ICRC concentrated on restoring contact between them and their families.

In Guinea, several army units mutinied in Conakry in February. While the initial cause was economic, the mutiny took a political turn when the soldiers involved attempted to oust the head of State. The ensuing fighting took a heavy toll of about 50 dead and many injured, and an undetermined number of mutineers were arrested (about 40 of them were still in prison at the end of the year). A second mutiny followed in March, but had less serious consequences than the first one. The ICRC asked to be allowed to visit the people detained in connection with these events. At the end of the year, it received the authorities' permission to visit the people held under the responsibility of the prison administration. Since the imprisoned insurgents were held under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence, visits to them were thus excluded.

In Sierra Leone, 1996 brought hope of an end to the five-year conflict between the government and the RUF. A cease-fire came into effect between the parties in March. At the same time, elections returned a civilian government to power and peace negotiations began between the belligerents, with Côte d'Ivoire acting as mediator. After an interruption from May to November, the negotiations ended with the signing of a peace agreement on 30 November in Abidjan. The situation in the field nonetheless remained complex. In spite of the cease-fire, fighting of greater or lesser intensity went on between the various armed groups (government forces, a foreign security company, traditional militias and RUF fighters). Civilians, especially those living near the trouble

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* RUF: Revolutionary United Front
spots, continued to suffer from the uncertain situation of neither war nor peace. In November several thousand people, including many RUF fighters, fled from south-eastern Sierra Leone to Liberia where they gave themselves up to the Mandingo wing of ULIMO.¹

On several occasions the ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary at the request of both the government and the RUF by transporting, under the protection of the red cross emblem, government and RUF representatives engaged in the peace negotiations in Côte d'Ivoire, and thereby helped to further the peace process.

After obtaining the authorities' consent in December 1995, the ICRC also launched a large-scale relief operation in February for about 160,000 people affected by the situation in the east of the country, both in the government-controlled and in the rebel-held areas. This operation had several objectives: the first was to provide seed and implements to enable the civilian population to resume farming and gradually become self-sufficient again in terms of food. Secondly, the ICRC wished to reactivate the medical services, paralysed by years of conflict, by supporting about 20 medical facilities, training competent local staff and carrying out work to improve hygiene and access to drinking water; a vaccination campaign for children under five years of age and women of child-bearing age was also begun. The operation was made more difficult by security constraints (safety of personnel) and the poor condition of roads in some areas, and air transport had to be used. For the same reasons, activities in Kailahun were carried out from a logistics base set up at Guéckédou (Guinea) until July, when the government closed the border to relief supplies. Other constraints of a more political nature caused the operation to be temporarily suspended several times, in May, July and October.

While addressing these particular priorities, throughout the year the Abidjan regional delegation continued its activities to promote knowledge of and compliance with humanitarian law and, via the advisory services provided to States, to encourage the implementation of humanitarian law at national level. The ICRC also continued, within its area of competence, to support National Societies in the region.

¹ See also Liberia, p. 40-42.
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- in Sierra Leone, visited 311 persons held in Freetown, Bo, Kenema, Zimi, Segbwema and Daru for security reasons or in connection with the conflict in the east of the country and regularly provided them with assistance according to their needs.

- helped to restore and maintain contact between refugees (mainly Sierra Leonean and Liberian nationals in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea) and their families via a Red Cross message network.

- from February onwards, distributed 1,200 tonnes of seed, 52,000 farming implements, 4,680 tonnes of food and various essentials to some 160,000 people in government-controlled and RUF-controlled isolated areas of eastern Sierra Leone (Kailahun and Pujehun, and the Daru, Segbwema and Zimi districts).

- carried out a primary health care programme, begun in April, for the population of the aforesaid areas by supporting about 20 medical facilities, training local medical staff, improving or setting up drinking-water supply and waste-water disposal systems, and vaccinating children under five years old and women of childbearing age;

- evacuated 12 injured people in October and November from the combat zones to hospitals in Segbwema, Kenema, Bo and Freetown.

- continued its cooperation programme with the region's National Societies, concentrating according to needs and to varying degrees on structural development, the training of staff and volunteers, and support for activities to spread knowledge of international humanitarian law and/or on strengthening the various National Societies' emergency response capacity.

- pursued its efforts, adapted to each specific situation, to encourage acceptance and better understanding of humanitarian law by the various target audiences in the region (civilian and military authorities, armed forces, the police, various associations, academic circles and the general public);

- as part of its Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law, held 3 seminars for high-ranking government officials – in Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Ghana – to promote the implementation of humanitarian law at national level;

- held a regional seminar in Cotonou on humanitarian rules applicable in situations of internal violence, attended by representatives of security and defence forces from 10 countries in the region;

- held a seminar in Lomé for military officers responsible for training in the humanitarian rules at intermediate levels of the armed forces.
In Mali, the peace process begun in early 1995 between the government and the Tuareg and Arab rebel movements remained fragile. The living conditions of the civilian population in the north of the country showed little improvement. The situation there, aggravated by the effects of a persistent drought, gave rise to steadily growing discontent in some sections of the population and hence to increased insecurity in the region. In these circumstances the ICRC, which had been present in Mali again on a permanent basis since March 1995, stepped up its activities in the areas most affected by the situation, especially in those parts of the country where no other humanitarian organizations were working (Timbuktu and Bourem). The purpose of its operation was twofold: to help restore an atmosphere of confidence between the communities by establishing and maintaining contact with all the parties and keeping the authorities and other humanitarian organizations regularly informed, and to come to the aid of people in need. The ICRC took action either by providing direct ad hoc assistance to certain vulnerable groups or by carrying out programmes to reactivate medical services and encourage the resumption of agricultural and economic production; these programmes were carefully designed to involve the local population.

In Senegal, the ICRC’s main concern was to have access to the people detained in connection with the situation in Casamance. After repeated requests, the ICRC obtained written permission from the authorities in April. The first visits were made in May and June to two places of detention in Dakar and Ziguinchor; they took place in accordance with the ICRC’s customary procedures. In addition, sporadic clashes between the army and the MDFC* in Casamance continued to affect the civilian population, particularly by barring access to certain villages and agricultural areas. The Senegalese Red Cross Society, with the help of the ICRC, distributed ad hoc food aid to civilian victims of the fighting.

Besides dealing with these particular priorities, the Dakar regional delegation continued throughout the year to promote humanitarian law and encouraged its implementation at the national level, providing the advisory services offered to States to that effect. The ICRC also continued, within its area of competence, to support National Societies in the region.

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* MDFC: Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- in Senegal, made its first visit in May and June to 138 people held in Dakar and 45 people held in Ziguinchor; a second visit was made in December;
- in Gambia, visited 27 people held at Mile 2 prison in connection with the July 1994 coup and its aftermath in November 1994 and January 1995, and 40 people held at the Fajara military camp (near Banjul) following a demonstration in October 1995 organized by supporters of the former governing party;
- in Guinea-Bissau, visited 8 people held in Bissau after the abortive coup of March 1993;
- in Mali, visited 12 people (including eight dignitaries from the former regime) held at five places of detention;
- in Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Senegal, distributed various types of assistance (bedding, hygiene requisites, recreational materials, etc.) according to the specific needs identified in the places of detention visited;
- supported the social welfare activities carried out in prisons by the Red Cross of Cape Verde and the Gambia Red Cross Society;
- gave all the detainees visited in the various places mentioned above the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their families.

- helped to restore and maintain contact between refugees from the Great Lakes region and their families by means of a Red Cross message system operated from Dakar and in cooperation with the region's National Societies;
- facilitated the exchange of Red Cross messages between Malian refugees in camps outside the country and their families;
- maintained contact with the parties concerned in Mali with a view to resolving the cases, still pending, of persons abducted during the years of unrest.

- delivered food to the Senegalese Red Cross Society for its assistance programme for the civilian victims of the events in Casamance;
- distributed more than 28 tonnes of sorghum and vegetable seed, agricultural implements, fishing tackle and requisites for artisan trades in northern Mali to enable over 4,000 families to become self-supporting again;
- distributed 6,000 tarpaulins and 12,000 blankets to 6,000 destitute families in northern Mali;
- completed the dredging of a canal between the Niger river and Lake Faguibine in Mali to enable agricultural areas to be enlarged and better irrigated.

- helped to reactivate basic health-care facilities which had existed before the years of unrest in the regions of Gao (through a project delegated to the Belgian Red Cross) and Timbuktu (as from September) by training and assisting local medical staff and by providing medicines and other medical supplies;
- carried out a vaccination campaign for children under five years old and women of child-bearing age in the Gao and Timbuktu regions.

- carried out environmental sanitation work and rehabilitated traditional wells as part of its medical programme in northern Mali.
— helped to promote dialogue among the region’s National Societies on the basis of specific mutual interests and to organize a meeting to this effect in Cape Verde in September for their leaders;
— continued its cooperation programmes with the region’s National Societies, concentrating according to needs and to varying degrees on structural development, the training of staff and volunteers, support for activities to spread knowledge of international humanitarian law and/or on strengthening the various National Societies’ emergency response capacity.
— pursued its efforts, adapted to each specific situation, to encourage acceptance and better understanding of humanitarian law and the ICRC by the various target audiences in the region (civilian and military authorities, armed forces, the police, various associations, academic circles and the general public);
— as part of its Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law, held a seminar in Dakar for high-ranking Senegalese officials on the respective roles of the State, the National Society and the ICRC in promoting humanitarian law;
— held a seminar in Bamako for military officers from all over the country assigned to set up a system of humanitarian law training at all levels.
LAGOS
Regional delegation
(Nigeria)

There were no major disturbances in Nigeria in 1996, although the situation remained unstable. After the execution by hanging of nine members of MOSOP* in November 1995, Nigeria came under criticism from the international community and a number of Nigerian and foreign human rights organizations. The Provisional Ruling Council in power was induced by that criticism to amend certain special legal provisions, in particular the Civil Disturbance Decree (under which the nine MOSOP members had been sentenced) and the State Security/Detention of Persons Decree.

The Provisional Ruling Council continued to implement its programme for the transition from military to civilian rule — as announced by the head of State in October 1995 — but failed to gain the support of all political factions in the country for it. Acts of violence increased during the year, and ethnic or religious rivalries were reflected in several intercommunal clashes.

Beside pursuing its long-term activities, particularly those to promote knowledge of humanitarian law and advise on its implementation, the ICRC closely monitored developments in connection with the arrest and detention of political dissidents. It also continued its active support for the Nigerian Red Cross Society so as to strengthen its operational capacity and thus its ability to intervene in emergency situations, such as the intercommunal clashes and the meningitis epidemic in the north of the country.

In February and April 1996, the border dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon over the Bakassi peninsula — which was taken to the International Court of Justice in 1994 — flared up again, leading to renewed clashes between the Nigerian and Cameroonian armed forces. The ICRC thereupon reminded the Nigerian authorities of their obligations under the Geneva Conventions and Protocol I, which were fully applicable to the situation, to comply with the provisions of international humanitarian law. In cooperation with the Nigerian Red Cross Society, it distributed ad hoc relief to the military medical facilities treating the wounded. The ICRC also requested the authorities several times — including a top-level approach in the form of a letter from the President of the ICRC to the Nigerian President — for access to any Cameroonian prisoners of war and civilian detainees who had been captured during the

* MOSOP: Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
clashes. No answer had been received by the end of the year, nor had the Nigerian government replied to the enquiries transmitted to it by the ICRC in May, at the request of the Cameroonian authorities, with regard to 131 Cameroonians (127 soldiers, one policeman and three civilians) missing since those events.  

2 For an account of activities and approaches on the Cameroonian side in connection with the Bakassi dispute, see Yaoundé, pp 70-72.

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IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- transmitted to the Nigerian authorities, at the request of the Cameroonian authorities, a list of 128 persons (127 soldiers and one policeman) reported missing after the fighting in February, and details of 3 civilians, who also disappeared in the course of the Bakassi conflict.

- in coordination with the Yaoundé regional delegation, and with the cooperation of the Nigerian Red Cross Society, restored and maintained contact between Nigerian civilian internees and prisoners of war in Cameroon and their families in Nigeria by means of a Red Cross message network.

- in cooperation with the Nigerian Red Cross Society, provided ad hoc assistance to military and civilian medical facilities to treat people injured during the Bakassi conflict.

- within its field of competence, continued to support the Nigerian Red Cross Society, particularly in its work to promote knowledge of international humanitarian law and to strengthen its operational capacity in each of the Nigerian federal states.

- continued its cooperation in humanitarian law training with most of the military academies, such as the Nigerian Defence Academy, the National War College and the Warrant Officers' Academy;

- organized several humanitarian law courses for directly operational units of the armed forces and the police;

- held a seminar, organized in cooperation with the National Society and the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs and attended by 80 senior government officials, members of the judiciary and representatives of the legislative authorities, to promote the implementation of humanitarian law at national level.
Central Africa

BURUNDI

On 4 June, three ICRC delegates were murdered when their vehicle, which was clearly marked with the ICRC emblem, was caught in an ambush in the northern province of Cibitoke. The delegates were returning to Bujumbura after a mission in Cibitoke province, which was particularly hard-hit by the conflict and where the ICRC was carrying out a large-scale relief programme for the civilian population. This deliberate attack and further threats to the delegation in the next few days forced the ICRC to withdraw all its expatriate staff from Burundi on 11 June and to suspend its activities there completely, leaving many victims without assistance or protection.

In 1996, tension in Burundi mounted steadily. From March onwards, clashes between the Tutsi-majority government army and armed Hutu groups became more and more frequent throughout the country, including the southern and central provinces which had been relatively calm until then. Self-defence militia groups were also formed within the civilian population, thus increasing the number of armed contenders acting outside any formally constituted body. In the rural areas the civilian population, mostly Hutus, found themselves held hostage by the hostilities, being forced either to gather in areas protected by the armed forces or to stay in the hills and be considered as sympathizing with rebel groups. The spiral of violence (attacks from one side provoking retaliation from the other), the fighting, the massacres and the destruction of many vital installations, especially electricity and water systems, claimed hundreds of thousands of victims among the civilian population: besides the many people killed, thousands were injured and tens of thousands displaced or forced into exile. Because of the extremely hazardous situation, the humanitarian organizations working in the country gradually reduced their presence near the victims, and by 4 June the ICRC was the only one still able to move around...
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- visited over 2,700 detainees held under the authority of the Ministries of Justice and of the Interior in 11 prisons and 37 temporary places of detention (lock-ups);
- provided the detainees with medical and material assistance (hygiene requisites, bedding and recreational items) in accordance with the needs identified;
- took steps on 3 occasions to prevent dysentery and typhus epidemics from developing in the Ngozi and Mpimba prisons (Bujumbura);
- carried out sanitation work in prisons and trained local maintenance teams.

- facilitated the restoration and maintenance of contact between Rwandan refugees and their families by means of a Red Cross message network (for total figures see Rwanda);
- coordinated a programme for the registration of unaccompanied Rwandan children among the refugees with the aim of ultimately reuniting them with their families (for total figures see Rwanda).

- distributed 240 tonnes of seed and 27,000 hoes to 27,000 displaced families to enable them to cultivate their land and thus regain food self-sufficiency;
- distributed 93,000 blankets, 20,000 tarpaulins, 24,000 jerrycans, 23,000 cooking sets and 31 tonnes of soap to 35,000 displaced families who had lost everything after having had to flee from their homes.

- regularly supported hospitals treating the wounded, especially in Bujumbura and in the Cibitoke and Bubanza provinces, by providing them with medicines and other medical supplies;
- provided ad hoc or regular assistance to 34 health centres in the areas of unrest;
- evacuated 63 wounded persons to appropriate medical facilities and, where necessary, financed their return to their places of origin once they had recovered.

- conducted an urgent ad hoc operation in January, together with other humanitarian organizations and the relevant authorities, to supply drinking water to the people of Bujumbura where the electricity network had been sabotaged;
- carried out emergency sanitation work and transported drinking water in tankers to places where groups of displaced persons had gathered, particularly on the Imbo plain (Bubanza province).

- organized humanitarian law courses for the regular forces (army, gendarmerie and police).
freely in most of the provinces, including those most severely affected by the conflict. After its withdrawal on 11 June, victims of the conflict living in some parts of the country were consequently left entirely unaided.

At the political level, the initiatives taken by former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, who was designated chief mediator for the Burundian crisis at a regional summit meeting held in Tunis in March, and by several high-ranking foreign officials dispatched to Burundi, failed to bring about a resumption of the dialogue between the government and the rebels. In view of the escalating conflict, the neighbouring countries convened a summit of heads of State in Tanzania on 25 June at which it was decided, with the consent of Burundi’s President and Prime Minister, to send a foreign military force to Burundi to help the government restore law and order. On returning to Burundi, however, the Prime Minister opposed the deployment of this force, thus plunging the government into a major crisis. On 25 July the Burundian army, led by former President Buyoya (1987-1993), ousted President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya. The National Assembly was dissolved and all political parties banned. Six days later, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zaire imposed an economic embargo on Burundi, demanding the reinstatement of the National Assembly and the political parties and the opening of peace negotiations between all the parties, including the rebel groups. At the end of the year, however, no political solution had yet been found and the embargo imposed on Burundi by its neighbours was still in force.

Until the tragedy of 4 June, the ICRC endeavoured to provide protection and assistance to the victims of the conflict, but even the most basic humanitarian values and the very meaning of neutral and impartial humanitarian activities were largely negated by the acute mistrust that prevailed between the communities, and on several occasions the ICRC was forced to reduce or even temporarily suspend its activities in all or part of the country. They had already been suspended in December 1995 after serious security incidents, but resumed in January when the highest authorities clearly renewed their pledge to guarantee the ICRC’s security.

In those circumstances, the delegation constantly sought to establish and build up contacts with all concerned — the political, military and civilian authorities, armed Hutu opposition groups and Tutsi militia groups — so as to promote compliance with the basic humanitarian rules (especially those regarding the respect to which the civilian population is entitled), to inform them of the fundamental principles governing the work of the Red Cross, and to ask them to guarantee the security of ICRC activities and staff. By their physical presence in the conflict-stricken areas and their frequent contacts with the parties involved, the delegates did their utmost to temper the animosity
between rival communities and thus to foster greater respect for the civilian population.

In addition, the ICRC had regular access to detainees held under the authority of the Ministry of Justice (prisons) and the Ministry of the Interior (gendarmerie squads and police stations). A general round of visits was made in April to all the country’s prisons. The ICRC offered the detainees visited the opportunity to exchange news with their families by means of Red Cross messages; this service was restricted, however, by the inaccessibility of some parts of the country for security reasons. In the course of its tracing activities, the ICRC concentrated on restoring and maintaining contact between Rwandan refugees in camps in the north of the country and their families in Rwanda, and on registering unaccompanied Rwandan children.

The ICRC also conducted large-scale assistance programmes for the civilian victims of the conflict. No serious food shortages were noted. The most urgent humanitarian needs stemmed from the partial or complete lack of access to medical care and drinking water and the total destitution of people who had had to flee their homes because of the conflict. The ICRC therefore focused on providing material assistance, distributing drinking water and setting up agronomic programmes. In the medical field, the ICRC evacuated the wounded to appropriate medical facilities and, where necessary, financed their return to their places of origin once they had recovered. In addition, regular support was given to hospitals treating the wounded or sick, and to health centres in the areas of unrest. After 4 June, the ICRC handed over its stock of medical supplies to the Ministry of Health and to other humanitarian organizations present in Bujumbura.

At the end of the year, after high-level discussions in Geneva between the ICRC President and Burundi government representatives and several missions to Bujumbura by the head of delegation, the thorough investigation requested by the ICRC into the circumstances of the attack in which three of its delegates lost their lives remained inconclusive, and the ICRC therefore considered that the conditions required for it to resume its activities in the country had not yet been fulfilled.
in 1996, Rwanda remained deeply marked by the after-effects of the 1994 genocide. The government tried resolutely to get a grip on the situation, following a firm course of action already outlined in 1995. Nevertheless, many of the various problems besetting the country since 1994 persisted in 1996.

As UNAMIR’s* mandate ended on 8 March, the government took several measures during the year to improve security in the country: new identity cards and passports — giving no indication of ethnic origin — were issued; confidence-building tours were organized in the prefectures to restore trust in the authorities; and checks were stepped up in parts of the country experiencing numerous armed incursions from Zaire. Most of the administrative systems and public services were also progressively restored. Judicial institutions were slowly re-established and several legislative reforms took place, in particular the promulgation on 1 September of the Organic Law on the Organization of Prosecutions for Offences constituting the Crime of Genocide or Crimes against Humanity committed since 1 October 1990. The first trials by a Rwandan court of persons accused of having taken an active part in the genocide opened in late 1996 and verdicts were expected in early 1997, whilst the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, set up in November 1994, had indicted 21 people by the end of the year, seven of whom were held in its custody in Arusha (Tanzania). Lastly, a pledge of substantial financial support was given by the international community, at a round table organized by UNDP* in Geneva in June at the request of the Rwandan government, for the latter’s programme to rehabilitate the country’s social and economic structures and revive economic activity.

* UNAMIR: United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
* UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
Despite these major developments, formidable humanitarian problems continued to plague Rwanda.

Over 1.5 million Rwandan refugees were still housed in camps in Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi, and the question of their future remained crucial for stability in the region. For most of the year, however, the large majority of refugees failed to heed appeals by the Rwandan government, UNHCR and the countries of asylum and did not return to Rwanda, partly because they feared retaliation by the Rwandan authorities and partly because they were seriously deterred from doing so by the Interahamwe militia leaders and the civilian and military authorities of the previous government. Then in July and August, the Rwandan refugees in Burundi finally did go back to Rwanda; the first of them were forcibly expelled by the Burundian army, whereas the others fled when the situation in northern Burundi deteriorated. From 15 November, in the wake of the offensive launched in late September by the ADFL,* over 500,000 Rwandan refugees who had been living in camps around Goma also returned to Rwanda after wandering for weeks in eastern Zaire in desperate conditions.

Finally, under pressure from the Tanzanian authorities, 460,000 Rwandan refugees living in the Lake Ngara region likewise went back to Rwanda in mid-December. These mass returns caused both short- and long-term problems. To begin with, emergency arrangements had to be made to receive hundreds of thousands of people — most of them exhausted by days of walking, sometimes without any clear destination. Later, some means of handling the social repercussions of their return had to be set up; this issue was still far from being resolved at the end of the year. Disputes over property rights between refugees who returned to find their land occupied by other people — themselves former refugees often claiming that the land had originally belonged to them before they fled the massacres in and after 1959 — looked set to be the main problem in that respect.

Meanwhile, a general atmosphere of distrust between the communities again prevailed in Rwanda throughout the year, accentuated by the armed incursions from Zaire into the country’s western prefectures to attack the authorities and survivors of the genocidal massacres. The number of people arrested in connection with the 1994 genocide or for national security offences remained high, over 3,200 a month on average. Arrests, often arbitrary, were particularly numerous in May and June, when new identity cards and passports were issued, and late in the year, when returning refugees flooded in. Several new places of detention were opened between August 1995 and October 1996 and

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* ADFL: Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Zaire-Congo

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3 See Zaire, pp. 62-69 and Tanzania, p. 102.
the capacity of some prisons was increased, bringing the country's estimated total prison capacity to 34,000. However, these measures and the releases that took place during the year did not offset the arrival of new detainees in the prisons, as there was no effective judicial system to limit the number of arbitrary arrests and to investigate the cases of those arrested. Consequently, the acute overcrowding already observed there in 1995 and the ever-present serious health hazards for detainees living in exceptionally inhuman conditions continued in 1996. By the end of the year, more than 60,000 people were crammed into the country's central prisons and over 30,000 more in temporary places of detention (lock-ups).

Another major humanitarian problem which remained unresolved was that of families split apart during the internal conflict, the 1994 genocide and the flight of hundreds of thousands of refugees to neighbouring countries, or the mass return of refugees in 1996. The problem of unaccompanied minors — children who lost or were separated from their families during the 1994 genocide and the events that followed, or when refugees streamed back home at the end of the year — was likewise of constant concern.

Moreover, many people whose homes were destroyed during the internal conflict and the massacres continued to live precariously in makeshift accommodation such as cowsheds or schools, or in cramped conditions with other families. Owing to the country's economic difficulties and particularly the lack of jobs, these people — mostly widows and survivors of the genocide — were again left to eke out a living on the fringes of society. In 1996, no systematic assistance was provided for them, either by the government or by the humanitarian organizations.

In 1996 the ICRC continued its efforts in all its traditional spheres of activity. As in 1995, acute overcrowding in Rwandan prisons throughout the year was again a major source of concern for the ICRC. At every possible opportunity, and particularly during the round table on Rwanda held in Geneva in June, the ICRC drew the attention of the countries concerned to the consistently alarming situation in Rwandan places of detention, which required their firm commitment and that of the Rwandan government to remedy it. Regular contact was also maintained at all levels with the relevant Rwandan authorities in order to remind them that they themselves bore the main responsibility for ensuring that the conditions of detention were acceptable. At the same time, the ICRC continued the large-scale assistance programme launched in 1994 to enable the detainees in those prisons to survive. The programme undoubtedly had an effect: by late 1995, the prison mortality rate had dropped to approximately that of the rest of the population and in 1996, despite the substantially higher number of people in prison, the situation
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- regularly visited detainees in prisons and temporary places of detention. At the end of the year, 90,040 people registered by the ICRC were held there; two-thirds of them were in prisons;
- provided 8,115 tonnes of food and 1,020 tonnes of other relief supplies as part of its prison assistance programme to ensure the survival of all detainees; dispensaries were also supplied with medicines according to the needs identified (shortages or unavailability of particular medicines) and the sanitation work begun in 1995 was completed;
- forwarded some 150,000 Red Cross messages between detainees and their families;
- monitored the general state of health of the prison population (hygiene, epidemiological monitoring, nutritional checks) in order to prevent any rapid deterioration;
- distributed ad hoc assistance in the temporary places of detention and carried out sanitation work as needed;
- concluded an agreement with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and, on the basis of that agreement, began regular visits in June to the persons detained under the Tribunal's authority in Arusha (7 persons registered).
- forwarded some 2.5 million Red Cross messages either within Rwanda, between Rwanda and neighbouring countries, or between Rwanda and other countries, to and from members of families separated by the events;
- continued to coordinate a programme to register unaccompanied Rwandan minors and ultimately reunite them with their families; in 1996, a total of 11,500 children were reunited with their families either by the ICRC or thanks to other humanitarian organizations.
- distributed 1,060 tonnes of food and 160 tonnes of various other supplies to over 11,000 direct victims of the genocide (orphans, widows, and people who had fled their homes because of insecurity);
- supported the programmes carried out by survivors' associations to build almost 400 homes in Kigali, Butare and Gisenyi;
- distributed drinking water and protein-enriched biscuits at supply posts along the main routes taken by refugees heading home on foot from Zaire and Tanzania, and made its vehicles available to transport the weakest refugees.
- supported the Gatagara prosthetic/orthotic centre through a project delegated to the Swiss Red Cross.
- continued to give the relevant authorities technical and material assistance to enable them to keep going the water treatment plants serving large urban areas;
- continued sanitation work in rural areas in order to improve access to drinking water; some of this work was carried out through projects delegated to the American, Australian, British, German and Swedish Red Cross Societies.
- supplied the Rwandan Red Cross with the logistical resources and relief supplies needed to set up a food aid programme for 15,000 secondary school pupils.
- organized numerous dissemination sessions on humanitarian law for various audiences - civilian and military authorities, armed forces and police units, academic circles;
- launched a public information campaign to promote respect for basic humanitarian rules.
remained under control thanks to the ICRC's unfailing efforts and the authorities' growing commitment. In November and December 1995, and to a varying extent each month in 1996, the authorities did in fact manage to meet their responsibilities and to supply some of the necessary food, firewood and medicines. By the end of the year, the ICRC was able to reduce its food aid to 50% of the amount required in the prisons (down from 100% in 1995). Owing to the Rwandan health authorities' efforts, its regular supply of medicines and other medical requisites to prison dispensaries could likewise be considerably reduced in 1996, and the ICRC stepped in only to make up for occasional temporary shortages, to provide specific medicines not available in adequate quantities in the country and to monitor the general health of the prison population. The work started by the ICRC in 1995 to improve prison sanitation was completed in 1996, and at the end of the year an agreement under which maintenance of the sanitary facilities would be taken over by the ministries concerned was being concluded between them and the ICRC.

In the lock-ups, which were intended to be only temporary places of detention, the ICRC did not distribute any food aid to the detainees. To meet any urgent needs observed during visits it did, however, give ad hoc assistance with regard to medical care and sanitation.

Besides providing assistance, which constituted the essential first phase in protecting the detainees, the ICRC also continued its regular visits to prisons and other places of detention. The delegates registered newly arrested persons and monitored the cases of detainees already in custody from an earlier date. In general, the work was carried out with good cooperation from the authorities. Nonetheless the ICRC was unable, despite repeated requests, to obtain the military authorities' permission to have systematic access to the places of detention under their responsibility. On the basis of the delegates' findings during their visits, the ICRC regularly submitted written and oral reports to the authorities concerned, reminding them of their obligation to treat detainees humanely. In addition, the ICRC gave all detainees visited the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their relatives.

To restore and maintain contact between family members separated by events, the ICRC continued to run a vast network for the exchange of Red Cross messages both within Rwanda, between Rwanda and neighbouring countries and between Rwanda and other countries. Part of this tremendous task was accomplished in cooperation with the National Societies of more than thirty countries which had accepted Rwandan refugees. As postal services in Rwanda itself were gradually re-established during the year, the use of the Red Cross message service was progressively limited to people living in isolated parts of the country.
The ICRC also continued to coordinate a large-scale programme for the registration of unaccompanied minors, with the ultimate purpose of reuniting them with their parents. This programme was launched in 1994 and had been run since then in conjunction with Save the Children Fund-UK, UNHCR, UNICEF and other non-governmental organizations. During the mass return of Rwandan refugees from Burundi, Zaire and Tanzania the ICRC, in accordance with its specific mandate, concentrated particularly on the reception of unaccompanied minors. On arrival in Rwanda, the children were registered by delegates, then transferred to transit centres there run by other humanitarian organizations. In many cases, the children had lost touch with their parents only temporarily among the crowds heading home and could therefore be rapidly reunited with their families, sometimes the same day.

Apart from the major sanitation work carried out in places of detention, in 1996 the ICRC continued and expanded programmes launched the previous year to improve drinking water supplies, particularly in rural areas in the Butare, Gikongoro, Ruhengeri, Gisenyi, Kibungo and Kigali prefectures. Some of the latter work was done through individual projects delegated to the American, Australian, British, German and Swedish Red Cross Societies. The ICRC also continued to supply spare parts and provide various forms of assistance to the authorities to enable them to continue operating water treatment plants serving the main towns. During the year, since the authorities concerned were able to provide sufficient chemicals for water purification, the ICRC stopped its own large-scale deliveries of such products and only made up for occasional shortages.

As the Rwandan medical services improved during the year and several non-governmental organizations stepped in, the ICRC was able to reduce its medical aid. Begun in 1995, the projects delegated to the French and German Red Cross Societies to rehabilitate health centres were extended to 17 such centres and completed in 1996. The Swiss and German Red Cross Societies also began a major programme during the year to support the Kibuye hospital with medical equipment, expertise and expatriate staff; the Swiss Red Cross took on the additional task, through a delegated project, of running the Gatagara prosthetic/orthotic centre.

In 1995, the ICRC had progressively been able to reduce its assistance to the civilian population and food distributions had ceased by the end of the year. In 1996, the ICRC concentrated on aiding particularly vulnerable sections of the population: on the one hand, survivors of the 1994 genocide, and on the

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5 See the ICRC’s 1995 Annual Report, p. 61.
other hand people who, feeling threatened by the armed incursions from Zaire, had fled their homes and gathered in public places — mainly in Kigali and Gitarama. In the former case, the delegation established closer contacts during the first six months with genocide survivors’ associations and helped them to carry out certain projects they had submitted to it. In the latter case, the ICRC intervened directly by providing ad hoc aid in places where those people had gathered. During the mass return of Rwandan refugees from Zaire and Tanzania, the ICRC also took part in the emergency operation set up by the humanitarian organizations — particularly UNHCR, the Federation, the Rwandan Red Cross and non-governmental organizations — to receive the new arrivals.

Furthermore, the delegation made every effort to overcome the mistrust felt by some of the population for the foreign community present in the country by promoting greater knowledge and acceptance of the ICRC’s specific nature and activities. A public information campaign on humanitarian law was also launched, and care was taken to incorporate local cultural values in the humanitarian message conveyed so as to make it accessible to all.

As the Rwandan Red Cross was being completely reconstituted, the ICRC, in consultation with the Federation, supported its development by providing it with the logistical facilities and various relief supplies it needed to organize a food aid programme for 15,000 pupils at secondary-level boarding schools.
Life for the Zairian people was no easier in 1996. The persistent socio-economic crisis, the increasing poverty of most of the population, the sorry state of public services and the postponement of elections initially promised for July 1995 left most Zairians living precariously from hand to mouth.

The ethnic rivalries in the east of the country, closely linked to the sensitive issue of origin and nationality and its direct consequences for land ownership and the right to vote, remained a source of hatred and violence between the different communities. Since Zaire's accession to independence in 1960, the Banyamulenge — numerous in South Kivu — and the Banyarwanda — the majority population in the Masisi area (Kivu province) — had possessed Zairian nationality under a law adopted at that time which granted citizenship to anyone who was living within the national borders and claimed it. In 1989, the law was amended and only those who could prove that their ancestors lived in Zaire before 1885 were henceforth entitled to Zairian nationality. The prospect of elections since 1990 caused growing tension between the population of Zairian origin on the one hand and, on the other, the Banyamulenge and especially the Banyarwanda, who saw themselves excluded de facto from the democratic process.

In the Masisi area, the first violent intercommunal clashes occurred in 1993; the situation then calmed down temporarily. From 1994 onwards, the disturbances were aggravated by the huge influx of over a million Rwandan refugees in eastern Zaire. In 1996 the Banyarwanda, backed by the Rwandan Hutu refugees, seized control of more and more of the Masisi area, to the detriment of the indigenous population and the Banyarwanda Tutsis. Almost all the latter were forced to flee to Rwanda, where they were given shelter in a camp set up by the authorities just within the border near Gisenyi, then resettled in the
The deployment of Zairian troops to stop the fighting in the Masisi area, then in the Lubero and Rutshuru regions, to which the disturbances had spread in May, did not solve the problems.

In South Kivu, the situation remained fairly calm until late September, except along the Zairean border with Rwanda and Burundi, where frequent skirmishes took place throughout the year between the various armed groups. Towards the end of September, the entire area from Kalemie in the south to Bunia in the north flared up after the ADFL, a force consisting of several Zairian opposition movements including the Banyamulenge, launched an offensive against the Zairian army. The offensive began in the Uvira region and advanced rapidly towards Bukavu, then Goma. It brought the existing intercommunal tensions to a flashpoint, while groups of Zairian soldiers in full and completely undisciplined retreat went on a looting spree. At the same time, the situation in the east of the country sparked disturbances in other regions further inside Zaire; they included Kinshasa, where people suspected of having some link with Rwanda were victimized. Further north, at the border with Uganda, there were clashes between the Zairian armed forces and the WNBF rebels on the one hand and the Ugandan army and ADFL fighters on the other.

All the Rwandan and Burundian refugees living in the camps between Uvira and Goma, along with a large number of Zairian civilians, scattered before the advancing ADFL fighters. Some went south, others north, while others headed west towards the interior of Zaire or east towards Tanzania. Their flight took place in particularly desperate conditions, for as the offensive gained momentum, all the humanitarian organizations working in this context were compelled by the lack of any security whatsoever to leave eastern Zaire and hundreds of thousands of people who had taken to the road were devoid of help or protection.

The human tragedy unfolding was so great that several third States urged the need for an external military intervention to allow humanitarian aid to reach the victims. After weeks of negotiations the United Nations Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, adopted a resolution on 15 November authorizing the deployment “for humanitarian purposes” of a temporary multinational force in eastern Zaire. At the very time the resolution was being adopted, more than 500,000 Rwandan refugees who were living in the Goma region after leaving their camps several weeks earlier and wandering around aimlessly in eastern Zaire started to return to Rwanda. In the following weeks the humanitarian organizations were unable, because of the hostilities and the attitude of the warring parties, to get through to eastern Zaire — except,

* ADFL: Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Zaire-Congo
* WNBF: West Nile Bank Front
after a short interruption, to the towns of Bukavu, Goma and Uvira — to help
the suffering Zairian civilian population and the Rwandan refugees who
continued to trek home in small groups. Despite this almost complete
impossibility to take action, most of the States which had agreed to the
deployment of a multinational force considered that the mass return of 500,000
Rwandan refugees had rendered the Security Council resolution inoperative.
This view was officially endorsed by the President of the Security Council, who
terminated the mandate of the multinational force on 31 December.

By the end of the year, the ADFL rebels controlled a broad swathe of Zairian
territory, bounded to the south by Uvira, to the north by Bunia and to the west
by Walikale. No dialogue had been established between the rebels and the
Zairian government and the logic of war held sway.

The humanitarian activities conducted by the ICRC in Zaire in 1996 can be
divided into two distinct periods: the first nine months and the rest of the year,
with the dividing line being the offensive launched by the ADFL rebels in the
east of the country in late September. Throughout the year, ICRC activities in
eastern Zaire, including the Masisi area, were dependent on security conditions.
On several occasions, as the parties became increasingly reluctant to accept
neutral and impartial humanitarian work, the ICRC was forced to suspend
some or all of its activities or to restrict its movements. The point of no return
was reached in October, when the general chaos caused by the ADFL offensive
rendered any humanitarian action impossible. The other humanitarian
organizations operating in this context experienced the same difficulties. Several
of them suffered deaths and injury among their ranks, particularly the Red
Cross of Zaire: five of its volunteers were killed and about a hundred others
wounded, including ten seriously, while working to help the victims.

During the first nine months, the ICRC pursued the activities it had begun in
previous years. The programme started in 1994 to meet the essential needs of all
detainees in certain places of detention visited by the ICRC was extended, first in
1995 and then again in 1996, to cover 24 prisons in seven regions of the
country. This assistance was given via non-governmental organizations and
local religious groups. The ICRC maintained contact with the prison authorities
in order to remind them of their responsibilities towards the detainees. It also
encouraged a search for solutions to enable the prisons which possessed land to
become self-sufficient, and repaired the sanitary facilities in several places of
detention where they were particularly dilapidated. Besides these assistance
activities, the delegates continued to register the Rwandan refugees held in Kivu,
in order to keep track of them if they were forcibly repatriated to Rwanda, as well
as the people detained for security reasons.

Activities to restore and maintain family links continued for Rwandan refugees in the east of the country, for Sudanese refugees in Haut-Zaïre and for Angolans who had sought shelter in the south-west of the country.

In its cooperation programmes with the Red Cross of Zaïre, the ICRC concentrated on training first-aid workers. Financial assistance was also given to the National Society to enable it to cover part of its running costs. Besides their exemplary behaviour in Kivu after the humanitarian organizations had to withdraw (see below), the Red Cross of Zaïre volunteers distinguished themselves on several occasions, for example, by providing first aid and evacuating the dead and injured when a plane crashed on a market in Kinshasa in January, and again by their vigorous efforts during campaigns to improve hygiene in markets and hospitals in the capital.

The ICRC also continued its work to promote knowledge of and compliance with international humanitarian law, focusing in particular on dissemination to the armed forces. A large number of sessions were organized for the various contingents of the Zaïrian armed forces, including those stationed in Kivu, to explain the basic rules of that law — particularly those concerning the respect to which the civilian population is entitled — and to make the work of the ICRC and its guiding principles better known.

When the conflict resumed in the Masisi area early in the year and then spread to the Lubero and Rutshuru regions, the ICRC gave assistance to people displaced as a result of the fighting. No serious food shortages were noted and relief supplies therefore included food only in exceptional cases, i.e. for villages which were cut off or for particularly vulnerable groups of people. The ICRC distributed the relief supplies needed to resettle displaced people either in camps or — most frequently — in host families. On several occasions, implements and seed were distributed when displaced people settled in a sufficiently stable environment for long enough to be able to grow food. It also continued to provide medical assistance, evacuating the wounded to referral hospitals outside the areas of unrest. During such transfers it became clear, however, that the enmity between the different communities was so great that a wounded person of one ethnic community could no longer cross through territory controlled by another. The ICRC therefore concentrated on supporting local medical facilities so that the sick and wounded could be treated on the spot. It also took steps to make drinking water more readily accessible and improve drainage systems in the displaced people's camps, and to repair water-supply systems that had been destroyed in various villages.

See Rwanda, pp. 59-60.
In South Kivu, along the Rusizi plain, the ICRC’s work was centred mainly on restoring and maintaining family links for refugees living in the camps, support for medical facilities treating the wounded — who included many Burundians evacuated over the border — and sanitation work; the latter was carried out through a project delegated to the Australian Red Cross Society. Since local medical facilities were increasingly reluctant to admit casualties of Burundian origin, the ICRC undertook to assist the Uvira hospital by providing staff and equipment, with the support of the German Red Cross. However, the spate of events from October onwards meant that this project had to be suspended when it had scarcely begun.

In 1996 THE ICRC:

- visited 603 people detained in connection with the situation, in 100 places of detention;
- gave all detainees the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their families (a total of about 1,100 messages were forwarded);
- continued an assistance programme, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and local religious groups, to supply water, food and other essential items to some 4,800 persons held in 24 prisons;
- repaired and serviced water-supply and drainage systems in 13 prisons;
- facilitated the restoration and maintenance of contact between Rwandan refugees and their families through a Red Cross message network between the various camps set up in Zaire, between Zaire and Rwanda, and between Zaire and other countries (for total figures, see Rwanda);
- coordinated a large-scale programme to register unaccompanied Rwandan minors among the refugees, with the aim of ultimately reuniting them with their families; this programme was carried out jointly with Save the Children Fund-UK, UNHCR, UNICEF and several non-governmental organizations (for total figures, see Rwanda);
- facilitated the restoration and maintenance of contact between Sudanese, Angolan and Ugandan refugees in Zaire and their relatives who had remained in their own countries; over 15,400 Red Cross messages were exchanged in this context;
- organized the repatriation to Zaire in April of 35 crew members and passengers of an aircraft belonging to the Zairian national airline which had had to make an emergency landing in Kamembe (Rwanda);
- organized the repatriation to Zaire in November of 12 Zairian soldiers and 34 members of their families who had fled the unrest in Kivu and given themselves up to the Ugandan armed forces.
- distributed as needed material assistance, food, seed and implements to a total of 25,000 families affected by intercommunal strife in the Masisi area;
- distributed ad hoc assistance (food and water) to Rwandan refugees passing through Goma on their way back to Rwanda;
- distributed emergency assistance to Rwandan and Burundian refugees and Zairian displaced persons fleeing the combat zones in eastern Zaire and heading for safer areas in the interior of the country, notably in Shabunda (to about 53,000 people), Kalemie (5,000 people), Kindu and Kisangani.
The context in which the ICRC had worked until then changed radically when the ADFL launched its offensive in eastern Zaire in late September. Over the previous months, an ever-stronger xenophobia had taken hold of certain circles in Zaire, which accused the humanitarian organizations of passing on intelligence to the enemy. As the ADFL advanced, humanitarian workers in the east of the country were more openly and directly threatened by Zairian soldiers and representatives of the local authorities. The situation, too, became increasingly chaotic owing to the behaviour of the routed Zairian troops: there was widespread looting, vehicles were stolen from the humanitarian

(several hundred), and in Kigoma in Tanzania (several thousand).

- supported 19 health centres and other medical facilities in the Masisi area to enable them to collect and treat the sick and wounded left unaided because of the intercommunal disturbances;
- assisted the health centres and other medical facilities receiving the wounded and sick in and around Goma and Uvira; sent an expatriate surgeon to the Lemera hospital for the two months of May and June and transferred medical supplies for the Uvira hospital.
- through a project delegated to the Australian Red Cross, sank 20 wells in various villages on the Rusizi plain;
- carried out emergency work to improve access to drinking water for the displaced populations in the Masisi area;
- repaired 2 water-treatment plants in Goma and supported the work of Red Cross of Zaire volunteers to clean up the town and remove and bury the dead.
- continued supporting the Red Cross of Zaire so as to strengthen its emergency response capacity; 8 courses were held for over 600 volunteers and first-aid workers from 11 provinces;
- continued its support for the National Society's various programmes, in particular the clean-up campaigns for the Kinshasa markets and the training of school traffic wardens to ensure the safety of schoolchildren at main crossroads in the capital.

- held many humanitarian law courses for contingents of the Zairian armed forces, including troops maintaining security in the UNHCR refugee camps in Kivu; a manual prepared by the delegation, in cooperation with specialized Zairian officers, was distributed to most of the participants;
- organized a seminar in May for Zairian officers, from all operational services, responsible for instructing troops in the humanitarian rules for behaviour in war situations;
- publicized a humanitarian message adapted to the circumstances by putting up 12,000 posters in Masisi villages.
organizations and law and order broke down completely. In such circumstances, the ICRC, like all the other humanitarian organizations, was forced to withdraw its expatriate staff first from Uvira, then Bukavu, and finally Goma. Hundreds of thousands of people — Rwandan and Burundian refugees and Zairian displaced persons — were thus left with no assistance whatsoever.

From then on, the ICRC repeatedly contacted the Zairian authorities and the ADFL leadership so as to gain access to the people trapped in the Kivu region and to remind the powers that be of their obligation to respect and ensure respect for the rules of humanitarian conduct by all concerned. It also drew the attention of representatives of the international community on several occasions, at international meetings and during bilateral talks, to the urgent need to ensure the safety both of the local population in eastern Zaire and of the displaced people and refugees there, and to see that the humanitarian aid they needed could get through to them. An appeal to this effect was likewise made by the ICRC President at a press conference in Geneva on 8 November.

Besides these diplomatic approaches, the ICRC mobilized the necessary resources and established a plan of action to be ready to step in as soon as the opportunity arose. In late November, although as yet unable to intervene in the combat zone itself, it returned to Goma, Bukavu and Uvira with the consent of the Zairian authorities and the ADFL rebels. It also tried to carry out its activities on the edge of the combat zone, in regions still controlled by the Zairian government where people fleeing the fighting — refugees and displaced persons — were beginning to arrive in large numbers, and on the Tanzanian shore of Lake Tanganyika. But the perilous situation and logistical difficulties seriously hampered its efforts to become operational in eastern Zaire, so that by the end of the year, the ICRC, like the other humanitarian organizations, still did not have access to large areas of Kivu.

On returning to Goma, the ICRC made contact again with its local employees and the Red Cross of Zaire volunteers. During the temporary absence of the ICRC’s expatriate staff, the latter had continued to help the conflict victims as best they could with the resources at their disposal, rendering first aid to the wounded and sick and collecting the bodies strewn throughout the town to give them a decent burial. When the mass return of Rwandan refugees scattered in the neighbouring districts began on 15 November, the ICRC distributed emergency relief supplies (food and water) to people in transit and evacuated sick or wounded refugees. ICRC teams also went outside the town to the site of an abandoned camp where refugees who had previously hidden in the bush had gathered, many of whom were wounded, sick or still very debilitated after weeks of wandering up-country. The ICRC organized transport for them to Rwanda. Once this emergency was over, the delegates tried to extend the range of their activities around Goma. Emphasis
was placed on supporting the medical facilities in and around the town, assisting particularly vulnerable groups of the population, repairing water treatment installations and restoring contact between unaccompanied minors and their families. The same approach was adopted in Bukavu, where Red Cross of Zaire volunteers and ICRC local employees had also continued their work during the delegates' temporary withdrawal. In Uvira, however, only missions to assess needs were possible and conditions remained unsuitable for activities to be resumed there. Although requests were made to the rebel leaders for access to the people held under their authority, no consent had been received by the end of the year.

In the immediate vicinity of the combat zone, the ICRC managed several times to distribute medical aid, food and other essentials to Rwandan and Burundian refugees and to the Zairian displaced persons gathering there. The most significant operation of this kind took place in Shabunda, where the ICRC distributed 60 tonnes of food in December to some 53,000 Rwandan refugees and Zairian displaced persons.

CONGO

In 1996, the situation in Congo was generally calm, but the complexity of the political situation and the constant presence in the capital of armed militiamen from all parties were a source of latent tension throughout the year.

The ICRC continued its activities to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and support the National Society and, in cooperation with the Federation and the Congolese Red Cross, distributed food and other aid to several hundred people suspected of being linked in some way with Rwanda, who had been forced to flee Kinshasa and had sought refuge in Brazzaville.

IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- continued its assistance to the Congolese Red Cross in order to strengthen its emergency response capacity; for this purpose, 3 training courses were held for volunteers in Oussou, Owando and Djambala.
- organized several humanitarian law courses for contingents of the police and armed forces in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, and for youth groups of the various political parties;
- organized a humanitarian law seminar for officers from all over the country in charge of instructing troops in the humanitarian rules.
The countries covered by the Yaoundé regional delegation enjoyed relative stability in 1996. Despite this, several events of a violent nature or linked to the extreme poverty of certain sections of the population occurred during the year and required special action by the ICRC.

The border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi peninsula — which was submitted to the International Court of Justice in 1994 — gave rise to renewed clashes between the Nigerian and Cameroonian armed forces in February and again in April 1996. In this context, the ICRC reminded the Cameroonian authorities of their obligation to comply with the provisions of humanitarian law as laid down by the Geneva Conventions and Protocol I, which were fully applicable to the situation. In cooperation with the Cameroon Red Cross Society, the ICRC distributed ad hoc medical assistance to the military medical facilities treating the wounded, as well as regular relief supplies throughout the year to the population along the front line. The ICRC also approached the authorities to request access to the people captured during the events. After obtaining their consent in March, the ICRC was able to visit Nigerian civilian internees regularly as from 20 March and Nigerian prisoners of war as from 8 May. It also transmitted to the Nigerian authorities a list drawn up by the Cameroonian authorities of 128 people — 127 soldiers and one policeman — reported missing during the events; the cases of three Cameroonian civilians reported missing in this context were also submitted to the Nigerian authorities.8

In Equatorial Guinea the ICRC, having obtained the authorities' consent in December 1995, made its first visit in April to the people held in two prisons and eight police stations; one person detained for security reasons was registered. During the year, the ICRC also obtained the authorities' permission to extend its visits to people held in military camps.

In the Central African Republic, three mutinies by certain army units broke out in Bangui in April, May and November. The first, which was triggered by the discontent of soldiers who had long been left unpaid, did not culminate in

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8 For an account of approaches and activities on the Nigerian side in connection with the Bakassi border dispute, see Lagos, pp. 49-50.
outbreaks of violence. But the May mutiny, in which the mutineers’ demands were political as well as economic, led to fierce clashes between the mutineers and forces loyal to the government. Many civilians were also killed or injured when the capital became a battlefield where anarchy temporarily prevailed. Several dozen people — mutineers and civilians — were arrested during the events. The crisis was resolved about ten days later with the signing of an agreement between the parties, stipulating in particular that the persons arrested would be released, that a government of national unity would be formed and that a new prime minister would be appointed. The November mutiny did not result in violent clashes between the mutineers and forces loyal to the government. The mutineers barricaded themselves in several parts of the capital and defied the government from there. At the end of the year, the stalemate continued.

In May and November the ICRC assisted the National Society’s volunteers, who took effective action to evacuate the wounded, retrieve the bodies of the people killed, set up first-aid posts and help medical facilities. It did not visit the people arrested during the events in May, as they were released soon after. At the hospital run by the French contingents it did, however, meet about thirty of the people who had been briefly held in custody. In a letter to the highest authorities, the ICRC reminded them of the need to ensure that bearers of weapons, whoever they may be, complied with the basic rules of humanitarian law, in particular the rules stipulating that people not taking part in the hostilities (civilians) or no longer doing so (the wounded and prisoners) must be treated with all due respect.

In Chad, after years of conflict, signs of a tentative return to normal began to appear in 1996. Armed clashes between government forces and opposition groups lessened in number and intensity during the year. A new constitution was adopted by referendum in March; presidential elections, the first since the country’s accession to independence in 1964, were held in June and won by the outgoing president, who formed a government of national unity and reorganized the army and the gendarmerie units. After the elections, however, certain armed opposition groups which did not accept the results hardened their positions. In this context, the ICRC continued its activities to help people detained for security reasons, to spread knowledge of international humanitarian law among the Chadian armed forces and to support the National Society.

As diseases such as cholera were reported during the year in some parts of Chad, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea with very precarious hygiene conditions and access to medical care, the ICRC supported the emergency public health programmes set up by the Red Cross Societies of Cameroon, Chad and Equatorial Guinea to prevent the spread of epidemics.
Besides addressing these particular priorities, the Yaoundé regional delegation pursued its long-term activities to promote knowledge of and compliance with humanitarian law. Within its own areas of competence, the ICRC also continued to support the region’s National Societies.

On 5 July, São Tomé and Príncipe deposited its instruments of accession to the 1977 Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions with the Swiss government.

IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- in Cameroon, regularly visited the Nigerian civilian internees and prisoners of war held in connection with the Bakassi conflict. At the end of the year, the ICRC was visiting 31 civilian internees and 86 prisoners of war;
- transmitted to the Nigerian authorities, at the request of the Cameroonians authorities, a list of 128 persons missing since the fighting in February and notified them of 3 civilians also reported missing in connection with the Bakassi conflict;
- in Chad, visited 51 persons held for security reasons in 6 places of detention;
- in Equatorial Guinea, had access in April for the first time to 10 places of detention and registered one person held for security reasons;
- in Cameroon, Chad and Equatorial Guinea, distributed various relief supplies to meet the needs identified in the places of detention visited there;
- gave all detainees visited in the various aforesaid contexts – particularly the Nigerian civilian internees and prisoners of war held in Cameroon;
- the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their families.

- helped to restore and maintain contact between Chadian, southern Sudanese, Rwandan and Burundian refugees and their families by means of a Red Cross message network run from Yaoundé in cooperation with the National Societies of the region.

- distributed, in cooperation with the Red Cross of Chad, 27 tonnes of food and 280 cooking pots to some 2,000 Chadian refugees back from Diffa (Niger) to enable them to return to their places of origin;
- distributed, in cooperation with the Cameroon Red Cross Society, food, implements and fishing tackle to about 1,000 people displaced by the Bakassi conflict, as well as food and various essentials to 70 elderly and disabled people who had not wished to leave their villages near the front line.

- gave ad hoc assistance to military medical facilities to enable them to treat people injured during the Bakassi conflict;
- supported the work of the Central African Red Cross Society during the May and November mutinies in Bangui by placing medicines and other medical supplies at its disposal;
- helped the Cameroon, Chad and Equatorial Guinea National Societies to combat the spread of diseases such as cholera by providing them with medicines and other medical supplies.

- helped to foster dialogue among the region’s National Societies on the basis of specific mutual interests, and for this purpose organized a meeting of their leaders in Yaoundé in October in which representatives of the Federation and the Swiss Red Cross also took part;

- continued its cooperation programme with the region’s National Societies, concentrating in accordance with their particular needs and to varying degrees on structural development, the training of staff and volunteers, support for activities to spread knowledge of international humanitarian law and/or on strengthening the various National Societies’ emergency response capacities;

- supported the efforts of the emerging Gabonese Red Cross Society to become properly established by helping it to set up trained and equipped first-aid teams and a dissemination department at its headquarters. Financial aid was also provided to convene the constituent general assembly at which the emerging National Society adopted its statutes.

- continued its efforts, adapted to each situation, to promote greater understanding and acceptance of international humanitarian law and of the ICRC among the region’s various target audiences (the civilian and military authorities, the armed forces, the police, various associations, academic circles and the general public);

- prepared and distributed humanitarian law manuals in Cameroon for military and police instructors and manuals for soldiers on humanitarian law and first aid, and initiated a similar programme in Chad;

- held a seminar in Yaoundé, attended by people with national responsibility in 21 French-speaking African countries for humanitarian law training programmes for the armed forces, to assess the progress made by these programmes, exchange the teaching materials designed and encourage the sharing of experience.
The negotiations between the Angolan government and UNITA to implement the terms of the Lusaka Peace Protocol signed on 20 November 1994 were the salient feature of 1996. These negotiations centred on the confinement to barracks and subsequent demobilization of UNITA troops and government armed forces and police. The international community reacted to the various delays in this process during the year by exerting pressure on the parties to comply with the agreement to which they had freely subscribed in 1994. In particular, it extended the mandate of UNAVEM III* five times for short periods only and threatened in October to impose sanctions on UNITA. The confinement of UNITA soldiers was thereupon completed. The selection of 26,300 UNITA troops to be absorbed into the Angolan armed forces ended in December and their integration began immediately. Demobilization of the other soldiers did not really start until the end of the year, thereby delaying for several months the opening of political negotiations to form a government of national unity.

In this context the ICRC continued, as in the previous year, to supervise the release of persons held by both sides in connection with the conflict: it visited the detainees, was present at their release and arranged for their return to the place of their choice. In addition, it sought to trace people reported missing or arrested and submitted these cases to the authorities concerned. Under an arrangement with UNAVEM III and WFP,* it also provided assistance during the first five months of the year to UNITA soldiers and their families who were in four confinement centres in Huambo province. This programme was handed

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* UNITA: National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
* UNAVEM III: United Nations Angola Verification Mission (III)
* WFP: World Food Programme
over to WFP at the end of May. The ICRC then took part in a joint programme of UNICEF, the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit (United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs) and Save the Children Fund-UK for the purpose of finding, through the Red Cross message network, the relatives of child soldiers who had lost contact with their families.

As the situation stabilized, the general living conditions of the civilian population improved but remained precarious: although there was no new famine, the spring harvest was inadequate and trade was less substantial than anticipated since the free movement of goods and people was not yet fully restored. The ICRC, which had begun to pare down its activities in Angola, had to distribute seed to the most vulnerable people on the Planalto in July, September and October, as the last general food distributions had taken place in April, at the end of the transitional period. In order to obtain seed locally, the ICRC exchanged flour and other essentials for seed in areas with surplus output. To help the Planalto achieve food self-sufficiency and to improve the population's diet, the ICRC continued the programme it had launched the previous year and, in cooperation with the authorities, set up vegetable seed multiplication projects. It also developed a reforestation programme. In autumn, since the situation was no longer urgent, the ICRC phased out its assistance and agricultural support programmes; some of them were handed over to the authorities or to other humanitarian organizations.

In 1996 the ICRC, in cooperation from July with the British Red Cross, continued its support programme for various health posts and hospitals in the Huambo and Benguela provinces by training medical staff and providing medicines and other medical supplies, as well as food for the staff working there and for the hospital patients. Repairs to the sanitary installations and equipment were also carried out. In general, however, the year was devoted to finding partners — either the Ministry of Health, development aid organizations or a foreign National Society — to take over the ICRC’s medical programmes, since the changing situation in the country no longer justified its emergency intervention. The transfer of these programmes was easier in the government areas, where the authorities were often able to support the medical facilities and where many non-governmental organizations were working. The UNITA-controlled areas were more difficult to reach and there were fewer non-governmental organizations there. As it was not yet possible to transfer the centres in the UNITA-held Bailundo region, the ICRC began to provide them with assistance to enable them to keep going for the first six months of 1997.

The ICRC also continued its prosthetic/orthotic programme, consisting of the limb-fitting facilities for amputees at Bomba Alta (Huambo), Kuito and

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9 See the ICRC's 1995 Annual Report, p. 73.
Neves Bendinha (Luanda) and the orthopaedic component production unit at Neves Bendinha. It was decided to open a second component production unit at Huambo, since needs could not be met by the Neves Bendinha unit alone, which opened in 1995 and also supplied components to other organizations. To coordinate prosthetic/orthotic programmes in Angola, the ICRC set up a coordination group in which all organizations involved in such activities for amputees there were represented, along with an Angolan amputees’ association.

IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- supervised the release of 205 detainees, including 58 freed by the government and 147 by UNITA. On being released, they were all given material assistance (clothes, food and sometimes financial help to cover travel costs);
- continued to approach UNITA for information about the fate and whereabouts of the 78 detainees last visited by the ICRC in 1994;
- informed the political leaders concerned of over 150 allegations of arrest or disappearance that had been brought to its attention by families.

- by means of a Red Cross message network, helped to restore and maintain contact between separated family members, some of whom were in government-controlled and others in UNITA-controlled areas; the ICRC collected 37,388 such messages and delivered 41,603;
- helped to restore contact between child soldiers and their families by enabling them to send and receive Red Cross messages in the course of a joint programme with other organizations;
- organized 85 family reunifications for 286 people who were in UNITA- or government-controlled areas of the country.

- distributed food and other essentials until April to over 200,000 people in Huambo province and the Ganda and Cusse (Huila province) regions;
- distributed seed for beans and other vegetables to 75,000 families in July and for oleaginous plants and sorghum to 60,000 families in September and October;
- distributed food until the end of May to UNITA soldiers and their families in four camps in Huambo province;
- conducted vegetable seed multiplication and reforestation projects.

- continued its support for about 20 health centres and hospitals on the Planalto by providing them with medicines and other medical supplies, and food for patients and staff; it also trained local medical staff. This project was delegated to the British Red Cross from July on;
- took part, in cooperation with the British Red Cross from July on, in two vaccination campaigns conducted by the authorities in the Huambo and Benguela provinces.

- fitted 1,550 amputees with 1,609 artificial limbs, repaired the prostheses of longer-term amputees and distributed 2,525 orthopaedic components to other organizations engaged in prosthetic/orthotic activities in Angola;
An extensive sanitary rehabilitation programme was set up by the ICRC during the year and carried out on the Planalto, both in UNITA-controlled and in government-controlled areas; in some towns it was developed in cooperation with the German and Netherlands Red Cross Societies. The water-supply system for hospitals, health centres and several towns was repaired and water sources were installed or rehabilitated in many municipalities; this programme was seen by the ICRC to have a direct positive effect on the health of the population. By the end of the year, it had handed over some of the repaired

- set up a second orthopaedic component production unit in Huambo.
- repaired or built 130 water sources in 20 municipalities and repaired the water supply system in several towns: Ukuma, Caala and Tchindjenje (Huambo province), Ganda (Benguela province), Bailundo and Alto Hama (Bailundo region). The work at Caala on the one hand, and Bailundo and Alto Hama on the other, was carried out through projects delegated to the Netherlands Red Cross and the German Red Cross respectively;
- repaired the sanitation systems at the Kuito and Huambo hospitals and in many health centres on the Planalto;
- these various projects enabled some 750,000 people on the Planalto to be provided with drinking water.

- trained National Society staff in tracing and related activities and placed 4 of its offices at the National Society's disposal;
- gave financial support to the National Society, in particular by providing it with vehicles.
- organized humanitarian law dissemination sessions for several civilian audiences (the authorities, journalists, schoolchildren and villagers) to increase their awareness of the ICRC's work;
- gave briefings on humanitarian law, the ICRC and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to all UNAVEM III members (officers and military observers, police officers and instructors) and to UNITA soldiers in confinement centres;
- produced programmes for Angolan radio and television designed to protect the civilian population against abuse and to spread knowledge of the ICRC's mandate.
- drew attention to its campaign against anti-personnel mines by organizing briefings for journalists and representatives of the authorities and raising the subject during dissemination sessions supported by the Angolan government;
- informed the population of the harm and suffering caused by the indiscriminate use of mines; information sessions were held particularly in schools and with promotional material specially devised for the campaign, adapted locally by the ICRC and used by the national media.
facilities to the local authorities and in other regions had found partners prepared to continue the work.

The ICRC continued to concentrate throughout the year on restoring and maintaining contact between people separated by the conflict, even though greater freedom of movement in Angola brought improved communication and with it a decline in the number of Red Cross messages. As stability increased, the ICRC was also able to intensify training for the Angola Red Cross to take over its activities in this field. Lastly, a number of dispersed families whose members were living in different (UNITA-controlled or government-controlled) parts of the country were reunited.

Generally speaking, the economic problems of a country devastated by war were felt more and more severely during the year, particularly in the towns, where social unrest led to two government reshuffles, in June and September. The demobilization process was also affected: since the social reintegration projects for soldiers who had not been selected for absorption in the national army were slow to materialize, many of them deserted and security conditions deteriorated sharply as a result. The rural population suffered particularly from marauders and many civilians, as well as staff of humanitarian organizations, died in attacks on the country’s main roads. The ICRC was itself the victim of several security incidents in June and December, which fortunately went no further than theft. Owing to these incidents, certain operations by the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations working in the field were suspended.

In an attempt to protect the civilian population in rural areas against the depredations of armed groups, the ICRC produced weekly programmes to convey humanitarian messages based on local cultural traditions and thereby encourage respect for the defenceless. These programmes were broadcast by the national radio service. The ICRC also organized courses on humanitarian law for the soldiers confined to barracks. In order to enhance respect for humanitarian law and the Red Cross emblem and to facilitate the ICRC’s work by making it better known, similar courses were held for all members of UNAVEM III, for Angolan journalists (especially those working for UNITA radio), local authorities and the Angola Red Cross.

The ICRC continued its campaign against anti-personnel mines by holding briefings for journalists, which were also attended by representatives of the authorities, and by discussing the problem at its humanitarian law courses. The government responded by deciding to support the campaign and demand the total prohibition of mines in accordance with OAU resolutions 1593 and 1628.\(^\text{10}\) In addition, the ICRC staged a campaign to alert the Angolan public,

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\(^{10}\) See also Operational Activities p. 33, Ethiopia p. 88-89 and The law and legal considerations, pp. 274-276.
and above all schoolchildren, to the dangers of mines; it furthermore organized visits for international media representatives to draw attention to the plight of the victims of the approximately ten million mines strewn throughout Angola. As in the previous year, a group of traditional singers and dancers accompanied the ICRC during its activities on the Planalto. They mainly helped to explain the cutback in ICRC activities, especially those to provide medical and food aid, and to encourage the population’s acceptance of it.

HARARE
Regional delegation
(Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe)

The countries covered by the Harare delegation enjoyed peace in 1996 and relative political and social stability, despite the hardships experienced by most of the population, especially in Malawi and Zambia. The regional delegation concentrated on its cooperation programmes with the region’s National Societies and assisted them in their development and activities, mainly providing training and material support to increase their emergency response capacity and familiarizing them with methods of promoting humanitarian law and restoring family links. It also encouraged the National Societies’ structural development, in accordance with their circumstances and to varying degrees. In general, it helped to strengthen solidarity among the region’s various National Societies by facilitating contact between them. The National Societies, for their part, asked the ICRC to become more closely associated with their regional grouping, the Southern Africa Partnership. The regional delegation furthermore continued its work to foster greater understanding and respect for humanitarian law among various target groups in the countries of southern Africa — the armed forces, the police, the authorities, academic circles and the general public. In some countries, special emphasis was placed on spreading knowledge of that law among the police. Missions to assess the progress of national military training programmes in international humanitarian law took place in countries where the ICRC gradually managed to persuade the armed forces to provide such training themselves. It also continued to encourage States to adopt measures for the

11 See the ICRC’s 1995 Annual Report, p. 74.
implementation of humanitarian law at national level; it did so either by organizing seminars in certain countries or by instituting a study — in Mozambique — on the conformity of national legislation with humanitarian law. In addition, the regional delegation’s office in Harare served as a logistics base for the agricultural programme in Angola.

In Botswana, the ICRC and the Federation carried out a joint mission to the National Society to help it resume its activities.

In Malawi, the situation remained relatively calm during the year, despite some tension within the governing coalition which led to the withdrawal of one of the constituent parties, depriving the President’s party of its parliamentary majority. The ICRC supervised the construction of a hospital ward at Zomba prison to provide medical care for the detainees and completed the installation of new kitchens in the country’s two largest prisons. Since the completion in 1995\(^{12}\) of its programme of visits to Malawi’s prisons to examine the material and psychological conditions of detention, the ICRC had sought to ensure, by drawing attention to their situation, that its work in aid of the detainees there would be continued. These efforts bore fruit and in 1996 an organization, Penal Reform International, stepped in on their behalf.

In October 1996, Mozambique celebrated the second anniversary of peace cooperation with and democracy in the country. Earlier in the year, in June, the ICRC had signed a three-year cooperation agreement with the National Society to help it to work in a peacetime environment. It was the first agreement of this kind to be concluded in the region.

In Zambia, preparations for the presidential and legislative elections on 18 November gave rise to tension: feelings ran high among the opposition parties over the constitutional amendment passed by parliament on 16 May that barred former President Kaunda from standing for election. In view of the situation, the ICRC held courses for the Zambia Red Cross Society to strengthen its emergency response capacity and supplied it with the necessary material to do so, particularly blankets, first-aid kits, radio equipment and Red Cross emblems to be displayed in various ways. The regional delegation also went on mission to Zambia several times to assess the situation and the National Society’s level of preparedness. On 18 November, the elections finally took place in peace and quiet, and were won by the outgoing President and his party, the MMD.*

In Zimbabwe, the presidential elections were held in April in an atmosphere of calm and the population returned the President to office. The National

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\(^{12}\) See the ICRC’s 1995 Annual Report, p. 76.

* MMD: Movement for Multiparty Democracy
Society had set up first-aid posts in most districts; the ICRC had given the National Society leaders prior training in that type of activity and had provided some of the necessary material.

IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- handed over 1,600 books donated by the British and American National Societies to the libraries of Malawi’s 4 main prisons and distributed 448 blankets to prisons in the north and east of the country;
- checked that the sanitary facilities and kitchens built by the ICRC since 1993 in Malawi’s prisons were in working order.
- coordinated and stepped up the programme conducted by the region’s National Societies to restore family links. The National Societies, particularly those in Zambia and Namibia, collected a total of 2,456 Red Cross messages from refugees from various African countries (mainly from the Great Lakes region) and delivered 3,955 to them.
- supported the development and activities of the region’s National Societies, concentrating – as in Zambia and Zimbabwe – on strengthening their emergency response capacity, particularly during electoral periods.
- concentrated specifically on promoting knowledge of humanitarian law among the police forces in Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia; organized 3 training courses in Mozambique for police officers from all over the country;
- took part, inter alia, in the regional course for peace-keeping troops, which was organized by the Harare military academy and attended by high-ranking officers from the various countries of the region;
- held seminars to promote the implementation of humanitarian law at national level in Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe; 20 to 25 participants representing the national authorities (executive, legislative and judicial) attended each of the seminars.
- in cooperation with the region’s National Societies, continued its campaign against anti-personnel mines, particularly by approaching governments, alerting the groups concerned and encouraging mine clearance.
PRETORIA
Regional delegation
(Comoros, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland)

The year in the countries covered by the Pretoria delegation was relatively calm, even though some of them still experienced occasional outbreaks of violence, such as KwaZulu/Natal in South Africa, or a certain political instability, such as Lesotho and Madagascar. The ICRC monitored the situation in those countries and, where necessary, took action on the victims’ behalf or helped the National Society concerned to assist them. In general, it supported the National Societies’ development and activities, concentrating according to needs and to varying degrees on the training of staff and volunteers, structural development and support for activities to spread knowledge of humanitarian law, and on strengthening their operational capacity to respond to emergency situations or take part in development projects for preventive purposes. The regional delegation also continued its work to promote knowledge of and respect for humanitarian law among the various target audiences in the region (armed forces, the police, the authorities, academic circles, schools and the general public). It continued to encourage States to adopt measures for the implementation of humanitarian law at national level and to accede to the 1980 United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. In cooperation with the South African Red Cross Society, it furthermore played an active part in the ICRC’s campaign against anti-personnel mines.

In May, former President Frederik de Klerk’s National Party left the government of national unity, formed immediately after South Africa’s first free and democratic elections in 1994, to join the ranks of the opposition. At the end of the year, the country adopted a new constitution. On the whole, the problems experienced in 1995 persisted: crime and insecurity grew, mostly in the cities, and KwaZulu/Natal in particular was affected by political violence.

From September 1995 on, the violence and the number of victims in KwaZulu/Natal had gradually diminished as more security forces appeared on the scene and people responsible for acts of violence were arrested. Then violence erupted again during the municipal election campaign, which began in mid-March 1996. However, the elections, which were initially postponed for a month, eventually took place on 26 June in a relatively calm atmosphere; the peace initiative announced by the ANC* and IFP* regional leaders just before

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* ANC: African National Congress  
* IFP: Inkatha Freedom Party
the elections and approved by President Mandela and the leader of the IFP had defused the situation. The IFP won the day thanks to the support of the rural regions, while the urban districts voted for the ANC. But implementation of the peace plan was delayed and, apart from the regions where local initiatives were taken, tension was still acute in KwaZulu/Natal at the end of the year. It was not, however, the only province in South Africa to be affected by violence: in view of the protests and sometimes very forceful reactions of the population to the increase in crime in the Western Cape and Eastern Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu/Natal provinces, the authorities announced new measures to combat it which led to large-scale arrests of suspects.

Against this background, the ICRC continued its activities in aid of detainees, both by visiting them in police stations or prisons and by taking part as an observer or expert in working groups on prison reform or health in prisons. On 16 August, it also signed an agreement with the authorities giving it access to all categories of detainees, which replaced the previous one signed in 1992 with the former government, and on 31 October it gave the government a working paper covering the main problems encountered during the ICRC visits.

Together with the South African Red Cross Society, the ICRC carried out relief operations for the victims of political violence, primarily in KwaZulu/Natal where the number of displaced people was very high. During the elections the National Society also set up first-aid posts, with supplies provided by the ICRC. So as to withdraw progressively from the assistance programme it had organized in the shantytowns around Durban, where the situation was no longer critical, the ICRC increased its support for the National Society to enable it to set up development projects there.

In view of the forthcoming elections, efforts to promote the humanitarian principles and values of the ICRC and the National Society during the first part of the year were centred on KwaZulu/Natal. Arrangements were also made with the local radio stations there and the national press to convey a humanitarian message to a wider audience, particularly schoolchildren. At the same time the ICRC continued its programme of training in humanitarian law for the South African armed forces, with which it had cooperated since 1995 to include humanitarian law courses in military training, and for local branches of the National Society.

During a mission to the Comoros in July, the ICRC was able to ascertain once again, as it had done in October 1995, that there were no longer any persons detained for security reasons following the September 1995 coup. The ICRC also carried out two missions, in April and July, to the Comoros Red Crescent to help it attain recognition as a National Society by the Movement.

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13 See the ICRC's 1995 Annual Report, p. 80.
In Lesotho, the previous two years’ unrest continued in 1996, though it had somewhat abated. Several people were arrested following coup rumours in February, but were released soon after. Disputes over grazing rights broke out between the communities in the interior of the country; several villages were set on fire, leaving hundreds of people utterly destitute. The Lesotho Red Cross Society twice provided them with assistance in the form of blankets, clothing, tents and food. Livestock thefts on the border with South Africa also sparked clashes resulting in several casualties and induced the authorities of the two countries to deploy soldiers on either side of the border.

In Madagascar, the ICRC pursued its programme to assess the nutritional situation and respond to needs for assistance in the country’s places of detention. This programme began in 1995 following ICRC visits to prisons there. In 1996 the ICRC, together with the Malagasy prisons’ Catholic chaplain service, completed its round of visits to 35 places of detention and their respective penal camps. In some cases, it supplied food aid. It also spoke with the local and national authorities to remind them of their responsibilities with regard to the detainees’ living conditions. In addition, the ICRC organized a pilot project for community first-aid work in cooperation with Malagasy Red Cross Society volunteers. The project was a success and plans were made to extend it to other parts of the country in 1997. Lastly, the ICRC made its annual visit to 25 people detained for security reasons; it had previously asked the authorities to have certain detainees transferred to other places of detention or to hospital, and the transfer of some of them did take place.

The ICRC went to Mauritius in June to meet the country’s new authorities. It visited several local branches of the Mauritius Red Cross Society in order to assess their needs and help to strengthen the National Society’s general operational capacity.

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14 See the ICRC’s 1995 Annual Report, pp. 78-79.
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- in South Africa, visited 170 detainees during 25 visits to 19 places of detention. On the basis of regular notifications by the police, it visited in particular all people arrested in connection with the political violence in the KwaZulu/Natal province;
- in Madagascar, visited 25 security detainees in 7 prisons and 1 hospital;
- provided financial support and material assistance as required to the persons visited.

- by means of a Red Cross message network, helped to maintain contact between refugees from various African countries, most of whom were in South Africa, and their families abroad.

- distributed in KwaZulu/Natal, in cooperation with the National Society, food aid and essential items (blankets, tarpaulins, cooking sets and jerrycans) to an average of over 1,000 people per month.

- developed inter alia a project for community relief work with Malagasy Red Cross volunteers and supplied the necessary material for the first-aid posts set up by the South African Red Cross Society when elections were held in KwaZulu/Natal;

- held an annual workshop in May for information and dissemination officers of the National Societies of Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

- assessed (with the help in particular of an Australian officer) the progress made in incorporating regular instruction in humanitarian law in the training given to the South African armed forces;

- produced a video in the Zulu language to spread humanitarian messages during the run-up to elections in KwaZulu/Natal.

- informed the public about the Movement’s activities to bring about a total ban on anti-personnel mines;

- publicized the campaign’s promotional material via the main South African media.
In May, Eritrea and Yemen signed an agreement in which the two countries undertook to submit their dispute over the Hanish Islands, which had culminated in an international armed conflict between them in December 1995, to an ad hoc court of arbitration.

In 1996, the ICRC continued its efforts to establish closer relations with the Eritrean government and encourage it to accede to the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, but in vain.

The ICRC also renewed the agreement concluded the previous year with the emerging Red Cross Society of Eritrea to finance Circus Eritrea, a local non-governmental organization composed of street children which, during its performances, informs the general public about various subjects such as AIDS or personal hygiene. Under this agreement, a humanitarian message concerning the Fundamental Principles of the Movement was incorporated into the Circus Eritrea programme.

In 1996, a year after a federal structure was established and general elections were held at regional and federal levels, the armed opposition movements representing various ethnic groups in the administrative regions continued their fight against the EPRDF*-dominated Ethiopian government. Tension ran particularly high in Regions 4 and 5 (Oromia National Regional State and

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15 See the ICRC's 1995 Annual Report, p. 81.
* EPRDF: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
Somali National Regional State). In June, two of the main armed opposition
groups active in those regions, the OLF* and the ONLF,* published a joint
communiqué in which they announced their intention of coordinating their
diplomatic, political and military action against the regime in power in Addis
Ababa. Other opposition movements such as the IFLO* and Al Ittihad also
made themselves felt during the year; there were clashes on several occasions
along the Somali border, in the Gedo region, between Al Ittihad combatants
and a Somali faction, the SNF,* which was supported by the Ethiopian army.
In the most sensitive regions, the federal government stepped up its military
presence and took a number of security measures designed to combat the rise
of the armed opposition and to cut off any support for these movements by the
civilian population; in particular, militia groups were formed in the rural areas
and committees in the urban areas to identify opposition group members or
sympathizers.

In this context, the ICRC concentrated on continuing its visits to people
imprisoned in connection with the change of regime in 1991 or for reasons of
national security. In general, several difficulties were encountered in doing so.
Only partial and irregular access was possible to detainees held by the military
authorities. Moreover, the transfer of decision-making power from the capital
to the regions proved detrimental on several occasions to the continuation of
visits to persons held by the civilian authorities. These difficulties were the
subject of regular ICRC representations to the civilian and military authorities
at both federal and regional levels. By the end of the year, not all the problems
encountered by the ICRC in obtaining access to all detainees had been solved,
but the ongoing dialogue gave cause for optimism.

When particularly acute needs were observed, the ICRC also took direct ac­
tion to improve health conditions in some places of detention by providing
medicines, other medical supplies and hygiene items as necessary, or by advis­
ing the medical staff or carrying out sanitation work. In addition, as tubercu­
losis was the chief cause of death in Ethiopian places of detention, special
attention was paid to combating it there. Throughout the year the ICRC
continued the anti-tuberculosis campaign it had begun in four places of deten­
tion in 1994, though the campaign's effectiveness was partially jeopardized by
the fact that almost 40% of the detainees being treated for tuberculosis were re­
leased before their treatment was complete. This problem was discussed with
the justice and health authorities, but no solution had been found by the end of

* OLF: Oromo Liberation Front
* ONLF: Ogaden National Liberation Front
* IFLO: Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromo
* SNF: Somali National Front
the year. The ICRC also gave detainees held in places of detention under the
civilian authorities’ responsibility the opportunity to exchange Red Cross
messages with their families; this service could be offered only to a limited
extent to detainees held under the responsibility of the military authorities. To
ensure that the judicial guarantees provided for by humanitarian law were
respected, the ICRC furthermore continued throughout the year to follow the
court sessions of the trials, which began in 1994, of dignitaries of the former
regime and submitted a report to the Ethiopian authorities during the year on
the basic judicial guarantees afforded to detainees.

Since some of the difficulties of access to detainees were due to the fact that
the newly instituted regional authorities knew little or nothing about the ICRC,
the delegation concentrated its efforts on familiarizing them with humanitarian
law, i.e. informing them about the ICRC and its operating principles and
making known the basic rules of humanitarian law, especially those concerning
the respect to which the civilian population and detainees are entitled. Many
such dissemination sessions were held for the armed forces’ personnel in all
regions of the country. Besides this special effort, the delegation continued its
activities to promote knowledge of humanitarian law within various target
audiences. Within the framework of the ICRC’s Advisory Service on
International Humanitarian Law, the delegation also helped to conduct a study
on the conformity of national legislation with humanitarian law.

The ICRC continued its cooperation with the Ethiopian Red Cross Society
and signed an agreement with it in April setting out the main lines of
cooperation in the development of its branches, tracing, first aid and
dissemination. As part of its restructuring process, a plan of action designed to
expand its base and move towards financial independence was presented by the
Society to the Federation, the ICRC and several interested National Societies
in July; it also proposed draft agreements to its partners in the Movement in
order to redefine the various areas of cooperation.

Support for prosthetic/orthotic workshops in Addis Ababa, Debre Zeit and
Harar, the training of orthopaedic technicians from other countries and
technical support for several prosthetic/orthotic centres previously run by the
ICRC itself in other countries continued to be provided, as they had been since
the latter half of 1995, via the ICRC’s Special Fund for the Disabled.16

Throughout the year, the ICRC mission to the OAU* in Addis Ababa
continued its work to promote knowledge of humanitarian law and awareness

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16 See Special Fund for the Disabled, p. 343.
* OAU: Organization of African Unity
in diplomatic circles of various humanitarian problems such as anti-personnel mines, water and armed conflicts, the environment and armed conflicts, and the protection of humanitarian personnel.17

17 See Operational Activities, pp. 33-35.

IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- visited 6,117 persons held in 129 places of detention in connection with the change of regime in 1991 or for reasons linked to national security, and registered 3,537 new detainees;
- forwarded 444 Red Cross messages between persons held by the civilian authorities and their families;
- improved health conditions in some 20 places of detention by providing medicines and other medical supplies, advising medical staff or carrying out sanitation work (water supply and drainage systems);
- distributed material assistance (hygiene products, recreational items, etc.) to some 21,000 detainees;
- provided medical assistance for the treatment of 455 detainees suffering from tuberculosis.

- helped to keep Ethiopian refugees abroad and refugees living in Ethiopia in contact with their families by means of a Red Cross message network run in cooperation with the National Society.
- distributed blankets, cooking utensils and buckets to a total of about 300 families affected by the violence.
- distributed ad hoc assistance to the medical facilities in the regions affected by the violence.
- continued its cooperation programmes with the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, with particular emphasis on strengthening its branches and fostering its activities to disseminate humanitarian law, restore family ties and provide first aid.

- organized a seminar, within the framework of the ICRC’s Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law, for some 40 senior government officials in order to promote the adoption of national measures for the implementation of humanitarian law;
- organized 2 seminars for 80 Ethiopian army officers responsible for the training of troops;
- encouraged the teaching of humanitarian law in police training schools and organized a seminar for police representatives in Addis Ababa;
- improved the military authorities’ knowledge of the ICRC and the basic rules of humanitarian law by organizing several seminars for Ethiopian army officers and soldiers.
The political and military situation remained extremely complex in Somalia in 1996. The leaders of several of the factions, which are based on the clan structure of Somali society, met on a number of occasions during the year but failed to overcome their antagonism. The situation remained particularly tense in Mogadishu, both along the line separating the northern part of the town, controlled by Ali Mahdi, from the southern part, controlled by General Aidid, and even more so in the Medina district, where fierce fighting broke out several times between General Aidid’s supporters and those of Osman Ato, his former associate and ally. In late July, during one of those violent clashes, General Aidid was killed. The clan to which he belonged designated his son, Hussein Aidid, to succeed him as leader of the USC/SNA* and “president” of the country. The death of General Aidid, who had dominated the Somali scene since 1991, had repercussions far beyond Mogadishu and even in Somaliland. Until the end of the year Hussein Aidid nonetheless kept to the political course set by his father.

Elsewhere in the country, tension of varying intensity and duration flared up sporadically during the year. Power struggles for leadership within a particular clan or sub-clan, or for control of water supplies, arable land or logistical infrastructures — ports, roads and airports — were often among the causes of rivalry and fighting. Another source of tension was the emergence of fundamentalist movements which contested the factions’ authority more and more openly. For a steadily growing proportion of the Somali population these movements, owing to their involvement in education and relief work and because they overrode clan rivalry, represented a life style preferable to that offered by the clans and sub-clans constantly at odds with each other. Twice

* USC/SNA: United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance
over, in August and then in December, fighting broke out in the Gedo region between the Al Ittihad movement and the Ethiopian army and SNF,* with the Ethiopian government accusing Al Ittihad of committing terrorist acts on Ethiopian territory.

In Somaliland, after the serious armed clashes which erupted in 1995, particularly between President Egal’s government and the opposition,¹⁸ the situation was relatively calm in 1996 except for some occasional tension between opposing clans or sub-clans and acts of sheer banditry. Towards the end of the year, since the term of office of President Egal and his administration expired in November, a national conference assembling all the factions opened in Hargeisa to prepare the succession.

Besides the direct victims of the war, much of the Somali population continued throughout the year to suffer the indirect effects of the conflict (economic activities paralysed, no public services, deterioration of vital installations for want of maintenance, utter destitution after being displaced, etc.). These were aggravated by climatic hazards — drought or floods — or by disease which attacked the herds of the pastoral groups. So although Somalia did not experience a human disaster in 1996 similar to those of 1991 and 1992, the situation remained extremely precarious all year and the slightest incident could have posed a serious threat to the survival of large sections of the population.

In 1996, the ICRC continued its efforts in all its traditional fields of activity, following the working method adopted in 1994. In July of that year,¹⁹ in order to avoid the risks inherent in maintaining a permanent infrastructure in Somalia (security of expatriate staff, looting and various pressures) the ICRC had transferred its delegation to Nairobi. At the same time, the ICRC’s local employees, based in several places in the country, had been given the task of monitoring the situation, alerting the delegation when humanitarian problems arose and helping, with delegates sent there as needed, to carry out appropriate humanitarian activities. To avoid security problems, a network of local transporters and traders was mostly used to deliver and distribute the requisite assistance, whereas the ICRC checked that the relief had actually reached the intended beneficiaries.

The ICRC took part mainly in Mogadishu, the Bakool, Bay and Gedo regions and the Juba and Shebelle valleys in providing assistance to people suffering the consequences of the conflict, which were exacerbated at times by the factors mentioned above. In 1996, the ICRC extended the specific approach it had gradually developed over the previous years. As the conflict was affecting

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* SNF: Somali National Front

¹⁸ See the ICRC’s 1995 Annual Report, p. 86.

¹⁹ See the ICRC’s 1994 Annual Report, p. 86.
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- paid regular visits to 294 people held in Somaliland in 5 places of detention under the authority of the government or the opposition;
- visited 9 people held by the USC in Baidoa;
- visited an Australian pilot in Baidoa in July who had made a forced landing in the Oddur region and was held by the USC (he was released in October);
- distributed ad hoc assistance to the detainees visited, as well as food aid to people held in the Mogadishu central prison, after WFP stopped doing so;
- gave all detainees visited the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their families; 244 messages were exchanged in this context;
- carried out sanitation work, through the Somali Red Crescent Society, in several places of detention in Mogadishu.

- forwarded over 100,000 Red Cross messages, with the assistance of the Somali Red Crescent Society, between separated family members, within Somalia and between Somalia and other countries;
- traced 684 members of dispersed families and arranged for 5 families to be reunited.

- distributed 1,550 tonnes of food and 1,350 tonnes of seed, as well as tools, tarpaulins, blankets, mosquito netting, fishing hooks and twine and various items of equipment to people affected by the various conflicts throughout the country;
- supplied veterinary medicines to combat a lung disease affecting camel herds in the Garoe region;
- ran a campaign against tsetse fly in the Juba valley.

- each month, admitted some 400 patients to the Somali Red Crescent hospital in North Mogadishu (Keysaney) and performed about 380 surgical operations;
- supported the Digfer and Benadir hospitals in South Mogadishu, as well as medical facilities in the Medina district which admitted people injured in the fighting;
- supported primary health care in the Juba valley, Hiran province and Somaliland by training local staff, providing medicines and establishing 5 new health posts;
- combated the spread of a cholera epidemic in Mogadishu, and in the Las Anod and Marere regions.

- equipped, sank or repaired 32 boreholes, equipped, rehabilitated or dug 104 wells, carried out work to improve water supplies at several health posts and other medical facilities and supplied various items for the maintenance or replacement of neglected installations.

- continued its support for the Somali Red Crescent Society, focusing on strengthening its operational capacity.

- continued its activities, in cooperation with the Somali Red Crescent Society, to promote knowledge of international humanitarian law by devising the most appropriate methods of reaching the largest possible number of people in a manner adapted to the Somali cultural context – plays performed by National Society volunteers, BBC broadcasts and comic strips.
the civilian population over a considerable period — especially displaced persons, returnees and certain isolated communities — the essential aim of assistance delivered by the ICRC was to guard against a rapid and drastic deterioration in their living conditions and thus avoid having to revert to large-scale assistance programmes such as those carried out in 1991 and 1992.

Assistance was therefore geared to consolidating the respective means of survival (agriculture, livestock, fishing and artisan trades) of those threatened sections of the population, not only by providing them with the requisite items (seed, farming implements, tools, veterinary medicines, various materials and equipment) but also by passing on the appropriate know-how and involving them very directly in carrying out the programmes. The ICRC took particular care to assess the latter's impact and to adapt them accordingly. Food was also occasionally distributed to give these groups the necessary time to resume their traditional subsistence activities. For the assistance provided to have a lasting effect, it was complemented by programmes to improve access to drinking water and basic medical care, stress also being placed on training competent local staff (medical personnel and water system maintenance teams). Besides this type of preventive action, the ICRC provided direct assistance in the form of food, clothing and other essentials to sections of the population whom the conflict had left without any means of survival.

Besides the primary health care programmes mentioned above, the ICRC continued to distribute medicines and other medical aid to existing hospitals and health posts. Considerable support was given in particular to the Somali Red Crescent hospital at Keysaney in North Mogadishu and to the Digfer and Benadir hospitals in South Mogadishu, which regularly admitted numerous casualties of the fierce fighting in the capital. When cholera broke out in Mogadishu, Las Anod and Marere, the ICRC also took the necessary steps to stop the epidemic spreading. In addition, work to improve drinking water supplies and sanitation was done throughout the country. It consisted mainly of rehabilitating and equipping the existing boreholes and hand-dug wells, servicing neglected installations and carrying out basic repairs and maintenance in various medical facilities and certain places of detention in Mogadishu and elsewhere.

Protection of the civilian population and detainees was likewise one of the ICRC’s priorities. Respect for the civilian population had largely gone by the board in 1996, especially in Mogadishu where battles had raged in the very heart of residential districts. Dozens of civilians were killed and hundreds wounded, including casualties when the National Society’s office and medical facilities came under fire; several Somali Red Crescent volunteers were killed or injured while working to help the victims. On each occasion the ICRC reminded the faction leaders, by taking up direct contact with them or through...
visits to detainees

press releases, of their obligation to respect the civilian population, property protected by the Red Crescent or Red Cross emblem, and humanitarian personnel. In addition, the ICRC continued its visits to persons detained in connection with the conflict, particularly in Somaliland, and its support for the National Society's tracing activities. Thanks to an extensive network to collect and distribute Red Cross messages — over 50 people working in some 20 offices countrywide — members of dispersed families were able to exchange news with each other, both within Somalia and abroad.

The approach adopted by the ICRC in previous years to spread knowledge of humanitarian law was pursued. Efforts were made to show the links between the humanitarian message and Somali traditional cultural standards more and more clearly and thereby render it accessible to all, and to use the most effective ways of conveying the message to the largest possible number of people (broadcasts by the Somali service of the British Broadcasting Corporation — BBC, plays, comic strips, etc.)

In view of the fact that the Somali Red Crescent Society was the sole humanitarian organization working throughout the country and that its existence depended entirely on the commitment of several National Societies, the Federation and especially the ICRC, the latter devoted particular attention to supporting it. In July, an agreement setting out a cooperation strategy was concluded between the Somali Red Crescent Society and the ICRC with the purpose of strengthening the National Society's operational capacity. The main emphasis of this agreement was placed on structural support, the training of competent staff, financial support and the development of self-financed programmes in aid of vulnerable groups of the population.

cooporation with
the National Society
**SUDAN**

The conflict in southern Sudan continued throughout 1996. In previous years — and particularly in 1995 — the armed opposition to the government had split into various factions fighting each other or torn by internal dissension and the number of potential and actual flashpoints had therefore increased. In 1996, however, this trend was reversed, for in April the SSIA/M* and the SPLA*/Bahr-el-Ghazal (headed by Commander Kerubino, an SPLA dissident) signed a political charter proposed to them by the government, thus becoming *de facto* government allies against the SPLA. At the same time, two SPLA commanders active in the Nuba mountains reached a provisional agreement with the government and declared a unilateral cease-fire. Lastly, during the year the dissension which had led to clashes between the supporters of two different tendencies within the SSIA/M was resolved. Although neither the political charter signed by the SSIA/M and Commander Kerubino nor the agreement reached with the two dissident SPLA commanders settled the political issue of southern Sudan, these changes of alliance produced a realignment of the forces in the south of the country: the government armed forces and their allies on the one side and the SPLA on the other.

Generally speaking, the fighting was geographically limited in 1996 and took place mainly along the Ethiopian border in the east of the Jonglei, Upper Nile and Blue Nile provinces and to the south of Juba; other intermittent clashes occurred in the provinces of Western Equatoria and Bahr-al-Ghazal. Although only relatively few civilians were directly affected by the hostilities, the latent conflict and general lack of security, as in previous years, left most of the population of southern Sudan in a critical situation. Some particularly

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* SSIA/M: South Sudan Independence Army/Movement, formerly known as the SPLA-Riek Machar
* SPLA: Sudanese People's Liberation Army

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indirect effects of the conflict
relations with the authorities

vulnerable groups were entirely dependent upon the aid provided by the relief organizations and had no other hope of survival.

On the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding concluded with the Sudanese government in March 1993 and specifying its conditions and procedures for working in the country, the ICRC continued its activities in southern Sudan in all its traditional domains. In May, the Delegate General for Africa visited Khartoum and met several high-ranking officials to take stock of the application of the Memorandum of Understanding three years after it was signed. ICRC programmes had in fact been impeded several times by government-imposed restrictions, particularly regarding access to some destinations on the monthly flight plans submitted by the ICRC. On this occasion, the Delegate General obtained favourable replies from the government representatives. In July, during the summit meeting of OAU heads of State and government held in Yaoundé, the ICRC Vice-President met the Sudanese President, who hailed the good relations maintained with the ICRC.

Despite these encouraging developments, in early November a serious crisis of confidence arose between the ICRC and the Sudanese government, forcing the institution to suspend virtually all its activities in the Sudan. The crisis was sparked off when Commander Kerubino took as hostages an ICRC nurse and two ICRC pilots who had landed in Wunroc to bring back five Sudanese casualties returning there after receiving medical treatment at the ICRC hospital in Lokichokio (Kenya). Commander Kerubino accused the ICRC of having transported combatants and weapons for the SPLA in its plane; these accusations were taken up and publicly repeated by certain government representatives. The nurse and the two pilots were released on 18 December, after lengthy negotiations with Commander Kerubino in which the ICRC’s Deputy Director of Operations, the head of delegation and Sudanese government officials took part. Meanwhile, a member of the United States Congress, who had been asked to intervene by the family of one of the pilots, also stepped in to help resolve the matter. However, the five patients brought back to Wunroc by the ICRC were not released by Commander Kerubino. Although the ICRC made it absolutely clear that the accusations levelled against it were totally untrue, at the end of the year neither Commander Kerubino nor the Sudanese government had withdrawn them. In those circumstances, the conditions required for the ICRC to resume its activities in the country were not fulfilled.

Until November, the ICRC continued its operation in aid of the civilian population affected by the conflict, focusing on three parts of southern Sudan: North Bahr-al-Ghazal province, the south of Jonglei province and the centre of

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20 See the ICRC's 1993 Annual Report, p. 88.
AFRICA

Upper Nile province. A comprehensive approach was adopted, i.e. the operation was designed to respond to all humanitarian needs observed. The particular aim was to help civilians to regain some self-sufficiency in terms of food by distributing seed and implements to the farming communities and fishing tackle to the fishing communities. In some cases, when civilians had lost everything owing to displacement, destruction or looting, the ICRC also distributed essentials such as blankets, soap and cooking utensils. But this assistance, vital as it was, would have had only a limited effect if the people had been deprived of drinking water and medical care. The ICRC therefore repaired boreholes, installed water pumps, dug wells and trained local well-diggers, providing them with appropriate equipment, and set up a primary health care programme by supporting dispensaries and other medical facilities and giving special attention to training competent local staff. In some regions, a vaccination programme for children under five and women of child-bearing age was launched.

Besides the medical activities mentioned above, the ICRC continued to evacuate people injured in the fighting in southern Sudan and the seriously ill to its hospital in Lokichokio; others needing medical treatment were also evacuated to the same hospital under the United Nations Operation Lifeline Sudan. The ICRC frequently had to postpone or even cancel outright certain medical evacuations because it was unable to obtain government consent for the necessary flights. As in previous years, the ICRC surgeons working at Lokichokio continued to train Sudanese and Kenyan medical staff, while work of various kinds was carried out to improve drinking water supplies both at the hospital and in the town of Lokichokio itself. In Juba the ICRC went on supporting the Sudanese Ministry of Health hospital by providing it with medicines and other medical supplies, and the ICRC surgical team posted there since 1995 continued to carry out an average of 200 operations a month and train local medical personnel; in addition, the ICRC regularly provided food via the Sudanese Red Crescent for patients and staff at the hospital. Lastly, the ICRC was able in May to set up a primary health care programme outside Juba, in the villages along the road towards Rokon.

The ICRC's prosthetic/orthotic workshop at Lokichokio, which was enlarged in 1995, continued throughout the year to supply artificial limbs and other orthopaedic appliances for amputees. In June, the ICRC stopped its direct involvement in the prosthetic/orthotic centre in Khartoum; materials sufficient for the manufacture of about 2,700 prostheses were handed over to the centre, which was run from then on by the Ministry of Social Planning.

In September, the ICRC obtained the permission of the Sudanese military authorities to visit persons detained in connection with the conflict. The first visit — to six detainees held by the army — took place in Juba in late October;
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- regularly visited 335 people held by the SPLA;
- visited 6 people held in Juba by the Sudanese military authorities;
- visited 2 people held by the SSIA/M;
- paid several visits to 5 people held by the SPLA dissident faction led by Commander Kerubino;
- gave all detainees visited the opportunity to exchange news with their families; 6,000 Red Cross messages were forwarded in this context;
- provided ad hoc food aid to people held by the SPLA in Labone;
- carried out sanitation work in several places of detention.

- exchanged 90,000 Red Cross messages between members of dispersed families in southern Sudan and between Sudanese refugees in Uganda, northern Zaire, Central African Republic, Kenya and Ethiopia and their families, in cooperation with the National Societies of those countries.

- distributed 165 tonnes of seed and 90 tonnes of various relief supplies (farming implements, fishing tackle, mosquito netting, blankets, cooking utensils and soap) to people affected by the fighting in the south of the country;

- distributed 180 tonnes of food, through the Sudanese Red Crescent, to patients and staff at the Sudanese Ministry of Health hospital in Juba.

- admitted 1,725 patients and performed 3,874 surgical operations at the Lokichokio hospital;
- supported the Sudanese Ministry of Health hospital in Juba and performed an average of 200 surgical operations there each month;
- set up a primary health care programme in three regions of southern Sudan and on the outskirts of Juba by training local medical staff and providing medicines and other medical supplies.

- fitted 574 war amputees with artificial limbs and manufactured 815 artificial limbs and orthopaedic appliances at the prosthetic/orthotic workshops in Lokichokio and (until June) Khartoum.

- sank 2 boreholes and repaired or installed 15 hand pumps in Lokichokio;
- carried out work to improve the drinking water supply and drainage systems at Juba hospital;
- equipped or renovated 16 boreholes, rehabilitated or dug 13 wells, carried out work on water-supply installations at several health posts and other medical facilities in the south of the country, trained and equipped local staff to maintain the installations.

- supported the Sudanese Red Cross, concentrating on strengthening its operational capacity, particularly in southern Sudan where a fifth branch was established.

- organized several humanitarian law courses for SPLA and SSIA/M officers, on the basis of a programme previously approved by the two movements;
- trained some of the patients at the Lokichokio hospital to become responsible, after their return to southern Sudan, for spreading knowledge of the basic rules of humanitarian law.
it was conducted in accordance with customary ICRC procedures. From January on the ICRC was furthermore able to resume visits, also in accordance with its customary procedures, to detainees held by the SPLA in the Natinga region, near Narus. These visits had been suspended in 1994 after the authorities concerned refused to allow delegates to speak with the detainees in private. During the year, the ICRC had access to several new SPLA places of detention, at Labone, near Torit, and at Pochala; at Labone, ad hoc food aid was distributed to detainees over a period of two months. In May the ICRC visited two people detained by the SSIA/M; it was the first visit to people held by that movement.

In addition, the ICRC continued to help maintain and restore contact between separated family members in southern Sudan and between Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and the Central African Republic and their families by means of a Red Cross message network operated in cooperation with the National Societies of those countries.

In 1996, several openings also appeared for the ICRC to promote knowledge of humanitarian law among the SPLA and the SSIA/M. Until then, for lack of an agreement with the authorities concerned, ICRC activities in this field had been restricted to dissemination sessions organized on an impromptu basis when delegates met combatants from the two movements out in the field. The matter was raised again during the year with the SPLA and SSIA/M authorities; both sides responded favourably to the ICRC's proposal to carry out a humanitarian law training programme for their troops, initially for the higher levels of command. The first courses were held in late August.

The ICRC continued its support for the Sudanese Red Crescent, concentrating on strengthening its operational capacity, particularly in the south of the country where four branches were working (Malakal, Juba, Wau and Raja). With its help the Sudanese Red Crescent established a fifth branch there during the year, at Bentiu.

As of November, most of these activities were suspended because of the hostage-taking and the accusations that the ICRC had transported weapons. Only the medical activities in Lokichokio, tracing activities (through the National Society and local ICRC employees), administrative and financial support for the five Sudanese Red Crescent branches in the south of the country and support for the hospital in Juba (through local employees and thanks to a stock of medicines and other supplies and equipment left there) were continued. By the end of the year, the ICRC had withdrawn all its expatriate staff from southern Sudan; in Khartoum, there remained only the head of delegation and three delegates responsible for routine administrative tasks and for continuing the dialogue with the government to clarify the accusations made against the ICRC.
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- visited 195 persons detained for security reasons in 5 places of detention in Uganda;
- visited 4 persons in May and 5 in September held in Djibouti for security reasons.
- continued its support for tracing activities in the Great Lakes region in connection with the Rwandan crisis and ran a very large data bank containing details of over 350,000 people (unaccompanied minors, parents seeking their lost children, persons detained in Rwanda);
- facilitated the restoration and maintenance of contact between Rwandan refugees and their families, either between the various camps in Tanzania, or between Tanzania and Rwanda, or between Tanzania and other countries, by means of Red Cross messages (for total figures, see Rwanda);
- sank and equipped 3 boreholes to give displaced families in the Rift Valley (Kenya) improved access to drinking water.

- bought some 3,700 tonnes of food locally and sent a total of over 7,500 tonnes of food and various relief supplies for ICRC operations in Burundi (580 tonnes), Rwanda (5,700 tonnes), Somalia (125 tonnes), the Sudan (360 tonnes) and Zaire (780 tonnes), as well as medicines and other medical supplies worth Sfr 4 million for ICRC operations in Burundi, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Somalia and the Sudan;
- distributed 565 tonnes of food, 58 tonnes of seed and various essentials to people displaced by the conflict in the north, north-west and south-west of Uganda;
- provided material assistance, in cooperation with the Kenya Red Cross Society, to people in the Rift Valley displaced as the result of political violence in previous years.
- organized information sessions on humanitarian law and produced a radio programme for Rwandan refugees living in camps in western Tanzania;
- supported the Kenyan armed forces in their humanitarian law training programmes and organized many such courses and briefings for the police forces.
- continued its cooperation programmes with the National Societies of the region, concentrating according to needs and to a varying extent on structural development, training of staff and volunteers, support for activities to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and/or on strengthening the various National Societies' emergency response capacities;
- helped to improve cooperation among the National Societies of the region and, to this end, organized 2 seminars for their senior officials.

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NAIROBI
Regional delegation
(Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda)

In 1996, the regional delegation in Nairobi continued to act as a coordinating centre for specialized and support services for other ICRC operations in the region, particularly in Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia, the Sudan and Zaire. Throughout the year, specialists based in Nairobi offered other delegations their services in many fields: agricultural, veterinary and nutritional expertise, water supply and sanitation, tracing, logistics and airborne operations, supply and management of emergency stocks, administration of a regional technical workshop, means of transport, administrative support, assistance to staff, dissemination of humanitarian law to the armed forces and other bearers of weapons, relations with the media and promotion of the ICRC's activities in the neighbouring countries.

Besides providing services for other delegations and engaging in long-term activities to promote knowledge of humanitarian law and cooperation with the National Societies of the region, the delegation was particularly concerned with the growing tension in northern Uganda and, to a lesser extent, the situation of Rwandan refugees in Tanzania, displaced persons in the Rift Valley in Kenya and detainees in Djibouti.

For Uganda, 1996 was a year of contrasts. In May, the presidential elections — the first to be held for 16 years — brought a landslide victory for President Museveni. As in previous years, the country's economy continued to expand, with particularly high GNP growth rates.

Conversely, the security situation deteriorated in the north and north-west of the country: the armed opposition movements — the LRA* and WNBF* — which had already made themselves felt in 1995, intensified their guerrilla activities, and the government strengthened its military presence there. Then in October the conflict in eastern Zaire began to have repercussions in Uganda and several clashes took place along the border between the two countries, in the Kasese region.

The civilian population, particularly people living in the rural areas, was hardest hit by this situation. The renewed insecurity disrupted farming and economic activities, restricted access to public services, especially medical care, and tore society apart. In some parts of the country, particularly around

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* LRA: Lord's Resistance Army
* WNBF: West Nile Bank Front
Koboko and Gulu, increasingly large groups of civilians terrified by the many acts of violence perpetrated against them fled to places deemed to be safer. In other cases the rural population, afraid of spending the night in isolated places, gathered in nearby villages or urban centres at nightfall. In the second half of the year, the Ugandan army forcibly assembled civilians in protected villages in order to remove them from the influence of the guerrillas.

The ICRC did its utmost to provide assistance and protection to the victims of the events. However, the conduct of operations in the unsettled northern and north-western regions was seriously hampered by the perilous conditions there; several humanitarian organizations — including the ICRC — suffered from security incidents during the year. In June, the Federation and the Uganda Red Cross Society, which were working in the north of the country in aid of Sudanese refugees, withdrew their staff from Koboko after a rebel attack on the town during which a Uganda Red Cross volunteer was killed. In these circumstances, the ICRC maintained regular contact throughout the year with the Ugandan civil and military authorities in order to promote respect for the basic rules of humanitarian law and to obtain guarantees for the safety of its staff; posters and brochures destined for bearers of weapons were also produced. For the same purpose the ICRC tried to establish regular contact with LRA and WNBF representatives, but only a tentative dialogue had begun with the LRA by the end of the year.

From July on, the ICRC regularly distributed food and essential items to displaced people who had gathered in camps in Koboko. Food and material assistance were also distributed as needed to displaced people in the Kasese and Gulu regions. These activities were carried out in cooperation with the Uganda Red Cross Society. The ICRC also visited persons arrested for security reasons and held by the army and the police in unsettled regions and in Kampala. Furthermore, it continued its support for the tracing activities of the Uganda Red Cross Society and its work to spread knowledge of humanitarian law; in view of the calmer situation prevailing in Uganda at the time, the ICRC had handed over responsibility for these activities to the National Society in October 1993.

In Tanzania, tracing activities for Rwandan refugees along the western border (forwarding of Red Cross messages and registration of unaccompanied children) constituted the ICRC’s main task there in 1996, until most of them returned to Rwanda in December. These activities were carried out in cooperation with the Tanzania Red Cross National Society.
Hostage crisis in Lima: the ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary between the government and the Tupac Amarú (MRTA). Recognition of its ability to intervene in such volatile situations is the result of its absolute commitment to neutrality and impartiality in assisting victims of conflict. The ICRC also took in relief supplies for the hostages to ease their plight and facilitated the release of a number of them.
The Americas

ICRC delegations or missions:
Colombia, Haiti, Mexico, Peru

ICRC regional delegations:
Brasilia, Buenos Aires, Guatemala City, Washington

Staff
ICRC expatriates\(^1\) : 67
National Societies\(^1\) : 6
Local employees\(^2\) : 184

Total expenditure
Sfr 23,109,351

Expenditure breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protection/tracing</td>
<td>13,289,280</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relief</td>
<td>708,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health activities</td>
<td>1,743,982</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperation with National Societies</td>
<td>1,791,179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination/promotion</td>
<td>2,132,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational support</td>
<td>2,060,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overheads</td>
<td>1,382,974</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Average figures calculated on an annual basis.
\(^2\) Under ICRC contract, as at December 1996.
The operational priority for the ICRC in the Americas in 1996 was Colombia, where the government’s ratification of Protocol II additional to the Geneva Conventions, which covers non-international armed conflicts, took effect in February. After years of spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law in the country, the ICRC began concentrating on the implementation of the law. It concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the government, which facilitated its work in the field by officially recognizing it as the acknowledged interlocutor for all parties to the internal conflict. This, along with its reputation among all Colombians as a neutral and impartial party, made it possible for the delegation to extend its activities and increase its presence in the country. By the end of the year the operation in Colombia was the ICRC’s biggest in the Americas.

The delegation was able for the first time to establish and maintain contacts with Colombian paramilitary groups, and thus to perform its role as a neutral intermediary not only between the government and the armed opposition (for example, by helping to arrange for the release of abducted people or the surrender of guerrillas), but also directly between guerrillas and paramilitaries and between them and civilian groups that felt threatened by the spiral of violence. In this role, it was successful in particular at defusing tensions, once in April and again in mid-year, by passing on messages and information between the parties to the conflict.

The operation in Peru focused on the situation of thousands of people arrested in connection with the internal conflict. The delegation visited over 4,200 such prisoners throughout the year, monitoring their health and status. At the end of the year, the ICRC did its utmost to lessen tensions and to improve the situation of the many hostages seized by an armed opposition group at the Japanese ambassador’s residence in Lima.

In Haiti, conditions at the prisons visited by the delegation remained a serious concern for the ICRC, prompting the delegation to postpone handing over its programmes to the local authorities and to stay on in the country. Its presence in Mexico facilitated contacts between the authorities and the Zapatista National Liberation Army.

To support the ICRC’s continuing campaign to ban anti-personnel landmines, all ICRC delegations worked throughout the year to increase awareness of this problem. The Guatemala regional delegation held a seminar on the landmines issue in Managua in May. A special ICRC delegation travelled to Ottawa in October to take part in the conference convened by the Canadian government on the same subject.1

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1 See The law and legal considerations pp. 274-276.
A cooperation agreement concluded between the ICRC and the Organization of American States (OAS) in May established the basis for joint activities, especially in the field of dissemination. It also helped the ICRC to urge the organization to adopt a resolution at its annual General Assembly, which was held in Panama City, expressing its support for a ban on landmines.²

The Bogotá delegation was the base for two decentralized services: the ICRC’s Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law posted a delegate there to cover the whole of Latin America and to provide technical assistance to States taking national implementation measures, and the Canadian Red Cross made a retired Canadian colonel available for assignments with the ICRC’s delegations throughout the continent. Working under ICRC coordination, he gave humanitarian law courses for the armed forces of South America.

One way to ensure that humanitarian law is observed in practice is through the establishment of national committees for its implementation. In previous years the ICRC worked for the establishment of such bodies and met with some success, especially in South America. In 1996 new committees were set up with ICRC help in Colombia and Panama, and the ICRC’s newly established Advisory Service also assisted in preparations to set up others, notably in El Salvador, Costa Rica and Guatemala.

² See Operational Activities p. 33.
COLOMBIA

With tens of thousands of violent deaths, hundreds of abductions and thousands wounded, Colombia remained one of the most violent places in the world in 1996. The violence between the main armed opposition groups and government forces was still further complicated by the growing emergence of paramilitary groups. There were very few encouraging signs that a negotiated settlement could be reached between the government and the armed opposition.

The direct effects of the internal conflict in humanitarian terms were serious. The fighting left hundreds of thousands of people displaced within the country, including about 75,000 in 1996 alone. According to official sources, some 27,000 people were killed in violent incidents, but the actual figure was probably much higher; many of these were victims of the conflict. There were about 1,100 abductions, half of which were directly attributable to the conflict, and some 2,700 people were arrested on charges related to it.

Colombians’ awareness of international humanitarian law was among the highest in the world after years of debate over accession to the Additional Protocols and extensive coverage in the national press concerning the applicability of humanitarian law in internal conflicts (the country’s accession to Protocol II came into force on 14 February). The government continued to take measures in support of humanitarian law. On 17 April Colombia recognized the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission established pursuant to Article 90 of Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions, and on 11 October the President of the Republic signed a decree instituting a governmental commission for the implementation of international humanitarian law and to render the conflict more humane, a body which was

3 See The law and legal considerations pp. 265-267.
to include representatives of the Ministries of the Interior, Justice, Foreign Affairs, Defence, Health and presidential advisors, with the ICRC and the Colombian Red Cross as observers.

Despite the fact that both the government and the armed opposition acknowledged the need to decrease the level of violence, and notwithstanding some progress in spreading knowledge of humanitarian rules, serious and repeated violations persisted. These were attributable to all the groups taking part in the conflict and included extra-judicial executions, forced disappearances, ill-treatment, threats and hostage-taking.

The ICRC and the Colombian government concluded a Memorandum of Understanding on 16 February, which confirmed the government’s authorization for the ICRC to conduct its humanitarian activities, and in particular to have contact with all groups taking part in the conflict.

The ICRC subsequently concluded a number of agreements with government ministries and departments, which were annexed to the Memorandum. For example, during the mission of the Delegate General for the Americas in April the ICRC signed an agreement with the Fiscalía General de la Nación (the Attorney General’s Office, an autonomous body established as part of the judicial branch under the 1991 Constitution), and other agreements were later concluded with the Ministry of Defence and the DAS.* These agreements mainly addressed the question of procedures for ICRC visits to detainees and the arrest notification system, which had previously been set up with the assistance of the ICRC and which operated throughout the year. In 1996 the ICRC continued to monitor the effectiveness of this notification system.

With no let-up in the conflict in sight, the ICRC stepped up its activities, increasing its expatriate presence in Colombia from 27 at the beginning of the year to 43 by the end of December, and the number of its offices and sub-delegations from seven to eight (at the end of the year the ICRC had sub-delegations in Apartadó, Barranquilla, Bucaramanga, Cali, Medellín and Villavicencio and offices in Florencia and Saravena, in addition to its delegation in Bogotá). In May the delegation increased its presence in the field, and in the Urabá region in particular. By so doing it was able to have more contact with victims, as well as with all armed groups and the military, and thus to intensify its activities.

The delegation’s main activities included dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law, documenting and confidentially reporting on violations of this law, visiting detainees, assisting people directly affected by the internal conflict (providing medical and material assistance, paying for travel

* DAS: Administrative Department of Security
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- visited 2,240 security detainees, 1,183 of them for the first time, in 773 visits to 345 places of detention;
- visited 20 people detained by the armed opposition or by paramilitary groups, and facilitated the release of 25 people held under such circumstances;
- paid for the return home of 125 people after their release from detention;
- paid travel costs covering a total of 2,220 fares for travel tickets to enable family members to visit their relatives in prison.

- documented 365 cases (concerning 731 people) involving allegations of violations of humanitarian law, and in 248 cases submitted this information to the authorities or to armed groups;

- paid for the transport to safer areas of 2,194 people whose lives were in serious danger.

- covered the cost of medical care for some 120 people wounded as a result of the conflict and for 34 detainees, and provided basic medical supplies and assistance for displaced people and hospitals in need.

- together with the Colombian Red Cross (CRC), held regional meetings and seminars for directors of youth services, dissemination departments and first-aid services of the National Societies of Colombia and neighbouring countries;
- supported the institutional development and telecommunications infrastructure of the CRC, and held courses to prepare first-aid and relief workers for activities in conflict situations.

- together with the CRC, held dozens of dissemination sessions, reaching over 36,000 people, including members of the military, the police, the armed opposition, paramilitary groups, civil servants, journalists, church officials, non-governmental organizations and civilians.
to allow families of detainees to visit their relatives in prison and to enable people whose lives or well-being were in jeopardy to move to safer areas), and acting as a neutral intermediary for the release of people held by armed groups.

A summary report on ICRC visits to penitentiaries and prisons was handed over to the authorities. Early in the year the ICRC handed over to the FARC* a summary report on violations of humanitarian law committed against civilians, covering the period from January 1994 to March 1995 (in November 1995 a similar report had been submitted to the ELN,* another armed opposition group). The delegation constantly reminded the armed opposition and the paramilitary groups of the need to allow people detained by them to communicate with their families, and repeatedly obtained permission for its delegates to visit such people.

The ICRC maintained contact with all these and other armed groups so as to encourage full compliance with the provisions of international humanitarian law.

Throughout the year the ICRC continued its efforts to get or keep in touch with the newly formed paramilitary groups. The largest of these groups, the ACCU,* had established contact with the delegation in 1995. Thanks to these efforts, the ICRC was able for the first time to step in where certain paramilitary groups, including some associated with the ACCU, either were continuing to detain people (transmission of Red Cross messages) or wished to release them (assistance in organizing the release). At the end of the year prospects for developing contacts with some of the other paramilitary groups were good.

The delegation also kept up contact with the armed opposition so as to provide the same services and report violations of humanitarian law perpetrated by their forces. On numerous occasions the delegation assisted in the release of people detained by the guerrillas or forwarded Red Cross messages to people held by them.

In August, September and October the armed opposition carried out a number of attacks against army posts. One assault in August resulted in dozens of casualties, and the FARC captured some 60 soldiers. With humanitarian law high on the national agenda, and many Colombians from various circles placing a great deal of hope in the implementation of the law, the ICRC was asked to help seek solutions to problems such as this. The ICRC immediately requested a list of the soldiers captured (which the delegation

* FARC: Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces
* ELN: National Liberation Army
* ACCU: Rural Self-Defence Groups of Córdoba and Urabá (Autodefensas campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá)
received in mid-October) and permission for its delegates to visit them. It also offered its services to help arrange their release, reminding the FARC of its obligation to observe the provisions of international humanitarian law, and in particular those relating to the rights of the soldiers to be treated humanely, to be visited by delegates and to correspond with their families. Unfortunately, the delegation was still unable to visit these people or to forward Red Cross messages to them by the end of the year.

In May the ICRC launched two assistance programmes which were carried out with the Colombian Red Cross (CRC): one which provided material assistance to victims of the conflict not receiving any help from the government or from other agencies, and another which sent CRC health brigades to provide medical assistance in regions of Urabá which, owing to the conflict, had become off-limits to other health workers. At the end of the year the ICRC concluded an agreement with the Spanish Red Cross under which the latter seconded staff to the ICRC-CRC programme in Urabá. The delegation also cooperated with the Colombian National Society in dissemination activities, a mine-awareness campaign and various training programmes. A cooperation agreement between the ICRC and the CRC, signed on 14 August, and an annex to it, concluded on 24 December, strengthened this cooperation still further.

The delegation also continued its activities to promote knowledge of international humanitarian law. In October an agreement on the teaching of humanitarian law at university level was reached with the University of Antioquia in Medellín; it was the first such agreement to be concluded in Colombia.
HAITI

The ICRC once again concentrated on activities in prisons and jails, with the aim of obtaining a general improvement in conditions of detention and individually following the cases of security detainees. Delegates regularly visited places of detention in and around Port-au-Prince, including the National Penitentiary, which housed almost half of the prison population in Haiti. They also visited and carried out repair work in about 20 jails and prisons in other towns in Haiti. ICRC medical staff kept track of the health of detainees in premises visited by delegates.

The delegation kept in contact with representatives of various government ministries, including via meetings with the Ministers of Justice and Foreign Affairs and representatives of the Ministry of Health, the National Police and the APENA (the national prison service), and also played a role as a liaison between the Haitian government and numerous assistance agencies, pointing out needs in the Haitian prison system. When other organizations were unable to help, direct assistance was also provided.

In the light of the serious and continuing need for humanitarian assistance in Haitian prisons, and especially at the National Penitentiary, the ICRC in May decided to expand its health and water and sanitation activities, adding two more staff and undertaking additional repairs at places of detention.

On 3 July the ICRC’s head of delegation met the Prime Minister and handed over a summary report on detention-related activities. They also discussed the possibility of concluding a new agreement to govern ICRC visits to Haitian places of detention (the last official agreement with the Haitian authorities dated from the weeks prior to the international intervention of October 1994).

The Haitian authorities arrested a number of people for security reasons in 1996, including some who had been members of former governments. In mid-year a series of armed attacks on civilians, policemen, the television station and government buildings prompted the authorities to arrest some of the members of the MDN.* The ICRC visited these prisoners at the National Penitentiary and at the jail in Pétion-Ville. The number of security detainees whose cases were followed individually thus rose to 44 by the end of the year.

In late October a group of six prisoners at the National Penitentiary commenced a hunger strike to protest against their continuing detention. Delegates visited them daily until the end of their strike one week later.

The ICRC supported the Haitian National Red Cross Society’s reorganization efforts, and also assisted the National Society in developing its activities to spread knowledge of international humanitarian law and the Red Cross principles.

* MDN: Mobilization for National Development
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- visited and individually followed the cases of 67 people who were arrested or remained incarcerated in connection with the intervention of October 1994 or who were detained for reasons of State security;
- provided cleaning materials and other assistance to 20 prisons and jails throughout the country;
- built a 110,000 litre clean-water tank at the National Penitentiary and drained septic tanks, repaired latrines, renovated buildings, improved kitchen hygiene and established or supported dispensaries at numerous places of detention;
- continuously monitored the health and nutritional situation of some 1,000 prisoners held in the National Penitentiary, and helped the APENA train health and food services staff.

- on 11 January concluded a dissemination programme under which every member of the new police force was given information on international humanitarian law (in all, 4,920 policemen attended such courses in 1995 and 1996).
PERU

The intensity of the internal conflict remained relatively low in comparison with the late 1980s. Fighting occurred in a few regions of the interior, including the upper Huallaga valley. Armed opposition groups also perpetrated bomb attacks in the capital. As in 1995, with the fighting in the countryside generally on the wane, activities for the over 4,200 people detained in connection with the conflict were the main thrust of the delegation’s work in Peru. Delegates visited these detainees regularly.

In August the Peruvian parliament adopted a law which made it possible to release people held in connection with the internal conflict who had meanwhile been cleared of the charges brought against them. By the end of the year approximately 110 people had benefited from this law. Notwithstanding this, the ICRC’s concern about the conditions of detention of over 2,000 detainees sentenced to long terms of incarceration and held in high-security prisons remained undiminished.

The ICRC on numerous occasions drew the attention of the Peruvian authorities to the need to bring the conditions of detention into line with international humanitarian law, and made representations at all levels, including the very highest. For example, this issue was broached when the ICRC President met the President of Peru in Davos, Switzerland on 2 February, and was one of the main points in the summary report on conditions of detention submitted by the ICRC in June to the Ministry of Justice. The delegation also handed over to the authorities summary reports on the situation of detainees held by the Ministries of the Interior and Defence. The ICRC furthermore reported to the Ministry of Defence on the problems faced by civilians in regions affected by the conflict. All these summary reports were likewise discussed with the President of the Republic.

The material assistance provided by the ICRC to people directly affected by the conflict went to widows, orphans, displaced people and those whose representations concerning conditions of detention
In 1996 the ICRC:

- visited 4,247 prisoners, 1,324 of them for the first time, in 1,112 visits to 167 places of detention;
- covered the cost of transport for family members to visit their relatives in prison eight times in the course of the year (issuing a total of 26,139 travel tickets, and enabling the families of 1,844 prisoners to visit their relatives);
- funded training courses throughout the year for prison doctors with a view to improving care in the country's major prisons.

- helped to organize 18 family reunifications;
- distributed food, building materials, cooking utensils and clothes to approximately 3,500 people directly affected by the internal conflict.
- covered the cost of medical care for more than 310 victims of the conflict;
- evacuated 40 people requiring special treatment to health facilities in major towns.
- provided logistical support for local branches of the Peruvian Red Cross in Piura and Arequipa and repaired facilities belonging to the National Society in Piura and Lima.
- held 224 dissemination sessions to promote knowledge of and compliance with international humanitarian law, reaching over 17,500 people, including members of the military, the police, self-defence groups and civilians.

Property had been destroyed, as well as to recuperados, or people who had previously lived in areas controlled by the armed opposition. The delegation also paid for medical assistance for people injured in incidents related to the conflict, including prosthetic and orthotic care, and provided medical supplies to hospitals and health posts in affected areas.

The delegation continued to carry out activities aimed at spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law. It developed dissemination activities in the Huallaga region and at various universities throughout the country and initiated a campaign at the end of the year to improve awareness of the neutrality of medical personnel, using radio, seminars and posters.

In August the President of the Republic approved the new statutes of the Peruvian Red Cross, which continued the restructuring process begun in 1994 with the joint help of the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
On 17 December members of the MRTA* occupied the Japanese ambassador’s residence in Lima during a diplomatic gathering and took hundreds of hostages. The ICRC’s head of delegation, who was among those attending the event, immediately offered the organization’s services to act as a neutral intermediary and was instrumental in securing the release of approximately 250 women and elderly people, as well as service staff and a number of children. The ICRC subsequently helped in securing further releases, arranging for the exchange of Red Cross messages between the hostages and their families and providing supplies to meet the hostages’ basic needs. ICRC medical teams also visited the compound every day as from 19 December.

In its role as a neutral intermediary the ICRC facilitated contacts between the MRTA rebels and the government and intervened on questions of a strictly humanitarian nature, but assumed no responsibility with regard to proposals passed on, decisions made or action taken. In the interest of clarity, it explicitly stated that it could provide no guarantees that decisions made or conditions set by the parties would be observed by them.

At the end of 1996, 81 hostages were still being held in the residence.

BRASILIA
Regional delegation
(Brazil, Ecuador, Guyana, Suriname, Venezuela)

The delegation continued to encourage the region’s governments to become party to the instruments of international humanitarian law. Specifically it raised with the various authorities the questions of Venezuela’s accession to the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions, the accession by Guyana and Suriname to the 1980 Weapons Convention, ratification by Ecuador of the Protocols additional to the Weapons Convention which deal with blinding laser weapons and mines, recognition of the International Fact-Finding Commission by the Ecuadorian government and the possible establishment of a national committee for the implementation of humanitarian law by Ecuador.

The ICRC held a number of courses on humanitarian law for Brazilian military schools and academies, contingents and observers leaving on UN peace-keeping assignments, and for the military police. Similar activities were conducted for the military in Guyana and Suriname. In Ecuador the ICRC

* MRTA: Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement
supported dissemination activities for the armed forces carried out by the Ecuadorean Red Cross, in accordance with a cooperation agreement between the two institutions, and held a seminar together with it for leaders of local National Society branches. It also supported various training seminars for staff of the Ecuadorean National Society, including one for presidents of its local branches.

Seminars and presentations of humanitarian law were also organized in Brazil for university staff and students (at the Universities of Brasilia and São Paulo), at academic institutions such as the Institute for Strategic Studies, and for government authorities.

The question of land distribution and relocation in Brazil was of concern to the delegation because of the violence it spawned. In certain places it was the centre of serious social tensions in rural areas, sometimes resulting in clashes between landless people and the police. While awaiting land distributions, a number of landless agricultural workers and their families occupied properties and established camps where the living conditions were harsh. The delegation contacted the government body in charge of land reform, the INCRA,* and the main organization representing landless peasants, and at the end of the year visited one such camp to take stock of the situation.

* INCRA: National Institute for Land Settlement and Reform

IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- in Brazil, gave courses on humanitarian law at various military schools and academies and to two contingents leaving on United Nations peace-keeping missions, as well as to numerous observers;
- organized a one-week course on humanitarian law and human rights for officers of the military police from 12 Brazilian states;
- in November held courses on humanitarian law for instructors of the armed forces of Guyana and Suriname;
- throughout the year supported dissemination activities of the Ecuadorean Red Cross, which held 38 courses on humanitarian law attended by some 4,400 members of the armed forces.

- supported activities of the Venezuelan Red Cross aimed at training staff responsible for dissemination, and supported similar activities of the Red Cross Society of Suriname.
- visited 6 security detainees held at 2 places of detention in Ecuador.
In Venezuela, the ICRC was concerned about the situation in the border region near Colombia, and conducted a three-week survey in April and May in Apure, Táchira and Zulia states. The survey showed that there was a need for visits to people detained in connection with the conflict in Colombia and for instruction in humanitarian law for the armed forces stationed in the region. The delegation presented a report on the mission and offered its services to the Ministry of Foreign Relations in June. In September, as no reply was forthcoming, the ICRC followed up on this offer with an official communication from its headquarters to the Ministry. This topic was raised at a meeting between the ICRC Vice-President and the Venezuelan Foreign Minister which took place on the occasion of the Ibero-American Summit, held in Santiago, Chile in November. The Venezuelan Foreign Minister responded positively to the ICRC's offer and indicated that a written reply would be forthcoming in the near future.

As in previous years the ICRC visited a group of Colombian nationals detained in Ecuadorean prisons who had been arrested following an incident near the Putumayo river, on the Colombian border, in December 1993. They were visited by delegates in April, and although they had been sentenced earlier in the year to long periods in detention, they were eventually released in September.

BUENOS AIRES
Regional delegation
(Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay)

The regional delegation followed and participated in the work of national committees for the implementation of international humanitarian law whenever possible and took further steps to encourage implementation of the law, inter alia by urging ratification of the various instruments. Paraguay was the fifth of the region's countries to establish such a committee, which held its first meeting in April. In October the Argentine government filed the declaration recognizing the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission as provided for in Article 90 of Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions.

The delegation continued its efforts to spread knowledge of humanitarian law. It took part in various seminars and conferences, including those

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4 See The law and legal considerations pp. 266-267.
organized by the governments or National Societies of the region, UNHCR* (on refugee law) and the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (on human rights and the military). The ICRC was also present during a number of events or activities devoted to peace-keeping operations, including a seminar organized by the governments of Argentina and Canada which was attended by representatives of 10 countries, the UN and the OAS, and the "Fuerzas Unidas" peace-keeping operations — 96 SOUTHAM” military exercise, which was held in August in Uruguay and involved about 300 soldiers from four South American countries and the United States.

In April the Vice-President of Bolivia visited ICRC headquarters in Geneva and had talks with the ICRC President. They discussed the possibility of extending dissemination activities and also Bolivia’s position regarding the

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

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- visited 96 security detainees at 2 places of detention in Chile in November, including 6 who were seen for the first time;
- visited 5 Peruvian nationals arrested on criminal charges (3 in Bolivia and 2 in Uruguay) and who were suspected of involvement with a Peruvian armed opposition group.
- concluded a cooperation agreement with the Chilean Red Cross in September which will govern joint efforts for the next three years, in particular in dissemination, information and tracing activities;
- together with the Federation, held a training seminar on the Red Cross principles and humanitarian law for the leadership of the National Societies of Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay at the end of May and beginning of June.
- gave courses and lectures on international humanitarian law at numerous universities and academic associations, including the Austral University in Buenos Aires, the University of Buenos Aires, the College of Lawyers of Bolivia, the Catholic Universities in Asunción and Montevideo and the University of the Republic in Uruguay, and concluded a cooperation agreement with the Bolivian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, under which the Bolivian diplomatic academy will introduce humanitarian law into its syllabus;
- gave instruction and training in humanitarian law to the military services of all five countries covered, including courses at army, air force and naval academies, and organized or assisted in the organization of seminars for the army in Argentina, the Cochabamba military academy in Bolivia, the police forces and Ministries of the Interior and Justice in Chile, the army and air force in Paraguay and the naval academy in Uruguay.
In November the ICRC sent a delegation consisting of its permanent Vice-President, the Delegate General for the Americas and the regional delegate based in Buenos Aires to take part in the Ibero-American Summit, which was held in Santiago, Chile. During the summit the Vice-President held discussions with the President of Colombia and the Venezuelan Foreign Minister.\(^5\)

As in previous years, the delegation visited security detainees in Chile. In May a number of detainees began a hunger strike, and the ICRC delegation visited them a few days later, shortly after their strike was suspended. Early in the year the delegation also visited three Peruvians arrested in Bolivia and two Peruvians arrested in Uruguay, all of whom were suspected of being involved with a Peruvian armed opposition group.

In 1996 the regional delegation initiated a campaign to raise awareness of the problems posed by anti-personnel landmines, and developed cooperation programmes with the region’s National Societies in the field of communications.

The delegation worked closely with the Argentine Red Cross with a view to concluding a cooperation agreement. The agreement was in preparation at the end of the year.

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\(^5\) See also Brasilia regional delegation, Venezuela p. 119.
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- in Guatemala, the ICRC made 13 visits to 6 places of detention and registered 6 security detainees;
- in Panama, the ICRC made 2 visits to 6 people detained since the United States military intervention of 1989 and 1990. (See also Washington regional delegation.)

- supported the medical programme of the Mexican Red Cross in the Chiapas mountains, which held thousands of consultations, intervened in hundreds of medical emergencies, carried out tens of thousands of vaccinations and evacuated hundreds of patients to major health centres.

- continued carrying out joint dissemination activities for the armed forces with the National Societies of Nicaragua and Panama, and supported the dissemination services of the region’s National Societies, and in particular that of the Jamaican Red Cross.

- supported training programmes in international humanitarian law which had previously been set up with the help of the ICRC and were run on an independent basis by the armed and police forces of Guatemala (at all the military academies and the police academy), Honduras and Nicaragua;
- continued the round of dissemination sessions begun in late 1995 for members of the Guatemalan military in the north, including Quiché, reaching about 3,000 soldiers in the first two months of the year (thus bringing the total to about 6,000);
- in September held two dissemination sessions for members of the URNG* for the first time;
- held dissemination sessions for members of civil defence groups in Guatemala;
- continued to finance and materially and technically assist the International Humanitarian Law Study Centre in Havana, which held 12 one-week courses for over 300 officers of the armed forces and officials of the Ministry of the Interior;
- supported instruction in humanitarian law for the police force in the Dominican Republic and initiated similar programmes for the public forces in Costa Rica and the armed and police forces in Jamaica, Belize and the Bahamas;
- gave seminars or courses on international humanitarian law for government representatives in Honduras, Panama and the Bahamas, for university staff and students in Cuba, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic and for the press in Honduras and Cuba.

- jointly with the Nicaraguan Red Cross, held a seminar on anti-personnel landmines in Managua on 30 and 31 May attended by over 70 representatives of government ministries and the armed forces of Central American countries and Mexico.

* URNG: Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity
The ICRC once again called upon those governments that had not already done so to ratify instruments of humanitarian law, and emphasized the importance of the 1980 United Nations Weapons Convention, especially in the light of the ICRC’s campaign to ban anti-personnel landmines. Dominica acceded to Protocol II additional to the Geneva Conventions on 25 April.

The delegation further promoted the adoption of national measures aimed at implementing international humanitarian law, and toward this end encouraged the establishment of interministerial committees for the implementation of this law. The ICRC gave guidance in the work of the first such committee to be set up in the region, in the Dominican Republic, helped establish another in Panama in July and assisted the governments of El Salvador, Costa Rica and Guatemala in preparing to create others.

Activities at the regional level in 1996 included a seminar on anti-personnel landmines, which was attended by over 70 participants representing the countries of Central America and Mexico. The event was organized by the ICRC and the Nicaraguan Red Cross, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua.

In April the ICRC and the Federation invited the presidents of the region’s National Societies to discuss the role and future of the Red Cross in the region at a meeting held in San José, Costa Rica.

A combined regional seminar and workshop on dissemination and cooperation projects was held in Guatemala City at the end of June, with the participation of heads of dissemination departments of the National Societies of Cuba, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama and representatives of the Federation. This attendance was consistent with the general trend towards greater cooperation among components of the Movement in the Spanish-speaking part of the region. To try to establish the same type of momentum among English-speaking and other National Societies, the ICRC held a similar event in Jamaica in December, with the participation of representatives from the National Societies of the CARICOM* member States, Haiti, Suriname and Guyana.

The delegation paid particular attention to the development of dissemination services in English-speaking countries in the region. It helped the Jamaican Red Cross become the first such National Society to set up a dissemination department.

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\(^6\) See *The law and legal considerations* pp. 266-267.

* CARICOM: Caribbean Community
In Mexico, negotiations continued early in the year between the government and the EZLN.* On ten occasions the ICRC, acting as a neutral and impartial intermediary, provided transport for and ensured the safety of EZLN delegates travelling to and from peace talks and meetings preparatory to them held in San Andrés and San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas.

The delegation continued to monitor the situation of people held in connection with the uprising in Chiapas. At the end of the year there were still 15 such people in custody.

The Red Cross was the only organization able, thanks to its reputation as a neutral institution, to conduct medical activities in Chiapas throughout the year. Responsibility for this programme and for running the two health posts established in Chiapas had been handed over by the ICRC to the Mexican Red Cross in 1995. In 1996 the ICRC monitored the National Society’s activities and concluded a cooperation agreement on financial assistance to Mexican Red Cross programmes, including dissemination.

WASHINGTON
Regional delegation
(Canada, United States)

The regional delegation maintained contact with members of the Canadian and United States governments throughout the year. In addition, numerous ICRC officials, including the President, the Director of Operations and the Delegates General for Africa, the Americas and the Middle East and North Africa travelled on mission to Washington and Ottawa to exchange views with the two countries’ governments, parliamentarians, assistance agencies and National Societies on ICRC activities in the various regions of the world.

The ICRC President went on mission twice to the US capital and once to Ottawa. In January he travelled to Washington and met the Secretary-General of the OAS, with whom he prepared a cooperation agreement that was subsequently signed in May. He also met the President of the World Bank to discuss possible forms of cooperation between the two organizations, as well as a number of high-ranking United States officials, including the Secretaries

* EZLN: Zapatista National Liberation Army
of Defense and State, the National Security Advisor and representatives of USAID.*

In October the ICRC President went to Ottawa to participate in the International Strategy Conference⁷ and to attend the ceremonies to mark the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Canadian Red Cross. He held talks with officials of the National Society and also with leading members of the Movement.

An ICRC doctor with extensive experience in treating victims of antipersonnel landmines travelled to Washington in March to take part in the meeting of the OAS Hemispheric Security Committee, which was discussing the problem of landmines. The ICRC’s Delegate General for the Americas and the Head of the Division for Relations with Armed and Security Forces took part in a conference held by the United States Southern Command in Miami and devoted to the role of the armed forces in the protection of human rights.

As part of its efforts to provide technical assistance to States as they take national measures to implement international humanitarian law, the ICRC, together with a legal adviser from the American Red Cross, offered advice to the US Congress on proposed legislation aimed at imposing legal penalties in the event of violations of the Geneva Conventions and other war crimes.

Throughout the year delegates took part in various debates and round-table discussions on topics such as landmines, humanitarian assistance and international humanitarian law, at universities, seminars for the armed forces and events organized by non-governmental organizations.

In addition one Panamanian prisoner of war, captured during the United States intervention in Panama, was visited in January.

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* USAID: United States Agency for International Development

⁷ See The Law and legal considerations, pp. 274-276.
From fighting to farming: scrap metal in the form of derelict tanks and other debris from the many years of conflict is easy to find in Afghanistan. The ICRC launched a programme to transform this metal into farm implements. About 30,000 were produced in 1996.
Indian sub-continent and Myanmar

ICRC delegations:
Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

ICRC regional delegation:
New Delhi

South East Asia and Far East

ICRC delegation:
Cambodia

ICRC regional delegations:
Bangkok, Jakarta, Manila

Staff
ICRC expatriates\(^1\): 167
National Societies\(^1\): 40
Local employees\(^2\): 1,462

Total expenditure
Sfr 81,199,648

Expenditure breakdown Sfr
Protection/Tracing: 27,037,097
Relief: 20,418,910
Health activities: 18,633,033
Cooperation with National Societies: 1,997,405
Dissemination/promotion: 3,149,661
Operational support: 5,302,808
Overheads: 4,660,734

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\(^1\) Average numbers calculated on an annual basis.
\(^2\) Under ICRC contract, as at December 1996.
Asia was once again a region of sharp contrasts in 1996, as parts of the continent continued to ride a wave of unprecedented economic growth while others remained mired in poverty and strife. In some countries these phenomena existed virtually side by side. Even countries enjoying both prosperity and relative social cohesion, however, remained concerned about region-wide tensions and the potential for future conflict. Hopes for a settlement of existing conflicts went largely unfulfilled as fighting once again took a grim toll among both combatants and civilians. As in the past, much of the suffering could have been avoided had the warring parties made a greater effort to comply with international humanitarian law.

Mine-ridden Afghanistan was once more the scene of the ICRC’s largest operation in Asia, and protecting and assisting civilians caught in the middle of the war there remained one of its most arduous tasks. The residents of Kabul were sorely tried as months of dogged fighting brought death, injury, hunger and deprivation. When the Taliban captured the Afghan capital in September, the front lines shifted north and west, filling the roads with new multitudes of people driven from their homes. Throughout the year, delegates did what they could to ease the suffering: they supplied food and other essential items, conducted agricultural rehabilitation programmes, provided large-scale assistance to medical and surgical facilities and fitted amputees with artificial limbs. The ICRC’s rehabilitation of Kandahar’s Mirwais hospital was completed in May, furnishing south-western Afghanistan with a well-equipped surgical facility. Accepted as a neutral intermediary throughout the country, the ICRC expanded its protection work as it gained access to increasing numbers of detainees. It also pursued its efforts to promote respect for humanitarian law.

Hopes for a settlement to the long-running conflict in Sri Lanka continued to be frustrated in 1996. Government forces retook territory in the north of the island while a series of spectacular and bloody bomb attacks in the capital Colombo further dimmed hopes for an end to the fighting. Meanwhile, the security situation in the east of the country made living conditions increasingly difficult and signs of malnutrition began to appear. The ICRC strove to meet the needs of civilians living in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, afflicted as those areas were by both conflict and drought: it distributed relief supplies, carried out water and sanitation projects, helped provide basic health care and ran agricultural rehabilitation programmes. Delegates visited detainees in the hands of the Sri Lankan army, the Sri Lankan police and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, and endeavoured to promote compliance with humanitarian law among all those involved in the conflict.

The rest of the Indian sub-continent witnessed considerable political change as new governments took over in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The
ICRC regional delegation in New Delhi continued developing its programme to promote knowledge of and compliance with humanitarian law among the Indian armed forces and police. Delegates completed their first full year of visits to people detained in connection with the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. No progress was achieved in discussions with the authorities of Myanmar, however, about the possibility of visits to detainees in that country.

Dissension within both the government and the Khmer Rouge generally served to attenuate fighting in mine-infested Cambodia and hopes for some form of national reconciliation endured. The ICRC remained active in the areas of detainee welfare, blood collection, material assistance to health-care facilities, prosthetic/orthotic activities, promoting compliance with humanitarian law and raising awareness of the danger posed by mines. It continued its work to restore family contacts, though on a smaller scale than in the past.

The activities of the regional delegation in Hong Kong were transferred to the regional delegation in Bangkok, which took over the ongoing task of strengthening ties with the authorities and the National Societies in the countries of the Far East.

Disturbances on the island of Java, continued violence in East Timor and a dramatic hostage crisis in Irian Jaya mobilized delegates based at the ICRC’s regional delegation in Jakarta, in addition to their regular work for detainees in various parts of Indonesia and their activities to promote humanitarian law.

Some progress was achieved in the peace process under way in the Philippines. The regional delegation in Manila pursued its detainee-welfare activities and strove to ensure that the civilian population was spared the effects of residual fighting. With violence continuing to flare on the island of Bougainville and large numbers of people being forced to flee their homes, the ICRC offered its services to the authorities of Papua New Guinea.

The ICRC was gratified to note that the Philippines ratified the 1980 UN Weapons Convention and that Palau became party to the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols.
The year began with Afghanistan divided into five zones. Much of the south and west of the country was controlled by the largely Pashtun Taliban, the Kandahar-based movement led by Mullah Mohammad Omar. The north-east was ruled by the Tajik-dominated Kabul government headed by President Rabbani and Commander Massoud. To the east around Jalalabad was the neutral zone under the Nangarhar shura (council of elders), while the central province of Bamyan was under the control of Shiite leader Karim Khalili’s Hezb-i-Wahdat. The north of the country, finally, was held by the predominantly Uzbek forces of General Dostom. In June the ethnic base of the Kabul government was broadened somewhat when Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Pashtun leader of Hezb-i-Islami, became Prime Minister of the Kabul government.

The first months of the year were particularly cruel ones for the residents of Kabul, who had borne the brunt of the fighting over the years. With industry and infrastructure devastated and many residential areas largely destroyed, a high number of Kabulis were displaced, unemployed and deprived of basic necessities such as clean water. A blockade on the city as the year started allowed through only a trickle of essential provisions. Though the supply situation eventually eased, Kabul remained the focus of military action for most of the year.

In August, the Taliban launched an offensive directed first at Jalalabad and neighbouring provinces, then at Kabul itself, which was finally taken on 27 September, placing two-thirds of the country in Taliban hands. The head of the ICRC delegation thereupon sought and obtained guarantees from senior Taliban officials that the organization’s operations could continue. Delegates swiftly resumed support to Kabul hospitals, and prosthetic/orthotic work...
proceeded uninterrupted, as did medical and detainee-welfare activities throughout the country.

In the months before the capital changed hands, while the Rabbani/Massoud forces were confronting the Taliban to the south, there were daily rocket attacks and cases of indiscriminate shelling and sniper fire, with many civilians being killed and many more wounded. The delegation protested on a number of occasions to the parties responsible for these violations of humanitarian law and, as the Taliban advanced on the city, stepped up its representations in an attempt to persuade the warring parties to spare the civilian population and ensure that routes into Kabul remained open for food and medical supplies.

After the fall of Kabul, the fighting moved northwards to the mouth of the Panjshir valley. The year ended with clashes continuing in the north-east and north-west as the Taliban faced a hostile coalition of the forces of Dostom, Khalili, Rabbani and Massoud. International efforts to bring an end to the protracted suffering of the Afghan people had once again failed.

Although there were radical changes in the military situation over the year, the ICRC maintained good working relations with all the major parties. Its operations were virtually unaffected by the fighting and, acting as a neutral intermediary, it was able for the first time to arrange for the mortal remains of several dozen fallen combatants from Taliban and Massoud forces to be transferred to their respective sides. In January, the ICRC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies setting out the division of tasks between the two organizations for their activities in Afghanistan, with the Federation responsible for helping the Afghan Red Crescent Society to develop non-conflict-related work (public health, etc.) and the ICRC covering conflict-related activities (first-aid posts, etc.). Under the agreement the ICRC retained its leading role.

In early 1996, continual rocket attacks combined with economic chaos and harsh weather to place a stranglehold on a hard-hit and increasingly desperate Kabul. With supplies running low, inflation spiralling and acute malnutrition on the rise, the ICRC repeatedly lengthened the list of particularly vulnerable families (those headed by disabled breadwinners, widows, recent returnees and the utterly destitute — a quarter of the capital’s estimated population) covered by its relief programme in the city. Delegates distributed wheat flour, beans and vegetable oil to the beneficiaries. Finally, with access roads all but cut, the ICRC organized an airlift from Peshawar, Pakistan, and flew in some 900 tonnes of food in February, enough to sustain 100,000 Kabulis for one month. When in March two of the four access roads were reopened to commercial and humanitarian traffic, the airlift was ended. However, as other organizations assisting vulnerable families did not receive the funding

1 The ICRC bases its distributions on the family unit, calculated as equal to six persons.
necessary for their work, the ICRC, acting in conjunction with the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS), extended its distributions still further, with half-rations and non-food items (clothes, blankets, heating fuel, etc.) going to some 15,000 additional families.

Surveys revealed that despite the restoration of road traffic into Kabul, the food situation remained precarious and the nutritional status of the most vulnerable members of the population — particularly children and widows — was deteriorating, even during the traditionally bountiful summer months. To monitor future trends in a city with its population swollen by the fighting, the delegation instituted a weekly market survey and a system of anthropometric measurements of children in ARCS clinics.

After the Taliban gained control in September, the ICRC continued its distributions in Kabul unabated and hired private contractors to bring 1,500 tonnes of food per month into Kabul from Peshawar, enabling additional non-food items (stoves, coal, candles, matches, plastic sheeting and soap) to be distributed as another severe Afghan winter began.

But relief work, like the war itself, was not confined to Kabul. Economic collapse forced people into poverty just as the fighting forced them from their homes. Across Afghanistan, delegates worked with the Afghan Red Crescent Society to come to the aid of vulnerable families, many of them displaced. Each sub-delegation maintained stocks of non-food items so as to be able to respond rapidly in the event of emergency. Ad hoc distributions were carried out when needed. Among its many other activities, the National Society played an invaluable role in identifying the people most in need of assistance.

Following high-level contacts with — and a great deal of cooperation from — the authorities in Mazar-i-Sharif and Kabul, the ICRC received permission to transport both food and medical and prosthetic/orthotic items to and from the two cities. As part of the road north of the Salang tunnel was heavily mined, the ICRC asked the Halo Trust, a British non-governmental mine-clearing organization, to make it safe for the passage of the planned transports. This it did with much courage and skill, and the first convoy in two years was able to pass. Many more convoys transporting relief and/or medical supplies were to follow.

ICRC support for some 7,000 families, most of them displaced from the Tagab Valley and living in the Samarkhel camp near Jalalabad, was suspended in August as the security situation had improved substantially in their home area. The running of the camp had been delegated to the Swedish Red Cross in 1995, with the ICRC retaining overall responsibility, and food-for-work schemes had been set up to encourage the families to return home. Though the Taliban offensive against Kabul brought fighting back to the Tagab area, about half of the camp dwellers had returned there by year’s end.
In late 1996, relief work was intensive in the north-west as many thousands of people, displaced by the clashes in Badghis province between the Taliban and General Dostom’s forces, streamed into Herat.

Under the ICRC’s agricultural programme in Afghanistan, which was launched in 1995, work continued to revive cultivation of arable land, restore a degree of self-sufficiency among the rural population and generally stimulate food production in war-ravaged Afghanistan. The programme also served as an opportunity both to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and to alert people to the danger of mines.

Implemented with the cooperation of the Afghan Red Crescent Society, the programme was aimed at the country’s most disadvantaged rural families, including displaced people and recent returnees. One objective was to rehabilitate wells and irrigation systems, so vital in the aggressively dry and windy conditions prevailing in Afghanistan. Over 300 km of surface and underground irrigation channels that had been neglected or even deliberately destroyed during the long years of warfare were cleared and repaired in 1996 on a food-for-work basis (7 kg of flour per person per day), bringing the total to some 500 km restored to working order since the programme began.

In addition, locally purchased seeds (onions, carrots, leeks, okra and radish) and, in Kabul province, tomato, pepper and eggplant seedlings were distributed to selected farmers. The seed and seedlings distributed were always accompanied by sets of agricultural implements produced under an ICRC income-generating project by craftsmen in Kabul, Parwan and Badakhshan who transformed metal from derelict tanks and other weapons of war into spades and shears. This provided paid work not only to the tool-makers themselves but also to about a hundred families involved in the collection of scrap metal.

Rich in calories and vitamins, and therefore useful in disease prevention, fruit is a traditional component of the Afghan diet and a crop that has been particularly hard hit by the war. Pest-control and tree-planting projects were therefore launched in selected areas.

As casualties among combatants and non-combatants alike remained high in 1996, the ICRC continued to help hard-pressed surgical facilities treating the war-wounded. It also gave ad hoc assistance to some 60 other facilities, including dispensaries and clinics, across Afghanistan. During the heavy fighting to the south of Kabul throughout the first nine months of the year, the ICRC provided massive support, including both medical and non-medical supplies, food, equipment and financial support for staff, to the capital’s Karte Seh and Wazir Akbar Khan hospitals, the surgical department of the Jalalabad Public Health Hospital (laundry and kitchen entirely renovated) and the provincial hospital in Ghazni. The six-month reserve stock of medical supplies

restoring self-sufficiency among rural population

assistance to surgical facilities
built up by the delegation proved adequate as the battle lines swept north of Kabul in the final months of the year.

Work undertaken in 1995 to rehabilitate Kandahar’s Mirwais hospital and install a new 150-bed surgical ward was completed in May. Equipment was purchased, training by expatriate specialists began for local staff and the first patients were admitted in June. When the front moved north of Kabul following the Taliban victories in September, and hospitals in the capital were consequently stretched to the limit, it was thus possible to evacuate hundreds of casualties south to Mirwais (others were taken to Jalalabad). To help cope with the emergency, the ICRC dispatched a surgical team to Kandahar from its surgical hospital in Quetta.

Since patients from the Kandahar region, which has a population of 1.5 million, no longer had to be transferred to the ICRC hospital across the border in Quetta, Pakistan, this facility was closed down, as was the first-aid post set up in Kandahar pending completion of the work on Mirwais.

With battles raging south of Kabul through much of the year, the ICRC’s first-aid posts in Sheikhabad and Pul-i-Alam treated casualties from the front lines. The Charasyab post was operational only intermittently owing to the poor security conditions. Mir Bachakot to the north continued to receive casualties, who were subsequently evacuated south to Kabul or north to Charikar.

Blood banks were built and equipped, and staff trained, in Kandahar and Ghazni.

The prolonged war in Afghanistan has had a major effect on the health of the people. Those who have remained uninjured have nevertheless suffered from the indirect consequences: malnutrition, the breakdown of health-care services and a sharp fall in living standards. Unable to ignore their plight, the ICRC engaged in activities not wholly intended for the direct victims of warfare. Mirwais hospital’s surgical department, henceforth catering for the surgical needs of the entire civilian population of the south-western provinces, was one example. Another was the growing number of people other than war-injured who were being admitted to the ICRC’s prosthetic/orthotic rehabilitation centres.

The millions of anti-personnel landmines scattered throughout Afghanistan once again took a very heavy toll among both combatants and civilians. To cope with the large number of victims, the ICRC continued running its prosthetic/orthotic centres in Kabul, Jalalabad, Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif. In the capital, repair work went on at the Ali Abad centre, which had been badly damaged in 1994. The temporary workshop, set up in the grounds of the Wazir Akbar Khan hospital, further increased its output of components, artificial limbs and orthopaedic appliances. It supplied parts and raw materials to the three centres attached to the sub-delegations as
well as to workshops run by other organizations. In addition, surgeons and prosthetic technicians held seminars on amputation techniques and stump revision in the country's major hospitals.

As therapy for Afghans with spinal cord injuries and other disabilities was not available locally, a number of polio and paraplegic cases received orthoses and/or treatment in ICRC or ICRC-supported facilities, including the Pakistan Red Crescent Society's paraplegic centre in Peshawar, where their treatment was financed by the ICRC. The production of orthoses at ICRC workshops was therefore stepped up.

Kabul's infrastructure has been steadily deteriorating since 1992: water mains have been wrecked and collection and treatment of household refuse and human waste have grown erratic. To counter the greatly increased risk of infectious disease, the ICRC again worked to improve water supplies and sanitation in 1996, mainly by sinking new wells, chlorinating existing wells, disposing of waste and building latrines and washing facilities. Water and sanitation engineers were also active at ICRC-assisted health-care facilities and in places of detention.

The ICRC was granted access by the Taliban, and the other parties, to a growing number of detainees being held by them, as a result in particular of the fall of Kabul and the fighting that ensued. These included newly captured combatants. In many places, visits became monthly events. The ICRC was for the first time allowed to visit a number of places of detention in Kabul and to see persons held by the Hezb-i-Wahdat and Harakat-i-Islami factions. Widening access early in the year led to a sharp increase in detention-related work, including sanitation. Acting as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC also repatriated a number of Pakistani detainees released by the Rabbani government.

Several places, such as Kabul and Jalalabad, changed hands during the year. The detainees whom ICRC delegates had been visiting up to that point were thereafter released as prisons were emptied by the new authorities. Within a short time the delegates were back visiting the same places, this time holding those newly detained by the new authorities.

In the first half of the year the ICRC held a series of seminars for prison authorities from Kabul, with participants from all government-run facilities, including the General Prosecutor.

The ICRC worked with Afghan Red Crescent branches throughout the country to forward Red Cross messages between detainees and their families and, in the absence of reliable postal services, between members of families separated by the fighting. Where possible and desired, it used its aircraft to reunite them. The Kabul delegation and the Mazar-i-Sharif sub-delegation...
IN 1996, THE ICRC:

- visited and registered 3,679 detainees – 2,802 for the first time – in 63 places of detention held by the Kabul authorities and the other parties;
- forwarded 5,879 Red Cross messages between the detainees and their families;
- issued 41 detention certificates.

- forwarded 14,141 Red Cross messages between individual civilians and their families;
- reunited with relatives 89 members of dispersed families.

- distributed some 25,500 tonnes of food and non-food relief to a total of about one million particularly vulnerable Afghan civilians, some 200,000 of them in Kabul.
- organized the clearing and repair of 300 kilometres of irrigation channels and oversaw 3 well-rehabilitation projects, thus providing 450 tonnes of flour to 3,500 families taking part in the food-for-work scheme;
- distributed about 30,000 locally produced agricultural implements to 10,000 families.
- distributed 88 tonnes of seed and seedlings to 10,000 families;
- treated 300,000 fruit trees and 9,100 vines against pests;
- ultimately assisted over 90,000 farming families through the programme.

- manufactured 4,443 prostheses and 1,550 orthoses, and fitted 3,308 disabled people with such appliances in 4 rehabilitation centres.

- chlorinated and checked 22,000 wells and built some 100 latrines in Kabul.

- provided assistance to the headquarters, three regional offices and 24 provincial branches of the Afghan Red Crescent Society.

- fully supported 5 Afghan hospitals, which admitted a total of 5,198 people suffering from war-related injuries, and provided ad hoc support to 15 other hospitals around the country, which treated 3,183 war-wounded;
- collected 7,836 units of blood in 5 hospital blood banks;
- supported a number of dispensaries and other medical facilities.
organized training seminars for ARCS staff on restoring contact between members of families separated by the fighting.

Dissemination was a fully integrated part of the delegation’s day-to-day work. Together with the National Society, it made every effort to promote compliance with humanitarian law and respect for Red Cross and Red Crescent principles, and to consolidate a nation-wide network to spread knowledge thereof among combatants, Afghan Red Crescent staff and the general population. Many special events were organized to this end and calendars and other items were distributed. Parallels between humanitarian law and local values and customs were also drawn in consultation with Afghan scholars, artists and journalists. In particular, a seminar on the law of war and humanitarian values in Afghan culture was conducted at Kabul University for 160 scholars and representatives of national organizations. Following the Taliban’s capture of Kabul, the delegation continued its efforts, adapting them where necessary. It endeavoured to reach as wide an audience as possible, in particular through radio, with interviews, short programmes and promotional spots, and continued to participate in the serialized BBC* radio drama New home, new life, produced in Pashto and Dari.

As the February airlift focused renewed media attention on the Afghan conflict and its effects on the civilian population, the delegation began providing logistical support for visits by a growing number of journalists. It was therefore decided to base an expatriate press officer in Kabul indefinitely.

The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) remained the ICRC’s main partner; cooperation continued throughout the year at national level and projects at the local level were largely unaffected by military events. The ARCS was gradually restoring its national network and expanding its relief, tracing and dissemination work, with support from the ICRC and the Federation. ICRC support included renovation of ARCS premises, assistance with running costs, training in administration, relief and the restoration of family contact, and income-generating projects such as raising poultry and refurbishing buildings to be used as guest houses. The National Society continued operating first-aid posts and health-care clinics, and made an invaluable contribution to agricultural rehabilitation and the location of potential beneficiaries of prosthetic/orthotic programmes. It also made improvements to homes (marastoons) that it runs for the most severely disadvantaged individuals, such as orphans and the mentally ill, in the major cities; some such homes that had been closed were reopened. In conjunction with the ICRC, the National Society organized seminars for its staff on the Movement’s principles and the ICRC’s mandate and work.

* British Broadcasting Corporation
2 Across the country branches were reactivated, others strengthened: at year’s end there were branches operating in 31 of the 32 provinces.
PAKISTAN

The year ended with Pakistan once again under caretaker administration as the Pakistan People’s Party government was forced to resign. Elections were scheduled for February 1997.

Throughout the year, the delegation in Islamabad cultivated contacts with government authorities, officials of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, diplomatic circles and international organizations in order to promote support for the role and work of the ICRC in the region, particularly in Afghanistan, and to brief them on the organization’s work in Jammu and Kashmir. A delegate specializing in the teaching of international humanitarian law to armed forces personnel went to Pakistan to discuss further humanitarian law courses for senior military officers, and the Delhi-based legal adviser travelled there in June, and again in December, in connection with national measures to implement that body of law. Both missions laid the groundwork for future cooperation between the ICRC and the Pakistan government and armed forces. The delegation also continued to contribute to the BBC radio serial *New home, new life.*

ICRC Pakistan continued to provide key support for the organization’s medical and relief operations in Afghanistan; the Peshawar sub-delegation maintained stocks of relief supplies and generally served as a logistics base and transit point.

With the newly renovated Mirwais hospital in Kandahar scheduled to open in June, the ICRC’s surgical hospital in Quetta, just across the border, began in March to train part of the new facility’s staff. Although it had played a vital role over the years in treating people wounded in the Afghan conflict, the Quetta hospital saw a gradual decline in the number of casualties admitted as fighting diminished in south-west Afghanistan. Apart from an upsurge in May, admissions remained low in 1996 and, as Mirwais was increasingly covering the surgical needs in the southern part of the country, the ICRC decided to close the Quetta facility. An office was kept open to maintain contact with local authorities and provide logistical support for the Kandahar sub-delegation. The first-aid post in Chaman run jointly with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society was also closed. Both the premises and part of the equipment were handed over to the National Society.

The ICRC continued to finance treatment for Afghan patients and a number of Pakistanis at the Pakistan Red Crescent Society’s paraplegic centre in Peshawar. This support was discontinued, however, when the centre was privatized at the end of the year.

3 See Afghanistan p. 137.
Elsewhere in Pakistan, the ICRC donated two ambulances to the Karachi branch of the National Society and paid their operating costs. It also continued to support the Society's mobile eye clinic in Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

Finally, delegates collected 209 Red Cross messages and delivered 686. The ICRC issued 1,180 ICRC travel documents in Pakistan, mostly to Afghan refugees for resettlement in third countries.
As the period under review opened, the stage was set for another year of violence and bloodshed: Sri Lankan government forces were poised to continue their reconquest of the Jaffna peninsula, after capturing Jaffna town in December, and the LTTE* was redeploying its fighters in the jungles of the nearby Vanni region while continuing to take the struggle to the heart of the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo.

A government offensive in late April and early May brought most of the rest of the peninsula under government control after years of LTTE domination, and hundreds of thousands of people who had headed south and east to escape the fighting were able to return to their homes. There followed months of attack and counter-attack as government forces attempted to press on into the LTTE-held areas to the south. Resulting casualties were high among combatants on both sides and, as in the past, civilians were killed or injured. Meanwhile, the need for humanitarian aid grew in the east of the country owing to restrictions imposed by the government on the transport of goods to areas in which LTTE forces were present.

Indiscriminate attacks and deliberate massacres, though less frequent than in the past, remained a feature of the conflict in Sri Lanka, and the violence once again affected combatants and non-combatants alike. Delegates collected information on such incidents and made confidential representations — both oral and written — to the parties involved, reminding them of their obligation to comply with humanitarian law, and especially to spare civilians and their property. This was a matter of particular concern in the east of the island, where armed clashes grew fiercer and more frequent.

The ICRC was also gravely concerned about violations of humanitarian law committed in the course of military attacks in which it was obvious that no quarter had been given to defenders who were wounded or sought to

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* LTTE: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the main armed Tamil opposition
surrender, and made vigorous representations about these incidents to the parties concerned.

The shifting military situation required flexibility on the part of the ICRC. In late 1995 it had relocated its staff from Jaffna town to Point Pedro in order to remain close to the victims as hundreds of thousands of civilians fled the fighting; in June 1996 it was able to reopen its Jaffna sub-delegation while maintaining a liaison office in Point Pedro. As people fled their homes southwards, the organization opened a sub-delegation in Kilinochchi, only to be obliged to transfer it to Mallavi several months later when a government offensive against Kilinochchi forced 150,000 people once more onto the roads.

In 1996, the ICRC again worked to protect and assist the victims of the armed conflict in Sri Lanka and to promote compliance with humanitarian law. It also again acted as a neutral intermediary between the parties to the conflict; for example, it retrieved and returned the mortal remains of fallen combatants that were in the possession of the other side. In LTTE-controlled areas, delegates assisted the Ministry of Health in its national polio-immunization campaign and accompanied officials of the Sri Lankan Ministry of Education, giving them the protection of the red cross emblem as they supervised school examinations.

The plight of the displaced civilians who fled into the Vanni region in April was a source of great concern to the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations working in the area. While appealing to the government to dispatch supplies to the area, the ICRC launched a relief operation in conjunction with local branches of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society. Delegates distributed non-food assistance to particularly vulnerable families to improve their conditions of health and hygiene and provide better shelter; they also set up a stock of essential non-food items to cope with any future population movements.

Signs of malnutrition were detected mainly in the east of the country, in particular Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts. After conducting a survey there, the ICRC launched an agricultural rehabilitation programme in order to help them produce additional means of sustenance: seed, farming tools and fishing nets were distributed to the population of isolated villages.

As in previous years, the ICRC regularly escorted government relief convoys travelling in areas of the north and east of the country from which the security forces had withdrawn, bringing badly needed supplies to civilians. It did the same for government ships bound for the Jaffna peninsula with relief supplies until the government offensive in May ended the need for such escorts. The new situation there also eventually allowed the ICRC to cease its own shipments to the peninsula of government-supplied food and other essential goods.

Between January and July, an ICRC-chartered ship was the sole independent means of transport between the Jaffna peninsula and Trincomalee.
Staff of various non-governmental organizations used the ship to reach the north in order to assist the civilian population there. Medical supplies, relief items and mail were also transported. Following the LTTE attack on the Mullaittivu military base and a general escalation of the conflict in the north, the ICRC was obliged to suspend service for one month pending a new agreement with the parties concerned. The weekly rotation between Kankesanturai, on the peninsula, and Trincomalee for patients requiring treatment in Colombo and people wishing to be reunited with their families was suspended in May and resumed only in September, when government authorization to do so was once again granted.

With such enormous numbers of displaced civilians suddenly living in areas without adequate facilities, hygiene and clean drinking water became a priority concern for the ICRC, particularly in view of the prevailing drought. Sanitary engineers worked to prevent outbreaks of water-borne disease in camps on the Jaffna peninsula, in the Vanni region and in Eastern Province by sinking new wells, deepening, strengthening and disinfecting existing ones, repairing pumps, organizing refuse clearance, building latrines and installing water tanks. ICRC medical staff distributed leaflets and took various other steps to promote hygienic practices and facilitate basic health care.

Acceptance by all parties of the ICRC's mandate from the international community to come to the aid of conflict victims was indispensable for its protection and assistance work. Unfortunately, that acceptance was sometimes difficult to achieve. Although the Sri Lankan authorities allowed the ICRC to launch water and sanitation projects in LTTE-held areas in the Vanni region and the east of the island, they were reluctant to permit the use of certain chemicals essential for disinfection; this led to delays. They also sometimes refused permission for the transport north of medical supplies crucial for the treatment of the war-wounded and the activities of mobile health-care teams run by the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society under ICRC supervision. The work of those teams was severely jeopardized by the extremely slow pace of government authorization.

There was a general increase in the workload of the National Society's mobile health-care teams. To improve access to medical care, the ICRC helped to set up and provided support for two additional teams in the Vanni region, bringing to six the number operating there. Delegates took over responsibility for the running of two teams in eastern Sri Lanka, owing to the crossline nature of their work, whereas the Ampara team there was disbanded as needs were now covered by other facilities. Finally, two teams on the Jaffna peninsula ceased operation following the government take-over there and the resulting renewed access to adequate care. In all, ten teams were in operation as the year ended. The ICRC continued its support for the seven primary health-care
centres run by the Sri Lanka Red Cross in the Mannar Mainland district and four new posts were set up in the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu areas, providing first aid and basic health care.

The ICRC continued to follow regularly the work of and assist government health-care facilities in Northern and Eastern Provinces. In conjunction with the Ministry of Health, it organized a course for 30 midwives in Batticaloa.

A series of bomb attacks and other security incidents in the capital Colombo led to a sharp rise in individual arrests as well as large-scale round-ups and cordon-search operations carried out by the authorities to find LTTE sympathizers. The ICRC closely monitored the situation and adjusted accordingly its detainee-welfare activities already under way for those held under the Emergency Regulations and the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Throughout the year, delegates visited and registered large numbers of people being held in prisons, police stations, military bases and other places, including, as of May, the Kankesanturai police station and its new lock-ups on the Jaffna peninsula. Finally, the ICRC informed detainees’ families of their relatives’ incarceration in cases where they had not been notified by the authorities.

Despite military developments, the ICRC continued to visit the few detainees — including army and navy personnel — being held by the LTTE in the north, and visited and registered a number of new LTTE-held detainees in the east. However, though allowed to see the detainees themselves, delegates continued to be refused access to the places in which they were being held. The LTTE handed over to the ICRC 20 Sinhalese civilians, including 16 fishermen, whom they had been holding and delegates arranged for their return to their families.

The massive displacement of civilians, particularly in April and May, caused many families to be split up. The ICRC was therefore increasingly active in restoring contact between members of such families. In some cases it was possible to reunite them. Red Cross messages also continued to be forwarded via National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies between Sri Lankans deprived by the conflict of access to normal postal services and relatives living abroad. Acting in conjunction with the government’s own investigative commission, the delegation continued its efforts to trace people who had been missing for months or even years. The delegation received a number of tracing requests from families of servicemen who had been declared missing in action.

Work to spread knowledge of and improve compliance with humanitarian law continued. During their dealings with military personnel, police forces, LTTE combatants, members of other Tamil groups and all other bearers of weapons, delegates took every possible opportunity to explain the basic rules of that law and the role and mandate of the ICRC itself. At a more formal level, the ICRC provided special training in humanitarian law for military instructors, and particular attention was given to military academies. Other training events
were organized throughout the police, including the Special Task Force, and with the help of a retired British police officer a seminar on humanitarian law and human rights law was set up for high-ranking police officers. Sessions were also held for medical staff and members of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society working in the mobile health-care teams, and contacts were cultivated in academic circles.

A special effort was made to increase knowledge and understanding of the ICRC through articles on its work in Sri Lanka published in English-language, Sinhalese and Tamil newspapers.

IN 1996, THE ICRC:

- visited 3,196 detainees in 228 government-run places of detention, including 74 persons held in connection with the 1987-90 uprising by the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna party, the Sinhalese opposition; delegates registered 2,553 new detainees;
- visited 64 detainees held by the LTTE;
- forwarded 5,899 Red Cross messages between detainees and their families.
- issued 23 detention certificates.
- organized the reunification of 17 families, mostly by escorting isolated family members out of conflict zones to where relatives were living or had taken refuge;
- opened 1,440 tracing files;
- resolved 580 cases;
- forwarded 13,881 Red Cross messages between individual civilians and their families;
- distributed some 3,275 rolls of plastic sheeting, 48 tonnes of soap, 6,672 sets of cooking utensils, 1,000 jerrycans, 12 tonnes of clothing and 33 tonnes of other relief to particularly vulnerable families;
- as part of its agricultural rehabilitation programme in Eastern Province, distributed some 218 tonnes of seed, 2,200 fishing nets and 4,000 hoes to particularly vulnerable families;
- shipped to the north some 2,000 tonnes of flour, 350 tonnes of other relief items and 160 tonnes of medical supplies provided by the government.
- transported 155 people requiring specialized medical treatment from the Jaffna peninsula to the south;
- furnished the medical supplies needed to run 10 mobile health teams and 13 primary health-care centres in the Vanni and Eastern Provinces.

- provided pipes, pumps, chemicals and other materials for over 50 water-supply and sanitation projects;
- installed 55 pumps.

- held dissemination sessions in the field for about 1,500 police officers, 672 Special Task Force personnel, 2,700 government military personnel, 300 LTTE combatants and 50 members of the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam;
- also organized sessions for about 800 school pupils, hospital staff, local authorities and members of the general public.
NEW DELHI
Regional delegation
(Bangladesh, Bhutan, India,
Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal)

The period under review was the first full year of ICRC protection work in Jammu and Kashmir. Three teams — each composed of a team leader, a delegate, a doctor and three Urdu-speaking interpreters — visited persons arrested in connection with the situation in the state and held in police lock-ups, jails and sub-jails both there and in other parts of India. The number of places visited grew and a pattern of follow-up visits was developed. Although the programme for visits occasionally suffered delays due to the security situation, the ICRC managed to overcome difficulties arising from the April/May nation-wide general elections and the September state elections in Jammu and Kashmir. The ICRC’s first comprehensive written report on its findings was handed over to the government of India by the Delegate General for Asia and the Pacific on 26 June. A follow-up meeting was held in September with the Minister of Home Affairs.

In cooperation with instructors of Indian military, paramilitary and police forces, the ICRC provided humanitarian law training for all ranks. It organized the first-ever such courses for Indian forces serving in Jammu and Kashmir: five one-day sessions were held for high-ranking officers of the BSF*, one of India’s main paramilitary forces, and the CRPF.* These were followed by half-day briefings at BSF headquarters. At the BSF’s request, the ICRC booklet Code of conduct for combatants was translated into Hindi. The Delhi-based delegate to the armed forces was also very active outside Jammu and Kashmir. Among other things he held a first-ever course on humanitarian law for BSF, CRPF and Indian Police Service officers at the North East Police Academy in Shillong. He also met high-ranking army officers to discuss the development of teaching modules on humanitarian law for military instructors.

In November a course was organized in Thailand for retired officers from South Asian countries who will assist the ICRC in its dissemination work in the region. One participant was still on active duty but had been disabled by a mine blast. The ICRC is confident that such instructors will convey the message with a great deal of credibility and authority.

The ICRC remained in regular contact with the headquarters of the Indian Red Cross Society and pursued its cooperation with that Society, particularly

* BSF: Border Security Force
* CRPF: Central Reserve Police Force
regarding promotion of humanitarian law and the principles of the Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement. As part of the joint ICRC/Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) programme to sponsor dissemination workshops for the National Society's staff throughout the country, the ICRC conducted two workshops for branches unable to attend the regional workshops held the previous year. One such workshop took place in Jammu for the Jammu and Kashmir branch and the other was held in Guwahati, Assam to cover the north-eastern states, an area affected by insurgency and counter-insurgency violence. A delegate specializing in cooperation with the National Societies arrived at the end of the year to work with the Jammu and Kashmir branch.

At the invitation of the Indian Centre for Humanitarian Law and Research, the ICRC gave an introductory presentation of international humanitarian law for 35 law professors from southern India. This was part of the ongoing joint effort with the Centre to ensure that that body of law is introduced as a subject in India's law faculties.

The media liaison office at the New Delhi delegation consolidated its existing contacts and worked to develop new ones throughout a large and linguistically diverse country, in particular with journalists covering events in Jammu and Kashmir. In conjunction with the Press Institute of India, the office held a workshop entitled *Humanitarian reporting of armed conflict*, attended by journalists, military personnel, academics, government officials and others from across India. It also successfully approached the Indian and foreign press for coverage of the anti-personnel mines issue and the ICRC’s call for a total ban on these indiscriminate weapons.

An ICRC legal adviser joined the regional delegation in February to assist governments in taking measures at the national level to implement international humanitarian law.

Following the violent run-up to and aftermath of the February elections in Bangladesh, the deputy regional delegate travelled there in March to discuss with officials of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society the emergency services available in the country and measures to deal with the effects of civil strife and other crises. The Delhi-based delegate to the armed forces had high-level discussions with the Bangladesh armed forces on the development of programmes to spread knowledge of international humanitarian law among the military.

The Delegate General for Asia and the Pacific went to Yangon in January for talks with the authorities of Myanmar on the possibility of ICRC visits to security detainees. No progress was achieved. In May, the regional delegate was joined by the head of the ICRC’s prosthetic project in Cambodia for a mission to Myanmar to assess the programme under which civilian amputees living in remote border areas are transported to Mandalay and Yangon to be
fitted with prostheses. The programme is run by local branches of the Myanmar Red Cross Society, financed by the Republic of Korea National Red Cross and supervised by the ICRC’s regional delegation.

Delegates twice visited camps for Bhutanese refugees in eastern Nepal. They assessed conditions there and interviewed recent arrivals, mostly relatives joining their families and former detainees who had been visited by the ICRC in Bhutan. The ICRC supported work by the Nepal Red Cross Society to restore contact between members of families separated by conflict and continued to support the mailing service for Bhutanese refugees living in Nepal. A three-day course on humanitarian law was held for cadets of the Royal Nepalese Staff College and a separate course was held for military instructors.

In Bhutan, delegates carried out a series of visits to persons detained for “anti-national activities”. As in the previous three years, these were conducted in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the ICRC and the Bhutanese government.

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**IN 1996, THE ICRC:**

- visited 3,583 detainees (3,210 for the first time) being held in 41 places of detention in connection with the situation in Jammu and Kashmir;
- visited 92 persons detained by the Bhutanese authorities for “anti-national activities”.
- forwarded 363 Red Cross Messages, 266 of them between detainees and their families;
- issued 99 ICRC travel documents.
- in India, organized events to promote knowledge of and compliance with humanitarian law for 240 members of the Border Security Force, 70 members of the Central Reserve Police Force, 30 police officers in Shillong, 150 army personnel, 130 members and staff of the Indian Red Cross Society, 40 journalists and 90 law professors from around the country;
- in Nepal, provided humanitarian law instruction for 36 army officers.

**Bhutanese refugees in Nepal**
The new year brought with it a renewed dry-season offensive by the RCAF* against the Khmer Rouge stronghold of Pailin, in Cambodia’s resource-rich north-west. Casualties were high. Political instability — including a deep rift in the country’s coalition government — and the early onset of rains halted the advance, though the army managed to hold the ground it had taken. When the monsoon ended, fighting resumed and Pailin eventually fell to government forces in November. As the year progressed a rift also became evident within the Khmer Rouge and there were a number of defections to the national armed forces. As the year ended there appeared to be dissension within the military itself, with differences between the government coalition partners apparently spreading to the RCAF.

An important development for the ICRC, which had long sought access to certain regions of the north-west, was its meeting in September with representatives of the newly formed dissident Khmer Rouge party known as the Democratic National Union Movement. The meeting took place in Phnom Malai, to which a team of delegates later travelled via Thailand to assess the needs of the civilian population. A second survey in the Phnom Malai, Pailin and Kamrieng area was under way as the year drew to an end.

The ICRC closed its office in Mongkol Borei and opened a small logistical unit in Sisophon, operating under the responsibility of the Battambang sub-delegation. With many thousands of people still displaced in the north-west, the ICRC closely monitored the resettlement process, with particular attention

* RCAF: Royal Cambodian Armed Forces
being paid to their safety and to compliance with humanitarian law, and reported violations to the authorities concerned. It also kept watch on the situation of Cambodians of Vietnamese origin.

Delegates visited detainees throughout the year in the provinces of Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Siem Reap. The ICRC financed the transport of water to Sisophon prison to offset a severe shortage affecting the inmates there. It also carried out a large-scale programme of anti-scabies treatment at Siem Reap prison.

In May the organization gained access to security detainees held in Phnom Penh by the Ministry of the Interior, and in October was authorized to visit persons detained in Tuol Sleng, a prison in the capital run by the Ministry of National Defence.

The tracing service covered the entire country with the exception of a few areas that remained off-limits for security reasons. A tracing agent was able to reach Samrong district, which had been inaccessible for nearly a year. As the postal service remained erratic in the capital and virtually non-existent in outlying areas, the collection and distribution of Red Cross messages was a key activity for the tracing service, and the number handled grew as the scale of visits to detainees increased. The number of new tracing requests was relatively low but the percentage of cases resolved was high.

The gradual process continued of handing over to the Cambodian Red Cross Society the responsibility for restoring family contact. Over the first half of the year the ICRC reorganized its family-contact operation for Cambodia, transferring its database to Bangkok in April. The positive effects of this reorganization became apparent as the year progressed.

As in the past, and doubtless the future, anti-personnel landmines remained a blight on Cambodia, their consequences affecting all aspects of national life. The delegation there was particularly active in the ICRC’s worldwide campaign for a ban on these weapons. For national mine-awareness day delegates helped produce — and the ICRC sponsored — four radio spots and a theatrical production, prepared an exhibition on landmines, arranged for the television broadcast of an ICRC film on the effects of these cruel devices and took part in other public events. The delegation also briefed and assisted a number of foreign journalists visiting the country to report on the heavy toll taken by mines among both military personnel and civilians. In September, Cambodia ratified the 1980 UN Convention on the use of certain conventional weapons “deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects”. To mark the occasion, the King of Cambodia accorded the head of delegation a private audience during which he assured the ICRC of his continued support.

One direct result of the landmines infesting Cambodia was, as always, the high number of amputees. The ICRC’s prosthetic/orthotic project in
IN 1996, THE ICRC:

- visited and registered 83 detainees – 62 of them for the first time – held in 8 places of detention and provided them with material aid where needed.

- opened 484 tracing files, resolved 334 cases and forwarded 4,644 Red Cross messages.

- collected 16,710 units of blood in 14 centres.

- produced 1,256 complete prostheses and 30 complete orthoses for its own programme; for other organizations it produced 1,953 knee joints, 87 functional hooks, 114 cosmetic hands, 9,587 alignment systems, 653 pairs of orthotic joints and 3,390 pairs of crutches;

- repaired 25 prostheses (i.e. requiring more than two man hours each);

- fitted 604 new amputees with prostheses and 19 other persons with orthoses.

- organized dissemination presentations attended by over 1,000 members of the armed forces, 400 members of the police, 90 government officials, 150 members and staff of the Cambodian Red Cross, 230 law students and 75 journalists;

- trained 12 National Society staff members who in turn reached civilians in various parts of the country, including almost 700 school pupils and teachers.
Battambang, where amputees were fitted with artificial limbs manufactured on the premises, received growing numbers of victims as new areas in north-west Cambodia became accessible. A prosthetic/orthotic technician from the Japanese Red Cross Society trained for six weeks at the Battambang centre. Meanwhile, the workshop in Phnom Penh continued to produce components for various non-governmental agencies involved in making prostheses. The prosthetic/orthotic coordinator based in the Cambodian capital also supervised work in centres carrying out such activities in Viet Nam and Myanmar.

The ICRC continued to provide ad hoc medical assistance to first-aid posts, dispensaries and civilian and military hospitals treating the war-wounded. The level of this aid rose significantly during and after the government offensive against Pailin in early 1996, which caused heavy casualties. In conjunction with the Ministry of Health, the ICRC continued to run 12 blood-collection centres throughout Cambodia. An agreement was signed between the ICRC and the Ministry in August to extend the programme for one more year. Despite efforts by the ICRC and the Cambodian Red Cross Society to recruit new donors, the application of stricter criteria for the acceptance of donations caused the amount of blood collected to drop by 20%. As the year ended the ICRC was still looking for a reliable partner to take over the blood-transfusion programme in the long term.

There was a sharp increase in activities to promote knowledge of and compliance with humanitarian law. The ICRC worked closely with the Cambodian Red Cross Society to develop the latter’s dissemination programme. Khmer dissemination officers were recruited across the country and trained for their task. They attended a week-long seminar on humanitarian law which also included the National Society’s development officers. Over the year, the dissemination officers organized events attended by members of the armed forces, police and other armed groups, government officials, Cambodian Red Cross volunteers and the general public. Day-long presentations on humanitarian law were held for military officers and seminars were organized for instructors from all RCAF training establishments. The latter were given by the Bangkok-based delegate to the armed forces, who also had discussions with officials of the Ministry of National Defence on the systematic inclusion of humanitarian law in the military training programme. To back up these various activities the ICRC provided material in the Khmer language.

Discussions with the Dean of the Law Faculty at Phnom Penh University resulted in permission for the ICRC to provide 20 hours of lectures on humanitarian law and 60 hours of weekly group work during the semester beginning later in the year. A Cambodian consultant with a legal background was hired and trained, and the lectures began in November.
BANGKOK
Regional delegation
(People’s Republic of China, Hong Kong, Japan, Laos, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Macao, Mongolia, Taiwan, Thailand, Viet Nam)

Following extensive discussions with the parties concerned, including a mission to Thailand by the ICRC’s Delegate General for Asia and the Pacific, the organization merged its Bangkok and Hong Kong regional delegations in July and transferred to the Thai capital most of the activities previously conducted by the Hong Kong delegation. A sub-delegation with one delegate remained in Hong Kong.

The ICRC pursued its dialogue with the Thai authorities to promote the country’s accession to the Additional Protocols.

The Bangkok regional delegation continued to monitor the situation along Thailand’s borders with Cambodia and Myanmar. With some 90,000 displaced civilians from Myanmar living along the Thai-Myanmar border, and clashes between Myanmar’s armed forces and insurgent groups occasionally spilling over onto Thai territory, ICRC delegates worked in conjunction with the Thai Red Cross Society to make contact with the various groups involved, assess the situation of displaced people and spread knowledge of humanitarian law.

As there was no major tension along the Thai-Cambodian border, the ICRC handed over its remaining stock of medical supplies to the civilian hospital in Aranyaprathet. It was able to gain access via Thai territory to the Phnom Malai area of Cambodia, thus enabling Cambodia-based delegates to carry out a survey of needs there.

The workload of the ICRC’s tracing service in Bangkok increased owing both to the merger with the Hong Kong delegation and the transfer to Bangkok from Phnom Penh of the Cambodia tracing databank.

The media liaison office attached to the regional delegation continued to cultivate contacts with local journalists and to make the ICRC better known to the Thai media. It also produced radio programmes and was closely involved in the ICRC’s campaign for a worldwide ban on anti-personnel mines.

A delegate to the armed forces joined the regional delegation in May to promote instruction in international humanitarian law within the region’s police and armed forces, in cooperation with his colleague in New Delhi, the ultimate aim being to achieve full incorporation of that body of law into the training syllabus.
The deputy regional delegate travelled to Laos early in the year to discuss with the authorities there the promotion of humanitarian law and the problem of unexploded ordnance, which injures and kills a great number of civilians in certain areas. In July the regional delegate went to Vientiane for talks with the Lao Red Cross on wider ICRC cooperation with that Society, and with government officials on measures at the national level to implement humanitarian law.

Cooperation with the Red Cross of Viet Nam continued in the form of training to restore family contacts and work to promote compliance with humanitarian law. Unfortunately, the plan to have a foreign partner take over the ICRC's part of the prosthetic/orthotic programme in Ho Chi Minh City, which it had been carrying out for six years in conjunction with the Ministry of Labour, Disabled Soldiers and Social Welfare, proved impracticable. As the year ended, the regional delegation was studying various possibilities for ensuring continued production and fitting of artificial limbs for destitute amputees (150 per month), which the ICRC is currently financing through its Special Fund for the Disabled.

Ties with the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) were further strengthened, particularly in the area of promoting compliance with humanitarian law and training in methods of restoring contact between members of families separated by conflict. The ICRC held a training seminar for RCSC tracing officers and, in conjunction with the National Society, organized a five-day course on humanitarian law for senior representatives of provincial branches and the Society's headquarters. No progress was achieved in efforts to expand the scope of ICRC activities in the People's Republic.

The ICRC Delegates General for Asia and the Pacific and for Africa travelled to Tokyo for talks with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japanese Red Cross Society on ICRC operations and Japan's cooperation with the organization. Discussions also continued with a view to ratifying the Additional Protocols.

The regional delegate took part in a basic training course at the Japanese Red Cross to prepare members of its staff for overseas missions. Subjects included the ICRC's mandate and fundamental points of humanitarian law. A Geneva-based orthopaedic technician travelled to Japan to discuss cooperation in this field between the ICRC and the Japanese Red Cross.

The regional delegate visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to discuss the potential for future cooperation, particularly in promoting knowledge of humanitarian law. He also passed on to North Korea's National Society a tracing request and a number of Red Cross messages relating to families split up by the Korean conflict.
The regional delegate gave lectures at three universities in the Republic of Korea and the Deputy Delegate General for Asia and the Pacific took part in the first basic training course organized by South Korea’s National Society to prepare staff for overseas missions. The ICRC continued to recommend to the South Korean authorities that they recognize the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission and to enhance national measures to implement international humanitarian law.

The regional delegation closely followed incidents between the two Koreas and made representations to the authorities concerned. In October it offered its services in connection with the incident in which a submarine from North Korea ran aground in South Korean waters and the subsequent capture by South Korean security forces of one of the crew members.

The regional delegate travelled to Mongolia to present the authorities and the Red Cross Society with the newly published Mongolian-language translation of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, which the ICRC had had printed in Hong Kong. The ICRC also organized four university lectures at Mongolian faculties of law.

In March, the Delegate General for Asia and the Pacific went to Hong Kong and Macao to officially inform the local authorities, local Red Cross branches and diplomats of the ICRC’s plan to merge its Hong Kong and Bangkok delegations. The ICRC worked with the University of Hong Kong to organize a well-attended seminar there on international humanitarian law and fundamental judicial guarantees.

IN 1996, THE ICRC:

- issued 221 travel documents, the vast majority to refugees for resettlement in third countries.

- manufactured, at its prosthetic/orthotic project in Ho Chi Minh City, 2,521 artificial limbs (including 1,788 for 1,721 destitute amputees). As the year ended, 2,033 persons remained on the waiting list.
JAKARTA
Regional delegation
(Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia/
East Timor, Malaysia, Singapore)

After a joint ICRC-Federation visit to Brunei Darussalam in March and subsequent separate visits by representatives of both organizations to assess the development of the country’s emerging National Society, which had applied for recognition in 1995, the ICRC officially recognized the Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent Society in November.

Jakarta-based delegates conducted six-monthly and yearly visits to places of detention in various parts of Indonesia. In conjunction with the Indonesian Red Cross Society (PMI), they provided material and medical assistance where necessary. In Aceh delegates had access for the first time to facilities run by the Special Forces.

The ICRC also engaged in related activities such as following up detainee releases and facilitating visits by families of detainees serving sentences far from their homes.

In the wake of the July demonstrations in Jakarta that followed the storming by Indonesian troops of the Indonesian Democracy Party headquarters, the ICRC visited people detained in connection with the disturbances.

Tension continued in East Timor. The disturbances included clashes between young Timorese and the security forces, and fighting between those forces and the armed opposition. When incidents occurred, delegates went rapidly to the scene to act as a neutral intermediary between the authorities and civilians and to monitor respect for humanitarian law. They visited detainees in prisons and interrogation centres on the island, including a number of detainees who were visited for the first time.

The ICRC/PMI water and sanitation programme was maintained, as were the various public health projects. These required a constant ICRC presence in remote areas. Five teams carried out a broad range of projects, including hydro-geological surveys, sinking wells and building extensive distribution networks to provide water to widely dispersed hamlets. An expatriate engineer continued to guarantee quality and provide training and technical advice. A second team of nurses was formed to consolidate the public health education programme. Instruction in hygiene and disease prevention and talks on the Red Cross were given primarily to mothers and children.

The ICRC organized a wide-ranging tour through 12 provincial districts to promote knowledge of and compliance with humanitarian law at all levels of the military, the police, government services and the civilian population.
Acting in its capacity as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC organized the transfer to Portugal of Timorese who had sought asylum in foreign embassies, former civil servants of the Portuguese colonial administration and a number of hardship cases. Delegates made arrangements for their journey, issued travel documents for them and contacted the Portuguese Red Cross, which welcomed them on their arrival in Lisbon. The ICRC’s tracing service and the National Society continued to forward Red Cross messages between East Timor and Portugal.

Events to promote knowledge of humanitarian law and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement were regularly organized for the Indonesian armed forces, police, Indonesian Red Cross members and staff, journalists and academic circles. For the latter, a week-long seminar for about 20 law professors from various private and public universities throughout the country was organized in order to enable them to increase their knowledge of humanitarian law, to distinguish it from human rights law and to share their teaching experiences.

In conjunction with the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the National Society, the ICRC hosted a seminar on international humanitarian law in Jakarta in June. There were over 100 participants, including senior government representatives of the ASEAN* countries and of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Papua New Guinea.

To help resolve the January hostage-taking in Irian Jaya by members of the OPM,* the ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary, with the consent of all the parties concerned. Delegates managed to contact the OPM, visit the hostages, distribute medicines, blankets, clothing and food, and collect personal messages to their families. After three months, however, the conditions for constructive dialogue no longer existed and the ICRC withdrew its services. A week later the Indonesian armed forces carried out a rescue operation, as a result of which nine hostages were released, two were killed and hundreds of villagers fled their homes.

The events in East Timor, the hostage-taking in Irian Jaya and the ASEAN dissemination seminar in Jakarta generated media interest in ICRC operations in the region. The delegation therefore hired a media liaison officer to build up contacts with Indonesian and foreign journalists.

The regional delegation’s activities in Malaysia once again focused on spreading knowledge of humanitarian law. Courses were organized for the Malaysian military — including UN peace-keeping troops — and members and staff of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society.

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* ASEAN: Association of South-East Asian Nations (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam)

* OPM: Organisasi Papua Merdeka, or Free Papua Movement
IN 1996, THE ICRC:

- visited 133 detainees in 38 places of detention in Indonesia and 247 persons — 161 of them for the first time — being held in 28 places of detention in connection with the situation in East Timor;
- financed family visits for 101 detainees.

- issued 186 travel documents;
- organized the transfer to Portugal of 189 East Timorese (former civil servants in the Portuguese colonial administration and hardship cases) who had sought asylum in foreign embassies;
- forwarded 437 Red Cross messages between East Timorese living in East Timor and relatives living elsewhere.
- harnessed 15 fresh-water springs and maintained 30 existing water-supply systems in East Timor.
MANILA
Regional delegation
(Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands,
Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand,
Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands,
Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Western Samoa
and the other island territories of the Pacific)

The regional delegation in Manila changed its structure somewhat in 1996 with the addition of a part-time ICRC representative for the Pacific, based in Fiji. The newly appointed representative was active primarily in promoting knowledge of and compliance with international humanitarian law across the region, thus leaving the Manila-based regional delegate more time to concentrate on the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand.

Both the Fiji-based ICRC representative and the regional delegate travelled extensively in the south Pacific to maintain contacts with governments and National Societies. In July the regional delegate took part in the Pacific Red Cross Societies' VIIth Programme Meeting in Western Samoa.

Like all ICRC delegations, the Manila delegation worked to promote adherence to the various instruments of international humanitarian law by the States within its region. In June, Palau acceded to the four Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. In July, the Philippines ratified the 1980 UN Weapons Convention and three of its four Protocols.

In addition to its basic task of cultivating relations between the ICRC and the region's media, the information office in Sydney was involved in a range of other activities, including serving as a link between the ICRC's Jakarta delegation and Australia-based representatives of the Free Papua Movement during the hostage crisis in Irian Jaya, and contacts with the Australian Red Cross Society.

The signing in September of a peace agreement between the Philippines government and the Moro National Liberation Front brought the south of the country a step closer to peace. However, violence continued as groups not party to the agreement carried on the armed struggle. At the end of the year preliminary talks were announced between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, even as other armed groups urged a united front against the peace accord.

The ICRC continued to make regular visits to people detained in connection with armed political resistance in the Philippines and, where necessary, returned to prisons for ad hoc visits. ICRC staff carried out anti-scabies and
disinfestation programmes in a number of prisons and paid the cost of medical treatment for detainees lacking the means to pay for it themselves. Direct medical care was also provided in some cases. In conjunction with the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC), the delegation organized and financed a series of family visits to detainees who requested such assistance and whose families could not afford the travel costs.

The delegation's tracing service concentrated on detention-related activities as its workload from other traditional activities in the country diminished.

In its endeavour to ensure that the civilian population was spared the effects of the violence, the delegation adopted a two-pronged approach: collecting information regarding violations of humanitarian law and then making representations to the parties concerned, and providing assistance to civilians affected by fighting. Thousands of civilians fled sporadic clashes between the Philippine armed forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Working with local branches of the PNRC, delegates distributed both food and non-food relief to families in Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, North Cotabato and Basilan. The ICRC paid the cost of treatment for a number of civilians injured in the crossfire. With the ICRC acting as a neutral intermediary, the New People's Army released two members of the Philippine armed forces whom it had detained for five months.

An ICRC doctor based at the Jakarta regional delegation held a workshop at Bacolod Regional Hospital, dealing mostly with the management of war wounds and the rights and obligations of medical professionals during armed conflict.

The delegation stepped up its work to promote knowledge of humanitarian law among armed forces personnel and PNRC staff. It also provided material both on that law and on the ICRC's work to non-governmental organizations, government agencies and universities. In July the Bangkok-based delegate to the armed forces held a seminar for officers from all three branches of the armed forces. In September he organized a presentation for cadets at the Philippine Military Academy and in October a workshop for military instructors. It is hoped that humanitarian law will eventually be incorporated into the military's general training programme. Sessions for active armed units were also held in the field, including courses for combatants belonging to Muslim secessionist groups. ICRC field officers gave talks on the law of war as part of their day-to-day work. The delegation also actively supported the National Society's own dissemination work at both national and local level.

The situation in Bougainville remained tense in 1996. The year-long ceasefire between the Papua New Guinea Defence Force and the BRA* ended and

* BRA: Bougainville Revolutionary Army
further violence erupted. Tens of thousands of people fled their homes to escape the fighting. With the conflict in its eighth year the ICRC offered its services to the authorities of Papua New Guinea, proposing activities to promote knowledge of and compliance with humanitarian law among the armed forces and the BRA, protection work for the civilian population, restoring family contact and, where needed, food and medical relief for civilians living in BRA-controlled areas. The delegation in Manila also monitored the situation of refugees from Bougainville living in the Solomon Islands. As the period under review ended, the ICRC was still waiting for a reply from the Papua New Guinea government.

**IN 1996, THE ICRC:**

- visited 437 detainees in 95 places of detention in the Philippines, registering 168 of them for the first time;
- financed family visits for 198 detainees in the Philippines;
- distributed relief to some 3,000 families displaced by fighting in the Philippines;
- in the Philippines, organized events for over 250 members of the armed forces, 665 members of the Moro National Liberation Front and 1,580 members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front;
- organized events for 70 police officers in Fiji and for 20 in Vanuatu.
Missing! Yet another young husband and father is anxiously sought. The ICRC is doing its utmost to help shed light on the fate of the thousands of people who disappeared in the former Yugoslavia. In 1996 some 18,000 tracing requests were collected by ICRC delegates from families of people unaccounted for. Tragically, most of the men reported missing after the fall of Srebrenica are now presumed dead.
Western and Central Europe and the Balkans

ICRC delegations:
Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

ICRC regional delegation:
Budapest

Staff
ICRC expatriates: 97
National Societies: 36
Local employees: 690

Total expenditure
Sfr 76,369,297

Expenditure breakdown

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Protection/tracing:</td>
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<td>Relief:</td>
<td>19,843,037</td>
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<td>Health activities:</td>
<td>23,174,627</td>
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<td>Cooperation with National Societies:</td>
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<td>Dissemination/promotion:</td>
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<td>Operational support:</td>
<td>4,787,185</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overheads:</td>
<td>3,911,350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Average figures calculated on an annual basis.
2 Under ICRC contract, as at December 1996.
In the year that followed the signing of the Dayton-Paris Agreement, the ICRC worked actively alongside the international community in the endeavour to bring stability to war-torn Bosnia and Herzegovina, while being careful to preserve its own specific and independent role.

Under the United States-brokered agreement, the clear separation of tasks between the various international players — military, political and humanitarian — made it easier, after the confusion of years of war, for the process to move forward. In giving the ICRC certain responsibilities — responsibilities consistent with its mandate under the Geneva Conventions — the international community and the signatories of the agreement recognized the valuable contribution which the organization’s independence, long-standing relations with all the parties, extensive presence in the field and knowledge of the context could make to the process. For its part, the ICRC did its utmost to accomplish what was expected of it, while benefiting from constant cooperation and interaction with all the players concerned.

The merits of this approach were clearly demonstrated with regard to the release of prisoners, one of the tasks assigned to the ICRC under the agreement’s annex on the military aspects of the peace settlement. This highly charged issue was at great risk of becoming politicized, as the military on all sides had become accustomed to using prisoners as barter chips and were inclined to link their release to other contentious issues, such as that of missing persons. Unfortunately, humanitarian arguments alone did not suffice to convince the parties to comply with their commitments. The ICRC therefore cooperated closely with the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR), which was of great help in bringing pressure on the parties through Joint Military Commissions and in providing the logistical back-up when releases took place. When even this was not enough and several hundred men continued to languish in detention well beyond the date set for their release, the ICRC turned to the international community to give it the final political backing required to bring the process to a satisfactory conclusion.

Whereas prisoner releases were undoubtedly one of the success stories of the Dayton-Paris Agreement in 1996, it was still impossible to achieve an immediate solution on the issue of missing persons. Over the year the ICRC had built up a fairly clear picture of the scale of the problem, having collected some 18,000 tracing requests from families of people unaccounted for, and had put in place the structures to begin dealing with it, involving all the parties and representatives of the families concerned.

It soon became clear, however, that political partners were also needed to press for more rapid answers. This prompted a proposal by the United States to create a special body, the International Commission for Missing Persons, to complement the ICRC’s more operationally oriented structures.
While investing much of its energy in the above two concerns, the ICRC also had to reassess and adapt its thinking on the ground in the post-conflict phase. No longer having to respond to an emergency situation, it identified a number of areas where it still had an important role to play in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while at the same time making room for other components of the Movement to be increasingly active in their own specific domains, in close cooperation with the ICRC.

A tentative peace had settled over the region, but in 1996 Bosnia and Herzegovina was still far from being a stable, flourishing society. Demobilization, unemployment, the rising crime rate and the huge task of reconstruction all meant that these were difficult times for the Bosnian people, especially the displaced, the elderly and social cases. Hospitals and health facilities had no budgets and no means to respond to demands placed upon them. Many families did not have access to adequate or safe drinking water, a situation exacerbated by the return of refugees. This meant that continued assistance and maintenance work was necessary to prevent a total collapse of those systems which were still functioning, and to ensure that minimum medical, social and sanitary services were available for the population.

Among the emerging new needs were those created by the landmine problem. Most landmines were scattered along the former front lines, where people were again free to move once the forces of the respective parties had withdrawn. Free, but not safe. A public campaign was therefore launched by the ICRC to alert people to the dangers they faced and advise them on the precautions to be taken. In addition, through a number of other programmes, the ICRC sought to demonstrate the relevance of international humanitarian law and human values to the lives of the people so devastated by war.

The ICRC also remained active in Croatia, particularly in providing assistance for the most vulnerable and protection for the civilian population in certain areas still affected by the conflicts of 1991 and 1995. It kept a close watch in particular on the situation as it evolved in Eastern Slavonia, the Serb-held area scheduled to be handed over to Croatian sovereignty in the course of 1997. In the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia the ICRC concentrated mainly on detention-related activities.

As for the rest of Western and Central Europe and the Balkans the ICRC kept up regular contacts with the governments and National Societies of all the countries in the region. One event of particular note for the ICRC in 1996 was the establishment of a regional delegation in Budapest to represent the institution in several countries stretching from Poland to Greece. This took place towards the end of the year, with the arrival in Budapest of a number of ICRC delegates, pending the official opening of the delegation in 1997.
Western Europe

ICRC representatives went on numerous missions to mobilize resources for humanitarian operations, support the ICRC’s call for a ban on landmines and organize and/or participate in events to promote international humanitarian law. Official presidential visits were made to Italy, where the ICRC President met the President of the Republic, the President of the Council of Ministers and several other leading government figures, and to Ireland, where he held talks with the Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs (who had recently assumed the presidency of the Council of the European Union).\(^1\) While in Dublin he also met the President of the Republic and other members of the government. Other presidential missions were conducted to Brussels, Strasbourg and Vienna to hold talks with or participate in the work of the European Union, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; as well as to Austria, Italy and Germany to take part in various events. Furthermore, the ICRC President met numerous heads of state and government during the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

The ICRC’s Vice-Presidents, other members of the Committee (the ICRC’s governing body) and the Director of Operations went to Austria, Belgium, Italy, France, Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom. Numerous missions were also conducted to these and other countries by Delegates General, representatives of the External Resources Department and members of the International Organizations Division and the Legal Division, in particular the latter’s Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law. Thus, the ICRC was able to take part, for instance, in the work of parliamentary or government committees in Denmark, Austria and Switzerland (the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Swiss National Council even held a special session at ICRC headquarters), to monitor the work of interministerial committees and other bodies established with a view to implementing humanitarian law at national level (such committees existed in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway and Sweden),\(^2\) and to participate in other meetings covering topics of humanitarian concern. Among the latter were a joint US-German conference on humanitarian law, implementation and war crimes, a meeting of European National Societies on the subject of Bosnian refugees (held in Stockholm in March), a United Nations round table on sanctions and the case of the former Yugoslavia, a symposium organized in

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\(^1\) See *European Union*, p. 168.

\(^2\) See *The law and legal considerations*, pp. 266-267.
Dissemination of knowledge of humanitarian law was again an important part of the ICRC's work. Courses were held for the armed forces of Sweden and Germany and ICRC representatives were invited to take part in NATO military exercises conducted in March near the Belgian-Netherlands-German border. In addition, the ninth annual French-language course on humanitarian law was held in Spa, Belgium in September and an event similar to the annual Warsaw course on humanitarian law (for law students and faculty) was organized in Frankfurt (Oder).

The ICRC's campaign for a global ban on landmines was one of its main priorities in its relations with governments and National Societies. ICRC representatives urged governments to support the call for a comprehensive ban, assisted National Societies in conducting public awareness campaigns and took part in numerous symposia and conferences on this topic, including one organized by Handicap International in Paris and two on mine-clearance techniques (held in Bonn and Copenhagen).

The peace process begun in 1994 in Northern Ireland following the IRA* ceasefire ran into trouble in 1996. In February the IRA resorted once again to arms and launched a series of bomb attacks on British soil. In May, the Catholic nationalists, Sinn Fein, gained ground in local elections, but in view of the British government's refusal to include them in the peace negotiations as long as the IRA did not renew its ceasefire, the prospects of any positive developments for Northern Ireland remained small.

The ICRC did not carry out any visits in 1996 to detainees held in connection with the situation in Northern Ireland. The resumption of violence, however, made it clear that such visits would continue to be necessary, pending a lasting solution.

* IRA: Irish Republican Army
EUROPEAN UNION

In May, the Development Council adopted a regulation on humanitarian aid which now gives the European Commission an appropriate legal basis for ECHO* to conduct its activities within a clearly defined framework. The ICRC was widely consulted prior to the adoption of the regulation, both by the Commission and by the European Parliament. Thanks to the new legal framework, ECHO will be able to support not only aid operations but also activities by humanitarian organizations designed to provide protection to war victims. In addition, ECHO will be able to intervene both before and after emergency situations arise (disaster preparedness and emergency rehabilitation activities).

Furthermore, the ICRC approached the European Union and its member States on a number of occasions to raise current operational issues, the problem of anti-personnel landmines and also more specifically legal matters. During the Intergovernmental Conference, which began under the Italian presidency on 29 March, the ICRC endeavoured to persuade member States that in reviewing the Maastricht Treaty, references to the need to implement international humanitarian law should be included. The desired results had not yet been achieved at the end of the year.

On 16 April, the President of the ICRC was invited to speak to the European Union Political Committee, made up of the political directors of the Foreign Ministries of the 15 member States and the Commission. In July, he also visited the highest authorities in the Republic of Ireland shortly after it had taken up the presidency of the Union. During the three-day visit to Dublin, he took part in the National Forum for Development Aid organized by the Minister of State for Development Cooperation.

Owing to the close relations which the ICRC has developed with numerous European Union bodies and member States, it has also participated in many seminars and meetings devoted either to operational matters or to subjects as diverse as the emergency/rehabilitation/development continuum or humanitarian ethics and related problems.

* ECHO: European Community Humanitarian Office
The Former Yugoslavia³

The overriding concern for the ICRC in the former Yugoslavia in 1996 was the implementation of the humanitarian aspects it had been made responsible for under the Dayton Agreement, signed in Paris on 14 December 1995 by the Presidents of Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Under the terms of the agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina found itself divided into two Entities: the Republika Srpska, mainly populated by Serbs, and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which grouped mainly the Muslim and Croat communities. Between the two lay the Inter-Entity Boundary Line.

The military aspects of the accord — a ceasefire, the deployment of a NATO-led international force (IFOR*), the separation of troops, collection of weapons and demobilization — were satisfactorily completed by the end of winter, after which the emphasis switched to political and civilian reconstruction.

The civilian aspects, overseen by the High Representative,⁴ proved more difficult to implement. The five years of conflict in the former Yugoslavia had left a legacy of fear and bitterness that could not be wiped out by the mere stroke of a pen. Ethnic cleansing made way for ethnic engineering as people were moved and resettled in a series of political manoeuvres.

Restoration of freedom of movement, one of the mainstays of the Accord, which would have allowed some two million refugees and displaced persons to return to their places of origin, turned out to be utopian, at least in the short term. Because of the security situation and the threat of discrimination, only a

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* IFOR: Implementation Force
³ See Budapest regional delegation pp. 186-187 for Slovenia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
⁴ The High Representative appointed to oversee the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton Agreement, as stipulated in Annex 10 of the agreement.
few displaced people and refugees returned. People who did return or had remained behind faced harassment, vandalism, physical aggression and, in some cases, expulsion from their homes. Furthermore, the prospect of a transfer of authority in certain areas created a new wave of displacements to swell the ranks of those who had already fled during the fighting.

Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, under the auspices of the OSCE,* were planned for all structures — federal, Entity and municipal — in the second half of the year. While voting went ahead on 14 September for a three-person multi-ethnic presidency and for various organs within each Entity, municipal elections had to be postponed for fear they would reveal only too clearly that some major problems had yet to be resolved.

Throughout the war the most basic of humanitarian rules were consistently ignored and deliberately flouted, but once the guns had fallen silent, people were more receptive to the humanitarian message. Taking advantage of this favourable climate, the ICRC devised a programme to promote international humanitarian law among soldiers and revive traditional human values among the members of the different communities throughout the former Yugoslavia with the aim of helping to forge a lasting peace. It also devised a number of programmes to build tolerance and understanding between communities, particularly among young people, with the cooperation of local Red Cross organizations.

Even after the hostilities were over the presence of several million landmines scattered along the former front lines in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, remained a constant threat to the population. To make the public aware of the danger and thereby reduce the number of landmine casualties, the ICRC launched a media campaign in the spring of 1996 with the slogan “Think mines!” TV and radio spots, posters and leaflets with a local flavour were devised in Sarajevo and Zagreb urging the population to take responsibility for their own safety. At the same time local Red Cross mine-awareness officers and volunteers were trained to go out and spread the message to the general public.

In the aftermath of the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia, the devastation was such that humanitarian assistance was required for much longer than was initially estimated. The various components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement therefore worked together in 1996 to fill the gap until reconstruction efforts provided sufficient resources for the population to survive without outside assistance.

While retaining overall control of and responsibility for operations in the former Yugoslavia, the ICRC developed several different forms of cooperation

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* OSCE: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
with participating National Societies. These delegated and bilateral projects, which ranged from community kitchens to food distributions and from water and sanitation projects to the rehabilitation of social institutions, were designed to complement the ICRC's own programmes and were carried out in close cooperation with local Red Cross organizations. The National Societies of Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States took part in this joint effort. By putting its network of offices, warehouses and logistics at the National Societies' disposal, the ICRC was able to keep its infrastructure in place in case of a renewed outbreak of hostilities.

In May the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies confirmed the validity of the Memorandum of Understanding they had signed in March 1995 covering the division of tasks and responsibilities in the former Yugoslavia in accordance with their respective mandates. Given the continuing instability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Eastern Slovenia, the ICRC retained its overall direction of the Movement's activities in these areas, while the International Federation continued to coordinate relief operations for refugees and vulnerable people in the rest of the former Yugoslavia and took over direction of the development of local Red Cross structures throughout the region.
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Under the terms of the Dayton-Paris Agreement the ICRC was assigned two specific tasks in Bosnia and Herzegovina. First, under Article IX of Annex 1A, it was entrusted with monitoring the release of all persons detained by the parties in connection with the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Secondly, Article V of Annex 7 stipulated that the parties must provide information through the tracing mechanisms of the ICRC on all persons unaccounted for and cooperate fully with the ICRC to determine their identities, whereabouts and fate.

Despite the commitment of the parties, within the framework of the Dayton-Paris Agreement, to implement the comprehensive and unilateral release of all prisoners, the process lasted well beyond the agreed timeframe. The process was made all the more arduous because the parties were reluctant to abandon their practice of exchanging detainees and continued to negotiate at local level.

On the basis of lists of detainees submitted by the parties, the ICRC drew up a plan for the release and transfer of all detainees. The ICRC also requested unimpeded access to all places of detention and to all detainees.

The Bosnian government representative, however, objected to a global release on the grounds that no light had yet been shed on the fate of thousands of people who had disappeared after the fall of Srebrenica in August 1995. While the ICRC shared the Bosnian government's concern over this issue, it was anxious that detainees who had the right to an early release should not pay the price for the inability to find a rapid solution to it.

Throughout the process ICRC delegates visited and registered new detainees held by all the parties, building up a comprehensive view of the detention situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, establishing lists of their own and carrying out private interviews to ascertain the desired destination of each detainee after release.

In January, some 900 prisoners notified to the ICRC by the parties were released by the stated deadline. However, the ICRC had thereafter to initiate a phase of intensive diplomatic pressure in order to obtain the release of the remainder, informing the political and military authorities concerned of the failure of the parties to fulfil their obligations.

Detainees still behind bars were declared by the detaining parties to be held on suspicion of war crimes, although in most of the cases the ICRC was not aware of any proceedings against them either at the national level or through ICTFY.* The ICRC President made this point abundantly clearly in his letter

* ICTFY: International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
of 13 March to the Presidents of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Prime Minister of Republika Srpska, which was also addressed to the Presidents of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

A breakthrough was finally achieved at the Moscow ministerial meeting of 23 March, at which the ICRC President and the High Representative put the issue of release of detainees clearly on the table. The results were almost immediate. On 5 April, the parties finally agreed that the remaining detainees against whom there were no substantiated allegations of war crimes would be released within a day.

In all, some 1,100 detainees had been released since the beginning of the year and the remaining 13 transferred to two jails in Sarajevo — one on the territory of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the other on Republika Srpska territory — and their legal files submitted to a representative of ICTFY.

At no point during this process could the ICRC be absolutely sure that some detainees had not been “hidden” from it, and numerous rumours to this effect continued to hamper efforts to convince families that their missing loved ones were neither alive nor being held in some unknown place of detention. Once the formal deadline had passed for all the parties to make known the detainees in their hands, the ICRC deemed it extremely unlikely that any more remained in concealed custody. This was confirmed by the fact that, from the time it had finalized its lists, the ICRC did not find a single prisoner in 1996 of whom it had not had prior knowledge.

At the end of the year, the ICRC continued to monitor the conditions of detention of 18 people detained on suspicion of war crimes. In addition, the ICRC visited some 130 detainees held for whatever reason by an authority other than that of their ethnic origin, including common-law criminals.

Another major concern for the ICRC in the wake of the Dayton-Paris Agreement was to find clear and tangible answers to the fate of people unaccounted for during the four-year conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Despite the hopes raised by the peace agreement, many families remained in agonizing uncertainty about the fate of their missing relatives.

The ICRC identified three main sources from which information on the fate of the missing people could be obtained: from the parties themselves; from members of the public, i.e. neighbours or acquaintances who might have witnessed certain events; and by the exhumation of mass and individual graves and the identification of bodies.

In order to tap these sources effectively, the ICRC set up two different coordinating bodies, a Working Group on Missing Persons and an Expert Group on Exhumations and Missing. The Working Group met under the ICRC's
chairmanship at the office of the High Representative in Sarajevo. It brought together the three former warring parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to officially process all tracing requests and substantiate documentary information on the missing.

In the first instance, the ICRC aimed to establish a file on every missing person as signalled through a request by a family member. This was done using a network of 22 ICRC offices and 527 local Red Cross branches throughout the former Yugoslavia and 30 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in countries which had accepted refugees from the conflict, thus building up a reliable picture of the extent of the problem and avoiding a propaganda war on figures.

At the Working Group’s regular meetings, each of the former warring parties was assigned due responsibility for enquiring into the fate of those persons reported missing from the area under their control at the time of their disappearance. After a couple of initial sessions, the representatives of the missing persons’ families were invited to attend as observers.

In addition to the efforts of the Working Group, the ICRC issued a public appeal for people with any information pertaining to the fate of the missing to come forward. A catalogue containing 11,000 names was distributed throughout the Red Cross network in the former Yugoslavia and worldwide. The list was also posted on the ICRC’s public server on the Internet. The accompanying public campaign was launched on 12 June with posters, TV and radio spots urging witnesses to come forward with information on individual cases. As a result of the campaign more people were added to the list and a new edition of the catalogue, this time comprising 14,000 names, was produced. A second public campaign was initiated in December, the results of which brought the total number of people reported missing by the end of the year to 18,000.

No account of the issue of the missing would be complete without special mention of Srebrenica, unquestionably the single most serious incident of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

By the beginning of 1996, the ICRC had still not received a reply to its request for information from the Bosnian Serb authorities on the fate of 3,000 men known to have been arrested after the fall of Srebrenica in August 1995. In addition, delegates had collected a further 5,000 names of people who fled the town before it fell and who remained unaccounted for. Only a small number (some 30 people) had reappeared during the release process.

At the end of January, the missing persons’ families who had fled from Srebrenica to Tuzla staged a protest in the ICRC’s offices to highlight their plight. Fully understanding the suffering they were undergoing and their urgent need for answers, the ICRC resolved to do everything possible to reassure them that their concerns were being addressed and to ease the pain of bereavement.
Also at the end of January, the ICRC Director of Operations and the Delegate General for Western and Central Europe and the Balkans went on a mission to Pale, Belgrade and Sarajevo to deal specifically with this issue. In Pale they met the then Presidents of the Republika Srpska and the Serb Assembly and presented them with the facts collected by the ICRC and the conclusions it had reached. These conclusions were that the vast majority of the missing men had been killed after capture and that many others had been killed in so-called “battle” or in lieu of arrest. The Director of Operations handed over a note verbale requesting the Bosnian Serbs to clarify what had happened and ensure that everything was done to inform the families and allow the dead a decent burial. The ICRC representatives also met the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs in Belgrade and the Vice-President of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo to discuss this issue.

On 7 February, the Director of Operations made known the ICRC’s conclusions for the first time in public, at a press conference in Geneva. This step was considered necessary by the ICRC to get the search process under way and to facilitate cooperation between the parties on this important issue.

There had been evidence of mass graves across Bosnia since 1992. The ICRC emphasized that it was the responsibility of other international mechanisms to identify the parties and individuals legally responsible for deaths or disappearances and to gather evidence in this regard. Nor did the ICRC have the capacity or expertise to carry out exhumations itself. Its main concern was that the need to identify bodies and accord them a decent burial — a need particularly acute for the families of the dead, who could only then begin the catharsis of mourning — should not be obscured by the haste to establish evidence of war crimes.

The ICRC therefore proposed the creation of the aforesaid second coordinating body, the Expert Group on Exhumations and Missing, chaired by the Office of the High Representative and grouping together all the international bodies concerned with this issue. These included ICTFY, IFOR, IPTF,* the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights, the UN Expert for the Special Process Dealing with Missing Persons in the Former Yugoslavia, and Physicians for Human Rights, an NGO specializing in exhumation work.

The Expert Group started work in February, established guidelines for the exhumations, clarified who would create and maintain the ante-mortem database (an extension of the files on missing persons compiled by the ICRC containing dental and medical information), and coordinated the exhumations carried out by ICTFY, other international mechanisms and the parties themselves.

* IPTF: International Police Task Force
Given the magnitude of the problem and the difficulties encountered in obtaining clear information about the fate of the missing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the results of all these combined efforts were fairly modest in 1996. Nonetheless, information provided by the parties via the Working Group or data collected as a result of exhumations or through the ICRC's own tracing efforts enabled some 1,000 families to be told what had happened to their missing relatives.

The slow progress in addressing this issue prompted the creation of an international body, the ICMP,* to act as a political partner for the ICRC's more operational approach. Its aim was to assess such progress, to examine the obstacles that remained, to mobilize funds and to intervene at a political level by approaching the relevant authorities to persuade them to do more to move the process forward. The ICMP met for the first time in Geneva in October, with the participation of the ICRC President and other people of international repute.

The ICRC remained convinced that until clear answers were forthcoming, this issue would act as a psychological obstacle to the peace process and a symbol of martyrdom with which the whole community would be forever unable to come to terms. It therefore decided to pursue intensive tracing methods for another two years – 1997 and 1998. Its ultimate objective was that by the end of this period, it would be in a position to respond individually to each and every family, even if only to say that despite every effort to the contrary no factual information had emerged as to the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones.

The complexity of the peace agreement and the number of players involved in the process meant that conferences and meetings were being held throughout the year on every aspect, at every level and in a host of geographical locations within the former Yugoslavia and in other parts of Europe. Whenever appropriate, the ICRC attended these meetings, participating either as a fully fledged member or as an observer.

They included two major meetings of the PIC* — a mid-term conference in Florence in June and one in London in early December, one year after the signing of the Accord — to review progress in the implementation of the peace agreement.

Both of these conferences were attended by forty-three countries, represented by their foreign ministers, and by 13 international organizations at

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* ICMP: International Commission for Missing Persons
* PIC: Peace Implementation Council, comprising the five members of the Contact Group (United States, United Kingdom, Russia, Germany and France), the European Union and other interested States and international organizations
the topmost level, as well as by numerous NGOs and other observers. The ICRC President and the Delegate General for Western and Central Europe and the Balkans attended on both occasions.

The London conference raised a number of unresolved issues, including the obstacles still impeding the return of some two million refugees, the difficulties of bringing the perpetrators of war crimes to justice, and the fate of missing persons. The ICRC’s priority was to ensure that this last issue was fully taken into account in the texts of the resolutions, a move which received the support of the conference.

A survey carried out by the ICRC in December 1995 had revealed that many people both in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the Republika Srpska were in acute need of food assistance, particularly among those displaced during the later stages of the conflict, the new returnees and the most vulnerable social cases. The winter conditions at the beginning and end of 1996 aggravated their plight, particularly in the Republika Srpska, where few international aid organizations and NGOs were actively involved. The ICRC therefore devised winter programmes comprising food and non-food distributions for vulnerable sectors of the population. At the end of winter, in March, the ICRC reassessed the situation and, with the emergency over, concentrated mainly on social cases. Whenever possible, items for distribution were purchased on the local market in order to support the region’s economy.

At a first meeting on reconstruction held in Brussels in December 1995, donors pledged 36 million dollars for agriculture for the first three months of 1996. However, as these efforts appeared unlikely to take effect in time for the sowing season, the ICRC decided, after a survey by an agronomist in mid-January, to distribute seed once again in early 1996 to complement the activities of other aid organizations in central Bosnia.

Things were not much better on the health front. The Ministry of Health had no budget and health facilities were still turning to the ICRC for assistance. The ICRC supported those mainly involved in reconstructive surgery for the war-wounded, treating the victims of landmine explosions and other patients who did not receive treatment during the conflict.

Water supplies and sanitation also remained precarious. Even though there were some improvements, the needs of people returning to their homes put even greater pressure on existing systems. The ICRC therefore continued its emergency water-treatment programme aimed at restoring a sufficient supply of safe water and acceptable hygiene conditions for the population. In addition, a major maintenance programme was carried out in cooperation with various National Societies, so as to prevent a breakdown in water-supply systems and guarantee a minimum service by providing urgently needed spare parts, equipment and expertise.
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- oversaw the release of 1,100 detainees;
- paid regular visits to 130 detainees held by an ethnic group other than their own, irrespective of the charges against them, and to 18 people accused or convicted of war crimes;
- paid regular visits to detainees held in The Hague under the responsibility of ICTFY.

- set up and chaired a Working Group with the participation of the three former warring parties; officially processed all tracing requests and replies through the Working Group which met nine times in Sarajevo in 1996;
- by the end of the year, through its Red Cross network in Bosnia and Herzegovina and worldwide, gathered 18,000 individual tracing requests from families of those unaccounted for;
- published two editions of a catalogue with respectively 11,000 and 14,000 names of people unaccounted for in Bosnia and Herzegovina and distributed 3,300 copies to all members of the Red Cross network involved; made the same list available on the ICRC’s public server on the Internet (World Wide Web);
- exchanged 442,000 Red Cross messages (for the whole of the former Yugoslavia);
- reunited 280 families (for the whole of the former Yugoslavia);

- transferred or repatriated some 550 detainees after their release from detention (for the whole of the former Yugoslavia);
- followed the cases of a dozen unaccompanied children under 16 years of age.

- monitored the situation of minorities and intervened with the authorities when necessary.

- implemented a large-scale winter programme (95/96), targeting 150,000 displaced people, the elderly and social cases not assisted by other organizations in central, eastern and northern Bosnia, with winter clothing, blankets, stoves, candles, food parcels, wheat flour and hygiene kits;
- provided emergency assistance to up to 30,000 people in the Republika Srpska displaced from the Serb suburbs of Sarajevo in 1996 with individual parcels, stoves, plastic sheeting, jerrycans, kitchen sets, clothing, baby sets and blankets;
- from April onwards, together with National Societies, implemented assistance programmes for social cases;
- at the end of the year, carried out another large-scale winter programme for 120,000 vulnerable people in central, eastern and northern Bosnia, providing winter clothing, blankets, stoves and food parcels, wherever possible produced locally;
- distributed a total of 90,000 vegetable seed kits, 1,312 tonnes of seed potatoes, about 500,000 sq. km. of plastic sheeting for greenhouses and 109,000 preserving kits (salt, vinegar and sugar) in the Republika Srpska and some municipalities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- facilitated bilateral projects carried out by the National Societies of Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States in the fields of distribution of food and baby and hygiene parcels, public kitchens and provision of school snacks.

- regularly supplied 62 medical structures with surgical materials, of which 33 were also provided with essential drugs for treatment of chronic diseases;
- through a project delegated to the Belgian Red Cross, rehabilitated health posts in the Bihac area;
- facilitated bilateral projects carried out by the National Societies of Austria, Belgium, Italy, Norway and Switzerland in the fields of rehabilitation of social institutions and provision of psycho-social support.

- carried out water and sanitation maintenance programmes within the majority of the municipal water boards in Bosnia and Herze-
govina by providing essential spare parts, tools and chemicals and by repairing pumps and electrical equipment;

- launched a programme to provide basic equipment such as pipes, valves and small pumps to front-line villages repopulated by returnees;
- made regular deliveries of a total of over 100 tonnes of chlorine and chemical dosing equipment to water boards to ensure drinking water quality;
- launched a programme for cleaning sewage systems and emptying septic tanks in collective centres, hospitals and public buildings in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska;
- enabled regional Epidemiological Centres responsible for testing water quality to function by supplying them with laboratory equipment and chemicals;
- through delegated projects with the British, German and Swedish Red Cross Societies, undertook maintenance and repair work on water-supply systems in the areas around Bihac, Tuzla, Zenica, Banja Luka, Sarajevo and in eastern Bosnia;
- facilitated bilateral projects carried out by the National Societies of France and the Netherlands in the fields of water, sanitation and installation of gas heating.

- provided financial support for summer camps organized by the local Red Cross in the Republika Srpska for 155 children between 8 and 15, with activities centred on the Red Cross; contributed to a summer camp for 100 children organized by the local Red Cross in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- assisted local Red Cross organizations through training and material assistance in the form of stationery kits and office supplies;
- provided educational support and courses for local Red Cross tracing activities and procedures and gave financial assistance to enable local Red Cross participation in a tracing seminar organized in Sofia in September;
- supported the community-based programmes of some local Red Cross branches;
- helped the Red Cross of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to organize its first general assembly in the summer.

- conducted 8 seminars on international humanitarian law: 4 for the armed forces of the HVO,* 3 for ARBiH,* and 1 for VRS* in Mostar West, Orasje, Posusje, Zenica, Mostar East and Banja Luka, for a total of 196 senior officers;
- conducted 1 trainers' workshop, in Capljina, for 10 battalion commanders and staff officers from the armed forces of the HVO;
- contributed ICRC presentations to 3 law of war seminars conducted by the HVO in Vitez, Tomislavgrad and Citluk;
- sponsored 1 ARBiH officer to participate in the humanitarian law course in San Remo, Italy;
- trained 6 local dissemination officers to carry out a continuous programme to spread knowledge of humanitarian law throughout the territory;
- conducted 36 seminars for over 850 participants from the IPTF, local Red Cross branches and volunteers, IFOR, local police officers and law students.

- as part of its mine-awareness campaign had TV spots broadcast twice a day by five TV stations and nine spots five times a day by 20 radio stations throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina; distributed 150,000 leaflets in Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian script; printed 37,000 posters; initiated a training programme for 9 field officers to become "master trainers"; organized training workshops for 83 Red Cross volunteers in mine awareness from the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; and printed 500 T-shirts with "Think Mines!" for children taking part in landmine awareness activities.

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* HVO: Bosnian Croat Forces (Hrvatskog Vijeka Obrane)
* ARBiH: Bosnian Government Army (Armije Republike Bosne i Hercegovine)
* VRS: Bosnian Serb Army (Vojske Republike Srpske)
As postal services in Bosnia and Herzegovina improved, the total volume of Red Cross messages declined sharply. However, for some people Red Cross messages remained an essential means of communication across the Inter-Entity Boundary Line.

Abuses against the civilian population continued in many areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina despite the peace. On several occasions the ICRC launched public appeals to protest against violations of humanitarian law. On behalf of minority groups, it put systematic pressure on central and local authorities to induce them to ensure the physical integrity of such groups and enable them to live normal lives in their habitual environment. However, whenever this proved impossible, the ICRC sought to obtain the commitment of the authorities concerned at least to make sure that population transfers were carried out in acceptable conditions. Such conditions included enabling people to leave on a voluntary basis, together with all family members, including men of draft age, and with their belongings.

With the official announcement on 18 February that the transfer of authority over the Bosnian Serb-held suburbs of Sarajevo to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was imminent, the Serb inhabitants started to leave, heading for villages in eastern Bosnia under Republika Srpska authority. The early arrivals found accommodation with families or in abandoned houses, many of them partially destroyed. The latecomers, often arriving in a desperate condition, could find shelter only in collective centres set up in schools or public buildings. Very few Serbs, mostly the elderly, elected to remain in Sarajevo.

Mostar remained a divided city and virtually no progress was made in 1996 in achieving reconciliation between the two communities or in obtaining the freedom of movement between the two parts of the city that was provided for under the terms of the peace agreement. The ICRC maintained a permanent presence in the city and kept a close eye on any developments which might endanger the safety of the civilian population.

In October, the ICRC received the green light from the Bosnian Serb army to hold international humanitarian law courses for troops in Bijeljina, Zvornik and Doboj.

At the end of the year, the decision was taken to merge the ICRC delegations in Pale and Sarajevo into one based in Sarajevo.
CROATIA

The year saw the normalization of relations between Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the mutual recognition of international borders, but the effects of the hostilities of 1991 and 1995 were still very much in evidence in certain parts of the country.

In Eastern Slavonia the beginning of the transition process to Croatian authority left some 100,000 local Serbs in considerable uncertainty and raised fears of another large-scale exodus from the area. In addition, many people were still in acute need of assistance, a situation further complicated by the absence of other humanitarian organizations on the spot.

The ICRC, along with a number of participating National Societies, distributed food parcels, ran public kitchens, carried out work to improve water supplies and sanitation and rehabilitated health facilities. As a confidence-building measure, the ICRC arranged for members of hundreds of families separated since 1991 to meet each other on the former front lines.

In its work the ICRC received continual support from the regional Red Cross branches of both Osijek and Vukovar. The ICRC hosted and chaired regular cooperation meetings with Croat and Serb Red Cross representatives in an effort to promote dialogue and strengthen their capacities in a climate of tolerance.

Meanwhile, the former Sectors North, South and West had been virtually emptied of their populations following the Croatian offensives in 1995. Several thousand elderly and isolated Serbs, unable or unwilling to accompany their relatives when they fled the area, struggled for survival and were prey to periodic abuse and criminal attacks. ICRC mobile teams operating out of Knin and Vojnic visited them regularly to check on their safety and well-being. From the beginning of the year, the Federation, in cooperation with National Societies, distributed relief and provided medical and social services.

In 1996, the ICRC continued to monitor the living conditions and treatment of detainees held in connection with the conflict or security-related offences. It met regularly with the Croatian authorities to advocate the release of Bosnian Serbs arrested in Bosnia or Croatia and detained under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defence and an amnesty for any others still being held one year after the end of active hostilities in Croatia. By the end of the year, the ICRC was following the cases of some 150 detainees in 14 places of detention.

At the end of 1996 over 2,000 people remained unaccounted for since the conflict in Croatia in 1991. Successive commissions had sought to resolve the issue, but with little success. At the end of 1995, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia once again pledged to exchange all available information on missing persons; they agreed to do so through a new commission. Several meetings were held in the course of the year both in Zagreb and Belgrade, with the ICRC participating as observer.
Landmines left in place after the conflicts continued to pose a threat to the population. At the request of the Croatian Red Cross, the ICRC helped it to devise a mine-awareness campaign and set up the necessary structures to continue the campaign independently. The programme included the distribution of brochures and posters to displaced people and the beneficiaries of Red Cross assistance, and the training of Red Cross volunteers in alerting the population to the danger of mines and transmitting these same messages through the local media.

In Zagreb in October the ICRC hosted a strategy meeting with 14 National Societies involved in the campaign to bring about a global ban on anti-personnel landmines.

IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- monitored the living conditions and treatment of some 390 detainees held in 20 places of detention in connection with the conflict or for security-related offences, including 18 Bosnian Serbs arrested in either Bosnia or Croatia, and not yet released;
- following a presidential pardon or amnesty, in January, June and October visited released Serbs temporarily transferred to the Gasinci refugee camp near Osijek and conducted private interviews with them to ascertain whether they wished to stay in Croatia or be transferred to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;
- thereafter transferred some 410 former detainees from Croatia to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

- sent to remote villages in the former Sectors North and South to check on the living conditions and safety of the civilian population in general and several thousand elderly Serbs in particular and, if any of them had been subjected to harassment, made representations on their behalf to the authorities.
- as part of its winter programme, provided 10,000 refugees and displaced people in Eastern Slavonia with blankets, stoves, candles, winter clothing and shoes;
- carried out limited distributions of food and other items to the most vulnerable people in Eastern Slavonia, through the local Red Cross branches;
- at the end of the year, implemented another winter programme for 35,000 beneficiaries in Eastern Slavonia, distributing blankets, stoves, candles, winter clothing and shoes;
- for the third consecutive year, distributed a total of 10,000 vegetable seed kits, 105 tonnes of seed potatoes, 10,000 sq km. of plastic sheeting for greenhouses and 31,000 preservation kits (salt, vinegar and sugar) in the former Sectors South and North and in Eastern Slavonia;
- facilitated bilateral projects carried out by the National Societies of Germany and the United Kingdom in the fields of distribution of food and hygiene parcels and running public kitchens.
- regularly visited six medical facilities in Eastern Slavonia and provided supplies of surgical material and drugs for chronic diseases, a programme taken over by the Belgian Red Cross as a delegated project in the second half of the year.
- assisted the municipal water boards of Eastern Slavonia with spare parts, tools and chemicals to enable them to repair water-supply systems and to ensure a safe and sufficient supply of drinking water;
- delivered 15,000 to 30,000 litres of water a day to the Kuplješko camp until its closure.
- supported 4 training courses for Croatian Red Cross tracing services and provided financial assistance for the National Society to participate in a tracing seminar in Sofia in September;
- provided material support in the form of stationery kits to all branches;
- provided financial support for the development of a new database.
- organized 13 workshops, with volunteers from the Croatian Red Cross and from Red Cross branches in the Vukovar area, showing how humanitarian values based on Red Cross principles can be inculcated in schools;
- signed an agreement with the Ministry of Defence to begin promoting knowledge of international humanitarian law among the armed forces; organized 2 courses to this effect for 45 officers.
- carried out 6 training courses for 90 mine-awareness instructors, who then passed on the information to their own communities so that most of the population at risk had received instruction by the end of the year.
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA
(Serbia, Montenegro)

After an accord was reached between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Croatia in November 1995, the two countries were able to normalize relations in August, opening the way for peaceful negotiations to resolve any remaining contentious issues. UN sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia were lifted in October.

The ICRC continued to keep a close eye on the situation in Kosovo, where tensions were still high between the Serb and Albanian communities and found expression in a spate of unprecedented attacks on police stations and government targets. An agreement on the education system (reintegration of Kosovo pupils, students and teachers into official schools and universities, resumption of payment of teachers' salaries by the State) between the Serbian President and the leader of the Albanian community had not been implemented by the end of the year.

The ICRC concentrated on detention-related activities in connection with the situation in Kosovo and on the problems within the National Society, which were a reflection of the political divisions within the country.

During the anti-government demonstrations in Belgrade in December, the ICRC kept the developments under close observation and stood by to offer its services if required. However, no such occasion arose.

With regard to persons unaccounted for since the conflict in Croatia in 1991, the ICRC took part as an observer in meetings of both the Croatian and Yugoslav State Commissions for Missing Persons, held regularly in Zagreb and Belgrade.
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- after receiving authorization from the Federal Ministry of Defence in mid-June, visited detainees, mainly of Croat origin, held for reasons of State security;
- visited persons of Albanian origin arrested for State security reasons and held in several places of detention, mainly in Kosovo;
- in all, visited some 100 detainees in 14 places of detention.

- exchanged 442,000 Red Cross messages (for the whole of the former Yugoslavia);
- reunited 280 families (for the whole of the former Yugoslavia);
- transferred or repatriated some 550 detainees after their release from detention (for the whole of the former Yugoslavia).

- carried out regular visits to some 800 men who had fled Zepa and were interned in camps pending their transfer by UNHCR to third countries as refugees;
- visited three people from Srebrenica who had crossed into the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in April after taking refuge in the forest when the enclave fell in July 1995.

- provided essential support for assistance programmes for displaced and vulnerable people in Bosnia and Herzegovina via the relief logistics centre in Belgrade.
- provided one-off assistance to some hospitals and supplied the health facilities covering the Slijevovica camp for refugees from Zepa.

- supported Yugoslav Red Cross training programmes for tracing officers and provided financial assistance for the National Society to participate in a tracing seminar in Sofia in September;
- provided material support to Yugoslav Red Cross branches in the form of office supplies, computer equipment and stationery kits.

- signed a cooperation agreement with the Federal Ministry of Defence on 10 July with a view to launching a programme for dissemination of international humanitarian law to the armed forces in the last quarter of the year;
- held the first course within the framework of this agreement in mid-December for 31 high-ranking officers from all parts of the armed forces.
Central Europe and the Balkans

BUDAPEST

Regional delegation
(Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia)

The ICRC’s decision to establish a regional delegation to cover central and south-east Europe was put into effect when the first delegates took up residence in Budapest at the beginning of October. The official opening, however, was deferred until the formal signature of a headquarters agreement with the Hungarian authorities in March 1997. The delegation in Skopje became an office dependent on the regional delegation in Budapest.

The objective of this new regional delegation was to combine efforts with the governments of the countries covered — in particular the armed forces and education and justice ministries — National Societies and local media to promote knowledge of international humanitarian law, to encourage the incorporation of that law into national legislation and to foster a debate on humanitarian issues affecting them as well as people in other parts of the world.

Most activities in the region had previously been carried out from the delegation in Skopje, with missions to Albania, Bulgaria, Poland and Romania to foster contacts with the authorities and National Societies and mainly to promote knowledge of international humanitarian law. In April the ICRC delegate based in Skopje travelled to Albania to check on conditions of detention in the prisons and the human rights situation in general. He met a number of high-level officials to discuss Albania’s internal situation and its relations with its neighbours. He also took part in a dissemination seminar organized by the Albanian Red Cross in Durrës.

At the end of September, the ICRC financed a regional seminar organized by the Bulgarian Red Cross in Sofia for the tracing services of 11 National Societies in the region.

The major focus for the Budapest regional delegation in its first three months was to set up its offices and hire local staff. In November the deputy regional delegate went to Sofia to participate in two courses for Bulgarian officers organized as part of its programme of dissemination to the armed forces. The same month he also went to Poland and held meetings with the Polish Red Cross, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ODIHR.*

* ODIHR: Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the operational arm of the OSCE based in Warsaw
In 1996, the ICRC monitored the work of interministerial committees in Albania and Bulgaria established with a view to implementing humanitarian law at national level. The ICRC’s Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law attended two meetings with government officials in Slovenia: a seminar on the implementation of humanitarian law in May and a discussion on the establishment of a committee for the implementation of this law at national level in June.

TURKEY

The ICRC made several attempts to continue its dialogue with the Turkish authorities on a number of humanitarian issues, through discussions in Geneva with the Permanent Representative to the UN and by two missions to Turkey in February and June.

Despite the ICRC’s conviction that it could play a constructive role there, no progress was made with regard to visits to security detainees or to protection of the civilian population affected by the situation in the south-eastern part of the country. The ICRC did make some headway in reaching an agreement with the Ministry of Defence to begin courses in international humanitarian law for the armed forces. In preparation for this eventuality, in May the ICRC organized a seminar in Ankara for 400 officers of the Turkish land forces on international humanitarian law and the ICRC’s role in protection and tracing work.

In April the ICRC informed the Turkish authorities that it had carried out visits on 11 and 12 March to seven Turkish soldiers in the hands of the PKK* in northern Iraq. Two were later freed and accompanied by the ICRC to the Turkish border.5

* PKK: Kurdish Workers’ Party
5 See also Iraq, p. 248.
Soup kitchens and tanks of drinking water were set up in Gudermes and other towns in Chechnya (Russian Federation) to help the most vulnerable of the displaced people. In 1996 some 400,000 people affected by the conflict in Chechnya received assistance from the ICRC.
Eastern Europe

ICRC regional delegations:
Kyiv
Moscow

The Caucasus

ICRC delegations:
Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

Central Asia

ICRC delegation:
Tajikistan

ICRC regional delegation:
Tashkent

Staff
ICRC expatriates¹: 123
National Societies¹: 36
Local employees²: 622

Total expenditure
Sfr 79,151,564

Expenditure breakdown

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<td>Relief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overheads</td>
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</tbody>
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¹ Average figures calculated on an annual basis.
² Under ICRC contract, as at December 1996.

EASTERN EUROPE
AND CENTRAL ASIA
In retrospect, the year was overshadowed by the cold-blooded murder in December of six delegates working at the ICRC's Novye Atagi field hospital near Grozny, in the Republic of Chechnya. They were from Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Spain. Their deaths did not occur in the heat of battle, but were the result of a deliberate criminal act. This tragedy forced the ICRC to scale down its activities for the victims of that conflict.

The all-out military confrontation in the northern Caucasus and Tajikistan left its mark on 1996. Although active hostilities in Chechnya ceased at the end of August, the underlying causes were not settled. In other places, such as the Prigorodny district (Ingushetia), Abkhazia and Nagorný Karabakh, ceasefire agreements held but little progress was made towards lasting political settlements. In this “no peace, no war” situation, humanitarian problems remained unsolved and the resumption of hostilities cannot be ruled out.

The difficult transition from planned to market economies continued to have a negative impact on most countries in the region, leading to a dramatic decline in living standards. Vulnerable people such as the elderly, the sick, the disabled and detainees suffered most from the widespread dismantling of social services. The widening gap between the few people making huge profits and the poverty-stricken majority of the population, particularly where it is accentuated by communal tensions, could at any moment lead to violence.

In the northern Caucasus, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, the ICRC endeavoured to protect the civilian population in conflict zones from various ills, ranging from actual threats to their physical integrity to outright discrimination. In Chechnya and Tajikistan, the utter disregard for humanitarian rules for the conduct of hostilities posed the greatest threat.

In Armenia and Georgia, thanks to the support of the highest authorities, the ICRC was allowed into all places of detention and conducted visits to security detainees in accordance with customary ICRC procedures. The three parties involved in the Nagorný Karabakh conflict released 110 prisoners; however, at the end of the year a number of people were still held as a result of the conflict. The Tajik authorities did not authorize the ICRC to visit, in accordance with its customary procedures, people detained as a result of the civil war; nonetheless, the ICRC launched a nutritional programme in Tajik prisons to save the lives of severely malnourished prisoners. In the northern Caucasus, access to detainees held in connection with the Chechen conflict remained extremely limited, mainly because of the lack of cooperation by the authorities on both sides.

The ICRC was deeply concerned about the fate of people unaccounted for as a result of conflict. While the Red Cross message network remained an effective way of restoring contact between people separated by hostilities, all
too often official tracing commissions set up by the parties concerned achieved only meagre results.

To assist the war-wounded, the ICRC focused on replenishing the supplies of the medical facilities caring for them. In Chechnya, it also worked to rehabilitate hospitals destroyed by the fighting, and in September it set up its own independent field hospital in Novye Atagi.

The production of artificial limbs for war amputees continued in the prosthetic/orthotic workshops in Baku, Tbilisi and Gagra (Abkhazia). The ICRC carried on its pilot project, begun in 1995, for the treatment of tuberculosis in the Baku prison hospital and prepared to launch similar projects in Armenia and Georgia.

Water and sanitation activities were of particular importance in Nagorny Karabakh and Chechnya, where the ICRC was once again running a major operation to maintain water supplies for Grozny.

Large-scale relief programmes were conducted with the active cooperation of participating and operating National Societies in the northern and southern Caucasus and in Tajikistan, despite considerable logistical difficulties in mountainous terrain. Community kitchens prepared hot meals for thousands of elderly people, and distributions of food and other assistance, including building material, benefited tens of thousands of people.

To facilitate the implementation of international humanitarian law at national level, the ICRC continued to build up its legal advisory services for governments. In 1996 national seminars took place in Baku, Yerevan, Tbilisi, Chisinau and Kyiv, completing the round of seminars organized for the 15 countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Substantial efforts went into making political, military, educational and academic circles aware of humanitarian rules and principles and tailormade approaches for each target audience were developed further. In the Russian Federation, the introduction of international humanitarian law into the Federal university curriculum was undoubtedly a breakthrough. Teaching international humanitarian law to the armed forces remained a key activity, including the organization of seminars and field exercises at regional and national levels.

As usual, cooperation with National Societies mostly took the form of support and training in spreading knowledge of humanitarian law and restoring family links. In five autonomous republics in the northern Caucasus, the ICRC supported local committees of the Russian Red Cross in their social and medical community work, with a view to furthering the long-term structural development and independence of the Red Cross.

As the year drew to a close, the tragedy of Novye Atagi lent new urgency to the search for appropriate responses to the type of risks increasingly faced by humanitarian workers in conflict situations.
Eastern Europe

KYIV
Regional delegation
(Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine)

After more than a year of negotiations had enabled the ICRC to sign a headquarters agreement with the Ukrainian government on 5 December 1995, the Kyiv regional delegation was opened in January 1996. The delegation maintained contact with the authorities in the region with a view to promoting international humanitarian law and familiarizing them with ICRC activities, and offered the assistance of the ICRC’s specialized Advisory Service in incorporating that law into national legislation. In Latvia and Lithuania, national working groups for the implementation of international humanitarian law were in progress, while Moldova set up the Moldova National Committee on Consultation and Coordination of Implementation of International Humanitarian Law in September 1996. In all three countries, participants in these bodies included the government ministries concerned and the National Red Cross Society. The topic was also given priority on several occasions during high-level contacts, for example when the President of Ukraine visited ICRC headquarters in March, accompanied by three government ministers. They were received by the ICRC President and a number of the organization’s senior officials.

In September the ICRC President travelled to the Baltic States, accompanied by the regional delegate. He met the President, the Minister of Defence and the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, the President, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State at the Ministry of Defence of Latvia, and the President and the Ministers of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Health of Lithuania. He was also received by the rectors of the universities of Riga, Tartu and Vilnius. His discussions with the authorities, besides being concerned with the implementation of international humanitarian law, centred on dissemination of that law among the armed forces and the ICRC’s worldwide campaign against anti-personnel landmines. In meetings with the respective heads of the three Baltic National Societies, he reaffirmed the ICRC’s support for their activities in dissemination and in the restoration of family links. The ICRC President’s visit was given extensive media coverage.

Cooperation with the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence began with a view to promoting knowledge of the law of war among the armed forces. A programme to that effect was drawn up for 1997. At the request of the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, a working group was set up, chaired by the head of the Legal
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- kept up its efforts to obtain access to the four detainees of the "Iliascu group", held since 1992 in Tiraspol, in the self-proclaimed "Dniester Republic" in Moldova.
- arranged for a number of Ukrainians to be reunited with their families in Ukraine, from whom they had been separated as a result of the conflicts in the southern Caucasus and Afghanistan;
- transmitted Red Cross messages from three Ukrainian sailors held up in a port in Liberia to their families in Simferopol, who had been without news of them.
- gave a two-week seminar on cooperation and promotion of humanitarian law and principles for 25 local branches of the Red Cross Society of Ukraine in Yalta (Crimea), attended by some 40 participants;
- gave three one-week training seminars for over 150 participants from Kyiv town, Kyiv region and Uzhgorod local committees, as well as shorter events for senior staff;
- held a first summer seminar on Red Cross youth programmes in Minsk (Belarus) for 25 teachers and headmasters of schools involved in Red Cross activities;
- sponsored the publication of an internal Red Cross newsletter, of which 3,000 copies were printed at the end of the year, and supported the production of 30,000 calendars for 1997.
- organized seminars in Kyiv and Chisinau, in cooperation with the OSCE*, on implementation of humanitarian law. The seminar in Kyiv was attended by 30 participants, including noted specialists from Great Britain and Denmark, high-ranking Ukrainian ministerial officials, and representatives of the Cabinet, the security services, parliament, the Academy of Sciences, the Ukrainian lawyers' association and the National Society. Some 40 participants, including the Minister of Justice, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Chairman of the Moldova Red Cross, attended the meeting in Chisinau;
- organized an introductory presentation on humanitarian law for the Chiefs of Staff of the Ukrainian armed forces and a series of seminars for over 180 officers and senior lecturers of the main military academies of the Ministry of Defence in Kyiv, Odessa and Kharkov;
- gave similar presentations in Belarus for the Ministry of Defence;
- held presentations for the Army Chiefs of Staff, Ministry of Defence and military training centres in Latvia and Lithuania;
- gave presentations on international humanitarian law at Kyiv university for future legal advisers, military interpreters and judges for military tribunals, with a view to having international humanitarian law incorporated into the university syllabus.

* OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Service of the Ministry of Defence. The delegation also established contact and made plans for future cooperation with the armed forces of Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania and Moldova. High-ranking officers of the armed forces of Belarus and Moldova took part in a seminar on the law of war organized by the ICRC Moscow delegation in September 1996.

The Kyiv delegation approached the Red Cross Societies in the region with a view to developing cooperation with them, mainly in dissemination and in restoring family links. To facilitate contact between National Society headquarters and the numerous local branches, and to enable the Red Cross Society of Ukraine to get in touch with a wider audience, the ICRC sponsored the publication of a newsletter. The first issue appeared at the end of the year. A first visit to the Society's Crimea branch in June gave the delegates the opportunity to organize a two-week training seminar for staff of over 20 local Red Cross branches. The seminar was also attended by representatives of the Ministry of Justice and health officials, as well as external speakers. The local branches of the Ukrainian National Society remained the focal point of the delegation's cooperation/dissemination work for the rest of the year. Apart from organizing a number of seminars, cooperation also included the provision of training and office materials.

Under formal cooperation agreements with the tracing services of the National Societies of Belarus, Estonia and Moldova, the ICRC provided training, technical advice and essential material support, including the financing of salaries. Tracing services in the other countries also received financial support from it. Much of the work of National Society tracing services in the region was still related to the Second World War. The ICRC stepped up its assistance to the Red Cross Society of Ukraine, as its tracing service faced a sharply increased workload in handling tens of thousands of attestations delivered by the International Tracing Service in Arolsen to enquirers in Ukraine.
MOSCOW
Regional delegation
(Russian Federation, with specialized services for all countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia)

Apart from actively supporting the ICRC operation in the northern Caucasus, the delegation maintained regular contacts with the Russian Federal authorities. On 3 September the ICRC President, accompanied by the Delegate General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, met the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs who was on a visit to Bern. The meeting enabled the ICRC representatives to raise a number of points of special concern, such as the unresolved conflicts over the status of Nagorny Karabakh and Abkhazia and recent hostilities in Tajikistan and in the northern Caucasus. In October the Delegate General met the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Chairman of the Russian Red Cross Society. In November the head of the Moscow delegation and the medical coordinator for the northern Caucasus met the newly appointed Minister of Health. The delegates expressed concern about the disregard for the integrity of medical facilities that had marked the Chechen conflict, and about the urgent need to provide at least basic health care for the population in that region. They also had a first meeting with two Deputy Chairmen of the Joint Commission established to implement the agreement signed by the Russian and Chechen sides in August 1996. They offered the ICRC’s services as a neutral intermediary in facilitating the release of detainees.

An ICRC programme to promote and facilitate the implementation of international humanitarian law at national level was presented by the Moscow delegation to the legal department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Representatives of the Russian Federation took part in an ICRC-organized seminar on questions related to implementation, namely the setting-up of interministerial committees at national level, held in Geneva in October. The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs supported the idea of organizing a national seminar in the Russian Federation in cooperation with the ICRC.

Throughout the year the Moscow delegation concentrated on its extensive dissemination programmes and on cooperation with the tracing services of the Russian Red Cross and other National Societies of the countries of the former Soviet Union. The delegation arranged for a number of people living in the southern Caucasus to be reunited with their families in Russia and handled the exchange of Red Cross messages between detainees arrested in connection with the Chechen conflict and their families in the Republic of Chechnya. Red Cross...
Cooperation with National Societies and local Red Cross committees

Cooperation was formally extended to include other activities mainly in aid of five local Red Cross committees in the northern Caucasus (Chechnya, Daghestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia). The ICRC helped them meet emergency needs in the region, for example by providing food parcels and warm clothes. Moreover, ICRC-supported Red Cross programmes for elderly and disabled people were set up in all five republics, with the long-term aim of enabling the committees to carry out community-relevant medical and social work independently.

The Russian Red Cross was also associated with the ICRC schools programme. It helped develop the concept and supervised distribution of teaching materials in the various regions. The programme was designed with a view to familiarizing 11 to 12 year old students throughout countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States with the principles underlying international humanitarian law and the mandate and activities of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It is based on a teaching file developed in 1993 by the Geneva branch of the Swiss Red Cross for local primary schools and involves the use of selected texts reflecting Red Cross concerns about human behaviour in situations of violence. As the words “Russian Red Cross” appeared in print on well over two million textbooks, the programme opened up the opportunity for the National Society to make itself known to young people across the enormous territory of the Russian Federation.

Test runs were first launched in a number of countries of the former Soviet Union in 1994, namely Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Coordinated by a delegate in Moscow and in cooperation with the Ministries of Education concerned, ICRC delegates together with local assistants adapted the textbooks and teachers’ manuals to the cultural and educational context of each country by using examples from local literature and taking into account local teaching methods. Feasibility studies in other central Asian countries were under way in 1996.

Despite the military and political upheaval resulting from the events in the northern Caucasus and the Russian presidential elections, the ICRC achieved a breakthrough in its relations with the Federal military hierarchy. Following intensive discussions, the Ministry of Internal Affairs submitted a proposal to the ICRC for closer cooperation with two prestigious military training academies with a view to organizing courses on the law of war for officers of army units that may be deployed in situations of internal conflict. A cooperation agreement was also signed with the Federal border guard service. The Moscow dele-
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- covered 19 salaries plus running costs for the Russian Red Cross tracing service;
- concluded an agreement with the National Society aimed at supporting the national Red Cross museum, which is used for presentations on the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement for school classes and nursing students;
- organized 2 training seminars in Smolensk and Vladivostok for Russian Red Cross staff involved in dissemination work, bringing to 11 the number of training seminars organized throughout the Russian Federation since 1993;
- organized a seminar for the heads of tracing services of 15 National Societies of the former Soviet Union, with the participation of the directors of the International Tracing Service in Arolsen and the American Red Cross Holocaust Centre in Baltimore and representatives of the tracing services of the Polish and German Red Cross Societies;
- supported Red Cross home-care and “meals-on-wheels” programmes for elderly and disabled people in Chechnya and the four neighbouring republics.

- in cooperation with regional and local Red Cross committees, arranged for the ICRC’s travelling exhibition on humanitarian law to be shown in a number of places including the Siberian towns of Novosibirsk, Kemerovo and Barnaul before moving on to Central Asia;
- in September held a first regional seminar in Moscow for representatives of the Russian Federation’s Ministry of Defence and the armed forces of CIS countries;
- translated into Russian and printed 120 texts, including both books and shorter publications;
- under the schools programme, produced and distributed textbooks and manuals to nearly 2.3 million fifth-form students and 115,000 teachers in the Russian Federation;
- for the first time in Russia, and with the participation of Russian and western university professors and other specialists, organized a seminar on the teaching of humanitarian law for some 40 junior lecturers and assistants from international law and relations departments of universities in the Russian Federation and a number of other CIS countries;
- under the publications programme, published two issues of the ICRC periodical covering operations in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Challenges, with a focus on the schools programme and the ICRC’s local staff; continued to produce the International Review of the Red Cross in Russian, for the first time including an article contributed by a Russian university professor.
gation fostered contacts with other services of the armed forces and the government ministries responsible for them, particularly the Ministry of Defence, so as to encourage the incorporation of the law of war into their training programmes.

In its dissemination approach to universities, the ICRC concentrated on making reference materials on humanitarian law available in Russian (by the end of 1996 all major texts on the subject had been translated and distributed to university libraries throughout the country) and on training future instructors. At the political level, the introduction of humanitarian law as a subject in to the Federal curriculum for international law and journalism faculties spelled significant progress.

The Moscow delegation also functioned as a decentralized publishing unit for all Russian language publications and contributed significantly to making texts on humanitarian work and international humanitarian law available to a new readership in CIS* countries. The conflict in the northern Caucasus gave rise to considerable interest in international humanitarian law, which meant that in addition to publishing and translating new texts, existing documents had to be updated and reprinted.

Northern Caucasus

For the ICRC, as for other international humanitarian organizations working in the northern Caucasus, the year 1996 was fraught with security problems. However, nothing had prepared it for the tragedy that was to strike four months after the Russian and the Chechen sides had concluded a ceasefire and while peace negotiations were going on: the cold-blooded murder of six of its delegates working at the Novye Atagi field hospital by unidentified gunmen during the night of 16/17 December.

The year began with renewed fighting in the Republic of Chechnya between federal troops and Chechen separatists, impelling successive waves of civilians to leave for neighbouring republics. Those who did not flee remained trapped in their homes for weeks at a time whilst their towns and villages were being shelled. Despite the call for negotiations launched by the President of the Russian Federation on 31 March, hostilities in the south intensified. The separatist leader was killed in April.

In May, under the auspices of the OSCE,* representatives of the Federal government, the Chechen government and the separatists met in Moscow and

* CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States
* OSCE: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
signed a preliminary cease-fire accord. The ensuing uneasy silence of the guns lasted until after the federal presidential elections in June, during which the incumbent President was reelected. Tension mounted once again and resulted in a large-scale Federal offensive in July. For three weeks, villages in southern Chechnya sustained heavy attacks, while in Grozny hardly a day went by without both military and civilian targets coming under fire. On 6 August separatist forces launched an offensive on Grozny and took control of the city after two weeks of bitter fighting. The Federal forces delivered an ultimatum announcing their intention to storm Grozny unless the separatists withdrew. About 200,000 civilians fled the city.

Fortunately, thanks in part to the diplomatic efforts of the international community, the threat of a showdown was defused. Negotiations resumed, resulting in a cease-fire concluded in Novye Atagi on 22 August. On 31 August the parties signed an agreement in Khasavyurt (Daghestan) providing for the pull-out of Federal troops; settlement of the status of the Republic of Chechnya within five years; and the establishment of a joint commission to put the agreement into effect. Although differences persisted, there was no more fighting. In November the Russian President decreed the withdrawal of all federal troops, which paved the way for elections to be held in the Republic of Chechnya early the following year.

Throughout the year, security was a major concern for the ICRC. During a first meeting with the Russian Federal authorities in Moscow in January, the Delegate General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia expressed its alarm about a series of incidents that had affected its operation in the Republic of Chechnya earlier that month. The hazardous conditions led the ICRC to reduce staff to the operational minimum and tighten security measures.

In March the ICRC President met the Russian Minister of Internal Affairs in Moscow. He raised a number of points that had been a source of concern to the organization practically since the beginning of the conflict, such as the

presidential mission to Moscow
conduct of hostilities without regard for humanitarian rules and the lack of access to captured combatants, and handed over to the Minister a report containing delegates’ findings. The ICRC President pursued discussions with the Russian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs at the organization’s Geneva headquarters.

In May the Delegate General and the Director of Operations conducted a mission to evaluate the ICRC operation in Chechnya, Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria, particularly from the point of view of security.

In July, after another incident, the Delegate General, accompanied by the head of the Moscow delegation and the head of the ICRC mission in the northern Caucasus, met the Russian Minister of Internal Affairs in Moscow with a view to securing his support in avoiding further incidents.

In October, the newly appointed Delegate General met the President of the Republic of Chechnya who was visiting the recently opened ICRC field hospital in Novye Atagi. Security problems were again discussed. More incidents involving ICRC employees and expatriates working for other organizations ensued in November, mostly caused by banditry. Following another meeting with the Chechen President, who had helped obtain the release of an abducted sanitation engineer, the ICRC mission in Grozny took additional security measures. As it turned out, to no avail.

Although the provision of assistance to vulnerable groups and medical and sanitary rehabilitation activities had reached peak levels in the wake of the August cease-fire, the murders of 17 December forced the institution to suspend all programmes requiring the presence of expatriates within Chechnya; only a limited number of activities went on, carried out by the local Red Cross committees and the Ministry of Health.

Perhaps more than its other activities in connection with the Chechen conflict, the ICRC’s protection work was seriously impaired by the drastic worsening of security conditions at the beginning of the year. Although both sides agreed in principle to let delegates visit detainees, in practice this was not always the case. As they did not have consistent access to places of detention and conflict zones, it was extremely difficult to identify the problems facing detainees and the general population and to take effective action to help them.

After a hiatus of more than five months, in May the ICRC was once again allowed to visit people detained by the Russian Federal authorities in the northern Caucasus. During his meeting with the Russian Minister of Internal Affairs in July, the Delegate General reiterated the ICRC’s wish to be notified of all arrests made by the Federal authorities and to be allowed to have access to all detainees held as a result of the Chechen conflict. A dialogue initiated with the Chechen authorities enabled delegates on several occasions to visit detainees held in government prisons. A few visits were also conducted to
people held by Chechen separatist forces. However, as no single central authority was in charge of these detainees and most of them were held by different local commanders, they were hard to locate.

The events in August again brought things to a halt. After numerous contacts with the Federal authorities, the ICRC was able to resume visits to some detainees held in the neighbouring republics. Contacts with the new Chechen authorities enabled delegates in December to conduct a first visit to a detention centre in northern Chechnya, and to detainees held in Argun. The visits were conducted in accordance with customary ICRC procedures.

As discussions about a simultaneous release of prisoners were under way, the ICRC offered its services to the parties in order to help, as a neutral intermediary, in carrying out the release operation. The parties did not accept the offer, and although they had agreed to release all prisoners on both sides, they were still holding a number of detainees at the end of the year.

Material assistance was given to the places of detention visited by delegates, and detainees who were released and wanted to return home received some financial support.

Throughout the year the ICRC kept a close watch on the situation in the Prigorodny district in North Ossetia, where heavy fighting took place in 1992. There were no major incidents, but the situation between Ingush and Ossetians remained tense. Delegates visited nine Ingush people detained by the Federal authorities in connection with the Ingush-Ossetian conflict. Another point of concern was the situation in Daghestan, where significant numbers of internally displaced Chechens put the hospitality of their neighbours to the test, especially following a hostage-taking incident in Kizlyar in January.

Again in 1996, there were too many examples of the suffering endured by civilians when war is waged with no regard for humanitarian rules. The population was exposed to all kinds of abuse ranging from threats and harassment to hostage-taking and the indiscriminate use of military force. Despite the fighting, the ICRC managed to stay in southern Chechnya, and even in Grozny, almost permanently. Representations were regularly made to the authorities concerned to obtain their indispensable cooperation in enforcing respect for international humanitarian law and the red cross emblem. Delegates did their best to spread knowledge of that law in every possible way, not only through dissemination activities as such, but also in the course of their medical and relief work.

Even once the fighting had ceased, many families were still searching for news of their next-of-kin. The ICRC kept in close touch with official and private committees that were set up to deal with the tide of inquiries. At the same time, delegates collected allegations of arrests which were then brought to the
attention of the authorities. The ICRC repeatedly made known its readiness to assist the parties in shedding light on the fate of people who were being sought.

The ICRC Red Cross message network played an essential part in this search. During the crisis that befell Grozny in August, for example, it immediately enabled people to communicate with relatives from whom they had been separated. In the last few weeks of 1996, the number of messages dropped slightly as the situation stabilized. They were collected and distributed mostly by ICRC teams, although the local Chechen committee of the Russian Red Cross had begun to take part in this activity in Grozny. The service was also regularly provided to detainees visited by ICRC delegates. The Red Cross message network was suspended after 17 December.

With a view to promoting knowledge of and compliance with international humanitarian law, delegates maintained contact with the military and political authorities in Moscow and the Federal military command and armed forces in the northern Caucasus, as well as with the Chechen authorities and the Chechen separatists.

At the beginning of the year the Federal forces gave their consent for the ICRC to carry out dissemination activities for troops stationed in the northern Caucasus. Delegates held formal teaching sessions on humanitarian law in barracks mainly outside the conflict area. They also gave presentations on the ICRC's work in order to improve contacts with the troops in the field both in Chechnya and elsewhere. Furthermore, an information campaign was launched in the media in the northern Caucasus, including radio broadcasts and articles and interviews in both the military and civilian press. Crossword puzzles and a quiz on humanitarian law and the history of humanitarian action were also used as dissemination tools. A new publication was produced with the aim of introducing young Russian soldiers to the basics of humanitarian law and the ICRC's work through a series of drawings by well-known cartoonists. Contacts with Chechen fighters started out on an informal basis and took place in the course of the delegates' fieldwork or through the local council of elders. Other projects included a study on Chechen customary law, which enabled a folk song encouraging respect for prisoners and civilians to be composed. A traditional play, to be performed in the villages to audiences of civilians and fighters, was being prepared at the time of the ICRC's withdrawal.

Throughout the year the ICRC regularly assisted a number of health centres treating the war-wounded, including mine casualties, in the Republic of Chechnya, and extended this aid to other facilities as needed. It took the form of medicines, medical supplies and equipment, as well as repairs and emergency rehabilitation work. Elsewhere, one-off emergency aid was given to the Kizlyar hospital in Daghestan which was partly destroyed in the hostage-
taking earlier in the year, and to the republican hospital in Nalchik following admission of 37 people who had been wounded in an explosion in June.

After the cease-fire in August, the ICRC again took stock of the situation. As the new Chechen health authorities were having great difficulty in providing medical supplies, the organization had to step up its assistance to health facilities. In Grozny, all the hospitals had been destroyed or badly damaged during the fighting. Following a survey of the city’s medical facilities, the ICRC worked to rehabilitate Hospital No. 9, enabling the surgical ward to resume functioning in mid-October, and to refurbish the Hospital No. 4 maternity ward. Hostilities flared up again several times, preventing plans for rehabilitating the blood transfusion centre and the prosthetic workshop in Grozny from being carried out. However, work on the blood transfusion centre had started by the end of the year and the other two projects already under way were being continued, despite the tragic events of 17 December.

At the beginning of September, the ICRC opened its own independent hospital in Novye Atagi, 20 kilometres south of Grozny, to provide the specialized surgical care urgently needed for the war-wounded. In so doing, it intended to ensure equal access to this type of care for combatants on both sides. Furthermore, it wished to demonstrate the principle of neutrality of medical facilities in a conflict zone. Donated and supported by the Norwegian government and National Society, the field hospital started work on 2 September with two surgical teams. Most of the operations performed there consisted in corrective surgery for patients whose wounds could not be adequately treated while fighting was under way and only a minimum of medical materials and medicines were available. The patients also included mine victims and people who had been hit by stray bullets. After the murderous incident of 17 December, responsibility for the facility was handed over to the Ministry of Health, and local ICRC staff cared for the remaining patients.

The conflict had disastrous effects on public utilities in many localities, leaving the population without drinking water, electricity and proper sanitation for prolonged periods. As in the previous year, in some parts of Grozny people relied entirely on the ICRC to provide water. In August key supply facilities were damaged in the fighting, leaving only one water pumping station serviceable (one of the two that had been set up by the ICRC in 1995). The organization’s engineers significantly raised its production capacity. From September to mid-October, the ICRC was the main provider of safe drinking water for the whole of Grozny. After 17 December the pumping station was operated by local staff.

Towards the end of the year, the greatest risk for the population of Grozny stemmed from the enormous amount of waste water and sewage that had accumulated since August. The drainage system was completely clogged,
leaving pumping stations unable to function and causing sewers to overflow. ICRC engineers set about clearing and repairing the city’s 13 pumping stations, enabling sewage water to be evacuated from the basements of residential buildings at a rate of 300 cubic metres per day. The operation was discontinued after 17 December.

Villages in the south and east of Chechnya, such as Sernovodsk and Samashki which were badly shelled in March, also benefited from water

IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- visited some 200 people detained in 25 places of detention in connection with the conflict in the Republic of Chechnya and the conflict between North Ossetians and Ingush.
- enabled civilians and detainees to exchange more than 23,000 messages with their families.
- in all, provided more than 3,000 tonnes of relief supplies to 400,000 people;
- at the beginning of the year, distributed winter clothes to 47,000 displaced people in Dagestan and Ingushetia;
- throughout the year, extended its community kitchen programme in cooperation with the local Red Cross branch to 13 kitchens in Grozny, 3 in Gudermes and 1 in Argun, providing more than 7,000 meals each day;
- by supporting the local Red Cross committee’s home-care programme, mainly in Grozny but also in Argun, Gudermes, Shali and Urus Martan, provided meals to some 700 bedridden elderly people;
- provided food and other supplies to 10 institutions caring for psychiatric and disabled patients and orphans;
- after the fighting in August, regularly provided 20,000 vulnerable people in Grozny, Argun and Gudermes with food parcels and wheat flour, blankets and plastic sheeting;
- distributed food, blankets, hygiene kits and plastic sheeting to repair windows and roofs to 35,000 villagers in southern Chechnya;
- supplied books and writing and knitting materials, etc., to 70,000 schoolchildren in Chechnya (Grozny, Argun and Gudermes), Dagestan and Ingushetia, as well as school snacks to some 20,000 children in Grozny;
- helped to rebuild or repair schools and distributed cement and plastic sheeting, plus 430 stoves enabling classrooms to be heated;
- distributed some 25,000 sets of winter clothes for children to families in the northern Caucasus.

- assisted, in all, more than 50 medical facilities in the republics of Chechnya and Dagestan, of which more than 20 received regular assistance;
- in Grozny, carried out repairs to Hospital No. 9, nearly completed refurbishment of the Hospital No. 4 maternity ward;
- opened the Novye Atagi field hospital, where expatriate and local staff treated 321 in-patients, performed nearly 600 surgical operations and gave more than 1,700 out-patient consultations;
- supported the visiting nurses programme run by the local branch of the Russian Red Cross in the republics of Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia, which provided medical care for 700 elderly and bedridden people at home.

- in all, produced 230 million litres of safe drinking water in ICRC water pumping stations and distributed
distribution operations and the rehabilitation of pumping stations. Various projects were carried out in Gudermes and Khasavyurt to improve the water and sanitation infrastructure. Once rehabilitation of the main pumping station in Khasavyurt had been completed, responsibility for running it was handed over to the authorities.

Until the cease-fire was reached in August, the ICRC responded to successive emergencies arising from military operations in Chechnya. Each

- 135 million litres by ICRC trucks in the northern Caucasus;
- in Grozny (January to November) produced 132,000 cu.m of chlorinated water and distributed 58,000 cu.m to hospitals and suburbs;
- in Gudermes (May to September) 8 ICRC water trucks distributed 16,000 cu.m and engineers set up a water pumping station;
- in Sernovodsk (March to July) produced 10,000 cu. m and distributed 7,000 cu. m, and Samashki (April to December) produced 72,000 cu. m and distributed 53,000 cu. m;
- in Engel-Yurt and Novogroznensky, kept the hospital supplied with water;
- After the cease-fire in August, provided 1 million litres of chlorinated water daily, of which ICRC trucks transported some 400,000 litres to storage tanks at 57 distribution points throughout the city (the remainder was distributed by other organizations and private vehicles);
- launched a major waste evacuation operation to get the sewage system in Grozny, including 13 pumping stations, working again;
- continued to provide daily supplies of clean water to four schools and a hospital in Gudermes and Samashki.
- throughout the year, carried out activities including latrine-building, water deliveries, reconnection to main water and power supply networks, disinfection and waste management in 30 collective centres housing some 4,700 displaced people in Khasavyurt;
- repaired the main pumping station in Khasavyurt (capacity: 120,000 cu. m per day), and in September started a water project to rehabilitate spring catchments for 7,000 inhabitants of the Anoli and Gogath villages near the Chechen border.

- organized a training course for tracing staff of Russian Red Cross branches in the northern Caucasus, and provided office equipment, stationery etc.;
- supported medical and social welfare programmes of the local branches of the Russian Red Cross in Chechnya and 4 neighbouring republics, and launched a relief project benefiting some 10,000 vulnerable families in Ingushetia and North Ossetia.

- organized over 50 presentations on humanitarian law and the work of the ICRC for more than 4,500 Federal troops stationed in the northern Caucasus, and 4 two-day training seminars for 180 army instructors;
- distributed to soldiers thousands of first-aid kits containing leaflets on the basic rules of behaviour in combat;
- in 3 radio spots, which were broadcast three times a day for two months on Radio Grozny and once a month on International Radio Liberty, advocated humane behaviour in combat;
- throughout the year, published articles on the ICRC, the law of war and the operation in the northern Caucasus in four military journals.
assistance to the displaced and those who stayed behind

crisis set tens of thousands people on the move, either within Chechnya or to the neighbouring republics. Basic food and other relief supplies were provided for the displaced, as well as those who chose to stay behind. As a result of the battle for Grozny alone, from mid-August to mid-September the ICRC assisted more than 160,000 people. In villages in southern Chechnya which were cut off during the hostilities in the summer, assistance was distributed to selected beneficiaries in close cooperation with the local secular and religious authorities.

After the fighting stopped, the ICRC regularly carried out distributions for vulnerable people in Grozny, Argun and Gudermes, in cooperation with the local Russian Red Cross committees. In the republics of Daghestan and Ingushetia, it continued to provide assistance to those who had been displaced. An assistance programme was launched both there and in Chechnya with the aim of enabling poor families to send their children to school.

Throughout the year the ICRC regularly supported community kitchens and opened additional ones. It also assisted medical and social institutions and supported welfare activities, mainly home-care and visiting nurses programmes, of the local branches of the Russian Red Cross in the five republics of the northern Caucasus. Under these programmes, nurses employed by these local committees provided medical care and distributed hot meals. In March, together with the local Russian Red Cross branches in Ingushetia and North Ossetia, the ICRC initiated a project aimed at assisting vulnerable families (1-2 per cent of the population) with food and other supplies. This included training the local branches’ senior staff and involving them in selecting the beneficiaries.
The Caucasus
ARMENIA/ AZERBAIJAN

Even as the cease-fire that ended hostilities over the Nagorny Karabakh issue entered its third year, hardly a week went by without skirmishes along the front lines. Another six rounds of negotiations held under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk group did not bring the parties closer to a definitive settlement. The Lachin corridor and other territories continued to be disputed. What remained indisputable was the sad legacy of the six-year conflict — the approximately one million people who had been uprooted. Some 350,000 refugees from Azerbaijan (including 40,000 from Nagorny Karabakh) were living in Armenia, while Azerbaijan had about half a million internally displaced people and nearly 170,000 refugees from Armenia. This bleak picture was aggravated by severe economic problems, and in some cases internal political tensions. Poverty remained a fact of life for many.

In May, the second anniversary of the cease-fire at last saw the release under ICRC supervision of 109 detainees it had been visiting in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh; the last detainee visited in this context was freed in September. Russian mediators worked together with the organization to secure this trilateral release, and the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, who was present at the transfer of the detainees, played an active role throughout the operation. However, for the ICRC the chapter was not yet closed as people were still being detained in the region as a result of the conflict. It therefore kept up its efforts to gain access to them and obtain their release. Besides not allowing the ICRC to have access to all categories of detainees and places of detention, the authorities failed to notify the organization systematically of new arrests. Limited but regular assistance in the form of basic food rations was necessary, and medical care for the prison population required significant improvement.
Many families were still looking for relatives who had remained unaccounted for since the renewed flare-up of fighting in December 1993 and May 1994, and even earlier phases of the conflict. By the end of 1996 delegates had collected a total of over 2,500 tracing requests. In submitting some specific requests to the Armenian, Azeri and Karabakhi authorities, the ICRC made a renewed effort to remind them of their obligation under humanitarian law to help ascertain the fate of all those still missing. However, by the end of the year it had still not received any replies that might help shed light on these cases.

As during the years of conflict, Red Cross messages were the only means of communication between detainees and their families, and often also for relatives who had been separated by the hostilities.

In November an ICRC legal delegate conducted a mission to Baku and Yerevan to discuss implementation of humanitarian law at national level with representatives of government and parliament. In Armenia and Azerbaijan legal experts were recruited to study the national law so as to facilitate the incorporation of humanitarian law.

As key contributors to the implementation, development and interpretation of humanitarian law, university lecturers and students remained a priority audience. The ICRC fostered contacts with a view to introducing lectures on humanitarian law at university level, and ultimately having humanitarian law incorporated into the curricula of leading academic institutions as part of such subjects as law, medicine and journalism. University libraries were stocked with reference works on the subject. Delegates gave presentations at Baku State University, and lecturers from Baku and Yerevan universities attended the first ICRC training course on humanitarian law held in Moscow in August.

Printed and illustrated dissemination materials in the local languages were distributed regularly and more specialized publications on humanitarian law were made available in Russian, thanks to the extensive multilingual publications programme run by the regional delegation in Moscow. To choose the design of a calendar for 1997, the Baku delegation, together with the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan, organized a contest for artists and photographers. The winning entry was a modern painting. In designing their calendar, the Yerevan delegation opted for the use of traditional proverbs to show the similarity of customary Armenian law and humanitarian law.

The schools programme\(^1\) went into a test run in spring 1996 which involved the launching of 3,000 copies of a textboot. The final version for all fifth-form students of Armenia’s and Azerbaijan’s secondary schools was completed and went into print. The programme was extended to Nagorny Karabakh, where

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\(^1\) See *Moscow regional delegation*, p. 196.
some 3,000 textbooks and teacher's manuals were distributed to fourth-form students and their instructors, together with notepads and pencils.

A first-aid training programme for both Armenian Red Cross and Azeri Red Crescent volunteers was in progress in eight front-line districts, as part of the ICRC/American Red Cross delegated project in these areas. The regional branches of the Armenian Red Cross Society and the Red Crescent of Azerbaijan took part in the ICRC's relief work, for example by providing lists of beneficiaries when distributions to vulnerable and displaced people were carried out. Training and material and financial assistance were given to the National Society services in charge of dissemination and the restoration of family links.

In Armenia, the ICRC received authorization in January to visit all persons held in places of detention under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior and of the State National Security Agency. In the course of their visits, delegates identified some 40 people coming within the ICRC's purview although they were not detained in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. In mid-August delegates visited 15 newly arrested Kurdish detainees; visits continued throughout the year. Following the arrest of dozens of people in the aftermath of the Armenian presidential elections in September and the ensuing disturbances, the ICRC extended its protection to these new detainees.

The organization continued to seek permission from the various government ministries responsible for armed units, particularly those stationed near the front line, to instruct officers and other ranks in the law of war. However, the Ministry of Defence merely authorized a first-aid course for soldiers.

The ICRC's medical activities in Armenia focused on the detainee population. As elsewhere in the region, tuberculosis was spreading, and particularly in prisons. The ICRC intended to set up a tuberculosis treatment centre, in cooperation with the authorities, along the lines of the programme it was running in Baku.

An ICRC engineer began a survey of water and sanitation facilities in the four regions of Armenia where the American Red Cross was carrying out a relief project under ICRC responsibility, so as to launch a rehabilitation programme in the villages where needs were most urgent.

The ICRC project carried out by the American Red Cross in cooperation with the Armenian Red Cross went into its third year. For the inhabitants of 17 villages situated within five kilometres of the border with Azerbaijan, life had still not returned to normal: sporadic exchanges of artillery fire and mine-ridden fields prevented agricultural work from resuming full-scale. Despite regular relief distributions to some 9,000 families, a survey conducted in May showed that the food situation was still critical. The ICRC therefore concentrated on reviving agricultural activity and restoring a degree of self-
sufficiency to the population by providing seed potatoes and wheat grain for sowing, supplemented by distributions of some staple foods.

Special assistance was given to impoverished families with children, including clothes and writing materials enabling them to go to school through the winter.

In Azerbaijan, delegates resumed visits in July to a detention camp in Baku, where they registered and followed up the cases of 12 people of Armenian origin. As the ICRC did not succeed in gaining access to security detainees held in connection with the internal situation in the country, intensive negotiations continued with the government ministries concerned. However, no result had been obtained at the end of the year.

Delegates kept a close watch on the situation in the Baku region, where there were still vulnerable minority groups. Whenever cases of discrimination and harassment were brought to their attention, delegates did their best to prevail over the authorities to put an end to such practices. By so doing, they were able, for example, to help people to obtain official identity papers and pensions. When protection efforts failed, the ICRC arranged transport and repatriations for people wishing to move to other countries in the region.

The ICRC’s mine-awareness work started in Azerbaijan at the beginning of the year. The aim was to help the population, including displaced people who had just returned home, to cope with the dangers involved in living in heavily mined areas such as the Fizuli district. The ICRC’s prosthetic/orthotic programme for war amputees, many of whom are landmine casualties, served to illustrate the risks people run in such circumstances. In addition, information leaflets on the danger of landmines were included in seed kits and relief parcels and distributed to people in front-line areas. These first initiatives were bolstered in the autumn by a project delegated to the Swedish Red Cross that enabled a coordinated campaign to be organized in the eight front-line districts where the ICRC was working.

Contact was maintained with the various Azeri government ministries responsible for armed units, especially those stationed near the front line, with the aim of obtaining permission to instruct all levels of the armed forces in the law of war. Dissemination sessions were frequently organized for units under the jurisdiction of the Ministries of the Interior and Defence, and for the border guards under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Security. At the end of November the Minister of Defence accepted the ICRC's request to name a liaison officer in each front-line district in order to facilitate dissemination work there.

The ICRC monitored medical facilities treating people injured during hostilities; there was a noticeable decline in the incidence of such injuries. It provided ad hoc medical assistance to five hospitals when needs were not met by the authorities.
The ICRC kept up its tuberculosis treatment programme in a prison hospital run by the Ministry of Justice in Baku. Apart from providing treatment for 120 prisoners, the intention was to show how the disease may be tackled effectively. One of the difficulties was that the disease was proving increasingly resistant to conventional treatments. The organization spared no effort to make medical and political decision-makers aware of the extent of the problem and their responsibility in dealing with it.

Work at the ICRC prosthetic/orthotic centre for war amputees, run in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population in Baku was well under way, enabling people who had lost a limb as a result of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict to be fitted with artificial limbs reasonably rapidly (the number of war amputees in Azerbaijan was estimated at well over 500). An officially recognized diploma course was prepared for the 24 local employees, who had so far only received on-the-job training.

In Azerbaijan's southern front-line district of Fizuli, many wells had been destroyed. Together with local technicians, the ICRC rehabilitated wells by putting in new water pumps and restoring the electricity supply. This meant renewed access to drinking water for some 20,000 displaced people and local residents.

The ICRC delegated to the American Red Cross its relief project for vulnerable people (including the disabled, elderly people without family, war widows and destitute people) in the eight front-line districts bordering Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh. Together with the local branch of the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan, the American Red Cross, based at the ICRC's sub-delegation in Barda, carried out distributions of family parcels and bulk food every two months.

The ICRC, for its part, concentrated its assistance (including food, blankets, candles, used clothes and soap) on some 3,000 displaced families in the Fizuli district, which remained a potential conflict zone. It also provided vegetable seed and gardening tools, together with information leaflets on the dangers of landmines, to vulnerable local families.

To help along agricultural rehabilitation and stimulate the local economy, the ICRC distributed wheat grain for sowing to some 30 private or semi-private local farms in the Fizuli district at the end of 1996. The objective was to redistribute the resulting yield in the form of flour to the ICRC's beneficiaries in the region the following summer.

To enable poor families in the four northern front-line districts and the Fizuli district to send their children to school, it also provided warm clothes and shoes. In addition, it surveyed existing school buildings with a view to repairing or rebuilding them.
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- visited 212 detainees held for conflict-related and security reasons in 38 places of detention, and supervised the release of 110 detainees.

- organized the exchange of 5,500 Red Cross messages between detainees and their families and between relatives separated by conflict.

- in Armenia, supported the relief project for some 8,000 families living along the north-eastern border with Azerbaijan, carried out by the American Red Cross under ICRC responsibility;

- in Nagorny Karabakh, carried out the "Teamwork" programme aimed at restoring self-sufficiency to some 3,000 families living in 30 villages in the districts most affected by the conflict (Hadrut and Martakert);

- in the front-line districts in Azerbaijan, supported the delegated project carried out by the American Red Cross for some 40,000 vulnerable people by providing some 1,000 tonnes of food and nearly 70 tonnes of other supplies;

- in the Fizuli district, distributed 453.5 tonnes of bulk food, 3.2 tonnes of soap and 5 tonnes of detergent to some 3,000 displaced people and vulnerable residents; as well as 185 tonnes of seed and 1,992 seed kits;

- enabled some 2,000 children in the Fizuli district to go to school by providing writing materials, clothes and shoes.

- provided medical supplies for 14 hospitals treating the war-wounded in Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh, and medicines and essential supplies for 15 civilian dispensaries in Nagorny Karabakh;

- ran a programme providing treatment for 120 tuberculosis patients at the prison hospital under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice in Baku.

- in cooperation with the Azeri Ministry for Labour and Social Protection, produced 432 artificial limbs for war amputees and manufactured 189 pairs of crutches;

- provided treatment for 35 war casualties flown in from Tajikistan to the prosthetic/orthotic centre in Baku.

- rehabilitated 13 wells in the Fizuli district (Azerbaijan) and in Nagorny Karabakh, thereby providing renewed access to safe drinking water for people living in villages near the front lines.

- organized national seminars on the implementation of humanitarian law in Baku and Yerevan in May, with the participation of UNESCO;

- conducted a dissemination/first-aid programme for some 420 soldiers in Armenia;

- in Azerbaijan, organized a seminar for 35 instructors of the Ministry of Defence and two of the Ministry of the Interior, as well as 28 presentations on international humanitarian law for over 3,700 military personnel.
In Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC continued to visit persons detained as a result of the conflict. In the months following the release operation in May, delegates obtained access to some new detainees.

Both military and civilian medical services in the region were still facing severe shortages of medicines and basic medical supplies. The ICRC assisted medical facilities run by the Ministry of Defence in front-line districts where victims of mine explosions and sniper fire, and other war casualties were treated. In the regions where it was carrying out relief and sanitation work, it continued to provide medicines and essential supplies to civilian dispensaries.

For the second year running, the scant rainfall threatened to leave Nagorny Karabakh parched and unproductive. Water was urgently needed not only for drinking, but also to irrigate the many vegetable gardens, which are a substantial source of food for the population (in Martakert, for example, almost all of the town’s 3,000 inhabitants grow their own vegetables). ICRC water and sanitation engineers managed to put a number of wells back into service with the help of local workmen.

Based on a combination of food distributions, agricultural projects, construction aid and water and sanitation measures, the “Teamwork” programme in Nagorny Karabakh was designed to help villagers in the particularly hard-hit north-eastern and southern districts of Hadrut and Martakert to become self-supporting again. While seed distributions were the mainstay of this operation, food was also supplied to tide families over until the next harvest. Some construction materials were provided for people without adequate shelter, mainly returnees. Although the overall situation in the assisted villages improved, in most of them the drought prevented the kind of harvest needed to regain self-sufficiency. The ICRC immediately reacted by distributing grain for winter sowing to avoid any impact of the drought on next year’s harvest.
Politically speaking, 1996 was one of the calmest years since Georgia obtained independence five years earlier. As a result, international aid declined for people displaced from southern Abkhazia to Mingrelia (western Georgia) in connection with the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. This population continued to add to the country's already considerable economic problems: for the third year running, the supply of gas and electricity was highly unreliable; unemployment soared; most medical services were no longer free of charge and therefore beyond the means of most people; and the price of bread and other basic commodities more than doubled.

Georgia and South Ossetia erased the last traces of the hostilities of 1991/92 by signing a Memorandum of Understanding on security and confidence-building measures in May.

The status of Abkhazia remained unsettled, and the economic embargo continued. Rampant crime and all manner of violence, including anti-tank mine explosions, posed a serious threat, especially in Gali and Ochamchira in southern Abkhazia. On several occasions the ICRC and other organizations had to suspend field activities there. However, towards the end of the year the ICRC opened an office in Gali with a view to offering increased protection for threatened minorities. In the last quarter, elections (declared illegal by the Georgian authorities and not recognized by the international community) were held in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. During the election period, tension increased and security incidents became more frequent in the Gali region, while unrest grew among the displaced population in western Georgia. However, once the elections were over, formal Georgian-Abkhaz peace talks resumed in December, centering on the return of refugees and displaced people to the Gali region and alleviation of economic sanctions. No tangible results had been achieved by the end of the year. The mandate of the CIS peace-keeping forces along the Inguri river was extended until January 1997.
The ICRC's protection activities for detainees progressed significantly. Efforts to persuade the authorities in Georgia to grant delegates unrestricted access to all detainees in all places of detention, including security detainees still under interrogation, at last paid off. Support from the highest quarters in the form of an official decree signed by the Georgian President in October enabled delegates to conduct their visits in accordance with customary ICRC practice. In a letter to him, the ICRC President expressed the organization's satisfaction with this step, which is expected not only to facilitate protection activities in Georgia but also to serve as an example for other CIS countries to follow suit. During the last quarter, with the consent of the authorities concerned, the ICRC started to arrange for detainees on both sides to be visited by their families. A first visit took place across the front lines in December. Delegates also helped to transmit family parcels to the detainees. In Abkhazia, the ICRC continued to visit persons detained in connection with the conflict.

Hostage-taking was unfortunately still common practice. On several occasions, delegates visited and registered people held as hostages on both the Georgian and Abkhaz sides. The ICRC did what it could to obtain the release of any hostages taken in connection with the conflict. At the same time, it endeavoured to obtain the cooperation of the authorities on both sides in dissuading hostage-takers from pursuing this practice, which is contrary to international humanitarian law and seriously hindered any efforts to resolve the deadlocked situation.

The situation of non-Abkhaz minorities, mainly elderly and isolated Georgians and Russians, was a source of deep concern. Many of them suffered discrimination and even physical violence. Delegates continued to collect and pass on to the Abkhaz authorities allegations of harassment and abuse of such groups. Through its relief programmes for them, the ICRC was able to monitor their conditions at close quarters. However, official pledges made by the authorities to enforce law and order were not always followed by effective action. Although some progress was made on that score in northern Abkhazia, the situation in the south remained worrying, as flaring tensions resulted in frequent security incidents. As in previous years, in cases where people were compelled to give up their homes, the ICRC helped them at their request to join relatives in Russia and Georgia.

In the absence of postal services out of Abkhazia, the ICRC kept up its extensive Red Cross message network. The number of messages exchanged declined somewhat, mainly because of increased mobility of the population and the restoration of some telephone lines. Family reunifications dropped by half, as people were finding it easier to cross the front line. However, the ICRC's protection was still much needed for people who were transferred for security
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- conducted visits to some 240 detainees, including about 160 newly registered people, in 18 places of detention in Georgia;
- carried out visits to some 60 detainees in Abkhazia, including about 50 newly registered people, in 10 places of detention.

- forwarded about 89,000 Red Cross messages and organized some 70 family reunifications;
- in December, organized a training seminar for the Ajarian branch of the Georgian Red Cross on activities related to the restoration of family links.

- distributed food parcels, plus 5-10 kg of flour per parcel, to some 70,000 beneficiaries in the towns of Gali, Tkvarcheli, Ochamchira, Gudauta, Gagra and Sukhumi and in rural areas;
- in the summer, provided 51,500 food preservation kits composed of sugar, oil and jar lids;
- distributed 44,764 blankets, 147,242 candles and 35.5 tonnes of wool for winter 1996/97;
- supported 20 community kitchens run by the local administration (seven kitchens were newly opened and equipped with mobile units), daily providing some 7,000 people with a hot meal comprising 2,200 calories;

- supplied 7,900 family parcels and 2,180 individual parcels to 17 of the community kitchens;
- distributed seed and fertilizer to 10 collective farms with a view to purchasing part of the harvest and using it to supply the canteens;
- provided family parcels to be distributed monthly under the Red Cross home care programme to 350 elderly and bedridden patients in Sukhumi town.

- assisted 8 health facilities treating the war-wounded in western Georgia and Abkhazia, enabling some 560 patients to be treated;
- assisted two polyclinics and a dispensary in the Sukhumi district by providing medical supplies and fuel making it possible for polyclinic staff to conduct home visits, enabling some 10,500 consultations to be carried out each quarter.

- in May, organized a national seminar in Tbilisi, with the participation of UNESCO, on implementation of humanitarian law;
- regularly gave presentations on humanitarian law for Georgian, Abkhaz and Russian troops stationed on the front lines;
- in December, organized a three-day seminar for cadets at the Military Academy in Tbilisi;
- took part in a 13-hour course on humanitarian law held at the Diplomatic Academy in Tbilisi;
- under the schools programme, distributed more than 63,000 textbooks for sixth-form pupils and handbooks for teachers, mobilizing ICRC trucks to deliver the books to the remotest mountain areas, and held information seminars for teacher trainers in 72 regions;
- produced 10,000 pocket calendars for Abkhazia containing references to humanitarian principles in the local culture and 2,000 similar table calendars for Georgia for distribution to a wide-ranging audience;
- produced video clips on the schools programme and on the prosthetic/orthotic centre in order to heighten the interest of the local media in Red Cross activities.
reasons and could not cross without risk to themselves. Cooperation was initiated with the Georgian Red Cross tracing service, the head of which took part in the regional workshop organized by the Moscow delegation.\(^2\)

Training Georgian, Abkhaz and Russian troops stationed on the front lines in the basics of international humanitarian law remained a priority for the delegates based in Tbilisi and Sukhumi. Workshops were also organized to enhance the communication skills of local and expatriate delegates, enabling them to carry out their protection activities for the civilian population in Abkhazia more effectively.

On another level, contacts with the Georgian Ministry of Defence were pursued with a view to obtaining more systematic instruction in humanitarian law, and ultimately making it an integral part of military training. The head of legal services of the Georgian Ministry of Defence took part in the seminar on the law of war organized by the ICRC in Moscow and became the delegation’s liaison officer. He prepared a training programme for the Georgian armed forces and supervised translation of the instructor’s teaching file into Georgian.

As the pilot phase had been completed, the schools programme\(^3\) carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Education got into full swing. The Abkhaz authorities were approached with a view to obtaining their agreement for the programme to be launched in Abkhazia.

The ICRC pursued its efforts to see international humanitarian law included in the curriculum of the University of Tbilisi and the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Talks on humanitarian law were given for university students and lecturers, and university libraries were stocked with reference literature. Cooperation went on with the Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association, which was involved in translating texts on humanitarian law into Georgian. Two members of the University of Tbilisi international law and relations department attended the first Russian-language ICRC training course on humanitarian law in Moscow, and the ICRC subsequently sponsored the participation of another two members in similar courses in Spa, Belgium.

In November an ICRC representative went on a mission to Georgia for discussions with government authorities and representatives of university circles to promote the implementation of humanitarian law. The Minister for Foreign Affairs had begun preparations for an interministerial committee to be set up, and a legal expert from the University of Tbilisi was recruited to carry out a study of Georgian national legislation with a view to facilitating the incorporation of humanitarian law.

The ICRC assisted hospitals treating the war-wounded in western Georgia and Abkhazia, where health facilities still relied mostly on international aid;

\(^2\) See Moscow regional delegation, p. 197.

\(^3\) See Moscow regional delegation, p. 196.
however, it was often difficult to distinguish war wounds from injuries received in a shoot-out (wounded people in the Gali region were transferred to Zugdidi hospitals, in western Georgia, by UNOMIG*). The ICRC also supported medical facilities which organize home care for elderly and disabled people.

The ICRC and the health authorities renewed their cooperation agreement for the two prosthetic/orthotic projects in Tbilisi and Gagra (Abkhazia). The workshops provided artificial limbs free of charge for all amputees in Georgia and Abkhazia, without discrimination. A meeting was held in Tbilisi in October to prepare a three-year training course for local staff employed in the ICRC's prosthetic/orthotic projects in the southern Caucasus.

The ICRC's relief programmes remained focused on Abkhazia, where the regional economy was still paralysed. The entire population was affected, but the hardest-hit were elderly people living in urban areas where they could not grow food for themselves. Most of them were Russian pensioners who had moved to Abkhazia for the warm climate and had no support from relatives abroad. In February, the Russian-Georgian border and the port of Sukhumi were officially closed by presidential decree, and all imports of humanitarian goods became subject to approval by the Georgian government. However, the decrees were not systematically enforced. In October/November the flow of relief goods was interrupted owing to the closure of the bridge between Georgia and Abkhazia before parliamentary elections in the region. Thanks to its permanent contingency stock in Abkhazia, which contains enough supplies for two months, the ICRC did not have to cancel any distributions.

Support was continued for community kitchens run by the local administration and Red Cross. The beneficiaries included elderly people, invalids and families with many children, as well as war veterans and jobless people, most of whom were Russian, followed by Armenians, Georgians, Estonians and Greeks. For 60 per cent of the beneficiaries the canteens were the main or only source of daily nourishment. In cooperation with the local authorities, the ICRC put particular emphasis on improving the quality and the nutritional value of the meals served. With the twofold aim of supplying the community kitchens with fresh products and supporting the local economy, it provided farms in the area with seed and farming implements; in exchange, it received part of the harvest.

The organization continued to keep an eye on the situation of displaced people in the Zugdidi and Tsalenjika districts where assistance from other organizations was being phased out, and the situation of civilians in South Ossetia, where it was cooperating closely with Caritas Denmark. The central contingency stock of relief supplies for ICRC emergency operations throughout the Caucasus was maintained in Tbilisi.

* UNOMIG: United Nations Monitoring and Observation Mission in Georgia
Central Asia

TAJIKISTAN

The year 1996 saw a flare-up of the internal armed conflict between government and opposition, despite several extensions of the Tehran cease-fire (concluded in September 1994) and another round of inter-Tajik talks. In the second half of the year opposition forces made significant gains in mountainous central Tajikistan. In a sweeping advance which put them in full control of the middle and upper Garm valley and the Mionadu valley, they took the towns of Tajikabad, Dzhirgatal, Komsomolabad, Garm and Tavildara.

In December, after several postponements, a meeting of the Tajik President and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition finally took place. They signed an agreement aimed at establishing a joint national commission for reconciliation, with wide-ranging powers. However, tension remained high, and security incidents involving the kidnapping of UN observers occurred on the road leading east from Dushanbe, making it extremely difficult to transport urgently needed relief to people trapped in conflict zones. At the end of the year the ICRC was the only organization working in these opposition-held areas.

In northern Tajikistan, which is cut off by mountains from the rest of the country and was not directly involved in the conflict, discontent with the economic and political situation led to frequent demonstrations against the government throughout the year.

In view of the fast deteriorating situation, in May the Delegate General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia travelled to the region for discussions with the Tajik authorities. The ICRC subsequently decided to extend a permanent presence to Khorog and Garm. Despite the difficulty of access to the worst crisis spots, it significantly stepped up its assistance to medical facilities treating the war-wounded, striving as it did so to strike a balance between government-run facilities and those under opposition control. The ICRC had
been planning to assist displaced people in returning home from the autonomous region of Gorno-Badakhshan to the southern Hatlon Oblast, which they had fled during earlier phases of the conflict (1992/93). However, as the new hostilities drove more and more people from central Tajikistan to the Dushanbe area, to the west, and Gorno-Badakhshan to the east, taking care of the food needs of the thousands of newly displaced became the priority.

In early December the Delegate General returned to the country and visited the war-ravaged Tavildara region. As during his previous mission, he had contacts with representatives of other countries and international organizations and the Chairman of the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan. He again met the Tajik Minister for Foreign Affairs and other senior government officials, and both the government and the opposition co-chairmen of the Joint Commission established to monitor the Tehran cease-fire. Discussions centred on relief supplies for the displaced; the ICRC’s wish to have access to opposition-controlled zones in order to assist the population and visit detainees there; and the need for delegates to be allowed to interview detainees in private, in accordance with the organization’s customary procedures, in the course of visits to government prisons. Little progress was made on the last two points: while the ICRC’s relief effort was appreciated, its role as a neutral intermediary failed to gain acceptance.

Thus, despite long-running negotiations, the ICRC was still not able to obtain access to all detainees arrested in connection with the hostilities and the ensuing sporadic outbursts of violence that had affected Tajikistan since 1992. The ICRC also made regular approaches to the opposition, seeking permission to visit prisoners held by it; delegates were able to visit, register and assist about one hundred of them after renewed hostilities in the Garm valley in the autumn, and brought news of them to their families. However, several hundred captured government soldiers held in the Tavildara/Mionadu valley remained inaccessible although the opposition had agreed to ICRC visits.

The Joint Commission established to monitor the Tehran cease-fire continued to provide a forum for negotiations between government and opposition. In the Ashkhabad Protocol of 21 July, both parties agreed to release their prisoners simultaneously and specifically requested the ICRC to act as a neutral intermediary in the process. In August the government submitted a list of detainees to be released. However, at the end of the year the rest of the agreement had yet to be put into effect.

While in the south the OSCE was keeping a close watch on the situation of returnees, both internally displaced people who had fled to Gorno-Badakhshan and refugees coming back from Afghanistan, the ICRC focused on the conflict-stricken Tavildara and Garm regions. Protection work was made extremely difficult, and often impossible, as territories frequently changed
hands (as was the case with Tavildara no less than five times). Delegates were often approached by civilians who had suffered harassment and reprisals at the hands of soldiers or opposition fighters. They passed such allegations on to the local authorities, endeavouring to prevail on them to take action to prevent recurrences. As the threat of landmines became evident in the Tavildara region, the ICRC distributed information leaflets to alert the population, in particular internally displaced people returning to the area, to the danger.

For delegates to be able to do their work despite the hostilities, it was essential that combatants and civilians throughout the region should know and accept the ICRC. Earlier efforts to foster contact with commanders of the Tajik armed forces, Russian border guards stationed in the region and the Tajik opposition proved successful in this respect. Cooperation programmes were concluded with the Ministries of Defence and the Interior, paving the way for systematic dissemination of international humanitarian law and training of instructors. Unfortunately, contact in the combat zones was limited after May because of the intense fighting.

Cooperation with the Ministries of Defence and Education continued with a view to introducing humanitarian law into the curricula of military training academies and other higher educational institutions. An official of the Ministry of Defence took part in the ICRC’s week-long international seminar on humanitarian law held in Moscow in September. The delegation facilitated the setting up of a working group on implementation of humanitarian law at the advanced military academy of Tajikistan. Working contacts were established with the Tajik State University (the law and journalism faculties), the Institute of Management and Service and the Technical University.

The schools programme carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Education completed its pilot phase in Dushanbe. Revision of the teaching materials began with the intention of launching the programme on a large scale.

The renewed hostilities and poor economic conditions played havoc with the health situation in Tajikistan. In summer the World Health Organization had to intervene to control outbreaks of typhoid fever and malaria. Even harder hit than other health services, medical facilities catering for the population in conflict zones lacked staff and supplies. When it had access to these zones, the ICRC transported urgently needed medical materials provided by other humanitarian organizations. The organization, for its part, mostly gave aid to facilities treating the war-wounded. In the course of the year its health staff were increased to cover needs in the Garm area, Gorno-Badakhshan and central and southern Tajikistan, and to carry out the nutritional programme for prisoners. Contingency stocks set up in Garm enabled it to assist hospitals

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4 See Moscow regional delegation, p. 196.
treating wounded combatants from both sides, at a time when the hostilities would have made it difficult to bring in supplies from the outside.

Because of the disastrous state of the economy, the country's prison inmates were even worse off than the rest of the population. After an agreement had been signed with the authorities on 7 June, delegates conducted an in-depth survey during which alarming levels of malnutrition and mortality rates were observed. For humanitarian reasons the ICRC thereupon took the exceptional step of launching a nutritional programme in summer 1996 to ensure the survival of the prison population, mostly common-law offenders. This programme, accompanied by distributions of basic medicines and products for personal hygiene, improved conditions in some prisons. While seeing it through the emergency phase and carefully monitoring the situation, the ICRC constantly reminded the authorities of their duty to assume full responsibility for the health of prisoners in their custody.

ICRC relief assistance was given to some 30,000 people who had been displaced or otherwise affected by the hostilities. Some of the displaced were taken in by relatives, but most found only makeshift shelter in schools and mosques. Thanks to its local contingency stocks, the ICRC was rapidly able to begin distributing family parcels and additional flour in the accessible areas, to displaced people in Gorno-Badakhshan (Kalai Khum), southern Tajikistan (Khovaling and Kulyab), the Garm valley and Dushanbe. In September the first of several ICRC convoys carrying relief and medical supplies arrived in Tavildara, which had been cut off from humanitarian aid since May.

In a race against the onset of winter and the unpredictable military situation, which threatened to make remote areas inaccessible overnight, relief convoys continued to run. Winter stocks were set up in Khorog and Garm. As a result of hostilities, the Tavildara and Darwaz/Sagirdasht regions were again cut off as of November/December; however, distributions in the Garm valley continued. The ICRC stepped up its assistance in Dushanbe as displaced people poured into the capital from upper Darwaz, Tavildara and the lower Garm valley. Monthly assistance continued in the south.

The ICRC had to mobilize substantial human and logistical resources for its relief effort. As a result of the hostilities, convoys were unable to travel direct from Dushanbe to Khorog, but had to make a lengthy detour that involved weaving back and forth across the borders of neighbouring Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. They had to cover 2,500 kilometres at heights of up to 4,300 metres above sea-level, along extremely poor roads. Their progress was also hampered by numerous military checkpoints set up along the way by the government, the opposition and Russian border guards in charge of protecting Tajikistan's external border with countries outside the CIS.
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- visited 110 detainees held by the Tajik opposition and enabled them to exchange Red Cross messages with their families;
- under a nutritional rehabilitation programme launched in June for some 5,500 detainees in Tajik prisons, provided 240,000 vitamin tablets and essential medicines, plus 165 tonnes of wheat flour, 10.3 tonnes of oil, 112.7 tonnes of beans and rice, 2,196 food parcels, 113 tonnes of high-energy biscuits and milk, plus 1,347 pairs of shoes and 4,357 blankets.
- distributed relief assistance including 1,315.3 tonnes of food and 75.7 tonnes of other supplies, such as blankets, clothes, candles, soap, plastic sheeting, fuel and stoves, to some 30,000 people directly affected by the conflict.
- provided medical and surgical supplies to 8 hospitals and 6 first-aid facilities caring for government soldiers and opposition fighters;
- provided public health facilities for displaced people in 4 localities with medical supplies;
- evacuated 26 psychiatric patients from war-torn Tavildara;
- flew 35 war amputees out of Tajikistan to Baku to be fitted with artificial limbs at the ICRC's prosthetic/orthotic centre there.
- signed a new cooperation agreement with the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan in July and provided training and material assistance in the dissemination of humanitarian law and principles.
- gave 16 presentations on the law of war for officers and soldiers under the jurisdiction of the Ministries of Defence and the Interior and the presidential guards, and assisted in the drafting of training programmes on the same subject for future military instructors of the two Ministries;
- at the request of the Ministries of Defence and Education, prepared humanitarian law curricula for military secondary schools and for military faculties of 6 institutions of higher education;
- in October conducted a first seminar on humanitarian law for senior officers of the Ministry of Security (including Tajik border troops) and for instructors of the Ministry of Security training centre, and gave a presentation on ICRC activities in Tajikistan for more than 100 officials of the Ministry;
- in December organized an introductory seminar on humanitarian law for instructors of the international relations faculty of the Tajik Institute of Management and Service;
- helped prepare a course on humanitarian law which started in autumn 1996 for students at the faculty for military medicine of the Tajik State Medical University;
- published information about the rules for behaviour in combat and the ICRC's mandate in three journals of the Tajik armed forces, the Russian 201st Motor-Rifle Division and the Russian border guards stationed in Tajikistan;
- printed 22,000 booklets with basic information about the organization in both languages to be distributed at checkpoints; and produced video tapes and radio spots in Tajik and Russian and a Tajik language version of Red Cross and Red Crescent: Portrait of an international Movement;
- under the schools programme, supplied 5,000 textbooks and 300 manuals to pupils and teachers for a test run which was carried out during the year.
Although the four Central Asian republics covered by this regional delegation had to contend with economic and social problems they were not the scene of armed conflict. The delegation in Tashkent therefore focused on preventive activities. An essential aspect of its work was to secure the cooperation of the authorities in promoting knowledge of international humanitarian law, and to assist them in incorporating that law into national legislation. This process was initiated in 1995 in Tashkent with a joint ICRC/UNESCO regional seminar aimed at raising the awareness of the authorities of all five Central Asian republics (including Tajikistan) in this respect. In 1995 and 1996 several follow-up missions were conducted to foster contacts with the government ministries concerned and encourage them to take the necessary measures, such as setting up national committees to deal with the question of implementation. In Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, bills were being prepared with a view to forming such committees.

Maintaining contact with the authorities, especially in potential crisis spots, also served to prepare the ground for more direct ICRC action in the event of new developments.

Dissemination efforts were centred on the armed forces, with the priority of persuading them to make the law of war a compulsory subject in military training; Uzbekistan, for example, seconded a unit to the UN peace-keeping forces, and Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan provided troops for CIS peace-keeping forces in Central Asia in 1996. As in previous years, the delegation organized dissemination sessions in all four republics, ranging from introductory presentations for officers to training seminars for military instructors, mainly from the Ministries of Defence and the Interior. Some encouraging developments took place, especially in Turkmenistan, which became the first country in the former Soviet Union where the ICRC was able to combine humanitarian law and human rights law in its dissemination activities for the armed forces. In June, representatives of the Ministries of Defence of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan took part in the first course on humanitarian law organized by the ICRC delegation in Moscow for CIS member countries.

After studying the public education system in the four republics, the ICRC began work on introducing a schools programme\(^5\) to familiarize children with

\(^{5}\) See Moscow regional delegation, p. 196.
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- in June, held the second annual regional seminar in Issyk-Kul (Kyrgyzstan) for dissemination delegates of the five Central Asian National Societies (including the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan);
- in June and October, in cooperation with the National Society, showed a travelling exhibition on the theme War and Humanity to more than 5,000 visitors in Uzbekistan;
- supported the National Societies in producing their own dissemination material, including calendars for the Kyrgyz, Kazak and Turkmen National Societies, a brochure for the Kazak Society, and films helping the Kazak and Uzbek Societies to make known their activities in their countries;
- provided training and guidance for the restoration of family links and gave material assistance in the form of office equipment and salaries.

- in December, hosted a training and information seminar for legal specialists from Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan who had been entrusted with the task of studying their respective national legislation to facilitate implementation of humanitarian law;
- organized humanitarian law courses lasting two to three days for more than 150 senior army instructors of the Uzbek armed forces, 30 officers of the Turkmen Ministry of the Interior, 30 members of the Republican Guard of Kazakstan and 180 officers and soldiers of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Defence, National Guard and CIS peace-keeping battalion);
- held a five-day workshop on humanitarian law and human rights law for some 30 officers of the Turkmen Ministry of the Interior, with the aim of drafting a code of conduct for forces deployed by the Ministry of the Interior in situations of tension and internal strife;
- published 40 press articles and broadcast 34 radio and 9 TV spots on ICRC activities, humanitarian law and the campaign against landmines in all four countries covered by the delegation;
- produced an Uzbek adaptation of the film ICRC 1995 Retrospective which was shown on national TV during peak viewing hours, preceded by an interview with the head of delegation.
Red Cross and Red Crescent values and the basics of humanitarian law. A delegate was newly based in Tashkent exclusively to cover this programme. The first step consisted in selecting individuals from various backgrounds for the future national teams in charge of developing teaching materials. Several presentations were given at schools and after-school centres to take up contact with schoolchildren and teachers. The regional delegation also established links with academic circles and organized talks for university students and teachers, with a view to having humanitarian law included in the syllabus.

None of the four countries had yet signed the UN 1980 Convention prohibiting or restricting the use of certain conventional weapons. Through contact with the authorities and the media the Tashkent delegation made every effort to highlight the dire consequences resulting from the use of anti-personnel landmines and other exploding/lethal devices.

The ICRC supported the National Societies in developing and promoting their activities, especially those to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and restore family links, and helped them to gain a higher profile in their own country. The Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan played a very active part in showing the travelling ICRC exhibition *War and Humanity* in Tashkent, Samarkand and Namangan (Ferghana valley). It attracted considerable interest, particularly in the Ferghana valley bordering on Kyrgyzstan where the violent clashes that claimed hundreds of Kyrgyz and Uzbek lives in 1991 were still fresh in people’s memories.

The regional delegation networked with other organizations running similar or related programmes in the region. The regional delegate presented the ICRC’s mandate and activities at a regional seminar on the management of population movements organized by UNHCR in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) and at a seminar for Central Asian countries on human rights organized by the OSCE in Tashkent.
When violence breaks out in the autonomous territories, the "Palestinian Red Crescent Society" is on the alert, ready to evacuate the wounded and give them first aid before driving the seriously wounded to hospital. The ICRC supports the efforts both of the Israeli "Magen David Adom" and of the "Palestinian Red Crescent Society" to assist victims of the violence.
The Near East

ICRC delegations:
Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria

The Gulf

ICRC delegation:
Iraq

ICRC regional delegation:
Kuwait

North Africa

ICRC delegation:
Egypt

ICRC regional delegation:
Tunis

Staff

ICRC expatriates\(^1\): 67
National Societies\(^1\): 2
Local employees\(^2\): 356

Total expenditure
Sfr 34,108,878

Expenditure breakdown

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<td>Overheads</td>
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\(^1\) Average figures calculated on an annual basis.

\(^2\) Under ICRC contract, as at December 1996.
In 1996 the ICRC responded to a number of emergency situations in the Middle East: the Grapes of Wrath military operation in southern Lebanon in April; the violence in the Gaza Strip and West Bank in September; and the inter-party fighting in northern Iraq, also in September. In all these cases, the ICRC was able to react speedily and effectively thanks to its well-established networks of contacts and offices, built up over 30 years in the Gaza Strip, West Bank and southern Lebanon. In northern Iraq a goal over the last couple of years had been to create just this sort of network, and the fact that delegates were rapidly able to conduct visits to persons held by the parties, by means of direct contacts with the various factions involved, was a clear vindication of this approach.

The ICRC was able to count on the Lebanese Red Cross and the “Palestinian Red Crescent Society” in its emergency response. The LRC first-aiders proved invaluable in evacuating and treating the wounded, and the PRCS, which had been supported by the ICRC with technical back-up from the German Red Cross, carried out over 600 such evacuations. The ICRC intensified its contacts with the authorities which are so necessary to enable such activities to be carried out and publicly called on the parties involved to respect the fundamental rules and principles of humanitarian law.

Various long-term goals were accomplished in 1996. After years of patient efforts and contacts, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Bahraini authorities authorizing visits to prisoners arrested and detained for security reasons. In addition, a revised version of the previous Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestine Liberation Organization, acting “for the benefit of” the Palestinian Authority, was signed, following discussions held throughout the year. In both cases, visits to detainees started in the autumn. The ICRC was able to provide protection to detainees essentially because it respected the rule of confidentiality throughout the negotiations, demonstrating how a discreet and low-profile approach can bear fruit. Elsewhere in the region too, the ICRC visited security detainees on the basis of its right of humanitarian initiative, and maintained its medium- and long-term goal to gain access to such detainees in all Arab countries.

For a number of years, the ICRC had been approaching national armed forces with a view to organizing intensive courses on humanitarian law for military instructors. Significant progress was made in this regard, and representatives of Arab national armed forces attended such courses in Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Syria and the United Arab Emirates.

Regarding issues of long-standing concern to the ICRC, some favourable developments took place. Under the organization’s auspices, 66 Sahrawis held in Morocco were returned to their families in October. The ICRC hoped that this move represented progress towards finding an overall solution to the
humanitarian problems outstanding from the Western Sahara conflict. In December, also under the ICRC’s auspices, 722 Iraqi POWs were repatriated by Iran (in addition to the 150 repatriated in the ICRC’s presence in October). Nevertheless, the States party to the Geneva Conventions showed disappointingly little interest in the continued lack of any solution to a humanitarian problem which was covered by the Conventions: the thousands of POWs who should have been repatriated as far back as 1988, when the cease-fire was signed, and the tens of thousands of families still in the dark over the fate of their relatives.

A further source of disappointment for the ICRC was the negligible progress made in accounting for the hundreds of Kuwaiti, Saudi, Iraqi and other nationals missing after the Gulf war. In an effort to clarify their fate, over a period of two and a half years a total of nine Tripartite Commission meetings had been held regularly in Geneva, as well as 19 Technical Sub-Committee meetings on the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border. Despite this, far too few individual search files met with sufficient goodwill on the part of the authorities concerned to enable real solutions to be found.

With regard to Iraq, the ICRC welcomed the fact that agreement was finally reached on implementing UN Resolution 986. The measures provided for were expected to bring at least partial relief to the suffering of the Iraqi civilian population under sanctions, but by the end of the year no positive effects had yet been observed.

Following a year in which the situation in the occupied and autonomous territories had appeared to be more or less under control, in the second half of 1996 the ICRC became alarmed at the rising number of incidents between Palestinians and Israeli armed forces or settlers. The continuing presence and, indeed, the growing number of settlers living in the Gaza Strip and especially the West Bank — in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention — gave rise to tension as a result of the close proximity of Israeli and Palestinian communities and the presence of troops to protect the settlers.

The tragic situation in Algeria, with the ever-spiralling and sickening violence against civilians, prompted the ICRC to step up its efforts to intensify contacts with the Algerian authorities. Unfortunately, these failed to open the way for activities to bring assistance and protection to victims of the situation.

In order to facilitate the incorporation of the provisions of international humanitarian law into domestic legislation and regulations, the ICRC had set up an Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law in 1995 to provide technical assistance to the world’s States in taking these national measures. A legal adviser for the Middle East and North Africa was posted to Amman at the beginning of the year, and started to work closely on this subject with the National Societies and national authorities in the region.
The Near East

ISRAEL, THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND THE AUTONOMOUS TERRITORIES

Implementation of the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement made little headway in 1996, and relations between the two parties became more tense in the latter months. While Israeli troops had been withdrawn from most of the main towns in Gaza and the West Bank by the end of the year, redeployment from the city of Hebron was still delayed.

Four suicide bomb attacks were carried out on Israeli civilians early in the year. These attacks took a very heavy toll: more than 60 people were killed and over 200 injured. Subsequently, the occupied and autonomous territories were almost completely sealed off between end-February and July: at times, movement by Palestinians was restricted even inside the territories. During the summer, specific groups of Palestinian workers were again allowed to enter Israel, but following a spate of violence at the end of September the closure was strictly reimposed. Although by the end of 1996 tens of thousands of Palestinians were authorized access once more to their place of work, the majority of the population were still unable to leave the Gaza Strip and West Bank to sell their produce on the Israeli market. The economic implications for the Palestinians were disastrous. Problems were also encountered in transport, education and health care, particularly since access to Jerusalem was likewise restricted.

Also as a result of the closure policy, many families remained separated for several months, since there was no free passage for people between the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Palestinian security detainees, now held almost exclusively on Israeli soil, had to forgo visits by their families for months, and students were unable to reach their place of study. In addition, a number of...
medical evacuations were delayed, with very serious consequences, and required the ICRC’s intervention.

The prolonged delay in the full implementation of the Interim Agreement, as well as the announcement by the Israeli government that it was lifting the freeze on the development of existing settlements in the occupied territories, contributed to an increase in tension between Israeli settlers and armed forces on the one hand, and the Palestinian population on the other. Eventually, on 25 September, after the opening of the Hasmonean tunnel in the Old City of Jerusalem, violence flared, pitting Israeli forces against Palestinians, including some security force members. The armed clashes, which lasted five days, spread rapidly through several towns and villages in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, resulting in around 70 deaths and over 1,450 injured, the overwhelming majority of them Palestinian civilians. Several Palestinian-run ambulances were damaged: one ambulance team member was killed and at least seven were injured. The ICRC called on the parties involved to respect the fundamental rules and principles of humanitarian law, in particular with regard to the civilian population and medical facilities and ambulances. Delegates distributed emergency medical supplies to hospitals in the autonomous territories on the basis of an on-the-spot survey of needs and maintained constant contact with Israeli and Palestinian authorities in order to facilitate medical evacuations, 650 of which were carried out by the “Palestinian Red Crescent Society”. The situation remained volatile as the year drew to a close.

Following the suicide bomb attacks in Israel early in the year, the ICRC also issued a strong condemnation, stressing that indiscriminate attacks which resulted in the death and wounding of civilians and spread terror among them constituted a serious violation of the basic principles of international humanitarian law.

During the 29th year of its presence in Israel and the occupied territories, the ICRC delegation continued its activities for the occupied population. It sought to enhance compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention by calling on the Israeli government to respect its provisions and, at the same time, took practical steps to help the civilians whom the Convention protects. It acted as a neutral intermediary between the Israeli authorities and civilians under occupation, making representations on behalf of people from the occupied territories. However, despite years of approaches to the Israeli authorities and the latter’s response, the ICRC did not succeed in obtaining full respect for the provisions of the Convention.

Both the Israeli army and the Palestinian police force carried out major security operations following bomb attacks in Israel, and the IDF,* citing secur-

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1 Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

* IDF: Israel Defence Forces
southern Lebanon

ISRAEL, THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND THE AUTONOMOUS TERRITORIES
Total expenditure in 1996:
Sfr 10,155,180

- Protection / tracing 63.7%
- Cooperation with National Societies 6.0%
- Dissemination / promotion 12.3%
- Operational support 3.4%
- Overheads 0.6%

In contravention of the Convention, which prohibits destruction of real or personal property, except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations. Once Israeli troops had been redeployed from the Gaza Strip and the main West Bank towns (apart from Hebron), the delegation noted a decline during the first six months of the year in the number of incidents in the occupied territories. Incidents were reported specifically in connection with the closure of the occupied and autonomous territories and with the presence of Israeli settlers in the territories. The announcement that settlements were to be expanded was therefore the cause of grave concern for the ICRC, particularly in view of the serious consequences, in humanitarian terms, for the protected population. The number of incidents rose again significantly towards the end of the year.

Civilians living in and near the Israeli-occupied "security zone" in southern Lebanon continued to be affected by military operations in the area. Operation Grapes of Wrath in April prompted several hundred thousand people to flee the affected area in southern Lebanon. During the same period Hezbollah launched daily rocket attacks on towns and villages in northern Israel, wounding over 60 civilians and forcing more than 20,000 to leave the area. With the support of the Israeli authorities and the "Magen David Adom", ICRC delegates assessed the effects of the attacks on the civilian population in northern Israel, and ascertained that their needs were being covered by the authorities and the MDA. From the outset of the operation, the ICRC reminded the belligerents of their obligations under international humanitarian law, particularly with regard to civilians and medical facilities and vehicles.

In accordance with the ICRC’s role as a neutral intermediary between Israel and countries with which the latter had not signed peace agreements, its delegations in Israel and Syria cooperated to enable Syrians, mainly pilgrims and students, to cross the demarcation line between the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and Syria. In a rare family reunification, a woman who had been living in Damascus for many years was able to return to her native Golan Heights. However, for the third consecutive year, 73 people from the Golan Heights were still refused permission by the Israeli authorities to cross the line to visit relatives in Syria, despite several representations by the ICRC.

The number of Palestinian detainees held by Israel stabilized at an average of 4,000 following the last major release of some 1,200 in January 1996 under the Interim Agreement. Arrests nevertheless continued at an average rate of more than 300 per month. Virtually all Palestinian detainees were imprisoned.

3 See also Syria p. 244.
in places of detention on Israeli soil, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. The ICRC was given access to all detainees protected by the Convention, with the exception of two Lebanese nationals detained in Israel since 1989 and 1994, respectively. It was also denied access to a further detainee known to be held by the Israeli authorities since early 1996. The ICRC repeatedly requested the release on humanitarian grounds of 29 Palestinians held by the Israeli authorities. By the end of 1996, seven of the detainees concerned had been released, while the majority remained incarcerated.

The family visits programme for Palestinian detainees, run by the ICRC in cooperation with the “Palestinian Red Crescent Society” (PRCS), was seriously hampered and eventually suspended because of closures of the Gaza Strip and West Bank, despite the fact that detainees are entitled to regular visits under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Visits resumed at the beginning of July following lengthy negotiations with the Israeli authorities, but under much more stringent conditions which required far more involvement by the ICRC and PRCS. In particular, the ICRC’s role as a neutral intermediary became even more important to ensure that the programme functioned properly. The programme was suspended once more during the clashes in September and again in October, and resumed only in December.

Discussions were held throughout the year with a view to resuming visits to people detained by the Palestinian authorities. In particular, the matter was discussed in Switzerland in February by the ICRC President and the President of the Palestinian Authority. On 1 September the ICRC signed a revised version of its Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestine Liberation Organization, which was acting “for the benefit of” the Palestinian Authority, and visits started on 27 November.

Delegates endeavoured to increase awareness of the principles of international humanitarian law and the activities of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement by organizing information sessions for various target audiences, both in Israel and in the occupied and autonomous territories. The Israeli media failed to show any great interest in such sessions, while the Palestinian media published numerous articles provided by the ICRC.

The ICRC continued to assume the general direction of the activities of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in the occupied and autonomous territories. In January the ICRC completed its programme in support of clinics in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. The PRCS clinics assisted under this programme were subsequently covered by the Federation’s programme on the PRCS primary and secondary health care activities. The Federation also supported the Society’s institutional development.
The Australian Red Cross completed a two-year “Released Palestinian Detainees” project in Gaza and the West Bank and started a “Women’s Development” programme in Gaza. The Netherlands Red Cross provided medical assistance to 11 non-governmental hospitals in the occupied and autonomous territories, including PRCS medical facilities.

The ICRC and the PRCS pursued their close cooperation on the provision of emergency medical care. With ICRC support, the PRCS set up a special department to coordinate and develop the emergency medical services of the Red Crescent branches. In November the Society was officially mandated by the Department of Health of the Palestinian Authority to take on the entire responsibility for this service in the Gaza Strip, a mandate which it had previously received for the West Bank. The ICRC helped to ensure that procedures, training and structures were developed and strengthened in order to improve performance in the medium and long term. A specialist seconded by the German Red Cross worked with the PRCS to consolidate the service and improve its efficiency.

The ICRC also lent support in developing the PRCS dissemination department and the Finnish Red Cross seconded a delegate to work with it. The department coordinated the dissemination activities of the Red Crescent branches, including an extra-curricular programme on the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Palestinian schools, using locally produced materials, and produced a slide show and brochure on the PRCS’s activities, which were used in particular for the 8 May celebrations and at holiday camps for young people. The Palestinian Curriculum Development Centre agreed that texts on the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement should be included in the new school textbooks.

The ICRC maintained regular contact with the “Magen David Adom” and provided it with financial support to replace material for its blood bank. It also facilitated a working meeting between representatives of the MDA and the PRCS with a view to building confidence and establishing regular relations between the two organizations in the long term.
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- visited Palestinian detainees on a regular basis: in all, carried out 341 visits to 1,453 detainees in 30 places of detention, registering 1,074 for the first time; held 1,385 private talks with detainees under interrogation; monitored detainees' medical situation;
- restored and maintained contact between detainees and their families by forwarding 4,062 Red Cross messages, kept track of individual detainees protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention and informed their families of their whereabouts; issued 18,375 detention certificates and 115 powers of attorney;
- in cooperation with the “Palestinian Red Crescent Society” (PRCS), ran the family visits programme, enabling family members to visit their detained relatives;
- handed over 3 released detainees to the care of the Lebanese or Syrian authorities.

- restored and maintained contact between residents of the occupied and the autonomous territories and their families living in countries without official relations with Israel by passing on 8,066 Red Cross messages and radio messages and dealing with 40 tracing requests;
- at the request of the parties concerned, acted as a neutral intermediary on behalf of families of Israeli servicemen and Arabs reported missing in action and, on 21 July, following an agreement negotiated under the auspices of the German government, supervised the release of prisoners and carried out the repatriation of mortal remains in the hands of Israel, the SLA* and Hezbollah;
- arranged for 21 transfers between Syria and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights to enable 413 people to cross the demarcation line.

- made representations to the appropriate authorities when the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention were not respected during or after incidents between Palestinian civilians and Israeli security forces or settlers.
- supplied 69 tents to people whose houses in the occupied territories had been destroyed by the Israeli forces.

- when the Gaza Strip and West Bank were completely closed, facilitated emergency medical evacuations for people in Gaza who required hospital treatment in Israel, and transported urgently needed medicines from Israel and the West Bank to the main hospital in the Gaza Strip;
- during the violence in September, provided emergency medical supplies to hospitals in the autonomous territories;
- supported and strengthened the Emergency Medical Service of the PRCS by paying for running costs and equipment and providing technical expertise via a representative from the German Red Cross;
- purchased medical equipment for the blood bank of the “Magen David Adom” in order to replace old material.

- held the regular yearly session to introduce international humanitarian law to about 40 IDF trainee legal officers;
- organized dissemination sessions in April for 30 officers of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service in several West Bank towns, and in August in Gaza and Jericho for members of the Palestinian police academy; in all, five sessions were held for around 150 people;
- regularly provided the Palestinian media with information on its activities, including a documentary on the ICRC’s action as a neutral intermediary on the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights: the information provided was used regularly;
- gave support to the PRCS dissemination department and was involved in four camps for about 400 children and various World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day activities.

* SLA: South Lebanon Army
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- carried out 60 visits to 672 security detainees in 9 places of detention, registering 643 for the first time, and exchanged 1,614 Red Cross messages to and from their relatives on their behalf.

- restored and maintained contact between families living in Jordan and their relatives detained in Israel and Kuwait by forwarding 3,541 Red Cross messages;

- restored and maintained contact between Jordanian families separated as a result of various conflicts by forwarding 205 Red Cross messages;

- forwarded 274 official and urgent documents for families in Jordan who were separated from their relatives in Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, and assisted in special hardship cases;

- issued 255 travel documents for Arab refugees who had been granted refugee status in third countries.

- in cooperation with the Jordan National Red Crescent Society, gave regular courses on humanitarian law and principles to schoolchildren, teachers and National Society members, reaching a total of 2,714 people;

- organized the distribution of the Cairo delegation's 1996 Arabic calendar to schools, and the printing of its cartoon series *Ahlam-Ahlam* in two publications circulated to Jordanian schools and made available to the public;

- strengthened the Jordan Red Crescent's dissemination capacities by training volunteers in the local branches, gave a talk on the relationship between humanitarian law and disasters at a three-day disaster preparedness seminar organized by the National Society, and helped to organize an essay competition in schools on the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

- held courses in international humanitarian law at the Institute of Diplomacy and at military training academies; continued dissemination programmes for Jordanian military and police contingents being sent on UN missions;

- maintained and developed contacts with the media and with various target groups such as universities (for instance, contributed to an exhibition at Yarmouk University's Centre for Refugees and Displaced Persons by providing publications and photos illustrating the ICRC's operations around the world).

- made available to the media comprehensive and updated media kits, photos, audio and video material on the effects of mines on civilians: the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation made use of the material in its broadcasts. The printed press ran articles on the issue and published the ICRC-designed advertisements in two Arabic and one English daily newspapers.
JORDAN

The Amman delegation continued to carry out a wide range of traditional ICRC activities, including protection for detainees. Delegates paid regular, twice-monthly visits to security detainees held under interrogation at the GID* and were also given access to detainees in facilities under the responsibility of the Public Security Directorate, mainly the Rehabilitation and Correctional Centres of Juweideh and Swaqa, and in the Zarqa Military Centre. Whenever requested, Red Cross messages were exchanged between detainees and their relatives. In July, an ICRC team carried out a round of visits to three detention centres in order to evaluate the medical services provided. The delegation subsequently submitted reports on their visits to the relevant authorities, including, when necessary, the Ministry of Health and the Public Security Department.

In the wake of the unrest which broke out in mid-August in the south of Jordan, there was a sharp but short-lived increase in the number of detainees. The ICRC therefore stepped up its visits to the GID and the Correctional and Rehabilitation Centres. Delegates subsequently followed up individual cases, informing the many families who had approached the delegation of the whereabouts of their relatives.

As a postal service had been set up between Jordan and Israel, the ICRC limited its services to forwarding official personal documents and urgent humanitarian radio messages between Palestinians in the occupied and autonomous territories and their relatives in Jordan. The number of messages forwarded increased markedly when the West Bank and Gaza Strip were subject to strict closure.

In its efforts to promote awareness of and respect for international humanitarian law, the delegation kept up a variety of contacts in military and police academies, universities, schools, research and documentation institutes and cultural associations. Delegates enjoyed good relations with journalists (both Jordanian and based in Jordan), the International Organization of Journalists and Jordanian TV, and through them encouraged the dissemination of knowledge of the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and humanitarian law, as well as information on ICRC activities throughout the world. Relations with these various bodies were thereby strengthened and extended, ensuring wider knowledge of the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the ICRC’s activities and humanitarian law.

* GID: General Intelligence Directorate
A particular effort was made to promote the ICRC's campaign against anti-personnel mines. The military study on anti-personnel mines published by the ICRC was circulated to contacts in the armed forces, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the media, and both the Arabic and English-language media reported on it.

The delegation, together with the Jordan National Red Crescent Society and the Jordanian Ministry of Education, regularly organized courses on humanitarian law and the Movement in schools and encouraged the introduction of such teaching into the school curriculum. To celebrate World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, exhibitions of the Movement's posters and publications were mounted in several schools and students were briefed on the protective role of the emblem and the need not to misuse it, as well as on the ICRC landmines campaign being conducted worldwide.

The delegation in Jordan continued to act as the logistical base for the ICRC's activities in Iraq, particularly its assistance programmes.

LEBANON

In the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the ICRC continued to deal with the consequences in humanitarian terms of the Israeli occupation of part of southern Lebanon, the so-called security zone. Civilians living in the occupied area and north of the front line were once more affected by sporadic military operations, and the Israeli navy maintained its blockade on the southern part of the Lebanese coastline.

At the beginning of April, tension increased significantly and, following several incidents between the Israeli army and armed groups, the Israeli army launched the two-week Operation Grapes of Wrath. The price paid by civilians was high: 170 Lebanese dead (more than 100 of whom died in the shelling of the Qana UNIFIL compound), 350 wounded, 350,000 displaced, and hundreds of houses damaged or destroyed; on the Israeli side, over 60 people were wounded and some 20,000 displaced.

During and after the military operations, the ICRC provided protection and assistance to those civilians who had remained in the area of southern Lebanon under fire and to displaced people who were sheltering in public places in Sidon, Beirut, the Chouf and the Bekaa valley. In doing so, it cooperated closely with the Lebanese Red Cross Society and maintained close contact with the Federation (see below). The ICRC also worked in coordination with Lebanese government bodies, the local NGOs active in the field and UN
agencies (UNDP,* UNICEF* and UNIFIL*). It provided health facilities in southern Lebanon with emergency items to enable them to cope with the influx of wounded and to continue routine treatment for those who had stayed in the area. When the hostilities ceased, the ICRC distributed medical supplies to all health facilities along the front line to help them to replenish their stocks.

On 16 April the ICRC issued a solemn reminder to the warring parties of their duty to comply with the rules of humanitarian law intended to protect all victims of armed conflicts. On 19 April it publicly condemned the shelling of civilians in the UNIFIL base in Qana and stressed the absolute ban on indiscriminate attacks. It also made representations to the belligerents, urging them, in particular, to give civilians and medical facilities and vehicles the respect to which they are entitled.

More than two weeks after Operation Grapes of Wrath had started, a de facto cease-fire was established and civilians on either side of the Israeli-Lebanese border were no longer to come under attack. A monitoring committee composed of representatives from France, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and the United States was set up to supervise its implementation. Towards the end of the year tension was again mounting in southern Lebanon, and several complaints regarding failure to respect the agreement were examined by the committee. In December, Lebanese civilians were injured by IDF shelling, while unknown fighters fired a Katyusha rocket at northern Israel.

To protect the civilian population, ICRC delegates in the occupied zone in southern Lebanon collected information on alleged violations of humanitarian law, and representations were made to the parties to the conflict urging them to spare civilian lives and property. The delegation had negotiated security guarantees with all the parties in order to carry out its humanitarian activities and give medical and material assistance to civilians living on the front line and near the Israeli-occupied zone. It ran five mobile clinics to serve seven villages in and close to the occupied zone.

Whenever civilians in Israel fell victim to rocket attacks by armed groups, as in April in particular, the ICRC delegation in Tel Aviv provided information to the Beirut delegation so that the appropriate representations could be made.

ICRC delegates paid regular visits to prisoners held in the Khiam detention centre in the Israeli-occupied territory. Ways of improving treatment and conditions of detention were discussed with the authorities, and assistance was distributed to the detainees. Families of detainees benefited from a family visit

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* UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
* UNICEF: United Nations Children’s Fund
* UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

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**LEBANON**

Total expenditure in 1996:

Sfr 4,186,125

![Pie chart showing expenditure distribution]
programme set up and facilitated by the ICRC, and Red Cross messages exchanged between detainees and their families. Detainees also received parcels from their relatives.

On 21 July, following an agreement negotiated under the auspices of the government of the Federal Republic of Germany, and at the request of the parties concerned, the ICRC supervised the simultaneous release of 62 prisoners and the repatriation of the mortal remains of 125 people in the hands of Israel, the SLA and Hezbollah. The operation ended years of uncertainty for families on both sides as to the fate of their relatives (see box).

One of the two Palestinian ex-detainees deported by Israel to southern Lebanon in April 1995 in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention remained stranded in the UNIFIL compound in Naqoura, despite the ICRC’s efforts to enable him to return home. ICRC delegates visited him regularly to collect and deliver Red Cross messages and give assistance.

A source of concern for the ICRC in Lebanon was the precarious and deteriorating situation of some 350,000 Palestinians living in refugee camps, most of them since 1948. UNWRA* assisted them by providing health care and education. The potential for violence remained strong, owing to political differences and the severe frustration rife amongst the refugees. The ICRC distributed emergency supplies to medical facilities in the camps.

During Operation Grapes of Wrath, the ICRC worked closely with the Lebanese Red Cross Society. The National Society performed outstanding services in April: it mobilized over 600 first-aid volunteers, carried out emergency transfers of sick and wounded people and blood supplies, collected the dead and ran more than 200 first-aid posts and 130 mobile clinics.

The ICRC supported the National Society’s ambulance service and its community health centres situated inside the occupied zone.

Close contacts were maintained with the Federation throughout the year, but especially in April; the Federation continued to support the institutional development of the Lebanese Red Cross, as well as its primary health care and blood bank activities. This close cooperation and exchange of information enabled all the components of the Movement to avoid duplication.

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* UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- carried out 39 visits to 248 detainees in the Khiam detention centre, including 90 who were newly registered;
- arranged for 87 released detainees to be transferred out of the Israeli-occupied zone, organized visits by 1,177 people to their relatives held in the Khiam detention centre; forwarded 6,465 Red Cross messages to or from detainees and issued 447 certificates of detention;
- acted as a neutral intermediary in the release of 45 people from the Khiam detention centre and the handing over of 18 bodies by the SLA to the ICRC; in the release of 17 SLA prisoners and the handing over of the mortal remains of 2 Israeli servicemen by Hezbollah; and in the handing over by the Israeli authorities of the mortal remains of 105 people, including those of Hezbollah combatants;
- provided needy families of detainees held in Israel and the Khiam detention centre with ad hoc assistance.

- restored and maintained links between family members separated as a result of the conflict by forwarding 1,320 Red Cross messages.
- made representations to the parties to the conflict when civilians were victims of failure to respect humanitarian law, both during Operation Grapes of Wrath and when any other incidents were brought to its attention.

- during and after the major military operations in April, distributed relief supplies to benefit 225,000 people, mainly in the area affected by military activities in southern Lebanon and in centres where displaced people had gathered (Sidon, Beirut, Chouf, Bekaa);
- provided ad hoc assistance to victims of the conflict and inhabitants of villages cut off because of it.

- provided ad hoc medical assistance to hospitals, dispensaries and first-aid posts along the front line between the Israeli-occupied zone and the rest of the country, and ran five ICRC mobile clinics in the area, which gave 2,846 consultations;
- provided Palestinian hospitals and dispensaries in refugee camps with emergency assistance.

- helped to maintain the operational capacity of the Lebanese Red Cross Society in the occupied zone by providing financial and material support for its first-aid services in areas affected by conflict, and medical supplies for its dispensaries;
- supported the National Society’s dissemination, volunteer training and communication activities.

- promoted knowledge of and respect for international humanitarian law and the principles and rules of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement by maintaining and developing contacts with the media and organizing courses for the armed forces, representatives of UNIFIL, combatants from armed groups, and universities; teaching of international humanitarian law was incorporated in the training programmes for all Lebanese armed forces;
- gave a lecture on the application of international humanitarian law for some 60 high-ranking officers from the Lebanese army at a seminar organized by the army at the military academy in Beirut in September.

- arranged for the national TV channel "Télé-Liban" to broadcast a two-hour live programme on the problem of landmines in Lebanon, drawing attention to the ICRC’s worldwide anti-landmines campaign.
SYRIA

The ICRC continued to act as a neutral intermediary for the 13,000 Syrian nationals living in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, who remained protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention. In principle they were not allowed to cross the demarcation line into Syria, and had thus been separated from their families for nearly 30 years. However there were exceptions to the rule, mainly pilgrims and students, who were transferred across the line under the auspices of the ICRC.4 Seventy-three people were still waiting for Israeli authorization to visit relatives in Syria, for the third consecutive year and despite ICRC representations. By handling Red Cross messages the ICRC worked as in previous years to restore and maintain links between families separated as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It also issued around 100 travel documents for Arab refugees who had been accepted by third countries.

In order to carry out its activities for people affected by the conflict, the delegation was in regular contact with the Syrian authorities; it also maintained contact with representatives of several Palestinian groups based in Damascus.

In the dissemination field, in order to improve knowledge of the law of war, delegates held courses on the subject for six high-ranking officers of the Syrian armed forces and gave presentations on the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and humanitarian law to officers from the UNDOF* and the UNTSO.*

The ICRC continued to support the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society in its dissemination activities by financing the printing of leaflets for the International Book Fair and in its first-aid activities by providing material for the training programme held at the Damascus branch. Assistance for the Red Crescent’s maternal and child health care programme in the form of milk powder and wheat soya milk, previously provided by the ICRC, was taken over by the Federation. In October, the ICRC President, accompanied by the Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa, attended the National Society’s celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of its recognition by the ICRC. He gave a speech in which he called for intensified efforts to apply international humanitarian law, and took part in a conference on the subject chaired by a representative from the Damascus Faculty of Law.

The “Palestinian Red Crescent Society” prosthetic/orthotic centre in Damascus, which had been equipped by the ICRC, received administrative support from the ICRC for its programme, which was partly financed by the German Red Cross, and an ICRC technician made the annual visit to the centre to provide technical support.

4 See also Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, p. 234.
* UNDOF: United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
* UNTSO: United Nations Truce Supervision Organization
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- organized the repatriation of 2 released detainees formerly held in Israel.
- arranged for 21 transfers between Syria and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights to enable 413 people to cross the demarcation line;
- forwarded 750 Red Cross messages and official documents, organized 1 family reunification and issued 125 travel documents.
- financed the Syrian Arab Red Crescent stand at the Damascus International Book Fair, its publications for the occasion and other dissemination material, gave financial support for the publications produced for its 50th anniversary celebrations and took part in its seminars;
- financed the purchase of materials for use in the first-aid training programme in the Syrian Arab Red Crescent branches;
- provided technical back-up for the “Palestinian Red Crescent Society” prosthetic/orthotic centre in Damascus financed partly by the German Red Cross.
- organized a session on the law of war for 6 high-ranking officers of the Syrian armed forces and two sessions on humanitarian law for the UN forces stationed on the Golan Heights;
- produced a video film on the “Palestinian Red Crescent Society” prosthetic/orthotic centre entitled “Reality on both Feet”, which was shown on two Syrian TV channels.
The Gulf

Iran

The ICRC kept up an office in Tehran, staffed by locally hired employees. Relations with the Iranian authorities concerning the humanitarian issues unresolved since the Iran/Iraq war were maintained from its Geneva headquarters.5

Iraq

The United Nations maintained the embargo on Iraq, which had been in force since 1990. As a result the situation of the Iraqi population, particularly in terms of public health, continued to worsen inexorably. Nevertheless, the UN “oil-for-food” Resolution 986 was expected to help slow down the decline. The Iraqi government accepted the resolution on 20 May: renewable every six months, it authorized Iraq to export two billion US dollars’ worth of oil to buy mainly food, medical supplies, agricultural tools and machinery. The plan on how to distribute the goods was accepted in mid-August, agreement was reached on implementing the resolution on 27 November, and Iraq started to export oil on 9 December.

Iraqi water installations continued to deteriorate for lack of spare parts, equipment and qualified personnel. Throughout Iraq, including the three northern governorates, the ICRC kept up its efforts to lessen the effects of this deterioration on public health by rehabilitating water supply and treatment facilities which had been identified, in cooperation with the Iraqi water authorities, as priority sites. Where required, the ICRC’s seven teams of locally hired technicians were available to install the pumping, chemical dosing and electrical equipment imported by it into Iraq, and the authorities were encouraged to ensure proper maintenance. Although the programme did not meet all needs in terms of rehabilitating the water treatment infrastructure throughout the

5 See Aftermath of the Iran/Iraq war, p. 250.
country, it nevertheless had significant preventive effects on the spread of waterborne diseases among the population.

In June/July the ICRC reassessed its water and sanitation programme in the light of the Iraqis’ acceptance of Resolution 986. It concluded that the impact of the agreement would not be felt on water and sanitation facilities until at least 1998, owing to considerable delays in implementing the agreement, the length of time needed to import equipment and rehabilitate the facilities and the fact that priority was to be given to food and medicines. It therefore decided to continue the programme for the time being.

Under its programme for the war-disabled, the ICRC kept up its support for two government-run prosthetic/orthotic centres in Basra and Najaf, and the Iraqi Red Crescent Society’s centre in Mosul. The latter’s premises were extended in 1996 so that production could be stepped up. In addition, a new centre was opened in Arbil, northern Iraq, in August; the French Red Cross funded the construction and running costs and staff salaries. The ICRC components workshop in Baghdad was moved to larger premises to enable output to be expanded to supply all the centres.

The quality of prostheses manufactured by Iraqi technicians, while not yet optimal, was sufficiently high that the ICRC could be confident that once its economic situation allowed, Iraq would again be able to run such programmes alone.

The Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa visited Iraq, including northern Iraq, in May. He discussed issues of humanitarian concern with the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in particular prisoners taken in the Iran/Iraq war,6 people unaccounted for since the Gulf war7 and detention-related matters (civilians held in the Abu Ghraib detention centre in connection with the Gulf war and Iranian servicemen held in a camp in Ramadi). Authorization was subsequently granted for the ICRC to pay more regular visits to Ramadi. At the end of 1996 visits resumed to Abu Ghraib.

On 8 October a meeting was held between the ICRC and the newly appointed President of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, who expressed his wish to maintain and expand the cooperation between the two organizations. During the meeting, the ICRC presented an ambulance to the Red Crescent Society.

The cease-fire signed in August 1995 between the KDP* and the PUK* was more or less observed up to 16 August, when a new bout of hostilities erupted between the two parties. On 31 August Iraqi troops and KDP forces seized the PUK stronghold of Arbil. Ten days later, the PUK lost control of Sulaymaniyyah. Some 60,000 civilians and combatants fled the city, some to take refuge

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6 See Aftermath of the Iran/Iraq war, p. 250.
7 See Aftermath of the Gulf war, p. 251.
* KDP: Kurdistan Democratic Party
* PUK: Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
on Iranian soil, others to return to Sulaymaniyah when the fighting died down. On 12 October, the PUK retook the governorate of Sulaymaniyah. Many NGOs which were assisting civilians in various domains pulled out of the region. A new cease-fire came into force on 23 October, but at the end of 1996 the situation remained tense and unpredictable.

Incursions by the Turkish army, while never reaching the same scale as the major military operations of April 1995, took place sporadically throughout the year. Shelling in the area near the Turkish border caused about 500 families to flee their villages. The livelihood of these people was in jeopardy, since it was too difficult and dangerous for them to return home to tend their crops.

The ICRC’s protection activities were the most important aspect of its work in northern Iraq. Delegates stepped up their contacts with KDP and PUK

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**IN 1996 THE ICRC:**

- carried out 3 visits to 64 Iranian servicemen captured in 1991 and 1992 and detained in Ramadi camp;
- carried out 208 visits to 3,412 detainees held in 55 places of detention in the northern governorates for security reasons or as a result of fighting between the PUK and the KDP or other hostilities; of these, 3,157 were registered for the first time;
- in March, visited 9 Turkish soldiers held by the PKK,* two of whom were later freed and accompanied by the ICRC to the Turkish border;
- handled 14,691 Red Cross messages between detainees in Ramadi camp and their relatives;
- issued 165 certificates of detention.

- when people were displaced near the Turkish border as a result of incursions and shelling by the Turkish army, distributed blankets, tents, cooking utensils and other items in cooperation with the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, particularly in readiness for the winter.
- during the hostilities in northern Iraq, provided the six main hospitals in the Arbil and Sulaymaniyah regions with emergency medical supplies to treat the several thousand casualties and handed out dressing sets to displaced people heading for the Iranian border;
- in September, launched an information programme on the ICRC and war surgery techniques in the main hospitals in northern Iraq.
- opened a new prosthetic/orthotic centre in Arbil, northern Iraq, and continued to support two government-run centres in Basra and Najaf by providing them with materials and polypropylene components manufactured in its Baghdad workshop and by training technicians;
- supported the government’s school for Iraqi technicians by helping with training and supplying imported materials;
- fitted 1,203 amputees with 1,258 prostheses and 133 orthoses at the ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic centres in Arbil, Basra, Mosul (see below) and Najaf.
leaders, and paid regular visits to places of detention run by both parties. When the fighting between the two parties resumed in August, the ICRC called on them to observe the basic humanitarian rules in combat and raised the issue of summary executions reportedly carried out by both sides. It stressed the need for the ICRC to have access to all those detained in connection with the conflict to ensure that their moral and physical integrity was respected.

In order to back up these protection activities, considerable effort was invested in spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law, respect for the red cross and red crescent emblem and the civilian population. The ICRC became much better known among the public in northern Iraq, and particularly its services to restore contact between relatives separated by the conflict. These services came to be requested regularly.

- worked with the Iraqi water authorities to improve the quantity and quality of drinking water and to ensure adequate disposal of waste water by rehabilitating a total of 60 water treatment plants throughout the country.

- in cooperation with the Iraqi Red Crescent provided ad hoc material assistance to people displaced internally as a result of fighting in northern Iraq; in all, assisted some 20,000 people, including some 4,000 at the Iranian border;

- assisted the Iraqi Red Crescent in carrying out dissemination activities (a total of 17,818 people attended 282 information sessions in schools and universities in 9 governorates), took part in camps for young people, provided financial and technical assistance towards the production of a monthly periodical on the National Society's activities and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and prepared for a joint campaign on the dangers of landmines;

- helped to develop the National Society's activities to restore and maintain family links;

- supported the Iraqi Red Crescent prosthetic/orthotic centre in Mosul by providing materials and components and by training technicians.

- in November held a seminar on the law of war, in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence, for 17 senior officers responsible for instruction in international humanitarian law within the Iraqi armed forces;

- handed over 1.5 million school exercise books bearing a humanitarian message and illustration for distribution in schools and universities in 8 governorates, including those in northern Iraq;

- held 26 sessions for 955 staff members in 21 places of detention in northern Iraq on basic humanitarian principles and on its detention-related work;

- gave 2 lectures on international humanitarian law for 350 students and professors at the University of Arbil, for the first time;

- held information sessions on the rules of humanitarian law for 581 members of the KDP and PUK peshmerga forces;

- provided local radio stations with "spots", which were broadcast regularly, on the rules of combat to be observed during hostilities.
AFTERMATH OF THE IRAN/IRAQ WAR

The ICRC remained seriously concerned about the fact that thousands of Iraqi POWs were still held under the responsibility of the Iranian authorities. Two-thirds of them had been visited and registered by the ICRC some years previously, including 1,442 most recently in 1993, and one-third of them were known to it on the basis of Red Cross messages. In the past, the ICRC had also gathered information on hundreds of Iranian soldiers, and remained equally concerned about their fate.

Ever since hostilities came to an end in 1988, and in particular after the repatriation of Iranian and Iraqi POWs in August and September 1990, the ICRC has pursued its efforts to obtain an overall solution to this serious humanitarian issue. To this end, the ICRC President raised the issue on several occasions, notably in May with the ambassadors of the 15 member States of the UN Security Council and with the Iranian and Iraqi ambassadors in New York and Geneva. For his part, during his missions to the region, the Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa repeatedly reminded the States visited of their obligations under the Geneva Conventions.

In the ICRC's view another important outstanding humanitarian issue was that of missing soldiers and the return of mortal remains. Under agreements concluded between Iran and Iraq in September 1995, the mortal remains of 600 Iraqis and 209 Iranians were repatriated in June and August.

The ICRC viewed the liberation of 724 Iraqi POWs and the repatriation under its auspices of 722 of them in December as an important step towards an overall solution. It called on both parties to cooperate in resolving the situation, and stood ready to offer its services.

IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- was present on 26 October when 150 Iraqi POWs were handed over by the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Iraqi authorities;
- supervised the repatriation of 722 Iraqi POWs on 28 December after having private talks with them to ascertain that they were being repatriated of their own free will;
- carried out 4 visits to an Iranian POW held in Iraq, conveyed Red Cross messages to and from his next-of-kin and urged the authorities to allow his repatriation;
- handled 281 tracing requests and issued 302 certificates of detention.
Aftermath of the Gulf War

In an effort to settle the humanitarian issues still unresolved after the Gulf War, representatives from Iraq and the Coalition States (France, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and the United States) attended three meetings of the Tripartite Commission chaired by the ICRC, which also chaired and provided technical support for ten Technical Sub-Committee sessions held in the demilitarized zone on the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border. The objective was to help ascertain the whereabouts and fate of Kuwaitis, Saudis, Iraqis and other nationals reported missing in connection with the hostilities.

The ICRC was very concerned at the lack of dialogue between the parties and the resultant poor quality of information being provided in response to the individual search files. At the 17th Tripartite Commission meeting, held on 16 October, the ICRC’s Director of Operations therefore called on the parties to make every effort to facilitate the search process in order to achieve genuine progress leading to tangible results.

The issue was also raised during the year when the Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa met the Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in May, and when the ICRC’s regional delegate met the Kuwaiti Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in June.

In Kuwait ICRC delegates monitored the conditions of detention and treatment of people whose detention was linked to the Gulf war and who had been without diplomatic representation since then. Visits were thus made to Iraqi, Jordanian, Yemeni and Sudanese nationals, Palestinians with travel documents only, and stateless persons. The ICRC had access to prisoners in places of detention under the jurisdiction of the Ministries of the Interior, Defence and Social Affairs.

Delegates also paid regular visits to detainees under expulsion order. The aim of these visits, apart from monitoring conditions of detention, was to ensure that families were not separated and that detainees were not expelled to a country where they had reason to fear persecution. Delegates made sure that those facing expulsion were given the opportunity to settle their personal affairs and were allowed to take their belongings with them.
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- in Iraq, for the first time since 1994, carried out 1 visit to 63 civilians from countries without diplomatic representation there and held in Abu Ghraib detention centre near Baghdad. Eighteen of them were registered for the first time;
- in Kuwait, visited 262 detainees in 8 places of detention, including 103 who were registered for the first time.
- restored and maintained contact between family members separated by the Gulf war by forwarding 18,786 Red Cross messages between people in Kuwait and their relatives in countries which do not have diplomatic relations with Kuwait;
- also issued 59 travel documents at the request of embassies and UNHCR for people who were unable to obtain passports and who wished to leave for another country, and 203 certificates of detention;
- via the Safwan border crossing, supervised the repatriation of 11 Saudis from Iraq and 3 Iraqis from Kuwait;
- within the framework of the Tripartite Commission, organized a family reunification on the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border for a Kuwaiti national and her subsequent return to Kuwait;
- arranged for the mortal remains of an Iraqi pilot whose plane had crashed in April 1995 to be repatriated from Saudi Arabia.
The Kuwait regional delegation concentrated on activities connected with the aftermath of the Gulf war. In addition, it carried out information and dissemination activities intended to heighten awareness of issues of humanitarian concern — such as respect for civilians and the problem of landmines — and the ICRC's activities. Delegates also promoted instruction in international humanitarian law for the armed forces; particular emphasis was placed on the United Arab Emirates, with a view to integrating such courses into the military training programme, and on Kuwait, where the authorities agreed that the ICRC should hold a course and a workshop for military instructors in 1997.

On 28 October the ICRC — represented by the Deputy Director of Operations — and the Bahraini authorities signed a Memorandum of Understanding authorizing it to make visits, in accordance with standard ICRC procedures, to prisoners arrested and detained for security reasons. This agreement was the first of its type to be concluded with a country in the region, and visits began on 9 November. Prior to this, the Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa had carried out a mission to Bahrain in August, during which he met the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of the Interior.

In Yemen, the ICRC continued its visits to places of detention under the jurisdiction of the Minister of the Interior and Political Security Administration. In order to follow up on the major sanitation programme carried out in 1995 in the country's central prisons, an ICRC water and sanitation engineer conducted a survey in the three main prisons of Sana'a, Hodeida and Taiz. The ICRC recommended to the Ministry of the Interior that the authorities should allocate funds for repairs and renovation work on the country's five main prisons and on several smaller ones.

The psychiatric care project launched in 1995 in the Sana'a central prison, in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Health and the Yemen Red Crescent Society, considerably improved conditions for mentally ill detainees, particularly as regards hygiene, food and medical care. The patients were housed in their own section of the prison and could move around freely.

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8 See Aftermath of the Gulf war, p. 251.
there. A representative from the Swiss Red Cross, who was based in Yemen, followed the project’s progress, which was also monitored by an ICRC psychiatrist during periodic visits from Geneva. In August the project was delegated to the Netherlands Red Cross. It was extended to Taiz as from November and to Ibb as from January 1997.

The ICRC maintained and built up contact with the OIC* based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in accordance with the cooperation agreement between the two organizations.

* OIC: Organization of the Islamic Conference

IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- in Bahrain, registered 1,429 detainees in 27 places of detention;
- in Yemen, carried out 5 visits to 5 places of detention and saw 5,927 detainees;
- in Yemen, ensured adequate sanitary conditions for detainees by visiting places of detention and encouraging the authorities to take responsibility in this regard; gave technical support to prison sanitation engineers.
- in Yemen, handled 3,654 Red Cross messages, essentially between Somali refugees living in Yemen and their families abroad.

- cooperated with the Yemen Red Crescent Society on assistance to mentally ill detainees and dissemination of humanitarian law and principles to the civilian population;
- in Yemen, followed up the psychiatric care project recently delegated to the Netherlands Red Cross by facilitating cooperation between the various partners and ensuring that the relevant authorities continued their efforts to improve conditions for mentally ill detainees.

- in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, ran 5 courses for 104 officers of the armed forces;
- held a seminar in Sana’a for high-level government and non-government officials, in cooperation with the Yemen Red Crescent Society, on the incorporation of humanitarian law into the national legislation of States.
North Africa

EGYPT

The ICRC delegation in Cairo stepped up its main activity, namely to support the promotion of understanding and acceptance of international humanitarian law and the ICRC’s mandate in the Arab world. It did so by designing and producing a range of dissemination material which was specially adapted to Arab audiences, and ensured that it was widely distributed or broadcast. Important contacts were made with the major radio networks which broadcast programmes in Arabic (the BBC and Radio Monte Carlo), for which the ICRC produced four radio series using Arab actors. The success of these series was demonstrated by the fact that they were subsequently broadcast by several national radio stations in the region. Working contacts were also built up with the Egyptian TV networks and other TV stations covering the Middle East and North Africa.

Particular stress was laid on reaching the younger generations of Arabs, the majority of whom may have little knowledge of humanitarian law or first-hand knowledge of the ICRC’s work. The delegation produced a cartoon series, which was published free of charge by the biggest weekly magazine for young people in Egypt, *Alaa El Din*, during 17 weeks of the school holidays.

The delegation likewise produced a limited range of printed matter for specific, well-defined target audiences. It also lent technical support to the dissemination efforts of other ICRC delegations in the region aimed at specific contexts or countries.

To promote knowledge of the ICRC in Egypt itself, the delegation maintained contact, in particular, with representatives of the Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs. Courses and lectures were held as usual for various military and academic target audiences and, for the first time, for members of the judiciary.

On several occasions the delegation met the Egyptian authorities and representatives of the League of Arab States to express the ICRC’s concern about the fate of some 200 Palestinians stranded in a no-man’s-land near Salloum, between the Egyptian and Libyan borders. The delegation was kept informed by *Médecins sans Frontières* of its activities in the camp and by UNHCR, which officially monitored the situation by means of contacts with both the Egyptian and the Libyan authorities.

A specialized delegate to the armed forces of the region was posted in Cairo and held successful sessions on international humanitarian law for the armed forces in Egypt and six other Arab countries, namely Iraq, Kuwait, Mauritania,
Morocco, Syria and the United Arab Emirates. The delegation maintained contact with the Arab League, whose Secretary General supported the ICRC’s efforts to promote such training.

The activities of the delegation’s tracing agency consisted mainly in issuing travel documents for nationals of the Horn of Africa countries and for those displaced by the southern Sudan conflict.

The delegation increased contacts with the Egyptian Red Crescent to inform its members more closely of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement’s and the ICRC’s activities. The Red Crescent was actively involved in the ICRC’s efforts, through its Legal Advisory Service, to create interministerial committees for the national implementation of humanitarian law.

IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- maintained and restored links between separated families in the region by handling 978 Red Cross messages, following up 58 tracing requests and issuing 253 travel documents.
- gave an explanatory account to an Egyptian Red Crescent youth rally in Cairo of humanitarian law and the ICRC.

- for the fifth year running, issued an illustrated calendar in Arabic using popular characters from traditional folk tales to demonstrate respect for humanitarian values; produced a cartoon series for young people on humanitarian values and the dangers of anti-personnel landmines;
- gave courses and lectures on humanitarian law and relevant ICRC activities for military, media, academic and cultural target audiences;
- in Egyptian judicial circles, held a series of lectures for the first time on the implementation of humanitarian law and the ICRC’s mandates in international and internal armed conflicts and internal unrest for 100 chief and assistant prosecutors, 40 judges and for 40 presidents of courts of appeal.
- jointly with the Egyptian Nile TV, produced a film for use in the anti-landmines campaign in the Middle East.
TUNIS
Regional delegation
(Algeria, Libya, Mauritania,
Morocco/Western Sahara, Tunisia)

The Tunis regional delegation continued to focus on the humanitarian issues arising from the aftermath of the Western Sahara conflict and the pursuit of attempts to resume protection activities in Algeria.

The delegation stepped up efforts to improve the operational capacity and visibility of the region’s National Societies. In particular, it helped them to develop dissemination activities to improve understanding in the Maghreb region of the ICRC, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and humanitarian law. Regular contact was maintained with the region’s media to promote coverage of the activities of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and notable success was achieved in having information placed in the Moroccan and Tunisian press. The delegation gave special attention to promoting the ICRC’s anti-landmine campaign.

A delegate from the regional delegation carried out ad hoc missions to Mauritania to maintain contact with the government and the Mauritanian Red Crescent on various dissemination matters. In addition, through various contacts, the delegate was briefed on the situation of refugees from northern Mali living in south-eastern Mauritania, with a view to supporting the ICRC’s operation based in Bamako.9

Serious violence in Algeria again took its toll, mainly among civilians. The ICRC continued to seek consent for a resumption of its protection activities, which were suspended in 1992, and obtain the necessary security guarantees. The Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa visited Algiers in April and held talks with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the regional delegate carried out several further missions during the year, keeping up a substantive dialogue with the government. However, only very limited progress was achieved.

The ICRC helped to improve the Algerian Red Crescent’s capacity to cope with urgent needs by providing financial assistance for its programmes for vulnerable sections of the population.

In August, four Algerians who had been held in Morocco for 12 years and visited by the ICRC since 1994 were released and repatriated under the auspices of the organization. In December, 49 Moroccans who had been held

9 See Dakar regional delegation, pp. 46-47.
in Algeria for 11 to 17 years were released and repatriated under ICRC auspices. Four delegates, including a doctor, had visited them for the first time earlier that month.

Under the UN settlement plan accepted by the parties in 1988, the cease-fire in effect since September 1991 was to be followed by the registration of all those eligible to vote in a referendum on self-determination for the people of Western Sahara and the repatriation of all prisoners, but the referendum has repeatedly been delayed.

The ICRC, for its part, has persistently sought to obtain the release of all the prisoners held in connection with this never-ending conflict and thereby enable them to be reunited with their families. To this effect, at the request of the US and German governments, who negotiated their release, the ICRC supervised the transfer of 66 Sahrawi prisoners held by the Moroccan authorities in connection with the conflict, on 31 October. It had previously registered all these individuals during visits to the places where they were being held. The prisoners joined their families living in the Sahrawi refugee camps in the Tindouf area of southern Algeria, travelling there in a plane provided by the German authorities.

The ICRC welcomed this development, but expressed its utmost concern for those still in captivity, who should be released in conformity with humanitarian law. The issue was raised with the authorities concerned during the year. The Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa met leaders of the Polisario Front in April, and in June went to Morocco, where he met the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Commander in Chief of the Gendarmerie Royale.

In the meantime, delegates continued their regular visits to all prisoners, some of whom had been imprisoned for 20 years, and helped to restore and maintain family links.
IN 1996 THE ICRC:

- visited 1,356 Moroccan prisoners and registered 3 for the first time; within 12 months, i.e. between December 1995 and November 1996, most of the 1,900 Moroccans in the hands of the Polisario Front were seen in the course of 3 visits;
- carried out 2 visits to 66 Sahrawi prisoners in the hands of the Moroccan authorities; they were subsequently released and returned to their families, under ICRC auspices, in October;
- restored and maintained contact between Moroccan and Sahrawi prisoners and their families by exchanging 41,257 Red Cross messages and sent 1,330 family parcels to Moroccan prisoners via the Algerian Red Crescent;
- improved medical conditions for Moroccan prisoners and the Sahrawi population by providing ad hoc assistance to local medical facilities;
- supervised the repatriation of 4 Algerians held in Morocco and of 49 Moroccans held in Algeria.

- in Algeria, provided financial assistance towards the Red Crescent Society's programmes for vulnerable sections of the population: hot meals for several hundred families during Ramadan and school materials for thousands of children for the beginning of the school year;
- in Libya, provided articles for the Red Crescent Society's magazine; participated in its dissemination sessions for young people; cooperated with and provided training for its activities to restore and maintain family links;
- in Morocco, in cooperation with the Red Crescent Society, organized a seminar on medicine and humanitarian law in Tangiers and produced a brochure on a seminar held in 1995 on improving protection for women, which was well received;
- helped the National Societies of Algeria, Libya, Mauritania and Morocco to set up documentation centres on humanitarian law by supplying them with recent publications;
- worked closely with the Tunisian Red Crescent on its events to celebrate World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, and helped the youth branches set up first-aid and dissemination courses in medical schools throughout the country.

- organized 2 humanitarian law sessions for instructors to the armed forces in Mauritania and, for the first time, one in Morocco;
- in Morocco, participated in a roundtable discussion on humanitarian law at Casablanca University;
- in Tunisia, attended a conference organized by the Tunisian Press Association and raised such issues as landmines, water and war, and the protection of women and children during war; in cooperation with the Tunisian Institute for Press and Information, held a workshop entitled "Journalists and International Humanitarian Law" for 25 student journalists.

- made special efforts to follow up its campaign against landmines by providing information kits to the region's authorities, National Societies and media.
“Landmines must be stopped”. The ICRC played an important part in international efforts to put an end to the production and use of landmines. In autumn 1996, the International Strategy Conference in Ottawa brought some hope of winning over the international community to the case for banning these pernicious weapons. But for many the ban — should it finally be enforced — will unfortunately come too late. The ICRC’s prosthetic/orthotic workshops are producing as many artificial limbs as possible to meet the steadily increasing demand.
The main challenge in 1996 was to put the resolutions adopted at the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent into effect. It should be recalled that the principal theme of that conference was the need to improve implementation of international humanitarian law; to that end the conference had endorsed the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts for the Protection of War Victims. In addition, the conference had adopted a resolution on a number of humanitarian law issues of particular importance for the civilian population, and one recognizing the work undertaken to clarify the humanitarian law applicable to armed conflicts at sea.

The ICRC was especially active with regard to the mines issue. The adoption of an amended Protocol II by the first Review Conference of the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which ended in May, marked some progress. However, the new rules restricting the use of antipersonnel landmines fell far short of the ban that the ICRC had called for. A major advance then took place at the conference convened by the government of Canada in October, where a group of 50 States pledged to work towards a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. The announcement at the end of the conference that a new treaty establishing such a ban would be negotiated the following year could be seen as a commitment to implement, in treaty form, the humanitarian law rule prohibiting the use of indiscriminate weapons. All components of the Movement have been endeavouring to persuade States to adopt such a ban, and there is now hope that this can be achieved in the not too distant future.

Mention should also be made of the Advisory Opinion delivered by the International Court of Justice in July on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons. This Opinion reaffirmed the customary nature of certain rules of humanitarian law and the fact that they apply to all weapons without exception.

The ICRC Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law was very active in 1996, organizing numerous seminars in various parts of the world and encouraging as a priority the setting up of national interministerial committees as well as national legislation protecting the emblem of the red cross or red crescent and provision for universal jurisdiction for war crimes. The problem of impunity of war crimes is a serious one and for this reason the ICRC strongly supported the creation of an International Criminal Court during negotiations on this subject at meetings convened by the United Nations.

Other challenges facing the world community, on which the ICRC has been asked to prepare studies, included the problem of applying humanitarian law in failed States where anarchic conflicts prevail, and the effect of increased arms transfers. Work on these subjects began in 1996, as well as the major
study on international customary law applicable in international and non-
international armed conflicts.

Other issues discussed by the ICRC with various players in the inter-
national community are those of international minimum humanitarian
standards and the problem of internally displaced persons. Another subject of
continuing concern for the ICRC was that of the effect of armed conflicts on
children and it has sought, along with other components of the Movement, to
find ways to help children in such situations.

Even though the ICRC conducts its own activities in conflict situations, it
attaches no lesser importance to cooperation with the other components of the
Movement and in particular with the National Societies, which are ever more
closely involved in its activities in the field. The chapters of this report devoted
to the description of protection and assistance activities for the victims of
armed conflicts clearly demonstrate the intensity and value of such links. The
ICRC has entrusted National Societies with the implementation of specific
programmes in conflict situations, while retaining overall responsibility for the
action undertaken.

As part of permanent formal consultations between the ICRC and the
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, several
senior representatives of the two institutions have shared their thoughts and
made known their aims with regard to the development of National Societies,
thereby enabling regional objectives to be established for 1997.

Faced with ever more varied and complex armed conflicts, the ICRC has
continued to seek appropriate means of upholding the fundamental values
which are all too often flagrantly disregarded, or even quite simply unknown.
It has reminded the various humanitarian players of the responsibilities they
bear under the terms of the Geneva Conventions. Above all, it has en-
deavoured to diversify its working methods so as to be better understood by
the various target groups for the dissemination of humanitarian law and the
principles of the Red Cross: this is an immense task which is very difficult to
accomplish, as tragically evidenced by the murder in Chechnya of six of its
staff. One of the three main objectives of the dissemination of humanitarian
law is after all to ensure that the red cross and red crescent emblem is
respected so that humanitarian action can take place. The appalling event
which marked the end of 1996 therefore relaunched the debate on what
relationship, if any, there should be between the humanitarian domain and
the military and political domains, and on whether the form given to the
protective message which the former endeavours to spread is really suitable to
convey its content.
THE LAW AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

As the guardian and promoter of international humanitarian law, the ICRC has led and taken part in many meetings on this branch of international law. It has worked with various international and regional governmental and non-governmental organizations to promote, enhance application of and develop humanitarian law.

PROMOTION OF THE TREATIES OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

States party to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949: 188

On 25 June 1996, Palau acceded to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949. Lithuania also acceded to them on 3 October 1996. These accessions brought the number of States party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions to 188.

States party to Protocols I and II additional to the Geneva Conventions: 146 and 138 respectively

In 1996, four States became party to one or both Protocols of 8 June 1977 additional to the Geneva Conventions. It should be remembered that Protocol I relates to international armed conflicts and Protocol II to non-international armed conflicts.

Additional Protocols I and II: Dominica (25 April), Palau (25 June) and Sao Tome and Principe (5 July).

Additional Protocol II: Cyprus (18 March).

None of these States made reservations or declarations of interpretation.

The latest ratifications and accessions brought the number of States party to the two Additional Protocols of 1977 to 146 and 138 respectively. The treaties thus attained a satisfactory degree of acceptance. In 1996, the ICRC continued to encourage all States not yet bound by the 1977 Protocols to ratify or accede to them. The United Nations General Assembly placed a debate on the status of the Additional Protocols on its 1996 agenda, as it has done every two years since they were adopted in 1977, and passed a resolution (51/155) by consensus inviting States which have not yet done so to become party to them.
International Fact-Finding Commission, under Article 90 of Protocol I

Colombia (17 April) and Argentina (11 October) filed the declaration recognizing the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission to enquire into alleged violations of international humanitarian law treaties, as provided for in Article 90 of Additional Protocol I, thus bringing to 49 the number of States party to Protocol I which have made this declaration.

1980 United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)\(^1\)

Prompted by the Review Conference of States party to the 1980 UN Weapons Convention, which held two sessions in 1996, and a continuing high level of international concern about the global problem of anti-personnel landmines, five more States — Djibouti, Georgia, Luxembourg, Mauritius and the Philippines — ratified or acceded to this treaty in 1996, bringing the total number of States Parties to 62 at year's end. These five States consented to be bound by all three of the Convention's original Protocols, as have all but five of the States Parties. Benin and Jordan remain party only to Protocol I on non-detectable fragments and Protocol III on incendiary weapons; France, Israel and the United States are bound only by Protocol II on mines, booby traps and other devices and by Protocol I.

The final session of the Review Conference, which ended in Geneva on 3 May 1996, adopted an amended version of Protocol II which strengthens restrictions particularly on the use of anti-personnel mines. On 13 October 1995, the Conference's first session in Vienna adopted a new Protocol IV on blinding laser weapons to which only Finland had become party by the end of 1996. A resolution (A/51/49) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1996 called on all States to become party to the Convention and to its new and amended Protocols at an early date.\(^2\)

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\(^1\) The full title of this treaty adopted on 10 October 1980 is the United Nations Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

\(^2\) See also pp. 274-276.
RESPECT FOR AND DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

Implementation of international humanitarian law at the national level

For international humanitarian law to be fully respected, States must incorporate it into their national law by adopting the necessary legislative and regulatory measures. Such measures are aimed in particular at guaranteeing the protection of the red cross/red crescent emblem, providing for the repression of violations of international humanitarian law, defining and guaranteeing the status of protected persons, laying down fundamental guarantees of humane treatment and fair trial in times of conflict and ensuring that protected sites are indicated appropriately.

To facilitate the adoption of these measures, a number of States have set up national committees to implement international humanitarian law which are responsible for formulating, proposing and monitoring national measures. At 31 December 1996, the ICRC had recorded the existence of 35 such committees.

Advisory Service

The Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law became fully operational in early 1996. It is intended to assist governments by supplementing their own resources for the implementation of international humanitarian law at national level. For this purpose, it provides the authorities with technical assistance and encourages the exchange of information and experience between governments. While responding to requests for advice, the Service also actively offers its assistance. In all cases, it works in close cooperation with governments and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, taking into account both specific requirements and the respective political and legal systems.

In order to encourage national implementation of international humanitarian law, national seminars were held in 1996 in Zimbabwe (14-16 February), Namibia (21-23 February), Zambia (28 February-1 March), Azerbaijan (6-7 May), Slovenia (7-8 May), Senegal (8 May), Armenia (10-11 May), Georgia (13-14 May), Côte d'Ivoire (1-2 August), Nigeria (13-14 August), Ghana (26-27 August), Ukraine (4-5 September), Republic of Moldova (9-10 September), Togo (17-18 September) and Ethiopia (28-29 November).

These seminars brought together representatives of national authorities to examine implementation at national level, analyse existing measures and plan future action. They were all held in cooperation with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; international or regional organizations such as UNESCO (Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia) and the Organization for
Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (Ukraine and Republic of Moldova) also cooperated in several of them.

In addition, legal advice was given to the authorities on draft laws concerning the protection of the red cross/red crescent emblem. In order to facilitate their work in this very specific domain of humanitarian law, a model law concerning the use and protection of the emblem was drawn up and published in the International Review of the Red Cross.\(^3\)

The Advisory Service also provided technical assistance for the repression, by means of national legislation, of violations of international humanitarian law. The Kazakhstan authorities asked for its help in harmonizing their draft penal code with the provisions of humanitarian law. In response, proposals were made for incorporating the punishment of war crimes in their draft national legislation. Similar advice was given to Rwanda, at the authorities’ request. The authorities in Guatemala included the suggestions made by the Advisory Service in their revised penal code, the draft text of which was currently under consideration, and similar contacts took place with Colombia, where the penal code was also being revised. Lastly, a bill under discussion in the United States and providing for the repression of war crimes was supported by the ICRC, in close cooperation with the American Red Cross.

The Advisory Service furthermore organized a meeting of experts on committees or other bodies responsible for the implementation of international humanitarian law at national level. This meeting, which was held in Geneva from 23 to 25 October 1996, was a follow-up to Recommendation V made by the Intergovernmental Group of Experts for the Protection of War Victims, (Geneva, January 1995) and endorsed by Resolution 1 entitled “International humanitarian law: from law to action” of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Geneva, December 1995).

The purpose of this meeting, attended by representatives of over 70 States — including representatives of committees that already existed or were currently being formed — and of 35 National Societies, was to study the committees or other national bodies responsible for the implementation of international humanitarian law and to lay down some guidelines as to the characteristics that such a committee or body, when deemed useful and desirable, should have.

### Meeting of National Society Legal Advisers and Persons Responsible for Dissemination

The first Annual Meeting of National Society Legal Advisers and Persons Responsible for Dissemination was held in Geneva from 21 to 23 October 1996.

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The meeting, organized by the ICRC, was attended by over 70 people, including representatives of National Societies and the Federation. The participants discussed a number of topics of current interest relating to the development, implementation and dissemination of humanitarian law, focusing in particular on the role of National Societies.

Penal repression

The past years have seen considerable development in the mechanisms available to repress breaches of international humanitarian law. There are, for instance, the efforts made by the international community towards the creation of an international criminal court, the work accomplished by the International Law Commission on the draft Code of Crimes against the Peace and Security of Mankind, as well as the establishment of the *ad hoc* Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

In 1996, the ICRC took part in particular in the two sessions of the United Nations Preparatory Committee on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court. Strongly in favour of the creation of such a Court, the ICRC has expressed its views in a number of fora on specific issues it raises. It considers *inter alia* that the Court should be competent for the prosecution of serious violations of humanitarian law committed during international and internal armed conflicts. This competence should take effect as soon as the crime is committed — and when the States are not exercising their duty to repress violations — and should not be made subject to further conditions, such as the consent of particular States or of the Security Council.

International Fact-Finding Commission

The International Fact-Finding Commission, provided for under Article 90 of Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions, was created as one of the means of implementation of international humanitarian law. Established in 1992, its competence *ipso facto* has been recognized by 49 States. It is composed of 15 members, each acting in their individual capacity, who are elected for a period of five years. The last election took place on 29 October 1996, when most of the previous members were re-elected for another term of five years. Prior to the election, the ICRC had the opportunity to meet the members of the Commission and have an exchange of views on issues of mutual interest and concern.

Any State which has accepted the Commission’s competence may request an enquiry into facts alleged to be a serious violation of international humanitarian law. Thus far, however, the Commission has not been asked to conduct any such enquiry.
Study on customary rules of international humanitarian law

In December 1995, the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent endorsed the recommendations drawn up by the Intergovernmental Group of Experts for the Protection of War Victims which met, at the invitation of the Swiss government, from 23 to 27 January 1995. Recommendation II of this Group proposed that “the ICRC be invited to prepare, with the assistance of experts on IHL representing various geographical regions and different legal systems, and in consultation with experts from governments and international organizations, a report on customary rules of IHL applicable in international and non-international armed conflicts and to circulate the report to States and competent international bodies.”

In order to determine the best way of carrying out this task, on 11 and 12 June 1996 the ICRC consulted a group of academic experts in international humanitarian law who will be members of the Steering Committee for the proposed study.

The Steering Committee decided to divide the work between research into national sources and international sources of state practice. For the national aspect, about forty countries were chosen by the Steering Committee on the basis of geographical representation, experience with armed conflict and availability of information to Steering Committee members. It was also decided that significant practice of other countries would be ascertained by research into international sources, which will be conducted by six academic research teams, and in the archives of the ICRC. Each of these teams would concentrate on one of the areas covered by the study: the principle of distinction between combatants and non-combatants, methods of warfare, use of weapons, specific protection, treatment of persons and human rights law applicable in armed conflict, and accountability and implementation.

Research into national and international sources, carried out by national and international academic research teams, started in autumn 1996. Their reports were scheduled for completion by autumn 1997, to serve as a basis for a consolidated report produced by the Steering Committee in 1998 and then submitted to governmental experts for review. The ICRC was assigned the task of subsequently drafting the final report, taking into account the opinions of the experts consulted, for submission to the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent scheduled for 1999.

Protection of internally displaced persons

Internally displaced persons are a particularly vulnerable section of the population. Forced by war to flee their homes, they have generally had to
abandon all their belongings and are utterly destitute. Often families have been split up and children, left to fend for themselves, are in a desperate situation.

It is therefore quite natural for the ICRC to take care of internally displaced persons through its operations in the field or by seeking to provide legal protection. During the year under review, the ICRC conducted large-scale operations in aid of displaced persons, for instance in Africa, particularly in the Great Lakes region, in regions such as the northern Caucasus (especially in the Russian Federation), and in Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, to mention only a few (a detailed description of the ICRC's operational activities is given in the relevant chapters of this report). It should, however, be noted that ICRC action is always intended to help all the victims of a given situation.

Most internally displaced persons are victims of armed conflicts. As such, they are entitled to the protection of humanitarian law, particularly that guaranteed by Article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions and by 1977 Protocol II: the latter expressly prohibits forced movement of the population. The ICRC endeavoured to ensure that these rules were respected by all parties to armed conflicts by regularly reminding them of their obligations. Strict compliance with humanitarian law would enable most population displacements to be avoided, for it is precisely the repeated violations of that law which force entire communities to flee.

In view of the large number of internally displaced people — and of war victims in general — close cooperation in a spirit of complementarity is essential between the various humanitarian agencies. The ICRC consequently took part throughout the year in the work of the Task Force for Internally Displaced Persons set up by the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

It also contributed to legal discussions aimed at enhancing the protection of internally displaced persons. For example it helped with the preparation, under the auspices of the Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Internally Displaced Persons, of a document reaffirming the principles of protection by humanitarian law, with specific reference to the needs of such persons.

The ICRC took part in general in the international debate on internally displaced persons. In April, it made a statement on this subject to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and was represented at a round table organized by Norway. In October, it spoke at the UNHCR Executive Committee session and addressed the United Nations General Assembly. It continued to follow closely the work of the conference for the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which was held in Geneva on 30 and 31 May, and made a statement to it; it also took part in the drafting committee which drew up the action programme and in some of the preparatory meetings, including the one held in Minsk.
In addition, the ICRC pursued and intensified its dialogue with other humanitarian organizations, particularly UNHCR, and also attended the latter’s Standing Committee meetings.

A Symposium on Internally Displaced Persons was organized by the ICRC in Geneva in late October 1996, the proceedings of which were published and widely distributed, especially to States and international organizations.4

Protection of children in armed conflicts

The ICRC was again dismayed to note in 1996 that an ever-growing number of children were being recruited into armed forces or volunteering to fight and thus being caught up in combat. Children can easily be manipulated and encouraged to commit acts without being able to realize how serious they are. They experience all kinds of suffering and hardship, and are often captured, wounded or killed.

It remains a shocking reality of armed conflicts that contrary to existing international standards contained in international humanitarian law instruments and in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in many cases children below the age of 15 take part in the hostilities.

The ICRC therefore continued to strongly support the adoption of both preventive and remedial measures to address this disturbing phenomenon. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement also felt the need for a large-scale response. To this end, its Council of Delegates adopted a resolution in 1995 requesting the drafting and implementation of a Plan of Action aimed at promoting the principle of non-recruitment and non-participation of children below the age of 18 in armed conflicts, and taking concrete action to protect and assist child victims of armed conflicts. The ICRC participated in the two meetings of the International Coordinating Group for the Plan of Action.

In January 1996, as in previous years, the ICRC took an active part in the meeting held by the working group responsible for drafting an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. At this meeting, the ICRC supported a prohibition of the recruitment of children below 18 years of age. Concerned about the potential danger of weakening existing rules protecting children, it also expressed its opinion on a series of important points with a view to ensuring harmonization of the draft optional protocol with the principles of international humanitarian law.

Finally, the ICRC contributed its expert advice to the study on the impact of armed conflict on children, presented in November to the United Nations General Assembly by Mrs Graça Machel, expert of the Secretary-General.

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Minimum humanitarian standards

The ICRC followed with sustained interest the draft declaration of minimum humanitarian standards applicable in all situations of violence, sometimes known as the “Turku Declaration”. In its address to the Commission on Human Rights, which debated the subject at its 52nd session (March-April 1996), it endorsed the initiative to convene an international seminar, and subsequently played an extremely active part in this seminar, which was held from 27 to 30 September 1996 in South Africa. Speaking on the ICRC’s behalf, the Director of Principles, Law and Relations with the Movement pointed out in particular that the draft minimum humanitarian standards gave a very valuable summary of the fundamental rules to be respected in all situations of violence. But the ICRC also stressed that the draft should be discussed in every detail, so that it truly corresponded to the needs of those for whom it was intended and did not serve as a substitute for the far more detailed rules of existing international law, particularly in times of armed conflict. The ICRC planned to continue to explore this type of solution in cooperation with all other organizations concerned by the subject, especially during the 53rd session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 1997.

Environment

Efforts were made to spread knowledge of the Guidelines for military manuals and instructions on the protection of the environment in times of armed conflict, concentrating in particular on helping States to promote broad circulation of their content and to consider the possibility of incorporating them in their respective military instruction manuals, as invited by General Assembly resolution 49/50.

Applicability of international humanitarian law to United Nations peace-keeping and peace-making forces

The ICRC continued its work on the applicability of international humanitarian law to peace-keeping or peace-making forces, as described in its last Annual Report. Indeed, the changing nature of peace-keeping heightened the need for a clarification of this question.

For the same purpose, the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations requested the Secretary-General last year to “complete the elaboration of a code of conduct for United Nations peace-keeping personnel, consistent with applicable international humanitarian law”.

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5 UN Doc. A/50/230, para. 73.
In conformity with its mandate “to work for the understanding and dissemination of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts and to prepare any development thereof”, the ICRC studied the possible content of such a code of conduct.

To this end, it organized two meetings of experts from military and academic circles, in March and October 1995. Former commanders of United Nations forces and representatives from the United Nations Secretariat were also invited to give their expert opinions. The participants analysed all the provisions of humanitarian law in order to determine their applicability to peacekeeping forces, and drew up a draft code of conduct.

This draft was subsequently reviewed jointly, in a spirit of close cooperation, by the ICRC and the United Nations Secretariat. A final text was drawn up in May 1996, entitled Guidelines for UN forces regarding respect for international humanitarian law, the word “Guidelines” being replaced later on by “Directives”. This document sets out the content and scope of the “principles and spirit” of humanitarian law referred to in many status of force agreements. At the end of 1996, the UN Office of Legal Affairs was engaged in a last round of consultations with troop-contributing countries.

These Directives are designed for United Nations forces conducting operations under United Nations command and control in situations of armed conflict. They are meant to be used in both peace-keeping and peace-enforcement operations, where the use of force is authorized either in self-defence or in pursuance of a specific mandate from the Security Council.

It must be emphasized that the Directives do not constitute an exhaustive list of the principles and rules of international humanitarian law to be observed by military personnel. Rules of engagement, or other relevant directives adapted to particular circumstances, should indeed continue to be issued. It must also be stressed that Blue Helmets remain bound by their national legislation to respect international humanitarian law whenever this law is applicable.

Identification of medical transports

In 1996, the ICRC continued its work to improve means of identification of medical transports in times of armed conflict, concentrating on information on new technologies likely to allow identification from a greater distance.

It took part in several meetings of experts at specialized international organizations such as IMO* and ITU.* These organizations deal inter alia with technical provisions and procedures for the identification of medical transports.

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6 Article 5, para. 2(g), of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

* IMO: International Maritime Organization
* ITU: International Telecommunication Union


The revised Protocol II contains a number of improvements, including an extension of the Protocol to apply in both international and non-international armed conflicts, a clear assignment of responsibility for mine clearance to those who lay the mines and a requirement that the location of all mines be mapped and recorded. In addition, new protection is extended to humanitarian workers. States Parties will be required to enact penal legislation to punish serious violations of the Protocol and have agreed to meet annually to review its operation.

A centrepiece of the new rules is that all anti-personnel mines used must be detectable so as to facilitate mine clearance. Long-lived mines may continue to be used — if placed in fenced, marked and guarded minefields. Self-destructing mines (equipped with mechanisms which cause them to self-destruct within 30 days and, if self-destruction fails, to de-activate within 120 days) may be used without any specific restrictions on their placement. States are required to implement these provisions on detectability and self-destruction within nine years after entry into force of the amended Protocol, although they are encouraged to do so sooner. The revised Protocol places no new restrictions on the use of anti-tank or vehicle mines.

The first session of the Review Conference also adopted, on 13 October 1995, a new Protocol IV on blinding laser weapons. This Protocol, and the amended Protocol II, together constitute the legal results of its proceedings.

The ICRC participated in all sessions of the Review Conference as an observer. In this capacity it was able to attend and speak at all official meetings. In keeping with its mandate for the development and promotion of international humanitarian law the ICRC contributed substantial background documentation to the Conference. To facilitate the process of adherence to the 1980 Convention the ICRC prepared and presented to States at the 51st United Nations General Assembly “Ratification Packets” in five languages, containing summaries of the Convention and model instruments of ratification or accession. The next Review Conference of the CCW is to be held not later than 2001.
Mines

Since 1994, the ICRC has stressed that the humanitarian crisis caused by anti-personnel mines will be ended only through their total prohibition. While the ICRC welcomes the improvements in the CCW Protocol’s general provisions, it was deeply disappointed by the weak restrictions on the use of anti-personnel mines, the lack of specific restrictions on anti-tank mines, the excessively long “grace period” for implementation of key provisions on use, and the absence of a mechanism to verify the fulfilment of technical requirements for self-destructing mines and to investigate possible violations of the restrictions on use. Given these weaknesses, largely due to the need to make decisions by consensus, it considers that the amended Protocol, in and of itself, is unlikely to lead to a significant reduction in the level of civilian landmine casualties in the foreseeable future.

Despite these shortcomings the ICRC has encouraged States to adhere to the revised Protocol II of the CCW in order to strengthen the minimum international legal norms which apply when mines are used. However, it has stressed that these norms do not oblige States to use mines or to invest in new types of mine, and that humanitarian concerns can be adequately addressed only through a total ban.

By the end of the CCW Review Conference more than 40 States from all regions had come to a similar conclusion and lent their support to a total ban on anti-personnel mines. Twenty-five had announced unilateral termination or suspension of the use of these weapons by their own armed forces. Eleven announced the destruction of some or all of their stockpiles. In view of the increasing momentum in support of a total ban, Canada invited like-minded States, international agencies including the ICRC and key non-governmental organizations to an International Strategy Conference in Ottawa in October 1996 to consider how to work together towards that goal.

The Ottawa Conference brought together 50 States which committed themselves to common efforts to ban and eliminate anti-personnel mines, to reduce new deployments, to increase resources for mine awareness and clearance and to increase assistance to mine victims. At its close the Canadian Foreign Minister challenged Foreign Ministers from other States to return to Ottawa in December 1997 to sign a new treaty prohibiting the production, transfer, stockpiling and use of anti-personnel mines. The Conference also prepared an ambitious “Agenda for Action” at national, regional and global levels through 1997. A follow-up meeting of the “Ottawa Group” is planned for June 1997 in Brussels. States participating in the Ottawa meeting were later instrumental in ensuring the adoption of a new United Nations General Assembly resolution (A/51/45 S, 10 December 1996), supported by 155 States and calling for the
negotiation of a new legally binding agreement to entirely prohibit anti-personnel mines.

Blinding laser weapons
The ICRC has actively promoted adherence by States to the 1980 Convention's new Protocol IV prohibiting the use and transfer of blinding laser weapons, an instrument which it considers to be an historic achievement of the Review Conference. During negotiation of the Protocol it was agreed that it would apply both to international and non-international armed conflicts. Many States indicated that it should apply in all circumstances and there was broad agreement that these weapons should not exist at all. A resolution of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent reaffirmed that the Protocol should apply not only to international armed conflicts. However, wording to this effect could not be adopted at the final session of the CCW Review Conference in April and May 1996 owing to objections of principle by a State which nonetheless was opposed to all uses of blinding laser weapons. For this reason the ICRC has encouraged States, when adhering to this new international instrument, to declare their understanding that it applies "in all circumstances". The ICRC has also encouraged further national measures to ensure that such weapons are neither developed nor produced.

Other arms-related issues
Arms transfers
The ICRC has become increasingly concerned about the effects of the virtually unrestrained transfer of arms, particularly small arms, around the globe. Its experience has been that enormous quantities of light weapons are available to virtually any individual or group seeking to acquire them, and that they are all too often used in flagrant violation of the rules of humanitarian law. In 1996 the ICRC began a dialogue on this issue within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in preparation for an ICRC study, requested by the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and scheduled for 1997, on the relationship between arms availability and violations of international humanitarian law.

Nuclear weapons
In July 1996 the International Court of Justice issued an Advisory Opinion, requested by the United Nations General Assembly, on the legality of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This was the first time that international humanitarian law governing the use of weapons has been analysed in some
detail by the Court. It ruled that while “There is in neither customary nor conventional international law any comprehensive and universal prohibition of the threat or use of nuclear weapons... the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law”.

The ICRC welcomed the reaffirmation by the Court of certain rules which it defined as “intransgressible”, in particular the absolute prohibition of the use of weapons which are by their nature indiscriminate and the prohibition of the use of weapons that cause unnecessary suffering. It was also encouraged by the Court’s affirmation that humanitarian law applies to all weapons without exception, including new ones.

The ICRC noted the Court’s finding, based on the scientific evidence submitted, that “…The destructive power of nuclear weapons cannot be contained in either space or time... the radiation released by a nuclear explosion would affect health, agriculture, natural resources and demography over a very wide area. Further, the use of nuclear weapons would be a serious danger to future generations...”. In the light of this the ICRC, in a statement to the United Nations General Assembly, commented that it “finds it difficult to envisage how a use of nuclear weapons could be compatible with the rules of international humanitarian law”. The ICRC is convinced that because of their devastating effect no one ever wants to see these weapons used and hopes that the Court’s opinion will give fresh impetus to efforts to rid humanity of this terrible threat.

Other weapons

In 1996 the ICRC continued to follow technological developments concerning other weapons with a view to promoting the specific regulation or prohibition, as necessary and in accordance with the rules of international humanitarian law, of new arms. It also continued to consider proposals for further regulation of the use of naval mines and of small calibre arms.

HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENTS

In 1996 the ICRC signed headquarters agreements with the Republic of Mali (16 April) — the new agreement replaced a previous one dating from 1992 — and the Republic of Azerbaijan (29 July). A similar arrangement was signed on 16 July with the Republic of Yemen. At the end of the year several other agreements were under negotiation. Such agreements establish the legal status of ICRC delegations in the countries concerned.
STATES PARTY  
TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS  
AND THEIR ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS

The following tables show which States were party to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and to the two Additional Protocols of 1977, as at 31 December 1996. They also indicate which States had made the optional declaration under Article 90 of 1977 Protocol I, recognizing the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission. The names of the countries given in the tables may differ from their official names.

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

Abbreviations

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

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

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

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

Declaration provided for under Article 90 of Protocol I (D90): prior acceptance of the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission.
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281
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Palestine

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

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

1 Djibouti's declaration of succession in respect of the First Convention was dated 26 January 1978.
2 On accession to Protocol II, France made a communication concerning Protocol I.
3 Entry into force on 7 December 1978.
4 Entry into force on 7 December 1978.
5 Entered into force on 23 September 1966, the Republic of Korea having invoked Art. 62/61/141/157 common respectively to the First, Second, Third and Fourth Conventions (immediate effect).
6 An instrument of accession to the Geneva Conventions and their additional Protocols was deposited by the United Nations Council for Namibia on 18 October 1983. In an instrument deposited on 22 August 1991, Namibia declared its succession to the Geneva Conventions, which were previously applicable pursuant to South Africa's accession on 31 March 1952.
7 The First Geneva Convention was ratified on 7 March 1951.
8 Accession to the Fourth Geneva Convention on 23 February 1959 (Ceylon had signed only the First, Second, and Third Conventions).
9 Entry into force on 21 October 1950.
The humanitarian message must be constantly adapted to the various audiences to which it is addressed. Programmes to promote humanitarian law are not designed merely to “teach” it, but also to encourage a certain form of interactivity inducing participants to give thought to the fundamental humanitarian principles and show systematic respect for human dignity. Those principles are the very basis of humanitarian law, which is nowadays all too often ignored or deliberately flouted as random violence spreads and the chain of command disintegrates, even though there is a general obligation to apply that law and to ensure that it is applied.

Violence and respect for the individual

In situations of tension and conflict, it is as essential as ever to remind the various bearers of weapons that they may not resort to violence indiscriminately. The primary aim of dissemination activities is therefore to avert and reduce violations of humanitarian law. The second priority is to have access to the victims. This requires the protagonists to understand the ICRC’s mandate and above all guarantee the security of humanitarian operations. As the borderline between military hostilities and criminal acts, i.e. between the overall conduct of hostilities and individual violations (banditry or lack of discipline among troops), is very tenuous in many situations of conflict today, the security of humanitarian workers is a crucial consideration. It is therefore imperative to make everyone — from government representatives and military commanders to the individual members of any given community or group — aware of their obligations to respect human dignity and not to wantonly destroy human lives.

Throughout the military operations in Chechnya, the ICRC endeavoured to remind combatants on both sides of the need to respect the rules of humanitarian law and of their responsibilities in this regard. For its own activities to be accepted and conducted in the safest possible circumstances, its mandate, too, had to be understood and respected. Eventually the ICRC was allowed to have access to the Russian military bases and address the troops leaving for Chechnya. Additional means of bringing home the humanitarian principles to officers and soldiers were used; for example, articles were published in the weekly military journal and games were specially designed for
instruction in humanitarian law. On the Chechen side, contact was established with the council of elders; radio broadcasts, songs and plays based on local folklore also helped to get certain messages across. Since the security of humanitarian operations often depends on collective responsibility, programmes to promote knowledge of humanitarian law and principles were not confined to combatants; the Chechen population was also one of the target groups for dissemination. However, the murder of six ICRC expatriates at Novye Atagi at the end of the year was tragic evidence that although the sensitive task of dissemination is indispensable for preventive purposes, such activities alone cannot guarantee the security of humanitarian workers.

It is therefore of paramount importance to adapt the humanitarian message to the various types of bearers of weapons. In Sri Lanka, for example, reminders were given of the basic rules of humanitarian law both in military academies and camps and to police instructors and members of the Special Task Force. The attention of the other party to the conflict, the LTTE* fighters, was likewise drawn to these rules. In Iraq, when hostilities resumed in the north of the country, the ICRC not only handed over an official document to the various authorities urging them to comply with humanitarian law but also immediately sent radio announcements explaining the minimum humanitarian rules to be respected by combatants to the local radio stations of both the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

Raising awareness as widely as possible

The traditional approach of holding dissemination sessions means that although target groups are reached, they are by definition restricted. For the humanitarian message to be heard by the largest possible number of people and thus be more effective in preventing violations of humanitarian law, its transmission via the mass media has become increasingly systematic.

The ICRC delegations continued to step up their production of audiovisual material and many local coproductions were prepared and completed. In Angola, the national radio service and UNITA* radio broadcast weekly programmes drawing attention to the ICRC’s mandate and activities and to the need to respect Red Cross staff. In Afghanistan, owing to the way the conflict developed, radio became the best means of conveying the message there; it was consequently used to promote knowledge of and compliance with the basic principles of humanitarian law and to encourage acceptance of the ICRC’s activities and those of the Afghan Red Crescent Society. In response to

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* LTTE: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, Tamil opposition
* UNITA: National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
an initiative by the Cairo delegation, Radio Monte Carlo, which covers most of the Arab countries, broadcast two series of 30 episodes illustrating the problems involved in humanitarian work.

Even though a message is widely disseminated, in order to be assimilated it must be understood by the people for whom it is intended. Hence the ICRC’s efforts to incorporate local cultural values in its dissemination activities and to put the message over by eliciting automatic responses that are dictated by local traditions.

The Somalis, for example, have a whole system of rules to govern the various aspects of their daily lives, including conduct in combat. A study of these traditional rules was made by Somali historians for the ICRC, and their findings should enable messages encouraging respect for fundamental humanitarian principles to be put over more effectively. In Egypt, for several years calendars have been produced for countries in the Middle East and North Africa; they are based on Arab-Islamic history, law and literature, and even on certain features of popular folklore.

Tackling the mines problem: prevention

The ICRC has engaged in a worldwide campaign to obtain a total prohibition of the use of anti-personnel mines\(^1\) by urging States to stop producing, exporting or using these weapons, which strike indiscriminately. Despite this campaign millions of landmines lie in wait, an ever-present threat for entire populations. In order to lessen the carnage caused by weapons that remain active long after hostilities have ceased, it is essential to alert the civilian population to the dangers of mines in the areas where they live and show them how to change their customary behaviour so as to protect themselves against these insidious devices.

Realizing that it is easier to do so by involving the people who are directly at risk, the ICRC therefore began to train local instructors in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Thanks to the snowball effect, within six months about a hundred people, mainly members of national and local Red Cross organizations, were capable of conducting prevention programmes. To get the message through to the largest possible number of people, TV and radio spots, posters and T-shirts and educational material for schools were also used. In the Huambo province of Angola, over 7,500 people were alerted to the danger of mines by a group of local musicians singing traditional songs in Portuguese and Umbundu. Performances were also given for schoolchildren. In addition, the ICRC helped some 50 national and international media wishing to cover various aspects of the threat posed by mines.

\(^1\) See *The law and legal considerations*, pp. 274-276, and *Communication*, p. 309.
The responsibility of States

The ICRC’s dissemination efforts alone cannot prevent all violations of humanitarian law. The States themselves have the responsibility, clearly defined by the Geneva Conventions, to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and to ensure that it is respected. The work of the regional delegations, for example, consists among other things in making governments aware of their obligations and thereby forestalling violations of the fundamental humanitarian principles. In other words, the ICRC must also work well outside the conflict areas: in order to encourage a humanitarian mentality and culture, it is stepping up its activities in over 150 countries and establishing an ever-greater number of contacts there. The inclusion of humanitarian law studies in university syllabuses reflects this desire to familiarize future soldiers and politicians with a body of law that is fundamental to respect for humanitarian values.

In Asia, many seminars were held to enable law professors and lecturers to develop such courses of study at their universities, in particular in India and Cambodia. In Indonesia, where humanitarian law was already being taught, a seminar attended by about 20 law faculty staff from every part of the country helped them to acquire a more in-depth knowledge of the subject, to distinguish between humanitarian law and human rights law and to exchange teaching experience. In the Russian Federation, the first course on humanitarian law was organized for about 40 lecturers from faculties of law and international relations.

Another challenge: young people

Thinking of children in a conflict generally means thinking in terms of victims. But young people are taking an increasingly active part in violence and even conflicts. While it is important to influence those who enlist them, it is essential to get through directly to the young people themselves and use appropriate strategies to instil respect in them for certain rules.

In Somalia the ongoing *Look before you leap* programme, conducted jointly by the Somali Red Crescent Society and the ICRC and intended especially for young armed militia members, made a good start. It is largely based on real-life situations encountered by the young people concerned, and its purpose is to lay down certain rules of behaviour to be followed even in a violent environment. To do so, comics drawn by local artists and song cassettes were distributed, a play written by Red Crescent volunteers was performed in various parts of the country and advertisements bearing humanitarian messages were put up at key points in Mogadishu.

In countries hard-hit by recent conflicts or still prey to a certain instability, young people must be assisted in their efforts to replace the spiral of violence
by a spirit of solidarity which will enable them to reconstruct their physical and psychological environment.

In Croatia, for example, over 150 teachers were trained to organize information activities, discussions and drawing competitions, both in school and outside, and also to set up youth sections of the Red Cross. By taking part in social welfare activities, these young people not only made a human gesture but also helped to spread the humanitarian message.

Behaviour is moulded at a very early age and it is clear that educating young people plays a crucial part.

In Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and the Russian Federation, distribution to over 2,500,000 schoolchildren aged 11 and 12 of a reading book with texts illustrating behavioural problems in violent situations was well under way by the end of the year. This programme was to be extended to advanced secondary school pupils and introduced in other Central Asian republics.

Aware of the media’s influence on young people with regard to violence, the ICRC continued to consider projects to encourage them to think about violence and individual and collective responsibility. Several delegations, such as those in Colombia and South Africa, conducted studies on young people involved in urban violence, particularly those who had formed armed gangs.

Encouraging the activities of National Societies and local disseminators

The bearer of the message is often just as important as the content of the message itself and the use of local human resources may be particularly conducive to success. The ICRC is tending more and more to encourage dissemination programmes devised and carried out by National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies themselves. To do so it helps, among other things, to train instructors who can thus spread the humanitarian message more widely by passing it on to other instructors.

The Somali proverb “Hands joined together work well together” has given rise to several projects, all based on cooperation with communities and local authorities. Five Somali Red Crescent Society theatre troupes were set up and the Society produced material to promote knowledge of humanitarian law and principles. “Why has the ICRC switched from distributing food to putting on plays? Are you only now trying to convey a humanitarian message?” Such was the comment made by a Somali elder about past and present ICRC activity in his country.

In Iraq, nine Red Crescent teams, each responsible for one province, were advised and financed by the ICRC. The teams regularly carried out programmes to familiarize schoolchildren, women’s associations and groups of
villagers with the ICRC’s mandate. A film entitled Remembering the silence and produced by the ICRC, in which former detainees are asked about the harm caused by their detention, was shown on several occasions to the administrative and security staff of certain detention centres in Iraq. To judge by their reactions at the end of the showing, it obviously gave them food for thought.

In Liberia, after ICRC delegates had to leave the country, the bulk of the delegation’s work consisted for obvious security reasons of activities to promote knowledge of and compliance with humanitarian law and principles: local staff spared no effort to conduct such activities among the soldiers of ECOMOG* and at the various checkpoints.

These few examples show how indispensable such programmes are to create a universal culture advocating respect for human dignity. It is important to get the message through both to the victims of conflicts and to all who bear weapons.

Dissemination to the armed forces:
A rapidly developing area of activity

At the end of 1996, the Division for Dissemination to the Armed Forces changed its name to the Division for Relations with Armed and Security Forces (ASF). What was the reason for this?

Instruction in the rules of the law of armed conflicts for the senior officers of the regular armed forces remains the chief task of this specialized unit. Armed conflicts and other situations of violence are changing in nature and going beyond the scope of provisions laid down for the conduct of hostilities, such as those of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols. In view of the multiplicity of “bearers of weapons” and government forces deployed to restore internal law and order, the ICRC extended the target group concept to include the security and police forces and a training module was designed for senior officers of such forces. The course covers all aspects of human rights and international humanitarian law which must be borne in mind by State officials in the performance of their duties.

The dissemination of humanitarian law in military and paramilitary circles is backed up at strategic and tactical levels. In order to convince government officials that respect for the principles of international law and humanitarian law in performing their duties is a requirement which enhances the credibility of the State, the ICRC took up increasing contact with them, making more systematic use of advisers to the armed forces who are themselves general

* ECOMOG: Economic Community Monitoring Group
officers. Discussions at the highest level of command of the armed forces, participation in international seminars and lectures at the most prestigious international military academies resulted in openings at NATO (NATO School, Rome), the United Nations and military institutes such as the Royal College of Defence Studies, the Defence College, Camberley, and the Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr.* At the supranational level, the ICRC developed its relations with NATO (SHAPE* and PfP*), OSCE* and the United Nations (e.g. peace-keeping contingents) by taking part in courses and military exercises (in Oberammergau, Heidelberg, Brunssum, etc.) intended primarily to improve cooperation and coordination between military, political and humanitarian circles.

At an important meeting with representatives of the SHAPE Operations Division, possible areas for cooperation were identified, particularly in the training sector.

Having decided to extend its courses to security and police forces as well, the ICRC engaged a police officer to design a training module covering humanitarian law and human rights and a course, scheduled for spring 1997, to train a “pool of police officers” to help provide such instruction in countries requesting it. While developing the strategy and appropriate backup and teaching materials, and using police experts, the ASF Division held training sessions in Turkmenistan, India, Sri Lanka, Croatia, Congo, Belize and Brazil.

So that officers can use the latest technology when taking or giving courses for the armed forces, attractive modern teaching materials were devised. For example, a “teach-yourself” CD-ROM on humanitarian law was made, with the assistance of the Swiss army, for members of the armed forces. It was produced in four languages (English, French, German and Italian), and work began on versions including Russian and Spanish. To enable staff officers of large combat units to practise taking tactical decisions in situations where there are several possible options and where the humanitarian dimension must be taken into account, a brigade exercise was devised by a meeting of military experts.

The foundations were also laid for the model manual on humanitarian law which the ICRC was requested to prepare, following a recommendation to that effect by the Intergovernmental Group of Experts for the Protection of War Victims at its meeting in January 1995; the Experts’ recommendations had been endorsed in December of the same year by the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The manual, of an essentially practical nature, is intended mainly for commanders of combat troops who are not trained lawyers.

* Staff College of the Federal German Defence Force
* SHAPE: Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
* PfP: Partnership for Peace
* OSCE: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
A major ICRC concern is the security of delegates engaged in humanitarian activities. Great care is therefore devoted to their training in order to avoid accidents due to inappropriate behaviour. The ASF Division worked very closely as an advisory unit with the Directorate of Operations in this area and produced a CD-ROM, entitled Target Zero, on the effects of weapons.

As delegates to the armed forces were increasingly requested to act as instructors, course directors/ coordinators or operational advisers, officers who belonged to the pool of humanitarian law instructors had to be called in more and more frequently. They carried out a total of eleven ad hoc assignments in eleven countries, including longer missions in the Balkans and the Middle East.

As part of the traditional regular activities carried out by ASF delegates and by their colleagues posted on five continents, 86 courses on humanitarian law/ the law of war were given to 1,683 officers from 55 countries.

Nineteen workshops for national instructors trained 370 people to pass on what they themselves had learnt by carrying out national training programmes on international humanitarian law/ the law of war.

Two regional meetings were held in Africa: the first, in Cotonou (Benin), for ten countries of ECOWAS,* and the second in Yaoundé (Cameroon), attended by 20 French-speaking African countries to assess the progress of national programmes of instruction in humanitarian law/the law of war.

Towards the end of the year, the first conference for heads of training in five countries on three continents was held in Geneva, bringing together strategists and tacticians. Eight generals and seven senior officers discussed the teaching of humanitarian law/the law of war in a new strategic environment and drew up work programmes adapted to the various levels of the military hierarchy, along with recommendations for the instruction of members of the armed forces in humanitarian law/the law of war.

Several information sessions on humanitarian law and the ICRC were held for UNIFIL,* UNDOF* and UNTSO* and for Uruguayan and Ghanaian contingents leaving on peace-keeping missions.

A document entitled Guidelines for UN forces regarding respect for international humanitarian law, which was prepared jointly by United Nations and ICRC lawyers, was officially handed over by the ICRC President to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, opening the way for the preparation of a special training module for UN troops.

* ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States
* UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
* UNDOF: United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
* UNTSO: United Nations Truce Supervision Organization
ICRC ACTION WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

STATUTORY MEETINGS

IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS
OF THE 26TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (3-7 December 1995) adopted eight resolutions which contain commitments by States party to the Geneva Conventions, National Societies, the Federation and the ICRC. This report describes the work carried out by the ICRC to implement the first five resolutions.

Resolution 1

The Conference solemnly reaffirmed that States must respect international humanitarian law and urged them to implement the Recommendations drawn up by the Intergovernmental Group of Experts, in particular by adopting appropriate measures at the national and international level and supporting international organizations working in this field. It called upon them to provide adequate support to the components of the Movement in carrying out the tasks entrusted to them by the Recommendations and invited them to consider further steps towards the effective protection of war victims.

During the year, the ICRC established an Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law consisting of a small team in Geneva and four legal experts based at ICRC delegations on different continents; their function is to advise governments and National Societies on legislative and practical measures to enhance respect for and implementation of international humanitarian law, and to encourage them to adopt such measures.1

For that purpose, two seminars were held in Geneva in October.2

Resolution 2

In Resolution 2, the 26th International Conference reaffirmed the obligations, under international humanitarian law, of States and parties to armed conflicts with regard to the effects of those conflicts on the civilian population. It highlighted eight specific situations or issues which require the urgent

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1 See *The law and legal considerations*, p. 266-267.
2 See *The law and legal considerations*, p. 267-268.
attention of the international community: the protection of the whole of the civilian population, the situation of women and children, the reunification of families, the civilian population affected by famine or deprived of water, antipersonnel landmines and blinding weapons.

The whole of the civilian population

In this regard, the Conference reaffirmed the obligation of States to respect and to ensure respect for the relevant principles and norms of international humanitarian law, and the obligation of all parties to armed conflicts to comply with the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Additional Protocols thereto. It condemned sexual violence and emphasized the importance for humanitarian organizations to have unimpeded access to civilian populations in need.

The situation of women

The Conference strongly condemned sexual violence in the conduct of armed conflict and urged that mechanisms to investigate, bring to justice and punish all those responsible for such acts be established and strengthened.

The ICRC has helped to implement the resolutions in these two respects primarily by operations to protect and assist the victims of conflict.

The situation of children

The Conference strongly condemned all forms of violence against children, as well as the sexual exploitation to which they are subjected. It also condemned the recruitment and conscription of children under the age of 15 years in the armed forces or armed groups; it recommended that parties to conflict refrain from arming children under the age of 18 years and preclude their participation in hostilities. The ICRC pursued its efforts, in the field and at special meetings, to enhance the protection of children and paid particular attention to implementing the relevant Plan of Action for the Movement.

Reunification of families

In this section the Conference made a point of reminding parties to conflict that they must avoid any action aimed at — or having the effect of — causing the separation of families and appealed to States to solve the serious humanitarian issue of dispersed families. It placed particular stress on assistance for unaccompanied children with a view to reuniting them with their families.

3 See Council of Delegates below and The law and legal considerations, Protection of children, p. 271.
The ICRC intensified its efforts, in cooperation with the National Societies and the Federation, to locate and identify unaccompanied children, to re-establish contact with and reunite them with their families, and to give them the necessary assistance and support. For its part, the ICRC’s Central Tracing Agency (CTA) continued to coordinate, whenever necessary, National Society activities in tracing and family reunification and to train National Society staff in the principles and techniques of tracing.

The civilian population affected by famine or deprived of water

The Conference strongly condemned attempts to starve civilian populations in armed conflicts and called upon parties to conflicts to avoid disrupting water-supply systems used by civilians. The ICRC itself made great efforts to restore water-supply systems damaged in military operations to working order.

Anti-personnel landmines and blinding weapons

The Conference noted the progress made towards the total elimination of anti-personnel landmines. It also welcomed the will of States to prohibit blinding weapons. The ICRC was very active in providing legal advice, conducting public campaigns and organizing or taking part in conferences on the subject.

Resolution 3

States which had not yet done so were urged to draft manuals on international humanitarian law applicable to armed conflicts at sea and encouraged to take into account the provisions of the *San Remo Manual* when drafting manuals and other instructions for their naval forces. The ICRC continued its dissemination work, while ensuring that attention was drawn to the *San Remo Manual* at special courses and seminars on international humanitarian law applicable to armed conflicts at sea.

Resolution 4

Resolution 4 of the Conference entitled *Principles and action in international humanitarian assistance and protection* was designed to draw the attention of governments to certain sensitive issues during action in the event of disasters. The resolution contains seven sections, each covering a specific aspect of such interventions and inviting States and, where appropriate, National Societies, the Federation and the ICRC, to take certain measures.
With regard more specifically to internally displaced persons and refugees, States were requested to fulfil their commitments under existing international instruments and in accordance with established practice. The resolution also highlights the lasting nature of many current refugee crises and calls upon States to provide appropriate funding for activities on behalf of the victims and also adequate food aid for such activities to be carried out. The Movement's essential role in providing assistance and protection to internally displaced persons is underscored, along with the need for National Societies to inform the Federation and the ICRC of any negotiations conducted with the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) which might lead to an official agreement.

Resolution 5

In Resolution 5, the Conference drew the attention of States to the role of National Societies as providers of vital health care, social services and emergency assistance, and stressed the need to develop their capacities so that they can act effectively as an auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field.

National Societies, the Federation and the ICRC were furthermore requested to continue to support the development of the global network of National Societies, especially by strengthening their institutional development, resources and programmes.

The ICRC itself undertook to continue to strengthen recognized and emerging National Societies by devoting increased human and financial resources to their institutional development, and envisaged sharing the experience acquired in its cooperation programmes so as to prepare guidelines for good cooperation practice. In addition, a small working group was set up under the auspices of the Joint ICRC/Federation Commission for National Society Statutes in order to draw up a model law of recognition, to be finalized after consultation with the National Societies and submitted to the 27th International Conference.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS OF THE 1995 COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

The Council of Delegates which met in early December 1995 adopted a number of resolutions and the ICRC did its utmost to implement them. Besides its participation in the work of the Standing Commission and the Advisory Commission (see below), two important areas of activity should be mentioned.
Children in armed conflicts

In its resolution on children in armed conflicts, the Movement adopted a Plan of Action in aid of children in armed conflicts which aims, in particular, to promote the principle of non-participation and non-recruitment of children below the age of 18 years in armed conflicts and to take concrete action to protect and assist child victims of armed conflicts.

In accordance with the decision taken by the Council of Delegates, and in order to carry out this plan, a coordination group composed of representatives of the ICRC, the Federation and four National Societies was set up and met twice in 1996. Discussions at its meetings focused on organizational aspects (the Swedish Red Cross agreed to act as the international focal point) and on finding ways to implement the Plan of Action.

Information policy of the Movement

In its resolution on the information policy of the Movement, the Council of Delegates called upon the ICRC and the Federation to convene a geographically representative forum of key communicators from National Societies and to produce a set of coherent project plans to run from 1996 to the millennium.

The ICRC and the Federation took several steps to encourage National Societies to support this forum, in accordance with Resolution 6. A meeting held at the American Red Cross headquarters in Washington on 25 and 26 June and chaired by a representative of the Belgian National Society was attended, for instance, by communication experts from the American Red Cross, Belgian Red Cross, Lebanese Red Cross, South African Red Cross, Uganda Red Cross Society and the Red Cross branch of Hong Kong together with senior staff of the respective ICRC and Federation communication departments. Besides several other projects, the ICRC was asked to set up a communication training programme for senior officials of National Societies, to work on a documentary presenting the Movement and to put forward a concept for a home page on the World Wide Web to give access to information about the Movement and to its components’ websites.

STANDING COMMISSION

The newly constituted Standing Commission met three times during the year: on 19 and 20 February, on 16 May and on 4 and 5 November. The ICRC was represented by its President and the Director of Principles, Law and Relations with the Movement.
Pursuant to the resolutions to that effect adopted by the Council of Delegates, the Standing Commission examined the problem of use of the emblem, formulated the rules of procedure for an arbitration mechanism to settle any differences that may arise within the Movement, and prepared the agenda for the Council of Delegates scheduled for November 1997.

At its November meeting, the Standing Commission decided that the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent would be held in Geneva during the second half of 1999; it instructed the ICRC and the Federation to organize and convene it.

Since September 1996, the Commission has had a permanent secretary who has an office at the Henry Dunant Institute in Geneva.

ADVISORY COMMISSION

The independent Advisory Commission, set up by the 1995 Council of Delegates as the successor to the Policy and Planning Advisory Commission, began work at the beginning of the year, concentrating mainly on two subjects:

♦ a review of the statutory provisions concerning the role, competencies and functioning of statutory bodies of the Movement; and

♦ work on a clear definition of the organization of the international activities of the Movement’s components and preparation of a draft agreement on this subject for endorsement by the next Council of Delegates (November 1997), which would bind all components of the Movement.

The ICRC designated three representatives to sit on this Commission with representatives of National Societies (six members) and the Federation (three members). All members are appointed ad personam. A broad exchange of views on the Commission’s mandate and work took place on 1 November at a meeting between the ICRC Executive Board and the entire Commission.

RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE MOVEMENT

NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The ICRC attaches great importance to the meetings of National Societies. Its President, several members of the Committee — the ICRC’s governing board — or other senior ICRC officials therefore attended a number of conferences or important regional meetings such as:
♦ the Extended Meeting of National Societies of the Visegrad Group (Bratislava, March);
♦ the fifth meeting of National Societies of the Pacific (Solomon Islands, June);
♦ the 26th Conference of Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies (Amman, September);
♦ the 4th Pan African Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Kampala, September);
♦ the Xth conference of National Societies of countries within ASEAN (Bangkok, September/October);

as well as several meetings of the Organizing Committee for the next Regional Conference of European National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to be held in Copenhagen from 17 to 20 March 1997.

The ICRC also took part in ceremonies celebrating important anniversaries of certain National Societies such as:
♦ the centenary of the South African Red Cross Society (May);
♦ the 120th anniversary of the Red Cross of Romania (July);
♦ the centenary of the Canadian Red Cross Society (Ottawa, October);
♦ the 50th anniversary of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (Damascus, October);
♦ the 75th anniversary of the Albanian Red Cross (Tirana, December).

These meetings provided an opportunity to strengthen recent or longstanding links and to demonstrate the ICRC's solidarity and desire to cooperate with National Societies.

During the year under review the ICRC, at the request of National Societies or by specific invitation, organized 82 visits to its Geneva headquarters for 302 people, including presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries general, directors, staff members and volunteer workers from National Societies of all continents, but particularly Europe and Asia. The visits helped to establish or maintain a dialogue conducive to the strengthening of the Movement.

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

Joint ICRC/Federation Commission for National Society Statutes

On the basis of the recommendations of the Joint ICRC/Federation Commission for National Society Statutes, on 6 November 1996 the ICRC
Assembly recognized the Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent Society. This new component of the Movement was then admitted provisionally to membership of the Federation by the latter's Executive Council.

The number of recognized National Societies thus stood at 170 at the end of the year. Several Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies were in the process of being set up and were expected to take part in the next Council of Delegates in November 1997, either as observers or as fully fledged members.

The Commission met seven times. In accordance with Resolution VI of the 22nd International Conference (Tehran, 1973), Resolution XX of the 24th International Conference (Manila, 1981) and the Constitution of the Federation, it monitored application and constant observance of the rules governing recognition of new National Societies and their admission to the Federation. It also examined the amendments that National Societies proposed to make to their statutes, in order to ensure that the statutes remain in conformity with the conditions for recognition and the Movement's Fundamental Principles and that those National Societies function democratically.

Joint ICRC/Federation meetings

Apart from the almost daily contacts between staff members of the two institutions, Article 35 of the 1989 ICRC/Federation Agreement provides for joint meetings at least three times a year. The meetings are intended to assist the Movement's statutory bodies in settling any procedural and substantive questions that may arise. They also serve to keep the two institutions regularly informed about the coordination of their activities and about all topics of interest to the Movement as a whole.

ICRC and Federation leaders met six times in 1996. Discussions focused on:

♦ appraisal of and follow-up to the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent;
♦ follow-up to the Council of Delegates and the resolutions adopted in 1995;
♦ preparation of and follow-up to Standing Commission meetings;
♦ organization and preparation of the 27th International Conference;
♦ efforts to harmonize views with regard to certain areas of activity common to both institutions.

In addition to these formal meetings, ICRC and Federation leaders met several times more informally for the specific purpose of improving functional cooperation between the two institutions.
FUNDS AND MEDALS

Joint Commission for the Empress Shôken Fund

This Fund was created in 1912 by a gift from the Empress of Japan, after whom it is called, and its capital has been increased several times by gifts from the Japanese Imperial Family, the government, the Japanese Red Cross, some Japanese citizens and the "Meiji Jingu Shrine Sukei-Kai" association, devoted to the memory of the Empress. The capital of the Fund was again increased in 1996 by gifts from the Empress, who is the Honorary President of the Japanese Red Cross, and from the Japanese government. The income from the Fund is used for the full or partial financing of National Society projects in the areas of development, equipment and transport.

The Commission, which is chaired by an ICRC member, examined requests for grants submitted by 49 National Societies, thus many more than in previous years. At a meeting on 15 April, in the presence of Japan's Permanent Representative in Geneva, the Commission awarded grants totalling 351,000 Swiss francs to 14 National Societies (Barbados, Belize, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Guyana, Hungary, Latvia, Lesotho, Namibia, Nepal, Pakistan, Senegal, Syria and Zambia).

Each recipient Society is required to send the Joint Commission, within 12 months of receiving its grant, a report on its use and the results achieved.

Maurice de Madre French Fund

Count Maurice de Madre, who died in 1970, bequeathed part of his property to the ICRC, stipulating the use to be made of it. The purpose of the Fund is to assist staff of National Societies, the Federation or the ICRC who suffer injury or illness in the service of the Movement or, in the event of their death, to assist their families. In exceptional cases, an allocation may be made even though the illness, accident or death has no direct link with service within the Movement. The Fund may also contribute to the training of recipients and help them to resume their professional activity.

National Societies aware of cases in which the Fund could award grants present a file in support of each application. Most files are prepared by ICRC and Federation delegates, in consultation with the National Society concerned.

In 1996, the Board of the Fund considered applications relating to staff of the Movement or their relatives and allocated a total of over 150,000 Swiss francs to recipients in the following countries: Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Belarus, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, El Salvador, Equatorial
Guinea, Guinea, Haiti, Kenya, Lebanon, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Spain, Tanzania, Uganda, Yugoslavia and Zaire.

Florence Nightingale Medal

As a tribute to the outstanding services rendered by Florence Nightingale, the 9th International Conference of the Red Cross, held in Washington in 1912, decided to set up a fund to award an international commemorative medal. It is the highest distinction that a nurse can receive. Under the Fund’s regulations, the Florence Nightingale Medal may be awarded to qualified male or female nurses and also to male or female voluntary nursing aides who are active members or regular helpers of a National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society or of an affiliated medical or nursing institution. The Medal may be awarded to individuals in these categories who have distinguished themselves in time of peace or war by their exceptional courage and devotion to the wounded, sick or disabled, or to civilian victims of a conflict or disaster; or by exemplary services and a pioneering and creative spirit in the areas of preventive medicine or public health. The Medal may also be awarded posthumously to honour the memory of a person who has fallen on active service.

A circular was sent on 2 September to National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies inviting them to submit, by 3 March 1997 at the latest, one or more candidates for the forthcoming 37th award of the Medal on 12 May 1997, the anniversary of Florence Nightingale’s birth. No more than 50 medals may be awarded at any one of these distributions, which take place every second year.

HENRY DUNANT INSTITUTE

The Henry Dunant Institute was set up in 1965 by the ICRC, the Federation and the Swiss Red Cross to contribute to the Movement’s development in the world.

In 1996, the Institute continued its work by building up contacts with National Societies and other organizations and institutions, particularly in the teaching and research fields. It also responded to requests for consultation, accepted trainees from National Societies and from various universities and research centres, published studies it had carried out and expanded its documentation centre. Institute staff took part inter alia in a seminar organized by the ICRC for Russian Federation university teaching staff.

Since 1974, the training given at the Henry Dunant Institute has consisted mainly of annual courses for senior officials of National Societies. The 21st annual course took place in Spanish from 12 to 24 May 1996 in Geneva, at the
Institute. Eighteen people from 18 Spanish-language National Societies took part in the course, which was held in close collaboration with the ICRC and the Federation. Various groups from outside the Movement also receive training at the Institute.

On 8 May 1996 the Institute, in cooperation with the Department of Sociology of the University of Geneva and the University of Social Sciences of the Russian Federation, held a colloquium on humanitarian values at the end of the millennium. During the colloquium an exchange of views took place on human values profoundly rooted in all cultures and all societies.

As in recent years, the Institute again concentrated on the problems of children and on family reunification. A study on child soldiers had been published previously in English and French and a Spanish edition was being prepared in cooperation with the Spanish Red Cross. In 1996, the Institute continued in particular with its study on street children. Visits were made in Cambodia and the Philippines to the National Societies and to other non-governmental organizations concerned with such children. The bibliography was also updated and a list of projects compiled, and the Institute attended the European Conference on Street Children Worldwide held in Amsterdam from 20 to 23 June 1996. The Institute's objective is to prepare a plan of action for the Movement and to expand National Society activities in aid of street children. The study is being conducted in cooperation with many National Societies, with humanitarian organizations engaged in activities for street children, and with the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Institute reissued several studies on family reunification and began to prepare training material containing practical examples accompanied by commentaries.

It also drew up a directory of training and research centres and institutes which may be of interest to the Movement.

The Institute received the winning teams in the Jean Pictet International Humanitarian Law Competition and held summer courses for law students, in cooperation with the University of Santa Clara (United States).

After publishing an English-language compendium of international humanitarian law texts, The law of armed conflicts, in 1973, 1983 and 1988, the Institute, in cooperation with the ICRC and thanks to a contribution from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the Oak Foundation, published the compendium in 1996 for the first time in French. It also began work on a new edition in English. The 1,470-page compendium contains 107 international humanitarian law texts.

With a view to redefining the Institute in 1997, its Executive Committee and General Assembly, in accordance with Resolution 8 of the December 1995 Council of Delegates, pursued their examination of its mandate.
THE INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE

A brief history

The activities of the International Tracing Service (ITS) began in 1943, when a special office was set up in London to trace civilian victims of the National Socialist regime. After being transferred several times, the institution, henceforth serving former victims of persecution, was established on a permanent basis in Arolsen, Federal Republic of Germany, in January 1946. Since 1955, it has been directed and administered by the ICRC in Geneva and is supervised by an International Commission composed of representatives of the ten ITS member States. This International Commission has given the ITS four mandates, namely, to gather, classify, preserve and evaluate personal records on persons deported or detained under the Third Reich and persons displaced in the immediate post-war period. To this day, these mandates continue to be the basis of its work.

Key facts and figures

Although the events of the Second World War already seem quite remote, the ITS is nonetheless in ever-increasing demand. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the political changes in Eastern Europe meant that for the first time a large number of former victims of persecution or their rightful claimants were able to assert their rights. Since 1990 the ITS has been flooded with enquiries, the processing of which requires considerable effort.

In the period under review, the ITS registered 236,241 enquiries (212,940 in 1995). This marked increase can be explained by, among other things, the fact that the gradual processing of the enquiries received from the “Memorial” Foundation in Moscow\(^1\) continued at the same time as the processing of new enquiries. As many as 261,802 replies were nonetheless sent out, compared to 236,756 in 1995. Despite this large number, a backlog of 314,104 enquiries (333,416 in 1995) remained, due in particular to the many bulk enquiries being sent to the ITS by various services, as in March for instance, when over 40,000 were received from Minsk.

\(^1\) An association of persons from the former Soviet Union who had done forced labour under the National Socialist regime.
Acquisition of documents

The opening of borders has enabled the ITS to acquire documents from the territory of the former Soviet zone of occupation in Germany, almost all of which were previously inaccessible to it. Close cooperation between archive services and other institutions abroad which have documents pertaining to persons of interest to the ITS is also becoming more and more efficient.

The acquisition of newly available documents is helping to supplement the existing archives and the ITS is now in a position to issue certificates attesting to periods of forced labour or detention to many people whose initial applications could not be processed for lack of documentation. Similarly, families can at last be given information to clarify the fate of missing relatives. In 1996, the ITS acquired 508 linear metres of documents relating to individuals and supplied by 314 services (in 1995: 555 linear metres supplied by 336 services).
Processing of data

In view of the large number of enquiries and the rising average age of enquirers, it became essential to speed up the processing of requests. In dealing with cases, the ITS had to find a means of rapid access to newly acquired documents. The use of computers both to evaluate and store documents was the ideal solution.

In 1992, the ITS took a first major step in this direction by starting to create computer files of all newly acquired documents. Thanks to the data bank constituted in this way, the central data file of names can now be consulted directly, and no longer, as previously, only after reference cards have been manually inserted into the central filing system. Since 1993, the registration of requests for information has been fully computerized as well.

In 1994, a specialized firm developed a computer program to identify and locate former places of forced labour and/or residence whose names have either been changed or distorted and thus differ from those specified by enquirers.

Thanks to the network set up to interlink all these systems, the ITS was able to establish a central data bank in 1996. All available information can be consulted on a central server. Any employee dealing with a request can therefore access the central data bank directly. This saves time at all levels of verification and enables working methods to be flexibly adapted to the demands of processing. In the years ahead, the ITS should endeavour to increase the consistent use of computer technology and further refine its application. This is the only way to guarantee speedier handling of cases and preservation of the stock of documents.
Together at last and ready to face the future. The ICRC’s aim is to help all victims of war pull through and set them on the road to recovery. ICRC headquarters organizes all the necessary financial and administrative support for activities carried out in the field.
For ICRC operational support units, 1996 was characterized mainly by the desire to develop external communications, be it with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the media, the donor community, the general public or staff in the field.

National Societies were involved more closely in ICRC operations thanks to a growing number of delegated projects and bilateral agreements. The ongoing worldwide campaign against anti-personnel landmines was stepped up, calling for considerable efforts by the National Societies of over 60 countries to ensure that the message was conveyed to the general public through the press, radio and television. Media liaison officers now based in over 20 capitals on five continents relayed the ICRC's humanitarian message far and wide. The ICRC's ability to communicate was further enhanced by the addition of a French-language version to its site on the World Wide Web.

Fund-raising, too, required major efforts in view of the ever-increasing difficulties stemming from the growth in the number of humanitarian agencies seeking financing. The unfortunate politicization of humanitarian work, together with donors' demands for greater visibility, made it harder to obtain support which was not specifically earmarked, yet such support is vital for the independence of the ICRC. Now that it has centralized all its fund-raising services and developed a better reporting system for donors, the ICRC will be able to meet this challenge.

Another communication tool, the ICRC's computer network, was extended to include workstations in the field, thus enabling some 40 delegations around the world to communicate directly and quickly with headquarters in Geneva. This led to a substantial increase in efficiency and made it easier for headquarters and the field to coordinate their stance on questions of interest to the organization.

The ICRC's greater openness to the outside world was also reflected in the growing number of non-Swiss expatriates working within ICRC delegations. Alas, when tragedy struck the ICRC in 1996, most of the staff who lost their lives — the delegates savagely slaughtered while on mission in Burundi or Chechnya (Russian Federation) — were from among their ranks.
COMMUNICATION

Working towards a general ban on anti-personnel landmines and stigmatizing the unacceptable horrors caused by these pernicious weapons continued to be one of the ICRC’s main objectives in 1996.\(^1\) To this end a wide range of communication tools were used throughout the world. The ICRC was given free advertising space in leading newspapers, both international and national, to run a series of public service announcements designed to bring home to the general public the enormous damage caused to countless lives throughout countries at war and also in countries no longer at war. Posters bearing the same stark messages were to be seen in a number of countries. Fourteen television channels with a total audience of almost 600 million people also agreed to support the campaign by broadcasting specially prepared spots.

ICRC delegations throughout the world organized press conferences, exhibitions and other events. Sixty-seven National Societies were closely involved in media work, advertising, lobbying and fund-raising for mine victims. Journalists and television teams were invited to visit countries affected by the scourge to give first-hand reports on the constant dangers and long-term effects of landmines, and on the restrictions imposed by their presence on the local population. Landmines not only shatter individual lives, they also restrict access to a cultivation of agricultural land, thereby prolonging the population’s dependence on outside help. In the field, mine awareness was taught in schools and through broadcasts on radio and television. Countless posters and leaflets were distributed.\(^2\)

In 1996 the ICRC further developed its capacity to respond to requests from the international and national media, both in operational situations and in its regional delegations. Media specialists now cater to the needs of local and regional readers, listeners and viewers in Colombia, Guatemala, Côte d’Ivoire, Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Australia, India, Thailand, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Tunisia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Russia. These media liaison offices were also involved in relaying the ICRC’s appeal for a total ban on anti-personnel landmines.

The organization’s weekly *ICRC News* was revamped and its circulation increased, concentrating on news agencies and the electronic media. Its

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1. See *The law and legal considerations*, pp. 274-276.
2. See *Promotion and dissemination of international humanitarian law*, pp. 286.
The ICRC's purpose is to provide information on ICRC activities both in trouble spots and in the quieter parts of the world. In addition, the ICRC put together half a dozen media-kits focusing on human interest stories which, by portraying the victims' plight as seen through their own eyes, underscored the universality of human feeling and suffering. Looking at the humanitarian consequences of conflict from a wider angle, ICRC delegates penned a number of articles for leading newspapers on the changing nature of conflict and its repercussions on humanitarian action. The proliferation of anarchic conflicts waged by fighters who do not belong to any structured armed forces or obey a clear chain of command often made it extremely difficult and dangerous for humanitarian organizations to go to the victims' rescue.

The ICRC had to face the challenge not only of the future, but also of the past, when allegations concerning the activities of several of its delegates during the Second World War were levelled against it and given extensive press coverage.3

Returning to the present time, and as part of its efforts to improve understanding of humanitarian issues and to ensure that more consistent attention is given to them, the ICRC, together with the Indian Press Institute, organized a seminar for the media in New Delhi which brought together about 80 journalists from local and international newspapers. High-ranking officers of the Indian armed forces and leading members of the academic world were also invited, so that a broad exchange of views could take place on such issues as access to problem areas and reporting. The aim was to see how the armed forces, humanitarian organizations and the media could work together in the interest of the victims of conflict, and the results were encouraging. The situations in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Kashmir were chosen as case studies.

Films, broadcasts and other audiovisual materials

*Life in a field hospital*, a 52-minute film, shows the ICRC's work in Lokichokio on the border between Kenya and Sudan where thousands of people injured in the conflict in southern Sudan have been treated in the past 10 years; *Water in Iraq* shows how all over the country the ICRC is helping to repair and maintain water supply systems damaged as a result of the 1991 conflict or lacking in spare parts because of the sanctions imposed upon Iraq. Both films were produced in 1996, as well as the 1996 *ICRC Retrospective*, retitled *Panorama*, and various short films. As part of the campaign against landmines a third television news pack was put together from the ICRC film

3 See *Archives and History*, pp. 313-314.
library and offered to television networks. A CD-ROM entitled *Random Ambush*, destined for the general public and young people and teachers in particular, was produced in English and Spanish and widely distributed.

Photo reports were carried out in Rwanda, Zaire, southern Sudan, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Tajikistan, Chechnya (southern Russia), the former Yugoslavia and Lebanon, providing illustration of current ICRC operations, the plight of conflict victims and the landmines issue for publishers, the media, exhibitions, etc.

The ICRC Web site (http://www.icrc.org), opened in September 1995, allows for easier access to the broad range of ICRC public information and for greater interaction between the ICRC and those interested in its activities. In 1996, the site’s content grew considerably and a French language version was opened. The Web site was awarded several prizes and the ICRC was invited to participate in a number of international seminars on the Web as a communication tool. An important part of the ICRC’s Web site is the landmine victims data base. During the International Strategy Conference in Ottawa, the ICRC’s Web site presented daily updates on the discussions held there and the progress accomplished. At the same time, a journalist and a photographer were sending in daily reports from Cambodia under the heading “Seven days in a minefield”.

**Exhibitions**

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum in Geneva hosted a very moving exhibition entitled *Pictures speak volumes*, which showed several hundred photographs drawn from the ICRC’s and the museum’s archives. It gave insight into a century of the ICRC’s efforts to assist war victims throughout the world.

The travelling exhibition *ICRC: challenging inhumanity* was inaugurated in Zurich in June before being presented in Lugano. Its purpose is to make the ICRC better known to the Swiss general public and help raise funds from private sources for the organization.

As in previous years, the ICRC took part in international book fairs held in Geneva and Damascus.

**Publications**

The ICRC continued to produce its traditional publications: the *International Review of the Red Cross*, which is its official periodical for opinion and reflection on the mission of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent

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4 See *The Law and legal considerations*, pp. 274-276.
Movement, as well as Red Cross, Red Crescent magazine and the Annual Report. Brochures on special subjects such as water and sanitation in Iraq and the situation in southern Sudan were published, while others such as the Fundamental Principles and the one presenting the ICRC’s work to restore family links, now entitled Waiting for News, were redrafted and updated. A new edition of Panorama was published, showing the ICRC’s activities as seen through the eyes of the victims it sets out to help and the Red Cross workers involved.

In a bid to get closer to the target audiences and their culture, more and more publications were prepared and printed in the field; ICRC headquarters served as a focal point, providing technical advice and organizing decentralized workshops. A number of brochures to support the efforts to ban landmines were also printed, in particular Anti-personnel landmines: friend or foe, a critical study of their military use and effectiveness, and A perverse use of technology: mines, a graphic description of the indiscriminate danger they present for the general population.
The year 1996 marked a turning point in the history of the ICRC’s archives. The public was given unrestricted access to files from before 1950, and for the first time the ICRC gave copies of two complete sets of archives on the Second World War to an outside institution.

On 17 January 1996, the Committee adopted new Rules governing access to the archives of the ICRC. At once the ICRC opened a reading room for researchers who, in 1996, used it for 150 working days. In addition, historical research officers and archivists answered almost 400 queries from all over the world.

This historic decision was the outcome of deliberations which began as far back as 1980, when the ICRC decided to open its archives to Professor Jean-Claude Favez of the University of Geneva and requested him to conduct an independent study on its action in favour of the Jews and minority groups persecuted by the Nazis. This study, entitled Une mission impossible? Le CICR, les déportations et les camps de concentration nazis,1 was published in 1988 and reissued in 1996. It was the first step towards opening up the archives to the public, as decided on 17 January 1996.

The adoption of the new Rules also took into account the scientific interest of all historians and of many people seeking information about the victims of conflicts and the conflicts themselves. It furthermore gave them the opportunity to continue the historical studies conducted in the past at the initiative of the ICRC itself.

The ICRC’s desire for greater openness was immediately expressed in the cooperation built up with various institutions representing the Jewish victims of Nazism, in response to a meeting in November 1994 between the President of the ICRC and the curators of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. The museum wished to be able to supplement its own archives with those of the ICRC. On 18 December 1996, the ICRC provided it with an initial series of microfilms — containing about 70,000 pages — as well as inventories of them, and subsequently decided to make a similar donation to the Centre for Contemporary Jewish Documentation in Paris and to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

During the past year, the Second World War has presented another challenge to the ICRC. In the spring and summer of 1996, US allegations

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1 Mission impossible? The ICRC, deportations and the Nazi concentration camps.
based on documents originating from the OSS,* the predecessor of the present-day CIA,* and levelled against certain ICRC delegates who worked for the organization during the Second World War were published in the international press. In view of the seriousness of those allegations and their moral implications, the ICRC decided to conduct an investigation both in its own and in public archives to shed light on its past, and for that purpose set up a working group on the Second World War.

Research on the documents from the OSS files was promptly carried out in the Swiss Federal Archives and those of the ICRC. It revealed only three cases in which individual employees or former employees of the ICRC were at fault. In the other cases, the research confirmed that the allegations stemmed essentially from ignorance of the institution's role and activities. On the basis of the initial results,2 the ICRC undertook to continue its historical investigation in order to clarify the matter as fully as possible.

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* OSS: Office of Strategic services
* CIA: Central Intelligence Agency

2 Published in the International Review of the Red Cross, No. 314, September-October 1996, pp. 562-567.
In 1996, as part of its restructuring programme, the Human Resources Department concentrated on the supplementary phases of recruitment and integration of new staff members, and on further training for those already employed at headquarters and in the field.

Recruitment and integration of new staff members

For recruitment purposes, applicants selected for consideration are invited for a one-day evaluation of their suitability; after individual interviews with recruitment experts, they are assessed by means of group exercises.

The successful applicants then follow an induction course which takes place in three parts.

They first spend one week of community life in a simulated operational delegation during which the prospective staff members, regardless of their position, can take part in all ICRC activities. The intention is to enable them to make sure that their professional aims correspond closely to what will be expected of them at the ICRC.

The second week serves to consolidate the knowledge gained, to develop it in greater depth and to acquire professional reflexes; on completing this part of the course, staff members are informed where they will be posted. Great importance is attached to matching personal profiles to the posts to be filled, on the basis of the observations made during these two weeks.

The last part of the course is designed to provide staff members with the more specific tools they need for their first mission to go smoothly; this phase is organized by professional category of employment and varies in length. Particular emphasis is placed on preventive measures against tropical diseases and other health risks to which expatriates are exposed, on the prevention and detection of stress, and on the safety precautions to be taken. Delegates are then monitored by a specialized unit during their first mission; this mission is considered to be an integral part of the induction phase.

Training

In 1996 there was also a marked expansion of training activities in the field for expatriates and local employees. Missions by training staff to the delegations showed the need to set up training centres on the various continents where the ICRC is working. Several projects were due to be launched in 1997, in particular in Kenya and Sri Lanka.

In 1996, on average, the ICRC had:

- 1,109 expatriates in the field, including 223 seconded by National Societies;
- 7,022 local employees under ICRC contract;
- 673 staff working at headquarters, including 12 seconded by National Societies.
In order to build up a genuine training network, ICRC training staff continued to establish and maintain contact with academic institutions in Switzerland and elsewhere dealing with subjects relating to humanitarian work. Several joint courses were held in 1996.

Professional expertise on the part of ICRC training staff is essential to set up a policy of further training adapted to the institution's needs. Three modules (design and development of training courses, delivery techniques for training and "purchasing" of training services) to consolidate knowledge and experience already acquired are now available to ICRC staff; they are also available to occasional trainers working in cooperation with the Federation who hold, for instance, local induction courses (the Basic Training Course) for National Society staff.

Thanks to the integrated approach that has been adopted and the strong links which now exist between recruitment and training activities and between the different units of the Human Resources Department, the preparation of future staff for the increasingly complex challenges awaiting them in the field has been significantly improved. The modules introduced in this context are the foundation of a real training process which should eventually be extended, in a continuous and coordinated manner, to all ICRC staff.

Security and stress management

Staff safety has been another major concern of the ICRC. Respect for the red cross emblem and consequently for the people wearing it is a sine qua non for the ICRC's work to help conflict victims. Now that humanitarian law is so frequently violated or ignored, not only civilians but also the very people who come to the aid of victims have become the target of more or less direct and premeditated attacks. The emergence of armed groups motivated by economic rather than ideological interests serves only to complicate the situation even further. The year 1996 was overshadowed by the tragic death of nine expatriates and one local employee working for the ICRC. Four local employees were injured during security incidents. Nor was the ICRC the only humanitarian organization to mourn the death of one or several employees. The situation is aggravated by the blurring of the distinction between strictly humanitarian mandates and other mandates in which assistance is combined with political and economic concerns, and recognition and acceptance of the ICRC's fundamental neutrality are becoming harder than ever to obtain.

Preventive measures have been included in the training of expatriates and remedial measures have been developed and strengthened. Since 1992,¹ a

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A doctor responsible for stress management has helped people to overcome the traumatic effects of very difficult and/or violent situations. He is now assisted by a male nurse and a female nurse. The task of this special consultancy team is not only to receive and support people returning from missions, but also to go out into the field as quickly as possible to counsel all staff deeply distressed by situations they have encountered. In 1996, such missions had to be made to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Chechnya.

At headquarters, no fewer than 810 interviews were conducted with staff returning from missions. People leaving for high-risk countries in terms of stress and disease are informed during a preparatory interview of the precautions to be taken: out of a total of 1,661 people who went on mission in 1996, 756 received such counselling.

Moreover, a large part of the training course for heads of delegation is now devoted to management of the delegation’s physical and psychological health, for it is essential for people who have just had a harrowing experience to be able to speak about it straight away to someone who understands.

The year in figures

In 1996, the ICRC hired 270 new staff members, including 259 in the field (96 delegates, 29 administrators, 5 secretaries, 34 interpreters, 54 doctors and other medical professionals and 41 technicians). Furthermore, the National Societies in 22 countries continued to provide considerable support for the work of the ICRC by seconding staff to it: no fewer than 578 people went on short- or long-term ICRC missions, which represented an average of 223 posts over the year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATIONAL SOCIETY STAFF SECONDED TO ICRC OPERATIONS BY COUNTRY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia ................................................. 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria ................................................. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium ................................................. 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada ................................................. 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark ................................................. 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland ................................................. 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France ................................................. 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany ................................................. 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary ................................................. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland ................................................. 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland ................................................. 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy ................................................. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan ................................................. 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands ............................................ 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand ............................................ 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway ................................................. 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain ................................................. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden ................................................. 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland ............................................ 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand ................................................. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom ........................................ 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States ......................................... 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL ................................................. 578

N.B. This list shows the number of people seconded and not the number of posts.
Progression of staff requirements
1986-1996

ICRC EXPATRIATES IN THE FIELD

STAFF AT HEADQUARTERS

STAFF SECONDED BY NATIONAL SOCIETIES

FIELD STAFF HIRED LOCALLY

* including 12 posts at headquarters
The ICRC’s overall funding needs have not changed significantly in the last few years, as the level of both the field and headquarters’ budgets has remained more or less stable. It nevertheless proved harder to cover them in 1996, since States were compelled by the economic situation in which they found themselves to cut back on humanitarian aid as well as elsewhere in their budgets. At the same time, there was ever-keener competition for government funds as humanitarian organizations proliferated. Finally, as humanitarian work became more politicized, growing problems were encountered in raising non-earmarked funds.

The ICRC therefore had to adapt its fundraising mechanism to this increasingly difficult environment. On the basis of an in-depth study of its resource mobilization procedures carried out in 1995, new strategies were developed in 1996 and, as one of the results, all services in charge of raising funds or mobilizing material support were centralized in one single unit, the External Resources Department. It is in charge of relations with donor governments, supranational donors such as the European Commission, the private sector and those National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies which supported the ICRC’s activities either by providing financial or material assistance or by seconding staff.

The new strategies included further development and consolidation of existing contacts with donors, with a view to improving the ICRC’s information and reporting systems. The aim was to reconcile the requests of many donors for more visibility with the ICRC’s own objective of maintaining a high proportion of non-earmarked contributions. A further consideration was to gain access to new budget lines such as funds reserved for prevention and disaster preparedness.

Another challenge consisted in developing potential financial resources from new donor States. Special emphasis was placed on countries in the Gulf region and South East Asia.

As a result of the ever stronger cooperation between National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the ICRC, handling delegated projects and bilateral agreements became a major task for the newly established Department. In 1996, 52 such projects were being implemented. As the chart below shows, most of these projects were carried out within the framework of the ICRC’s health activities, the majority consisting of water purification and sanitation programmes.
TOTAL NUMBER OF IMPLEMENTED PROJECTS: 52

Although these “new” forms of cooperation with the ICRC could on the whole be considered very successful, there was room for improvement in a variety of management-related issues. To this end, a comprehensive review of ICRC-delegated projects and participating National Societies’ bilateral projects carried out in areas under ICRC coordination was initiated by the External Resources Department in May. Intermediate findings were issued at the end of October at the second bi-annual National Society Information Meeting. The final version of the review, scheduled for early 1997, will form the basis for establishing clearer policy guidelines. A users’ manual for the implementation of such projects is also to be produced to help solve the management-related issues still outstanding.

A key unit within the External Resources Department, the Promotion and Private Fundraising Division worked to keep the general public informed about the ICRC’s goals and operations, and to muster financial support from the private sector. In 1996, the Division organized a major exhibition entitled “ICRC: challenging humanity”. The exhibition was inaugurated in Zurich in the spring and was to be shown in the main Swiss cities. The Division also launched a newsletter for its private-sector donors, carried out an information campaign for lawyers and issued emergency appeals for victims of the conflicts in Chechnya (southern Russia), Afghanistan and the Great Lakes region of Africa.
FINANCE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Finance

After improving the financial risks management system in 1995 by instituting better indicators and more comprehensive forecasting mechanisms, it was decided in 1996 to review the ICRC’s financial system as a whole in the course of the “Finance 98” project. This project, based largely on recent management and process analysis techniques, should lead to the establishment of a new financial system, reorganization of the “finance” services and the introduction of integrated software by 1 January 1998.

An in-depth study of present and future financial information needs was conducted last summer within the ICRC and with certain external partners. On the basis of the conclusions reached, a complete analysis of financial procedures was carried out and a reorganization project was formulated. In parallel, five working groups were set up in the autumn to examine prospective developments in cost accounting, financial accounting, budget techniques, investment management, and financial support services. The conclusions of these working groups will be useful in finalizing the reorganization and defining most of the requirements to be covered by the new software. The project will again call for a substantial input of human and financial resources in 1997.

Information technology

In 1996, the information technology gap between headquarters and delegations narrowed considerably. After a retrofit of the headquarters infrastructure and workstations in the field, an electronic mail link-up was established with the major delegations, enabling some 40 delegations to communicate directly and speedily with headquarters. Via this network messages can be sent from any workstation. The validation and classification of messages and the distribution of copies are all done directly on screen. In addition, certain documents and databases can be accessed in the field, in electronic form, with on-line updating: these include manuals, the in-house bulletin and electronic fora.

The assistance of external international partners in setting up such a structure is essential, not only with regard to communications, but also to enable the ICRC to manage the necessary hardware and procedures — new
equipment, data back-up, user management, etc. — more efficiently. Furthermore, the project also relies on a team of decentralized staff who are responsible for supervising the installation of the requisite data-processing facilities wherever the ICRC is present throughout the world.

The ICRC’s private radio network, which is vital during emergency operations and indispensable in regions without a cable network, has been updated, mainly by installing new transceiving equipment at headquarters. It is now possible to increase both message transmission speed and transmission quality in poor radio-wave propagation conditions. The ICRC’s work benefits directly from these new facilities, which increase its safety and effectiveness.

In terms of management applications, 1996 witnessed the completion of the first computerized stage of the project to reorganize human resource management: in particular, a commercially available software package was installed and its first functions — more especially those for basic definitions of posts and people, management of training programmes, and recruitment — were put into use. This development goes beyond the Human Resources Department project, for it reflects the ICRC’s intention to remodel its administrative data processing completely by gradually replacing the existing system with commercially available software packages and above all installing highly efficient and integrated management tools. From 1997 onwards, this will entail setting up a new financial system and revising the entire logistical and statistical structure.

At organizational level, the Information Technology Division has continued its transformation, not only to ensure better customer services for the ICRC as a whole, but also to find the best means of gauging its own effectiveness. These changes have made it possible to draw up plans for the full external partnership in the provision of information technology services at headquarters.
Balance sheet (Table I)

The overall total increased by almost 43 million Swiss francs, mainly because of the widening gap between the total for underfunded operations (1995: 16.5 million/1996: 49.8 million) and for those with surplus financing (1995: 7.7 million/1996: 29.5 million). This increase follows the continuing decline in the funding of field activities (net deficit of 20.3 million at 31 December 1996, against 8.8 million at 31 December 1995). None of the six regions covered by the ICRC’s operations had a net balance in its favour at the end of the financial year. The funding of operations showed a constant deficit throughout the year, which peaked in June at over 60 million. The ICRC was able to cope with the situation thanks to laboriously elicited financial pledges, a policy to hedge against financial risks by means of a reserve for shortfalls which yielded just enough liquidity, and finally an elaborate system of financial forecasts.

Of the current assets, short-term bank deposits invested at 31 December 1996 had been reduced in favour of a medium-term investment project (30 million) which appears under the heading “Fixed assets”. This project was set up to increase the yield of the cash balance less subject to fluctuation. The amount thus invested is guaranteed by the bank to which it has been entrusted, a performance target is set according to a reference index and potentially necessary liquidity is ensured by a stand-by credit.

On the liabilities side, the total for operations with surplus financing was up from 7.7 million Swiss francs at the end of 1995 to 29.5 million at 31 December 1996. This rise can be explained mainly by respect for the earmarking of several contributions, part of which had to be carried forward for disbursement in 1997. The other significant trend was an increase in the provisions for operational risks; this was essential given the decline in funding, plus the need for the ICRC to insure delegations’ furniture, equipment and vehicles itself, since insurance companies’ conditions for insurance against war risks were no longer acceptable.

Summary statement of income and expenditure/charges (Table II)

Headquarters budget

The year was marked by a distinct decline in the growth of running costs at headquarters (131.3 million in 1996, against 128.7 million in 1995, i.e. an increase of 1.98%). There was also a slight reduction in the number of posts in...
Geneva and important discussions began on the integrated functioning and organization of various support units (logistics, procurement, finance, partnership with a company to cover all information technology needs at headquarters). These projects were to continue in 1997 and were expected to produce the desired results in 1998. A preliminary re-examination of priorities had to be made to finance the first phase of implementation, and the costs budgeted for 1996 had to be covered by cutting back on other items.

A special effort was made in dealing with ad hoc expenditure and income (depreciation of stocks, adjustment of provisional entries, financing by means of provisions, exchange rate earnings, etc.) which appear under the headings "Other expenditure" and "Other income". The strict separation of these items of income and expenditure is the first stage of a project intended to adapt the ICRC's accounting practices to international accounting standards.

Field budget

The reduction in total cash expenditure (467.7 million Swiss francs in 1996, against 495.1 million in 1995), in kind and in services (53.1 million in 1996, against 82.7 million in 1995) can be explained by the changing needs which the institution had to meet. Protection activities and those to restore and maintain family links continued to increase, whereas assistance activities, in particular food aid, diminished. A breakdown by geographical region of expenditure on operations showed a decrease in Africa and Western Europe — more specifically the former Yugoslavia, while in Asia and Western Europe a growth in activities was observed.

Total cash income fell by 23.8 million Swiss francs (456.5 million in 1996, against 480.3 million in 1995) and total cash expenditure by 27.4 million (467.7 million in 1996, against 495.1 million in 1995). Despite this almost equal reduction, at the end of the year the cumulative funding deficit stood at 20.3 million Swiss francs.

Special funds managed by the International Committee of the Red Cross

In order to make use of the potential synergies created by the diversification of investments and risks and a reduction in banking charges, the portfolios of seven special funds were grouped together in two portfolios, management of which was entrusted to two banks. This joint management also enabled a policy of coverage for market risks to be introduced by creating a single provision for stock-market fluctuations.
EXPENDITURE BY REGION IN 1996
(including contributions in kind and services)
in millions of Swiss francs

Total: Sfr 663.1 million

* Except Central Asia

EXPENDITURE ACCORDING TO TYPE OF ACTIVITY IN 1996
(including contributions in kind and services)
in millions of Swiss francs

Total: Sfr 663.1 million
Report of the auditors
for the year ended December 31, 1996
to the general meeting of the
INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS, GENEVA

As auditors of your association, by virtue of article 11 paragraph 2 of the articles of incorporation and articles 43 and 45 of the internal governing regulations, we have examined the books of account and the financial statements for the year ended December 31, 1996 in accordance with the provisions of the law and the articles of association. Our audit was conducted in accordance with auditing standards promulgated by the profession. We confirm that we meet the legal requirements concerning professional qualification and independence.

On the basis of our audit and the reports of KPMG London, who were responsible for reviewing that the income and expenditure relating to the operations of the ICRC in the field have been correctly accounted for, we conclude that the books of account and the financial statements are in accordance with articles 957 and onwards of the Swiss Code of Obligations and the articles of incorporation.

We recommend that the financial statements submitted to you be approved.

The account of income and expenditure/charges includes a column which sets out the gifts in kind or of services received by the ICRC. This consists of statistical information not recorded in the books of account. We have not examined this information. This data has been reviewed, however, as part of the review work performed by KPMG.

Geneva, April 17, 1997

ATAG Ernst & Young SA

F. Genetelli
Expert-comptable diplômé
(Auditor in charge)

J. Niklas
Lic. HEC
## COMPARATIVE BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1995/1996

### TABLE I

#### ASSETS (in Sfr)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CASH</td>
<td>1,020,987</td>
<td>1,450,421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER CURRENT ASSETS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Securities</td>
<td>17,892,935</td>
<td>18,722,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bank deposits</td>
<td>83,917,505</td>
<td>64,807,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Amounts receivable</td>
<td>25,910</td>
<td>25,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accruals and prepaid expenditure</td>
<td>51,167,625</td>
<td>48,939,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVANCES TO DELEGATIONS</td>
<td>12,352,616</td>
<td>17,301,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIXED ASSETS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Buildings</td>
<td>36,538,796</td>
<td>35,270,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Emergency relief supplies</td>
<td>6,175,617</td>
<td>3,647,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Furniture and other equipment</td>
<td>8,055,663</td>
<td>7,199,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Medium-term deposits</td>
<td>50,770,076</td>
<td>76,117,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPERATIONS WITH TEMPORARY DEFICIT FINANCING</td>
<td>16,498,256</td>
<td>49,838,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL ASSETS</td>
<td>243,893,446</td>
<td>285,519,618</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### LIABILITIES (in Sfr)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHORT-TERM LIABILITIES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accounts payable</td>
<td>6,769,598</td>
<td>8,209,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. Governments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. National Societies and various institutions</td>
<td>398,437</td>
<td>726,492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. Other</td>
<td>50,441,819</td>
<td>56,843,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accruals and deferred income</td>
<td>21,694,955</td>
<td>26,259,996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUNDS FOR CURRENT OPERATIONS</td>
<td>79,304,809</td>
<td>92,038,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Headquarters activities</td>
<td>242,722</td>
<td>179,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Field activities</td>
<td>7,739,843</td>
<td>29,569,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LONG-TERM LIABILITIES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mortgages</td>
<td>8,900,000</td>
<td>8,700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROVISIONS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- For operational risks</td>
<td>81,607,908</td>
<td>90,105,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- For staff commitments</td>
<td>6,886,292</td>
<td>6,190,048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- For work in progress or to be undertaken</td>
<td>2,415,156</td>
<td>1,636,525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUNDS FOR INVESTMENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- For investments in real estate</td>
<td>32,427,263</td>
<td>32,427,263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- For investments in furniture and equipment</td>
<td>10,563,626</td>
<td>10,592,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPITAL RESERVE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Balance at beginning of the year</td>
<td>1,041,297</td>
<td>1,305,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Excess of income over expenses</td>
<td>264,530</td>
<td>274,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- General reserve</td>
<td>1,305,827</td>
<td>1,580,408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- General reserve</td>
<td>12,500,000</td>
<td>12,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- General reserve</td>
<td>13,805,827</td>
<td>14,080,408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL LIABILITIES</td>
<td>243,893,446</td>
<td>285,519,618</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### TRUST FUNDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Trust funds in banks</td>
<td>82,665</td>
<td>991,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVERALL TOTAL</td>
<td>243,976,111</td>
<td>286,511,234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### OVERALL TOTAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Creditors</td>
<td>82,665</td>
<td>991,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVERALL TOTAL</td>
<td>243,976,111</td>
<td>286,511,234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


## SUMMARY STATEMENT OF INCOME

### EXPENDITURE

(in Sfr)

| Secretariat of the Assembly and the Executive Board | 4,169,043 | 4,169,043 |
| Internal Audit | 933,045 | 933,045 |
| **General Directorate** | | |
| - Communication | 4,648,890 | 4,648,890 |
| - External resources | 16,913,607 | 16,913,607 |
| - Finance, administration and information technology | 31,788,449 | 31,788,449 |
| - Human resources | 12,255,208 | 12,255,208 |
| **Operations** | | |
| - Zones: | | |
| Africa | 2,721,006 | 2,721,006 |
| The Americas | 1,018,114 | 1,018,114 |
| Asia and the Pacific | 1,585,888 | 1,585,888 |
| Western and Central Europe and the Balkans | 1,318,452 | 1,318,452 |
| Eastern Europe and Central Asia | 1,244,122 | 1,244,122 |
| Middle East and North Africa | 1,463,493 | 1,463,493 |
| - Central Tracing Agency | 4,564,676 | 4,564,676 |
| - Detention | 2,266,617 | 2,266,617 |
| - Health | 7,435,025 | 7,435,025 |
| - Relief | 3,712,057 | 3,712,057 |
| - Relations with international organizations | 5,200,428 | 5,200,428 |
| - Management of operational personnel | 3,611,026 | 3,611,026 |
| **Principles, Law and Relations with the Movement** | | |
| - Principles and relations with the Movement | 2,947,501 | 2,947,501 |
| - Dissemination and cooperation with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies | 2,667,866 | 2,667,866 |
| - Legal Division | 3,843,856 | 3,843,856 |
| - Division for Dissemination to the Armed Forces | 1,950,848 | 1,950,848 |
| **Other Activities under ICRC Auspices** | | |
| - International Tracing Service, Arolsen | 239,874 | 239,874 |
| **Other Expenditure** | | |
| - Dissolution of provisions for depreciation of assets | (86,771) | (86,771) |
| - Use of provisions for staff commitments | (1,696,244) | (1,696,244) |
| - Use of provisions for work in progress | (928,631) | (928,631) |
| - Allocation to provisions for operational risks | 8,650,000 | 8,650,000 |
| - Allocation to provisions for staff commitments | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| - Allocation to provisions for work in progress | 150,000 | 150,000 |
| - Attribution to the special fund for the disabled | 200,000 | 200,000 |
| - Adjustments of previous financial years | 332,803 | 332,803 |
| - Other expenditure | 3,454,960 | 3,454,960 |
| **Total Expenditure** | 142,335,630 | 467,662,550 | 609,998,180 | 53,087,014 |

### IN CASH

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### EXPENDITURE IN KIND AND/OR SERVICES

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<td>52,297,970</td>
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### RESULT

- Excess income over expenditure | 274,581 | 274,581 |

**GRAND TOTAL** | 142,610,211 | 467,662,550 | 610,272,761 | 53,087,014
## AND EXPENDITURE/CHARGES IN 1996

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<td><strong>467,662,550</strong></td>
<td><strong>610,272,761</strong></td>
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## EXPENDITURE IN 1996

(INCLUDING GIFTS

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<th>TYPE OF ACTIVITY</th>
<th>HEADQUARTERS BUDGET AND EXTRA-BUDGETARY EXPENSES</th>
<th>FIELD BUDGETS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>%</th>
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*(in Sfr)*

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## CONTRIBUTIONS IN 1996

*(in Sfr)*

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<td>372,787</td>
<td>818,025</td>
<td>1,190,812</td>
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<td>United States of America</td>
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<td>1,545,773</td>
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<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>375</td>
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<td>Vietnam</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>1,758</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>762</td>
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<td>762</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>2,457</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,457</td>
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<tr>
<td>Various National Societies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>149,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int. Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>257,824</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total from National Societies</td>
<td>5,561,322</td>
<td>19,760,861</td>
<td>25,322,183</td>
<td>40,369,555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Contributions in 1996

### Public Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DONOR</th>
<th>HEAD-QUARTERS BUDGET</th>
<th>FIELD BUDGET</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>Contributions in kind and/or services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avully</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bellinzona</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chêne-Bougeries</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>624</td>
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<td>Collex-Bossy</td>
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<td>Cologny</td>
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<td>Confignon</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Geneva, Canton of</td>
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<td>Jersey, Island of</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Lugano</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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<td>Meyrin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan-les-Ouates</td>
<td>2,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presinge</td>
<td>500</td>
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<td>10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trente, Region of</td>
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<td>Versoix</td>
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<td>Vevey</td>
<td>45,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veyrier</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total from public sources</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,394,400</strong></td>
<td><strong>188,684</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,583,084</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Non-governmental Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DONOR</th>
<th>HEAD-QUARTERS BUDGET</th>
<th>FIELD BUDGET</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>Contributions in kind and/or services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG Fund</td>
<td></td>
<td>135,250</td>
<td>135,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Vision</td>
<td></td>
<td>36,300</td>
<td>36,300</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total from NGOs</strong></td>
<td><strong>36,300</strong></td>
<td><strong>135,250</strong></td>
<td><strong>171,550</strong></td>
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</table>

### Private Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DONOR</th>
<th>HEAD-QUARTERS BUDGET</th>
<th>FIELD BUDGET</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>Contributions in kind and/or services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support association</td>
<td>375,000</td>
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<td>375,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swiss companies</td>
<td>228,780</td>
<td></td>
<td>228,780</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts</td>
<td>2,966,648</td>
<td>9,039,500</td>
<td>12,006,148</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct mail in Switzerland</td>
<td>3,091,198</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,091,198</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total from private sources</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,570,428</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,130,698</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,701,126</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Transfer of Swiss Government Contribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DONOR</th>
<th>HEAD-QUARTERS BUDGET</th>
<th>FIELD BUDGET</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>Contributions in kind and/or services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>(5,000,000)</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand total</strong></td>
<td><strong>108,326,702</strong></td>
<td><strong>447,100,723</strong></td>
<td><strong>555,427,425</strong></td>
<td><strong>53,087,014</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td>Region and Region and Region</td>
<td>Contribution in kind and/or services</td>
<td>Balance at 31 December 1996</td>
<td>EXPENDITURE</td>
<td>RECEIPTS</td>
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<td>-----------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>- With surplus financing</td>
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<td>EUROPE AND THE BALKANS</td>
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<tr>
<td>EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASIA</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFRICA</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>- With surplus financing</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Without headquarters contributions for services worth Sfr 6,666 for Asia and the Pacific and Sfr 18,483 for Eastern Europe and Central Asia.
## SPECIAL FUNDS

### FOUNDATION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

#### BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Securities ...........................................</td>
<td>1,648,110</td>
<td>Inalienable capital ................................</td>
<td>1,466,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(market value : Sfr 1,987,481)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inalienable reserve ................................</td>
<td>347,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time deposits ......................................</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>Total capital .......................................</td>
<td>1,813,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Tax Administration, Bern (withholding tax refund)</td>
<td>9,053</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,907,163</td>
<td>Banks ..................................................</td>
<td>1,056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>92,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,907,163</td>
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</tr>
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#### RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1996

<table>
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<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bank and custody charges .........................</td>
<td>10,265</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charges on purchase / sale of securities ..........</td>
<td>3,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premium on purchase / loss on sale of securities</td>
<td>25,927</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audit fees ............................................</td>
<td>2,431</td>
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<tr>
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<td>41,847</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>RECEIPTS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income from securities ................................</td>
<td>69,383</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income from time deposits ............................</td>
<td>4,301</td>
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<td>Bank interest ..........................................</td>
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<tr>
<td>Profit on refund of securities ........................</td>
<td>63,251</td>
</tr>
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<td>137,499</td>
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</table>

#### RESULT

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1996 .......</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**ESTABLISHMENT**

1 May 1931.

**OBJECT**

To help the International Committee of the Red Cross to continue in complete independence the humanitarian activities which, in accordance with its Statutes, it carries out in time of peace as in time of war.

---

**ADMINISTRATION**

A Council composed of:

- one member nominated by the Swiss Federal Council;
- four to six members appointed by the International Committee of the Red Cross.
**AUGUSTA FUND**

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1996**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>167,853</td>
<td>Inalienable capital</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1995</td>
<td>18,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation</td>
<td>8,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Florence Nightingale Medal Fund, current account:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1995</td>
<td>32,844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1996</td>
<td>11,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>170,853</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1996**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
<th>RECEIPTS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds, less the share of the overall provision for portfolio variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Expenditure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Receipts</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESULT**

Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1996 | 11,239

**ESTABLISHMENT**

In 1890, at the initiative of the ICRC, to commemorate the services rendered to the Red Cross by the German Empress Augusta, wife of Wilhelm I.

**OBJECT**

Modified on several occasions.

At the Twenty-first International Conference of the Red Cross, held in Istanbul in 1969, it was decided that, pending further modification, receipts from the Augusta Fund would be allocated to the Florence Nightingale Medal Fund. This decision was confirmed at the Twenty-second Conference, held in Tehran in 1973.

**ADMINISTRATION**

In view of the above decision, the same as for the Florence Nightingale Medal Fund.
## FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE MEDAL FUND

### BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>SFr</th>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>SFr</th>
<th>SFr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>186,422</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock of medals</td>
<td>51,668</td>
<td>Reserve: Balance brought forward from 1995</td>
<td>119,556</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augusta Fund, current account</td>
<td>44,084</td>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1996</td>
<td>23,707</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>143,263</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation</td>
<td>9,222</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>54,689</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>282,174</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXPENDITURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESULT</th>
<th>SFr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1996</td>
<td>23,707</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ESTABLISHMENT

In accordance with the recommendations of the Eighth International Conference of the Red Cross, held in London in 1907, and with the decision of the Ninth Conference held in Washington in 1912, a Fund was established by contributions from National Red Cross Societies.

The regulations were revised by the Eighteenth International Conference of the Red Cross, held in Toronto in 1952, and by the Council of Delegates, held in Budapest in 1991.

### OBJECT

The Fund’s income is used to distribute a medal, called the "Florence Nightingale Medal", to honour the life and work of Florence Nightingale.

The medal may be awarded to Red Cross and Red Crescent nurses and voluntary aides for having distinguished themselves by their service to sick and wounded people in time of peace or war.

The medal is awarded every two years by the ICRC on the basis of proposals made to it by the National Societies.

Only 50 medals may be distributed at any one time.

### ADMINISTRATION

A Commission composed of five ICRC representatives, including four Committee members.
CLARE R. BENEDICT FUND

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>3,487,925</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>1,632,629</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provision for portfolio variation:
- Balance brought forward from 1995 | 512,351
- Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation | 172,632

Receipts and expenditure account:
- Balance brought forward from 1995 | 928,443
- Attribution decided in 1996 | (928,443)
- Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1996 | 234,058
- International Committee of the Red Cross, current account | 936,255

3,487,925

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>RECEIPTS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>3,944</td>
<td>Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds, less the share of the overall provision for portfolio variation</td>
<td>238,002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3,944 238,002

RESULT

Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1996 for attribution | 234,058

ESTABLISHMENT

1 February 1968.

OBJECT

The Fund's income is attributed to assistance activities for the victims of armed conflicts, in accordance with Miss Benedict's wishes.

ADMINISTRATION

A Commission composed of three persons appointed by the ICRC.
MAURICE DE MADRE FRENCH FUND

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>3,429,250</td>
<td><strong>Capital</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total capital</strong></td>
<td>3,106,370</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependant's allowance</td>
<td>13,725</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>309,155</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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3,429,250

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>RECEIPTS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allocations</td>
<td>152,231</td>
<td>Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds, less the share of the overall provision for portfolio variation</td>
<td>233,949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>4,531</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenses</td>
<td>1,242</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

158,004

RESULT

Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1996 | 75,945 |

ESTABLISHMENT

ICRC Assembly decision of 19 December 1974.

OBJECT

To assist temporary or permanent staff, such as delegates and nurses, of international or national Red Cross or Red Crescent institutions who, in the course of their work or during war operations or natural disasters, have suffered injury and thereby find themselves in straitened circumstances or in reduced health.

In the event that the persons specified above should lose their lives in the course of the said humanitarian activities payments may be made to their families.

ADMINISTRATION

A Board composed of five persons appointed by the ICRC, currently:
- two ICRC members or staff;
- one representative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies;
- one representative of the de Madre family;
- one Swiss lawyer.
# OMAR EL MUKTAR FUND

## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>980,510</td>
<td>Initial capital</td>
<td>760,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation</td>
<td>48,533</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Receipts and expenditure account:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1996</td>
<td>103,603</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attribution decided in 1996</td>
<td>(103,603)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1996</td>
<td>65,585</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>105,892</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>RECEIPTS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>1,326</td>
<td>Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds, less the share of the overall provision for portfolio variation</td>
<td>66,911</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RESULT

Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1996 for attribution | 65,585 |

### ESTABLISHMENT

Pursuant to decision No. 5 of the Executive Board of 20 November 1980, adopted by the Committee in December 1980.

### OBJECT

A Fund in dollars, made up of one or several donations by the authorities of the Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the income of which is to be used to finance the ICRC’s general assistance and protection activities.

### ADMINISTRATION

A Board composed of three ICRC representatives.
PAUL REUTER FUND

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1996

ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>305,986</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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LIABILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial capital ...........................................</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts and expenditure account:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1995.......................</td>
<td>29,159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1996............</td>
<td>20,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1995.......................</td>
<td>35,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation</td>
<td>15,159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>5,760</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

305,986

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1996

EXPENDITURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECEIPTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds, less the share of the overall provision for portfolio variation</td>
<td>20,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

348

RESULT

Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1996................................................................. 20,552

ESTABLISHMENT

Pursuant to decision No. 1 of the Executive Board of 6 January 1983.

PURPOSE

The Fund's initial capital of Sfr 200,000 donated by Prof. Paul Reuter (his Balzan prize) may be augmented by gifts or bequest. The Fund's purpose is to:
- use the income to encourage and promote knowledge and dissemination of international humanitarian law;
- and to that effect award a prize every two years to reward work, assist in the implementation of a project or make a publication possible.

ADMINISTRATION

A Committee composed of one member of the ICRC, who is its chairman, and two members of the ICRC staff, appointed by the Directorate;
- two persons from outside the ICRC who, with the Committee members, shall compose the Paul Reuter Prize jury.
SPECIAL FUND FOR THE DISABLED

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1996

ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Str</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>3,089,133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIABILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Str</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial capital</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation</td>
<td>152,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts and expenditure account: Balance brought forward from 1995</td>
<td>1,271,504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of expenditure over receipts in 1996</td>
<td>(399,342)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total capital</td>
<td>2,025,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve funds (Cambodia project)</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>864,109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3,089,133

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1996

EXPENDITURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Str</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure for prosthetic / orthotic programmes</td>
<td>618,254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Training - Ethiopia</td>
<td>339,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Centre equipment - Nigeria</td>
<td>97,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Centre fees - Ho Chi Minh</td>
<td>124,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fees Malawi-Zambia-Zimbabwe</td>
<td>51,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>3,969</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESULT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Str</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excess of expenditure over receipts 1996</td>
<td>(399,342)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ESTABLISHMENT

Pursuant to the Assembly's decision No.2 of 19/20 October 1983.

OBJECT

To help finance long-term projects for disabled persons, in particular the creation of workshops for the production of artificial limbs and orthotic appliances, and centres for rehabilitation and occupational retraining.

To participate not only in ICRC and National Society projects, but also in those of other humanitarian bodies working in accordance with ICRC criteria.

ADMINISTRATION

A Committee composed of six ICRC staff members:

- one member of the ICRC, who shall act as chairman;
- the Chief Medical Officer;
- one representative of the Department of Finance, Administration and Information Technology and one representative of the Department of Principles, Law and Relations with the Movement;
- the person in charge of programmes in aid of disabled persons at the Medical Division;
- one representative of the Operations Department appointed by the Director of Operations.
RELIEF AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TABLES

The statistical data in the following tables can be summarized as follows:

Relief and medical supplies dispatched by the ICRC in 1996:
All relief and medical goods received as contributions in kind or purchased by the ICRC and inventoried in the country of final destination between 1 January and 31 December 1996.

Contributions in kind received and purchases made by the ICRC in 1996:
All relief and medical goods received as contributions in kind or purchased by the ICRC and inventoried in the country of final destination between 1 January and 31 December 1996. The figures for contributions in kind cover all material support received as a gift but do not include any services received, such as the provision of human resources and/or logistic means. The figures for medical and relief purchases comprise all procurements carried out both with unearmarked and with earmarked financial contributions ("cash for kind"). The grand total of Sfr 120,424,108 therefore corresponds to the grand total given in the table "Relief and medical supplies dispatched by the ICRC in 1996".

ICRC relief and medical distributions in 1996:
All relief and medical goods distributed by the ICRC in the field between 1 January and 31 December 1996. These goods were either purchased or received in kind during 1996 or taken from stocks already constituted at the end of 1995.
### RELIEF AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES DISPATCHED BY THE ICRC IN 1996

(by receiving countries, according to stock entry date)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRIES</th>
<th>GIFTS IN KIND</th>
<th>PURCHASES BY THE ICRC</th>
<th>TOTAL DISPATCHED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEDICAL</td>
<td>RELIEF</td>
<td>MEDICAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Sfr)</td>
<td>(Sfr)</td>
<td>(Sfr)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Tonnes)</td>
<td>(Tonnes)</td>
<td>(Tonnes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFRICA</td>
<td>1,450,955</td>
<td>8,441,430</td>
<td>12,553.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>90,311</td>
<td>1,224,853</td>
<td>2,146.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>1,264,058</td>
<td>140.0</td>
<td>2,370,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>16,746</td>
<td>115,785</td>
<td>95.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>7,132</td>
<td>4,397</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>32,134</td>
<td>29,223</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>27,041</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>80,609</td>
<td>42,608</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>6,389</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>6,389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea Bissau</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>1,376</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>68,974</td>
<td>3,924</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>78,789</td>
<td>10,147</td>
<td>4.8</td>
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<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>1,251</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>16,623</td>
<td>1,122</td>
<td>126</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>290,299</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>57,675</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>2,606,548</td>
<td>4,908.3</td>
<td>2,685,216</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>2,341,145</td>
<td>3,218</td>
<td>2,341,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>244,255</td>
<td>107.5</td>
<td>1,216,746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>85,613</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaire</td>
<td>380,775</td>
<td>216,766</td>
<td>120.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>14,615</td>
<td>14,615</td>
<td>14,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional stock in Kenya</td>
<td>979,869</td>
<td>1,327,261</td>
<td>445.0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>586,581</td>
<td>1,327,261</td>
<td>445.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE AMERICAS</td>
<td>364,095</td>
<td>426,358</td>
<td>130.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>23,775</td>
<td>273,619</td>
<td>71.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>206,910</td>
<td>22,817</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>133,410</td>
<td>129,922</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASIA &amp; THE PACIFIC</td>
<td>422,800</td>
<td>2,001.5</td>
<td>4,223,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>422,800</td>
<td>2,001.5</td>
<td>4,223,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>3,143,070</td>
<td>11,800,015</td>
<td>25,281.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>604,735</td>
<td>21,556</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan (conflict in Afghanistan)</td>
<td>108,512</td>
<td>21,784</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>175,416</td>
<td>44,978</td>
<td>50.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>7,760</td>
<td>103,503</td>
<td>107.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WESTERN &amp; CENTRAL EUROPE</td>
<td>1,606,637</td>
<td>5,760,447</td>
<td>3,681.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Yugoslavia</td>
<td>1,606,637</td>
<td>5,760,447</td>
<td>3,681.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASTERN EUROPE &amp; CENTRAL ASIA</td>
<td>977,088</td>
<td>6,822,668</td>
<td>6,170.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>94,989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>257,758</td>
<td>1,114,231</td>
<td>815.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>2,203,876</td>
<td>2,893.3</td>
<td>136,462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>1,211,878</td>
<td>358.3</td>
<td>2,055,343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>2,695,609</td>
<td>1,679.9</td>
<td>383,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency stock &quot;Caucasus&quot;</td>
<td>1,133,905</td>
<td>2,000.3</td>
<td>1,133,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDDLE EAST &amp; NORTH AFRICA</td>
<td>271,946</td>
<td>104,047</td>
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The table above shows the relief and medical supplies dispatched by the ICRC in 1996, broken down by geographic region and type of supply. The figures include both the value of the supplies and the weight (in Tonnes).
## CONTRIBUTIONS IN KIND RECEIVED AND PURCHASES MADE BY THE ICRC IN 1996

(divided by donors & purchases, according to stock entry date)

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<th>KITCHEN SETS</th>
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### RELIEF AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES DISTRIBUTED BY THE ICRC IN 1996

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<td>8,351,369</td>
<td>3,150.8</td>
<td>11,427,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>416,036</td>
<td>3,148,424</td>
<td>1,851.5</td>
<td>3,564,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDDLE EAST &amp; NORTH AFRICA</td>
<td>6,382,362</td>
<td>2,243,916</td>
<td>649.1</td>
<td>8,626,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>5,568,867</td>
<td>784,997</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>6,353,864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel, the occupied &amp; the autonom. territories</td>
<td>115,286</td>
<td>552,841</td>
<td>234.3</td>
<td>668,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>577,019</td>
<td>801,318</td>
<td>289.0</td>
<td>1,378,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>97,120</td>
<td>97,120</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>97,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Sahara</td>
<td>28,319</td>
<td>28,319</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>100,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>92,871</td>
<td>7,640</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>100,511</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| GRAND TOTAL               | 49,972,913    | 89,147,625   | 84,880.0        | 139,120,338 |

347
COMMITTEE

The Committee, composed of 15 to 25 Swiss citizens, defines the general policy and the principles which guide the activities of the institution.

The Executive Board comprises the President, the permanent Vice-President, two Committee members, the Director General, the Director of Operations and the Director of Principles, Law and Relations with the Movement.

Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, President, Doctor of Laws of Zurich University, (member of the Committee since 1986).

Mr Pierre Keller, Vice-President, Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations (Yale), banker, (1984).


Mr Ulrich Gaudenz Middendorp, Doctor of Medicine, lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine of Zurich University, former head of the surgical department of the Cantonal Hospital, Winterthur, (1973).

Ms Renée Guisan, General Secretary of the “Institut de la Vie international”, head of medico-social institutions, member of the International Association for Volunteer Effort, (1986).

Mrs Anne Petitpierre, Doctor of Laws, barrister, Professor at the Law Faculty of the University of Geneva, (1987).

Mr Paolo Bernasconi, Bachelor of Laws, barrister, lecturer in fiscal law and economic criminal law at the Universities of St. Gallen, Zurich and Milan (Bocconi), former Public Prosecutor in Lugano, (1987).

Mrs Liselotte Kraus-Gurny, Doctor of Laws of Zurich University, (1988).

Ms Susy Bruschweiler, nurse, former Director of the Swiss Red Cross College of Nursing in Aarau, Chairwoman of S-V Service contract catering, (1988).


Mr Jacques Moreillon, Bachelor of Laws, Doctor of Political Science, Secretary General of the World Organization of the Scout Movement, former Director General at the ICRC, (1988).


Mr Rodolphe de Haller, Doctor of Medicine, former lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Geneva, former President of the Swiss Association against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases, (1991).

Mr Daniel Thürer, Master of Laws (Cambridge), Doctor of Laws, Professor at the University of Zurich, (1991).

1 As at 31 December 1996.
Ms Francesca Pometta, Bachelor of Arts, former Swiss Ambassador, (1991).

Mr Jean-François Aubert, Doctor of Laws, Professor at the University of Neuchâtel, former member of the Swiss National Council and Council of States, (1993).

Mr Joseph Feldmann, Doctor of Philosophy, tenured Professor at the University of St. Gallen, retired Lieutenant General of the Swiss army, (1993).

Mrs Lilian Uchtenhagen, Doctor of Economics of the University of Basel, former member of the Swiss National Council, (1993).

Mr Georges-André Cuendet, Bachelor of Laws of the University of Geneva, graduate of the Institute of Political Studies of the University of Paris (France), Master of Arts of Stanford University (USA), member of the Administrative Council of Cologny (Switzerland), (1993).

Mr Ernst A. Brugger, Doctor of Natural Science, consultant for economic development issues, professor at the University of Zurich, (1995).


HONORARY MEMBERS: Mr Jean Pictet, Honorary Vice-President, Mr Maurice Aubert, Mr Hans Bachmann, Ms Denise Bindschedler-Robert, Mr Jakob Burckhardt†, Mr Athos Gallino, Mr André Ghelfi †, Mr Harald Huber, Mr Henry Huguenin, Mr Rudolf Jäckli, Mr Robert Kohler, Mr Pierre Languetin, Mr Olivier Long, Mr Marcel A. Naville, Mr Richard Pestalozzi, Mr Raymond R. Probst, Mr Alain Rossier, Mr Dietrich Schindler, Mr Hans Peter Tschudi, Mr Alfredo Vannotti.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, President
Mr Eric Roethlisberger, permanent Vice-President
Mr Jacques Forster, member of the Committee
Mrs Anne Petitpierre, member of the Committee
Mr Peter Fuchs, Director General
Mr Jean de Courten, Director of Operations
Mr Yves Sandoz, Director of Principles, Law and Relations with the Movement
INTERNATIONAL ADVISERS

Since 1984, the ICRC has held two meetings a year with a dozen leading international figures selected for a four-year period to advise it on operational matters, on the application of international humanitarian law and on the ICRC's place within the international community.

In 1996, the fourth group of ICRC international advisers (appointed for the 1996-1999 period) met in March and September. Its discussions focused on relationships between humanitarian action and political action, particularly in the context of peace-keeping operations, on the relationship between humanitarian law and human rights, on the establishment of an international criminal court and its implications for the implementation of international humanitarian law, and on several operational situations, especially the humanitarian situation in the former Yugoslavia and in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

Advisers for the period 1996-1999:

Ambassador Hussein Ahmad AMIN, Professor of Islamic Studies at the American University of Cairo.

Ambassador Vitaly IVANOVICH CHURKIN, Former Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, presently Ambassador to Brussels.

Prof. Dr. Günther GILLESSEN, Professor of Journalism at the University of Mainz. Former editor in charge of international affairs with the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.

Ambassador Yoshio HATANO, Formerly Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva and then in New York. At present, President, Foreign Press Center, Tokyo.

Judge Rosalyn HIGGINS, Judge at the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

Mrs Graça Simbine MACHEL, Chairperson, United Nations Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children.

Major-General (Ret.) John A. MacINNIS, Chief of the UN Demining Unit in New York.


Mr. Pedro NIKKEN, President of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, San José, Costa Rica.
Ambassador Herbert S. OKUN, Special Adviser to the Co-Chairman (Mr. Cyrus Vance) of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict. Executive Director, Financial Services Volunteer Corps.

Ambassador Mohamed SAHNOUN, Adviser, UNESCO Culture of Peace Programme.¹


¹ Joint United Nations/OAU special Representative for the Great Lakes region of Africa (as of January 1997).
MISSION STATEMENT

The ICRC acts to help all victims of war and internal violence, attempting to ensure implementation of humanitarian rules restricting armed violence.

The ICRC’s mission arises from the basic human desire, common to all civilizations, to lay down rules governing the use of force in war and to safeguard the dignity of the weak.

The ICRC has received a mandate from the international community to help victims of war and internal violence and to promote compliance with international humanitarian law.

The ICRC’s activities are aimed at protecting and assisting the victims of armed conflict and internal violence so as to preserve their physical integrity and their dignity and to enable them to regain their autonomy as quickly as possible.

The ICRC is independent of all governments and international organizations. Its work is prompted by the desire to promote humane conduct and is guided by empathy for the victims. The ICRC is impartial: its only criterion for action is the victims’ needs. The ICRC is neutral and remains detached from all political issues related to conflict.

By applying these principles strictly, the ICRC is able to act as an intermediary between the parties to armed conflict and to promote dialogue in situations of internal violence, with a view to finding solutions for matters of humanitarian concern.

Through its work, the ICRC helps to prevent the worsening of crises and even at times to resolve them.

As the founding member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the ICRC directs and coordinates the international work of the Movement’s components in connection with armed conflict and internal violence.

The ICRC gives priority to cooperation with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their Federation. It acts in consultation with all other organizations involved in humanitarian work.

The ICRC systematically reminds all military and civilian authorities directly involved in armed conflict or internal violence of their obligations under international humanitarian law and the other humanitarian rules by which they are bound.

The ICRC has the duty to remind all States of their collective obligation to ensure respect for international humanitarian law.

In all societies and cultures, the ICRC endeavours to promote international humanitarian law and the fundamental human values underlying that law.