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 1997, the average exchange rate was: Sfr. 1.45 to US$ 1.
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By their very nature and the extent of the suffering they brought in their wake, the conflicts waged around the world in 1997 pointed up all the complexity of the post-Cold-War era and made it painfully obvious that ensuring the safety of entire populations, and of innocent civilians in particular, constitutes a challenge that the international community seems increasingly unable to meet.

This state of affairs is the expression of a moral and political crisis which affects, to a greater or lesser degree, contemporary society as a whole. It is evident in the resurgence of nationalistic, religious or ethnic ideologies which jeopardize the political unity of States. It can also be seen in the rejection of the values of tolerance and solidarity. In conflicts sparked by this crisis, State authority disintegrates, power becomes fragmented and armed gangs take over from regular military forces.

It is therefore hardly surprising that our delegates in the field should have difficulty in finding individuals in positions of influence who are willing to assume their responsibilities, and that in situations where political and moral chaos is rife, where no distinction is made between combatants and non-combatants, utter disregard for civilians should become commonplace. This trend must be reversed. Indeed, to ensure that it is represents the greatest humanitarian challenge that we face today.

True, in a number of conflicts diplomatic initiatives have fortunately brought hostilities to an end and paved the way for a peaceful settlement, even if implementation often remains an uncertain and complex affair. In mentioning such cases, I wish to draw attention to the fact that in countries whose economic and human resources have been devastated, humanitarian needs do not disappear the minute that the guns fall silent, and conflict could all too easily flare up again. There are detainees to be visited, assisted and protected; the search for missing persons must continue; all necessary support must be provided to
restore health services, to care for the war-disabled, to provide drinking
water, and to meet the basic needs of hundreds of thousands of dis­
placed people.

It is also in these situations of renewed calm that active campaigns to
promote international humanitarian law and humane values must be
conducted, since the traumas of war not only mutilate the body but also
frequently dull the conscience. In a world characterized by a constantly
widening gap between the haves and the have-nots, by soaring arms
sales, by terrorist activities which claim ever more victims, including a
rising number of children, in a world where 800 million people go hun­
gry and 1.2 billion live in absolute poverty, sources of conflict and vio­
ence are aplenty, and preventive action appears more necessary than
ever.

I should like to pay tribute to all those who, despite ever-growing
dangers, put their own lives on the line and continue to strive, by work­
ing tirelessly in behalf of victims, for a world imbued with solidarity.
And I call on the donor community to keep up its support for the
International Committee of the Red Cross and thereby to enable those
brave men and women to accomplish their tasks.

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 acts as lead agency for international relief operations conducted by the Red Cross and Red Crescent in situations of international and non-international armed conflict, internal strife and their direct results, as well as in situations of armed conflict concomitant with natural or technological disasters.

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 a 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.

In 1997, the CTA was integrated into the newly created General Central Tracing Agency and Protection Division.

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 in 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 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 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 both 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;

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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. 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.

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:

- to limit the suffering caused by armed conflicts and situations of disturbances and tension through improved knowledge of and greater respect for humanitarian law;
- to ensure the security of humanitarian operations and the safety of Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel so that help can reach the victims;
- 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;
- to help propagate a spirit of peace.

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.

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2 Article 5, paras 2 (a) and (g), of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

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 1997
Fond memories bring a smile to the face of this elderly grandmother separated from her family by the ruthless and uncaring hand of war. Humanitarian assistance is measured not only in tonnes of supplies delivered and numbers of people reached, but also in small gestures that restore hope and bring warmth to a lonely soul.
In the wake of the tragic losses suffered by the ICRC in 1996, humanitarian organizations continued to work under precarious security conditions during the past year. Moreover, the emergence of unforeseen armed conflicts and other forms of violence, like the lightning military offensives in the former Zaire, the constantly changing situation in Afghanistan, the crisis in Albania, the coups d’état in Sierra Leone and Cambodia and the war in the Republic of the Congo, together with the effects of disastrous weather on already vulnerable populations in areas such as South-East Asia and East Africa, stretched the human and financial capacity of the ICRC to the limit – all the more so as ongoing crises continued, predictably, to require the organization’s attention in 1997. Although the virtual absence of any international conflicts gave rise to the general feeling that war was less prevalent in the world, delegates in the field were faced with a growing number of flashpoints for tension that developed into situations of extreme violence or internal conflicts.

The main victims of hostilities today are, increasingly, civilians, who are becoming both the focus and the target of the fighting. Preventing and alleviating the suffering of the victims of armed conflicts or violence, without discrimination, is the ICRC’s raison d’être. On the ground, this translates into a global approach aimed at assisting all of these people, especially the most vulnerable groups. In 1997, besides carrying out its traditional protection and assistance work, the ICRC strove to prevent violations of international humanitarian law by multiplying its representations to the parties involved in conflicts, with a view to fostering greater respect for the law so that more lives could be spared and protected. The ICRC cannot overemphasize the fact that specific legal norms exist to strengthen the protection that should be afforded to women, children and elderly people, and that these norms must be applied. To this end, truly effective measures should be taken to implement the law, thereby guaranteeing respect for the dignity and fundamental rights of all individuals.

The increasingly numerous risks to which humanitarian organizations have been exposed in recent years are undoubtedly due to changes both in the very nature of conflicts and in the way hostilities are conducted. These risks are, moreover, heightened by the fact that both victims and those who come to their aid are more and more frequently caught up in the very midst of the fighting. To this must be added the rise in crime, which only increases the vulnerability of humanitarian workers in areas where there are disturbances. Whether this is demonstrated by the repeated theft of material or by hostage-taking, nowadays humanitarian organizations are at the mercy of certain individuals or armed groups, in particular in situations where poverty is endemic.

While recognizing the need to improve coordination among all those involved in providing assistance, the ICRC considers it just as important to increase consultation between humanitarian organizations and political bodies. This interaction must, of necessity, lead to a more clear-cut division of tasks and responsibilities between aid providers, which work to alleviate human suffering, and political
authorities, whose primary aim is to tackle the underlying causes of conflicts and restore conditions that are conducive to peace and stability.

Despite the constructive dialogue that has been established in many forums which bring together humanitarian organizations and political bodies, the ICRC has noted with growing concern that there is a tendency, in central Africa in particular, to fall back on humanitarian aid as an alternative to political action. However, if that aid is perceived by the warring parties as supporting political objectives, this may further increase the vulnerability of relief workers. Moreover, when violence – as an expression of a deliberate policy – increases to a point where the survival of whole groups is at stake, the response to crises can no longer be confined to humanitarian action.

The ICRC's capacity to take up the challenges ahead will depend on the ability and determination of the international community to find global solutions to humanitarian problems. These solutions will have to take account of the underlying political, social and economic factors if humanitarian aid is to achieve lasting results.

As far as coordination is concerned, the ICRC is ready to play its part and fulfil its responsibilities, on a pragmatic and voluntary basis, in particular wherever it is de facto the main humanitarian organization on the spot. Within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement as a whole, the ICRC takes charge of directing operations in countries where there are armed conflicts or other forms of violence, while continuing to develop its cooperation with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their Federation. This division of tasks and responsibilities is in conformity with the Movement's Statutes and the new agreement adopted in Seville in November 1997.

For the ICRC, the past year was also marked by growing difficulties in financing all of its work. While severe crises received the expected attention and support, the same cannot be said of situations which were no longer in the headlines but nevertheless continued to require substantial ICRC involvement: those in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka; Colombia and Peru; Rwanda (with some 120,000 detainees) and the Horn of Africa; and Iraq, the Israeli-occupied territories and the Palestinian autonomous territories all illustrate this problem. In addition, increased financial support remained necessary for providing an adequate response to humanitarian needs in places where the situation might be described as "neither war nor peace", such as in several countries of the former USSR and the former Yugoslavia. Support for this type of work is an important factor in preventing new conflicts and ensuring a smooth transition from a situation of emergency to the rehabilitation and development phases.

Out of a concern to continue improving its performance while at the same time keeping its expenditure under control, in 1997 the ICRC began a study designed to enhance its ability to meet the needs of both victims and donors through a detailed examination of those needs, more elaborate planning and professional management based on an ongoing evaluation of its activities.
Wide-ranging activities for the protection of war victims

Within the ICRC's sphere of work, the notion of protection encompasses all activities aimed at shielding people who are caught up in armed conflicts and situations of internal violence from the dangers, suffering and abuses of power to which they may be exposed, making their voices heard and lending them support. Those concerned are mainly the wounded, people deprived of their freedom, families split apart by the events and the civilian population in general, including certain particularly vulnerable categories such as displaced persons, women and children. In the broader sense, protection involves a vast spectrum of activities ranging from bilateral negotiations and multilateral diplomacy to training and education, communication and the provision of services.

In the strictest sense, protection means gathering information and then taking steps to persuade the authorities concerned or those who wield power to prevent or put an end to infringements of the law, especially humanitarian law. An organization like the ICRC thus sees protection in three ways: primarily in terms of confronting people with their responsibilities and making confidential approaches, next in terms of providing support for existing structures and, exceptionally, in terms of substituting for those structures. Efforts to convince those in charge to shoulder their responsibilities are effective only where there is a modicum of political will to follow the recommendations made and collaborate effectively.

As a rule, respect for the dignity of individuals and protection of their fundamental rights can exist only in an environment in which it is possible to prevent and put a stop to violations of the law. Such a favourable environment is created through a combination of effort and resolve on the part of the authorities concerned, civil society, the international community and international and non-governmental organizations. The operational activities of the ICRC fit into and are a basic component of this endeavour. Nevertheless, it is the authorities themselves who are responsible for the safety and physical integrity of the people under their control.

Protecting the civilian population

Immunity and respect for civilians and other people who are not or are no longer participating directly in the hostilities is one of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and customary law.

As with its other protection-related activities, the ICRC's approach in this sphere is based on a great deal of preparatory work (making various contacts, building a climate of trust, getting to know the real situation in all its various aspects), on efforts to get close to the victims (gaining access to them, maintaining a presence over time, collecting reliable – in principle, first-hand –
information) and on persuasion (direct, discreet dialogue with the specific authori-
ties concerned and with anyone in a position to put a stop to the abuses reported).

Unfortunately, it has to be said that in 1997, yet again, the distinction between
civilians and combatants or other people bearing arms was respected less and
less, particularly where the fate of the civilian population itself was at stake.
Furthermore, humanitarian organizations did not always enjoy the respect or
facilities that are essential for them to be able to do their work.

In some situations, the ICRC was thus not in a position to provide protection.
This occurred primarily where the minimum conditions of security for humani-
tarian staff were not present, such as in Chechnya and Burundi. The same can be
said of situations where access to victims proved impossible, mainly for lack of
agreement by all the parties involved. Furthermore, efforts to give protection
were in vain where there was a clear and deliberate intention to eliminate the
other side. In this context, the massacre of several thousand people who had fled
through the former Zaire and the tragic developments in Algeria, where the
ICRC was unable to work, represented two of the organization’s major concerns.

During the year under review the ICRC was, however, able to come to the aid
of the civilian population in a number of places. In Sri Lanka, for example, it reg-
ularly approached government forces and the independence movement, the
LTTE,* regarding cases of ill-treatment of which it had learned and regarding the
manner in which hostilities were being conducted in the Vanni region. In other
situations where active combat was taking place, such as in Afghanistan and
northern Iraq, the ICRC made numerous representations aimed at persuading
the forces there to keep civilians clear of the fighting and to take the necessary
precautions to limit the effects of the hostilities on them as far as possible. In
Afghanistan, the rising ethnic tension was a particular source of concern, as were
various forms of discrimination against women practised for several months by
the Taliban in the area of medical care.

In the Israeli-occupied territories, the ICRC continued its efforts on behalf of
the civilian population in the face of recurrent violations of certain provisions of
humanitarian law, violations such as the building of new settlements, the confis-
cation of land, the forced displacement of groups of people and the destruction
doing houses. In East Timor, the ICRC stepped up its approaches to the Indonesian
authorities in order to improve the situation of civilians.

The ICRC significantly increased the geographical scope of its activities in
Colombia, enabling it to strengthen its dialogue with those involved in the armed
violence and, when excesses took place, to make more frequent approaches both
to government forces and to the armed opposition movements and main rural
self-defence groups. The situation in the country was a prime example of the

* LTTE: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

♦ visited 1,680 places of detention in 56 countries;
♦ visited more than 200,000 detainees and monitored the detention history of 130,819 of them;
♦ provided 14 million Swiss francs' worth of medical and other relief for detainees and their families.

fragmentation of the power-base and multiplication of armed groups which the ICRC had already seen elsewhere and which made its work all the more difficult and complex.

Activities for people deprived of their freedom

Visits to detainees

Anyone deprived of their freedom is vulnerable, with regard to both the detaining authorities and the pressures of prison life. This vulnerability is heightened in situations of armed conflict and collective or political violence, where there is an even greater temptation to use excessive and unlawful force.

In its activities for people deprived of their freedom, the ICRC's priority aim is to prevent or put an end to disappearances, torture and other forms of ill-treatment, degrading conditions of detention and the splitting apart of families. While remaining careful not to take any position on the grounds for imprisonment, the ICRC nevertheless endeavours to ensure that people undergoing criminal prosecution have the benefit of the judicial guarantees enshrined in international humanitarian law and customary law.

Regular visits to places of detention, carried out in accordance with specific procedures, are an indispensable tool for the ICRC in achieving these particular aims. They enable the organization to find out exactly what the situation is, on the basis of the information gathered and observations made by its delegates, and are the foundation for a practical, realistic dialogue with the authorities. Dialogue is at the very heart of the ICRC's work: first of all, there are the private interviews with detainees, next, bilateral confidential representations to the authorities concerned, at various levels. Checking the identity of detainees and carrying out follow-up visits until their release are other special features of the ICRC's approach, and ones which are essential to its protection work.

The prison systems in many countries have comparable problems: precarious detention conditions due mainly to overcrowding, the slowness and inefficiency of legal proceedings, violence among detainees and corruption.

In 1997 the ICRC conducted visits to a large number of prisoners in 56 countries. Africa was the continent where it saw the highest number of detainees and where the problems arising were the most acute. In Rwanda, some 120,000 detainees were living in drastic conditions and to a large extent depended for their survival on the ICRC's visits and work. Lock-ups that did not have the basic facilities for prolonged incarceration, often with over six detainees per square metre, were used for housing this prison population, whose numbers had increased by 40% since 1996. In Ethiopia, the number of detainees visited by the ICRC doubled over the past year, partly thanks to better access. In Uganda, a new large-scale operation was launched in civilian prisons, police stations and military camps.
Major detention-related work was also carried out in Asia, on the Indian sub-continent, in particular for people arrested in connection with the situation prevailing in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the conflict in Sri Lanka. ICRC activities increased substantially in Afghanistan, where, because of the growth of the prison population, the organization visited three times as many detainees as the year before. Despite certain difficulties, the ICRC was able to go to places of detention under the control of all the parties to the conflict, with only one of them refusing it all access for some months.

In the Middle East, the continuation of visits to detainees begun in 1996 in Bahrain and the resumption of visits in the Palestinian autonomous territories made it possible to forward appropriate recommendations and proposals to the authorities. The ICRC also continued to see people detained by the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, at the Hague and Arusha respectively.

**Ensuring the survival of detainees**

Much of the ICRC’s work is directed at ensuring that the human dignity of detainees is respected. In a great many countries, the material conditions of detention have deteriorated catastrophically to the point where the physical integrity of inmates, and even their lives, are in danger. This extremely worrying fact may generally be explained by the overcrowding in prisons and the inadequacy of the budgets allocated, which leads to the inability declared by certain authorities to improve the situation. Armed conflicts and other forms of collective violence aggravate this problem, which affects the entire prison population, and not just the people arrested in connection with these events. Irrespective of the repressive policy being implemented, all prisoners are thus deprived of the minimum humanitarian protection they are entitled to expect from the authorities.

Often, faced with this fact, the ICRC cannot be content with reminding the authorities of their responsibilities and submitting recommendations to them with a view to ensuring the survival of detainees. It thus finds itself more and more frequently obliged to broaden its criteria for action in the countries where it is already working. This increased involvement has led the ICRC to extend its protection activities to penal-law prisoners, who were not initially among its concerns and who do not fall specifically within its mandate.

The decision to substitute in part, or even wholly, for the detaining authorities must be given careful consideration each time and calls for agreement with those authorities on the precise conditions that are to apply, especially when a long-term commitment is envisaged. Thus, in Tajikistan, the ICRC noted that the food and nutritional rehabilitation programme begun in 1996 for around 6,000
detainees had not led to the expected improvement in their nutritional situation, owing to the lack of tangible involvement by the authorities and various problems with pilfering. In Madagascar, the programme to improve the food supply for detainees, centred mainly on encouraging agricultural production within the prison system, was continued. ICRC involvement in Rwandan detention centres – mainly in the spheres of hygiene and nutrition – remained exceptional from the point of view of the range of services provided, the tonnage of supplies involved and the number of beneficiaries. Detention-related work with similar aims but in other spheres took place in Haiti (medical treatment and hygiene), Afghanistan (hygiene and supply of basic medicines) and Yemen (psychiatric treatment). In Azerbaijan, despite various problems of coordination with the authorities, the ICRC continued its ambitious programme to combat tuberculosis in prisons. Places of detention are a particularly favourable environment for the propagation of this disease, which remains the main cause of mortality among detainees in this country, and if it is not treated, or not well enough treated, TB can also have very serious consequences outside prisons. The same type of programme was started in Georgia.

Consultation, exchanges, specialized training

Because of the more and more marked involvement on the ground of new players working in the areas of protection and detention in particular, the ICRC had many contacts with bodies such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, the International Civilian Mission in Haiti and various bodies set up in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in order to help develop complementary approaches and thereby avoid both duplication of effort and gaps in the services provided. Indeed, if the endeavour to promote human dignity is to be rational and effective, it calls for complementarity between the parties involved at all levels of their work. This applies to the situations covered and the mandates of each, as well as to types of activity, working methods, operational objectives and priorities.

In 1997 the ICRC took part in a number of international and national meetings and conferences, which enabled it to have fruitful exchanges. As a result it was involved, to a certain extent, in efforts to provide special training and in discussions on a wide range of subjects. It thus attended a conference for the heads of prison administrations in European countries, devoted to overcrowding in prisons, organized in Finland under the aegis of the Council of Europe; a seminar run by the African Prison Association on production activities in prisons; and a conference on alternatives to imprisonment held by Penal Reform International in Zimbabwe. In addition, it sent representatives to various conferences organized nationally by the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights and other country-level meetings in Australia, Uganda and Turkey.
A new development that occurred in 1997 regarding ICRC visits to people deprived of their freedom were as follows:

- visits were rapidly conducted to prisoners of war captured on both sides during the military operations between Sudan and Uganda;
- a new authorization to carry out visits to places of detention was issued in June by the junta in power in Sierra Leone;
- visits began in Lesotho in July, after permission was granted to see people accused of sedition, high treason and undermining State security;
- detainees held in connection with the secessionist uprising in the Comoros archipelago were visited as from September;
- in October, upon receiving authorization, the ICRC began visits to detainees in Côte d’Ivoire;
- visits began in July to people detained in Mexico because of their supposed links with the EPR,*
- also in July, shortly after signing an agreement with the government, the ICRC began to visit security detainees in Bolivia;
- an agreement to allow visits was signed in October with the Albanian authorities;
- visits to Peruvian prisons, which had been suspended for almost all of 1997, were resumed in December (during the year, visits continued to other places of detention, such as military installations and police stations).

Unwelcome developments and stagnation

In conformity with its mandate regarding the implementation of humanitarian law, and on the basis of its right of humanitarian initiative, which authorizes it to take up any issue that falls within its purview, in 1997 the ICRC offered its services, but to no avail, in several countries. In particular:

- the ICRC failed to gain access to Cameroonian prisoners of war allegedly in captivity in Nigeria;

* EPR: Popular Revolutionary Army
♦ despite some encouraging signs (the repatriation under ICRC auspices of 542 Iraqi prisoners of war and two Iranian soldiers captured after the Gulf war), the tragic situation of several thousand prisoners of war known to the ICRC remained unresolved nine years after the cessation of hostilities in the conflict between Iran and Iraq – as a result, the prisoners were still deprived of ICRC visits, and their release and right to repatriation continued not to be granted, in violation of Article 118 of the Third Geneva Convention;

♦ over 1,900 Moroccan soldiers held by the Polisario Front, often for over 20 years, who had been visited by the ICRC, continued to be detained despite the 1991 ceasefire, as the parties linked their repatriation with the political issue over which they remained at odds;

♦ no significant developments took place in discussions with Algeria;

♦ in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the ICRC was not able to visit people deprived of their freedom after the change of government;

♦ in Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, negotiations by the ICRC to gain access to security detainees in accordance with its customary criteria failed to come to a successful conclusion;

♦ no progress was made in the dialogue with the Turkish authorities on the humanitarian situation and related problems in Turkey.

No significant developments took place in the other contexts highlighted in the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report.

Role as neutral intermediary: humanitarian initiatives

In many situations, the ICRC made an effort to be flexible and adapt to specific needs so as to carry out its mission as a neutral intermediary in the best way possible. This was the case with respect to activities as diverse as taking part in the release and repatriation of prisoners, acting on behalf of hostages, transferring mortal remains or organizing the return home of persons displaced within their own country.

During the year the ICRC facilitated the release and/or repatriation of prisoners of war or civilian internees held in connection with the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh, soldiers detained by the FARC* in Colombia, prisoners of war and other detainees in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, people held in southern Lebanon by the Israeli-backed SLA* militia and by Hezbollah, Taliban prisoners in the hands of the northern coalition in Afghanistan and people detained

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* FARC: Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces
* SLA: South Lebanon Army
by the NPA* in the Philippines and by the LTTE* in Sri Lanka. The ICRC also stepped in as a neutral intermediary on a number of occasions to improve the situation of people who had been taken hostage, independently of its efforts to have a stop put to these acts banned by humanitarian law. In Lima, until the crisis at the Japanese ambassador’s residence was resolved by force in April, the organization regularly visited the people being held there, enabled them to exchange news with their families and ensured their subsistence, while at the same time it was busy facilitating dialogue between the Peruvian government and the MRTA* members involved. In Colombia, the ICRC strove to obtain notification of people being held by most of the parties to the conflict and to gain access to them. It often enabled them to exchange news – strictly confined to family matters – with their relatives and provided logistic back-up to facilitate the release of close to 300 people.

Transfers of mortal remains took place mainly in southern Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and in connection with the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the ICRC organized the return of over 24,000 displaced people by boat, train, truck or airplane.

**Restoration of family links**

One of the main purposes of humanitarian law is to preserve the family unit, since the splitting apart of families is one of the major causes of suffering in times of conflict and violence.

In its day-to-day work in the field and as part of its protection mandate, the ICRC, with the help of its tracing staff, takes steps to maintain or restore contact between family members who have been separated by armed conflict, internal violence or imprisonment, thereby helping to alleviate their anguish and mental suffering. This work can take different forms, such as collecting and delivering family messages, organizing family reunifications, arranging for family members to visit relatives in prison or across front lines, or searching for people of whom there has been no news or who have been reported missing.

**Family messages**

Family messages, initiated during the First World War, still have a vital role to play. They continue to be a simple, swift and effective way of helping thousands of relatives who have been separated from each other to renew contact. This method of communication owes its success to a unique network coordinated and

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* NPA: New People’s Army  
* LTTE: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam  
* MRTA: Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement
run in part by the ICRC, but above all made up of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies throughout the world.

Compared with the preceding years, 1997 saw a reduction in the number of family messages handled. This may be explained by the fact that in several places, such as in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, postal services were restored. Nevertheless, there continued to be a great many exchanges of messages – essential in several contexts – especially in West Africa, the Great Lakes region and Eastern Europe. Over 120 National Societies contributed to this effort.

Family reunification and the problem of unaccompanied children

The ICRC continued its work to trace individuals who had been separated from their families and, where necessary, to arrange for their return home. Searches were carried out in many different ways: collecting and delivering family messages, sending Red Cross/Red Crescent staff to places where the individuals were thought to be staying, making contact with countless people and publishing names or photos. All this work depended on meticulously collecting information and analysing it in detail – in general, using computerized databases. It took place, for example, in Somalia, Croatia, Cambodia and Sri Lanka, where, in each place, several hundred cases were resolved.

In this sphere, children occupy a special category. The youngest, as the most vulnerable group in every community, are always among the first – and the worst – affected by the consequences of armed conflicts. Children often find themselves separated from their families during active hostilities and in the course of evacuations or mass movements of the civilian population. In such situations, protecting unaccompanied children means identifying them, searching for their parents and renewing contact with members of their families, then maintaining this link until it is possible to reunite them with at least one of their parents.

Throughout 1997 the ICRC, often in cooperation with other humanitarian organizations, played an important role in bringing unaccompanied children back together with their families and successfully conducted programmes for this purpose, in particular in the Great Lakes region of Africa. Over 24,000 children in the region were thus reunited with their families, while work continued for another 8,000 who were alone or had been taken in by other families.

The complexity and scope of the activities undertaken to assist unaccompanied children in the Great Lakes region led to an unprecedented coordination of efforts between the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations, such as UNHCR, UNICEF and SCF.* Some highly productive exchanges, including those that took place at a regional workshop organized by SCF in Nairobi, contributed to developing streamlined and complementary approaches, in particular where working methods and tools were concerned.

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* SCF: Save the Children Fund
People reported missing

International humanitarian law stipulates that the parties to a conflict have an obligation to supply all the information in their possession regarding the fate of combatants and civilians reported missing. In various situations during the year, the ICRC encouraged and took an active part in the implementation of mechanisms to facilitate dialogue both with and between the authorities concerned and to speed up efforts to settle the major problem of persons unaccounted for. In doing so, it gave ongoing support to the families of those reported missing, helping them in their search for the truth and attempting to meet their legitimate expectations. For anyone in this situation wishes, and has the right, to know what has happened to a relative who is missing – to find out first of all whether or not the person is still alive and, if not, to recover the mortal remains and give the person a decent burial. Knowing the fate of a loved one, even when it is tragic, is the only way to put an end to the awful uncertainty for the people affected and enable them to begin the mourning process that is essential if their lives are to return to normal.

In the former Yugoslavia, the process initiated in 1996 to gather information from the authorities on people unaccounted for continued, through the working group specially set up under the Dayton agreement. Despite some difficulties, the group met three times under ICRC auspices in 1997. Representatives of the families of people reported missing were also formally integrated into the mechanism. To supplement the responses expected from the former warring parties, the ICRC actively explored all possible sources of information in the field. It also participated regularly in the meetings of the Expert Group on Exhumations and Missing Persons chaired by the Office of the High Representative, set up to coordinate the activities of the different international bodies involved.

The ICRC also continued to chair the Tripartite Commission in charge of ascertaining the fate of people who had disappeared during the Gulf war. The concrete findings of the Commission, as those of the Technical Subcommittee reporting to it, remained slight and its progress, unfortunately, fell short of expectations.

In relation to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, the ICRC submitted requests to the parties concerned, drawn up on the basis of information supplied by the families of persons unaccounted for. It formally offered its services, but to no avail, in establishing procedures to shed light on these cases.

Developing and strengthening the National Society network

Cooperation with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in order to assist them in further developing their tracing services intensified in 1997. Work begun with the National Societies in the former USSR at the end of 1993 led in 1997 to the signing of cooperation agreements with several tracing
services in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan). A fresh boost was also given to cooperation with the tracing services of the National Societies in Central Europe.

Furthermore, as part of its effort to support and cooperate with the National Societies, the ICRC organized various events throughout the world. International meetings were thus held in New Delhi, bringing together the tracing services of a number of Asian National Societies; in Moscow, in the form of a regional round table; and in Geneva, with the participation of 20 or so representatives from the tracing services of the National Societies of Australia, Canada, the United States and several European countries. National workshops were also held in seven African countries, including Sudan, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Relief: a comprehensive approach with health as the ultimate goal

Conflicts and other violent situations inevitably result in damage to the health of the individuals and populations affected by them.

This damage can be direct, such as people wounded or disabled. It can also be indirect, for example, the destruction or impairment of health services, the breakdown in the supply of medicines, the exodus of medical personnel, restricted or lack of access to health care, but also – and above all – the disruption or collapse of services and activities that are essential to survival, including the supply of water, the maintenance of environmental hygiene, the control of vectors of epidemics, agricultural production, livestock-rearing, fishing and food marketing.

The end of hostilities does not necessarily mean that everything will immediately go back to normal: anti-personnel mines can still kill or maim women, children and farmers, and make it impossible to cultivate vast areas. Impoverishment, the destruction of infrastructure and the disruption of services continue to endanger the health, and even the survival, of entire populations or vulnerable groups for a long time. The capacity to cope with any natural disasters that may occur is also diminished in a country which has suffered the consequences of a war. And the longer the fighting lasts, the more disastrous those consequences will be.

The ICRC, which for decades has been faced with both the immediate and the delayed effects of conflicts, has gradually developed a comprehensive approach to them. This involves striving, among other things, to supplement medical assistance with measures to maintain or bring about food and economic security, access to water, environmental hygiene and protection from the elements, all essential factors in preserving or restoring the health of conflict victims.

In order to take into account the duration of conflicts and their delayed effects, emergency aid often has to be supplemented with rehabilitation programmes. As far as possible, these are included as part of relief work right from
the start, or at a very early stage. Thus it often happens that emergency aid and rehabilitation or reconstruction activities coexist as part of the same project.

The quality of the assistance given can only be guaranteed through the evaluation of relief work and the provision of appropriate training to humanitarian personnel. Evaluation and training are therefore an integral part of assistance.

The projects described below illustrate this comprehensive approach as practised by the ICRC in 1997. What follows is not an exhaustive list of relief and health activities, which will be described in greater detail in the sections devoted to each country, but rather a selection of representative examples.

**Emergency food aid, food and economic security, protection of the basic means of subsistence**

Emergency food aid was frequently required in 1997: for example, supplies were distributed to displaced people in the eastern part of the former Zaire; to widows, disabled people and other groups at risk in Afghanistan; to flood victims in Somalia and to hospitals, orphanages and other social-welfare institutions in Albania; and a nutritional assistance programme was carried out for detainees in Tajikistan.

In a less urgent post-conflict situation, namely the one in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the ICRC continued to provide supplementary food aid linked to programmes for seed distribution, small-scale food production and job creation.

The ICRC also set up a wide range of multifaceted projects, adapting its strategies to the particular socio-economic contexts in which it worked so as to stimulate production for the direct benefit of needy individuals and families. These projects were primarily aimed at protecting the basic means of subsistence, with many focusing on rehabilitation as a means of reducing the dependence of vulnerable groups on nutritional aid or continual seed distributions. In Somalia, for example, repairs were made to 11 irrigation systems and pumps were purchased for them in order to boost agricultural production. In Afghanistan, efforts to rehabilitate irrigation canals and major water-supply infrastructure continued. Such projects, of course, emerged in response to strong demand from the local population, which was a key to their success.

In other instances, the ICRC launched operations without having been requested to do so by the population concerned. A major effort was then needed to inform local communities and secure their cooperation. In Somalia and Ethiopia, for example, the programmes to reduce the numbers of tsetse flies – the vectors of trypanosomiasis in animals – called for numerous traps to be set up along the banks of water courses, which are the main areas of infestation. The programmes reduced the fly population, bringing about a substantial improvement in livestock health (leading to increased production of meat and milk, and improved fertility), and made it possible to use grazing land by the waterside, which is the most fertile, and often the only source of fodder.
In north-eastern Armenia (an area bordering on Azerbaijan), a small sum of money was granted in May 1997 for the repair of eight combine harvesters in six villages, to enable the population to bring in their wheat on time and thus keep down losses. This type of assistance created the basic conditions needed to revive the village economies. The relationship of trust that was built up, based on familiarity with the region’s economic mechanisms and on dialogue, also made it possible to rehabilitate destroyed schools and to rebuild damaged homes so that families could move in again.

With a view to obtaining the total backing of the population, projects to assist the victims of the genocide in Rwanda were not managed by the ICRC but were systematically carried out by local or national organizations (charities, youth groups, churches, widows’ associations, etc.). A wide range of activities were included, from agriculture and livestock-rearing to reconstruction and craftwork.

In Somalia, a four-month vocational training course in fishery was provided in seven coastal villages, and was a unique experience in more ways than one. It stood out not only by its broad scale, but also by the very close cooperation that was developed with the Somali Red Crescent Society, the use of the expertise of local fishermen and the distribution of a large amount of fishing tackle to participants, all of this in the hope of generating substantial income.

Other activities, less spectacular but just as vital, were also carried out successfully. In Sierra Leone, for example, a complex and finely-tuned monitoring system was set up to guarantee the purity of some 15 varieties of upland and swamp rice bought within the country and distributed to 36,000 farming families in difficulty. This operation, which took account of local adaptation strategies, slowed down the impoverishment of Sierra Leone’s genetic capital of rice varieties and was also aimed at making it possible for the target population’s rice production to get off to a fresh start. The diversity of rice varieties actually plays a key role in agricultural production, as farmers sow several varieties, each of which is specifically suited to the micro-conditions in their various fields.

In Mali, two programmes were being carried out simultaneously for a truly comprehensive approach: on the one hand, a veterinary programme backing annual campaigns against the main epizootic diseases and promoting marketing activities, and on the other hand, an agronomy programme focusing on market gardening and cereal production (mainly flood-resistant rice, sorghum and wheat). Through the distribution of supplies, technical support, training and the setting up of different types of associations in local communities, the two programmes pursued the same objective: to take part in consolidating the peace process by making technical services available to the population and by bringing various groups together. This approach was also reflected in the launching of longer-term projects, such as technical support for rebuilding houses and for creating a healthier environment, or the financing of new community health centres and health posts in areas difficult to reach.
Since one of the root causes of the rebellion in northern Mali is the lack of economic integration among the country’s ethnic groups, a common problem in the context of development, this comprehensive approach is exemplary and shows how a well-run assistance programme can help to protect the population.

**Access to water, sanitation and environmental hygiene**

Whether the aim is to bring emergency supplies of drinking water to displaced persons, repair water-treatment and distribution systems in areas or towns devastated by conflict, provide running water for hospitals, dispensaries or prisons, set up latrines, or even dispose of corpses, the ICRC’s relief work almost always includes programmes involving water and sanitation.

In 1997, the ICRC’s activities in this sphere were carried out in 14 countries, particularly in central Africa (Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda), but also in Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Iraq. Many projects were carried out in cooperation with participating National Societies.

**Providing medical treatment, running medical and surgical services, caring for the wounded and those disabled in war**

Depending on the situation, the ICRC had to adopt different strategies so as to enable the wounded, the sick and the disabled to receive treatment in conflict areas.

In Afghanistan, for example, besides supplying hospitals with medical and surgical equipment and medicines, and providing surgical teams for the hospitals in Kandahar and Kabul, the ICRC had to deal with a particular problem raised by the local health authorities’ decision to refuse women admission to hospitals that were not specifically designated for them. Since there was only one very poorly equipped hospital that could receive female patients, this was tantamount to depriving them of treatment. The ICRC played a major role in negotiating the revocation of this decision.

Another particular health problem was posed by the taking of hostages at the Japanese ambassador’s residence in Lima, Peru. In this case, ICRC doctors arranged for daily consultations for the hostages, some of whom were released on health grounds. With the help of volunteers from the Japanese Red Cross Society, they also provided psychological support for the families of the hostages.

In the Republic of the Congo, the prevailing lack of security caused by the fighting in Brazzaville forced the ICRC to take action outside the capital: it set up temporary health posts along the route taken by people fleeing the city, organized the evacuation of the wounded to hospitals in Kinshasa and supplied the latter with the additional equipment necessary for treating those patients. The staff and patients of a hospital that was situated on the front line were moved to a disused school in a safer area, where the ICRC installed a water tank and latrines, and supplied treatment equipment.

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**IN 1997 THE ICRC:**

- deployed sanitation teams in 14 countries to provide drinking water for displaced people and/or repair water-treatment facilities and distribution systems in towns and regions affected by conflict;
- initiated or completed 11 water and sanitation programmes, through projects delegated to the National Societies of Australia, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States;
- distributed and/or installed water and sanitation materials worth 21 million Swiss francs.
In 1997 the ICRC:

♦ distributed medicines and other medical supplies worth 20 million Swiss francs in 43 countries;
♦ was the major supplier of medicines, medical materials and equipment to 9 hospitals in Asia and Africa where a total of 33,682 patients were admitted and 176,639 people given outpatient treatment;
♦ deployed medical teams in 4 hospitals throughout the year and, for part of the year, in 9 hospitals;
♦ fitted a total of 7,503 amputees with artificial limbs in its 20 prosthetic/orthotic workshops;
♦ produced for its workshops 11,354 prostheses, including 7,201 for landmine victims;
♦ manufactured and provided for other organizations that fit amputees more than 19,000 prosthetic/orthotic components (artificial knees and feet, and various appliances).

In many conflict-ridden areas, ICRC aid consisted in supplying medical and surgical equipment and medicines to hospitals and other health centres.


During the year, the ICRC ran 20 prosthetic/orthotic workshops and provided thousands of components to other organizations, including Handicap International, the Cambodia Trust and Veterans International, which also fit amputees. In order to ensure that its limb-fitting projects continue after its withdrawal, to support similar projects run by other organizations, to pass on its techniques (notably the use of polypropylene) and to help train prosthetists, the ICRC administers a Special Fund for the Disabled, which runs a training centre in Addis Ababa, finances projects in various countries and follows up former ICRC projects. In 1997, some 30 prosthetists from 10 countries were trained and 20 evaluation and technical assistance missions were carried out in workshops in Africa, Latin America and Asia with backing from the Fund.¹

Evaluation of activities, training

The work of the ICRC in Mali and its programme for treating detainees with tuberculosis in Azerbaijan were the subject of special evaluations in 1997. The programme in Azerbaijan provided both material for a study on drug-resistant TB and data on the problem of TB in prisons. These findings were presented at various meetings of specialists and concerned organizations (WHO*, MSF*), notably in Baku. A statement underlining the magnitude and seriousness of the problem was drawn up and later published in the British Medical Journal (29 November). The ICRC is currently writing a manual on the treatment of TB in prisons, in cooperation with WHO.

A consultant from the Relief Division carried out an evaluation of the impact of a micro-credit programme in Azerbaijan, thus making it possible to develop a methodology that will be useful for future work.

Furthermore, a study on the impact of the numerous agricultural programmes conducted in Angola confirmed the validity of the activities undertaken, although it pointed to some weaknesses when it came to procedures for concluding and handing over programmes. The study also analysed the effects of mines on agricultural production and survival strategies. The data gathered should

¹ See Special funds, p. 370.
* WHO: World Health Organization
* MSF: Médecins sans frontières
make it possible to step up activities aimed at raising awareness of the danger of mines and spreading information on how to deal with the presence of these weapons within the framework of other agricultural programmes.

For the first time in the context of the ICRC’s agricultural work, a report was drawn up entirely by external experts in order to evaluate the entire range of economic support and rehabilitation work carried out in Afghanistan. Indeed, after the final assessment of any programme, which is the most important step in improving design, an external evaluation of follow-up and overall management can prove most useful. In another case, a specialist in the multiplication of seed potatoes was asked to carry out a three-week assessment of work done in Abkhazia and Nagorny Karabakh.

In the area of training, five HELP* courses were organized in 1997 in Bangkok, Geneva, Baltimore, Honolulu and – for the first time – Addis Ababa, the latter in cooperation with the city’s university. The course in the Ethiopian capital, which attracted 29 candidates from 20 countries, was the first to take place on the African continent.

Lectures were also given at the University of Aix-Marseille III in France and the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium, within the framework of the NOHA* postgraduate diploma in humanitarian assistance set up by ECHO.*

An annual seminar on war surgery was held in Geneva in April. Another seminar took place in Omdurman, Sudan, in June, with the participation of 190 members of the Sudanese armed forces medical services.

A seminar on tuberculosis in prisons, for doctors working in places of detention, was organized in Georgia in June.

As the result of a symposium held in 1996 on the medical profession and the effects of weapons, a project to study and reflect on the effects of conventional weapons, was launched in 1997. The main aim of the project, entitled S1rUS, was to define in objective terms which weapons cause “superfluous injury” and “unnecessary suffering” as referred to in certain instruments of humanitarian law.

Cooperation with National Societies in the conduct of operational activities

Under the terms of Article 3 of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, “the National Societies form the basic units and constitute a vital force of the Movement”. In this sense, they are the ICRC’s primary ally in its humanitarian work and are central to its strategy. Recognizing the

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* HELP: Health Emergencies in Large Populations
* NOHA: Network on Humanitarian Assistance
* ECHO: European Community Humanitarian Office
important role played by the National Societies in providing assistance for conflict victims and in promoting humanitarian law, the ICRC has established a partnership with them, and intends to develop it further. This calls for clearly defining the objectives and scope of its collaboration with them, putting in place effective mechanisms for consultation and coordination, balancing the interests of all while working out common aims, communicating effectively and searching for outside support for humanitarian work.

This process, which requires efforts from both sides, is gradually moving forward. To take first of all the National Societies in whose countries and with whom the ICRC conducts operational activities, the organization’s general objective could be expressed as follows: to help strengthen the Movement as a whole by facilitating the setting-up and development of a network of National Societies capable of carrying out their mission effectively, while maintaining a high level of integrity. It is particularly in situations of conflict or internal disturbances, or in anticipation of such situations, that the ICRC wishes to involve the National Societies in its work and support their initiatives and projects designed to increase their independence, financial autonomy and operational capacity.2

As for the ICRC's partnership with National Societies that, from outside, back up the organization’s operations (providing staff, funding or material support), this is just as important to develop, in particular by pursuing and clarifying the policy of project delegation and by continuing to carry out bilateral projects.3 The ICRC also wishes to extend its exchanges of views with National Societies and consult them on operational matters of mutual interest (as it did in March 1997, when it organized an operational forum on security problems).

In addition, the ICRC wishes to deepen its familiarity with the National Societies by broadening what has up to now been only an occasional practice, namely professional exchanges between ICRC staff and their colleagues within the Societies.

Relations with international organizations

Violations of the norms of humanitarian law and of basic humane values call for a strong reaction on the part of the international community lest these violations become a tacitly accepted parameter of international relations. Faced with this risk, the ICRC redoubled its efforts with governments and international organizations, with civil society and with all the perpetrators of violence, seeking to mobilize them on humanitarian issues.

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2 See ICRC cooperation within the Movement, p. 311.
3 Delegated projects are ICRC projects carried out by a National Society, while bilateral projects, which are also carried out by a National Society, are not part of the ICRC's objectives in the given area; both however, are carried out under overall ICRC responsibility.
Attempting to prevent humanitarian crises, to soften their effects, to meet the most pressing needs and to prepare for development by restoring and strengthening local resources — all of this also calls for consultation with each player involved and an ongoing dialogue between the various humanitarian organizations.

Broad-based humanitarian endeavour

In multilateral forums, increasing attention was paid to humanitarian law. The ICRC was particularly pleased with the outcome of the 12th Ministerial Conference of Non-Aligned Countries, which was held in New Delhi on 7 and 8 April. For the first time, a document from the Non-Aligned Movement allocated a separate section to humanitarian action and included among the Movement's aims respect for humanitarian law and implementation of the principle whereby States are jointly responsible for ensuring that respect.

The latter principle was also at the core of a resolution (A/RES/ES -10/3) adopted on 15 July by the 10th emergency special session of the UN General Assembly on "illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". In the resolution, the General Assembly recommended that the parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention "convene a conference on measures to enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" — as they are bound to do under Article 1 common to all four Geneva Conventions.

As regards strengthening and clarifying humanitarian law, several measures on anti-personnel mines were taken in advance of the Ottawa Conference by various regional organizations, such as the OAU,* the OAS,* the OSCE* and the Council of Europe. In addition, the OAU Council of Ministers adopted a resolution raising the minimum age for recruiting children into the armed forces.

Lest these various measures and resolutions remain empty gestures, discussions were undertaken with several regional organizations to give some form of follow-up to them. In Lima, for example, the OAS adopted a resolution on respect for humanitarian law that included a provision aimed at informing the ICRC on progress made.

4 See Promotion and development of international humanitarian law, pp. 295-297.
5 See Promotion and development of international humanitarian law, pp. 295-297.
6 See Promotion and development of international humanitarian law, pp. 293-294.
7 See The Americas, p. 121.
* OAU: Organization of African Unity
* OAS: Organization of American States
* OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Neutral and independent humanitarian action

In 1997, the ICRC’s mobilization efforts also – and perhaps increasingly – took the form of a dialogue with political bodies, such as the Central Organ of the OAU mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution, the Permanent Council of the OSCE and the UN Security Council. For example, a working lunch was organized, as every year, for the members of the Security Council and the ICRC President, and there were monthly meetings between the successive Presidents of the Council and the head of the ICRC delegation in New York. The latter addressed the Council three times during the year: on 12 February on the subject of humanitarian challenges in Africa, on 21 May on the protection of humanitarian assistance, and on 14 August on the situation in Albania.

At the heart of the matters discussed was the distinction – a vital one if humanitarian work is to be neutral and independent – between peace-keeping operations, on the one hand, and humanitarian activities, on the other. The ICRC was therefore particularly glad to hear the new UN Secretary-General state, at a symposium held in Singapore in February, that: “Humanitarian assistance must not be used as a tool to achieve political goals. The political and the humanitarian mandates must not be confused. The former are determined by the Security Council. The latter derive from the need to provide concrete help and from the principles of international humanitarian law.”

Dialogue and cooperation with the various players on the humanitarian scene

In order to preserve the solid principles underlying humanitarian action, the ICRC continued its efforts, together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to promote the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief.

The ICRC also organized a forum in Wolfsberg, Switzerland, in June to strengthen the dialogue between political and humanitarian decision-makers. It was attended by about 60 representatives of donor countries and humanitarian organizations.

♦ In 1996, the ICRC signed a cooperation agreement with the Organization of American States;
♦ In 1994, the ICRC signed a cooperation agreement with the Organization of the Islamic Conference;
♦ In 1992, the ICRC signed a cooperation agreement with the Organization of African Unity;
♦ In 1990, the ICRC was granted observer status at the United Nations.


9 See External resources, p. 330.
Contacts with various non-governmental organizations continued in 1997. The ICRC thus hosted, jointly with the Graduate Institute of International Studies, a symposium dealing with security issues for around 60 such organizations in Geneva on 5 December.

Throughout the year, the ICRC continued to take part in the UN’s interagency coordination mechanisms. Furthermore, out of a concern to include rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in its response to emergencies, the ICRC established closer ties with UNDP,* the World Bank and, in particular, the latter’s newly set up Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit. It continued to have a constructive dialogue with URD* (a consortium of non-governmental organizations) and intensified its relations with UNHCR and FAO* in particular. The ICRC also contacted the new UN Commissioner for Human Rights.

Lastly, speaking at the 52nd session of the UN General Assembly, the ICRC declared its readiness to take on a more active coordinating role in certain spheres of activity: “The ICRC is ready and willing to assume field coordination responsibilities, on a pragmatic and voluntary basis and without prejudice to its specific mandate, particularly in places where it is *de facto* the main humanitarian organization on the spot”.

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* URD: Urgence, réhabilitation, développement
* UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
* FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
As conflict spread across central Africa, engulfing Zaire — now the Democratic Republic of the Congo — and the Republic of the Congo, hundreds of thousands of people fled their homes. In 1997 the ICRC helped 24,000 unaccompanied children lost in the turmoil to find their families again.
West Africa
ICRC delegation:
Liberia
ICRC regional delegations:
Abidjan, Dakar, Lagos
Central Africa
ICRC delegations:
Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda
ICRC regional delegation:
Yaoundé
Southern Africa
ICRC delegation:
Angola
ICRC regional delegations:
Harare, Pretoria
East Africa
ICRC delegations:
Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda
ICRC regional delegation:
Nairobi
Staff
ICRC expatriates: 1 304
National Societies: 1 87
Local employees: 2 3026
Total expenditure
Sfr 234,800,632
Expenditure breakdown
Sfr
Protection/tracing: 68,465,579
Relief: 75,652,482
Health activities: 40,149,883
Cooperation with National Societies: 9,261,831
Promotion/dissemination: 8,057,632
Operational support: 19,695,778
Overheads: 13,517,447

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1 Average figures calculated on an annual basis.
2 Under ICRC contract, as at December 1997.
War and intolerance continued to affect many countries in sub-Saharan Africa in 1997, with some notable exceptions, such as southern Africa, which enjoyed another year of relative stability, and Liberia, where elections marked the end of an eight-year-old conflict. Many of the political alliances and balances of power that had long been holding sway over the continent were upset as a result of the events in the Great Lakes region. These upheavals were accompanied by a general rise in instability, whose full impact on the redefinition of Africa's geopolitical equilibrium cannot yet be fully assessed. Moreover, in some areas, such as the Horn of Africa, the effects of the hostilities were compounded by those of devastating climatic conditions.

Two facts stand out in the overview of operational contexts presented below: on the one hand, violence – often blind and out of control – claimed large numbers of victims, many of them people who did not take part in the hostilities; and on the other hand, humanitarian organizations had to overcome a multitude of obstacles – including political ones – in order to protect and assist those most in need. In some instances, the difficulties proved insurmountable and tragic events unfolded away from the eyes of the world. From that point of view, humanitarian values and the right of conflict victims to protection and assistance suffered a severe setback in 1997.

In the course of the year the ICRC continuously adjusted its operational approach and the size of its staff to keep up with developments in the different places where it was active and to be able to come to the aid of the victims as effectively as possible. Owing to increased humanitarian needs, an operational delegation was set up in Kampala and an office opened in Bangui. The ICRC's network of regional delegations – whose tasks included but were not limited to the ongoing promotion of international humanitarian law and humanitarian mobilization as a whole – enabled the organization to take rapid action whenever violence flared, as it did in the Senegalese province of Casamance, the Central African Republic and Zambia.

Protecting detainees remained one of the ICRC's main concerns in 1997. On the African continent its delegates visited more than 155,000 persons incarcerated in 23 countries and conveyed several hundred thousand Red Cross messages between family members who had become separated during the events and between detainees and their relatives. Along with the steps that it took to remind the authorities of their responsibility to ensure that conditions of detention were acceptable and that detainees were treated humanely, the ICRC had to carry out large-scale assistance programmes in a number of prisons where significant humanitarian needs were noted. Furthermore, whenever the organization received reports of acts of violence committed against the civilian population, it approached the relevant authorities on a case-by-case or systematic basis and drew their attention to the fact that respect was due to persons not taking part in the hostilities.
This issue was also tackled by promoting humanitarian values among as wide an audience as possible, with a view not only to ensuring that humanitarian law was better known and complied with, but also to facilitating access to the victims. The ICRC thus developed a broad range of activities and made use of many different methods designed to reach all strata of society, including comic strips and music for young people, plays and radio or TV spots for the general public, and an advisory service in the field of humanitarian law for the authorities. Worldwide ICRC campaigns with specific goals, such as the drive to ban landmines, were also supported by the organization's delegations in Africa.

On the assistance side, the ICRC endeavoured in every operational situation to meet all the various needs of conflict victims, whether in the areas of health, sanitation, food or material aid of any kind. Whenever possible, it tried to involve beneficiaries as closely as possible in relief programmes, with the ultimate aim of enabling them to fend for themselves again and do without foreign aid. This approach included the numerous efforts that were made to rehabilitate the means of production of conflict victims by assisting them with activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing and handicrafts. In some situations, however, owing to the severity of the fighting or the urgent humanitarian needs of especially vulnerable groups, rehabilitation was not a feasible option and emergency relief distributions continued to be necessary.

As in previous years, the ICRC enjoyed the support of the National Societies of the countries in which it worked. Red Cross/Red Crescent volunteers were often the first and at times even the only people in a position to assist the victims when security conditions were at their worst. Tragically, several of them lost their lives or were wounded in the course of the year, notably in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo. Throughout 1997 the ICRC pursued its cooperation programmes with African National Societies, in particular with a view to strengthening their capacity to respond to emergency situations. Moreover, in conformity with the agreements concerning the respective fields of activity of the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the ICRC kept up its dialogue with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. It also continued to carry out some of its programmes in the form of projects delegated to participating National Societies.
During the first few months of the year, stability and security gradually returned to Liberia thanks to the implementation of the provisions agreed upon in Abuja, Nigeria, in August 1996, by the parties to the conflict (in particular, the demobilization and disarming of combatants belonging to the various factions) and the deployment of ECOMOG* contingents throughout the country. On 19 July the presidential elections – the first in two decades – were held to the satisfaction of foreign observers and resulted in victory for Charles Taylor, head of the former NPFL.* The newly elected President took office on 2 August and, immediately afterwards, set up a government that included members of other political groups. In early September the sanctions imposed on Liberia by ECOWAS* since 1992 were lifted and, at the end of the month, UNOMIL* began its disengagement. In late 1997, however, several factors – including the conflict in Sierra Leone, the persistent presence of hundreds of thousands of Liberian refugees in neighbouring States, the country’s general state of disarray after years of war and the aftermath of the wholesale violence that prevailed during the conflict – remained a threat to Liberia’s new-found stability.

At the end of 1996 the ICRC had returned to Liberia on a permanent basis after a period of eight months during which, for security reasons, the delegation

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3 See Sierra Leone, pp. 47-48.
* ECOMOG: Monitoring Group of the Economic Community of West African States
* NPFL: National Patriotic Front of Liberia
* ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States
* UNOMIL: United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- visited 145 people detained in Monrovia’s central prison, most of whom had been arrested by ECOMOG and handed over to the authorities (these people were subsequently released);
- visited 5 people detained in Monrovia’s central prison after their transfer from the National Security Agency (which was under presidential authority);
- visited a person being held in a hospital, under ECOMOG’s responsibility;
- gave all the detainees it visited the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their families;
- distributed material assistance to the detainees it visited, in accordance with their needs;
- repaired the roof and sanitary facilities of Monrovia’s central prison;
- until September, regularly monitored the situation of some 2,000 former RUF combatants and members of their families who had taken refuge in the west of the country, providing them with food made available by the WFP,* tools and medical supplies, and distributed further relief to the local population;
- conveyed 5,610 Red Cross messages between separated family members, in particular Liberian refugees outside the country and their relatives, by means of a collection and distribution network comprising over 40 offices throughout the country and run in cooperation with the Liberia National Red Cross Society and the National Societies of the host countries;
- provided medical supplies for clinics run by the Liberian Red Cross in Buchanan, Dolo, Gbarnga, Gbatala and Totota (the latter opened in 1997);
- ran a mobile clinic for displaced persons in and around Monrovia;
- reactivated a medical facility in Bopolu for former RUF combatants and their families who had taken refuge in the west of the country;
- supervised maintenance work (chlorination) on some 500 wells and pumps supplying drinking water to Monrovia;
- helped strengthen and develop the Liberian Red Cross by involving it closely with its own work (relating mainly to health, the promotion of humanitarian law and tracing), providing training and giving it material and financial support;
- launched a programme for schoolchildren in and around Monrovia to promote humanitarian values and Red Cross activities, in cooperation with the National Society;
- held information sessions for a wide variety of audiences, in particular ECOMOG contingents and the Liberian armed forces and police;
- taught several dozen volunteers from all branches of the National Society methods of promoting, in their own communities, a message of solidarity centred on respect for human beings.

* WFP: World Food Programme
had withdrawn to Freetown, from where regular missions were carried out to
Monrovia. As soon as President Taylor was elected and the government formed,
the delegation contacted the new authorities to secure their consent to the deploy­
ment of ICRC activities on their territory – in particular, an agreement was signed
with the Ministry of Justice allowing the ICRC to visit people deprived of their
freedom.

As peace gradually returned and the country began to open up to numerous
humanitarian organizations active in a wide range of spheres (health, agriculture,
sanitation, etc.), the ICRC focused on activities to protect detainees and the civil­
ian population. The delegation continued, in particular, to monitor and assist a
group of some 2,000 people (former RUF* combatants and their families) who
had fled from eastern Sierra Leone and given themselves up to the Mandingo
wing of ULIMO* in Liberia. In September, with the situation in Liberia returning
to normal, these people had regained a certain degree of self-sufficiency in food
and a number of them intended to return home. As a result, the ICRC stopped
providing them with assistance. Besides conducting visits to people being held by
the country's authorities, the delegation approached ECOMOG several times to
obtain access to the detainees in its power and discuss violations of humanitarian
rules. Moreover, in cooperation with the Liberia National Red Cross Society, the
ICRC developed and extended to the whole country a network for collecting and
distributing Red Cross messages, thereby making it possible for family members
separated by the events to keep in touch with one another.

While it dealt with these priorities, the delegation also pursued the medical and
sanitation programmes begun in previous years and strove to promote interna­
tional humanitarian law. The ICRC carried out most of this work in cooperation
with the Liberian Red Cross, thereby contributing, together with the International
Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to the strengthening and
development of the National Society.

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4 See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, pp. 40-42.
5 See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, p. 41.
* ULIMO: United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia
In Sierra Leone the hopes of peace glimpsed the previous year failed to materialize in 1997. The agreement signed between the government and the RUF in November 1996 was not implemented and an increasing number of clashes occurred at the start of the year between the army and the traditional militias, and between the latter and the RUF. On 25 May the democratically elected President was overthrown by a group of army officers, known as the AFRC,* soon joined by the RUF, renamed the People's Army. This *coup d'état* was widely condemned by the international community, and in particular by ECOWAS, which demanded the ousted President's unconditional return to power.

In the days following 25 May the Nigerian troops stationed in Sierra Leone, later joined by ECOMOG contingents, tried to restore the authority of the elected President by force, and fighting broke out in Freetown itself. During the hostilities, which took place in a general climate of extreme confusion and involved widespread looting, a number of civilians were killed or wounded and many residents of the capital fled to the provinces or to Guinea. Fighting also raged in the provinces, especially in Kenema, between the military alliance newly in power and the traditional militias. Against this backdrop of widespread insecurity, most aid and development organizations left the country.

In late August, as part of various measures decided on to reinstate the constitutional government, ECOWAS, followed by the UN Security Council,7 imposed sanctions on Sierra Leone. The ICRC had previously stepped in to remind

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* AFRC: Armed Forces Revolutionary Council

6 See the ICRC's *1996 Annual Report*, pp. 43-44.
7 Resolution 1132 of 8 October 1997.
ECOWAS that no embargo could be placed on humanitarian assistance. At the end of the year, the procedures that would enable the ICRC to continue bringing into Sierra Leone the materials necessary for its neutral and impartial work were still under discussion between the organization and the monitoring bodies put in place by ECOWAS and the Security Council.

The dialogue established between ECOWAS and the ruling junta, combined with diffuse military pressure, led on 23 October to the signing of an agreement whereby the junta undertook to restore power to the elected President after a transition period lasting until April 1998. At the end of the year, no significant progress had been made with the implementation of this agreement. Most aid organizations were still absent from the country and the embargo, whose consequences were still impossible to measure in humanitarian terms, remained in force.

Some days after the coup d'état, the ICRC made formal representations to ECOWAS, ECOMOG and the ruling junta in Freetown to remind them of their ICRC role as neutral obligation to respect the relevant provisions of humanitarian law and the work of the Red Cross. In Freetown, at the height of the confusion, the ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary, in particular by facilitating the evacuation to Guinea of around 100 foreigners trapped in the city and by negotiating with the parties the evacuation of several hundred people from a hotel that was caught in the crossfire. In addition, it quickly organized visits to people captured on both sides.

IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- in Sierra Leone, before the coup d'état, visited 134 people held under the responsibility of the government in 7 places of detention in Freetown and in the provinces;
- in Sierra Leone, after the coup d'état, visited 134 people detained under the responsibility of the ruling junta, and 15 people under that of ECOMOG;
- in Côte d'Ivoire, in Gagnoa prison, visited 29 people detained in connection with a boycott of the 1996 presidential elections;
- carried out a project to clean and disinfect the prisons in Gagnoa and Abidjan;
- gave the detainees it visited the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their families;
- distributed food and other supplies to detainees, in accordance with their needs;
- conveyed 11,125 Red Cross messages between family members separated by the events in Sierra Leone, and between refugees settled in the region (mainly Sierra Leoneans and Liberians in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea) and their families, in cooperation with the National Societies of their host countries;
- distributed 260 tonnes of food in Sierra Leone (made available by the WFP), 1,200 tonnes of rice seed, 41,000 packets of vegetable seed and 72,000 hoes to around 200,000 conflict victims in eastern Sierra Leone;
- provided almost 1,000 tonnes of food, blankets, cooking utensils, candles and clothing to some 45,000 displaced people resettling in Sierra Leone;
- after the coup d'etat, regularly distributed food to 4,000 vulnerable people in Freetown;
- for 2 months, dispatched a complete surgical team and provided medical supplies to help care for people wounded during the incidents that followed the coup d'etat in Freetown;
- set up 5 clinics in Freetown to dispense primary health care to the city's population;
- opened on its premises in Zimi, Sierra Leone, a medical facility for people wounded in the periodic outbreaks of fighting, evacuated others to hospitals and supported medical establishments that took in the war-wounded;
- pursued a primary health-care programme for some 140,000 people in eastern Sierra Leone by supporting 10 medical facilities, training local staff, improving or setting up systems for the supply of drinking water and the disposal of waste water, and vaccinating children under the age of 5;
- continued its cooperation programmes with the region's National Societies, concentrating (depending on each case) on promoting structural development, training staff and volunteers, supporting activities to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and/or strengthening the capacity of the Societies to take action in emergency situations;
- continued its efforts to promote acceptance and greater understanding of humanitarian law and of the ICRC among various target groups in the region, namely the civilian and military authorities, the police, the armed forces, various organizations, academic circles and the general public;
- advised the authorities in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo with respect to drawing up legislative measures on the use of the emblem and the repression of war crimes, and setting up interministerial committees for the implementation of humanitarian law;
- together with the interministerial committee of Côte d'Ivoire, organized in Abidjan the first meeting of African national interministerial committees for the implementation of humanitarian law, which was attended by government representatives and National Societies from 12 countries (Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Togo and Zimbabwe);
- together with the Red Cross of Benin, organized a seminar for around 40 representatives of the country's executive, legislative and judicial authorities to promote the implementation of humanitarian law at the national level;
- held a seminar in Guinea for 25 military officers responsible for instructing troops;
- organized ad hoc dissemination sessions in Sierra Leone for armed members of the various parties involved in the conflict.
The consequences of this crisis on Sierra Leone's health system – already greatly weakened by years of conflict – were disastrous, and the ICRC, like MSF* (one of the few other organizations to have stayed put) considerably increased its involvement in the medical sphere, both in Freetown and in the provinces. While the events did not lead to widespread food shortages in the country, partly thanks to the success of the agricultural programmes carried out in previous years by the ICRC and other organizations, the delegation had to assist certain groups of particularly vulnerable people in Freetown.

The ICRC also continued its cooperation with the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, in particular to strengthen the latter's capacity to act in emergency situations, setting up teams of volunteers in Freetown, Bo and Kenema and assisting with the promotion of humanitarian law and with tracing activities. After 25 May, the ICRC backed the National Society's emergency health and relief programme. Despite the political crisis, the ICRC managed to carry out its planned activities, begun in 1996, to provide agricultural assistance and support for medical facilities treating people affected by the situation in the east of the country. However, because of the insecurity, some activities had to be modified or delayed or even – though rarely – interrupted for a lengthy period.

In 1997 the ICRC signed an agreement with the authorities in Côte d'Ivoire allowing it to visit people detained in the country. The first visits took place in October, in two prisons in Abidjan and Gagnoa. Ad hoc food assistance was provided for several dozen inmates recovering after a cholera epidemic in the central prison and reformatory in Abidjan.

In Guinea the ICRC pursued its representations to the authorities with a view to gaining access to people being held in connection with an attempted coup d'état carried out in February 1996. By the end of the year the ICRC had not yet been authorized to visit these people.

While addressing the above priorities, the Abidjan regional delegation continued to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and provide advisory services for the implementation of this law at the national level. Moreover, within its own areas of expertise, the ICRC kept up its support for the region's National Societies.

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8 See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, p. 44.
9 See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, p. 43.
* MSF: Médecins sans frontières
In 1997, a year of presidential and legislative elections, Mali experienced serious political unrest. Several opposition figures remained outside the electoral process, during which the outgoing president was re-elected and his party gained a majority in the parliament. Fighting broke out, mainly in Bamako, both before and during the elections, and a number of opposition members were arrested and detained. The ICRC carefully monitored developments in connection with these people. At the same time, in the north of the country, the peace process begun in 1995 between the government and the Arab and Tuareg rebel movements failed to meet the expectations of the civilian population, whose living conditions did not improve to any measurable degree. The ICRC pursued the work undertaken in the previous years, in particular its efforts to support the peace process and to restore an atmosphere of trust between the various communities, by keeping in touch with all the parties, including groups of former rebel combatants, and by regularly passing on to the authorities the observations made by its delegates in the north of the country. Moreover, the ICRC helped relaunch the production sector among vulnerable groups, developing a broad spectrum of activities (agricultural, veterinary, fishing and water-supply programmes) itself and encouraging the relevant government services and local communities to become directly involved. In order to support the extension of the new government health policy to northern Mali, the ICRC also embarked on a wide-ranging three-year programme designed mainly to reactivate or, where necessary, set up fully equipped and staffed health posts in the Bourem and Timbuktu regions.

In Niger insecurity prevailed for the greater part of the year in the north and east of the country, where certain rebel groups, tired of waiting for the fulfilment of the promises made at the signing of the 1995 peace agreement, officially dissociated themselves from the peace process. As a result, both the army and the police hardened their positions. This turn of events was accompanied by a serious political crisis following the coup d’état and presidential elections in 1996, and by social tensions and economic problems. In 1997 the ICRC conducted several missions to Niger, in particular to step up its dialogue with the authorities on humanitarian problems in the country and to encourage greater acceptance of the organization’s specific mandate.

In Senegal the year was marked by a very noticeable rise in tension in Casamance. The cease-fire declared in 1995 between the government and the
Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance was broken in March. Clashes between government and rebel forces claimed dozens of victims, including civilians, while several thousand people had to leave their homes because of the insecurity. The ICRC continued its visits to persons arrested in connection with the crisis and further developed its programmes to disseminate humanitarian law, in particular in government circles and among the armed forces (including the contingents stationed in Casamance) and the police. In addition, the ICRC supported the work undertaken by the Senegalese Red Cross Society in the troubled region.

Renewed tension in Casamance

In 1997 the ICRC:

- in Senegal, visited 191 people arrested in connection with the events in Casamance who were incarcerated in 3 places of detention in Dakar and Casamance;
- in Gambia, visited 15 people held at the Mile 2 prison in connection with the 1994 attempted coup d'état and its aftermath in 1995;
- in Guinea-Bissau, visited 2 people still being held in Bafata following the attempted coup d'état in March 1993;
- in Mali, visited 4 detainees held in Niafunké;
- distributed various supplies, in accordance with the needs noted in the places of detention visited in Gambia (in cooperation with the National Society), Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Senegal;
- launched a vegetable garden programme at the central prison in Dakar to improve the detainees' food supply;
- gave all the detainees visited the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their families;
- helped restore and maintain contact between people from various groups (in particular, refugees from the Great Lakes region and from Mali) and their families, by means of a network for exchanging Red Cross messages operated from Dakar, in cooperation with the region's National Societies;
- supplied food to the Senegalese Red Cross Society for its relief programme to help civilians affected by the events in Casamance;
- boosted the means of production of some 12,000 families in northern Mali by distributing supplies (64 tonnes of sorghum, rice and vegetable seed, farming tools, fishing tackle and materials for craftwork), supporting similar projects undertaken by the Mali Red Cross, vaccinating 50,000 head of livestock and treating 5,000 for various ailments, subsidizing the purchase of 100 tonnes of animal fodder so as to enable the poorest breeders to feed their herds during the lean season, and setting up a solidarity fund (with symbolic payment for services rendered) open to breeders' associations;
- in Mali, helped organize community-wide discussions with a view to involving local people directly in managing the health system in the northern part of the
Besides dealing with these particular priorities, throughout the year the regional delegation in Dakar pursued its overall activities to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and advise States on the implementation of this law at the national level. Similarly, within its areas of expertise, the ICRC continued to support the region’s National Societies and to encourage dialogue and cooperation between them.

country, supported 8 health posts and other medical facilities, vaccinated 25,000 people (children under the age of 6 and women of child-bearing age who had not been immunized during the years of conflict) in the Bourem and Timbuktu regions, took part in the fight against a meningitis epidemic by vaccinating 17,000 people (some of these activities were carried out as part of a project delegated to the Belgian Red Cross);
- in Ziguinchor, Senegal, distributed medical supplies to a hospital and supported the restoration of a community health centre run by the Senegalese Red Cross Society;
- supported prevention work undertaken by the youth section of the Red Cross of Cape Verde during a cholera epidemic;
- built or rehabilitated 10 wells and other water-supply systems serving the health posts and isolated rural communities in the Bourem and Timbuktu regions of Mali;
- pursued its cooperation programmes with the region’s National Societies, concentrating, depending on each case, on promoting structural development, training staff and volunteers, supporting activities to disseminate humanitarian law and/or strengthening the capacity of the Societies to act in emergency situations;
- in Dakar, held a seminar on information and dissemination topics for senior staff of the region’s National Societies, and in Banjul, took part in a seminar for the Societies of Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal on institutional development;
- depending on the context, pursued its efforts to promote greater acceptance and understanding of humanitarian law and of the ICRC among various target groups, namely the civilian and military authorities, the armed forces, the police, various associations, the press, academic circles and the general public;
- launched studies (carried out by legal consultants selected locally) on the compatibility of legislation in Mali, Niger and Senegal with humanitarian law;
- in Senegal, in cooperation with the National Society and the Senegalese Institute for Human Rights and Peace, organized a seminar for about 30 high-ranking government officials, members of parliament and representatives of the army and the police, on the implementation of humanitarian law at the national level.
LAGOS
Regional delegation
(Nigeria)

In 1997 the Provisional Ruling Council continued to implement its programme for the transition from military to civilian rule. Elections for the local government councils were held in March, followed in December by elections for the state assemblies. However, the slow pace at which the transition process was conducted, together with the arrest and prolonged detention of members of the opposition, continued to arouse criticism, both within Nigeria and from the international community. Furthermore, outbreaks of violence in several of the country's states claimed numerous civilian lives. These confrontations had various causes, in particular ethnic rivalry, disputes between the resident and migrant communities, and the relocation of municipality offices. Moreover, at the start of the year, a number of attacks were carried out against military targets, mainly in the Lagos area, leading to the arrest of suspects among militant members of the opposition.

The delegation continued to keep a close watch on developments in connection with the arrest and detention of members of the opposition, in particular through regular contacts with Nigerian human rights circles and the National Human Rights Commission set up in 1996. In parallel the ICRC continued to support the Nigerian Red Cross Society with a view to strengthening its operational capacity and thereby enabling it to act more effectively in emergency situations, in particular during outbreaks of intercommunal strife. In order to spread knowledge of humanitarian law, the ICRC pursued its ongoing programmes for the armed forces, the authorities and the media, and, in close cooperation with the National Society, launched an original project aimed this time at the general public, and featuring a play, entitled Askari, illustrating the values of peace and tolerance.10 11

The ICRC also pursued the negotiations it had previously entered into with the Nigerian authorities in order to gain access to any Cameroonian prisoners of war who had been captured in the border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi peninsula. The ICRC had received allegations of detention concerning such persons. In June the ICRC permanent Vice-President met with the Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs at the OAU* Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Harare, and in August the regional delegate raised the matter with the special legal adviser to the head of State. At the end of the year, however,

10 See Promotion and development of international humanitarian law, p. 304.
* OAU: Organization of African Unity
no progress had been made. Furthermore, the Nigerian authorities gave no response to the list – forwarded the previous year by the ICRC at the request of the Cameroonian authorities – of 128 people who had gone missing during the conflict, or to the cases of three civilians who also remained unaccounted for.

12 For a summary of the approaches made and action taken on the Cameroonian side in connection with the border dispute, see Yaoundé, pp. 78-80.

IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- supported the sanitation activities of the Nigerian Red Cross in prisons by offering its expertise and supplying equipment;
- supported a mobile clinic run by a local non-governmental organization and serving the main prisons in Lagos;
- in coordination with the regional delegation in Yaoundé and in cooperation with the Nigerian Red Cross, continued to convey Red Cross messages between Nigerian civilian internees and prisoners of war held in Cameroon and their families in Nigeria (1,000 messages were handled);

- provided the National Society with bandages, 200 blankets, cooking equipment and utensils, 650 jerrycans and plastic sheeting for its work for victims of intercommunal strife;
- continued to support the work of the Nigerian Red Cross aimed at spreading knowledge of humanitarian law and helped strengthen the National Society’s operational capacity (in particular by developing a radio network linking the country’s states), financing the salaries of senior staff at headquarters and maintaining a vehicle fleet;
- continued to cooperate with most of the country’s military academies in the teaching of humanitarian law, in particular by organizing a seminar for some 60 officers responsible for instructing troops, and held several dissemination sessions for commanding officers of the armed forces and the police;
- together with the Nigerian Red Cross, launched a programme aimed at reaching a wide audience by means of a play - with television and radio adaptations - illustrating the values of peace and tolerance inherent in the main local cultures (the play, Askari, was performed before tens of thousands of people in 20 of the country’s states);
- organized a seminar for government officials and professors from some 15 Nigerian law faculties on the teaching of humanitarian law in the country’s universities.
Central Africa

BURUNDI

ICRC operations in Burundi remained suspended throughout 1997 owing to the withdrawal of all expatriates in June 1996 following the murder of three delegates in the province of Cibitoke.\(^\text{13}\) Several missions to Bujumbura were carried out during the year to urge the Burundian authorities to move ahead with the thorough investigation requested by the ICRC into the circumstances of the attack in which the delegates had lost their lives. However, no tangible results came of these contacts. While deplored the fact that many Burundian victims remained without protection, by the year's end the ICRC still considered that the conditions required for it to resume work in the country had not yet been fulfilled.

During the year the ICRC nevertheless kept open its delegation in Bujumbura, with the support of its Burundian colleagues. Fifteen vehicles were exported to the former Zaire for use in the organization's work there, while some of the ICRC's stocks of medical supplies were handed over to three hospitals in Bujumbura.

The situation in Burundi remained extremely precarious in 1997. At the start of the year, talks were held between the government and one of the main opposition parties, the CNDD,* but little progress was achieved. At the international level, the mediation efforts undertaken by former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere also remained unsuccessful. In April the economic embargo imposed on Burundi the previous year\(^\text{14}\) by several African countries was eased. Clashes and fighting between the Burundian army and rebel forces continued, in particular in the southern and northern provinces. Other tensions arose between the CNDD-FDD* and the Palipehutu* when they could not agree about whether the time was ripe for opening negotiations with the Buyoya government. Moreover, relations between Burundi and Tanzania became increasingly strained and sporadic armed incidents occurred along the border between the two States.

Besides the direct victims of the fighting, civilians - mainly in rural areas - continued to be severely affected by the crisis in Burundi. In sensitive regions the government continued the policy it had begun the previous year of grouping the population in villages put under the protection of the army. The concentration of

\(^{13}\) See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, p. 51.
\(^{14}\) See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, p. 53.
* CNDD: National Council for the Defence of Democracy
* FDD: Force for the Defence of Democracy
* Palipehutu: Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People
people in places that were not designed to accommodate so many – especially in terms of medical and sanitary facilities – together with the lack of access to farmland, had serious humanitarian consequences (during the second half of the year, several tens of thousands of these people were nevertheless able to return home). Moreover, in a climate of heightened antagonism between the various communities, the values of tolerance and humanity often fell by the wayside, and a great many acts of violence against civilians were reported.

Against this backdrop, around 30 humanitarian organizations continued their work to assist those affected by the situation, subject to the restrictions that were imposed on them and the security constraints they had to cope with.
During the early months of 1997, the offensive launched at the end of September 1996 by the ADFL* in the Uvira region moved rapidly towards the interior of the country. With virtually no fighting, except along the Kisangani-Walikale axis and in Kenge, the ADFL took the country's major towns one by one, aided by foreign forces, thereby opening up the way to Kinshasa. The capital fell on 17 May, a few days after the departure of President Mobutu, who was to die in exile in Morocco in September. The ADFL subsequently extended its control over the whole country, now renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the exception of a few pockets of resistance where groups of fighters – soldiers from the former Zairian and Rwandan armed forces, Interahamwe militia men and traditional fighters – continued their guerrilla activities against the ADFL. At the end of the year security conditions remained precarious in several parts of the country, especially in the east, owing to the presence of these groups, dissension between various ADFL contingents and tensions or sporadic fighting between rival communities, mainly in the Fizi, Baraka and Masisi areas.

In addition, the conflict that broke out in June in the neighbouring Republic of the Congo had repercussions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially in the capital, where gunfire from the opposite bank of the Congo river claimed victims among the civilian population. The fighting in Brazzaville drove several thousand Congolese to seek refuge in Kinshasa.16

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15 See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, pp. 63-64.
16 See Republic of the Congo, pp. 66-70.
* ADFL: Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaïre
At the political level, self-proclaimed President Laurent Désiré Kabila and his government were scarcely installed in Kinshasa when they had to face the resurgence of certain sectors of the opposition to former President Mobutu, whose members were frustrated at not having been invited to share power. Opposition demonstrations were held, in particular in the capital, and were suppressed by ADFL contingents. Arrests also took place in opposition circles and among the members of the former regime.

The conflict, together with the insecurity that prevailed right through the year in some regions, had serious humanitarian consequences in a country already weakened by years of crumbling public services and an ongoing socio-economic crisis.

Many civilians suffered from the scorched-earth policy adopted by the different groups of fighters retreating before the advance of the ADFL. Along the westward routes taken by these fighters, notably in Equateur and Eastern Province, civilians saw their property looted without restraint while infrastructure such as hospitals, health posts and water-supply facilities were also plundered, or even destroyed. Owing to the general insecurity, tens of thousands of civilians fled their homes and traveled to places in the country that were considered safer, while tens of thousands of others crossed Lake Tanganyika to seek refuge in Tanzania, in the Kigoma region. Subsequently, as a result of new developments and the gradual lessening of tension, the displaced people began to go back home. In September UNHCR started to repatriate the refugees settled in Tanzania, while others returned on their own.

Before the advancing ADFL fighters, some of the Rwandan and Burundian refugees living in the camps set up between Uvira and Bukavu returned to their countries of origin; others (mainly Rwandans) headed for the country’s western borders. Although a number of them managed to reach Angola, the Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and countries further away on the Atlantic coast, several tens of thousands of these refugees moving towards the west remained in quite inaccessible areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Driven by illness, hunger and a hostile environment, they abandoned their hiding places and gathered in groups, in particular to the south of Kisangani and in Mbandaka. At the same time, whether because of the lack of minimum security conditions, the intransigence of the parties involved or the almost insuperable logistic difficulties and the fluctuating military situation, the humanitarian organizations working in this situation, including the ICRC, found their access to victims very seriously impeded. After much pressure had been brought to bear on the new authorities by the international community, the refugees south of Kisangani and in Mbandaka were finally repatriated to Rwanda by UNHCR in June and

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17 See Rwanda pp. 71-77.
July. Other, smaller groups of refugees continued to emerge from the bush right up to the end of December, mainly in the Kivu area, and they were also repatriated to Rwanda. The circumstances in which these events took place – and which still need to be elucidated precisely\(^\text{18}\) – were desperate and the approaches made by humanitarian organizations (principally UNHCR, but also the ICRC and some non-governmental organizations) to protect the refugees remained largely unsuccessful.

During the year the ICRC maintained a flexible policy to its staff deployment, in accordance with the developments in the military situation. In the early months the activities carried out by the organization in the increasingly vast areas controlled by the ADFL were run from a mission in Bukavu, in coordination with the Kinshasa delegation, which pursued its own activities in government-held territory. In June, after the ADFL had taken power in Kinshasa, the Bukavu mission was dismantled and the Kinshasa delegation resumed direct responsibility for all ICRC activities in the country. At the end of the year, besides the Kinshasa delegation, the ICRC's set-up consisted of sub-delegations in Bukavu, Goma, Kisangani and Uvira, and offices or sub-offices in Buta, Kindu, Lubumbashi and Mbandaka. Several times in 1997, ICRC teams deployed in the field to respond to specifically identified humanitarian needs had to suspend their activities or even withdraw completely, owing to the lack of any security whatsoever. For the same reason, entire regions remained inaccessible to the ICRC for varying amounts of time, especially in the Masisi area.

At the start of 1997, the ICRC was able to continue its activities for detainees in areas that were still controlled by the Mobutu government. Besides regular visits to the places of detention run by the military and civilian authorities, the ICRC carried out sanitation work in prisons and continued a programme begun in 1994 to meet the basic needs of detainees in several of the places visited.\(^\text{19}\) When the ADFL seized power in Kinshasa in May, a stop was put to these activities. According to the information available to the ICRC, the detainees already visited by the organization either had been released or had escaped when the regime changed. The ICRC subsequently made repeated approaches to the new authorities in order to gain access to any new detainees. By the end of the year, despite a dialogue with the authorities on the issue, the ICRC was still unable to visit persons held by the ADFL.

During the first months of the year, many families were scattered on both sides of the front line. Therefore, in cooperation with the Red Cross of Zaire, the ICRC

\(^{18}\) During the year, the UN appointed a commission to inquire into the serious human rights violations allegedly committed in the country since 1993. With one delay after another, by the end of the year the commission had still not been able to begin its work.

\(^{19}\) See the ICRC's 1994 Annual Report, p. 64, 1995 Annual Report, p. 65; and 1996 Annual Report, p. 64.
set up a network for exchanging Red Cross messages. At the end of 1997, as most of the displaced people had returned home and the situation had stabilized, the volume of messages handled had greatly decreased. Throughout the year the ICRC also continued to convey Red Cross messages between Congolese refugees settled in the Kigoma region of Tanzania and their families in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and between Angolan refugees and their families at home.

Special attention was paid to the problem of unaccompanied children. The dismantling of the Rwandan refugee camps in the Kivu area in October 1996 made it impossible to monitor the minors registered there in the previous years, a large number of them having gone back home during mass returns or during repatriations organized by UNHCR. However, unaccompanied Rwandan children continued to turn up throughout the year in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; these were repatriated by UNHCR, SCF* or the ICRC. At the end of the year, to the best of the ICRC’s knowledge, there remained 2,000 unaccompanied Rwandan children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in addition to unaccompanied Burundian children. Together with the National Society, the ICRC also registered unaccompanied Congolese children who had become separated from their families during the events, with the ultimate aim of reuniting them with their parents.

Besides providing emergency aid for displaced persons and refugees in the acute phase of the conflict, the ICRC’s priority was to help Congolese civilians who had left their homes because of the conflict to return and settle back in. In mid-April a vast operation was set up to transport these people – with all kinds of vehicle, from planes and boats to trains and trucks – back to their places of origin. This operation started in Kisangani, from where several thousand of them were brought back to various destinations in the Kivu area. It continued with similar transfers throughout the national territory and finished at the end of the year. In addition, to help the returnees (including refugees coming back from Tanzania) settle in their homes again, the ICRC distributed food, seed, farming tools, blankets, tarpaulins, jerrycans, kitchen utensils and soap, depending on their needs. Various institutions dealing with vulnerable groups, such as hospitals, orphanages and missions, also received food aid. In addition, food was distributed to workers who were repairing damaged roads in the Kivu area.

In the emergency phase, and in coordination with the other aid organizations active in the area, the ICRC endeavoured to bring food and medical supplies to the refugee groups to which it had access, whether they were heading back to Rwanda along the routes leading from the Kivu area towards the west and south, or whether they were in the Republic of the Congo (Lukolela-Liranga) and, to a

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20 See in particular Rwanda, pp. 71-77.

* SCF: Save the Children Fund
In April the ICRC, which was being held at a distance from the tragic events that were unfolding, publicly requested that the ADFL guarantee humanitarian organizations free access to the victims.

Health activities developed along several different lines. First of all, besides the emergency assistance it provided to the displaced people and refugees, the ICRC supported medical facilities treating the war-wounded evacuated from the conflict areas, in particular in Kinshasa, Goma, Bukavu and Uvira. Later, it concentrated more on post-conflict rehabilitation in the areas which had been worst hit by the hostilities and where the civilian population had not had access to medical treatment. Here, the priority was to enable the health-care system – dealt a final blow by the war – to become operational once more, until other organizations (development agencies, for example) could resume or begin their programmes. Depending on the needs encountered, the ICRC restored or even rebuilt looted or destroyed medical facilities and provided them with regular or ad hoc medical supplies and the support necessary to run them. In addition, work was begun on several referral hospitals and aid was delivered to them, mainly to enable them to provide adequate surgical services. An expatriate medical and surgical team was sent to the Uvira hospital to compensate for the lack of qualified local staff.

Meanwhile, the ICRC's water and sanitation programme focused on preventing epidemics which could be caused by the drinking water shortages that threatened the large urban areas owing to the destruction of water-supply infrastructure during the conflict. Technical and material assistance was given to the relevant government department, whose provincial branches had often been cut off from any support from the capital. The ICRC's efforts ranged from merely providing various kinds of supplies to carrying out work on a large scale, such as rehabilitation of entire water-supply systems. This programme began in the Kivu area and was later extended to other provinces as the ADFL advanced. In addition, ad hoc sanitation work was done for various medical facilities.

The conflict, followed by the change in regime, meant that the ICRC could only partly achieve the aims it had set itself for promoting humanitarian law, whether among the armed forces, the general public or in academic circles. As the conflict was marked by sharply drawn ethnic divisions and the proliferation and fragmentation of armed groups, a humanitarian message based on respect for people not or no longer taking part in the fighting generally had little if any chance of being heard. However, the firm commitment of the National Society volunteers working alongside the victims, often in extremely difficult security conditions, undoubtedly set an example for the population. A dialogue on this issue was later begun with the recently installed authorities, in particular the military, and in the second half of the year the ICRC was able to hold sessions on humanitarian law for officers in the new national army and police force, which were then being set up.
Throughout the year, the ICRC continued its cooperation with the Red Cross of Zaire, renamed the Red Cross Society of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. When the crisis was at its most acute, material aid (food, stretchers and first-aid kits) was brought to the National Society's volunteers, who were often the first to care for the victims. Priority was also given to training and equipping first-aid workers, to training volunteers in charge of promoting knowledge of Red Cross work and to supporting various programmes run by the National Society, for example those to improve hygiene in public places in Kinshasa, set up neighbourhood composting systems and train teams of patrollers responsible for ensuring the safety of schoolchildren at the capital's main crossroads. Out of a concern to contribute to the financial independence of the National Society's branches, the ICRC supported the implementation of various income-generating projects whose profits were to be used to cover some running costs. Lastly, it contributed towards the National Society's overall running costs and helped pay the salaries of some of its senior staff.

In the context of the emergency work done for refugees scattered throughout the country, special mention must be made of the determination and courage of the National Society volunteers who, with the limited resources available to them, took action at a time when it was impossible for the international humanitarian organizations to intervene. Several of these volunteers paid for their commitment with their lives, notably in Kenge, where 10 of them were killed in the cross-fire.
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- up to May, visited 96 people detained in connection with the events in 14 places of detention run by the military and civilian authorities under the Mobutu government;
- up to May, and in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and local religious organizations, continued an assistance programme to provide water, food and other basic necessities for some 2,600 people held in 14 places of detention;
- made approaches to the ADFL with a view to obtaining access to the detainees under its responsibility;
- in cooperation with the National Society, handled over 133,500 Red Cross messages between family members separated by the events in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, between Congolese refugees settled in Tanzania and their relatives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and between Angolan refugees and their relatives at home;
- took part in the repatriation, by UNHCR and SCF, of over 18,500 unaccompanied Rwandan children;
- together with the National Society, registered 1,123 unaccompanied Congolese children separated from their families by the events, and organized 874 family reunifications;
- made ad hoc representations to the ADFL concerning acts of violence against civilians that were brought to its attention;
- arranged for some 24,000 people who had been displaced throughout the country as a result of the conflict to return home;
- distributed vegetable seed and tools to over 30,000 displaced Congolese families who were resettling in the Kivu area;
- handed out blankets, tarpaulins, jerrycans, kitchen utensils and soap to over 41,000 Congolese families (displaced people or refugees returning from Tanzania) to help them settle back home and provided supplementary food rations for over 75,000 people affected by the events, mainly in the Kivu area;
- distributed emergency aid (mainly high-protein biscuits and essential medicines) to the groups of Rwandan and Burundian refugees and displaced Congolese to whom it had access;
- supplied seed and tools to 1 cooperative and 3 agricultural colleges as a way of encouraging them to resume seed production;
- during the conflict, distributed medical supplies to health facilities admitting the war-wounded and displaced people;
- restored or rebuilt 58 medical facilities that had been looted or destroyed in the conflict, mainly in the Kivu area, and regularly provided these facilities, and a number of hospitals, with medical supplies (in the Kisangani region, these activities were carried out from September onwards under a project delegated to the Belgian Red Cross);
- restored or set up several units in the Uvira hospital (surgery, radio-
and provided a medical and surgical team for the hospital so as to compensate for the lack of qualified staff and to train local staff;

- up to May, restored and maintained the systems for supplying drinking water and evacuating waste water in 5 prisons;
- furnished the relevant authorities with 250 tonnes of chemicals for water treatment, hydromechanical equipment and various supplies, and carried out work on installations to ensure the distribution of drinking water in 12 towns (in Lubumbashi and Buta these activities were carried out under projects delegated to the American and Netherlands National Societies, in November and December respectively);
- sank and equipped 35 wells in various villages on the Rusizi plain (this work was begun in November under a project delegated to the Australian Red Cross);
- made food and other supplies available to the National Society for its work to assist displaced Congolese and refugees scattered throughout the country;
- continued to support the National Society's various programmes (improvement of hygiene in public places, school patrollers, theatre group promoting humanitarian ideas, neighbourhood composting systems, income-generating projects);
- held a seminar on the law of war for 400 officers from the armed forces of the Mobutu government;
- held seminars on the law of war for 320 staff officers from the new Congolese national army and 400 trainee police;
- organized 2 lectures on the law of war and the ICRC's role for 720 students from the Catholic University of Kinshasa and the National Education Institute.
With the approach of the presidential elections planned for the end of July, there was a steady increase in the political tension that had been felt in the Republic of the Congo since the start of the year between the outgoing President, Pascal Lissouba, and his predecessor from 1979 to 1992, Denis Sassou-Nguesso. On 5 June violent fighting broke out in and around Brazzaville. In the north of the country, in July, Sassou-Nguesso's supporters took control of several towns that had been held until then by forces loyal to Lissouba. The various attempts made during this period to find a solution to the crisis through mediation proved fruitless, and the fighting continued with occasional lulls. Finally, in October, Sassou-Nguesso's supporters – with the help of the Angolan armed forces\(^{21}\) – seized Pointe-Noire and Brazzaville. In early November the self-proclaimed new President, Sassou-Nguesso, announced the composition of his government. At the end of the year insecurity still prevailed in the capital, where many people continued to bear arms, and also in certain parts of the country that were not fully under the control of the new authorities.

Civilians were the main victims of the conflict, which took place primarily in Brazzaville itself. Thousands of people were killed or wounded in the capital during the fighting, in which substantial military resources were deployed, often at random. Many of the capital's inhabitants left the city, fleeing northwards or southwards to safer places. Some were taken in by relatives or returned to their native villages, others gathered in places such as churches, administrative buildings, schools or islands in the Congo river between Brazzaville and Kinshasa, while still others sought refuge in Kinshasa. During the fighting the centre of

\(^{21}\) See Angola, p. 83.
Brazzaville was the scene of massive destruction, made worse by widespread looting, that affected essential infrastructure, such as the water-supply system and medical facilities. More generally, the conflict had disastrous economic and social consequences on the country as a whole.

The random violence and the lack of any security whatsoever in Brazzaville during the early days of the fighting made it impossible for the ICRC to work, and its expatriate staff present in the Congolese capital when the conflict erupted had to withdraw to Kinshasa. On 12 June the ICRC publicly called on all the parties concerned to respect and ensure respect for the fundamental rules of humanitarian law, in particular those protecting people who were not or were no longer participating in the fighting and humanitarian personnel. Contact was later made with representatives of the forces involved and an operation to assist the victims was set up with the help of the National Society and in conjunction with other humanitarian organizations working on the spot. Nevertheless, owing to the insecurity that prevailed up to the end of the year and also to serious logistic restrictions, the ICRC's work was repeatedly hindered in the course of the year.

During the conflict, whenever there was a lull or an opportunity presented itself, the ICRC endeavoured to support the medical facilities that were still operational on both sides of the front line splitting Brazzaville down the middle, so that the war-wounded could be treated. Food and medical supplies, brought in by plane or boat from Kinshasa, were distributed in several hospitals and some 20 health centres in cooperation with the Congolese Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations working on the spot. In August the only referral hospital in the northern part of the capital had to close down because of the fighting, and the hospital's patients and staff were transferred by the authorities to a school in Kintele, about 20 kilometres north of Brazzaville. The ICRC helped turn this school into a first-aid post. Together with the National Society, the ICRC also set up a relay system for transferring the wounded from Brazzaville to Kinshasa, where they were treated in a health post opened by the Red Cross Society of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Depending on how seriously they were wounded, these patients were either treated there or evacuated to the general hospital in Kinshasa where 100 or so beds had been made available with the ICRC's assistance. Meanwhile, as this could be no more than a temporary arrangement, the ICRC explored local solutions. In Gamboma it supported a hospital that treated the war-wounded evacuated from the northern part of Brazzaville.

In addition, on both the northern and southern roads taken by people fleeing from the capital, and on the island of Mbamu (in the Congo river, between Kinshasa and Brazzaville), the ICRC supported temporary health posts that had been opened to treat displaced people. In areas where they were gathering, latrines, showers and tanks of drinking water were set up to prevent the development of illnesses caused by poor hygiene. Furthermore, in the centre of...
Brazzaville, National Society and ICRC teams set about collecting abandoned corpses and burying them in a cemetery outside the city. This work had to be interrupted after only a few days owing to security problems, and the ICRC subsequently provided the parties to the conflict with equipment for carrying out this task themselves. Finally, in conjunction with MSF,* food and medical aid were brought to over 5,000 Rwandan refugees who had arrived from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in May and settled in Lukolela-Liranga, upriver from Brazzaville. In June this work was taken over by UNHCR, also with MSF.

After Brazzaville had been seized by Sassou-Nguesso's supporters and a new regime put in place, the ICRC concentrated on post-conflict rehabilitation work. Its priorities were to reactivate the health-care system, which had been largely destroyed or rendered inoperative during the war, and to restore the supply of drinking water to Brazzaville.

Repairs were begun on around 20 health centres in Brazzaville, which received medical supplies on a regular basis to enable them to function again at their pre-war capacity. The ICRC also contributed to the rehabilitation of the university teaching hospital, which was the referral hospital for the entire country, in particular by supplying fuel for its generator and providing the materials necessary to ensure a capacity of 250 beds. For a month an expatriate surgeon advised local medical staff, and for two months food was distributed for 200 patients there. Medical aid was also brought to the Brazzaville military hospital (where most patients were civilians) and to several hospitals and medical facilities elsewhere in the country.

In the sphere of sanitation, the ICRC assisted the national water board in repairing Brazzaville's two main water-treatment plants, which had been destroyed during the war. A high-voltage cable supplying electricity to one of the plants was repaired, and chemicals for water purification and various equipment were provided. By the end of November, both plants were back in operation and ICRC experts, together with technicians from the relevant government department, were able to concentrate on repairing the many leaks in the city's pipework that had been caused by the fighting. In neighbourhoods where it had been impossible to restore water-distribution systems, in particular where health centres were situated, drinking water was brought in by tanker truck. Moreover, in several places where displaced people remained, the ICRC provided the equipment necessary to sink wells and build showers and latrines.

With displaced people beginning to return to Brazzaville, the ICRC also went about distributing food and other supplies in the city's worst-hit areas, to help residents settle back in. Relief items were also provided in a dozen places where several thousand displaced people were still sheltering.

* MSF: Médecins sans frontières
- asked the new authorities for permission to visit the people arrested and detained in connection with the conflict and the change of regime;
- from mid-December, conveyed some 500 Red Cross messages between residents of Brazzaville and their relatives abroad;
- registered 125 unaccompanied children separated from their families during the fighting and organized 31 family reunifications in the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- made ad hoc representations to the parties when acts of violence against civilians were brought to its attention or when humanitarian work was not respected by the combatants under their authority;
- after negotiations with the parties concerned, evacuated to a safer area 60 orphans and their companions who had been trapped in the fighting north of Brazzaville;
- during an operation led by the French armed forces, evacuated 50 or so foreign nationals from Brazzaville to Kinshasa;
- distributed over 150 tonnes of food, together with tarpaulins, jerry-cans, kitchen utensils, soap and medicines to some 12,000 people (those displaced, the wounded, medical personnel, Rwandan refugees and vulnerable groups);
- during the conflict, either regularly or on an ad hoc basis supported 2 hospitals and around 20 health centres in Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and along the routes taken by displaced people leaving the capital;
- arranged for the evacuation of over 250 wounded people from the Republic of the Congo to Kinshasa and assisted the Kinshasa general hospital in treating the most serious cases;
- after the conflict, set about repairing and supporting the resumption of medical activities in around 20 health centres in Brazzaville, helped rehabilitate the university teaching hospital and the military hospital in Brazzaville, and provided ad hoc assistance for several medical facilities elsewhere in the country;
- carried out sanitation work (installing latrines and showers, sinking wells or transporting drinking water) in many places where displaced people had gathered;
- supplied 80 tonnes of chemicals for water purification and various equipment needed to restore 2 water-treatment plants supplying Brazzaville, and assisted the water board in repairing the water-distribution system in the capital;
- collected and buried several hundred abandoned corpses in Brazzaville;
- gave the Congolese Red Cross supplies for its projects to assist victims of the conflict and involved National Society volunteers in implementing its programmes;
- at every opportunity raised awareness among the various authorities and groups of fighters it met concerning the need to respect humanitarian work and the basic rules of humanitarian law.
As soon as the new government had been installed, contact was made with the authorities, including those at the highest level, to inform them about the ICRC’s activities, to ask them to guarantee safe conditions for humanitarian work and to request permission to visit people arrested and detained in connection with the events. On this last point, although the response received was favourable in principle, by the year's end it had yet to be formalized in an agreement. During the conflict, the ICRC made approaches on an ad hoc basis when acts of violence against civilians were brought to its attention. However, given the atmosphere of widespread violence and the proliferation of people bearing arms, who were often young and operating outside the established hierarchical structures, the ICRC’s protection activities and its efforts to promote knowledge of humanitarian law were scaled down.

In mid-December work was begun on setting up a network for collecting Red Cross messages so that the inhabitants of Brazzaville could send news to their families abroad. During and after the conflict, the ICRC registered several dozen unaccompanied children separated from their families during the fighting. Some of these were quickly reunited with their parents and at the year's end the ICRC was continuing its efforts to find the relatives of those remaining.

National Society volunteers played a prominent role in helping to carry out these activities, often in dangerous situations. On 22 November one of them was killed and two others were wounded when a combatant opened fire on the truck they were in.

prominent role of National Society
The problems of all kinds facing Rwanda since the 1994 genocide continued to plague the country in 1997. No lasting solution emerged to the crisis, which was marked by rising tension between the armed opposition groups and the RPA* and resulted in an increasing polarization of Rwandan society.

Following the offensive launched in the former Zaire at the end of September 1996 by the ADFL* (supported by the RPA), hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees, who had settled in camps in Kivu since 1994, were forced to return to their country. Tens of thousands more headed for the western borders of the former Zaire, while an unspecified number died in circumstances yet to be clarified while wandering through the former Zaire.22 The Rwandan refugees living in the Ngara region of Tanzania returned to their country in December 1996, having been urged to do so by the Tanzanian authorities. Subsequently, tens of thousands of other Rwandan refugees were repatriated from the former Zaire by UNHCR, in April and June. The sudden mass return of over a million people to Rwanda caused problems both in the short and in the long terms, ranging from how to provide emergency accommodation for the new arrivals to how to reintegrate them into Rwandan society.

Meanwhile, growing insecurity pervaded Rwanda in 1997, mainly in the prefectures of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, where skirmishes between guerrilla forces and the RPA increased. At times, these clashes degenerated into out-and-out combat involving a large number of fighters on both sides and the use of considerable military force. In addition to the casualties among the soldiers and rebels, many civil-

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* RPA: Rwandan Patriotic Army

* ADFL: Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire
ians were killed or wounded, either because they had been deliberately targeted (in a situation where, because of the growing mutual distrust between the communities, the principle of affording due respect to the civilian population was increasingly ignored) or because they were the victims of reprisals for support given (allegedly or in fact) to the other side, or else because they simply happened to get caught in the cross-fire. On several occasions the guerrillas carried out their attacks against communal lock-ups: hundreds of detainees and civilians were wounded or killed during these attacks and in the fighting with the army that ensued.

The number of arrests remained high, in particular following the return of the refugees at the start of the year. Those detained included not only people suspected of having played a part in the 1994 genocide, but others taken in for reasons of State security. Arrests were often carried out arbitrarily, outside any legal framework. Despite the efforts made by the Rwandan government to strengthen the judicial system, which was overwhelmed by the work involved in limiting these arbitrary arrests and in preparing and investigating the cases of those detained, and given the small number of releases that took place in 1997, the prison overcrowding noted in previous years persisted, with the ever-present risk of serious consequences for the health of detainees. Owing to the lack of space, the Rwandan authorities resorted more and more often to communal lock-ups for incarcerating newly arrested people. These places of detention, however, were not designed to hold such a large number of inmates for a lengthy period. Added to this was the lack of resources allocated to the Ministry of the Interior, which was in charge of managing these places of detention, so that it could meet the basic needs of detainees. As the months went by, conditions in the lock-ups gradually deteriorated, leading to the death of some 1,300 detainees registered by the ICRC. At the end of the year, over 73,800 people were crammed into the country’s central prisons, over 46,500 in lock-ups and 3,000 in the other places of detention visited by the ICRC.

In addition, a large number of people continued to live in great destitution, their suffering caused either by the 1994 genocide (mainly widows and orphans) or by the general insecurity prevailing in some parts of the country. The dangerous climate also slowed down the resumption of production activities and hampered the setting up of large-scale reconstruction and development programmes. Moreover, Rwanda’s food supply remained precarious, mainly owing to rising prices, average harvests, the return of refugees in droves and a rainy season that came late to the agricultural regions in the south. Faced with this situation, the Rwandan government called for substantial international food aid.

Such was the situation faced by the ICRC as it pursued the efforts it had begun in 1996 in all its customary spheres of activity.
At the beginning of 1997, a number of expatriates and Rwandans working for non-governmental organizations and UN bodies were killed or injured in attacks in which they were deliberately targeted in the prefectures of Cyangugu, Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. In view of the deterioration in security conditions, the ICRC had to suspend its activities for 10 days or so, to give itself time to take additional precautions and to review both the size of its staff and its modus operandi in the country. From March onwards, as the ICRC gradually resumed its activities, security remained a constant concern and the regions accessible to the organization were regularly assessed. At the end of the year, the situation in a large part of Rwanda, mainly the north and west, was so dangerous that the ICRC was unable to work there.

As in previous years, one of the ICRC’s main concerns was the drastic situation that persisted in the central prisons as a result of overcrowding. Contacts were kept up with the Rwandan authorities, at all levels, with a view to reminding them of their responsibility to provide acceptable detention conditions and discussing with them various means for improving the situation in prisons. Meanwhile, the major assistance operation launched in 1994 to ensure the survival of detainees23 continued throughout the year. As the authorities were experiencing procurement difficulties of all kinds, the ICRC supplemented the quantity of food supplied in prisons. Vitamin tablets were also distributed, and the most seriously undernourished inmates were put on a nutritional rehabilitation programme. In addition to monitoring the general state of health of detainees, the ICRC distributed medicines and equipment to prison dispensaries, in accordance with the principle that aid should be provided only where the capacity of the authorities in charge was overstretched. In May the ICRC and the Ministry of Justice signed an agreement whereby the authorities would take back responsibility for maintaining sanitary facilities in the country’s prisons while the ICRC would provide technical and financial support for the team of technicians put together for this purpose by the authorities. Furthermore, in cooperation with the authorities concerned, the ICRC concluded the work previously begun to upgrade the water-supply systems in several towns. This work also benefited the prisons situated in these towns by considerably reducing the risk that the water supply would be cut off, a chronic problem in some places of detention in the past. Nevertheless, water had to be brought to two prisons by tanker truck.

Despite the commitment of the authorities, the ICRC’s assistance programmes and the efforts made by other humanitarian organizations, no lasting solutions were found in 1997 to the causes of prison overcrowding or its grave consequences, and the health of detainees gradually declined.

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In lock-ups, because of the extremely serious worsening of detention conditions noted at the start of the year, the ICRC altered the approach it had adopted until then (ad hoc intervention only, so as not to turn the lock-ups – originally designed for temporary detention – into places used for detention over longer periods) and broadened its intervention criteria. When the situation was at its worst, sanitation and rehabilitation activities were undertaken, in particular to improve air circulation and increase the supply of drinking water. High-protein biscuits were distributed in some cases and steps were taken to transfer the most seriously undernourished detainees to prisons where they could be put on a nutritional rehabilitation programme. The ICRC also supplied food to two humanitarian organizations (Concern and Caritas) that managed communal kitchens in some lock-ups. Lastly, it made medical supplies available to the authorities.

Meanwhile, the ICRC kept up regular contacts with other organizations active in prisons in Rwanda – in particular UNDP* – and continued its efforts to draw the attention of the governments concerned to the gravity of the situation that prevailed in Rwandan places of detention and to the need for lasting solutions to the problems there.

Besides this wide-ranging assistance programme, which represented the first and a necessary stage in protecting detainees, the ICRC continued its visits to prisons, lock-ups and several places of detention run by the gendarmerie. In June the ICRC received authorization to visit two places of detention under the responsibility of the military authorities in Kigali. The aim of all these visits was to register people newly arrested, monitor previously registered cases, check on detention conditions and offer all detainees the possibility of exchanging news with their families. On the basis of the observations made during these visits, the ICRC regularly submitted written and oral reports to the authorities, reminding them of their obligation to treat detainees humanely.

The ICRC’s work to protect the civilian population in the parts of the country most affected by the conflict was limited, mainly because security problems prevented the organization from going to these areas. It was therefore all the more necessary to promote humanitarian rules, in particular among people carrying weapons. The Rwandan military authorities accepted a plan proposed by the ICRC to make the teaching of humanitarian law a standard part of the instruction given to all troops, and the first stages of the plan, notably the training of Rwandan military instructors, were implemented during the year. Meanwhile, sessions were held for RPA units and the civilian authorities, to encourage respect for humanitarian rules and the work of humanitarian organizations. Programmes were also produced with the national radio and broadcast to a wide audience.

* UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
The resumption of postal services and the return of the majority of refugees -- including the unaccompanied children who had been living in camps in Tanzania and the former Zaire -- to their places of origin made it possible for most of the people who were without news of their families to renew contact with them. The major network for exchanging Red Cross messages, in place since 1994, was therefore scaled down, and only messages between detainees and their relatives continued to be exchanged. Furthermore, over 27,000 unaccompanied children were registered in 1997, mainly after the refugees had returned. In cooperation with other organizations, in particular UNICEF, UNHCR and SCF-UK, most of these minors were reunited with their families. For the others -- children separated from their parents since 1994 and living in Rwanda, and very young children who were unable to give precise details of their identity (some 8,800 by the end of the year) -- efforts to find their families continued under the programme coordinated by the ICRC since 1994.24

In 1997, owing to the prevailing insecurity, two programmes launched the preceding years by various National Societies25 to increase the supply of drinking water in rural areas had to be taken over by the ICRC, and they were successfully concluded during the year. A third had to be abandoned because of inadequate security. The ICRC also stepped in temporarily to ensure sanitation and drinking water supplies for vulnerable groups (orphans, widows and welfare cases).

In addition to its medical activities in prisons, the ICRC continued to support the hospital in Kibuye, in particular by providing expatriate staff to compensate for the scarcity of qualified Rwandan personnel. Moreover, on several occasions, ad hoc assistance was given to medical facilities having to cope with a sudden influx of wounded. The Gatagara prosthetic/orthotic centre, which had been restored under a project delegated to the Swiss Red Cross, was officially inaugurated in early August.

Work begun the previous year to assist vulnerable people, in particular those who had lived through the 1994 genocide, was extended in 1997. The ICRC's approach consisted in supporting programmes submitted to it by various associations of survivors. These programmes, aimed at the socio-economic reintegration of vulnerable groups, were of various kinds: depending on the case, the ICRC provided food and basic necessities, school supplies, small livestock, poultry or swarms of bees, building materials, seed and tools, or even materials for handicrafts. It also regularly gave out food and basic necessities to orphanages and social-welfare institutions.

Moreover, when the Rwandan refugees returning from the former Zaire and Tanzania came back in their country, the ICRC took part in the emergency opera-

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25 See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, p. 60.
tion carried out by a number of humanitarian organizations – especially UNHCR, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Rwandan Red Cross and non-governmental organizations – to receive the new arrivals.

In 1997 the Rwandan National Society, whose reconstruction was in full swing, concentrated on setting up local structures. In consultation with the Federation,
which was primarily responsible for developing the Rwanda Red Cross, the ICRC continued working with the latter, focusing mainly on restoring family links, strengthening the Society’s capacity to respond to emergencies and assist the most destitute, and promoting knowledge of the Red Cross and its work.

- supported the Kibuye hospital by making medical and surgical teams available and providing medical supplies (over 4,600 patients were admitted and over 30,000 out-patient consultations were given during the year);
- provided ad hoc assistance to medical facilities treating the war-wounded;
- by means of a project delegated to the Swiss Red Cross, restored the Gatagara prosthetic/orthotic centre, where it fitted 46 new amputees with artificial limbs and produced 57 prostheses and 151 orthoses;
- repaired the water-supply systems in several towns (Gitarama, Gikongoro, Byumba, Rwamara and Kinyiya);
- supplied 100 tonnes of chemicals and technical equipment needed to operate the water-treatment plants serving large urban areas;
- continued its sanitation work in rural areas to make drinking water more readily available in the prefectures of Gitarama and Kibungo;
- supplied the Rwandan Red Cross with 2,304 tonnes of food for an ongoing programme to feed 10,000 secondary-school pupils in Butare, Gisenyi, Gitarama and Ruhengeri;
- supported National Society branches in their first-aid work, in particular in manufacturing stretchers;
- back an exhibition on the Red Cross that was presented in most of the major towns and was seen by some 20,000 people (civilians, members of the armed forces, government employees and students);
- held an instructors’ seminar for 25 RPA officers with a view to standardizing the teaching of humanitarian law within the armed forces;
- arranged for 2 Rwandan professors to be trained at the University of Abidjan as part of an endeavour to introduce the teaching of humanitarian law at the National University of Rwanda, and supplied the latter with reference books;
- organized many sessions on humanitarian law for different audiences (civilian authorities and units of the armed forces and the gendarmerie);
- conducted a historical study of traditional humanitarian values and principles with a view to adapting its humanitarian message to the Rwandan cultural context;
- in cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, organized a humanitarian law seminar in Arusha for the Tribunal judges, their assistants and defence lawyers.
In 1997 the border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi peninsula remained unresolved. The International Court of Justice, to which the case had been submitted in 1994 by Cameroon, had not yet handed down its decision and no official negotiations between the two parties had been entered into. On the front line, there were some sporadic skirmishes. The ICRC, in cooperation with the Cameroon Red Cross Society, carried out an operation to enable groups of people displaced because of the insecurity to grow their own food again. At the same time, food was regularly distributed to those who did not want to leave their villages, and ad hoc material assistance was provided for the families of people who had gone missing during the conflict. In addition, regular visits were continued to the Nigerian prisoners of war and civilian internees detained in Cameroon in connection with the dispute. These visits were temporarily suspended in July and November by the Cameroonian authorities, weary of the lack of progress on this issue on the Nigerian side. For the same reason, from June up to the end of the year the Cameroonian authorities suspended the exchange of Red Cross messages between these prisoners, who were protected by the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions and Protocol I, and their families in Nigeria.

In Equatorial Guinea, on the basis of an agreement reached with the authorities in December 1995, the ICRC visited 16 civilian and military places of detention. At the time of the visits, no one arrested for security reasons was being detained. In cooperation with the Equatorial Guinea Red Cross Society, sanitation work was carried out in several of the places of detention visited.

In the Central African Republic the tension caused in 1996 by a mutiny in certain army units continued to affect Bangui. At the start of the year, through the mediation of Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon and Mali, an agreement was reached between the mutineers and the authorities, followed by the deployment of a military force – MISAB* – made up of contingents from six African countries. After several armed incidents, and given the lack of any real progress in the reconcilia-

26 For an account of approaches and activities on the Nigerian side in connection with the Bakassi border dispute, see Lagos, pp. 54-55.
27 See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, p. 70.
29 Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Mali, Senegal and Togo.
* MISAB: Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Bangui Accords
tion process, violent fighting broke out in June when MISAB set about disarming the mutineers. The fighting, which took place in the capital itself, left many dead and wounded, including civilians, and prompted tens of thousands of the city’s inhabitants to flee to safety. A cease-fire was agreed on between the parties at the start of July and a new accord was reached. By the end of the year, however, this agreement had been implemented only in part.

During the year the ICRC supported the work undertaken by the Central African Red Cross Society, in particular to provide first aid for people wounded in the fighting, evacuate them to appropriate medical facilities and distribute relief to displaced people. However, humanitarian efforts suffered on some occasions from the parties’ lack of understanding of the specific role of the Red Cross. The ICRC, present on a permanent basis in Bangui since June, therefore endeavoured to raise awareness among officials on both sides, and among the general public, of the guiding Red Cross principles of neutrality and impartiality. In addition, the ICRC visited people arrested in connection with the events and provided them with regular food aid until their release.

In Chad the process of normalization begun in 1996 continued into 1997. Legislative elections were held at the start of the year and a new National Assembly was set up shortly afterwards. The situation at the military level remained calm, except for the fierce fighting that broke out in the south of the country between the Chadian armed forces and FARF* combatants at the end of the year. In addition, tension mounted sporadically in the east and south between rival communities. During the year, the ICRC continued to assist people detained for security reasons, spread knowledge of humanitarian law among the armed forces and support the Red Cross of Chad. In January Chad acceded to the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions.

Besides focusing on these special priorities, throughout 1997 the Yaoundé regional delegation pursued its activities to raise awareness of humanitarian law and to provide advisory services aimed at promoting the implementation of this law at the national level. Similarly, within its fields of expertise, the ICRC continued to support the region’s National Societies and to foster the development of a policy of regional cooperation among them.

* FARF: Armed Forces for a Federal Republic
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- in Cameroon, visited Nigerian civilian internees and prisoners of war (34 and 87, respectively, by the year's end) detained in connection with the Bakassi border dispute;

- in the Central African Republic, visited 136 people held in 5 places of detention under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence in Bangui in connection with the events of January and June (all these people were subsequently released), and 1 person held for security reasons in a military camp;

- in Chad, during a round of visits made to 42 civilian and military places of detention, visited 39 people detained for security reasons;

- in Equatorial Guinea, visited 16 civilian and military places of detention;

- distributed various kinds of assistance, in accordance with the specific needs noted in the places of detention visited;

- gave all the detainees visited the possibility of exchanging Red Cross messages with their families (for the Nigerian civilian internees and prisoners of war held in Cameroon, the country's authorities suspended this service in June);

- helped restore and maintain family links for different groups of people (in particular, Congolese, Chadian and Rwandan refugees in the Central African Republic) by means of a network for exchanging Red Cross messages run from Yaoundé in conjunction with the region's National Societies;

- in Cameroon, enabled some 2,000 people displaced as a result of the Bakassi border dispute to grow their own food again by providing them with seed in cooperation with the National Society, regularly distributed food to 150 elderly and disabled people who did not wish to leave their villages near the front line, and provided school supplies and clothing for 120 families of people who had gone missing in connection with the dispute;

- in the Central African Republic, in cooperation with the National Society, distributed blankets and tarpaulins to some 2,600 people temporarily displaced following the events in Bangui at the end of June;

- in Chad, in cooperation with the Central African Red Cross Society, provided supplies for the medical facilities in Bangui treating people wounded during the events of January and the end of June, and supported the medical work done by the National Society in this context;

- gave the Cameroonian health authorities the medical assistance they needed for treating people wounded in the Bakassi border dispute;

- supported the work done by the Cameroonian and Chadian National Societies to fight epidemics of diseases such as cholera;
- in Cameroon, rehabilitated 6 springs in 2 villages situated near the front line on the Bakassi peninsula;

- continued its programmes of cooperation with the region's National Societies, focusing, depending on the circumstances, on various activities (fostering structural development, training senior staff and volunteers, supporting efforts to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and/or strengthening emergency preparedness);

- depending on the context, continued its efforts to promote greater understanding and acceptance of humanitarian law and the ICRC among different target groups in the region (the civilian and military authorities, the armed forces and the police, various associations, the press, academic circles and the general public);

- in Cameroon, within the framework of its advisory service for the promotion of humanitarian law, launched a study on the conformity of national legislation with that law.
In Angola the start of the year was marked by a series of delays that lasted several weeks and stood in the way of the implementation of the political aspects of the Lusaka Peace Protocol signed by the Angolan government and UNITA* in November 1994. A range of political decisions had to be reached on three main issues: the taking of office of the 70 UNITA deputies elected to the National Assembly in 1992, the formation of a government of national unity and reconciliation and the defining of the constitutional status of the President of UNITA. It was only after this last point had been settled, in early April, that the UNITA deputies were sworn in and the government of national unity and reconciliation was officially set up. As for the process of extending government administration to the areas still controlled by UNITA, it was hindered by many difficulties. In May it ground to a halt for several months and it did not resume until September, when UNITA handed over several towns, including Negage (Uige province), to the Angolan government.

The incorporation into the new Angolan armed forces of 26,300 men selected from among UNITA troops proved impossible to achieve in accordance with the terms of the peace accord and in the end only 11,000 soldiers from this movement were absorbed. Moreover, a great many UNITA fighters who should have been demobilized deserted the confinement centres before the end of the process.

The international community was disturbed about these various delays and put pressure on the parties to respect the 1994 peace protocol, extending the mandate

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30 See the ICRC’s 1996 Annual Report, p 74.
* UNITA: National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
of UNAVEM III* three times and then sending a new UN mission – UNOMA* – to the country on 1 July. At the end of August, however, in view of UNITA's unwillingness to conform to the letter of the provisions contained in the peace protocol, the UN Security Council threatened to take sanctions against the movement. Owing to the negligible progress made by UNITA, these sanctions finally came into force on 29 October.

The Angolan armed forces launched an offensive in Lunda Norte province, in the north-east of the country, at the end of May, with the declared aim of securing the Angolan borders and preventing any incursion by armed elements from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They occupied several towns that were still under the control of UNITA, which led to a sporadic resumption of fighting and the displacement of civilians. At the start of June, the ICRC visited the province to assess any humanitarian needs that might have arisen as a result of the fighting. Other surveys were subsequently carried out in most of the other provinces bordering on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Moxico, Lunda Sul, Malanje and Uige) and in the areas around Huila, Benguela and Huambo, where a rise in tension could also be felt. In connection with the events unfolding in the Republic of Congo, ICRC delegates also made several trips in late 1997 to the Cabinda enclave, the scene of clashes between the Angolan armed forces and Cabinda separatist groups. Moreover, in view of the presence in the Republic of the Congo of elements of the Angolan armed forces, the ICRC sent the authorities concerned a note verbale and a memorandum reminding them of the need, in this situation, to respect and ensure respect for the principles and rules of humanitarian law.

Following the end of the process to release people detained in connection with the conflict, the delegation did not carry out any activities in Angola’s places of detention during the first eight months of the year. However, new prisoners coming within the ICRC’s mandate were captured by the government after the resumption of hostilities in the north-east of the country.

In 1997 the ICRC handed over to the Angola Red Cross some of its programmes aimed at restoring and maintaining contact between family members separated by the events. The National Society thus became responsible for distributing Red Cross messages in the towns of Huambo and Kuito. However, the new outbreak of hostilities in the north-east, together with the fact that it was impossible for the National Society to gain access to UNITA-controlled areas, pointed to the need for the ICRC to continue its involvement in this work. The delegation

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31 See Democratic Republic of the Congo, pp.58-60.
32 See Republic of the Congo, pp.66-68.
* UNAVEM III: United Nations Angola Verification Mission (III)
* UNOMA: United Nations Observer Mission in Angola
sanitation projects
handed over

support for health
posts ended

spreading the
humanitarian message

to maintain its three sub-offices in the areas still in UNITA hands.

In February the ICRC completed its work on sanitation projects in Angola and handed them over to the relevant provincial authorities or to non-governmental organizations that were ready to continue them. Instructions on the management of the facilities were accompanied by large donations of equipment and materials.

At the start of the year, the delegation also ended its programmes to support health posts – with the exception of the Chipipa post (Huambo province), the rehabilitation of which was completed in June – and handed over the responsibility for the posts to the Angolan Ministry of Health or to other humanitarian agencies. Meanwhile it provided logistic and administrative support for the German Red Cross, within the framework of a six-month bilateral project for restoring health posts in Bailundo and, partly, the hospital there. Following the resurgence of tensions in the north-east of the country, a medical survey was carried out in several provinces affected by problems of overt or latent violence. On the basis of the survey, the ICRC gradually began to resume its ad hoc assistance to certain medical facilities in potential conflict areas so as to enable them to deal with any influx of wounded people that might occur.

In addition, the ICRC continued to fit amputees with artificial limbs in its prosthetic/orthotic centres in Bomba Alta (Huambo), Kuito and Neves Bendianga (Luanda), and to manufacture orthopaedic components in its production unit in Neves Bendianga and, since January, in the one in Bomba Alta. On 4 June the ICRC and the other members of the coordination group for prosthetic/orthotic programmes in Angola\(^3\) signed a letter of agreement with a view to streamlining the manufacture of artificial limbs throughout the country and thereby enabling all amputees to have their artificial limbs serviced or repaired at the centre nearest them.

In 1997 again, many civilians fell victim to banditry, which also plagued the international organizations present in Angola. The ICRC was itself the victim of three security incidents at the start of the year, involving the theft of vehicles in the town of Luanda. Moreover, outside the towns, political violence not only prompted the displacement of large groups of people, it also caused the interruption or even the suspension of the activities of some humanitarian organizations. For this reason, in order to help prevent civilians in rural areas from being victimized by armed elements, the ICRC continued to spread its humanitarian messages via weekly programmes broadcast on national radio. Information sessions on Red Cross principles, the ICRC's mandate, the organization's work in Angola and the promotion of humanitarian law were also organized for various audiences, includ-

\(^3\) See the ICRC's *1996 Annual Report*, p 76.
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- visited 45 detainees in Uige, Lunda Norte and Huambo provinces who had been arrested in connection with the resumption of fighting in the north-east of the country;
- as UNITA was unable to provide new information on the matter, ended its representations concerning 78 detainees held by this movement, of whom it had had no news since 1994;
- passed on to the relevant political authorities 158 allegations of arrest or disappearances that had been made to it by the families of those concerned;
- helped restore and maintain contact between separated family members, some of whom were in government-held and others in UNITA-held areas (in so doing collected 10,806 and delivered 10,960 Red Cross messages);
- reunited 44 people with their families;
- registered some 50 unaccompanied Rwandan children under the age of 16 who were refugees in Angola, with a view to reuniting them with their families in Rwanda;
- satisfied 74 tracing requests dealt with, in part, by the Angola Red Cross under ICRC supervision;
- handed over to the provincial authorities or to non-governmental organizations the responsibility for 13 health posts on the Planalto;
- provided ad hoc assistance to the hospitals of Dundo and N'zagi (Lunda Norte province), Saurimo (Lunda Sul) and Malanje, in the form of medical supplies for the treatment, if necessary, of some 150 war-wounded;
- opened a new centre in Huambo for the production of orthopaedic components;
- manufactured 1,720 prostheses and 6,146 orthopaedic components for other organizations carrying out prosthetic/orthotic work in Angola;
- fitted 1,344 new amputees with artificial limbs and repaired prostheses for amputees who had already been fitted some time before;
- finished repairing the water-supply systems in the towns of Caala and Bailundo, in cooperation with the Netherlands Red Cross and the German Red Cross respectively, and completed the water-supply and sanitation projects begun in Ganda and Kuito;
- handed over all its water and sanitation projects to the relevant provincial authorities or to non-governmental organizations active in this sphere;
- held training sessions for Angola Red Cross staff, including a seminar for the heads of the National Society’s provincial branches, on restoring and maintaining family links;
- recorded radio programmes broadcasting humanitarian messages in the local Kikongo and Umbundu languages, using local traditions as a basis;
- gave lectures on humanitarian law, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the ICRC to representatives of the local authorities and the traditional leaders, the press, the National Society, the Angolan police and armed forces (including a commando unit based in Cabinda) and 370 members of UNAVEM III and UNOMA;
- informed the population in the Huambo region about the damage and suffering caused by the indiscriminate use of mines, in particular through 144 performances given by a group of traditional singers and dancers to audiences totalling around 12,000 people.
The visit in January by Diana, Princess of Wales, to the ICRC's two artificial limb production centres in Angola helped to spread awareness among the general public, both in that country and abroad, of the ICRC's campaign to bring about a ban on anti-personnel landmines and of its work to support the victims of these weapons. In addition, the delegation continued to organize seminars on this subject for the media and for government representatives. Among other things, it promoted, jointly with UNICEF, a debate in the National Assembly that addressed Angola's participation in the Ottawa Conference to be held in December. The general public was also made aware of the danger of mines by means of performances given by a group of traditional singers and dancers in the province of Huambo.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{34} See the ICRC's \textit{1996 Annual Report}, p. 79.
HARARE
Regional delegation
(Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe)

The countries covered by the Harare regional delegation enjoyed a period of relative political and social stability in 1997, although tensions surfaced at the end of the year in Zambia and Zimbabwe and living conditions remained difficult for many people in the region. In addition, the effects of the AIDS epidemic were very strongly felt in this part of southern Africa.

This year again, the ICRC concentrated on cooperation with the region's National Societies. By means of financial and material support, training courses and practical advice, the organization helped most of these Societies to become autonomous in their work aimed at restoring and maintaining family links. In most of the region's countries, in cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, it also organized first-aid courses for volunteers and emergency-preparedness seminars for the senior staff of the National Societies. Moreover, the regional delegation helped the Societies to improve their media profile in their respective countries and facilitated contact between them.

Promoting greater knowledge of and respect for international humanitarian law - among the armed forces, the police, the authorities, the general public and in academic circles - was also a key concern. As regards dissemination among the armed forces, the ICRC was involved, in particular, in designing and setting up situations in which humanitarian law applied and which were acted out in the context of various military exercises. The delegation also held several seminars, sometimes in cooperation with outside partners (the Spanish Civil Guard, ACCORD*), for members of the Mozambican and Namibian armed forces. Where the police were concerned, the regional delegation focused its dissemination work most particularly on Zambia and Mozambique, a country which was about to create a new police force. Furthermore, the ICRC continued to provide advisory services to the authorities concerned with a view to encouraging them to set up mechanisms for incorporating humanitarian law into their national legislation.

In October the regional delegation had a favourable initial interview with the commander-in-chief of the armed forces of Botswana regarding the development of activities to promote humanitarian law in that country.

* ACCORD: African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
implementing humanitarian law in Mozambique

The political crisis that had broken out in Malawi the previous year ended in April and the country began gearing up for the general elections to be held in 1999. The ICRC provided technical and material assistance for the Malawi Red Cross Society’s emergency-preparedness programme. It also increased its financial support for the National Society’s activities aimed at restoring and maintaining family links so as to enable the Society to meet the needs generated by the arrival in Malawi of refugees from the Great Lakes region.

In Mozambique the ICRC focused on promoting humanitarian law among the country’s armed forces and police. In March, with the help of an expert from the Spanish Civil Guard, it organized a course for high-ranking officers from the Mozambican armed forces. In addition, jointly with the Ministry of Justice and with support from its own Advisory Service, the ICRC ran a seminar on the national implementation of humanitarian law for senior representatives of the government, the armed forces and the police and for members of the academic world. One notable outcome of this seminar was the setting up of an interministerial committee for the implementation of humanitarian law.

In April the ICRC held a training course in Namibia so as to enable National Society staff involved in activities to restore and maintain family links to work independently, with ICRC technical and financial assistance. At the same time a workshop was held for the Angolan refugee community in Namibia, and centres for collecting and delivering Red Cross messages were opened in the places where groups of Angolans were living. A Red Cross message service was also set up by the National Society for foreign nationals being detained as illegal immigrants.

The year under review saw a continuation of the confrontations between the government of President Chiluba and the country’s opposition parties. Tension rose after the attempted military coup d’état of 28 October. Following this event, a state of emergency was decreed, judicial guarantees were restricted and some 90 people – both soldiers and civilians – were arrested. Former President Kaunda, accused of having instigated the coup d’état, was placed under house arrest. Concerned by the consequences of these arrests, the ICRC conducted several missions to Zambia and at the start of December, on the basis of its statutory right of initiative, offered its services to the government, requesting access to the people detained in connection with the events.

In Zimbabwe there were several protests in 1997 against the government’s tax and social welfare policies, and these sometimes degenerated into clashes with the police. The end of the year was also marked by intercommunity tensions, following the authorities’ decision to proceed with the expropriation of some of the land belonging to white farmers. The regional delegation gave a number of lectures on humanitarian law for members of the Zimbabwean armed forces, including contingents detailed to peace-keeping missions, and for officers of the Zimbabwean and United States armed forces within the framework of a joint exercise.

35 See the ICRC’s 1996 Annual Report, p 80.
- stepped up and coordinated a programme for restoring and maintaining family links run by the region’s National Societies, which (especially those of Zambia and Malawi) collected 7,742 Red Cross messages sent by refugees from various African countries (mainly from the Great Lakes region) and delivered 4,466 to them;
- supervised the registration by the Zambia Red Cross Society of 73 unaccompanied children from the Great Lakes region who were among the refugees settled in the Natende and Maheba camps;
- gave financial backing to the Mozambique Red Cross Society so as to help it resolve the 51 cases of unaccompanied children that remained outstanding after the end of the civil war;
- in Malawi, supplied the prosthetic/orthotic centre at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Blantyre-Limbe with 124 kg of polypropylene and other materials for manufacturing artificial limbs, and in Zimbabwe, supplied the Bulawayo and the Harare prosthetic/orthotic centres with, respectively, 784 kg and 1,017 kg of materials and equipment;
- financed the training of new first-aid instructors in Botswana and Malawi;
- supplied the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society with blankets, bandages and jerrycans for its first-aid programmes and gave similar assistance to the Malawi Red Cross Society for its emergency-preparedness programme;
- provided a vehicle each for the Malawi Red Cross and the Namibia Red Cross, to support their dissemination work within their far-flung local branches;
- in conjunction with the Federation, organized a workshop on emergency preparedness for members of the Zambian Red Cross;
- gave lectures on the law of armed conflict, Red Cross principles and the ICRC’s work to representatives of the authorities, the armed forces and the police in the other countries covered by the regional delegation;
- as a consultant on humanitarian law, took part in several regional military exercises, including the multinational Blue Hungwe exercise involving over 1,100 soldiers from the armed forces of 8 southern African countries;
- continued its efforts to ensure that national legislation was in conformity with humanitarian law, in particular by organizing technical missions to several of the region’s countries;
- encouraged the setting up in Mozambique of an interministerial committee for the national implementation of humanitarian law and supported the work of similar committees in Namibia and Zimbabwe.
The year was marked by a worsening of the situation in the Comoros, continuing political instability in countries such as Lesotho and Swaziland and outbreaks of violence in South Africa (KwaZulu/Natal). Furthermore, several of the region’s countries were affected, at the economic level, by a period of drought caused by the El Niño weather pattern. The ICRC monitored the situation in these countries closely and, where appropriate, assisted the victims, sometimes through the National Societies concerned. It also supported the region’s National Societies, both in organizational matters and with material and financial backing. Depending on the case, and to varying degrees, it fostered their structural development, helped strengthen their emergency preparedness, assisted them with projects linked to prevention or public relations, or provided training for their staff and volunteers. The ICRC also strove to increase knowledge of and respect for humanitarian law in this part of Africa by raising awareness of these issues in various circles. In particular, it encouraged the region’s States to adopt national measures to implement humanitarian law and urged them to accede to the 1980 UN Convention prohibiting or restricting the use of certain conventional weapons and the Ottawa Convention banning the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines.

In South Africa the year was marked by the withdrawal from political life of the President of the NP,* the resignations of senior members of the main South African political groupings (NP, ANC*, IFP*), the formation in September of a new party, the UDM,* and the appointment of the country’s Vice-President as head of the ANC.

In general, this year again problems linked to violence, in all its forms, persisted in South Africa. While crime continued to be a problem in the country’s large cities and, from the end of the year, for white farm owners, political violence (although markedly on the decrease in comparison with 1996) hit KwaZulu/Natal especially hard. In July and August an increase in sporadic violence in that province required the mobilization of the police and the army and prompted 3,000

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* NP: National Party
* ANC: African National Congress
* IFP: Inkatha Freedom Party
* UDM: United Democratic Movement
people to seek safety in the town of Richmond. In February riots also took place in the shantytowns west of Johannesburg, leaving a number of people dead or wounded. While the regional delegation did not carry out any specific activities relating to security detainees, it nevertheless made several visits during the year to prisons and police stations in order to check on detention conditions and – as an observer or an expert – kept up its contacts with non-governmental organizations involved in prison work. In conjunction with the South African Red Cross Society, during the first half of 1997 the ICRC continued its efforts to assist victims of the political violence in KwaZulu/Natal. This activity, however, was suspended at the end of June when political violence in the province fell back to a low level, leading the ICRC to downsize its contingent in the field and close its Durban office. In addition, the regional delegation provided the National Society with logistic support for its programme to help the victims of flooding in the Midlands region (KwaZulu/Natal) in January and the Durban region in April. The ICRC also supported the South African Red Cross in developing its activities to assist the population living in shantytowns and in strengthening its branches situated in poor and vulnerable regions. Lastly, the regional delegation continued its training programme in humanitarian law for the South African army.

At the start of the year, the capital of the Comoros, Moroni, was the scene of strikes and demonstrations by civil servants, which in some cases escalated into violent confrontations with the army and the police, leaving a number of demonstrators wounded. Arrests took place in connection with these events, although the people imprisoned were subsequently released. During the first quarter of 1997 the ICRC made several vain attempts to obtain access to security detainees in Moroni. The island of Anjouan was also affected by this wave of protest and the situation reached a point where clashes erupted between the demonstrators and the Comorian army, sent to the island to help restore law and order. The clashes ended with the death of several people and the wounding of many more, whom the Comoros Red Crescent assisted with the support of the ICRC. The second half of 1997 was marked by the unilateral declaration of independence on 14 July of the island of Anjouan, followed swiftly by that of the island of Moheli. On 3 September the Comorian army tried to regain control of Anjouan, but met with vigorous resistance from the local population. These confrontations claimed many victims (people left dead, wounded or homeless) and led to the capture of 83 soldiers. On 8 September the ICRC sent a delegate to the spot to investigate humanitarian needs. Through the intervention of the Comoros Red Crescent, medicines and other supplies were provided for the people affected. Three times, and in conformity with its customary procedures, the ICRC visited the Comorian soldiers being held by the Anjouan secessionists. Some of these detainees – a total of 56 people – were subsequently released, but the ICRC continued to keep a close watch on the situation of the remaining 27.
– In July and December, visited and distributed leisure items to 41 security detainees, including 35 accused of sedition, in the central prison and the women’s prison in Maseru, Lesotho;
– visited 2 prisons and 5 police stations in South Africa;
– in Madagascar, visited 44 agricultural penal camps and 16 prison vegetable plots as part of an assessment of the nutritional status of detainees, conducted follow-up visits to 14 prisons and organized an awareness-raising seminar on the nutritional problems encountered in the country’s prisons for the national director of the prison administration, 12 regional directors and 6 section heads;
– in the Comoros, conducted 3 visits to government soldiers captured during the events of September in Anjouan and brought them leisure and hygiene articles;
– gave all the detainees visited in the above situations the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their families;
– by means of Red Cross messages, helped maintain family links between refugees from various African countries, most of whom were in South Africa and Swaziland, and their relatives abroad (287 messages were sent

IN 1997 THE ICRC:

– in the countries covered by the regional delegation and 688 delivered);
– in KwaZulu/Natal, during the first 6 months of the year and in cooperation with the South African Red Cross Society, distributed food aid and essential items (blankets, jerrycans, kitchen sets and tarpaulins) to victims of the political violence;
– delivered medicines to the Comoros Red Crescent, together with 25 tents and 50 kitchen sets sent by the Nairobi regional delegation for distribution to the people affected by the events in Anjouan;
– made 6 hospital tents available to the Malagasy Red Cross Society;
– financed several training courses for first-aid workers and instructors from the National Societies of Lesotho and South Africa;
– provided basic training or refresher courses in first aid for volunteers from 4 regional committees of the Malagasy Red Cross;
– assessed the medical programmes undertaken by 14 local committees of the Comoros Red Crescent and examined the possibility of developing a pilot project in community first-aid in Moheli;
– donated an ambulance to the local branch of the Seychelles Red Cross Society in Praslin;
– in Johannesburg, in cooperation with the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, organized an information course for senior members of the Red Cross Societies of Lesotho, Madagascar, Swaziland and South Africa;
– organized lectures on humanitarian law for over 470 members of the armed forces and police of Lesotho, South Africa and Swaziland, and, with the help of 2 officers, assessed the inclusion of a regular teaching programme on this body of law in the training given to the South African armed forces;
– in Lesotho and Swaziland, held working meetings with high-level officials on the national implementation of humanitarian law;
– in cooperation with the Comoros Red Crescent, ran several seminars for the Comorian armed and security forces, focusing in particular on the behaviour to adopt in situations of internal unrest;
– in the Comoros, Lesotho and South Africa, held dissemination sessions for representatives of the authorities, the press and the academic world attended by a total of some 340 people;
– printed 3,000 copies of Rules for behaviour in combat in the siSwati language and made them available to the Baphalali Swaziland Red Cross Society.
In Lesotho the unrest that had been rocking the country sporadically since 1994 continued in February with a mutiny by several dozen junior police officers who took possession of the police headquarters in Maseru. After having tried in vain for 11 days to negotiate with the mutineers, the Lesotho government called on the armed forces to launch an attack on the premises. The attack was carried out on 16 February and led to the arrest of 127 police, most of whom were released within 48 hours. With the agreement of the country's authorities, the ICRC twice visited the people imprisoned following these events.

In Madagascar the ICRC provided financial support and hospital tents for the Malagasy Red Cross Society to use in its relief activities for victims of the cyclone that hit the island in January. The organization also extended its community first-aid programme to another four regional committees on the island. Furthermore, this year too it continued its assessment and monitoring programme in the country's places of detention. A report on the nutritional status of all categories of prisoners, summing up the ICRC's findings in 34 prisons visited between June 1995 and December 1996, was drawn up and handed over to the relevant authorities. On the basis of the report, in August the ICRC organized a workshop for national and regional senior prison administration staff, in order to raise their awareness of nutritional problems in places of detention. Moreover, an ICRC agronomist visited fields and vegetable plots attached to the main prisons under the responsibility of 13 prison administrations, with a view to assessing their condition and the chances of increasing their productivity with little investment. Lastly, the ICRC carried out its annual round of visits to seven places of detention and noted that all security detainees had been released in conformity with an amnesty granted in March by the Malagasy parliament.

In February the regional delegation carried out a mission to Mauritius and the Seychelles to monitor the development of cooperation programmes (emergency preparedness, promotion of humanitarian law) conducted jointly by the ICRC and each of the two National Societies concerned.

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36 See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, p 84.
In 1997 the Eritrean government continued its efforts to rebuild and develop the country. In May the Constitutional Assembly voted unanimously to adopt a national constitution, which paved the way for political pluralism while restricting the formation of any new political parties that might be founded on an ethnic or religious basis. At the international level, relations between Eritrea and Sudan deteriorated after the two States accused each other of supporting opposition groups active on either side; this turn for the worse was reflected in a military build-up along the border. As the ICRC was unable to work on the spot, it was not in a position to evaluate the implications of this rise in tension for the humanitarian situation.

The efforts made by the ICRC during the year to resume its dialogue with the Eritrean authorities and to urge them to accede to the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols remained fruitless.

Meanwhile the ICRC continued its support for the emerging Red Cross Society of Eritrea. In particular, it backed the National Society’s efforts to cooperate with Circus Eritrea, a local non-governmental organization composed of street children whose performances carry a humanitarian message, and to train first-aid workers, especially in the border areas in the west and north of the country.
ETHIOPIA

During the year under review the Ethiopian government, led by the EPRDF,* continued its programme of political and economic reforms but was unable to rally all political tendencies, despite discussions with the main armed opposition groups. The tensions noted in previous years thus persisted, in particular in the Oromia National Regional State and the Somali National Regional State (Regions 4 and 5) where two of the main groups from the Ethiopian armed opposition, the OLF* and the ONLF,* remained active, although only to a limited extent. Furthermore, along the border with Sudan the situation became temporarily volatile at the start of the year when the armed opposition to the Sudanese government opened up new fronts in Sudan.38 Along the border with Somalia, too, in the Gedo region, the tensions observed the previous year persisted between the Al Ittihad fighters and those from a Somali faction, the SNF,* supported by the Ethiopian army.39

Meanwhile Ethiopia's food supply, constantly threatened by adverse weather, remained very precarious in 1997, especially in the countryside. The Wello and Shoa areas in central Ethiopia were hit by drought, while other places, in particular the Ogaden region at the end of the year, had extremely heavy rainfall which caused serious flooding and left tens of thousands of people destitute.

To strengthen its presence in sensitive areas and improve both its familiarity with the humanitarian problems there and its response capacity, in 1997 the ICRC

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38 See Sudan, pp. 104-108.
* EPRDF: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
* OLF: Oromo Liberation Front
* ONLF: Ogaden National Liberation Front
* SNF: Somali National Front
opened two new offices, in Gode (Somali National Regional State) and Asosa (Benishangul-Gumuz National Regional State), in addition to its sub-delegation in Harar and its office in Jijiga.

Throughout the year the ICRC continued its visits to people imprisoned in connection with the change of regime in 1991 or for reasons of State security. Thanks to its intense dialogue with the Ethiopian authorities, the organization also gained access to civilian places of detention that had previously been off limits to it. Despite this positive development, the ICRC was unable to see all those incarcerated in the country.

After completing its visits to places of detention, the ICRC regularly reported its findings and made recommendations to the authorities, reminding them of their responsibility to provide decent living conditions for detainees. It placed particular emphasis on various means of countering the combined effects of overcrowding, poor hygiene and lack of medical care. On several occasions, when particularly acute needs were observed, the ICRC took direct action, providing equipment, medicines and hygiene items or carrying out sanitation work, as necessary. The anti-tuberculosis programme begun in 1994 in conjunction with the authorities in several places of detention had to be stopped during the year, as no solutions had been found to the obstacles previously encountered both in diagnosing sick detainees and in treating and monitoring them. The ICRC nevertheless continued to pay special attention to the problem of tuberculosis in prisons and to report its observations to the authorities. The organization also offered detainees held in places under the responsibility of the civilian authorities the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their families. Moreover, it monitored hearings in the trials of officials from the former regime to ensure that the judicial guarantees provided for under humanitarian law were respected.

In the Afiq area (Region 5), which was the scene of regular armed clashes, the ICRC initiated a programme to support vulnerable groups. On the basis of surveys carried out on the spot to determine the population’s main needs, various activities were launched in the areas of health care, veterinary services, water supply and sanitation. In addition, the ICRC took steps to support several thousand Somali refugees in Dolo, distributing supplies and opening a nutritional rehabilitation centre for the most seriously underfed children. The situation of these vulnerable people later became stabilized. Lastly, when the east of the country was hit by extremely heavy rainfall followed by floods, the ICRC actively supported the relief operation carried out by the Ethiopian Red Cross Society as part of a general effort launched on the government’s initiative.

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40 See the ICRC’s 1996 Annual Report, pp. 87-88.
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- visited 10,980 people held in connection with the 1991 change of regime or for security reasons in 126 places of detention and registered 5,660 new detainees;
- in cooperation with the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, handled 2,180 Red Cross messages between people detained under the responsibility of the civilian authorities and their families;
- improved health conditions in places of detention by advising medical personnel, providing medical supplies or carrying out sanitation work, as necessary;
- distributed material assistance to some 56,000 detainees;
- helped maintain or restore family links for Ethiopian refugees outside the country and for refugees from neighbouring countries settled in Ethiopia, through a network for exchanging Red Cross messages run in conjunction with the Ethiopian Red Cross (4,572 messages handled);
- supported the National Society's work to assist 25,000 victims of flooding in the east of the country by providing tarpaulins, blankets, saucepans, mosquito nets, jerrycans and medicines, and by vaccinating livestock;
- launched a programme in the Afder area to combat the tsetse fly and another to teach nomadic herders how to recognize the most common diseases affecting their animals and how to treat them with suitable medicines, in cooperation with the International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology and the South-East Rangelands Project;
- distributed material assistance to some 10,000 Somali refugees in Dolo;
- in cooperation with the health authorities, launched a rural community health-care programme in the Afder area, supporting existing medical facilities, backing vaccination campaigns and training health workers in remote villages;
- for several months, set up a nutritional rehabilitation centre for the most undernourished children among the Somali refugees in Dolo;
- repaired or built 5 water-supply points for communities of nomadic herders in the Afder area;
- continued to assist the National Society in strengthening its branches (in particular, supported the opening of a branch in Asosa), promoting humanitarian law, restoring family links and providing first aid;
- helped set up and supported the work of an interministerial committee for the development and implementation of humanitarian law;
- signed or submitted several agreements with the relevant authorities aimed at standardizing the teaching of humanitarian law among the armed forces, the police and civil servants;
- alone or in cooperation with the Ethiopian Red Cross, organized many information sessions on humanitarian law for various audiences, including the civilian and military authorities and the public at large;
- continued to support cooperation between the Ethiopian Red Cross and Circus Ethiopia, a local organization whose artistic performances inform the general public about various humanitarian subjects.
During the year the Ethiopian military authorities approved a plan of action proposed by the ICRC to include the teaching of international humanitarian law in the instruction given to troops. By the end of the year the first phase of the plan – training Ethiopian military instructors and adapting teaching materials – had been put in place. Agreements on incorporating humanitarian law in training programmes were also submitted during the year to the police force and to the Ethiopian Civil Service College. In parallel with these efforts to standardize the teaching of humanitarian law, the ICRC organized many dissemination sessions for various audiences, either alone or in cooperation with the Ethiopian Red Cross. Furthermore, within the framework of its advisory service for States, the ICRC backed the work of the interministerial committee for the implementation of humanitarian law set up by the authorities in February.

The Ethiopian Red Cross, with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, began a process of change in 1997 with a view to consolidating its base. The ICRC became involved in this process and, in June, signed a cooperation agreement with the National Society on the strengthening of its branches, especially in sensitive areas of the country, in the spheres of first aid, promotion of humanitarian law and tracing. In conjunction with the Federation, the ICRC also supported the setting up of a new branch of the Ethiopian Red Cross in Asosa.

Throughout the year the ICRC mission to the OAU* in Addis Ababa continued its efforts to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and raise awareness in diplomatic circles of humanitarian issues such as landmines, child soldiers, displaced persons or the teaching and implementation of humanitarian law.41

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41 See *Operational Activities*, pp. 36-39.

* OAU: Organization of African Unity
SOMALIA

The year under review was one of contrasts for Somalia. On the one hand, the leaders of the country’s various factions met on numerous occasions to try to end the longstanding conflict. Their discussions were held mainly within the framework of the so-called Sodere process. This process, begun at the end of 1996, led to the creation on 3 January 1997 of a National Salvation Council. After remaining at a standstill for a long time, it was subsequently relaunched in November on the initiative of the Egyptian government, which invited the representatives of the main factions, including Hussein Aidid and Ali Mahdi, to Cairo. An important stage was reached in December when the factions, meeting in the Egyptian capital, adopted a joint declaration on the restoration of national unity. By the end of the year, however, this declaration – which still had to be formally approved at a national reconciliation conference planned for early 1998 – was already being challenged by various factions that had signed it. Besides this, and independently of the Sodere process, Hussein Aidid signed two peace agreements during the year, the first with his former ally Osman Ato and the second with Ali Mahdi, and these helped temporarily to lower the tension in Mogadishu.

Meanwhile violence continued to flare up in Somalia. The most serious fighting broke out in the Gedo region from March to June, between the Al Ittihad movement and the SNF, and in the Bay and Bakol regions from July onwards, between Hussein Aidid’s SNA* and the RRA.* In Mogadishu the situation remained volatile throughout the year, with sporadic clashes. Other, less serious, tension

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42 From the name of a place in Ethiopia where the first discussions took place.
43 See also the ICRC’s 1996 Annual Report, pp. 91-92.
* SNA: Somalian National Alliance
* RRA: Rahanwein Resistance Army
spots were also recorded in Kismayo between the SNF and the SSDF,* and in Galkayo between the SSDF and the SNA.

In several regions, drought or floods further darkened the picture, jeopardizing harvests and driving thousands of civilians from their homes. This was particularly so at the end of the year, when the Juba and Shabele valleys were hit by the worst floods in 40 years. According to estimates produced by the Somalia Aid Coordination Body, these floods caused the deaths of 1,800 people and the displacement of 230,000 others.

By comparison with the rest of the country, Somaliland enjoyed a period of relative stability in 1997. President Egal was re-elected in February and his government took pains to consolidate its position by including some members of the opposition. The region's economy benefited from this favourable situation, which also enabled aid and development organizations to begin or expand their programmes. Occasional tensions between opposing clans or sub-clans nevertheless persisted, in particular in the east of Somaliland.

Many Somalis - directly or indirectly affected by the various conflicts, at the mercy of disastrous weather, deprived of public services and vital infrastructure, left to their own devices by a ruined economy – remained very vulnerable in 1997, whether they lived in the towns or the countryside, and some of them were largely dependent on aid organizations.

During the year the ICRC continued its efforts in all its traditional spheres of activity, following the working method it had adopted in July 1994 with a view to avoiding the risks inherent in maintaining a permanent set-up in Somalia (delegation based in Nairobi, network of local employees scattered throughout the country, ad hoc missions by expatriate staff to outline the main tasks to be carried out and monitor them). On some occasions, owing to perilous security conditions, certain areas remained inaccessible to the ICRC for varying amounts of time.

As in previous years, assistance programmes for people affected by the fighting and by adverse weather developed along two main lines. On the one hand, emergency aid was provided – food, medical and other supplies, sanitation work or support for agricultural activities, depending on the case – for people left without any means of survival. Operations such as these were organized in particular to assist people recently displaced as a result of the hostilities in the Gedo, Bay and Bakol regions, and also as part of an international effort to help victims of the serious flooding that occurred at the end of the year – this last operation was hampered by major logistic constraints (lines of communication cut, people in distress scat-

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* SSDF: Somali Salvation Democratic Front

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44 A body composed of donor countries, member States of the Intergovernmental Authority Development (see footnote p. 105), Egypt and Yemen, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations.

tered over vast areas). At the same time, the ICRC continued and expanded its preventive work, to enable threatened groups to resume or develop their traditional food-producing activities (agriculture, livestock-rearing and fishing). In this wide-ranging endeavour, the ICRC constantly took care to involve the groups concerned closely in designing and carrying out the programmes planned so as to ensure their success and durability. The areas targeted were mainly rural, as taking such action in the large urban areas (which also had serious humanitarian needs) was far beyond the organization's expertise and capabilities. Nevertheless, in towns and cities the ICRC helped the Somali Red Crescent Society to set up micro-projects designed to support the most disadvantaged, for example by arranging small loans for people who wanted to set up a business, organizing courses in typing and English or raising goats that were then handed over to those in need.

The ICRC's involvement in health activities also responded to the dictates of emergencies on the one hand and prevention on the other. Hospitals and other medical facilities admitting war casualties were supported throughout the year, whether regularly or on an occasional basis. The medical and sanitation needs of people driven from their homes by the fighting and/or floods were also taken into account when it was being decided what form emergency aid should take. At the same time, programmes focusing on primary health care in the isolated villages around Marere, support for the Somali Red Crescent's health posts (mainly in the Hiran area) and the prevention of diseases such as cholera were continued. As regards water supply and sanitation, priority was given to facilitating access to drinking water for herders and their animals.

Otherwise, work to protect the civilian population and detainees was restricted by circumstances peculiar to the Somali situation, notably the number of opposing parties and their degree of fragmentation, the weakness of the chain of command (fighters sometimes acted on their own initiative) and the cultural mechanisms for settling disputes between clans and sub-clans. Because of this, the ICRC focused on the promotion of humanitarian law on a broad scale, in cooperation with the Somali Red Crescent Society. In order to ensure that the humanitarian message reached the greatest possible number of people, particular care was taken to link it to traditional Somali cultural values and to find the most suitable means of conveying it. In addition, on some occasions the ICRC approached the faction leaders directly to remind them of the basic humanitarian rules and the respect to which humanitarian work is entitled. This was the case in June, following the murder of a doctor from the organization MSF* on the premises of the Baidoa hospital, and in April, after shots were fired at the offices of the Somali Red Crescent in...
Mogadishu. In Somaliland, a dialogue was begun with the relevant authorities on the possibility of teaching humanitarian law to the region’s armed forces. The work of tracing missing persons and restoring family links continued by means of a vast network for exchanging Red Cross messages run by the Somali Red Crescent.

- with the help of the Somali Red Crescent Society, handled 75,131 Red Cross messages between members of dispersed families in Somalia or abroad;
- located 632 members of dispersed families and organized 6 family reunifications;
- distributed over 2,400 tonnes of food and some 1,100 tonnes of seed, together with tools, tarpaulins, blankets, mosquito nets and basic necessities, to people affected by the fighting, adverse weather or poor harvests;
- distributed regular food aid to several orphanages and hospitals and to detainees in Mogadishu’s central prison, the WFP* having concluded its work in this sphere in 1996;46
- repaired 8 km of broken or badly maintained dykes over a 200-km stretch of the Juba river and rehabilitated irrigation systems covering 1,600 hectares of arable land in the Hiran region;
- in the Juba valley, continued and developed a programme to combat the tsetse fly, responsible for disease in livestock, and in the Hiran region, launched a programme to fight a maize pest, in cooperation with the International Centre for Pest Physiology and Ecology (Kenya);
- distributed fishing tackle to several thousand fishermen along the river banks, taught around 100 people how to make fishnets, rehabilitated the Bosaso fish market and, together with the Somali Red Crescent, launched a training programme on sea-fishing techniques and fish storage for some 380 people living on the coast, giving the participants fishing tackle and small boats at the end of the course;
- supported several programmes launched by the National Society to assist the most disadvantaged, mainly in urban areas;
- supported the Somali Red Crescent hospital in Mogadishu (Keysaney) and other hospitals admitting war casualties in the capital and in Baidoa, Beer, Belet Weyn, Dusamareb and Galkayo;
- improved the services provided by the laboratory of the Somali Red Crescent hospital in Mogadishu by sending an expatriate specialist there for 2 months;
- distributed medicines for malaria and diarrhoea to people affected

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46 See the ICRC’s 1996 Annual Report, p. 92.
Following its practice of previous years, the ICRC also continued to support the Somali Red Crescent. In particular, it sought to involve the National Society's staff more and more in its own activities, so as to enable them to take over this work, and it endeavoured to promote and back the Somali Red Crescent's efforts to set up programmes for vulnerable groups.

by the flooding in the Juba and Shabele valleys;
- set up a first-aid post for 15,000 people displaced by the flooding near Belet Huen and a mobile clinic in the Marere region;
- continued its community-based health programme in remote villages with no access to medical facilities by teaching local personnel how to treat the most common illnesses, supplying them with basic medicines and improving access to drinking water;
- in cooperation with the Somali Red Crescent, strove to contain a cholera epidemic in the Wanla Weyn region by providing medicines, logistic means and sanitation equipment, and by training local medical personnel;
- equipped, sank or repaired 12 boreholes, 26 wells and 5 traditional water reservoirs in rural areas (part of this work was carried out under a project delegated to the German Red Cross) and improved the supply of drinking water and the drainage systems in several health posts and other medical facilities;
- set up an emergency programme to provide some 90,000 people trapped by the floods in the Marere region with drinking water;
- completed a historical study of the similarities between Somali cultural traditions and humanitarian law, distributed the study to decision-makers in the country and selected a dozen radio plays written by local authors on the basis of the study for airing by the Somali service of the British Broadcasting Corporation;
- continued its programmes for young people and those serving in the militia, begun in 1996, linking humanitarian ideas to Somali traditions and developing suitable ways of conveying these ideas (plays, video cassettes, comic strips).
The conflict in southern Sudan grew more intense at the start of the year. In March the SPLA* launched a major military offensive between the Ugandan border and Juba, directed against the government army and its allies and against the Ugandan rebels in the WNBF* and the LRA.* Later, trapped south of Juba, the SPLA continued its march and conquered large areas in the Lakes and Bahr al-Ghazal provinces. At the same time, operating from the borders with Eritrea and Ethiopia, the NDA* opened up new fronts in the Blue Nile and Red Sea provinces. The military situation stabilized somewhat during the second half of the year, although sporadic fighting continued, especially in Bahr al-Ghazal and around Juba.

On the political level, two significant events occurred in 1997. In April the government signed a peace agreement with six factions of the armed opposition, including Riek Machar’s SSIA/M* and the SPLA/Bahr al-Ghazal of Commander Kerubino (an SPLA dissident); these factions had already signed a political charter with Khartoum the previous year.45 The agreement led to the setting up, in August, of a South Sudan Coordination Council headed by Riek Machar. The principal mandate given to this Council was to prepare, during a four-year transitional period, for a referendum on the political status of southern Sudan. It was also given extended authority in the military sphere with the establishment of a unified force, the SSDF.* Furthermore, in October – for the first time since 1994 –

*SPLA: Sudanese People’s Liberation Army
*WNBF: West Nile Bank Front
*LRA: Lord’s Resistance Army
*NDA: National Democratic Alliance
*SSIA/M: South Sudan Independence Army/Movement
*SSDF: South Sudan Defence Forces

45 See the ICRC’s 1996 Annual Report, p. 95.
the Sudanese government and the SPLA met for peace talks in Kenya, under the aegis of IGAD.* These talks ended without any tangible outcome, but the parties did commit themselves to meeting again in April 1998.

As in previous years, most of the inhabitants of southern Sudan were living in a highly critical situation owing to the conflict, the widespread insecurity, the collapse of services and infrastructure following years of war and, in some cases, drought. The fighting in the first six months left many wounded, some of whom died for lack of treatment due to the vastness of the region and the inability of local medical facilities to cope. In addition, thousands of people had to flee their homes, especially in the Bahr al-Ghazal province and the Yei region, or else, in the case of those who had already left their homes in previous years, had to move on again to try and find somewhere safer. In this situation, the humanitarian work carried out under the UN's Operation Lifeline Sudan continued throughout the year, but with delays or restrictions due to financing difficulties or the attitude of the parties and without access to entire regions where humanitarian needs had been reported.

The ICRC's activities remained affected throughout the year by the crisis that had arisen in November 1996 when Commander Kerubino and the Sudanese government had accused the ICRC of having transported by plane combatants and weapons for the SPLA (in reality, the organization was bringing five wounded Sudanese back to Wunrok, Bahr al-Ghazal, after they had been treated at its hospital in Lokichokio, Kenya). The ICRC, forced to suspend its operations in the field owing to the suspicions aroused against it, made it quite clear that these accusations were completely unfounded. In addition, it maintained that a total resumption of its operations could not be envisaged until two essential conditions had been met, namely, the total withdrawal of the accusations, on the one hand, and authorization to visit the five patients it had brought back to Wunroc and whose fate was still unknown, on the other. By the end of the year, the constant dialogue maintained with the Sudanese authorities gave grounds for some optimism regarding the resolution of this crisis.

The suspension of ICRC activities mainly affected the work done by expatriate staff in southern Sudan. In cooperation with the Sudanese Red Crescent or through its Sudanese employees, the ICRC was in fact able to continue with some of the programmes it had developed in southern Sudan in the previous few years. Moreover, other activities carried out in 1996 were successfully handed over to

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* IGAD: Intergovernmental Authority on Development, a sub-regional organization which has a general secretariat in Djibouti and is composed of the following countries: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda.
visit to Ugandan prisoners of war

humanitarian organizations working on the spot – or were on their way to being so by the end of the year.

In Khartoum in June the ICRC visited two Ugandan prisoners of war captured during the fighting that had taken place at the start of the year on the border between Uganda and Sudan. These two people, like the Sudanese prisoners of war captured by Uganda in similar circumstances, are protected by the Third Geneva Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war.50

Because it was impossible for ICRC expatriates to go to southern Sudan, visits to people held by the SPLA in several places of detention were continued by the organization’s Sudanese employees. The principal aim of these visits was to enable the detainees – whether already visited by the ICRC or recently captured – to exchange Red Cross messages with their families, mainly in the north of the country. In addition, owing to the serious humanitarian problems observed, on several occasions the ICRC provided food, medical supplies and other items to these detainees. At the same time the organization reminded the detaining authorities of their responsibility to ensure acceptable conditions of detention for prisoners.

Furthermore, the ICRC continued its efforts to maintain or restore contact between members of dispersed families in southern Sudan and between Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries and their relatives. This was done thanks to a network for exchanging Red Cross messages run by the Sudanese Red Crescent and local ICRC employees, with the cooperation of the National Societies in the host countries and, at times, with logistic support from the UN’s Operation Lifeline Sudan.

The ICRC’s health-related work concentrated first and foremost on the Lokichokio hospital in Kenya. During its 10 years of activity, the facility had been extended and improved on several occasions (from 40 beds at the time it was built, its capacity could now be stretched to over 500 beds in time of need) and a total of almost 12,000 war casualties and other patients had been admitted there. In 1997, as the ICRC was itself unable to carry out medical evacuations from southern Sudan, it arranged with Operation Lifeline Sudan for hundreds of people wounded in the fighting in that part of the country to be brought to the hospital and then taken home once they had recovered. The prosthetic/orthotic workshop set up in Lokichokio, for its part, continued its activities for Sudanese war amputees. Some of the primary health-care programmes launched in previous years in three areas of southern Sudan were taken over by other humanitarian organizations, while in other cases, under the supervision of its local employees, the ICRC continued to provide medical supplies to the health posts and dispensaries it had assisted previously. In cooperation with the Sudanese Red Crescent,

50 For an account of activities and approaches on the Ugandan side, see Uganda, pp. 109-112.
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- visited 2 Ugandan prisoners of war interned in Khartoum, provided them with essential supplies and gave them the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their families at home;
- visited some 1,700 people held by the SPLA in 4 places of detention, provided them with assistance (food, medical supplies and other items, as needed) and conveyed 4,839 Red Cross messages between them and their families;
- in cooperation with the Sudanese Red Crescent and the National Societies of the host countries, handled 107,291 Red Cross messages between members of dispersed families in Sudan and between Sudanese refugees outside the country and their relatives;
- supplied fishing tackle to Action Against Hunger, an organization that had taken over an ICRC programme in Malwalkon (Bahr al-Ghazal);
- admitted 2,215 patients and performed 4,877 operations at the Lokichokio hospital where it continued to train Kenyan medical personnel;

- continued its support for the Sudanese Ministry of Health hospital in Juba by regularly providing it with medical supplies and food, and by carrying out sanitation work there;
- assisted several government hospitals that admitted war casualties (Ed Damazin, Kassala and Omdurman) and surgical facilities in areas controlled by the SPLA (Yei, Maridi);
- evacuated around 50 Sudanese war casualties by plane from northern Uganda to the Lokichokio hospital;
- provided the health posts in the South Bor and Waat areas with medical supplies;
- organized a seminar on war surgery for Sudanese surgeons and government officials in Khartoum;
- supplied fishing tackle to Action Against Hunger, an organization that had taken over an ICRC programme in Malwalkon (Bahr al-Ghazal);
- admitted 2,215 patients and performed 4,877 operations at the Lokichokio hospital where it continued to train Kenyan medical personnel;

- strengthened the operational capacity of the Sudanese Red Crescent by providing various kinds of assistance, together with logistic and financial support for its programmes benefiting those affected by the conflict in southern Sudan, Khartoum and the east of the country;
- organized information sessions on humanitarian law for the Sudanese armed forces in Khartoum and for patients at the Lokichokio hospital;
- assisted the National Society in organizing a seminar in Khartoum for the Sudanese media on the issue of anti-personnel mines.

- fitted 180 new war amputees with artificial limbs and produced 476 prostheses and orthoses in the Lokichokio prosthetic/orthotic workshop;
the ICRC went on giving regular aid in the form of medical supplies and food to the Ministry of Health hospital in Juba, where a local contractor also carried out sanitation work. Lastly, with new military fronts opened in the east of the country, the ICRC, together with the National Society, distributed medical supplies to several hospitals admitting the wounded and to dispensaries set up in camps for displaced persons.

In addition to organizing various sessions to spread knowledge of humanitarian law among various audiences, in 1997 the ICRC took part in two special dissemination events. In June in Omdurman-Khartoum, in cooperation with the army medical service, the ICRC held a seminar on war surgery for Sudanese surgeons and government officials; then in Khartoum in August, it assisted the Sudanese Red Crescent in organizing a seminar for the country's media on the problem of anti-personnel mines.

The ICRC continued to support the Sudanese Red Crescent, focusing mainly on strengthening the National Society's operational capacity, in particular in the south of the country where five of its branches were active (Bentiu, Juba, Malakal, Raga and Wau), and on backing its work to promote humanitarian law. Various kinds of assistance were given to these branches to help them carry out their various programmes. Logistic and financial support was also provided for two branches in the east of the country, to enable them to cope with humanitarian needs arising from the opening of the new military fronts there.
In 1997 the tensions that had come to the fore again the previous year in several regions of Uganda persisted or even worsened. In the south-west (Bundibugyo, Kabarole and Kasese districts), the clashes that had taken place at the end of 1996 between the Ugandan army and the ADF* rebels degenerated into more violent fighting from June onwards. In the north (Gulu and Kitgum districts), the LRA continued its military activities throughout the year. In the north-west (West Nile region), on the other hand, the conflict between the Ugandan army and the WNBF rebels seemed to abate towards the end of June, except in Aringa county where guerrilla activities continued to be carried out by a dissident faction of the WNBF, the URNF II.*

The deterioration of the security situation in some parts of the country led to an increase in humanitarian needs. As in 1996, civilians, especially those living in the countryside who were terrorized by the acts of violence committed against them, were the main victims of the conflict. With the gradual return of calm to the Koboko area (West Nile) in 1997, most of the people who had been displaced the previous year were able to return home, whereas in the other conflict-ridden parts of the country the number of those displaced increased. In addition to these people, there were thousands of others who were afraid of spending the night in isolated places and gathered in villages or towns at nightfall, returning home the following morning. These population movements, attributable also in part to the government’s policy of assembling groups from the countryside in certain localities and commercial centres protected by the army, had unfavourable consequences: in particular, farmers found themselves virtually cut off from their fields and, therefore, their means of subsistence, while the places in which the displaced people assembled were generally not equipped (especially

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* ADF: Allied Democratic Forces
* URNF II: Ugandan National Rescue Front II
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- visited 1,897 people detained for security reasons or in connection with the violence in the country, in 37 places of detention under the responsibility of the civilian, police or military authorities;
- regularly visited 112 Sudanese prisoners of war held in Kampala;
- conveyed 1,231 Red Cross messages between detainees and their families, and between prisoners of war and their relatives in Sudan;
- facilitated family visits for minors detained in Kampala;
- distributed various kinds of assistance, depending on the needs observed and the degree of emergency, in the places of detention visited;
- carried out sanitation work, on the basis of prior evaluations, to improve hygiene conditions in 3 prisons and offered to assist the authorities in planning similar work in other prisons;
- helped the Uganda Red Cross Society run a network for exchanging Red Cross messages from detainees, members of families separated by the events and refugees in the country, by training and supervising qualified staff and by repairing motorbikes or supplying them to National Society volunteers engaged in this work;
- made representations to the parties concerned when acts of violence committed against civilians were brought to its attention;
- distributed over 1,500 tonnes of food to 50,000 people, 46 tonnes of seed and tools to 130,000 people and basic necessities to 240,000 people affected by the fighting;
- regularly provided medical supplies for 6 hospitals and, as necessary, for around 30 medical facilities admitting war casualties and/or treating people who had been displaced as a result of the violence;
- helped reopen 2 clinics treating displaced people who had returned home to Koboko;
- assessed the need for artificial limbs for war casualties;
- rehabilitated 19 springs and 7 boreholes to improve access to drinking water in Koboko and the surrounding area, and supported a programme run by the Uganda Red Cross to teach rules of health and hygiene to the local population;
- supported the Uganda Red Cross, in particular through greater cooperation in the areas of tracing and promotion of humanitarian law, and by increasingly involving the National Society's staff in designing and implementing its assistance programmes;
- in cooperation with the Uganda Red Cross, gave many presentations on Red Cross activities, in particular for the local and traditional authorities, with the aim of facilitating humanitarian work and improving access to victims;
- organized sessions and seminars to spread knowledge of humanitarian law among the armed forces and discussed with the military authorities ways of standardizing the teaching of humanitarian law to troops.
as regards hygiene and health) to cater for so many. By the end of the year, the number of people displaced as a result of the conflict came to over 325,000, mainly in the south-west (Bundibugyo, Kabarole and Kasese districts) and the north (Gulu and Kitgum districts). To this displaced population should be added 180,000 Sudanese refugees in the north of the country and 23,000 Rwandan, Congolese, Somali, Ethiopian and Kenyan refugees.

Furthermore, in 1997 the number of people detained in connection with the conflict also increased, in particular following the events at the start of the year in the West Nile area during which hundreds of WNBF fighters were captured or surrendered. A number of Sudanese were taken prisoner at the same time. Many URNF II and LRA fighters gave themselves up during the year and, considering that a large number of those who came from the LRA were actually people who had been kidnapped by this movement, the Ugandan authorities handed them over to World Vision, a humanitarian organization in charge of a programme to facilitate reintegration into civilian life. Other arrests were made in the context of the situation in the south-west and following the attacks carried out in Kampala itself.

Because of the increase in humanitarian needs, the ICRC decided to open a delegation in Kampala from 1 May - up to then, the work done in Uganda had been supervised by the regional delegation in Nairobi. Furthermore, during the year three offices were opened, in Kasese, Arua and Kitgum, in addition to the existing ones in Gulu and Koboko. At times some parts of the country were inaccessible to the ICRC because of the prevailing insecurity. The ICRC maintained a constant dialogue with the Ugandan authorities on this issue, but it was able to have little contact with the various rebel movements.

In 1997 the ICRC had ample access to places of detention, whether these were under the responsibility of the civilian or military authorities or the police. Some 1,800 people held in connection with the conflict were visited. During the year, the Ugandan army transferred most of the fighters it had captured or who had given themselves up to civilian prisons, which were ill prepared to deal with this influx of new detainees. The ICRC constantly reminded the Ugandan authorities of their responsibility to provide acceptable living conditions for detainees. Meanwhile, in response to certain emergencies, food and other supplies were distributed. The general state of health of the prison population was also monitored and, in some cases, the ICRC gave assistance designed to help the authorities fight the spread of contagious diseases. In addition, the ICRC facilitated contact between the Ugandan authorities and representatives of donor governments and aid organizations on issues relating to the improvement of conditions of detention. It also offered to assist the detaining authorities in planning work to upgrade the sanitary installations in several civilian prisons.

The Sudanese prisoners of war, protected by the Third Convention, were regularly visited by the ICRC, which provided them with assistance according to their
needs and gave them the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their families at home. Following these visits, confidential reports on the general conditions of detention, together with the ICRC’s recommendations, were submitted to the Ugandan government.

Another key concern of the ICRC’s was the protection of the civilian population. Whenever acts of violence committed against civilians were brought to its attention, the organization made ad hoc representations to the relevant parties. More generally, in cooperation with the Uganda Red Cross Society, the ICRC pursued its programmes to promote compliance with the rules of humanitarian law – and, by the same token, the respect to which civilians and people who are not or are no longer fighting are entitled – for various audiences, in particular the armed forces. A project aimed at systematically including humanitarian law as part of military training was discussed with the authorities concerned.

Displaced people in the conflict areas received various forms of assistance, depending on their situation. Where these people had, despite the circumstances, managed to keep their access to agricultural land, the ICRC provided them with seed and tools so that they could grow all or at least part of their own food again. Otherwise, especially in cases where newly displaced people had lost everything in fleeing to safety, food and basic necessities were distributed. The ICRC also supplied relief for displaced people who were able to return home in the Koboko region, to help them settle in. Close coordination was maintained with the other humanitarian organizations on the spot – in particular the WFP, which was working to feed people in the districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Bundibugyo – so as to achieve optimal coverage of the needs observed.

Besides its medical work in prisons, the ICRC provided medical supplies regularly or as needed to hospitals and other medical facilities that admitted war casualties or treated displaced people. In cooperation with the Uganda Red Cross, a programme to educate the local population about hygiene and the prevention of malaria was also initiated in the Koboko area. In addition, the ICRC carried out an assessment of the need for artificial limbs which concluded that an orthopaedic specialist should be sent to Uganda in 1998 in order to improve the services available for war amputees.

The Uganda Red Cross and the ICRC discussed a cooperation agreement, to be signed in 1998, dealing specifically with work to restore family links and promote knowledge of humanitarian law, two areas of activity for which the National Society had taken over responsibility in 1993. In addition, the ICRC continued its cooperation with the Uganda Red Cross in order to strengthen the latter’s emergency preparedness, taking particular care to involve the National Society’s staff more and more in designing and implementing programmes.

Lastly, the Kampala delegation provided logistic support for the ICRC’s operations in Rwanda and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
NAIROBI
Regional delegation
(Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania)

In 1997 the delegation in Nairobi continued to provide support for ICRC operations throughout the region. During the year specialists based in Nairobi, in addition to running a regional technical workshop, assisted the other delegations in many spheres: agricultural and veterinary work, nutrition, water supply and sanitation, restoration of family links, aerial logistics and operations, transportation, administration, assistance to staff, dissemination of humanitarian law among the armed forces and other bearers of weapons, relations with the media and promotion of the ICRC's work.

At the same time the delegation focused on the situation of refugees in Tanzania, political tension and violence in Kenya and, to a lesser extent, political developments in Djibouti. On 1 May responsibility for the ICRC's work in Uganda, previously borne by the Nairobi-based staff, was handed over to a new delegation set up in Kampala.

In Djibouti the year was marked by political tension stemming from power struggles over the succession to the president in office and, from September, by the resumption, albeit limited, of military activity by a dissident faction of the FRUD.* Arrests were made among the Afar opposition, while other opposition members were extradited from Ethiopia. The ICRC was able to visit these people, who were held in Gabode prison.

In Kenya, as the months went by, the prospect of presidential and legislative elections planned for the end of the year led to a heightening of tension between the government and the opposition. The latter sought the adoption of constitutional reforms, in particular to enable fair elections to be prepared and held and to allow for genuine power-sharing. Starting in May there were mass demonstrations, mainly in urban centres, which occasionally degenerated into confrontations between demonstrators and police. Dozens of people were killed and hundreds of others wounded. Arrests were made, but those concerned were usually released quickly. Furthermore, in mid-August the Mombasa area was hit by a wave of violence that targeted mainly civilians, especially those from the interior of the country. Almost 100 people were killed, dozens arrested, hundreds wounded and tens of thousands of others displaced. The opposition and the government later came to an agreement on introducing a set of constitutional reforms and the presidential and legislative elections were held on 29 and 30 December. As a result, the

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* FRUD: Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy
outgoing president was re-elected and his party gained a majority in the parliament. Added to the political disturbances were sporadic clashes between rival communities, often sparked off by disputes over cattle stealing, especially in the areas bordering on Ethiopia, Uganda and Sudan. These – often deadly – clashes left a large number of civilians in a highly precarious situation. Moreover, people living in certain parts of the country were severely affected by dire weather, in particular in the north and north-east, which were hit first by drought and then by major floods towards the end of the year.

The ICRC, in consultation with the Federation, continued to support the Kenya Red Cross Society, in particular with a view to increasing its capacity to spread knowledge of humanitarian law, provide emergency assistance and restore family links. Thanks to this support, the National Society was able to take effective action in the situations described above – giving first aid to people injured during demonstrations and evacuating those most seriously hit to suitable medical facilities, providing food and other supplies to victims of intercommunal violence or disastrous weather, or restoring contact between family members separated by the events in Mombasa. Meanwhile the ICRC kept up an intense dialogue with the authorities and the leaders of the main opposition parties with a view to encouraging respect for humanitarian rules and Red Cross work. It continued its efforts to increase knowledge of humanitarian law among various groups, in particular by holding numerous sessions for the armed forces and the security forces. In parallel, the ICRC and the military authorities agreed on a new approach to make the study of humanitarian law a standard part of the instruction received by all troops, and initial steps in this direction were taken during the year. The ICRC also maintained contact with the authorities to promote Kenya’s accession to the humanitarian law treaties, in particular the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions. Lastly, the organization took care to monitor developments following the arrests made in connection with the political tensions, and it entered into a dialogue on this matter with the authorities concerned.

The situation in Tanzania remained calm throughout the year except in Zanzibar where, since the 1995 elections, political tension had persisted owing to the opposition’s refusal to sit on various government bodies; at the end of the year, several opposition members were arrested. Despite this relative calm, the inhabitants of many parts of the country suffered the consequences of a severe drought and, with the help of specialized international organizations, the government therefore took measures to distribute food to vulnerable people. Moreover, because of the events taking place in neighbouring countries to the west, there were mass movements of refugees in Tanzania. The repatriation of some 500,000 Rwandan refugees who had settled in the Ngara region since 1994 – begun at the end of 1996 – was completed in January. Further south, in Kigoma province, some 75,000 people fleeing the events taking place in the former Zaire sought refuge in
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- in June and October respectively, visited 3 and 16 people detained in Djibouti for security reasons;
- provided technical and material assistance intended to improve living conditions in the Djibouti central prison;
- helped the Tanzanian authorities fight the spread of a cholera epidemic in 3 prisons in Dar es Salaam;
- supported the Tanzania Red Cross Society in its efforts to restore contact between Congolese refugees and their families in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and between Burundian refugees scattered among the various camps in Tanzania and their relatives;
- coordinated a programme to register unaccompanied children found among Burundian refugees, with the aim of reuniting them with their families (1,357 unaccompanied minors were registered and 12 family reunifications were organized in various camps);
- helped restore or maintain contact between the refugee groups in Djibouti and their families by means of a network for exchanging Red Cross messages run in cooperation with the National Societies of the host countries;
- purchased locally around 1,600 tonnes and dispatched over 7,000 tonnes of relief supplies for use in its operations in the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda;
- supported the Kenya Red Cross Society’s programmes in aid of vulnerable groups by providing 300 tonnes of food, blankets, kitchen sets and tarpaulins;
- in cooperation with the Kenyan National Society and the Federation, repaired infrastructure (dispensaries, schools, cattle dips) destroyed in the Rift valley, Kenya, during intercommunal clashes;
- provided regular medical assistance to the Kigoma regional hospital in Tanzania for treating 158 Burundian war casualties;
- transferred 13 war amputees from Djibouti to the Addis Ababa prosthetic/orthotic workshop (under the responsibility of the ICRC’s Special Fund for the Disabled)51 for the replacement of prostheses received in 1994;
- repaired a water-supply system destroyed during the intercommunal violence in Kenya’s Rift valley and equipped 3 health posts with hand pumps;
- continued its cooperation programmes with the region’s National Societies, concentrating (depending on the circumstances and to varying degrees) on fostering structural development, supporting activities to restore family links and/or promote humanitarian law and strengthening emergency preparedness;
- in Kenya, held dissemination sessions for the police and supported the armed forces programme to teach humanitarian law to troops, in particular by training instructors at the Staff College and the Cadet Officers’ Academy and by supplying teaching aids to military academies;
- organized several courses in humanitarian law for the staff and students of 3 universities in Kenya’s Rift valley;
- held an exhibition and a round table on anti-personnel mines for representatives of various humanitarian organizations in Kenya;
- held an exhibition on anti-personnel mines in cooperation with the Tanzanian National Society.

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51 See Special Fund for the Disabled, p. 370.
Tanzania. In September, on the basis of an agreement reached with the Tanzanian authorities and the authorities of the newly established Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNHCR began to repatriate these refugees; meanwhile several thousand made their own way home. In addition, the insecurity affecting Burundi led to an increase in the number of Burundian refugees in Kigoma province, who amounted to 300,000 by the end of the year. In September also the Tanzanian authorities launched a large-scale operation to assemble in the refugee camps all foreign nationals in an irregular situation who were dispersed in the Kigoma area; in this way, thousands of people were grouped in camps and several hundred expelled. Furthermore, Burundian war casualties crossed the border to receive treatment on Tanzanian soil. Against this backdrop, relations between Burundi and Tanzania remained tense throughout the year, especially in November, when several armed incidents occurred along the border between the two countries.

The ICRC adapted its set-up to the changing situation: its office in Ngara was closed after the departure of the Rwandan refugees, an office was opened in Kigoma and a permanent presence established in Dar es Salaam. The ICRC's activities in aid of Burundian and Congolese refugees concentrated on supporting the work of the Tanzania Red Cross Society in the areas of tracing and restoring family links. Special emphasis was placed, in cooperation with other humanitarian organizations (in particular UNHCR and UNICEF), on identifying and registering unaccompanied children found among the refugees, with the ultimate aim of reuniting them with their families. In addition, the ICRC assessed the medical care given to the Burundian war casualties who had arrived in Tanzania and provided regular assistance to the Kigoma regional hospital, which admitted most of these patients. The issue of a group of soldiers from the former Zairian armed forces who, together with their families, had sought refuge in Kigoma, was the subject of a dialogue with the Tanzanian authorities and UNHCR – in this connection, the ICRC made known its readiness to visit and assist the group, depending on the needs observed, should the Tanzanian authorities decide to intern the soldiers (within the meaning of international humanitarian law). A similar question arose at the end of the year with the presence in Kigoma of a group of Burundian fighters from the FDD,* arrested by the Tanzanian authorities. Furthermore, when cases of cholera were reported in several prisons in Dar es Salaam, the ICRC sent a sanitation specialist there and provided medicines and other supplies to help the relevant authorities and the Tanzania Red Cross stop the spread of an epidemic.

* FDD: Force for the Defence of Democracy (the armed branch of the CNDD, the National Council for the Defence of Democracy)
Far from the limelight, tens of thousands of people in Latin America are forced to flee their homes to escape the prevailing violence. ICRC delegates visit outlying villages to collect eyewitness accounts and make representations to the parties blamed for the events. In Colombia, together with the National Society, the ICRC set up mobile health brigades to distribute medicines, handed out food parcels to the most needy and arranged for families at risk to be taken to safer areas.
The Americas

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

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

Staff
ICRC expatriates: 1 78
National Societies: 1 7
Local employees: 2 220

Total expenditure:
Sfr 31,514,829

Expenditure breakdown:
Protection/tracing: 17,692,826
Relief: 1,764,807
Health activities: 2,083,131
Cooperation with National Societies: 2,116,428
Promotion/dissemination: 3,376,245
Operational support: 2,608,674
Overheads: 1,872,718

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1 Average figures calculated on an annual basis.
2 Under ICRC contract, as at December 1997.
In 1997 the ICRC’s work as a humanitarian neutral intermediary was the most prominent aspect of its presence in the Americas. In Colombia, where operational activities remained a high priority, the ICRC was called upon by the parties concerned to step in as a neutral intermediary when 70 members of the military were released by an armed opposition group after lengthy negotiations. In Peru too the organization acted as a neutral intermediary, assiduously fulfilling its humanitarian mandate during the hostage crisis.

In Colombia, the ICRC was highly concerned about the situation of civilians, who suffered from the effects of the internal conflict and were driven from their villages in large numbers. Working with the Colombian Red Cross, it saw to the welfare of people displaced by the violence. In order to respond better to the need for humanitarian assistance, it opened new offices and sub-delegations in affected regions throughout the country.

The ICRC continued to keep up contacts with all those involved in the conflict in Colombia. By the end of the year the organization’s operation there was not only its largest in the Americas, but also the one involving the broadest spectrum of activities under its mandate.

In Peru, the hostage crisis came to an end in April. During the events, the ICRC performed the role of neutral intermediary, strictly limiting its work to humanitarian questions. Throughout 1997 the organization awaited the Peruvian government’s authorization to resume visits to detainees held in prisons under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice. The visits had been suspended by the government in December 1996 owing to the hostage crisis. After a year of constant efforts, including a mission to Peru by its President, the ICRC was authorized in December by the Peruvian President to begin again visiting detainees convicted of “terrorism and treason”. As for the ICRC’s other activities in the country, the delegation maintained its presence in the Huallaga region and continued to provide assistance to victims of the conflict.

In Brazil the ICRC kept a close watch on the growing tensions between the security forces and certain sectors of the population. It continued its activities aimed at promoting international humanitarian law and in December proposed a two-year nationwide programme to train instructors within the military police.

The Buenos Aires regional delegation worked constantly to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and to promote the prohibition of anti-personnel landmines among the countries making up the southern half of the continent.

In addition to the countries already covered, the regional delegation in Guatemala City in 1997 took over responsibility for ICRC activities in Haiti, where the delegation became a mission, Guyana and Suriname.
In light of the situation in Chiapas, the ICRC supported the activities of the Mexican Red Cross Society, keeping a close eye on the consequences in humanitarian terms of events in the area.

As for cooperation with National Societies, the Guatemala City regional delegation held two major meetings: one for English-speaking countries and another for Spanish-speaking ones.

Moreover, through its Geneva-based legal advisory service, the ICRC closely monitored the establishment and functioning of national committees for the implementation of humanitarian law, with the help of a legal adviser based in Bogotá. The organization also followed the drafting of national legislation for the protection of the red cross emblem and the repression of violations of that body of law. In June 1997 the General Assembly of the OAS,* meeting in Lima, adopted a resolution at its 27th regular session inviting all member States to consider the information submitted by the ICRC on the implementation of humanitarian law. In addition, the Seventh Ibero-American Summit, in its final declaration, echoed the need to promote and respect both that law and universally recognized humanitarian principles.

* OAS: Organization of American States
In 1997, with the internal conflict intensifying, Colombia continued to be a top priority for operations in the Americas. Though Colombia was one of the countries where reference was most often made to humanitarian law, serious violations of the law persisted. Government forces, armed opposition groups and rural self-defence groups were the main parties to the conflict.

Despite the fact that an electoral initiative put forward by civilian groups in support of peace received the backing of some 10 million voters during the local elections on 26 October, the humanitarian outlook remained bleak. The civilian population was caught in the crossfire between those involved in the conflict, falling prey to threats and attacks by rural self-defence groups and members of the armed opposition alike. Tens of thousands were forced to leave their homes. In 1997 the ICRC, working with the Colombian Red Cross, dealt with 22,395 cases in which people had been displaced for reasons related to the conflict.

In order to respond to the need for humanitarian assistance, the ICRC opened new offices in the regions affected by the conflict, including Pasto, Cúcuta, Sincelejo and Valledupar, and increased the number of its staff in the field.

On 15 June the ICRC, acting as a neutral intermediary at the request of the government and the FARC,* assisted in the release of 60 government soldiers who had been captured by the armed opposition group in mid-1996 and of 10 marines who had been held since January 1997. This release took place after a long negotiation process in which the ICRC was invited by the government and the FARC to take part as a neutral intermediary, together with the National Reconciliation Commission.

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* FARC: Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces
The captives were transported to a pre-determined location, where they were examined by a joint ICRC/National Society medical team. The ICRC then handed them over to the military authorities.

The ICRC also acted as a neutral intermediary in numerous cases involving the taking of hostages. For example, in November, at the request of the parties concerned, it assisted in the release of two OAS officials and the coordinator of the human rights programme of the department of Antioquia who had been taken captive by the ELN* in connection with the municipal elections, and in the later freeing of two foreign engineers. In 1997 the ICRC facilitated the release of some 300 people, including mayors, candidates standing for election and ordinary civilians.

Hostage-taking grew to alarming proportions in Colombia in 1997: by the end of the year the ICRC delegation in Bogotá had registered nearly 500 cases. Under Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions, the taking of hostages constitutes a serious violation of international humanitarian law. In such circumstances, action taken by the ICRC can be based only on humanitarian considerations. For example, the delegation in Colombia contacted the captors, made possible an exchange of Red Cross messages between the hostages and their families, visited the hostages, furnished material assistance and, where necessary, provided logistic support for the hostages' release. The ICRC did not intervene in negotiations relating to the conditions for release, nor was it in any way involved in the payment of ransoms.

By opening new offices in various regions, the ICRC strengthened its presence throughout the country. Delegates were thus able to establish new contacts with the authorities, the guerrilla forces and the rural self-defence groups. On several occasions the ICRC was called upon to facilitate contacts between these parties in order to make it possible to discuss matters of humanitarian concern.

Delegates also established contact with CONVIVIR* groups - legally recognized civilian intelligence and security associations whose members are authorized to carry small firearms.

In July public opinion was shaken by news of a massacre in Mapiripán. While the slaughter of civilians was not new to the Colombian conflict, the increased frequency and scope of such incidents were indicative of a worsening security situation.

Indeed, mass killings racked the entire country in 1997: they were reported in the north, in the south (Huila), in the centre (Cundinamarca) and particularly in the northern part of Antioquia (Urabá) and the department of Meta.

* ELN: National Liberation Army
* CONVIVIR: Rural Security Community Cooperatives
  (Cooperativas Comunitarias de Vigilancia Rural)
the problem of displaced people

In the midst of this tangle of armed groups and clashes between different forces, the civilian population was often the target of threats and attacks. This forced many civilians to seek safety in other regions.

Following the events in Mapiripán, a new surge of people moved on in search of more secure areas. In July and August ICRC delegates carried out three missions to assist civilians in Mapiripán, chartering DC-3s on four occasions to evacuate a total of 150 people to Villavicencio, in Meta.

The displaced were scattered across the entire country. The ICRC assisted thousands, including a relatively small number who congregated in camps in Turbo, Pavarando and Boca del Atrato (in Urabá). The sheer size of the problem was a cause of concern for international organizations such as UNHCR and for donors such as ECHO,* with whom the ICRC maintained contacts late in the year with a view to carrying out an overall assessment of the situation and to coordinating assistance.

Throughout the year, various prisons in Colombia were the scene of violent rioting in protest against overcrowding and the inefficiency of the judicial system. The most serious incidents, involving killings, severe injury and hostage-taking, occurred in April, at the Valledupar district prison in the department of Cesar and at Popayán prison. In both cases, prisoners' representatives and the government requested the ICRC to take action. The delegation provided medical and material assistance to the hostages and conveyed Red Cross messages between them and their families. Together with the Colombian Red Cross, it also evacuated the wounded and the dead from the prisons.

In December riots broke out in prisons throughout Colombia after the Congress failed to adopt an amnesty and sentence-reduction bill. During these events one person died, at La Picota prison in Bogotá. The ICRC closely followed the situation and took action only in the most serious cases.

As in previous years, the delegation visited prisoners falling under its mandate in places of detention. ICRC health staff regularly went to the country's main prisons and kept the INPEC* informed of the health problems encountered. The ICRC provided medical assistance to the prisoners and material support for their families, covering the travel costs of those who visited their detained relatives.

At the end of December the ICRC began a study of the application of judicial guarantees with respect to detainees, handing out a questionnaire to some 100 people in captivity in seven places of detention. Under Article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions and Article 6 of Additional Protocol II, any person held in connection with an armed conflict must be afforded all the elementary judicial

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* ECHO: European Community Humanitarian Office
* INPEC: National Penitentiaries and Prisons Institute
guarantees. In 1997 the organization also gave a legal adviser the task of studying Colombian legislation in order to verify that the provisions of humanitarian law were incorporated therein.

In 1997 the ICRC maintained or established contact with all the parties to the conflict so as to remind them of their obligations under humanitarian law and urge them, through constructive dialogue, to observe Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol II. The organization also made written representations concerning alleged violations of humanitarian law.

Working with the Colombian Red Cross and the ICRC delegate for dissemination to the armed forces based in Bogotá, the delegation continued to hold courses and seminars on humanitarian law for the military, focusing on training high-ranking officers as instructors in this field. The protection of medical personnel in armed conflicts and the obligation to distinguish between civilians and combatants were especially emphasized.

Whenever possible, the ICRC held dissemination sessions for leaders and combatants of the armed opposition groups and members of the rural self-defence groups. It did the same for security detainees.

In 1997 the delegation did much to spread knowledge of humanitarian law in academic circles. Its programmes included a series of lectures on this body of law held for teachers and students, and an expert-level academic training course of 100 to 120 hours offered at universities in Bogotá, Barranquilla, Manizales, Popayán and Medellín.

In May 1997 a cooperation agreement was signed by the Colombian Red Cross, the ICRC, the University of the Valle in Cali and its Graduate Institute of Legal and Political Studies and International Relations.

The ICRC advised the competent authorities on the adoption of legislative measures for the implementation of humanitarian law, particularly its rules on the protection of the red cross emblem and displaced people, and on the repression of violations. The delegation also held a workshop on subjects such as the provisions made in Colombian legislation for the repression of war crimes and other violations of the law.

On 31 October, responding to an initiative taken by the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the ICRC invited Colombian ambassadors in Europe to its headquarters in Geneva for a one-day seminar on the Red Cross and humanitarian law.

In April a joint ICRC/Colombian Red Cross assistance programme was launched for victims of the internal violence who did not qualify for help from the government or non-governmental organizations. The programme included medical aid, distributions of food and other supplies, and support for displaced people as they settled in new areas. After a major population displacement took place in the Urabá region in March, the ICRC and the Colombian Red Cross conducted a joint survey in Mutatá, distributing food and other items to those displaced.
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- saw 2,141 security detainees, including 969 for the first time, in the course of 469 visits to 225 places of detention;
- during the visits, provided clothing, personal hygiene articles and recreational items for detainees;
- facilitated the release of 70 members of the military held by the FARC and 200 people held by the armed opposition or by rural self-defence groups;
- paid for 2,545 travel fares, allowing family members to visit their relatives in prison;
- paid for the return to their homes of 118 people after their release from captivity;
- handled over 1,300 Red Cross messages sent by or to detainees, displaced people and others who had lost contact with their families, including over 1,000 messages exchanged during the prison riots in April;
- documented 817 cases (concerning 1,847 people) involving allegations of violations of humanitarian law;
- made representations to the authorities or to armed groups concerning the cases of 850 people;
- paid for the transport to safer areas of 5,600 people;

- in the regions most affected by the conflict, distributed over 41,000 food parcels (containing rice, beans, sugar, coffee, chocolate and sugar cane), 12,500 hygiene kits and 11,700 mats;
- distributed cooking utensils to some 4,500 families;
- covered the cost of medical care for 82 people wounded as a result of the conflict and for 13 detainees;
- provided basic medical supplies and assistance to displaced persons and to hospitals;
- supported mobile health brigades by providing medical supplies, logistic backing and funding (in Urabá, in cooperation with the Colombian Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross, provided primary health care to some 6,850 people in 29 villages, and in Caquetá, provided medical care for 5,350 people in 8 villages along the Caguán river);

- worked closely with the Colombian Red Cross to spread knowledge of humanitarian law (for instance by holding workshops for military and police academies and for security agencies), to conduct health activities (through the mobile health brigades) and to provide relief to displaced people (by distributing food and other supplies);

- together with the Colombian Red Cross and the ICRC delegate for dissemination to the armed forces, regularly held courses and seminars on humanitarian law for the military;
- in its efforts to spread knowledge of humanitarian law among the armed forces, concentrated on the training of instructors in this field;
- held some 950 dissemination sessions and events, reaching over 47,000 people, including members of the military, the armed opposition, rural self-defence groups, government officials and civilians.
In 1997 a special effort was made to strengthen the National Society’s operational capacity, especially in the fields of administration, staff training, telecommunications and emergency preparedness.

Together with the Colombian Red Cross, the ICRC continued to support mobile health brigades which provided primary health care, including medical and dental consultations and vaccinations, for civilians in the Urabá region of northern Colombia. Beginning in March, more mobile teams were added, this time in Caquetá department, in the south. They worked along the Caguán river, travelling mainly by boat.

From 20 to 24 May the ICRC President carried out a mission to Colombia, during which he officially submitted to the President of the Republic a summary report on the organization’s activities since it began working in the country in 1969. The document included sections on the ICRC’s mandate and contained recommendations aimed at ensuring that the authorities fulfilled their obligations under international humanitarian law.

During his visit the ICRC President held talks with other high-ranking members of the government. They centred on the humanitarian situation in Colombia, the implementation of humanitarian law, ICRC approaches to international organizations such as the OAS and the Non-Aligned Movement requesting them to adopt resolutions devoted to this law, and international conferences on the prohibition of anti-personnel landmines.

The ICRC President also held a meeting with the members of the National Reconciliation Commission and was invited to speak at the Human Rights Institute of Javeriana University in Bogotá.
In the first few months of 1997, international attention focused on Peru as the entire world waited for the outcome of the hostage crisis at the Japanese ambassador’s residence in Lima. On 22 April armed forces commandos stormed the building, bringing to an end an ordeal that had begun when the MRTA* took control of the residence in December 1996.

The ICRC played the role of neutral intermediary throughout the events. As a member of the Guarantors Commission that was established to try to defuse the crisis, it exclusively addressed humanitarian issues. The Lima delegation provided material and medical assistance to the hostages on a daily basis and conveyed Red Cross messages between them and their families.

From the beginning of the crisis the ICRC secured the release of some 400 hostages, many of whom were set free for medical reasons. Until 19 April 1997 it monitored the health status of those who remained captive, providing medicines and, together with the Ministry of Health, bringing the equipment necessary for medical examinations into the building.

Every day the delegation provided food and other supplies, in accordance with its evaluations of the hostages’ vital needs. From the outset of the siege to 22 April, delegates twice a week carried Red Cross messages back and forth between the hostages and their families. In all, 9,580 messages were exchanged.

When the Guarantors Commission was established on 15 January, the ICRC took part as a neutral intermediary, in accordance with its principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. Although it did not join in the negotiations itself, it facilitated a direct dialogue between the parties and made available an office across from the Japanese ambassador’s residence, which served as a meeting place for the various government and MRTA representatives and for the members of the

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* MRTA: Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement
the Commission. The organization also handled logistic matters to enable the MRTA to attend these meetings.

The authorities has discontinued ICRC visits to prisons under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice on 18 December 1996, in response to the MRTA's occupation of the Japanese ambassador's residence. The ICRC hoped to resume these visits shortly after the crisis was brought to an end, but it was not authorized to do so. After approaches were made at the highest level in August the ICRC President went to Peru to discuss the matter with head of State and other government representatives, the Peruvian President announced that the ICRC would be allowed to visit detainees sentenced for "terrorism and treason" as from 8 December.

On 11 December a team of ICRC delegates, including a doctor, conducted a visit to Santa Mónica de Chorrillos women's prison in Lima, which took place in conformity with the organization's customary criteria. The delegation drew up a new programme of visits to places of detention for 1998, with a view to fulfilling the ICRC's humanitarian obligations.

In 1997 there were some 4,000 prisoners who came within the ICRC's purview in the country.

The situation of civilians in the emergency areas continued to be a subject of concern for the ICRC. In order to meet the need for humanitarian assistance in the department of San Martín, the organization's office in Tocache was made into a sub-delegation. The ICRC relied on dialogue as a means of developing good relations with the military authorities and it noted an improvement in the treatment of detainees.

The presence of ICRC delegates in the field made it possible to collect information on violations of the basic standards of international humanitarian law. This information was then confidentially submitted to the appropriate authorities with the aim of halting such practices.

The ICRC continued to provide emergency assistance for civilians affected by the internal conflict, especially in the upper Huallaga valley and the jungle region of Junín department. Beneficiaries included civilians whose property or homes had been destroyed, displaced people and recuperados (people who had previously lived in areas controlled by the armed opposition), families whose breadwinners were incarcerated for more than three months and newly released detainees. The assistance consisted of food parcels, blankets, cooking utensils and clothing.

In late August and September there was a new rash of violence in the Huallaga region, with clashes breaking out between government troops and organized armed groups. Some 1,500 civilians fled their villages in search of safer areas. The ICRC office in Tingo María lent emergency assistance, providing food, clothing, blankets and cooking utensils to the displaced, who later returned to their homes.

The delegation covered the cost of medical treatment and hospitalization for people who were wounded as a result of the internal violence and continued to
provide medical supplies to hospitals admitting such patients. In July and August the delegation also assisted the limb-fitting centre at the National Rehabilitation Institute in Callao by equipping a workshop for the production of polypropylene prostheses and by making available a prosthetist-orthotist to train local staff.

The ICRC maintained contacts with a wide range of target groups in order to explain its specific mandate, methods of work and principles. The delegation continued holding talks on the basic standards of humanitarian law for such varied audiences as the armed forces, the police, students, medical staff and civilians. Most of these talks were given in the emergency areas. In Lima, presentations

**IN 1997 THE ICRC:**

- made repeated representations to the government seeking authorization to resume visits to prisoners in permanent places of detention under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice;
- continued to visit detainees in temporary places of detention under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior, paying 661 visits to 104 temporary places of detention and seeing 539 detainees, including 486 for the first time;
- paid for 24,657 travel fares, allowing 13,816 people to visit their detained relatives up to 8 times during the year;

- located 9 people being sought by their relatives;
- handled 8,171 Red Cross messages (including those exchanged during the hostage crisis);
- distributed food, clothing, blankets and cooking utensils to 5,800 civilians who were displaced owing to the internal violence;
- provided medical supplies and medicines to hospitals, which admitted 63 detainees, and cared for 233 others on an out-patient basis;
- covered the cost of medical care and hospitalization for 170 people who had been wounded in the conflict and were being treated in hospitals run by the Ministry of Health;
- evacuated 18 people requiring special treatment to health facilities in major towns;
- supported the renovation of the headquarters of the Peruvian Red Cross Piura branch and, with the Spanish Red Cross, helped refurbish the national headquarters in Lima;
- held 76 dissemination sessions on the basic standards of international humanitarian law, ICRC activities and the Red Cross principles, reaching 6,642 people, including members of the military, the police, students, medical staff and civilians.
took place at the Peruvian Military Academy, the National Police Academy and the National Criminology and Penitentiary Centre.

Thanks to an ICRC initiative, in August a regular course on humanitarian law was given for the first time at the faculty of law of the University of Lima.

In 1997 certificates were awarded to 90 volunteer relief workers from Peruvian Red Cross branches in Arequipa, Lima and Piura who had received training funded by the ICRC and dispensed by instructors from the Colombian Red Cross.

During his visit to Peru, the ICRC President held a meeting with the President of the Peruvian Red Cross. Their discussions centred on the status of the National Society, future cooperation and other matters of mutual interest.

BRASILIA
Regional delegation
(Brazil, Ecuador and Venezuela)

The delegation continued to urge the region’s governments to accede to the humanitarian law treaties, including Protocol IV (on blinding laser weapons) and amended Protocol II (on mines, booby-traps and other devices) to the 1980 UN Convention prohibiting or restricting the use of certain conventional weapons. In particular, it encouraged the government of Ecuador to recognize the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission set up under Article 90 of Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions and to establish an interministerial committee for the implementation of international humanitarian law, and it called upon the Venezuelan government to accede to the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions and to adopt legislation on the protection of the emblem. In December the governments of all three countries signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction, also known as the Ottawa treaty.

In Brazil the delegation held courses on humanitarian law throughout the year for legal advisers from the Army School of Administration, naval instructors and officers of the military police (the main force for ensuring law and order and security in the country, with some 600,000 members). In July, when the military police launched a strike that spread to 15 of the country’s 27 states, the army was put on alert. An ICRC delegate travelled to Brazil in December to submit a major dissemination project to the Ministries of Justice and Foreign Relations. This nationwide initiative, drawn up in consultation with the military police of various states, called for some 300 military police instructors to receive training in humanitarian law and human rights over a period of two years.
contacts with the new authorities in Ecuador

After the President of Ecuador was removed from office in February, the regional delegate established contact with the new authorities – and with the Minister of the Interior in particular – so as to coordinate efforts to hold a course on humanitarian law and human rights for high-ranking police officers. The course took place in November. In accordance with the existing ICRC/Ecuadorean Red Cross cooperation agreement, the delegation supported the National Society’s activities to spread knowledge of humanitarian law to the armed forces and held seminars for its dissemination instructors.

On various occasions the regional delegate travelled to Venezuela to discuss the ICRC’s offer of services and the possibility of ICRC visits to detainees held there in connection with the conflict in Colombia. Despite its representations, the ICRC did not obtain access to these detainees, nor was it able to work in the border region. In July the organization began talks with the Venezuelan Red Cross aimed at developing a paramedic cooperation programme in the border area.

On 8 and 9 November the Seventh Ibero-American Summit was held on Margarita Island, Venezuela. The meeting’s main themes were ethics and democracy. The final declaration mentioned the need to promote and respect international humanitarian law and universally recognized humanitarian principles.

the Ibero-American Summit

IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- worked with the Ecuadorean Red Cross to hold seminars on humanitarian law for the armed forces, members of the diplomatic corps and government officials;
- in Brazil, continued presenting the Victims of War travelling photo exhibition;
- in Brazil, organized courses on humanitarian law for police and navy officers and instructors, held a course for legal advisers from the Army School of Administration and paid for a military officer to attend a Canadian armed forces course held in Ottawa in May;
- took part, as the only civilian institution, in joint military manoeuvres carried out in October by the armed forces of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay;
- in December, gave a course on humanitarian law at the faculty of communication sciences of the University of Sao Paulo.

- together with the Venezuelan Red Cross, conducted seminars on the protection of the emblem for National Society branches;
- attended the meeting of the Inter-American Regional Committee of the Red Cross held in Quito in May;
Throughout the year the ICRC continued to support the work of the interministerial committees for the implementation of humanitarian law in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.

The campaign for the prohibition of anti-personnel landmines was a centrepiece of the delegation's work to promote humanitarian law in 1997 and enjoyed widespread coverage in the written press and other media. Radio and television stations devoted numerous programmes to the subject, each specifically relating to the country concerned.

In Argentina the delegation helped conduct courses on humanitarian law given at the faculty of law of the University of Buenos Aires. These courses addressed subjects such as anti-personnel landmines, peace-keeping operations, environmental protection in wartime and international criminal tribunals. The ICRC continued to give courses on humanitarian law to the armed forces, both in the capital and in the provinces.

In June the delegation took part, together with the ICRC delegate for dissemination to the armed forces in South America, in joint manoeuvres carried out in Uruguay by the Argentine and Uruguayan armies. ICRC delegates demonstrated how the organization works during armed conflicts to assist in the exchange of prisoners and mortal remains.

On 13 March the ICRC and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bolivia signed an agreement granting the organization access to all security detainees in prisons and police detention centres. ICRC visits to detainees in the country had previously been carried out on an ad hoc basis, outside of any official framework. In January, when the regional delegate visited three places of detention in La Paz and its environs, some members of the Peruvian armed opposition group MRTA were among the detainees. With the agreement signed, the ICRC carried out a full series of visits to security detainees in La Paz in July.

In April, after unrest broke out in the Chaparé region of Cochabamba department (one of the main coca-producing regions of Bolivia), the ICRC and the Bolivian Red Cross assessed the situation in the area. Delegates established contact with representatives of the groups concerned, including peasants and their unions, the local authorities, representatives of the government human rights commission and military police chiefs. Following this survey, the ICRC decided to focus on the promotion of humanitarian law among the security forces.
In 1997 courses on the law of war were incorporated into the training programmes of Bolivian military academies. The ICRC, working closely with army officers responsible for human rights and humanitarian law questions, was entrusted with developing the academic aspects of the courses.

From 23 to 28 November the regional delegate in Buenos Aires carried out a mission to Bolivia in order to meet the new government authorities and high-ranking military leaders. During their talks they addressed topics such as ICRC activities, dissemination to the armed forces and police, the work of the national committee for the implementation of humanitarian law, cooperation with the National Society and visits to detainees.

In February ICRC delegates visited two places of detention in Chile where detainees had declared a hunger strike. From 28 July to 8 August a team of ICRC delegates, including a doctor, carried out a complete series of visits to security detainees for the first time since 1995, checking on their conditions of detention.

As part of its efforts to promote humanitarian law, at the end of October the ICRC held talks with the Chilean authorities on the question of anti-personnel landmines. The regional delegation continued to hold dissemination sessions for the armed forces.

The ICRC provided support for an international seminar on humanitarian law and tracing activities held in April by the Chilean Red Cross for all the National Societies of South America.
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- visited 39 security detainees in 4 places of detention in Bolivia, in accordance with an agreement signed in March;
- in Chile, conducted a full series of visits for the first time since 1995, seeing 116 security detainees in 12 detention centres;
- in June took part in three days of joint manoeuvres held in Uruguay by the armed forces of Argentina and Uruguay, in which some 900 troops were trained for peacekeeping operations;
- gave courses in Argentina for armed forces contingents assigned to UN peacekeeping operations;
- concluded a cooperation agreement with the Argentine Red Cross covering dissemination, the restoration of family links and communication;
- provided training in humanitarian law to members of the army, air force and navy of the countries covered by the delegation, participated in Argentina in battalion-level military exercises, and gave courses at the Argentine Military Academy and the INDAE (the National Institute of Air and Space Law);
- held lectures on humanitarian law at various universities, including the faculty of law of the University of Buenos Aires, Belgrano University in Buenos Aires, law faculties in Córdoba and Rosario and the Institute of International Studies of the University of Chile;
- signed an agreement with the Diplomatic Academy of Bolivia providing for the teaching of humanitarian law as part of its curriculum;
- updated brochures on humanitarian law, which were distributed in the region covered by the delegation and were also sent to various other ICRC delegations in the Americas (Brasilia, Guatemala City and Washington);
- gave talks in academic circles in Chile, and in August took part as a member of the jury in a competition on humanitarian law at the Catholic University of Chile;
- in April, trained instructors at Chile's Military Academy, and in June, working with the Academy, held a seminar for teachers, ministerial representatives and members of the national committee for the implementation of humanitarian law;
- in March gave a course and in October held a seminar on humanitarian law for military officers in Paraguay;
- in August, at the Asunción book fair, held presentations on humanitarian law and anti-personnel landmines;
- gave a lecture on humanitarian law for students of public international law at the Catholic University in Asunción.
GUATEMALA CITY
Regional delegation
(Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic,
El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti,
Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama,
Suriname and other countries in the Caribbean)

The delegation continued to promote adherence to international humanitarian law and its treaties, urging the countries that had not already done so to accede to the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions, to recognize the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission and to become party to the 1980 UN Convention prohibiting or restricting the use of certain conventional weapons and its Additional Protocol IV. With the support of the ICRC’s Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law, the delegation conducted missions to Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Jamaica and Panama to follow the work of national committees for the implementation of humanitarian law, and to support efforts to enact legislation protecting the emblem and to ban anti-personnel landmines. All of the region’s States voted in favour of the resolutions adopted during the OAS General Assembly on respect for humanitarian law, the question of landmines and mine clearance.

With the active support of the delegate for dissemination to the armed and security forces, the ICRC also continued its work to spread knowledge of humanitarian law among the police and military forces.

In February and March respectively, the organization signed five-year cooperation agreements with the Costa Rica Red Cross and the Cuban Red Cross, dealing in particular with dissemination activities and communication. In May and July similar agreements were concluded with the Red Cross Society of Panama and the Salvadorean Red Cross Society.

At the regional level, in August the Guatemala City delegation and the Port-au-Prince mission, working in cooperation with the Dominica Red Cross Society, held the third annual meeting of English-speaking National Societies of the region in Roseau, Dominica. Representatives from the National Societies of the CARICOM* States, and also of Guyana, Haiti and Suriname took part in the event, which mainly addressed themes related to dissemination.

* CARICOM: Caribbean Community
In June a similar meeting was held in Guatemala for the National Societies of the Spanish-speaking countries of the region.

International forces remained stationed in Haiti throughout the year. At the end of November the UNTMIH* (which had replaced the UNSMIH* in August) was itself succeeded by the MIPONUH.*

The delegation in Haiti concentrated on its detention-related work, conducting visits, providing medical assistance and carrying out sanitation work in prisons. Delegates saw detainees on a regular basis throughout the year, making oral and written representations on their behalf to the APENA (the national prison service) and closely following individual cases.

At the National Penitentiary in Haiti, the ICRC continued with its programme to support and train medical personnel, and in March began a general disinfection programme. The sanitation delegate kept in close contact with APENA staff and visited various prisons in the provinces during the first three months of the year, assessing the sanitation conditions and the running of dispensaries.

A health delegate acted as a liaison between the APENA and various non-governmental organizations, thus making it possible to improve the monitoring of the medical and health situation in places of detention.

Working closely with the technical services of the APENA, the ICRC carried out repairs to the water-supply systems in various places of detention. It also set up dispensaries, conducted training courses for nurses and built latrines and showers.

At the end of June an ICRC sanitation engineer carried out a mission to assess the sanitation conditions and water supply in prisons throughout Haiti.

The ICRC regularly held meetings with the chief medical officer of the APENA, with a view to exchanging information on the main health problems in detention centres.

In early September ICRC delegates met the head of the Haitian police to discuss the problem of overcrowding in prisons and the role of the APENA, which had been placed under the authority of the national police in June. The ICRC was concerned about the lack of means made available to the APENA, which it feared could jeopardize the gains made so far in improving detention conditions.

At the beginning of the year the ICRC and the Haitian National Red Cross Society signed a cooperation agreement for 1997 covering dissemination activities. The ICRC also assisted the National Society in its fund-raising campaign. On 8 May, World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, the ICRC and the National Society organized an exhibition on Red Cross activities in Haiti, and in July train-
visits to detainees in Mexico

At the beginning of 1997, with the dialogue between the Mexican government and the EZLN* suspended since September 1996, the ICRC maintained its presence in Mexico City. In January the organization visited the one remaining person who had been in detention since 1995 in connection with the EZLN uprising. Fifteen others had been released at the end of 1996 and in the first few weeks of 1997.

In July, after the ICRC had approached the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Interior and Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the organization that it was authorized to visit detainees who were allegedly linked to an armed group calling itself the EPR.*

During the year ICRC delegates visited security detainees in places of detention throughout Mexico. On 18 December the ICRC submitted a confidential summary report to the authorities on these visits.

In March, April and June the delegation, in close cooperation with the Mexican Red Cross, carried out surveys in Chiapas, which had been the scene of unrest. During the last two surveys, the ICRC was able to review the operation of two medical programmes run by the National Society in the southern part of the state.

In December the ICRC kept a close watch on the situation in Chiapas after 45 peasants, including a number of women and children, were massacred in Acteal. It stayed in touch with the Mexican Red Cross, offering to provide support for the National Society’s activities in the region.

In Guatemala, the last security detainee falling under the ICRC’s mandate was released in February, in accordance with the terms of the national reconciliation law.

In March a demobilization process for members of the URNG* began, in accordance with the peace agreement signed in late December 1996 by the Guatemalan government and the four components of the opposition organization. The ICRC, working closely with the Spanish Red Cross, supported assistance operations for nearly 3,000 people grouped in eight demobilization camps.

After holding talks with the government and the URNG, the ICRC began a programme to help demobilized combatants to re-establish contact with their families.

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* EZLN: Zapatista National Liberation Army
* EPR: Popular Revolutionary Army
* URNG: Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity
The delegation kept up contacts with the various military academies in Guatemala, holding numerous working sessions with instructors in humanitarian law. It provided support for and took part in courses held for the army with the aim of explaining the ICRC's role and activities. It also organized courses for students and teachers at Guatemalan universities in the capital and in the departments, and continued to promote the main standards of humanitarian law among the police forces.

An ICRC project aimed at promoting knowledge of humanitarian law among the Maya and Ladino populations of Guatemala entered its second phase in 1997. Workshops and talks were held, and radio programmes, theatrical performances, videotapes, dances and other cultural events were employed as part of the dissemination effort.

In October the Guatemalan parliament adopted an act on the protection of the emblem and another on anti-personnel landmines after approaches were made by the ICRC.

From 27 May to 18 August an ICRC delegate carried out a survey in the northern and central parts of Nicaragua, where seven years after the end of the war a number of problems persisted. Despite the disarming of the EPS* and the Contra rebels, various armed groups remained active in these areas, some with Contra or Sandinista leanings, others established as self-defence forces, and still others consisting of criminal elements. In addition to stressing the need for protection and assistance, the survey also looked at the possibilities for dissemination activities among rebel groups and for cooperation with the Nicaraguan Red Cross.

The ICRC found that the main victim of the violence was still the civilian population, that the promotion of humanitarian law would only be possible for those armed groups which were organized, and that the operational capacity of the Nicaraguan Red Cross needed strengthening.

In September the delegation established contact with the FUAC,* reaching an agreement with the group to carry out dissemination sessions for its members.

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* EPS: Sandinista Popular Army
* FUAC: Andrés Castro United Front
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- in Panama, conducted 2 visits to 1 place of detention, where delegates saw 7 detainees, including 1 for the first time;
- in Haiti, visited 32 people held in connection with the events of October 1994 or for security reasons;
- in Mexico, visited 135 security detainees, including 134 for the first time, at 23 places of detention;
- in Grenada, visited 17 prisoners;
- continued to support the medical programme of the Mexican Red Cross Society in Chiapas, which mainly benefited indigenous communities by providing consultations, treatment, vaccinations and obstetric services and by evacuating patients to medical facilities;
- signed cooperation agreements with the National Societies of Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador and Panama;
- helped the dissemination department of the Nicaraguan Red Cross prepare talks for National Society branches throughout the country;
- helped fund the monthly review *Humanidad* in Nicaragua;
- in February, presented the fundamental Red Cross principles at a Nicaraguan Red Cross youth camp;
- in February, held various working meetings with the Mexican Red Cross and the National Human Rights Commission in order to develop a programme on humanitarian law for their representatives;
- gave courses and held seminars on humanitarian law at San Carlos University and Rafael Landivar University in Guatemala, organized talks at the law faculties of 4 universities in Cuba (initiating a seminar at the University of Havana and helping to ensure that humanitarian law was included in the academic programmes of law faculties at universities in Havana, Santiago, Camagüey and Villa Clara), and signed a cooperation agreement with the University of Panama;
- held training seminars on humanitarian law for the Diplomatic Academy in Haiti;
- took an initiative under which the University of the West Indies in Jamaica included humanitarian law in its curriculum;
- organized and planned, with the support of the respective governments, dissemination programmes for the police and security forces at police and officers' academies in Costa Rica, Guatemala and Panama;
- in cooperation with the Nicaraguan Red Cross, in October held a first national seminar on the implementation of humanitarian law in Managua for some 50 representatives of the respective ministries, the armed forces, the parliament and various universities;
- held a seminar in July covering introductory courses on humanitarian law for the armed forces and the police of Guatemala, with the participation of armed forces instructors from the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, representatives of the police forces of Costa Rica and Panama, and the director of the International Humanitarian Law Study Centre in Havana;
- in Mexico, in cooperation with the country's Red Cross and at the request of the National Human Rights Commission, held dissemination sessions to promote humanitarian law among the armed forces.
WASHINGTON
Regional delegation
(Canada, United States)

The Washington delegation maintained contact with the United States government authorities with a view to encouraging them to ratify the 1977 Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions and to expand the applicability of the War Crimes Act, which had been adopted by Congress in 1996 and was amended in November 1997.

The delegation contacted military academies in the United States and proposed that their training programmes include such subjects as the role of the ICRC, respect for the standards of humanitarian law and humanitarian operations in relation to military intervention.

The ICRC President carried out a mission to the United States from 5 to 11 April. At UN headquarters in New York he held meetings with various people, including members of the Secretariat and the Security Council. He also gave several press conferences and met the Chairman of the International Commission for Missing Persons in the former Yugoslavia.

In Washington, the ICRC President met with United States government leaders, notably the Secretary of State and White House security advisers. He also held a meeting with a representative of the Defense Department, who acknowledged the specific role of the ICRC. The President appealed to all those concerned to ensure that peace-keeping operations allowed humanitarian organizations to conduct their activities unhindered. The United States authorities recognized the ICRC’s difficult and often dangerous work of protecting and assisting conflict victims throughout the world. The ICRC President also visited the American Red Cross and held a meeting with its President on the need for cooperation with National Societies.

The delegation kept up a constant dialogue with international organizations such as the OAS and the World Bank, which have their headquarters in Washington. In June, delegates based in Washington, together with others from ICRC headquarters and from the ICRC Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law, attended the OAS General Assembly in Lima, Peru. During this session, a resolution was adopted on the implementation of humanitarian law.

In January the ICRC and the OAS held a joint seminar in Washington on humanitarian law for diplomats accredited to the organization.

Throughout the year ICRC delegates helped prepare seminars and talks for military academies, universities and international fora, addressing such topics as the humanitarian situation in various regions, the role of police forces, humanitar-
ian emergencies, the coordination of humanitarian work and the problem of anti-personnel landmines.

As for cooperation with National Societies, in March the President of the American Red Cross visited ICRC headquarters in Geneva, and in June a member of the Committee, the ICRC’s governing body, took part in a seminar held in Ottawa by the Canadian Red Cross and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs on humanitarian law for diplomats accredited to the Canadian government.

An ICRC doctor also assisted the American Red Cross during a press conference on the subject of anti-personnel landmines.

In December the ICRC President went to Ottawa to witness the signature of the Ottawa treaty for the prohibition of anti-personnel landmines.
Displaced people can, if they receive the necessary support, begin to fend for themselves again. In eastern Sri Lanka over 1,000 families were given seed kits and hoes. Overall, the ICRC distributed 6,270 tonnes of seed and farming tools worth 7.4 million Swiss francs in 1997.
Indian sub-continent and Myanmar

ICRC delegations:
Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

ICRC regional delegation:
New Delhi

South-East Asia and the Far East

ICRC delegation:
Cambodia

ICRC regional delegations:
Bangkok, Jakarta, Manila

Staff
ICRC expatriates: 1 196
National Societies: 1 48
Local employees: 2 1,604

Total expenditure:
Sfr 109,802,192

Expenditure breakdown: Sfr
Protection/tracing: 27,161,002
Relief: 39,365,956
Health activities: 21,828,341
Cooperation with National Societies: 3,970,787
Promotion/dissemination: 3,880,192
Operational support: 7,236,906
Overheads: 6,359,008

1 Average figures calculated on an annual basis.
2 Under ICRC contract, as at December 1997.
Years of spectacular economic growth in East Asia came to an abrupt halt in 1997, one result being renewed potential for political instability as dislocation caused by the downturn unleashed a tide of uncertainty, debt and dashed hopes. While there was some prospect that the resulting squeeze on government spending might help dampen a disquieting arms race in the area, concern continued about a number of region-wide tensions. Ongoing attempts to settle existing conflicts, particularly in South Asia, continued to be frustrated and a failure to comply with international humanitarian law once again caused suffering as appalling as it was unnecessary.

As in previous years, Afghanistan was the scene of the ICRC's largest operation and the plight of Afghan civilians one of the organization's greatest challenges. The residents of Kabul struggled through yet another year of increasing hardship while the war spread north to Mazar-i-Sharif and west to Herat. As so often in the past, people were driven from their homes and out into a harsh, barren countryside. ICRC delegates endeavoured to ease their distress, striving to ensure adequate medical care for as wide a range as possible of the population, providing the relief supplies needed to keep them going and working to restore conditions in which they could recover a degree of self-sufficiency. As usual, the ICRC played a leading role in rehabilitating people disabled by the conflict in the mine-infested country and used its network of Red Cross messages to keep a growing number of families in touch with relatives from whom the fighting had separated them. Accepted as a neutral intermediary throughout Afghanistan, the ICRC once again visited large numbers of detainees and did what it could to ensure that their conditions and treatment met international standards.

The north and east of Sri Lanka were yet again the setting for violent clashes as the war dragged on through another year, with government forces engaged in a dogged struggle to open a secure land route to the Jaffna peninsula. Delegates worked hard to meet the needs of deprived civilians in areas in which armed tension coupled with drought had rendered normal life impossible. Medical care loomed large in their efforts, as did water and sanitation work. The ICRC also continued its detainee-welfare activities and promoted respect for humanitarian law.

In August the ICRC opened its first regional training unit, for Asia and the Pacific, and held its first introductory training course outside Switzerland (in Rajasthan, India) for staff from the region.

Delegates based in New Delhi continued visiting persons held in connection with the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The regional delegation also carried on its programme to promote knowledge of and compliance with humanitarian law among the region's security forces.
Strains in the relationship between Cambodia’s two ruling parties exploded into open conflict in July and there was fighting in the streets of Phnom Penh. Delegates came to the aid of the victims as the country veered perilously close to civil war. Throughout the year 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 the many millions of mines littering Cambodian soil.

The regional delegation in Bangkok continued a wide range of activities, in particular its programme to spread knowledge of humanitarian law throughout the Far East.

Delegates based in Jakarta maintained their detainee-welfare and dissemination work in an area in which a combination of economic crisis and climatic change was aggravating the effects of existing tensions. A catastrophic drought throughout the region brought hunger to the inhabitants of remote villages in Irian Jaya already sorely tried by the state of persistent tension prevailing there.

The peace process laboured on in the Philippines as the ICRC continued to visit detainees and came to the aid of the victims of fighting on the island of Mindanao.

The historic signing in December of a treaty banning the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines was the culmination of a long campaign in which the ICRC had played a prominent part, not least through the efforts of its media liaison officers in a number of the region’s delegations.
The period under review ended much as it had begun, with the southern two-thirds of Afghanistan, including the capital Kabul, under the control of the largely Pashtun Taliban, the Kandahar-based movement led by Mullah Mohammad Omar. Throughout the year Taliban forces faced three main opposition groups: the predominantly Tajik Jamiat-i-Islami party of Commander Massoud and Professor Rabbani, the mainly Uzbek Jumbesh party of Generals Dostom and Malik and the two factions of the Hazara Hezb-i-Wahdat of Shi'ite leaders Karim Khalili and Mohammed Akbari. Rivalries and shifting alliances both inside and outside the opposition coalition resulted in ferocious fighting in and around Mazar-i-Sharif over the summer, though this did not change the situation on the ground and the Taliban finished the year with no northern areas under their control apart from the Pashtun-dominated Kunduz enclave.

Thus, with their country the main arena of an intricate regional power game, the people of Afghanistan suffered through yet another year of a conflict as cruel as it was inconclusive. Eighteen years of fighting had left the economy in ruins, health-care facilities overwhelmed and the exhausted population struggling to cope not only with shot and shell but also with soaring inflation, food shortages, disease and despair.

The ICRC was very concerned about violations of international humanitarian law. It repeatedly reminded all the parties to the conflict of their obligations toward persons protected by that body of law and of the requirement to comply with the rules it lays down regarding the conduct of hostilities. Delegates endeavoured to verify reports of detention, assiduously requested access to all those held, and made confidential representations to all the warring parties with a view to obtaining a greater degree of compliance with the law of armed conflict.
Tragedy struck the ICRC in October when an employee was killed by a stray bullet while driving a vehicle in a convoy that was caught in crossfire.

Over the years, countless Afghans have been driven from their homes by the violence raging around them. The period under review was no exception. Early in the year, with the fierce Afghan winter still holding the landscape in its grip, many tens of thousands of civilians were on the move, their only possessions that which they could carry on their backs. Though a lucky few found shelter with family or friends, a number of areas soon became saturated with the influx of displaced people. When some 9,000 found themselves in the north-western city of Herat without shelter and with only the barest essentials for survival, the ICRC delegation set up a camp on the outskirts of town, brought in large numbers of tents, water tanks and jerrycans, and sunk wells, built latrines and otherwise strove to ensure an adequate water supply and acceptable sanitary conditions for the camp's capacity of 30,000 people. Sanitation work was also carried out in other camps near the city and two outpatient clinics were set up in conjunction with the Afghan Red Crescent Society. Delegates distributed food to camp-dwellers and to thousands of families to the east in the Pul-i-Khumri area and various other places around the country, both urban and rural. Fighting in the north over the summer caused massive displacement of civilians. The ICRC took immediate action to provide them with food, safe drinking water, medical care and adequate sanitary facilities. As the year drew to a close, the ICRC was assisting some 2,000 displaced families in Bamyan. Though concerned to meet the needs of people forced to flee their homes, delegates encouraged these people to return as soon as conditions made it safe to do so. The ICRC’s activities in aid of displaced people were carried out in close cooperation with United Nations agencies and a range of non-governmental organizations.

With the growing volume and diversification of the ICRC’s relief work in Afghanistan, the organization strengthened its logistics base across the border in Peshawar, Pakistan. However, the strategic situation and the resulting north-south divide in Afghanistan meant that the Peshawar base could not provide all the support needed. The closure of the border with Uzbekistan also forced the ICRC to seek new solutions and, as a result, the organization rented warehouses in Turkmenistan.

The war-weary population of Kabul, swollen as it was with people fleeing there to escape the fighting, struggled on through deteriorating economic conditions. As in the provinces, the ICRC delegation in the capital continued to concentrate on helping returnees, the destitute (identified by means of socio-economic survey) and some 30,000 of the most vulnerable families, those headed by a widow or a disabled breadwinner. To this end, delegates distributed food (cereals, pulses.

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3 The ICRC bases its distributions in Afghanistan on the family unit, calculated as equal to six individuals.
food-for-work programmes

vegetable oil and salt) and other relief (clothing, blankets, heating fuel, stoves, soap, plastic sheeting and jerry cans). The number of beneficiaries in Kabul grew over the period under review and rations were increased when harsh climatic conditions raised calorific requirements.

When spring finally arrived, it brought heavy rains. ICRC relief teams joined their counterparts from the Afghan Red Crescent and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to come to the aid of flood victims in the north and south-west of the country.

The food-for-work programme was expanded in the capital as part of the ongoing effort to reduce long-term dependence on direct aid. New food-for-work and cash-for-work projects were also implemented in the provinces, in some cases by the ICRC alone and in others in conjunction with the Afghan Red Crescent. Emphasis was placed on restoring essential infrastructure, though the projects included activities as varied as refuse collection and the production of knitwear by hundreds of widows in Kabul for distribution by the ICRC to detainees vulnerable to the winter cold. Such projects outside the capital made it possible to reduce the number of people receiving direct aid. As in previous years, food-for-work schemes were largely aimed at heading off a further deterioration of the nutritional situation — and hence the population’s health — by stimulating cultivation of arable land and thus promoting self-sufficiency. They frequently dovetailed with income-generating schemes in urban areas such as tool production by craftsmen who used metal from derelict tanks and other weapons of war to make agricultural implements such as spades. By the end of the year, agricultural projects were under way in 20 provinces and included the spraying of fruit trees, support for honey production and orchard-tree nurseries, seed distributions and work to restore the irrigation systems so vital in that parched and wind-blown landscape. Such work in Badghis province, for example, helped settle returnees and prevent renewed displacement. It was also instrumental in enabling displaced people living in the Samarkhel camp near Jalalabad to return to their homes in the Tagab valley. Delegated to the Swedish Red Cross while remaining under the overall responsibility of the ICRC, the Tagab resettlement programme also included water-supply and housing-construction projects.

Preliminary surveys carried out in the Panjshir valley with a view to launching relief and veterinary programmes paved the way for aid to medical facilities there as well as a vaccination campaign for livestock.

The carnage of war once again made medical care a priority for the ICRC. Following the winter lull, bursts of heavy fighting such as the Taliban offensive in the north and attacks on Kabul placed an intolerable strain on the country’s already crumbling medical infrastructure. The ICRC therefore continued entirely to support five major surgical facilities: the Karte Seh and Wazir Akbar Khan hospitals in Kabul, the Jalalabad Public Health Hospital, the Mirwais hospital in
Kandahar and Ghazni hospital. Among other things, the delegation provided the hospitals' surgical departments with essential supplies and salary incentives for staff. Some 20 other facilities treating the war-wounded across Afghanistan, including the military hospitals in Kabul and Herat, also received ICRC assistance. In the wake of the fighting in northern Afghanistan, the ICRC stepped up its assistance to Mazar-i-Sharif and environs by, among other things, sending an expatriate medical team to help out in the city’s main hospitals. The ICRC team training local staff at Ghazni hospital extended its stay to the end of the year as part of the organization’s ongoing effort to foster the independence of local staff by affording them an opportunity to gain hands-on experience under expert supervision. Finally, 20 expatriates continued to provide training for Afghan staff at Mirwais hospital in Kandahar.

Given the unstable strategic situation during the period under review (some battle lines remained static for months on end while others moved hundreds of kilometres in a single day), stationary medical facilities such as first-aid posts lost much of their relevance. Throughout the year, therefore, the ICRC strove to provide more flexible assistance with increased support for ambulance services, giving on-the-spot care and taking serious cases to the nearest surgical unit.

In September the Taliban authorities in Kabul ordered that women requiring treatment be channelled into a single medical facility, which was very poorly equipped, and that female medical staff no longer work anywhere else. The ICRC therefore entered into negotiations with the authorities in a search for practical measures to ensure access for all to adequate medical care while respecting religious convictions. A special committee composed of representatives from the Taliban, the UN, non-governmental organizations and the ICRC was set up to seek solutions, and as the year ended women were once again being admitted to the capital’s main hospitals and female staff were resuming their work.

Even for those who managed to escape the effects of actual battle and the poverty, hunger and disease resulting from years of violence and chaos, mine-infested Afghanistan remained a potentially deadly place. For those all-too-numerous Afghans who had fallen victim to these fiendish devices, the ICRC continued running its prosthetic/orthotic centres in Kabul, Jalalabad, Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif. Restoration work continued on the Ali Abad centre in the capital, which had been badly damaged in 1994 and temporarily replaced by a workshop set up on the grounds of the Wazir Akbar Khan hospital to produce artificial limbs, orthopaedic appliances and components. The workshop supplied raw materials, components and wheelchairs to the three ICRC provincial centres as well as to workshops run by other organizations. During the period under review the ICRC prosthetic/orthotic programme in Afghanistan admitted its 20,000th amputee since it was launched in 1988. Though the programme was originally designed to help individuals – both military and civilian – who had lost limbs in
mine blasts, the prolonged war in Afghanistan has had a devastating impact on the general health of the people and, just as ICRC-supported war-surgery hospitals also frequently meet the surgical needs of the entire population, the prosthetic/orthotic centres – 60% of whose staff were themselves disabled – cared for paraplegics and people disabled by disease, such as a growing number of poliomyelitis victims.

Kabul's infrastructure had steadily deteriorated over the years and the resulting inadequacy of the water supply and waste disposal had greatly encouraged the spread of infectious disease. In 1997 a pilot project was carried out featuring a comprehensive approach to low-cost water supply and sanitation, and including the construction of large numbers of improved latrines and the sinking of both tube and shallow wells for use by the public. The project proved a resounding success and was therefore expanded, with ICRC engineers taking measures to prevent the contamination of existing wells, organizing the collection of night soil and working to promote hygienic practices.

Delegates visited places of detention in much of Afghanistan, seeing a dramatically higher number of detainees than in the previous year, though a rapidly changing military situation frequently made it difficult to contact the relevant authorities. Much effort and time was therefore invested in establishing new contacts and explaining the ICRC's mission. Despite numerous representations beginning in May, however, delegates were not allowed to visit persons detained by one of the main parties. As the year ended and alarming allegations were being made that many of those detainees had been executed, the ICRC was continuing to make every effort to gain access to all places of detention.

Among the items they distributed to needy detainees, delegates provided clothing and quilts to alleviate the bitter cold of the Afghan winter. Many places of detention were overcrowded and a sharp rise was noted in the incidence of waterborne disease. ICRC engineers therefore took action to improve the water supply and sanitation facilities in a number of these places, repairing latrines, washrooms and waste-evacuation systems, and sinking new wells and equipping them with hand pumps. Initiatives were also taken to encourage the growing of food in prisons and to foster literacy among the detainee population.

In May the ICRC brought together 50 representatives of the Taliban prison authorities to explain the organization's mandate and visiting procedures and describe its activities across the country.

A key aspect of ICRC visits to detainees was enabling them to contact and remain in touch with their families, virtually throughout the country, by means of Red Cross messages. With invaluable assistance from the National Society in a country devoid of conventional postal services, remarkable success was achieved in forwarding these messages, which also provided a means for families separated by the fighting to remain in touch with their relatives both inside and outside
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- visited and registered 9,411 detainees (7,418 for the first time) in 87 places of detention run by the Kabul authorities and the other parties;
- forwarded 19,958 Red Cross messages between the detainees and their families;
- issued 32 detention certificates;
- provided 77 tonnes of food and non-food relief to detainees;
- carried out water and sanitation work in 13 places of detention;
- forwarded 33,327 Red Cross messages between individual civilians and their families, a dramatic rise over the previous year;
- reunited with relatives 120 members of dispersed families;
- distributed 24,278 tonnes of food and 3,806 tonnes of other relief to a total of about one million particularly vulnerable Afghan civilians, some 220,000 of them in Kabul;
- organized the clearing and repair of 1,040 kilometres of irrigation channels and 60 wells, thus providing irrigation for 25,000 hectares of previously parched land and 1,150 tonnes of flour to 14,000 families taking part in the food-for-work scheme;
- distributed 50,000 locally produced agricultural implements to 16,276 families in 19 provinces;
- distributed 186 tonnes of seed to 23,400 families;
- ultimately assisted a total of 150,000 farming families through its programme;
- fully supported 5 Afghan hospitals, which admitted a total of 20,147 people (5,474 of whom were suffering from war-related injuries) and provided ad hoc support to more than 12 other hospitals around the country;
- collected 9,114 units of blood in 5 hospital blood banks;
- organized a war-surgery seminar (involving 2 ICRC surgeons and the head of the organization's prosthetic/orthotic centre in Mazar-i-Sharif) for over 60 surgeons in the northern provinces (seminars on amputation techniques, stump management and prosthetics/orthotics were also held in hospitals around the country);
- manufactured 4,615 prostheses and 2,974 orthoses, and fitted 4,399 newly disabled people with such appliances, in 4 rehabilitation centres;
- constructed 10,640 latrines;
- sunk 80 wells;
- carried out water and sanitation work in 6 places of detention;
- provided a wide range of support to the headquarters, 3 regional offices and 24 provincial branches of the Afghan Red Crescent Society, for example by carrying out joint relief programmes, training staff in tracing techniques, assisting in the production of publications, supporting Red Crescent clinics, maras-toons and social rehabilitation programmes, and building up the Society's operational capacity;
- organized 322 dissemination events attended by over 16,000 people;
- launched a programme aimed both at collating information on the location of anti-personnel mines, mine incidents and the treatment received by mine victims, and at raising mine-awareness among the population, in particular farmers, women and children (these activities, carried out jointly with the Afghan Red Crescent, reached nearly 150,000 people).
Afghanistan. Nevertheless, fighting in certain regions posed major obstacles and some messages unfortunately had to be returned to the sender. Though facing similar difficulties, tracing staff managed to reunite a number of families split apart by the hostilities. During the year much of the ICRC’s tracing programme in Afghanistan was handed over to the National Society and special training sessions were organized for its staff.

As in the past, the Afghan Red Crescent was the ICRC’s main partner in humanitarian endeavour throughout the war-torn country. Each province had a functional National Society branch and the ICRC, working in close cooperation with the Federation, strove in 1997 to help all the branches consolidate their activities. Red Crescent staff were very much involved in relief distributions to the most vulnerable members of society (indeed, some such operations were carried out independently by the National Society with ICRC financial and technical support) and in the implementation of food-for-work schemes, agricultural projects and programmes to spread knowledge of humanitarian law. The Red Crescent played an essential role in locating potential beneficiaries for the ICRC’s limb-fitting programme. Delegates bolstered the National Society’s self-sufficiency by assisting it in a number of income-generating projects, which included cattle-raising, farming, carpet-weaving, tailoring and carpentry. The delegation supported the Society’s *marastoons*¹ in Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif and Jalalabad, and in the latter two cases finished refurbishing the premises. It also supported the Society’s mine-awareness team, which made numerous presentations in Wardak and Logar provinces.

Spreading knowledge of humanitarian law was once again an integral part of the delegates’ day-to-day work. Acting together with the National Society, delegates made every effort to promote compliance with that body of law and respect for Red Cross/Red Crescent principles as well as to strengthen a nationwide network of activities aimed at deepening knowledge of the law among combatants, Red Crescent staff and the general population. Dissemination specialists placed promotional radio spots on local stations throughout the country and once again took part in the serialized BBC* series *New home, new life*. Regular training sessions were held for ICRC employees and hospital staff, and a four-day seminar was organized for National Society dissemination officers and chairmen of local branches.

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¹ Homes for particularly disadvantaged people such as orphans and the mentally ill.

* BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation
PAKISTAN

The delegation in Pakistan once again played a key role in support of the ICRC’s work in Afghanistan, which was the organization’s largest operation in 1997. The sub-delegation in Peshawar remained the purchase unit, logistical hub and general gateway to the ICRC’s widespread activities in Pakistan’s northwestern neighbour and over the year adjusted its structure to cope with the increasing flow of relief and medical supplies and of staff arriving and departing.

The delegation in Islamabad continued to nurture contacts with government authorities, the armed forces, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, the media, diplomatic circles and international organizations in order to encourage support for the work of the ICRC and the body of law on which it is based, and to brief them on the ICRC’s role in Jammu and Kashmir. A presentation on humanitarian law and the organization’s activities was also organized for professors at the University of Karachi and other institutions of higher learning. The Delhi-based media liaison officer travelled to Pakistan to cultivate contacts with the media while the Delhi-based delegate to the armed and security forces had high-level contacts with the training branch of Pakistan’s military.

The delegation issued 665 travel documents, mainly for Afghan refugees accepted for resettlement in third countries, and forwarded 2,212 Red Cross messages, the majority between people in Afghanistan and their relatives living in Pakistan.

Though the ICRC’s medical activities on Pakistan territory in connection with the conflict in Afghanistan had been phased out, the organization’s Quetta office continued to support work across the border in Kandahar, maintained contact with local authorities and supported the Baluchistan branch of the Pakistan Red Crescent. Elsewhere, the ICRC continued to meet the operating costs of the two ambulances donated by it to the Karachi branch of the National Society and to support the Society’s mobile eye clinic in Pakistan-administered Kashmir.
Widespread fears that the period under review would prove to be yet another year of violence and bloodshed in Sri Lanka were confirmed as the force of arms once again held sway. Fighting flared early on as government troops sought to cut off LTTE* forces in the jungles of the Vanni region by wresting control of the road leading from Vavuniya to Mannar and launching, several months later, the biggest offensive in the country's recent history in a bid to take the Vavuniya-Kilinochchi road, a much-coveted land route leading north to the Jaffna peninsula. The LTTE struck at shipping on the government-held Jaffna peninsula and elsewhere. As so often before in this protracted conflict, attack was followed by counter-attack and the cost in human lives and suffering was great. The already precarious situation of the hundreds of thousands of displaced civilians in the Vanni region worsened while intercommunal tensions and violence mounted in the east of the country. Shock waves from the struggle were also felt once more in the Sri Lankan capital itself. The effects on the civilian population of the fighting itself were exacerbated by government restrictions on the transport of goods into areas where the LTTE was present. The need for humanitarian assistance therefore remained unabated.

The Colombo delegation called on all the parties to the conflict to show greater respect for humanitarian law, reminding them in particular of their obligation to spare prisoners, the wounded and civilians. Delegates monitored military operations whenever they occurred to ascertain whether the rules of warfare were being complied with and made representations – both oral and written – to the parties involved when violations were noted. In contrast to the other points raised with the warring parties, some improvement was noted in the degree to which an effort was made to spare the civilian population.

* LTTE: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the main armed Tamil opposition group
The ICRC continued to act as a neutral intermediary between the parties. For example, it retrieved and returned to the authorities concerned the mortal remains of both government soldiers and LTTE combatants; it transported civilians requiring medical treatment and distributed medical supplies in “uncleared areas”; it escorted government relief convoys when these were judged necessary and requested by local officials, and provided protection for government officials working on irrigation projects, supervising school examinations and conducting anti-malaria campaigns and polio vaccinations (in the latter case a cease-fire was arranged); it facilitated the release by the LTTE of foreign sailors and a foreign vessel; and, finally, at the request of both parties and with the cooperation of the military, it facilitated a meeting in February between the LTTE and Muslim leaders which resulted in an easing of intercommunal friction.

The plight of the displaced civilians in the Vanni region (estimates ran as high as 350,000) remained a source of great concern. Delegates continued distributions of non-food relief to the most vulnerable among them in order to improve their health and hygiene conditions and to afford them better shelter. Though disrupted for a time, government food convoys to the region resumed under ICRC escort. A number of cases of malnutrition prompted delegates to notify the authorities and request action. As a precaution against emergencies, delegates built up a stock of non-food items sufficient to meet the needs of 10,000 people. Relief distributions were also carried out, albeit on a much smaller scale, in the east of the country and the Anuradhapura district. The ICRC opened an office in Puthukkudiyiruppu in order to ensure that its staff were based as close as possible to those they sought to assist in a war increasingly being waged in separate zones.

In certain areas of Eastern Province the ICRC worked with other agencies to combine agricultural and irrigation projects in order to stimulate food production and thus make residents self-sufficient enough to cope despite the economic restrictions imposed on them for security reasons.

Though interrupted briefly for a change of vessel, weekly rotations were made by an ICRC ship between Trincomalee and the Jaffna peninsula. As the sole independent link between Jaffna and the rest of the country, the ship transported staff from the ICRC and other agencies, persons requiring medical care unavailable in Jaffna, government-provided medical supplies and other humanitarian items.

The year under review started with the third consecutive poor rainy season. The resulting water shortage, combined with the high number of civilians displaced into areas lacking adequate drinking water, sanitary facilities and other infrastructure, heightened still further concern about outbreaks of water-borne disease. With local resources strained beyond the breaking point, ICRC staff continued to install and repair pumps and wells in the Vanni region and Eastern Province, provide items necessary for water distribution and proper hygiene, and carry out awareness-raising work to promote hygiene, water conservation and

Food, water and shelter for the displaced
other practices necessary to health. These programmes had to remain flexible in order to keep up with population movements.

As the year began, the ICRC lent its support to the addition of a further mobile health team run by the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society. This brought to 10 the number of such units working in the north and the east of the country to ensure that civilian war victims frequently on the move had access to basic health care. With the deterioration of security conditions in certain areas, ICRC staff took over the running of the teams assigned to them. In the Vanni region delegates continued to furnish material support to the steadily growing number of primary health-care centres run by the Sri Lanka Red Cross, providing treatment and health education for people in remote areas. Some centres had to change location to keep up with population movements resulting from the fighting. The ICRC also provided medical supplies – in particular anti-malarial drugs – to government medical facilities in the Vanni region and to National Society branches in Jaffna aiding victims of the conflict.

Delegates continued their regular visits to detainees being held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Emergency Regulations, seeing large numbers of people in prisons, police stations, rehabilitation camps and other places of long-term detention. As in 1996, security incidents in the capital, Colombo, led to a sharp rise in the number of arrests.

Visits were also conducted to a small number of persons detained by the LTTE and talks continued with a view to gaining access to all detainees held by the group. The LTTE released, under ICRC auspices, two Indonesian nationals, 37 crew members of a North Korean ship and 27 Sri Lankan civilians.

Where no other means was available, Red Cross messages were used to establish and maintain contact between detainees and their families. The ICRC also processed tracing requests: from the Sri Lankan military regarding the fate of soldiers missing in action, from civilians regarding loved ones from whom they had been separated by the hostilities and from families regarding members who had allegedly been arrested by the security forces.

Work continued throughout Sri Lanka to improve knowledge of and compliance with humanitarian law. Though dissemination is part of the daily work of ICRC staff, there was much activity specifically for this purpose. Presentations were held around the country for police, army and air force personnel. Particular stress was laid on military academies, which have incorporated the law of war into their syllabus. A two-week course was organized for army officers to train them as instructors in this body of law. Similarly, and for the first time, the air force organized a course for instructors in conjunction with the ICRC. Informal presentations were made to Tamil paramilitary groups. A major effort was made to inform the civilian population about the ICRC’s mandate and the law on which that mandate is based, with events being organized at schools, administrative centres and local
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- visited 3,066 detainees (2,056 for the first time) in 180 government-run places of detention, including 66 persons held in connection with the 1987-90 uprising by the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna party, the Sinhalese opposition;
- visited 37 detainees being held by the LTTE;
- collected 5,402 Red Cross messages from detainees and delivered 4,044 such messages to detainees;
- issued 72 detention certificates;
- organized the reunification of 20 families, mostly by escorting isolated family members out of conflict zones to where relatives were living or had taken refuge;
- opened 1,382 tracing files;
- resolved 958 cases;
- collected 4,046 Red Cross messages and delivered 7,018 such messages between individual civilians and their families;

- distributed plastic sheeting, soap, cooking utensils, bedding, clothing and other relief items to 22,000 particularly vulnerable families in the north of Sri Lanka;
- shipped to the north medical supplies provided by the government and logistic equipment for various non-governmental organizations;
- as part of its agricultural rehabilitation programme in the east of the country, distributed 700 hoes and 1,000 seed kits to some 1,000 families, and items such as cooking utensils, soap and bedding to particularly vulnerable people;
- transported 582 people requiring specialized medical treatment from the Jaffna peninsula to the south;
- furnished the medical supplies needed to run 10 mobile health teams and 29 primary health-care centres in the Vanni health-care region and Eastern Province, up from 10 centres at the end of 1996;
- provided pipes, pumps, chemicals and other materials for 35 new water-supply and sanitation projects and for 86 repair jobs on existing systems;
- held dissemination sessions in the field for 313 police officers, 679 government soldiers, 1,125 military officers, 106 LTTE combatants and 124 members of the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam;
- distributed 5,000 manuals on humanitarian law for instructors to members of the armed forces and the LTTE, and produced 1,800 diaries containing information on humanitarian law for officers of the Sri Lankan armed forces in addition to 25,000 wall calendars and 220,000 pocket calendars.
Red Cross branches. A lecture was given at Jaffna University on humanitarian law and the work of the ICRC. The delegation also established a newsletter and once again endeavoured to convey its message through the media.

In response to the tension prevailing in the north of the country, the Sri Lanka Red Cross worked with the ICRC to organize a series of events marking World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day. These included a poster contest for school pupils on a number of Red-Cross-related subjects and cultural themes and observances.

The ICRC once again strove to engage in fruitful structural development with the headquarters of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society. It worked closely with National Society branches all over Sri Lanka, launching a cooperation programme with the Batticaloa branch to come to the aid of wounded civilians and another with the Jaffna branch to provide medical care to people returning to the peninsula, and helping the National Society set up a mobile dental clinic in Trincomalee. The ICRC and the Sri Lanka Red Cross jointly assisted hundreds of fire victims at Pettalai camp. There was also cooperation in the areas of dissemination, tracing and first aid.
NEW DELHI

Regional delegation (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar [until mid-year], Nepal)

Despite security incidents in Jammu and Kashmir and the disruption caused by them, the ICRC was nevertheless largely able to maintain its visits to 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. Delegates inquired into the material and psychological conditions of detention and treatment of these persons, and informed the authorities of their findings and recommendations. The ICRC also enabled the detainees to communicate with their families by means of Red Cross messages. In May, it handed over to the government of India its second comprehensive report on its visits and in November held a workshop for doctors active in prisons in Jammu and Kashmir. Delegates also carried out a number of assignments to troubled north-eastern India.

Both ICRC delegates and retired military officers were actively engaged in humanitarian law training for all ranks of the security forces. Lectures and complete courses were held for the Indian air force and navy, the Central Reserve Police Force, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, the Delhi police force and the Andhra Pradesh police. A large number of events were organized for the Border Security Force. The delegation also carried on its national and regional programme to promote knowledge of humanitarian law among non-military sectors of society. The Delhi-based legal adviser continued to counsel the region's governments on how best to implement humanitarian law.

To learn more about the need for assistance in restoring contact between people separated from their relatives by conflict, the delegation organized a three-week survey in India, Bangladesh and Nepal. The findings and resulting tracing guidelines were later discussed at a workshop held in New Delhi with representatives of the National Societies concerned.

A member of the delegation joined representatives of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and the Federation for a combined mission to the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The delegation and the Bangladesh Red Crescent organized a one-day tracing course and three five-day workshops for National Society staff regarding tracing and other subjects. It also assisted the Red Crescent in the area of "image-building". In addition, the ICRC worked closely with the National Society to spread knowledge about the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, jointly producing a calendar promoting the Fundamental Principles of the Movement.
and assisting in the setting up of a mobile first-aid team, the purpose of which was also to spread the Red Cross/Red Crescent message. The Delhi-based delegate to the armed and security forces made presentations to personnel from all branches of the armed forces in both Dhaka and Chittagong.

Prior to handing over responsibility for activities in Myanmar to the Jakarta delegation in June, the regional delegate travelled to the country for talks with National Society and government officials on the possibility of ICRC visits to security detainees and on the organization’s prosthetic/orthotic programme there. This programme continued to be run by local branches of the Myanmar Red Cross Society, financed by the Republic of Korea National Red Cross and supervised by the ICRC.

In Bhutan, delegates carried out a series of visits to persons detained for “anti-national activities”. As in previous years, these were conducted in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the ICRC and the Bhutanese government. For the first time, the Delegate General for Asia and the Pacific travelled to Bhutan for talks with the King and senior government representatives about the situation in the south and east of the country and proposals to spread knowledge of humanitarian law among armed forces personnel.
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- in India, visited 2,609 detainees (1,153 for the first time) being held in 27 places of detention in connection with the situation in Jammu and Kashmir;
- in Bhutan, visited 104 persons detained for "anti-national activities";
- collected 471 Red Cross messages (369 of them from detainees) and delivered 521 (151 to detainees);
- issued 285 ICRC travel documents;
- to enhance regional cooperation in the area of dissemination, organized a workshop in Dhaka for representatives of the National Societies of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka;
- pursued its "train the trainers" programme with 3 one-day dissemination courses for staff of the Indian Red Cross Society;
- organized events to promote knowledge of and compliance with humanitarian law for 378 members of the Border Security Force, 200 members of the Indian Air Force, 60 members of the Central Reserve Police Force and members and staff of the Indian Red Cross Society;
- as part of its ongoing effort to ensure that humanitarian law is included in the curriculum of law faculties, helped organize a workshop in Goa on humanitarian and refugee law for law professors;
- helped prepare a panel discussion for academics, legal experts, military commanders and government officials on the proposed permanent international criminal court and took part in a seminar held at the National Law School for lawyers from countries belonging to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation as well as in a number of other events organized by refugee and human rights organizations, international agencies and universities;
- in conjunction with UNESCO,* organized a regional seminar in Kathmandu on the implementation of humanitarian law and cultural heritage law for government representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, thus allowing the ICRC's Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law5 to make important new contacts throughout the region;
- held a three-day course in the law of war for senior officers at the Nepal Army Staff College, while an ICRC-trained team of three retired officers instructed battalion commanders and peace-keeping forces.

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5 See *Promotion and development of international humanitarian law*, p. 288.

* UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
The year began with a tragedy for the ICRC when one of its employees was murdered while working in remote Banteay Meanchey province, despite the fact that both he and his vehicle displayed the red cross emblem. The organization suspended its activities in that part of the country until discussions with military and civilian authorities sufficiently assured it of its staff's safety that it felt able gradually to resume them.

As the year progressed, tension grew between Cambodia's two ruling parties, the Cambodian People's Party and FUNCINPEC,* and the spectre of civil war once again haunted the sorely tried country. Violence flickered for months before finally flaring into heavy fighting in Phnom Penh in July and resulting in the forcible ouster from power of the First Prime Minister.

In the wake of the three-day battle, delegates in the capital concentrated on emergency medical assistance, distributing essential items to the capital's main hospitals, which were quickly exhausting their supplies. Many victims were taken to hospital in ICRC vehicles, which also served to evacuate both Cambodian and foreign civilians trapped by the fighting. When the emergency was over, the delegation stocked medical supplies in Battambang, Sisophon and just across the border in Aranyaprathet, Thailand, for use in the event of future violence. Delegates also assisted the Cambodian Red Cross Society in preparing relief distributions for hundreds of civilians made homeless by the events.

In March delegates completed the ICRC's first round of visits—begun the previous year—to all of Cambodia's prisons and continued with regular visits that

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* FUNCINPEC: United National Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia
included medical and nutritional surveys. During the July events, delegates furnished medical aid for detainees injured by the hostilities and provided food to those left to fend for themselves. They also visited some 500 soldiers and civilians captured in the fighting and being held at temporary places of detention in and around Phnom Penh.

The ICRC made representations to the relevant parties regarding victimization of the civilian population during hostilities, in particular in Battambang province. It continued to monitor conditions on the Thai-Cambodian border regarding civilians who had fled into Thailand to escape fighting and also, to the best of its ability, kept watch on the situation of Cambodians of Vietnamese origin.

Working largely in conjunction with the Cambodian Red Cross, the ICRC endeavoured in all provinces to restore and maintain contact between members of families separated by conflict in a country lacking an effective postal system and whose citizens are often too poor to travel. Only areas controlled by Democratic Kampuchea were inaccessible to the ICRC. While the forwarding of Red Cross messages from detainees visited by delegates accounted for much of this activity, remarkable breakthroughs were achieved when individuals whose relatives had been searching for them for over 20 years were finally traced in areas of the north-west controlled by the DNUM.*

When the DNUM-controlled areas became accessible to delegates travelling by road from Phnom Penh, a survey was carried out and contacts established with DNUM officials. Offices were opened in Pailin, Samlot and Phnom Malai in order to register amputees for limb-fitting and rehabilitation, collect and distribute Red Cross messages, and liaise with the local authorities.

In conjunction with the Ministry of Health, the ICRC continued to run 14 blood-transfusion centres around the country (a new centre having been set up in Prey Veng by German Technical Cooperation), providing health-care facilities with blood tested for the presence of, among other things, hepatitis and HIV. The national blood transfusion centre in Phnom Penh, for example, provided vital supplies for the treatment of people wounded in a March grenade attack and the July fighting. The ICRC’s agreement with the Ministry of Health regarding the blood programme expired in August and the programme was therefore handed over to the Ministry at the end of the year, though the ICRC continued its assistance to the Cambodian Red Cross in the realm of blood collection.

The ICRC’s prosthetic/orthotic centres continued their activities, with the workshop in Phnom Penh manufacturing components that were supplied to various non-governmental organizations engaged in prosthetics, and the centre in Battambang producing a record quantity of artificial limbs as well as fitting and

* DNUM: Democratic National Union Movement
rehabilitating amputees (a dramatically rising number of whom came from the newly accessible areas of the north-west).

The ICRC and the Federation worked together to develop the capacity of the Cambodian Red Cross to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and recruit blood donors. Workshops were organized jointly with the UN Centre for Human Rights in Phnom Penh for National Society dissemination officers, who took part in a number of ICRC presentations to the RCAF.* Many of the participants were recently integrated former soldiers of the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea.

Though the unfolding events made it difficult to organize activities to promote compliance with humanitarian law, the ICRC helped train armed forces instructors in the subject. Sessions were held for RCAF officers at the National Military Police School and for naval officers at the Royal Naval Forces School. For the first time, ICRC-trained army officers instructed soldiers in the law of war. Delegates also held seminars on humanitarian law for military officers and civilian officials in DNUM-controlled areas and organized presentations for academics, journalists, National Society staff and amputees throughout the country.

With the holding of an examination prepared by the ICRC, the law faculty at Phnom Penh University completed its first semester of courses in humanitarian law, henceforth recognized by the Ministry of Education as a regular part of fourth-year studies. The ICRC conducted a seminar on that body of law for investigators from the National Assembly’s Human Rights Commission.

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* RCAF: Royal Cambodian Armed Forces
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- visited 653 detainees held in 32 places of detention and provided them with material aid where needed;
- opened 393 tracing files, resolved 221 cases and forwarded 12,427 Red Cross messages;
- collected 14,290 units of blood in 14 centres;
- produced 1,557 complete prostheses and 35 complete orthoses for its own programme, and for other organizations manufactured 1,139 knee joints, 8,577 alignment devices, 1,056 pairs of orthotic joints and 3,740 pairs of crutches;
- fitted 872 new amputees with prostheses and 20 other persons with orthoses;
- organized 130 dissemination presentations attended by 1,908 members of the armed forces and 890 government officials;
- distributed 33,000 dissemination booklets, 2,000 posters and 290 teaching files and manuals on humanitarian law;
- took an active part in Mine Awareness Day (24 February), an annual event in Cambodia, one of the most severely mine-infested countries in the world;
- produced a radio spot, placed newspaper advertisements on the campaign for a total ban on anti-personnel mines and sponsored the production of banners to be displayed around the country.
THROUGHOUT the year the ICRC monitored developments along Thailand’s borders with Cambodia and Myanmar. In March delegates surveyed the situation of displaced civilians living on the border with Myanmar. In conjunction with the Thai Red Cross Society, the Bangkok delegation kept a close watch on the situation of tens of thousands of Cambodian civilians who had fled into Thailand following the events of July in their country. The rainy season severely restricts land travel in north-western Cambodia. Therefore, having obtained permission from all the authorities concerned, delegates travelled from Thai territory into Cambodia to survey the needs of civilians living in areas controlled by the Democratic National Union Movement.

A one-week course on tracing techniques was held in June for staff from the Thai National Society. The delegation worked throughout the year to extend its network of contacts with Thai universities in order to promote knowledge of humanitarian law, a goal it also pursued together with the Thai Red Cross.

The ICRC worked closely with the Red Cross Society of China to build the latter’s capacity to restore contact between members of families separated by conflict. A jointly prepared tracing manual was completed and distributed to National Society branches around the country. In addition, the first-ever Chinese-language manual on humanitarian law was produced and distributed. In conjunction with the People’s Liberation Army, delegates organized a five-day course for senior officers on the rules of air warfare. Following the return of Hong Kong to China on 1 July, the ICRC closed its office in the territory. The previous month, ICRC representatives had met with Chinese government officials to discuss expanding the scope of ICRC activities in the People’s Republic to include visits to detainees. Though no significant progress was made, it was agreed that future discussions would be conducted directly through the channel of the regional delegation rather than on the basis of ad hoc meetings of experts.

There was much activity in Viet Nam in the year under review to promote adherence to humanitarian law and knowledge and implementation of its rules. Events were organized from one end of the country to the other. Delegates also worked to build the Red Cross of Viet Nam’s tracing capacity. Unfortunately, though extensive discussions were held with the authorities to ensure the smooth running of the prosthetic/orthotic programme in Ho Chi Minh City, once again the year ended without a suitable partner being found to take over the ICRC’s
role in the project, which it had been operating for seven years in conjunction with
the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs. An agreement was never­
theless reached with the Ministry as the year drew to a close, setting out the princi­
ples to govern financing for the programme well into 1998. The ICRC’s Special
Fund for the Disabled continued to cover the cost of producing and fitting prosthe­
theses for destitute amputees not eligible for government support.

Together with the Lao Red Cross, the ICRC organized a round table on current
challenges regarding humanitarian law. The meeting, which included discussion of
measures to be taken at the national level to implement that body of law, brought
together representatives from a number of government ministries.

In conjunction with the ICRC and Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the
Japanese Red Cross Society marked its 120th anniversary by holding a two-day
meeting on problems and challenges faced by humanitarian law. Both the regional
delegate and the Delegate General for Asia and the Pacific made presentations
at the event.

IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- issued 147 travel docu­
  ments, the vast majority
to refugees for resettlement in third countries;
- forwarded 5 Red Cross messages
to the Red Cross Society of the
Democratic People’s Republic of
Korea;
- manufactured, at its
prosthetic/orthotic centre in Ho Chi Minh City,
1,743 artificial limbs
(including 1,050 for destitute amputees), with 2,082 persons
remaining on the waiting list at year’s end;
- took part in 2 basic
training courses: one
for Japanese Red
Cross staff and one for
staff of the Republic of Korea
National Society selected for sec­
ondment to international field operations;
- in conjunction with the Federation,
held a three-day course on the
Movement and humanitarian law
for 40 representatives of the North
Korean National Society;
- took part in a meeting of
Portuguese-speaking National
Societies held in Macao in July;
- held a four-day seminar
on the law of war in Da
Nang attended by rep­
resentatives of the Red
Cross of Viet Nam, the civil ser­
vice and the military (the latter
sent 30 senior instructors);
- in conjunction with Mongolia’s
Institute of Strategic Studies, held a
one-week course on humanitarian
law in Ulan Bator for 30 high­
ranking military officers (delegates
also had the opportunity to meet
with representatives of govern­
ment, the media and the Red
Cross Society of Mongolia, and a
workshop on humanitarian law was
later held for National Society staff).
The focus of the delegation’s work remained threefold: detainee-welfare activities, fostering knowledge of and compliance with humanitarian law and cooperation with the National Societies.

Once again, Jakarta-based delegates visited places of detention in various parts of Indonesia. Working in conjunction with the Indonesian Red Cross Society, they provided material and medical assistance where necessary, enabled detainees to contact or remain in touch with their next of kin and organized family visits to detainees being held far from their homes. The ICRC also followed up individual medical cases and in certain instances provided financial assistance for their hospitalization.

Though initially cleared by the authorities, visits to persons held at military bases in Aceh were suspended in March, when further access was denied. Other field work in the Aceh area also became impossible. As the period under review ended, no solution had yet been found despite numerous high-level meetings with government representatives.

Delegates collected and processed tracing requests, forwarded Red Cross messages and joined the Indonesian Red Cross in organizing a tracing/message service workshop attended by National Society employees from all over Sumatra.

Disturbances continued in East Timor – particularly in connection with the Indonesian elections in May – with attacks and clashes between rival groups of youths and between security forces and the armed opposition. Large-scale arrests ensued. The ICRC visited places of detention both as part of its six-monthly series of visits and on an ad hoc basis. It played the role of neutral intermediary and monitored respect for humanitarian law in a number of situations.

The ICRC/Indonesian Red Cross water and sanitation teams carried on their work, engaging in projects that ranged from the sinking of individual wells to the building of large distribution networks. National Society staff assisted by an expatriate health worker continued the programme of public health education and monitoring. Two mobile teams travelled throughout East Timor to promote prevention and adequate treatment of common but dangerous diseases, with positive results being noted in a number of areas. These infrastructure-development and health activities required a constant ICRC presence in remote parts of the territory. Staff took advantage of this presence to promote knowledge of humanitarian law among local people.
As Portugal had no diplomatic representation in Indonesia, the ICRC issued travel documents and made arrangements for the transfer to Portugal of East Timorese who had sought asylum in foreign embassies, former civil servants in the Portuguese colonial administration and a number of hardship cases. Delegates forwarded Red Cross messages between Timorese living in East Timor and relatives living elsewhere, and helped reunite Timorese families who had been separated by the situation.

The ICRC and the Indonesian armed forces organized the first-ever dissemination seminar for the Special Forces, at which 50 officers discussed humanitarian law and human rights with delegates and an outside expert. ICRC staff took part in a number of similar events organized by and in conjunction with the military and universities. These included sessions for personnel of the security services in East Timor. The ICRC dissemination delegate also addressed a symposium held by the Indonesian Red Cross for representatives of the nation’s government, military and civil society.

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IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- visited 69 detainees (19 of them for the first time) in 16 places of detention in Indonesia and 433 detainees (328 of them for the first time) being held in 51 places of detention in connection with the situation in East Timor;
- financed 95 family visits to 72 detainees;
- issued 38 travel documents;
- organized the transfer to Portugal of 38 East Timorese;
- forwarded 158 Red Cross messages in connection with East Timor;
- visited and assisted 13 drought-stricken villages in Irian Jaya, with a total population of some 8,000 people;
- carried out regular visits to promote health in 35 remote villages;
- harnessed 8 new sources of fresh water and maintained 7 existing water-supply systems in East Timor.
In September, a joint ICRC/Indonesian Red Cross team surveyed a mountainous area of the troubled region of Irian Jaya hard hit both by drought associated with the El Niño weather pattern and by ongoing skirmishing between the OPM* and Indonesian security forces. The team found that the water shortage combined with the resulting crop failure had already produced malnutrition in one out of four residents in the areas surveyed and that many among the weakened population were falling victim to malaria and various infections. The ICRC and the National Society therefore launched a logistically challenging operation to assist the communities most vulnerable to the drought – isolated mountain villages – by improving access to food, safe drinking water and medical care. Delegates also visited detainees in a number of prisons in Irian Jaya.

In February, the ICRC, the Malaysian Red Crescent Society and the Singapore Red Cross Society held a two-day seminar in Singapore on promoting respect for humanitarian law and Red Cross/Red Crescent principles. The ICRC President and the Secretaries-General of nine National Societies from the ASEAN* region took part in the seminar.

An ICRC representative attended the second Asia/Pacific workshop for National Society information officers, held in Kuala Lumpur in April. In June, the Malaysian Red Crescent organized, in conjunction with the ICRC, a workshop on humanitarian law for National Society instructors.

Responsibility for ICRC activities in Myanmar was transferred to the Jakarta delegation from the New Delhi delegation at mid-year. Assistance for the war-disabled in Myanmar continued to be supervised on a regular basis by the ICRC’s prosthetic/orthotic coordinator based in Cambodia.

* OPM: Organisasi Papua Merdeka, or Free Papua Movement
* ASEAN: Association of South-East Asian Nations
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)

Though dogged by difficulty and occasional violence, and sometimes stalled completely, peace negotiations were pursued by the Philippine government and a number of insurgent groups. The agreement reached in 1996 between the government and the MNLF* held; accordingly, the latter’s combatants started being integrated into the Philippine security forces.

In its protection work, the ICRC continued to focus on registration and follow-up of people arrested in connection with insurgency and secessionist activity in the Philippines. In the course of their annual series of visits, delegates assessed the material and psychological conditions of detention and forwarded Red Cross messages in order to restore or maintain contact between the detainees and their families. When necessary they monitored developments by means of supplementary visits. In conjunction with the Philippine National Red Cross, the ICRC organized and financed trips by families lacking the means to visit their relatives being held in far-away places of detention.

In Mindanao, thousands of families were displaced by clashes in January and as many as 60,000 were forced to flee fighting in June and July, in both cases between the Philippine armed forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The Philippine Red Cross and the ICRC swung into action, distributing food and other essential items to a total of some 40,000 people in need. The ICRC also covered the medical expenses of civilians wounded in skirmishes between the NPA* and security forces in various parts of the country. The upsurge in violence in Mindanao prompted the ICRC to assign a delegate to the area full time.

An unprecedented seminar on landmines was held in Manila in July. Organized jointly by the ICRC, the Philippine Red Cross and the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs, the event was attended by senior military officers, defence analysts and mine-clearance experts from 18 countries worldwide. The ICRC also organized a four-day session on humanitarian law held as part of the Philippine seminar on landmines

* MNLF: Moro National Liberation Front
* NPA: New People’s Army
armed forces' Command and General Staff Course, which brought together military officers from the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. In October, the ICRC organized the first-ever workshop on humanitarian law for Philippine military instructors. Dissemination continued to be very much a part of the delegates' general field work. Sessions to promote compliance with the rules of warfare were held on all sides, notably during training for the integration into the national security forces of former MNLF combatants. The ICRC President travelled to the Philippines in December to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the National Society. There he met with various officials of the National Society, government and civil society.

Throughout 1997, the ICRC maintained regular contact with the authorities of Papua New Guinea regarding the situation on the conflict-ridden island of Bougainville and the offer of services it had made to them in 1996. As the year drew to an end, however, there was reason to believe that a lasting peace settlement was likely to be agreed upon in the near future.

The National Societies of Kiribati and Palau were accorded official recognition by the ICRC in 1997.

6 See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, pp. 159-160.

IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- visited 417 detainees (108 for the first time) in 86 places of detention in the Philippines;
- where needed, distributed recreational and personal hygiene articles and supplied places of detention with items required to maintain the detainees' health;
- financed family visits to 188 detainees in the Philippines;
- distributed 150 tonnes of relief supplies to 40,000 people displaced by fighting in the Philippines;
- organized dissemination events for 184 members of the armed forces, 686 members of National Societies and more than 500 civilians;
- though the situation in Bougainville made it difficult to spread knowledge of humanitarian law, 2 one-day workshops were held for 50 officers of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force and dissemination sessions were organized for staff and volunteers of the Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society.
Pollution can cause the rapid spread of water-borne diseases among people weakened by the disruption of food supplies and medical care during a conflict. In Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina the ICRC provided spare parts, chemicals and expertise to help restore access to clean water and repair damaged sewage systems.
Western and Central Europe and the Balkans

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

**ICRC regional delegation:**
Budapest

**Staff**
ICRC expatriates: 1 80
National Societies: 1 27
Local employees: 2 619

**Total expenditure**
Sfr 71,127,223

**Expenditure breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protection/tracing</td>
<td>18,511,791</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relief</td>
<td>22,431,609</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health activities</td>
<td>13,427,886</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperation with National Societies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotion/dissemination</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operational support</td>
<td>4,854,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overheads</td>
<td>3,935,135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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1 Average figures calculated on an annual basis.
2 Under ICRC contract, as at December 1997.
The ongoing efforts of the international community to further the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina by implementing the Dayton agreement, signed in late 1995, and to help not only this war-torn country but also the entire region return to normality met with varying degrees of success during the year under review.

The main military objectives - cessation of hostilities and separation of ground forces - had been reached early on in the process, making a significant contribution to stability and security in the region. In 1997 a dissuasive role continued to be played by the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR), which had taken over from the larger NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) at the end of the previous year.

The political and humanitarian aspects of the agreement proved more difficult to implement, however. While some progress could be seen in political developments at the national level, on the whole cooperation was reluctant. Persistent unwillingness on the part of the former belligerents to hand over indicted war criminals to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was a source of immense frustration to the international community and led in July to the first-ever arrest operation by SFOR.

There was also concern that overall conditions for the return of refugees and displaced persons had not significantly improved. Continued obstruction in the form of inadequate security, the failure to establish a system of access to personal documents and deficiencies in the allocation of temporary housing caused large numbers of returning refugees and displaced persons to be relocated against their will in places other than their original homes.

Given the slow pace of change, the international community decided to make any future aid for reconstruction dependent on compliance with the peace agreement. The ensuing lack of investment in regions where the authorities were deemed not to have complied led to high unemployment, low productivity and a dearth of opportunities for the people to get back on their feet again.

Moreover, the imbalance in the allocation of international financial aid to the two entities making up the country (the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska) meant that many people continued to depend on some form of supplementary assistance.

The ICRC therefore worked with donors, National Red Cross Societies, other humanitarian agencies and local institutions to provide a social safety net designed to meet some of the needs created by the lasting effects of the war. The organization relied on its experience in the country and the relations it had cultivated with all the players concerned to help ease the popula-

\[1\] The full title of the treaty is the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
tion through this period of transition and to strengthen the ability of key community institutions, particularly the local Red Cross, to assist their own people.

Despite the ICRC’s best efforts to ascertain the fate of missing persons through intensive tracing methods and cooperation with national and international political partners, many thousands remained unaccounted for.

The active role played by the ICRC in the international campaign for a global ban on anti-personnel landmines was rewarded in December when a total of 123 States signed a new treaty prohibiting the production, transfer, stockpiling and use of these devastating weapons. The signatories included almost all the Western and Central European nations, including Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, both severely mine-infested.

In Croatia, the year was marked by efforts to reintegrate the mainly Serb-populated region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium. Although the process went ahead fairly smoothly, the ICRC kept a close watch on the plight of vulnerable individuals. The organization’s activities to protect the civilian population were enhanced by the complementarity developed between the main players, with the ICRC at the forefront as the only one with sufficient resources to monitor the situation effectively on a regular basis, not only in Eastern Slavonia but also in the former UN Sectors.

In the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, tensions in Montenegro, Sandzak and especially Kosovo were a major cause for concern. Unrest increased throughout the country as a result of deteriorating economic and social conditions, leading to a surge in the number of violent incidents. While keeping an eye on these developments the ICRC continued to visit security detainees and press for further access to them.

At the beginning of the year disorder spread across Albania. The social unrest triggered by the collapse of pyramid investment schemes into which thousands of people had poured their life-savings exploded into violence in March, leading to a complete breakdown of law and order. The ICRC responded by opening a fully operational delegation in the country to assist those most in need. Action by the international community, too, was swift with the deployment of a multinational protection force that remained in the country from April until August. The overall crisis began to recede following the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe-monitored general election of 29 June, in which the Socialist Party swept to victory.

Another new launch for the ICRC was the official opening of its regional delegation in Budapest, covering several countries in Central Europe and the Balkans.
Western and Central Europe

ICRC representatives carried out various missions and attended numerous conferences, meetings and seminars throughout Europe in an effort to rally support for humanitarian operations, move forward the process for a ban on landmines and promote international humanitarian law. In June the ICRC President addressed a plenary session of the Brussels Conference. The purpose of this meeting was to respond officially to the Canadian invitation to launch negotiations for a legally binding treaty to ban anti-personnel mines and to sign such an agreement in Ottawa in December 1997. Representatives of 154 countries participated and 97 States associated themselves with the ensuing Brussels Declaration which committed them to a comprehensive ban on such weapons.4

The ICRC President made official visits to several countries, including Germany, where he met the President of the Republic, the Chancellor and several other leading government figures in June, and Romania, where he delivered a short speech to the North Atlantic Assembly, held for the first time in a non-member country, in October. The President also travelled to London in September to address members of the British Jewish community and for meetings with senior government officials and representatives of the British Red Cross. Other presidential visits were made to Strasbourg and Vienna to hold talks with or participate in the work of the Council of Europe and the OSCE. *

The ICRC President paid an official visit to Luxembourg, which held the presidency of the European Union. In discussions with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, he focused on the relations between the ICRC and the European Union, and the ICRC's bilateral relations with Luxembourg. The ICRC President was also received by HRH the Grand Duchess Charlotte, President of the Luxembourg Red Cross.

Numerous missions were also carried out by the ICRC Vice-President, members of the Committee, Delegates General and representatives of the External Resources Department, the Legal Division and the International Organizations Division. Events specifically linked to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement included the Fifth European Regional Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference, convened in Copenhagen in March; a one-day debate on issues relating to the work of humanitarian organizations, held by the ICRC in Paris in May; a humanitarian forum chaired by the ICRC in the Swiss town

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4 See Promotion and development of international humanitarian law, pp. 295-297.

* Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
of Wolfsberg in June and attended by senior representatives of the main humanitarian organizations and donor countries, the World Bank and the European Commission; and a round table on preventive action organized by the ICRC in Copenhagen in November, with the financial assistance of the Danish government.

In its capacity as guardian and promoter of international humanitarian law, the ICRC took part in a number of events focusing on that body of law. These included the 14th Congress of the International Society for Military Law and Law of War, the theme of which was the investigation and repression of violations of the law of armed conflict, and the 15th annual course on international humanitarian law organized in Warsaw jointly by the ICRC and the Polish Red Cross. A conference on the implementation of humanitarian law was held by the British Department for International Development in October, affording the ICRC the opportunity to speak about the challenges it faces in the area of preventive action.

In October the ICRC President made an official visit to Spain, where he was received by the country’s King and Queen. During his visit, the President met the Prime Minister, the President of the Spanish Parliament and several leading government figures. He also held extensive discussions with senior representatives of the Spanish Red Cross.

The following month Spain hosted the Council of Delegates. The meetings, which took place in Seville, culminated in the adoption of a new Agreement on the Organization of the International Activities of the Components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

On 19 July the IRA* ended 18 months of violence by announcing a new ceasefire, which was respected by all the parties concerned save two small radical paramilitary groups. Following the launch of all-party talks on 17 September, the chances of a negotiated political settlement for Northern Ireland looked better than at any other time in the previous 30 years.

Between 10 and 14 November two ICRC delegates, accompanied by a doctor, carried out an interim visit to prisoners in Belfast’s Maze prison. The team evaluated the conditions of detention of prisoners being held in relation to the events in Northern Ireland and later discussed its findings with the Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

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6 See Promotion and development of international humanitarian law, p. 301.
7 See ICRC cooperation within the Movement, pp. 307-309.
* IRA: Irish Republican Army
Violence broke out in Albania at the end of February, following six weeks of unrest triggered by the collapse of pyramid investment schemes in which thousands of people lost their life-savings. With the breakdown of law and order, chaos quickly engulfed the south and then spread to other areas of the country. Large quantities of weapons were seized by civilians from abandoned military depots, resulting in a number of deaths and a steady stream of wounded to the country's hospitals. On 2 March the government declared a state of emergency and imposed a night-time curfew.

Two days later an ICRC delegate met a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who welcomed the organization's offer of services. The following week, the ICRC Delegate General for Western and Central Europe and the Balkans met the Deputy Minister of Defence in Tirana to present the ICRC's plans for assistance. Meetings were also held with the Albanian President and senior representatives of the National Society. On 12 March the ICRC set up a fully operational delegation in the capital and a sub-delegation in the southern town of Gjirokaster.

Surveys carried out by the ICRC, together with the Albanian Red Cross, showed that social-welfare institutions and medical facilities were in need of urgent assistance. These establishments had previously depended on government supplies, which could no longer reach them or had already been looted. Moreover, an estimated 10 per cent of the population had become vulnerable as a result of the disruption of State and commercial supply lines. The ICRC therefore requested that aid efforts by members of the international community should focus on the reestablishment of vital State structures and restoration of law and order, rather than provision of large-scale humanitarian assistance.

These findings, coupled with the steady deterioration of conditions in the country, prompted the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to launch an integrated appeal. The assistance operation focused on six activities: provision of food and medical supplies to social-welfare
and health-care establishments, water-supply and sanitation activities, assistance to vulnerable groups, support for the National Society, visits to detainees and promotion of humanitarian principles and Red Cross activities.

The distribution of supplies to needy establishments began almost immediately. However, the provision of relief to individuals requiring aid in various parts of the country was delayed until 26 May, owing to the lack of security on the country’s roads.

Help was at hand from the international community with the arrival on 15 April of the first troops assigned to the Italian-led multinational protection force, whose role was to facilitate the safe and prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance by helping to create a secure environment for the work of international organizations.

Between March and October joint ICRC and Albanian Red Cross teams distributed family parcels (each containing supplementary food rations and hygiene articles for a family of five for one month) to the most vulnerable groups, provided social-welfare institutions and health-care establishments with basic medical supplies and food, and furnished chemicals and equipment to the Albanian water authority. Upon completion of the joint programme in October, the ICRC handed over 185 tonnes of food to the National Society, for use during the harsh winter months.

In May the ICRC and the National Society also initiated a weapons-awareness campaign aimed at making the population, particularly young people, aware of the dangers of handling firearms and explosives.

The cooperation of the Albanian Red Cross, with its country-wide network of local branches, was vital to the efficient implementation of the relief programme. In addition to its usual tasks, the Federation endeavoured to help the National Society to meet the new demands placed on it by boosting its logistical means (trucks, telecommunications equipment) and increasing the number of its offices around the country. This was especially necessary as many warehouses and premises had been looted and burned down.

The security situation started to improve gradually after the OSCE-monitored general election of 29 June led to a resounding victory for the opposition Socialist Party. The new government immediately began efforts to restore law and order, while undertaking negotiations with international monetary institutions to obtain financial assistance for restructuring. In September the ICRC Vice-President visited Albania to discuss the organization’s current and future activities and to announce the successful conclusion of both the relief programme and the integrated action with the Federation.

In October, following sustained contacts with the Attorney-General and the Ministers of Justice and of the Interior, the delegation in Tirana concluded a general agreement with the authorities allowing the ICRC to visit all detainees held
visits to detainees under the jurisdiction of the two Ministries. The first series of visits began on 19 November and was conducted by a team comprising an ICRC delegate, a doctor and an interpreter.

In early November the Albanian President was received in Geneva by the ICRC President, who extended his thanks to the country's authorities for their support of the ICRC action during the crisis. For his part, the Albanian leader expressed his gratitude for the work of the ICRC and the Movement as a whole in his country.

The ICRC had previously visited detainees in Albania in 1991 and 1992.

IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- following an agreement concluded with the authorities in October, assessed the conditions of detention and treatment of detainees in 3 prisons, 1 prison hospital and 22 police stations;
- implemented an assistance programme in conjunction with the Albanian Red Cross, under which some 75,000 needy families received 4,594 tonnes of relief items, i.e. 203,195 family parcels, 490 tonnes of wheat flour, 148.5 tonnes of food in bulk and 3.3 tonnes of hygiene items;
- supplied 63 social-welfare and medical establishments with 367.5 tonnes of relief, i.e. 13,077 individual parcels, 145.7 tonnes of food in bulk, 44 tonnes of wheat flour and 18.3 tonnes of hygiene items;
- distributed 50 tonnes of basic medical and surgical supplies to 63 social-welfare institutions and health-care facilities throughout the country;
- provided water boards with 74 tonnes of chlorine and 50 chlorine-testing kits, sufficient to ensure a clean and safe water supply over the hot summer months;
- worked with the permanent staff of the Albanian Red Cross' 36 branches to plan relief and medical distributions, by compiling lists of beneficiaries, selecting warehouses, organizing volunteers and assessing security risks;
- helped the National Society raise its profile by providing press releases, fact sheets and other information material in Albanian;
- ran a weapons-awareness campaign during which a 30-second radio spot and a TV advertisement were aired regularly by local and national broadcasters between May and August, distributed leaflets on the risks associated with the misuse of firearms and translated the ICRC video Danger: Mines into Albanian for use in presentations to school-children;
- arranged for 4 programmes on Red Cross activities and humanitarian principles to be aired on Radio Tirana.
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

During the second year after the signing of the Dayton agreement Bosnia and Herzegovina was engaged in a complex process of transition, endeavouring to lay the foundations for peaceful coexistence in the aftermath of war. The international community remained a central player in this process, to which it devoted considerable energy and resources in a bid to ward off future violence and ensure lasting stability in the region. Despite this commitment and a number of tangible achievements, implementation of the main points of the agreement was slower and more painful than anticipated.

Overall, 1997 witnessed modest yet encouraging progress in the establishment or consolidation of joint political and economic institutions. At the national level, meetings were held between the country's three Presidents, and efforts to set up the Council of Ministers, the Parliament, the Central Bank and the Constitutional Court came to a successful conclusion. Undeniable though these advances were, key issues such as the search for those unaccounted for, the return of refugees and displaced persons, the removal of landmines and cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia on the arrest and prosecution of war criminals remained contentious.

Hardship and stagnation were particularly evident in the economic and social sectors. The decision by the international donor community to make further aid for reconstruction conditional upon compliance with the peace agreement, together with resistance by some parties to the adoption of basic economic legislation and accords led to a considerable imbalance in the level of assistance received by the two entities. In certain parts of the Republika Srpska, unemployment rates ran as high as 80 per cent. The fact that many displaced persons were living in areas where they were not yet active or employable (i.e. people who had spent all their lives in the countryside now residing in towns, and vice versa) only exacer-
bated the problem. As a result, a significant percentage of the population con­tinued to depend on some form of assistance.

The complexity of the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the desire of the international community to make it work was reflected in the number of conferences and meetings held on every aspect of the problem and at every level. Whenever appropriate, the ICRC attended these fora, either as a participant or an observer. The Third Pledging Conference for International Help to Bosnia and Herzegovina was held in Brussels on 23 and 24 July after having been postponed several times owing to the lack of progress by the authorities in complying with the provisions of the peace agreement. At the conference, representatives from 48 nations and 30 international organizations promised their continued support for reconstruction in the country. The ICRC emphasized the fact that humanitarian assistance was still required and must not be made conditional upon any political process.

This concern was reiterated by the ICRC President at the third meeting of the PIC,* held in Bonn in December and attended by representatives of 51 countries and 21 international organizations. Just prior to the meeting, the aim of which was to review progress in the implementation of the peace agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina's three Presidents reached agreement on a common passport, a new citizenship law and the functioning of the Council of Ministers.

The fate of those unaccounted for remained one of the most important issues still to be resolved and the deep frustration felt by the families of these people at the absence of information and progress acted as a destabilizing force at the very heart of the drive to bring about reconciliation.

The authorities' reduced commitment to the tracing process and the increased politicization of the issue led to the adjournment of further sessions of the Working Group on Missing Persons. Following the last session on 30 January, the ICRC sought to develop a more constructive approach for future meetings by holding consultations with all the parties and families concerned. The conclusions drawn from these contacts were that the parties must be fully committed to the process, the ICRC should take on a more prominent role in representing the interests of the families and the families themselves should become more involved in the process.

As a result, a first meeting of associations of families of missing persons was held in Sarajevo on 29 and 30 April. Representatives of 10 associations from all over the country took part in the meeting, during which ICRC activities were presented and the needs of the families more clearly defined. A second meeting with

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* 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 associations was held in November, focusing on the issues of exhumation, identification of mortal remains and decent reburial.

The Working Group itself was reconvened in Geneva, where it held its 11th session in July. A member of the OHR* attended on behalf of the international community, which had already been represented at previous meetings, and spokesmen for the families and local Red Cross tracing services were given observer status. During the 12th session, held in November, a plan of action on the legal issues facing the families of missing persons was discussed, among other matters.

In addition, the fourth session of the ICMP* took place on 19 and 20 June. The meeting, which began in Zagreb before moving on to Vukovar and Belgrade, was attended by the ICRC President, who is a member of the Commission, and by representatives of the associations of families and of the governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The exhumation process was relaunched towards the end of the year under OHR coordination with the handing over of death certificates by the authorities of the two entities. At the local level, the ICRC provided those responsible for carrying out exhumations with basic items to facilitate their work.

Throughout the year the ICRC continued to collect tracing requests from families and other information pertaining to the search for missing persons. The third updated edition of a catalogue of names and other data on those unaccounted for was published in March and copies were distributed throughout the country and to the National Societies of States hosting refugees.9 After the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia had granted permission for its files to be consulted for relevant information on missing persons, a year-long project began in June in The Hague with the ICRC financing the cost of a staff of 32 to sift through some 60,000 pages of reports gathered by Tribunal investigators.

Also in The Hague, an ICRC team carried out three visits – in January, June and November – to persons held by the Tribunal in order to assess their physical and psychological conditions of detention. After each visit, the ICRC submitted a report on its findings to the President of the Tribunal. In addition, the organization financed visits to detainees by family members unable to pay their own travel costs.

Regular visits were conducted to persons detained in Bosnia and Herzegovina in connection with the former conflict, as well as to a number of common-law detainees, who required special attention owing to their minority status. During the visits delegates assessed conditions of detention and treatment and provided

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* See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, p. 174.
* OHR: Office of the High Representative appointed to oversee the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton agreement
assistance in the form of clothing and hygiene items, where necessary. Together with other organizations concerned, the ICRC endeavoured to ensure that the detainees' basic legal rights were respected.

In August two detainees, who had been on the ICRC's list of missing persons since September 1995, were located in a prison in Zenica following an unannounced visit by the IPTF.* The men, both Serbs, were immediately released and reunited with their families under ICRC auspices in Banja Luka on 20 August. The ICRC also facilitated the transfer to Banja Luka of the last nine Bosnian Serb prisoners of war released by the Croatian authorities.

Since a number of organizations, such as the IPTF, were involved in activities to protect civilians from various forms of harassment, the ICRC largely confined its work in this domain to keeping in touch with these organizations and maintaining its information network. It continued to collect and deliver Red Cross messages, in cooperation with the local Red Cross, particularly between people living on either side of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line. Family reunifications for vulnerable individuals, many of them elderly and in need of assistance to reach relatives living in another entity, were also organized under ICRC auspices.

The ICRC carried out regular assessments of its health-related and food assistance programmes in the country so as to be able to adapt its approach to the changing post-conflict situation, taking into account the reforms being planned or carried out in the medical and social sectors. The results showed that, since most reconstruction projects were geared to long-term development, continued ICRC assistance was necessary in order to meet immediate needs and keep existing structures going while reforms were taking effect.

Progress was particularly slow in the health sector owing to the failure on the part of the Ministries of Health of both entities to adopt relevant legislation, and to the fact that so few people could afford to pay for their own treatment. Medical establishments therefore remained dependent on external resources to provide basic services and the ICRC continued as the main supplier of drugs and other essential items for a wide range of facilities (hospitals, clinics, health posts and pharmacies) that were not receiving regular assistance from other sources. The organization also lent its support to homes for the elderly, psychiatric hospitals and other medical and social-welfare establishments on an ad hoc basis.

In April the ICRC carried out a survey to determine the impact of discontinuing such supplies. It found that severe shortages would have occurred in some cases, with up to 60 per cent of prescriptions unable to be filled. The organization was nevertheless able to cease distributions in parts of the Republika Srpska owing to the increasing number of humanitarian organizations operating in the entity.

* IPTF: United Nations International Police Task Force
Water-supply systems and sanitation facilities improved in 1997, enabling the ICRC to significantly scale down its programmes by the year's end. During the period under review, the emphasis gradually shifted from emergency repairs to maintenance work. While continuing to implement a "quick response" strategy for dealing with immediate problems, water and sanitation engineers provided local technicians with general advice, trained them to detect leaks and supplied them with basic equipment (spare parts, tools) and chemicals to ensure a sufficient amount of clean drinking water. Health centres, schools and other social-welfare institutions were also provided with equipment and chemicals.

In addition, the ICRC supported various rehabilitation projects being carried out in the social, health and sanitation sectors by eight National Red Cross Societies.

The ICRC redefined its concept of vulnerability in the transition period, adopting a two-pronged approach aimed at assisting both individual beneficiaries and community structures providing services to those in need. In this regard, particular importance was placed on strengthening cooperation with the local Red Cross.

While developing this approach the ICRC continued to respond to the needs already identified. The second phase of its 1996/97 winter programme designed to provide food, clothing and heating materials to vulnerable individuals ended in January. The following month a spring seed programme was launched, and was eventually extended to cover four times the number of families originally planned when support pledged by other organizations failed to materialize. Community kitchens and food distribution programmes run by various National Societies under the ICRC's overall responsibility came to the aid of other needy people. The 1997/98 winter programme was carried out with the assistance of the local Red Cross and items were purchased on the spot whenever possible in order to stimulate local production.

In a further effort to boost the local Red Cross capacity to respond to needs at the community level, a number of small income-generating projects were initiated in both entities. Rehabilitation of Red Cross offices and warehouses began in April, in cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Also with the International Federation, the ICRC continued to work towards the recognition of a Red Cross Society for the country as a whole. Some progress was made in October when a single Red Cross was set up in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Subsequently, the Secretaries General of the Red Cross organizations of both entities attended, as observers, the Council of Delegates held in Seville in November.\(^\text{10}\)

\(^{10}\) See *Western and Central Europe*, p. 181, and *ICRC cooperation within the Movement*, pp. 307-309.
- paid regular visits to 110 detainees held in 15 places of detention;
- carried out 3 visits to detainees held in The Hague under the responsibility of ICTFY and financed 10 visits by relatives who did not have the means to pay for their own way;
- brought to a total of 19,697 the number of tracing requests gathered since the beginning of the process from families of those still unaccounted for;
- published a third edition of a catalogue containing 17,300 names of missing persons and distributed 11,000 copies to all members of the Red Cross network involved in the tracing process;
- provided information on the fate of 1,409 missing persons, with approximately two-thirds of the answers supplied by the former warring parties during the Working Group sessions and a further third obtained as a result of the organization's intensive tracing methods;
- delivered 12,131 Red Cross messages;
- reunited 39 individuals with their families;
- maintained contact with other organizations monitoring the situation of minorities and followed up alleged incidents of harassment with the authorities;

IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- implemented the second phase of the 1996/97 winter programme, under which 47,000 beneficiaries not assisted by other organizations received warm clothing, blankets, cooking utensils, wheat flour, food parcels and hygiene items;
- carried out the first phase of the 1997/98 winter programme to 57,000 beneficiaries, providing food to destitute families in urban areas and clothing and heating materials to vulnerable people in rural and mountainous regions;
- implemented a winter-wheat seed programme in the Banja Luka and Doboj areas for 14,195 families owning some land but lacking the means to farm it (1,278 tonnes of wheat seed and 2,129 tonnes of fertilizer were provided);
- carried out a spring seed programme supplying 180,000 families in mountainous regions with 1,373 tonnes of potato seed and 169,500 vegetable seed kits;
- provided emergency assistance for some 30,000 needy people consisting of individual parcels, wheat flour, hygiene items, kitchen sets, plastic sheeting, blankets and tools;
- facilitated bilateral projects carried out by the National Societies of Austria, Germany, Switzerland and the United States to provide assistance to the needy through food distributions, community kitchens and school snack programmes;
- regularly provided 26 hospitals and 43 other medical facilities with surgical supplies and essential drugs for chronic diseases;
- through projects delegated to the Belgian, Japanese and Norwegian National Societies, rehabilitated hospitals in Prijedor and Brcko;
- facilitated bilateral projects carried out by the National Societies of Belgium, Italy, Norway and Spain to rehabilitate hospital buildings and ambulance services, train medical staff and provide psycho-social support;
- carried out emergency repairs and maintenance work on the water-supply systems, including pumping equipment, of 45 municipal water boards;
- provided 102 municipal/local water boards, 39 medical facilities and 43 schools with essential plumbing and electrical repair equipment, and chemicals and disinfectants for the prevention of water-borne diseases;
- completed its programme to unblock clogged sewage systems in hospitals and public buildings in both entities, using 2 sewage-treatment trucks;
- provided water from tanker trucks to the population in areas surrounding Tuzla and Trebinje where the supply had been temporarily cut off;
- gave two-day training workshops in leak detection for the staff of 12 water boards and provided equipment for the task;
- through a project delegated to the German Red Cross, rehabilitated the Jahorina water-supply line which serves areas of Sarajevo and numerous villages in the Republika Srpska;
- facilitated a bilateral project implemented by the Swedish Red Cross to improve sewage systems in Tuzla and Zivinice;

- provided financial and material support for 16 summer camps organized by the local Red Cross in 4 places (3 in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 1 in the Republika Srpska) for a total of 1,440 children from among the most vulnerable sectors of the population;
- supported local Red Cross tracing, relief and dissemination activities by providing training and office supplies;
- in cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, carried out major repairs to Red Cross offices and warehouses in both entities;

- set up a number of community-based projects in conjunction with the local Red Cross to provide assistance to vulnerable people while simultaneously creating employment and stimulating the local economy;
- with the support of the Norwegian Red Cross trained 192 volunteer teachers in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 132 in the Republika Srpska as part of a programme to promote fundamental humanitarian values;

- completed a mine-awareness curriculum for primary schools in cooperation with the Ministries of Education in both entities and held introductory seminars on the subject for teachers and school directors;
- launched a data-gathering programme on the impact of mines, which is being implemented by 11 ICRC mine-awareness officers, 2 ICRC field officers and 118 Red Cross volunteers trained as mine-awareness instructors;
- held 7 training workshops in mine awareness for 170 Red Cross volunteers;
- organized a nationwide drawing and essay competition for school-children on the theme of mine awareness, attracting over 1,000 entries (the best were displayed in Ottawa at the conference held to sign an international treaty banning the use of anti-personnel mines).
The ICRC's mine-awareness efforts gained momentum throughout the country in 1997, with more and more local Red Cross volunteers being trained as instructors. Information about the dangers of landmines was spread by ICRC mine-awareness officers, with the help of local Red Cross volunteers, through media campaigns, school activities and community presentations.

In order to improve coordination and identify vulnerable groups, a data-gathering programme was set up as a tool for understanding the impact of mines on communities. The programme, which became a model of its kind, comprised two activities: general research on the human, social and economic effects of mines, and a study on mine accidents. Its findings were also used to help define the ICRC's approach to the landmine problem in other parts of the world.

Another lasting consequence of the hostilities, namely pervasive feelings of mistrust and lack of understanding, was addressed by the ICRC through a programme to promote fundamental humanitarian values. The programme focused on training teachers to motivate young people to join the Red Cross and become involved in community-based activities. Teacher-training workshops emphasized team spirit and awareness of Red Cross principles, such as respect for fellow human beings, regardless of ethnic origin.

Significant progress was made in spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law among the armed forces. Contacts with the military were strengthened and the number of courses held on the law of armed conflict was increased. In addition, a training agreement for all divisions was concluded with the Commander-in-Chief of the Bosnian Serb Army.
CROATIA

The process of returning the region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium to Croatian control, which went ahead in accordance with the provisions of the letter of intent addressed by the Croatian government to the United Nations Security Council in January, was a major focus of both national and international attention. Following nationwide local elections in April, joint political and administrative structures for the region were set up by the Croatian authorities together with the elected representatives of the Serb minority. The process took place under the supervision of UNTAES,* whose mandate was extended by two six-month terms to 15 January 1998, the completion date for reintegration.

The normalization of relations between Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia proceeded throughout the year, leading in September to the signing of six agreements on issues such as cross-border traffic, social welfare and a more flexible border regime between Eastern Slavonia and Yugoslavia.

Despite achievements at the political level, security conditions remained precarious for many people, particularly in Eastern Slavonia and the former UN Sectors. Although the mass exodus feared by some in the wake of the reintegration of Eastern Slavonia did not occur, housing shortages and the issue of displaced persons continued to give cause for concern. In February the ICRC submitted to the Croatian authorities a report on the situation of the population remaining in the former Sectors North and South. In response to a number of violent incidents in May, involving Croatian refugees returning to the former Sectors and local Serb residents, the ICRC provided assistance to the victims and made representations to the authorities to draw their attention to the situation.

Throughout the year, six ICRC mobile teams based in the towns of Knin and

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* UNTAES: United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium
Vojnic carried out daily visits to remote villages scattered across the region so as to assess the living conditions of elderly and isolated individuals.

Together with a number of National Societies, the ICRC assisted vulnerable people in Eastern Slavonia and the former Sectors by distributing food and other items, implementing a spring seed programme and running community kitchens. Emergency repairs to water-supply systems, rehabilitation projects and the provision of assistance to vulnerable people were also carried out.

IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- monitored the living conditions and treatment of some 115 persons held in 19 places of detention in connection with the conflict or for security-related offences;
- oversaw the release of 60 detainees previously held by the Croatian authorities, including 18 Bosnian Serb prisoners of war, and helped 12 detainees to return to their areas of origin;
- facilitated visits by 65 relatives to 34 detainees held in Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;
- collected a total of 896 tracing requests from the families of those who went missing as a result of the 1995 military operations in the former UN Sectors, submitted them to the relevant authorities and maintained contact with the latter, and provided answers to 66 cases;
- under the joint ICRC/UNHCR family reunification programme enabled 83 persons to leave the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Eastern Slavonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to join their relatives who had remained in Croatia;
- reunited 17 families separated by the former front lines;
- delivered 6,446 Red Cross messages;
- carried out regular visits to some 600 villages scattered throughout the former UN Sectors North, South and West to check on the living conditions and well-being of the civilian population in general and some 10,000 elderly Serbs in particular, making representations on their behalf to the authorities, when necessary;
- distributed food and other essential items on a monthly basis to some 30,000 displaced persons and refugees in Eastern Slavonia and the former UN Sectors;
- implemented a spring seed programme for 20,000 beneficiaries in Eastern Slavonia, providing them with 20,000 vegetable seed kits, 100 tonnes of potato seed and 100 tonnes of fertilizer;
- facilitated bilateral projects carried out by the German Red Cross to provide snacks to 7,854 children in 55 schools in Tenja and Tordinci, and to supply daily hot meals through community kitchens;
- supported ICRC assistance programmes for vulnerable people in Bosnia and Herzegovina via the relief logistics centre in Zagreb;
- through a project delegated to the Belgian Red Cross, supplied essential drugs for chronic diseases and surgical supplies to 6 health-care facilities in Eastern Slavonia;
sion of chemicals and equipment to municipal water boards ensured that basic standards of hygiene and sanitation were being met. Essential drugs and surgical supplies continued to be furnished to medical facilities in Eastern Slavonia until the Croatian Ministry of Health was able to take over responsibility for the region again.

- assisted the hospital in Vukovar by delivering daily hot meals to some 200 patients between June and September, when the health authority was able to take over;

- carried out emergency repairs to water-supply systems and throughout Eastern Slavonia and provided all 7 municipal water boards and 10 small villages with enough spare parts, tools and chemicals to enable them to ensure a continuous supply of drinking water;

- delivered an average of 20,000 litres of water a day to areas experiencing a temporary cut in their supply;

- completed a project to rehabilitate the sewage system at the Beli Manastir school complex in Eastern Slavonia, attended by 1,200 schoolchildren;

- organized 12 youth leadership workshops attended by 30 secondary school pupils and teachers;

- produced 4 editions (10,000 copies) of the ICRC/Croatian Red Cross newsletter, describing the activities of various youth organizations in Croatia;

- provided financial and logistical support to the Croatian Red Cross for 2 international summer camps attended by 160 young people from all over Croatia and the rest of Europe;

- continued to support first-aid teams in the Eastern Slavonia and Srem/Baranja regions, and provided 8 local Red Cross branches with radio equipment to improve their emergency preparedness;

- held a course in the law of armed conflict in February for some 20 army officers, followed by a course in October for 18 military instructors from all 3 branches of the armed forces (army, navy and air force);

- conducted 2,688 seminars on mine awareness for 13,000 adults and 46,000 children in various towns in Eastern Slavonia and other mine-contaminated areas;

- launched a new media campaign in February and held 5 press conferences to spread the message about the danger of mines;

- trained 85 local Red Cross volunteers as mine-awareness instructors and produced a video documentary on mine awareness to be used by them in their work;

- helped train 4 instructors from the UN Mine Action Centre to implement an awareness programme in centres for displaced persons and refugees;

- distributed mine-awareness information in the form of calendars, brochures and notebooks to the public and to its main contacts via instructors and local Red Cross branches.
Throughout the year the ICRC continued to monitor the conditions of detention and treatment of persons being held in connection with the conflict or for security-related offences. Those released were helped to return home by the ICRC, which oversaw transfer operations and organized transport. In April the organization set up a programme of family visits to detainees, under which people living in Eastern Slavonia were able to visit relatives held in Croatia. In addition, visits by family members living in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to detainees in Croatia, and vice versa, took place for the first time.

For many people, the most painful legacy of the war was continuing uncertainty about the fate of relatives who had gone missing. The search for those unaccounted for since the 1991 conflict in Croatia and the 1995 military operations in the former UN Sectors remained a cause for deep concern. In 1997 the ICRC attended, as an observer, five sessions of the Croatian and Yugoslav governmental commissions for missing persons.

Under a joint ICRC/UNHCR family reunification programme, the ICRC helped elderly and other vulnerable people to get back together with relatives who had fled to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia following the military operations in the former Sectors. The ICRC also ran its own programme, reuniting individuals with their families in Croatia. In Eastern Slavonia the ICRC kept a watch on the changes brought about by the region’s reintegration, maintaining contacts with the local population, the authorities and UNTAES.

To combat the ever-present threat posed by landmines in former front-line areas, the ICRC worked with the Croatian Red Cross to implement a community-based programme under which Red Cross volunteers received training in how to increase mine awareness in their own communities. In addition to organizing hundreds of seminars and presentations, in February the ICRC launched a media campaign on the issue of mines.

As part of the ICRC/Croatian Red Cross youth programme, a series of leadership training workshops took place for secondary-school teachers and students, and for the first time in Croatia, two international Red Cross summer camps were organized. The aim of the camps was to promote Red Cross principles and awareness of humanitarian issues through the exchange of ideas and discussion of relevant topics.
The year under review was marked by growing political and economic instability in all regions, with occasional outbursts of violence giving serious cause for concern. The Serbian President, Slobodan Milosevic, was voted in as Federal President in July but elections for both his successor in Serbia and a new leader in Montenegro were the subject of some controversy. The economic outlook remained grim and the population manifested its discontent by staging protests in Belgrade and Kosovo.

The ICRC focused its attention on Kosovo as demonstrations by the Albanian community over the state of the economy and the failure by the Serbian authorities to implement an agreement on the education system reached in September 1996 became increasingly violent. In January Serbian police carried out a series of arrests of Kosovo Albanians suspected of having committed acts to undermine State security. Following repeated contacts with and written representations to the Ministry of Justice in Belgrade, the ICRC was given access at the end of February to those arrested. However, a second round of visits was suspended owing to the authorities' refusal to allow the ICRC to speak in private with detainees not yet sentenced. Despite numerous contacts with the authorities and a meeting on the issue between the Serbian President and the ICRC President in Belgrade in June this remained the case until December, when a written representation to the Ministry of Justice resulted in permission being granted to the ICRC to visit the detainees whose sentences had been confirmed.

In the meantime, delegates kept up regular visits to other security detainees already sentenced. In addition, the ICRC reunited detainees released by the Croatian authorities with their families in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- visited some 117 detainees held for reasons of State security in 14 places of detention;
- carried out one round of visits to 37 persons of Albanian origin held in 5 places of detention in Kosovo;
- reunited 12 detainees released by the Croatian authorities with their families in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;
- collected a total of 896 tracing requests from the families of those unaccounted for since the 1995 military operations in the former UN Sectors, submitted them to and maintained contact with the relevant authorities, and provided answers to 66 cases;
- reunited 41 people with their families in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;
- under a joint ICRC/UNHCR family reunification programme, helped 83 persons living in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Eastern Slavonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina return to their relatives who had remained in Croatia;
- handled 2,501 Red Cross messages;
- helped the Yugoslav Red Cross open 5 dissemination centres by training volunteer staff and providing books and equipment;
- launched a 12-month project on the protection of and respect for the red cross emblem, instructing Yugoslav Red Cross volunteers in its proper use;
- assisted the Yugoslav Red Cross in organizing summer camps for 6,000 children, many of them orphaned refugees;
- held courses in humanitarian law for officers of the First Army in April, the Yugoslav navy in June and the Third Army in September;
- trained 37 mine-awareness instructors from 6 Red Cross branches and developed a small-scale mine-awareness programme for people working the land near the country's western borders.
The search for those unaccounted for since the 1991 conflict in Croatia and the 1995 military operations in the former UN Sectors remained a priority for the ICRC, which took part as an observer in five meetings of the Yugoslav and Croatian governmental commissions for missing persons. Relations between the two countries on a number of other issues continued to improve.\footnote{See \textit{Croatia}, pp. 193-196.}

Under a joint ICRC/UNHCR family reunification programme, the ICRC helped people who had fled to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia during the military operations in the former Sectors to resume contact with and, in some cases, return to their relatives still in Croatia. The organization also maintained its own programme, reuniting mainly elderly people and other vulnerable individuals with their families in the Federal Republic.

The ICRC held various seminars and training workshops in humanitarian law for the Yugoslav armed forces. Working relations were formally established with SFOR headquarters and command posts. Together with the Yugoslav Red Cross, the ICRC trained an initial pool of mine-awareness instructors from Red Cross branches located in border areas. The ICRC also helped the National Society to open dissemination centres in five of the country's main cities.
TURKEY

As in previous years, the ICRC endeavoured to further discussions with the Turkish authorities on a number of humanitarian issues. At the end of March the Delegate General for Western and Central Europe and the Balkans travelled to Ankara, where he held talks at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the year, several meetings were also held with Turkey's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva. In each case, however, the Turkish authorities were unwilling to enter into substantial dialogue on whether or not Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions applied to the situation in the south-eastern part of the country. Consequently, the ICRC was unable to discuss potential activities for detainees or civilians affected by the situation in these areas.

On two occasions – in May/June and again in September/October – the Turkish army launched a major military operation in northern Iraq. The ICRC appealed to the Turkish military authorities and to all the parties involved to observe the basic rules of international humanitarian law, requesting immediate access to the area so as to be able to fulfil its mandate under the Geneva Conventions. The Turkish authorities turned down its request, arguing that the Fourth Geneva Convention did not apply.

Pursuant to the agreement concluded in 1996 with the Turkish military authorities, the ICRC was invited to hold a series of courses in the law of armed conflict. In March 60 army and navy officers attended three basic courses, while a training seminar was held for 43 military instructors. In addition, a special course in humanitarian law and human rights was given to 18 senior police officers.

BUDAPEST
Regional delegation
(Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia)

The ICRC's opening of a regional delegation to cover central and south-eastern Europe coincided with the move by many countries in this part of the world to switch to a market economy and become members of supranational institutions, such as NATO and the European Union. Some of these countries saw their efforts rewarded and others faced disappointment. Throughout the year the
new delegation strove to gain an understanding of how the rapid political and economic developments were affecting the more vulnerable sectors of society.

With the breakdown of law and order in Albania the fledgling delegation was confronted with an immediate crisis. It responded by coordinating the setting-up of a fully operational delegation.\(^\text{12}\)

At the end of March the ICRC President attended the official opening of the regional delegation and met the Hungarian President and Prime Minister, both of whom expressed their willingness to support the delegation in all its activities.

Throughout the year the delegation worked to build up a broad network of government, media and National Society contacts with the aim of promoting knowledge of international humanitarian law and its incorporation into national legislation. Missions were carried out to the National Societies of all eight countries covered by the delegation, mainly to assess their needs and capabilities and to discuss potential areas of cooperation. During the visit to Bulgaria, which took place in January, meetings were held with the National Society to discuss the order of priority for responding to the needs created by the economic and political turmoil affecting the country.

In October, while visiting the Romanian capital Bucharest for the North Atlantic Assembly, the ICRC President and the regional delegate held a series of meetings with representatives of the government and of the Red Cross of Romania.

In order to develop and structure cooperation programmes with the tracing services of the region's National Societies, an assessment of the current tracing activities and potential needs of the Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, Romanian and Slovak Red Cross Societies was carried out at the end of September.

Substantial progress was achieved in the drive to spread knowledge of humanitarian law among the region's armed forces. Existing training programmes continued to be implemented in Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, while activities were resumed in Poland and Romania after a break of almost six years. The first-ever course in the law of armed conflict to be held in Slovenia brought together 24 armed forces officers in October. The delegation also investigated the possibility of extending such activities to the police and security forces of Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and discussed plans for active cooperation with the armed forces of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia.

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\(^{12}\) See Albania, pp. 182-184.
Over the past few years the ICRC has opened prosthetic/orthotic workshops and rehabilitation centres in the southern Caucasus to assist amputees, especially landmine victims. In 1997 the ICRC fitted more than 7,000 of these victims in its workshops and provided other limb-fitting centres with some 19,000 orthopaedic components.
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 expatriates: 1 117
National Societies: 1 35
Local employees: 2 753

**Total expenditure**

Sfr 65,538,137

**Expenditure breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protection/tracing:</td>
<td>16,057,924</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relief:</td>
<td>26,455,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health activities:</td>
<td>7,128,945</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperation with National Societies:</td>
<td>1,798,822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion/dissemination:</td>
<td>5,537,457</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operational support:</td>
<td>5,130,373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overheads:</td>
<td>3,429,416</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Average figures calculated on an annual basis.
2 Under ICRC contract, as at December 1997.

EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA
In 1997, for the first time in many years, cease-fire agreements were in place in all the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia previously affected by the conflicts that had ensued after the break-up of the former Soviet Union. These included Tajikistan, where a cessation of hostilities had been concluded in late December 1996, followed by the setting-up of a National Reconciliation Commission. In most cases, however, open fighting was replaced by “no-war-no-peace” stalemates and no lasting solution was found to the actual problems at the heart of the conflicts; sporadic outbursts of violence and the lingering threat of landmines continued to claim many victims, and no real progress was made at the political level which would preclude fighting breaking out again over old, unresolved issues. The consequences of this situation in humanitarian terms were especially severe, given the extreme and deepening economic hardship caused by the collapse of the former Soviet system and the transition from a planned to a market economy, which had impoverished the population and paralyzed social services. The absence of negotiated political settlements exacerbated the plight of the population and made it even more difficult to find solutions to the acute humanitarian problems: hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people were still afraid of returning to their homes, which, in any event, had often been either destroyed or occupied by others; many persons detained in relation to conflicts were still held captive in spite of the fact that hostilities had stopped and agreements for their release had been signed; and in some areas, armed blockades remained in place, resulting in a further deterioration of economic conditions and the complete isolation of the affected population.

In this context the ICRC pursued its efforts to protect and assist detainees and civilians still affected by the aftermath of armed conflicts in the region, particularly in the northern Caucasus, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan. In Armenia and Azerbaijan a group of prisoners held in relation to the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh was released in May under the auspices of the ICRC. Protection and assistance activities were developed further in Armenia and Georgia, where the organization had full access to all places of detention. In parallel with the existing tuberculosis programme for detainees in Azerbaijan, a similar project got off the ground in Georgia. In both countries tuberculosis was the leading cause of death among prison inmates.

In support of its ongoing attempts to shed light on the fate of those who remained unaccounted for in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, the ICRC submitted to the authorities concerned a list containing the names of more than 2,200 missing persons. Throughout the region, the extensive Red Cross message network continued to be an essential means of communication for families split up by hostilities.

To assist the war-wounded and people injured during sporadic fighting, medical and surgical supplies were distributed to health facilities caring for
them, while the prosthetic/orthotic workshops in Baku, Tbilisi and Gagra continued the production of artificial limbs for amputees.

As in the previous year, the need for safe drinking water was greatest in Chechnya and Nagorny Karabakh. To prevent widespread disease and provide sufficient water for small-scale farming in areas affected by conflict, substantial distributions, repairs and maintenance work were carried out in both regions. The people who suffered most in the fighting, particularly minority groups and the elderly, benefited from ongoing relief programmes. In Abkhazia and Chechnya these took the shape of community kitchens and support for state bakeries, while in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Nagorny Karabakh and Tajikistan traditional distributions of food, clothing and other supplies were carried out. Special programmes included the rehabilitation of schools and kindergartens in Armenia and Azerbaijan, which were aimed at enabling classes to continue during the cold winter months. Assistance was not, however, limited to the distribution of food and other items: as part of a drive to restore long-term self-sufficiency, agricultural tools, seeds and fertilizer were provided for conflict victims in Abkhazia, Nagorny Karabakh and Tajikistan.

The numerous violations of international humanitarian law committed in the course of the armed conflicts that took place in the region were a clear sign that spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law to as wide a spectrum of audiences as possible should remain an essential component of the organization's activities. Even greater efforts therefore went into making political, military, educational and academic circles aware of humanitarian rules and principles, using communication tools specifically tailored for each target group. To assist States in integrating into domestic legislation all international obligations arising under humanitarian law, the ICRC continued to offer governments in the region specialist legal advisory services on the drafting and implementation of laws, notably in Armenia, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.

As in the past, the ICRC continued to step up its active cooperation with the National Societies of the region, particularly in the northern Caucasus. Support and training were given to bolster their operational capacity in the areas of tracing, dissemination and relief and to promote long-term development.

Throughout the year, activities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia were overshadowed by the murder of six ICRC delegates in the hospital of Novye Atagi on 17 December 1996, which had brought home the true extent of the volatile security situation in the region, with all its consequences for ICRC operations. The ICRC maintained close contact with the relevant judicial and political authorities, in both Grozny and Moscow, so as to underline the need to pursue the investigation into the murders and to identify the perpetrators. As 1997 came to a close, however, no official information regarding the circumstances surrounding these tragic events had been received.
Eastern Europe

KYIV
Regional delegation
(Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Ukraine)

Most of the countries covered by the Kyiv regional delegation continued to experience economic and social hardship as well as their share of political tension. In its second year of operation, the delegation maintained contact with a broad range of authorities in the region, with the goal of promoting international humanitarian law and familiarizing them with ICRC activities. Through its presence, the organization was also in a position to monitor any changes in the humanitarian situation.

On 29 September, the President of Lithuania paid an official visit to the ICRC headquarters in Geneva, during which he announced his country’s willingness to support its National Society and to cooperate in implementing humanitarian law at the national level.

As part of its limited protection activities, the delegation continued to follow the situation of members of the “Ilascu group” held since 1992 in Tiraspol, in the self-proclaimed “Dniestr Republic” in Moldova, who were last visited in 1994. It also monitored the situation of vulnerable minority groups.

The assistance of the ICRC’s Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law was again offered in incorporating humanitarian law into national legislation, with technical support, special seminars and other advice on the drafting or amendment of laws being given to the governments of Belarus, Estonia, Lithuania and Ukraine. To help the implementation process along, the ICRC arranged for the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols to be translated into Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian. As a follow-up to the seminar on implementation of humanitarian law held in Kyiv in September 1996, the delegation maintained contact with the Ministry of Justice in Ukraine to promote the setting-up of an interministerial committee for national implementation.

After the teaching of humanitarian law was made compulsory in all military training programmes, new manuals on the rules of combat and the law of armed conflict were published in Ukrainian with ICRC support. Teaching aids were also provided to the military department of Kyiv State University, where the head of the law faculty started a 40-hour course for advanced trainee officers, following his participation in three ICRC seminars over the preceding few years. At the invitation of the Lithuanian Ministry of Defence, representatives of the ICRC and the Lithuanian Red Cross were invited to take part in a regional field exercise called
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- kept up efforts to regain access to the three detainees of the "Ilascu group", held since 1992 in Tiraspol, in the self-proclaimed "Dniestr Republic" in Moldova;
- arranged for a Ukrainian soldier who had been with the Soviet armed forces in Afghanistan to return home to his family;
- under cooperation programmes, provided financial support and training for the tracing, dissemination and information services of all 6 National Societies of the region;
- financially supported National Society publications: a leaflet on the Red Cross, 5,000 copies of a new internal newsletter in Belarus, and 3,000 copies of a newsletter and 5,000 copies of a poster for World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day in Ukraine;
- organized for the third time an international one-week course on the law of armed conflict, attended by 19 officers from all 12 countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Bulgaria, Estonia and Latvia;
- held 2 three-day seminars on the law of armed conflict for more than 70 high-ranking Ukrainian officers;
- in Belarus, gave a presentation for 25 officers from the Minsk barracks;
- in Belarus, organized a seminar on national implementation of humanitarian law attended by 45 participants from 20 ministries and national institutions, and distributed a report on the conclusions of the seminar to the relevant authorities;
- in Belarus, participated in the first meeting of the interministerial committee for the implementation of international humanitarian law;
- under its university dissemination programme, enabled lecturers from all countries covered by the Kyiv delegation to attend the second ICRC Russian-language course on humanitarian law held in Moscow in November;
- organized 7 dissemination seminars for Red Cross branches and local institutions in Ukraine, and 3 in Belarus;
- published some 100,000 copies of a new manual on the rules of combat and 7,000 copies of a manual on the law of armed conflict in Ukrainian.
Amber Hope for peace-keeping troops from Lithuania, Poland and Denmark. Delegates were able to present basic principles of humanitarian law and carry out simulated ICRC operational activities, which were fully integrated into the field exercise. Two high-ranking Ukrainian officers participated in the first Russian-language course on the law of armed conflict held at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy.

From 1 January, the delegation started to give full technical assistance for the tracing services of both the Latvian and the Lithuanian Red Cross Societies. The services continued to be financed by the British Red Cross. Cooperation agreements covering a range of activities were renewed with the National Societies of the region. Training as well as material and financial support were provided to help strengthen their operational capacity, notably in the areas of tracing, dissemination and information. The ICRC also assisted in the preparation and publication of the National Societies' internal bulletins so as to enhance contact between branches and headquarters and to spread basic knowledge about the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and humanitarian law. In the second half of the year special attention was paid to the Crimea, Ukraine, which had seen the return home of mainly Tatar communities who had been deported to Central Asia at the end of the Second World War; many of these people were living in particularly difficult conditions. Emphasis was laid on strengthening and extending a network of National Society nurses, who assisted all the most vulnerable groups among the civilian population.
MOSCOW
Regional delegation
(Russian Federation, with specialized services for all
countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia)

The end of hostilities in the northern Caucasus and the relative political continuity in Moscow enabled the regional delegation to keep focusing on the promotion of international humanitarian law. To promote respect for humanitarian law and facilitate the ICRC’s activities in the region, dissemination to a broad spectrum of audiences, including the armed and security forces, federal authorities, universities and schoolchildren, remained the mainstay of the regional delegation’s activities.

Between 1 and 4 June, the ICRC President paid an official visit to Moscow at the invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In addition to the Minister and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, he met the Ministers of the Interior and Education, the Speaker of the State Duma, the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Russian Federation, the Secretary of the Security Council and the First Deputy Chief of Staff. The discussions centred mainly on the humanitarian consequences of the war in Chechnya, including issues such as the conduct of the hostilities, protection of the civilian population and the fate of prisoners and missing persons; they also touched on the development of cooperation between the ICRC and the authorities of the Russian Federation in disseminating humanitarian law to the armed forces and at schools and universities, and on support by the Russian Federation for ICRC activities in various parts of the world. The ICRC President also met the Chechen First Deputy Prime Minister, with whom he raised, among other things, the question of detainees held in relation to the Chechen conflict, and the issue of ICRC operations in the northern Caucasus. The question of the outcome of the enquiry into the 1996 murder of six ICRC delegates in Chechnya was discussed with both the Federal Russian and Chechen interlocutors. In the latter regard, the ICRC President again emphasized the importance of identifying and prosecuting the perpetrators.

As part of its activities to promote humanitarian law, the regional delegation was able to establish and develop contacts with high-level representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Education and Justice, the President’s Office and Parliament. A study of national legislation and implementation of humanitarian law, carried out by a group of experts in the field, got under way.

Further support was given to national efforts to integrate the law of armed conflict into the training, instruction and combat procedures of the armed forces. Despite numerous meetings and seminars, existing cooperation agreements signed...
promoting humanitarian law among the armed forces

dissemination at universities

with the Ministries of the Interior and Defence could not be fully implemented. In contrast, new contacts were developed at the executive level of the military hierarchy and several extensive new cooperation programmes were agreed upon, including one with the federal border guard service. Dissemination sessions and seminars on the law of armed conflict were held for various military units and institutions, and military instructors in the northern Caucasus. With support from the ICRC, three high-ranking officers took part in the first Russian-language course on humanitarian law held in San Remo, Italy.

Progress was achieved in making humanitarian law an accepted part of the federal curricula for international law and journalism faculties, as compulsory courses on the subject were incorporated into the teaching programmes of several universities and other institutes of higher learning. A new second-year course on war and the media was held by the journalism faculty of Moscow State University, which, with support from the ICRC, was able to send a lecturer to a symposium in Boston, United States. Material on humanitarian law was systematically made available to Russian universities. A highlight of the year was the first-ever De Martens moot court competition on humanitarian law, which drew participants from 10 law and international relations faculties in the CIS* region that had participated in an ICRC Russian-language course on the teaching of humanitarian law in 1996. The second such course, again held in Russian, was organized in November. The delegation also convened an international conference on the promotion and dissemination of humanitarian law in cooperation with the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, and arranged for a senior lecturer from the journalism faculty of Moscow State University to participate in a seminar held in San Remo, Italy, on the role of the mass media in armed conflict.

The ICRC’s vast schools programme, now in its third year, was designed with a view to familiarizing secondary school students in most of the CIS countries with the basic principles underpinning both international humanitarian law and the mandate and activities of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. To ensure integration and acceptance of the programme it was decided to incorporate a selection of texts illustrating human behaviour in situations of violence into the existing, official course on national literature. Carried out under cooperation agreements signed with regional and federal education structures, the programme was assessed in the first half of the year. On the basis of the results, work started on similar teaching material for 13 to 14 year-old pupils and in October the first copies of a pilot version textbook were distributed for testing in 74 Russian regions.

A travelling exhibition entitled People and War, which showed 140 photographs from the ICRC archives spanning the period from 1859 to 1996, toured

* Commonwealth of Independent States
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- helped 5 people living in former conflict areas to be reunited with their families in the Russian Federation;
- forwarded 62 Red Cross messages between civilians in the southern Caucasus region and their families in the Russian Federation;
- covered 18 salaries and part of the running costs of the Russian Red Cross Society's tracing service;
- organized a seminar for the heads of the tracing services of the 15 National Societies of the former Soviet Union;
- carried out support missions to each of the CIS National Societies receiving ICRC assistance;
- provided financial backing for the national Red Cross museum, which gave some 100 presentations on the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement for school classes and nursing students;
- assisted in the production and financially supported the publication and distribution of two issues of the new version of the Russian Red Cross magazine;
- furnished local Red Cross committees with a range of dissemination materials;
- set up a second international course on the law of armed conflict, held in Moscow and attended by 16 representatives from 13 CIS countries;
- organized a travelling exhibition on humanitarian law entitled People and War, which aimed to promote understanding of humanitarian law and Red Cross activities carried out on behalf of war victims; (the exhibition toured 5 cities, including 2 in the northern Caucasus, and was visited by 3,000 to 8,000 people in each location);
- presented seminars on the implementation of humanitarian law for representatives of the authorities, federal institutions, members of parliament and the Russian Red Cross;
- organized 3 Russian-language seminars attended by representatives of the Ministries of Defence of CIS countries, the Baltic States and Bulgaria;
- held several seminars on the law of armed conflict at numerous military schools and institutes in the Russian Federation, the southern Caucasus, Belarus and Ukraine;
- under the schools programme, produced and distributed textbooks and manuals reaching 2.3 million fifth-form students and 115,000 teachers in the Russian Federation;
- launched 7,000 copies of a pilot textbook for sixth-form students and 300 accompanying teachers' manuals;
- organized in Moscow a second seminar on the teaching of humanitarian law for 40 junior lecturers and assistants from law and international relations departments of universities in the Russian Federation and 10 other CIS countries;
- distributed comprehensive sets of Russian-language ICRC publications on humanitarian law to over 1,000 academic libraries across the Russian Federation;
- published more than 168,000 copies of books, reports and other documents, notably 4,000 copies of a university textbook on humanitarian law, and 1 issue of the ICRC periodical Challenges, which covered operations in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.
dissemination to the general public

several Russian towns, including Moscow, St Petersburg, Rostov and Nalchik. It drew thousands of visitors, among them high-ranking representatives of the authorities and the armed forces, as well as children participating in the ICRC schools programme. Media coverage and round-table discussions further enhanced its impact.

Cooperation with the Russian Red Cross Society continued largely unchanged. As in the past, efforts concentrated on two main areas: operational support to Red Cross branches in the northern Caucasus (which was expanded to include the districts of Stavropol and Krasnodar) and substantial material assistance for the National Society’s tracing services and dissemination programmes. The volume of Red Cross messages and tracing requests was relatively modest; all Red Cross messages addressed to destinations in the Russian Federation were handed over to the National Society for distribution, with the exception of those messages exchanged between detainees in the southern Caucasus region and their families in the Russian Federation. To assist with the development of tracing services in the broader region, follow-up missions were carried out to the southern Caucasus and Central Asia. Joint ICRC/Russian Red Cross dissemination activities were kept up as in previous years. A decision was taken to convert the National Society’s magazine (Review of the Russian Red Cross) into a teaching aid so as to facilitate the “training the trainers” scheme, one of the cornerstones of dissemination in the Russian Federation which had encountered difficulties owing to the vastness of the country and the resulting large number of local Red Cross structures. The scheme, developed under a cooperation agreement with the Russian Red Cross, was financially supported by the ICRC. The National Society was also associated with the ICRC’s schools programme.

The Moscow delegation continued to function as a decentralized publishing unit for Russian-language texts used by government officials, legal experts, teachers, military instructors, the National Societies and ICRC delegations throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Northern Caucasus

The situation in the northern Caucasus remained a source of concern even though no major military action took place in the region. The Chechen presidential and parliamentary elections in January went ahead as scheduled, but discussions held during the year between Moscow and Grozny on the future status of Chechnya did not yield any significant results. Very difficult security conditions prevailed in the eastern republics of the northern Caucasus, with assassinations and kidnappings a common occurrence despite tougher law-enforcement measures being taken by the Chechen and Russian authorities.
ICRC operations in the northern Caucasus were considerably reduced, following the murder of six delegates at the Novye Atagi field hospital in December 1996¹ and owing to the rise in crime in the area. After the tragedy, the ICRC, which had been one of the few organizations active in the region throughout the conflict, withdrew all its expatriate staff from Chechnya, Daghestan, Ingushetia and North Ossetia, and regrouped its operational base at the sub-delegation in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria. In the course of 1997 every available opportunity was taken to enquire about progress made with the authorities' enquiry into the assassinations. In February and May, the Delegate General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia met the President of the Chechen Republic for discussions in Grozny. The issue was also raised by the ICRC President during his official visit to Moscow in June. By the end of the year, security conditions and the lack of progress regarding the enquiry still precluded a permanent expatriate presence in Chechnya and its neighbouring republics.

However, in view of the manifest needs of the population, assistance was continued. A team of expatriates was maintained at the sub-delegation in Nalchik so that health and relief programmes were able to continue in all five republics, carried out by local ICRC staff and local committees of the Russian Red Cross from Chechnya, Daghestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia. To report on the implementation of these programmes, ICRC local staff paid weekly visits to the ICRC sub-delegation in Nalchik; in addition, ICRC delegates carried out one-day visits as well as ad hoc missions to monitor the situation and follow up ongoing ICRC activities. In May, a revised plan of activities for the period up to the year's end was drawn up, thus formalizing the adjustments that became necessary after the events of December 1996. Under the plan, cooperation was also extended to the Red Cross committees in the autonomous republics of Karachayevo-Cherkesskaya and Adygea, and in the districts of Stavropol and

¹ See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, p. 198.
protecting detainees
and the civilian population

importance of
Red Cross messages

Krasnodar, thus enabling the ICRC to channel assistance to even greater numbers
of internally displaced people and to vulnerable groups affected by the conflict in
Chechnya. First contacts were established in the republic of Kalmykia in
December, with a view to developing cooperation with the local Red Cross com-
mittee. Traditional cooperation programmes, such as the home visiting nurses pro-
gramme and basic relief assistance, were kept up as in the previous year.

Protection work declined significantly owing to the fact that delegates were
withdrawn from Chechnya and the three neighbouring republics, and the fate of
people captured during the hostilities remained a source of great concern to the
ICRC. Contacts with a number of organizations dealing with this issue were main-
tained. The delegation, on behalf of the families concerned, also requested the
Russian federal authorities to provide information on the whereabouts of prison-
ers previously visited by the ICRC. A comprehensive report on the conduct of
hostilities during the war in Chechnya was submitted to the relevant authorities,
so that appropriate lessons can be learned from the events, notably as regards
training combatants in the law of armed conflict.

As there was an ongoing need to restore family links and in view of the dis-
rupted communication system, the ICRC assisted the local committee of the Red
Cross in Chechnya in setting up its own tracing service. The Red Cross message
network resumed operations in the republic during the summer. As part of gen-
eral cooperation activities, contact was maintained with local Russian Red Cross
branches in the northern Caucasus so as to assist them in their tracing work.
Delegates also kept in touch with the representatives of official and private com-
mittees set up to deal with enquiries about missing persons, and stood ready to
assist both former parties to the conflict in ascertaining the fate of missing people.
The ICRC’s assistance, however, was not requested.

To monitor the situation of civilians affected by the Chechen and Ingush-
Ossetian conflicts, relevant information was gathered from local ICRC employees,
the local committees of the Russian Red Cross and through contacts with the
authorities. Following a flare-up in violence in the Prigorodny district in summer,
the head of the Nalchik sub-delegation met with the Ministers of Internal Affairs,
Security, Social Protection and Health of North Ossetia to discuss the humanitar-
ian consequences of the tensions.

After the conclusion of emergency dissemination activities designed to facili-
tate humanitarian operations and access to victims during the conflict, emphasis
shifted to developing longer-term plans for raising awareness of humanitarian law.
In light of the clear threat to humanitarian assistance in the northern Caucasus, a
priority was to gain widespread acceptance of ICRC work and personnel. To build
up a comprehensive dissemination and communication approach, use was made
of a dense network of contacts and partners in the region, with the aim of reaching
all strata of society and of obtaining reliable information about the situation on
the ground. In the first quarter of the year, local staff were trained at the Nalchik
sub-delegation to become dissemination officers for Chechnya, Daghestan,
Ingushetia and North Ossetia.

Despite the reduction in activities, delegates maintained contact with the fed­
eral armed forces in the northern Caucasus. Seminars on humanitarian law were
held throughout the year for troops stationed in the region, civil defence instruc­
tors in North Ossetia and first-aid trainees of the local Red Cross committee in
Nalchik. At the invitation of the officer responsible for education and training in
the northern Caucasus military district, the ICRC prepared a range of lecture
material which was published in a training officers' journal and in this manner dis­
tributed to all units of the federal forces in the district. Other dissemination tools
included crossword puzzles and quizzes on humanitarian law and the history of
humanitarian action. Contacts were stepped up with universities and institutes in
Kabardino-Balkaria, where the travelling exhibition People and War was shown in
Nalchik in December. The schools programme4 covered the entire northern
Caucasus, with the exception of Chechnya.

After ICRC health activities were officially suspended in Chechnya, all remain­
ing medical supplies were handed over to the Chechen Ministry of Health for dis­
tribution to local medical facilities. To be able to respond rapidly in the event of an
epidemic or other emergency, the ICRC kept a contingency stock of medicines
and medical items at the sub-delegation in Nalchik. All new equipment purchased
by the organization for Hospitals No. 4 and No. 9, the Respublika Hospital and the
general surgical centre in Grozny, which were badly damaged in the war, was
delivered and installed. In addition, substantial one-off deliveries of medicines
were made in the course of the year to help medical facilities meet the needs of
the population. Outside Chechnya, limited activities continued: in Daghestan, for
example, the refurbishing of the children's tuberculosis hospital in Khasavyurt was
completed. Owing to the continued widespread lack of medical supplies, the pres­
ence of large numbers of internally displaced people and sporadic violence caus­
ing numerous wounded, ad hoc deliveries were made to hospitals and other med­
ical facilities in Daghestan throughout the year.

The Novye Atagi field hospital, scene of the tragedy in 1996, was officially
handed over to the Chechen health authorities in September. At the same time an
agreement was concluded with the Chechen Ministry of Health, which precisely
defined the authorities' responsibilities towards patients, staff and equipment.

To formalize the end of direct ICRC involvement in the rehabilitation of the
blood transfusion centre in Grozny, a Memorandum of Understanding was con­
cluded with the Ministry of Health in October. The construction work was virtu­

4 See pp. 210-211.
ally completed by the end of the year. To ensure that back-up blood screening services would be available until the transfusion centre becomes operational, appropriate materials and other supplies were given to Hospitals No. 4 and No. 9.

Throughout the year, regular financial and material support was provided for the visiting nurses programme. As in the past, the programme was managed by local branches of the Russian Red Cross in Chechnya, Daghestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia, Adygea and Karachayev-Cherkesskaya; (up to 99 nurses provided medical care for over 1,200 patients);

- gave financial and material support for the visiting nurses programme run by the local branches of the Russian Red Cross in the republics of Chechnya, Daghestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia, Adygea and Karachayev-Cherkesskaya; (up to 99 nurses provided medical care for over 1,200 patients);
- handled 583 Red Cross messages in Chechnya;
- in all, provided the local committees of the Russian Red Cross Society with more than 2,200 tonnes of relief for distribution to particularly vulnerable groups;
- in the winter months, furnished warm clothing and shoes for distribution to vulnerable groups, including internally displaced people in Chechnya, Daghestan and Kabardino-Balkaria;
- gave food and other supplies to 26 social-welfare and medical establishments caring for 6,800 people;
- supplied books and writing and knitting materials to 70,000 schoolchildren in Chechnya;
- provided 720 patients cared for under the visiting nurses programme in Grozny and Gudermes with family parcels, wheat flour and hygiene kits;
- provided 32 collective centres housing internally displaced people in Khasavyurt with assistance such as repair materials, ovens, stoves and disinfectant;
- until March, in a total of 17 community kitchens in Grozny, Argun and Gudermes supplied 1 meal a day, 5 days a week, for some 8,200 beneficiaries;
- through the local branch of the Russian Red Cross, distributed food and hygiene articles to a total of 30,000 vulnerable people living in mountainous areas of Chechnya;
- under the bread programme supplied 117 tonnes of wheat flour, enabling up to 8,000 beneficiaries to collect 3 loaves of bread a week from state bakeries;
- delivered medical supplies to the general surgery, eye surgery, paediatric, maternity and burns units of 4 hospitals in Grozny;
- delivered medical supplies to 5 hospitals and 12 other health facilities in Daghestan, and to the central hospital and an orphanage in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria;
- supplied medicines to 14 sanatoriums in Kabardino-Balkaria, enabling them to treat some 6,000 internally displaced people sheltered there;
Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia, providing for elderly and housebound people to be assisted at home by nurses dispensing quality care and medicines, as well as hot meals and food parcels. Minor repairs were carried out in the homes of several hundred beneficiaries. In the second half of the year, the ICRC extended the programme to the local committees of the Russian Red Cross in the Adygei and Karachayevo-Cherkesskaya republics.

- carried out a one-off distribution of medical supplies to the 400-bed military hospital in Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia, the Nazran Respublika Hospital in Ingushetia, and to hospitals in Krasnodar caring for victims of the conflict in Chechnya;
- provided the Respublika Hospital in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria, and 2 hospitals in Stavropol with one-off deliveries of medical material to enable them to give free emergency care to a total of 10,000 internally displaced people;
- provided technical equipment for repairing 15 boreholes linked to the main water-treatment plant in Grozny;
- in Grozny, produced 52,000 cu. m of chlorinated water;
- provided basic equipment such as tools, pumps, engines, spare parts and protective clothing to the Grozny water board to help it maintain the sewerage system;
- donated 6 water trucks to the local administration in Grozny;
- supported medical and social-welfare programmes of the local branches of the Russian Red Cross in Chechnya and 7 neighbouring republics;
- organized a seminar on strategic planning and institutional development, attended by the presidents and other representatives of 11 local Red Cross committees of the northern Caucasus and southern Russia;
- held a first-aid training seminar for the 5 Red Cross committees in the northern Caucasus in cooperation with the Russian Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies;
- appointed a Chechen specialist to carry out a study on Chechen customary law and traditions of warfare, with a view to strengthening acceptance of humanitarian law by finding parallels in the local culture;
- organized 9 seminars on the law of armed conflict attended by 730 soldiers and officers stationed in the northern Caucasus military district;
- gave presentations on the ICRC and humanitarian law to education and training officers of troops falling under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior;
- distributed 20,000 wall and pocket calendars with humanitarian-law themes;
- provided the libraries of military units with publications on humanitarian law and the ICRC;
- presented the travelling exhibition People and War in two cities.
assistance relating to water-supply and sewerage systems

Even though the fighting had stopped, there was no improvement in the disastrous state of the public utilities in many localities, notably Grozny. The poor condition of the sewerage and water-supply systems presented a major public health hazard and left the population vulnerable to epidemics, especially during the hot summer months. Local staff continued to carry out ICRC projects to upkeep pumping stations in Grozny and Gudermes, thus providing the population with safe drinking water. The ICRC fleet of six tanker trucks was donated to the local administration for use in delivering water to the population; in addition, clean water was transported by the non-governmental organization Merlin and private distributors. To assist the city’s administration in addressing the chronic sewerage problem, material assistance in the form of tools, pumps, spare parts and other items that could not be purchased locally was given to the Grozny water board. In parts of the town flooded by sewerage, pumps were provided to enable residents to evacuate waste water from their basements.

Since no immediate end to the water and sewerage crisis was in sight, the sub-delegation in Nalchik, in cooperation with the Chechen committee of the Red Cross, organized an information campaign to make the population aware of the health hazards associated with drinking contaminated water and encourage them to boil water supplied by the municipal system. No cases of cholera were reported in Chechnya during the summer. However, following an outbreak of dysentery and typhoid in Daghestan, a special distribution of chlorine was made to disinfect water tanks in villages surrounding Khasavyurt. Hospitals in the region received supplies of the necessary medicines until the epidemic was under control. To prevent another similar incident, pumps were provided to the affected villages, chlorine tablets distributed in schools and information posters displayed.

As in the case of medical supplies, the sub-delegation in Nalchik maintained a contingency stock of relief items, which would enable it to meet the needs of 20,000 to 25,000 beneficiaries for two to three months.

Since the needs of vulnerable groups did not stop with the fighting, relief distributions, primarily in the form of food, hygiene articles and winter clothing, were carried out by the local committees of the Russian Red Cross.

In Chechnya in particular, the situation of elderly and internally displaced people remained extremely precarious, owing to the lack of social services and the non-payment of retirement pensions. The poor purchasing power of these vulnerable groups limited their access to food, especially in urban areas. As a result, in September the ICRC launched a new assistance programme, carried out in cooperation with the Chechen branch of the Russian Red Cross, under which almost 8,000 Russian and Chechen beneficiaries received one loaf of bread three times a week. The bread programme replaced the community soup kitchens in Grozny, Argun and Gudermes, which had been supported until March and then closed as planned.
Southern Caucasus

ARmenIA/AZERBAIJAN

Armenia and Azerbaijan failed in 1997 to reach a negotiated settlement of the issues dividing them. In the course of the year the OSCE* Minsk group, under the new chairmanship of France, Russia and the United States, made repeated but unsuccessful attempts to inject new life into the deadlocked negotiations. Fresh rounds of talks took place at the end of September, after the Nagorny Karabakh elections, and again in November, but in both cases without any tangible results.

Although the cease-fire agreement concluded in 1994 continued to hold, numerous clashes and other violent incidents occurred throughout the year. April, July and October in particular saw a rise in tensions along the northern border between Armenia and Azerbaijan and along the Nagorny Karabakh cease-fire line, with hundreds of casualties and disappearances of military personnel and civilians reported on both sides. Sadly, no progress was made in enabling some half a million internally displaced people and refugees in Armenia and Azerbaijan to return to a normal life. As in previous years, the political deadlock was compounded by severe economic problems, although the humanitarian situation in Nagorny Karabakh did improve gradually towards the end of the year.

In March the Minsk group, without prior consultation with the ICRC, appealed to all the parties concerned to release and repatriate people who had been registered by the ICRC and were still being held captive in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. Subsequently the Armenian, Azeri and Nagorny Karabakh authorities released a total of 26 detainees. The ICRC supervised the releases and provided air transport for the repatriations.

* OSCE: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
It also kept up its efforts, with limited success, to gain access to and obtain the release of all persons detained in relation to the conflict who had either been arrested before the release of the group of 26 and to whom access had not been granted, or who had been arrested afterwards. As part of these efforts the Delegate General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia carried out a mission in June to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh. Top-level talks were held on the humanitarian consequences of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, in particular the issue of missing persons.

Many families had still not received any news about relatives who had been unaccounted for since the flare-up of fighting in December 1993 and May 1994, or even earlier phases of the conflict. Consolidated lists of all persons who had gone missing before the 1994 cease-fire, comprising more than 2,200 names and based on individual applications by the families concerned, were submitted to the three parties. The lists were accompanied by a request to provide information regarding the fate of these people, which highlighted the authorities’ obligation under humanitarian law to do so. Although further representations in the matter were made after the submission of the lists, no information had been provided by the end of the year that might help shed light on the cases in question.

In Armenia, delegates were able during the year to visit a total of 60 detainees held in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict and the country’s internal situation. All detainees were given the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their families and received material assistance, most importantly food and medicines. In Azerbaijan, in contrast, visits to persons held for internal security reasons were still not authorized, despite offers of services having previously been submitted to the authorities. Twenty-two persons detained in relation to the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh were visited regularly. Delegates also kept an eye on the situation of minority groups in the Baku region and in a number of cases made representations to the authorities so as to help people of Armenian origin to deal with discrimination and administrative obstacles.

In Nagorny Karabakh, delegates kept up visits to seven persons detained in relation to the conflict and supplied two prison dispensaries with regular monthly assistance in the form of basic medicines and dressing materials.

After months of sustained efforts, a cooperation agreement on dissemination was signed in May between the Armenian Ministry of Defence and the ICRC, covering international training courses for senior officers, regular dissemination sessions as part of military training and the translation of reference texts on the law of armed conflict.

To improve knowledge of the law of armed conflict in military units stationed near the front lines, contact was maintained with the Azeri government ministries responsible for the various armed units present in the area. Presentations on humanitarian law were given at regular intervals to units in the field. The Ministry
of Defence still refused access to military schools, where the ICRC wished to have the law of armed conflict integrated into regular military training. It did, however, allow a presentation to be held for military instructors from the naval academy and an officers’ school.

In Armenia, courses on humanitarian law, given by an ICRC-trained lecturer, were introduced at the law and journalism faculties of two private universities and a nursing college. Negotiations with Yerevan State University and the Ministry of Education to hold a similar course paid off in the second half of the year, when humanitarian law was officially included in the curricula of the faculties of law, international relations and journalism.

Contacts were also maintained with universities and other institutes of higher learning in Azerbaijan, where humanitarian law was already being taught at Baku State University. Lecturers from the State Universities of Baku and Yerevan participated in the second ICRC Russian-language course on humanitarian law held in Moscow.

Under agreements with the respective Ministries of Education, ICRC textbooks and manuals introducing the basic principles of humanitarian law were distributed to all fifth-form pupils and teachers in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh. Training for literature teachers started immediately after the distributions.

In the course of the year an Armenian and an Azeri legal specialist recruited by the ICRC undertook a complete study of the national legislation of their respective countries with a view to the incorporation therein of international humanitarian law.

The ICRC’s mine-awareness campaign in Azerbaijan, carried out as a project delegated to the Swedish Red Cross, continued with a view to making people living in the front-line districts and camps for internally displaced persons aware of the danger of landmines and unexploded ordnance. Mine-awareness training sessions were held for schoolchildren and community leaders, who also received related material for distribution. The campaign reached more than half a million people in the course of the year.

Whenever tensions flared along the cease-fire line in Azerbaijan, military and civilian hospitals in the front-line districts were provided with medicines and other medical supplies to treat the wounded and to set up contingency stocks. To prevent shortages of essential medical and surgical supplies in Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC visited and assisted hospitals, which treated victims of landmine explosions and other war-wounded, civilian medical facilities in remote areas and prison dispensaries.

The tuberculosis treatment programme run by the ICRC at the prison hospital in Baku was kept up with the active involvement of local staff. Numerous patients who had completed their treatment remained TB positive, thus adding to fears.

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5 See the ICRC’s 1996 Annual Report, p. 208.
that the disease had become drug resistant. The delegation intensified its efforts to make the authorities aware of the scale of the problem, urging them to take action at the national level. To this end, the ICRC, a Russian specialist and WHO* representatives carried out a joint mission in April to meet with the Ministries of Justice, Internal Affairs and Health. The involvement and commitment of the authorities was made a condition for the continuation of ICRC activities in this field. As a first step, the Ministry of Justice arranged for repair work and extensions to be carried out on the hospital and laboratory facilities.

The training programme for volunteer first-aid instructors in eight front-line districts, carried out by the American Red Cross in cooperation with the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan, was completed in September. Efforts were made to coordinate the training with plans by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the National Society to extend the programme to the rest of the country.

Water shortages remained a source of concern in the front-line districts and Nagorny Karabakh. In Azerbaijan, activities at the start of the year concentrated on water storage and distribution systems in the Fizuli district. Repairs were carried out and installations set up to improve the water supply for internally displaced persons and returnees and in villages destroyed by the fighting. In May the ICRC programme entered its final phase as the European Union launched its proposed large-scale infrastructure rehabilitation programme in the area.

In Nagorny Karabakh, water and sanitation engineers, with the help of local communities, restored wells and carried out extensive repairs to supply networks, thus providing much-needed water for the many vegetable gardens which were a significant source of food and income for villagers. On the basis of an impact assessment the programme was continued in eight villages and a town.

At the ICRC prosthetic/orthotic centre for war amputees in Baku, Azerbaijan, output increased following the arrival of new equipment. The centre was run in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. In the second half of the year, the cooperation agreement concerning the workshop and patients' dormitory was renewed with the Ministry. Authorization to fly in patients from other countries, however, was withdrawn in May. Until that point, some five patients a month from Tajikistan had been fitted with prostheses and orthoses. However, on the basis of an agreement concluded between the Azeri and Chechen authorities, 28 Chechen amputees were fitted with artificial limbs between August and December.

Surveys conducted during the year showed that by and large, the food security situation had improved in regions where the ICRC was conducting major assistance programmes.

* WHO: World Health Organization
In Armenia, four distributions of food and other supplies, benefiting some 30,000 people living in 17 front-line villages and one town, were carried out until April, when the activity was taken over by the American Red Cross as a renewed delegated project. It was completed as planned at the end of September 1997. Since one of the stated aims of relief efforts was to revive agricultural activity and restore self-sufficiency, beneficiaries in rural areas also received seed potatoes, vegetable seed kits and food preservation sets. A programme to repair combine harvesters was completed in time for the harvest with a view to increasing the yield from the 1996 wheat seed distributions. In the Fizuli district of Azerbaijan, assistance concentrated on internally displaced families and those who had recently returned to their homes. All received regular twice-monthly distributions of food rations and other items, seed potatoes and vegetable kits. Food distributions in the district were, however, discontinued in the second half of the year, after the delegation was unable to reach an agreement with the authorities about the revision of beneficiary lists and monitoring activities.

The project delegated to the American Red Cross in Azerbaijan, which provided relief to 12,500 vulnerable people in the eight front-line districts bordering on Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh, was maintained. To address needs caused by heavy rains and widespread flooding in summer, one-off emergency food distributions were made to vulnerable families and camps for internally displaced persons in the area.

To enable poor families in the front-line districts of Armenia and Azerbaijan to send their children to school during the cold winter months, warm jackets and shoes were provided and an extensive rehabilitation programme undertaken. Depending on needs, buildings were repaired and latrines set up, and food and other items delivered. As similar needs were identified in other front-line areas of Azerbaijan, eight school rehabilitation projects were launched in a further four districts. Community involvement was an important aspect of this activity.

In Nagorny Karabakh the “Teamwork” programme, which combines emergency measures and agricultural rehabilitation, continued. Seed potatoes, vegetable seed and insecticide were supplied to beneficiaries, and selected villages received a small number of beehives. Wheat seed was distributed to collective farms which had experienced a poor harvest, and potato and wheat-seed multiplication programmes were launched. This assistance was supplemented with food parcels and food preservation kits to tide families over until the next harvest. By the end of the year, 14 of the assisted villages were found to have reached an adequate level of self-sufficiency and steps were taken to phase out assistance accordingly.
- visited 89 detainees held for conflict-related and security reasons in 29 places of detention, and supervised the release and repatriation of 26 detainees;
- provided treatment for 198 patients enrolled in the ICRC-run tuberculosis treatment programme for detainees at the prison hospital in Baku;
- organized the exchange of some 2,400 Red Cross messages between detainees and their families and between relatives separated by the conflict;
- submitted to the relevant authorities some 2,200 tracing requests from families of missing persons;
- in Armenia, supported a relief project delegated to the American Red Cross which provided some 9,150 vulnerable families with 1,432 tonnes of food and 257 tonnes of other supplies;
- in the Fizuli district, distributed 341 tonnes of food, 10 tonnes of soap and detergent, 3,213 vegetable seed kits and 67 tonnes of seed potatoes to some 3,000 families;
- enabled some 18,000 children in Armenia and the Fizuli district to go to school in winter by providing food, warm clothing and shoes, furniture and heating materials and rehabilitating schools and kindergartens;
- under a revised construction programme in Nagorny Karabakh, provided building materials to specific, small projects in the neediest villages;
- jointly with the Azeri Red Crescent, carried out relief distributions in the 8 front-line districts of Azerbaijan;
- provided medical supplies for 10 military and civilian health facilities treating war-wounded in Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh, and essential supplies for civilian dispensaries in Nagorny Karabakh;
- under the American Red Cross training programme for first-aid instructors in Azerbaijan, held 10 training sessions attended by 124 people living in the front-line districts (92 volunteers from 61 villages successfully completed the course);
- in Baku, manufactured 404 artificial limbs, including 99 for mine victims, and fitted 319 new amputees;
- manufactured 64 orthoses, including 2 for mine victims, and fitted 39 new patients with orthoses;
- manufactured 786 pairs of crutches;
- in the Fizuli district of Azerbaijan, installed 12 submersible pumps, 3 reservoirs and a number of pipes, and rehabilitated 3 irrigation pumps;
- in Nagorny Karabakh, restored the water supply for 20,000 people in 8 villages and 1 small town situated near the front lines;
- rehabilitated the water distribution system for a prison hospital in Yerevan;
- signed cooperation agreements covering tracing, dissemination and general activities with the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan;
- provided material support, including office equipment, to the Armenian Red Cross Society and Azeri Red Crescent;
- arranged for an Armenian Red Cross tracing officer to receive
practical training in Moscow and for a dissemination officer to participate in a regional training course held in Tbilisi;
- enabled an Azeri Red Crescent dissemination officer to attend a one-week workshop held by the Moscow regional delegation;
- arranged for an Armenian officer to attend the ICRC's second international course on the law of armed conflict held in Moscow in March;
- enabled an Armenian and an Azeri officer to attend the ICRC's third international course on the law of armed conflict held in Kyiv in November;
- enabled an Azeri senior officer, designated by the Ministry of Defence, to participate in the first Russian-language course on the law of armed conflict held in San Remo, Italy;
- in Armenia, held a seminar on humanitarian law for 110 senior officers at the armed forces general staff headquarters in Yerevan, and organized dissemination courses for military police units across the country;
- in Nagorno Karabakh, organized dissemination sessions on the basic rules of humanitarian law for more than 700 officers and soldiers, and for the staff and patients of an ICRC-assisted military hospital;
- in Azerbaijan, gave several presentations on humanitarian law for soldiers belonging to military units stationed close to the front lines;
- in Armenia, gave a one-day presentation on humanitarian law as part of a human rights seminar;
- arranged for 2 lecturers each from Yerevan and Baku State Universities to participate in the ICRC's second Russian-language training course on humanitarian law, held in Moscow in November;
- organized a three-day seminar on humanitarian law to launch the introduction of the subject into the curricula of the law, journalism and international relations faculties of Baku State University, and arranged for the participation of a professor from the University of Grenoble, France;
- published 73,000 ICRC supplementary literary textbooks relating to humanitarian law for fifth-form students and 6,300 accompanying teachers' manuals, in Armenian and Azeri;
- held a series of 31 training seminars for fifth-form literature teachers in Armenia and Azerbaijan;
- arranged for the Geneva Conventions to be translated into Armenian and Azeri and for an ICRC leaflet on the emblem to be translated into Armenian;
- published and distributed 15,000 leaflets in the Azeri language explaining ICRC activities in Azerbaijan;
- as part of its mine-awareness campaign, distributed 15,000 leaflets, 120,000 brochures, 16,000 posters and stickers, 25,000 exercise books for schoolchildren, helping to alert more than 500,000 people to the danger of landmines.
The positive trend set in the previous year continued in 1997: relative political stability prevailed and the cease-fire was generally respected. Nonetheless, the situation along the separation line between Georgian and Abkhaz forces remained tense and large segments of the population continued to suffer from the after-effects of the conflict, in particular some 250,000 displaced people who had fled the fighting in Abkhazia in 1993 and had been stranded in western Georgia ever since. Living conditions for them and other vulnerable groups worsened as international aid steadily declined. From July onwards, skirmishes involving Georgian partisans and the Abkhaz authorities reached deep into Abkhazia as far as Sukhumi. Although the civilian population in Abkhazia in general was affected by a widespread rise in violent crime, members of minority groups living alone were especially vulnerable and became targets for various forms of harassment. Security in southern Abkhazia gave cause for particular concern on account of landmines, bomb explosions, kidnappings and rampant crime. The ICRC suffered two security incidents in spring and autumn of the year.

A summit for heads of CIS States took place in March in Moscow, during which the mandates of the CIS peace-keeping forces stationed in the buffer zone between Georgian and Abkhaz forces and of UNOMIG* were confirmed and extended, initially until 31 July 1997 and later until 31 January 1998. Notwithstanding the positive start to the year, tensions rose in April as the Abkhaz authorities declared their opposition to a CIS summit resolution to extend the security zone along the Inguri river to the Gali region, which was under Abkhaz control. The parties met for several rounds of talks, and a joint declaration

* UNOMIG: United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia
to resolve differences peacefully was eventually issued in August. As part of the discussions, a first-ever meeting took place between the Georgian President and the leader of Abkhazia, spelling progress at the diplomatic level. The negotiation process moved another step forward during a conference held in Geneva in November, with the establishment of a coordination council set up under United Nations auspices. A joint peace declaration was also signed in November by the leaders of Georgia and South Ossetia, who undertook, among other things, to work towards the return of refugees from their respective territories.

The ICRC was able to continue to carry out its protection activities for detainees under favourable conditions. Delegates enjoyed unrestricted access to all inmates in every place of detention, including both people held for conflict-related or security reasons and penal law offenders, and were able to talk freely with all detainees. In the course of the year visits were conducted to all permanent and temporary places of detention in Georgia and Abkhazia and, for the first time since 1994, to the preliminary detention centre of the Georgian Ministry of Security. In addition, ad hoc medical and material assistance was delivered to places of detention. On some of their visits, delegates were accompanied by a prosthetist, who fitted detained amputees with artificial limbs.

Under the family visits programme, launched in late 1996, the ICRC was able to arrange for detainees to be visited by their relatives, whom it provided with transport and accommodation. Visits also took place across the front lines.

In Abkhazia, the situation of non-Abkhaz minority groups, mainly elderly and isolated persons of Georgian, Armenian and Russian origin, remained a source of deep concern. While delegates continued their regular visits to representatives of these groups in order to collect and pass on to the Abkhaz authorities allegations of harassment, robbery and other crimes, many people started visiting the delegation on their own initiative. At times, forming a clear picture of the situation was difficult, especially in the Gali region where security conditions were particularly unstable.

Given the ongoing absence of postal services within and out of Abkhazia, the ICRC's Red Cross message network was maintained, with over 75,000 messages being exchanged in the course of the year. The network was run partly in cooperation with three local branches of the National Society, which were responsible for collecting and distributing Red Cross messages in the country. The number of family reunifications carried out under ICRC auspices declined overall.

Making Georgian, Abkhaz and Russian troops stationed along the front lines more aware of the rules of international humanitarian law remained a top priority. To this end, contact was maintained with the Georgian and Abkhaz armed and police forces, as well as the Russian peace-keeping troops. The Georgian Ministry of Defence completed translating the ICRC teaching file on the law of armed conflict into Georgian.
An agreement having been reached with the Abkhaz authorities, a short test run of the schools programme\(^a\) took place in seven schools in Abkhazia in May and June. From July the programme got into full swing, reaching all 2,500 fifth-

\(^a\) See Moscow regional delegation, pp. 210-211.

in Georgia

- conducted visits to 333 detainees (including 127 registered for the first time) in 21 places of detention under the responsibility of the Georgian authorities;
- carried out visits to 61 detainees (including 41 registered for the first time) in 10 places of detention under the responsibility of the Abkhaz authorities;
- arranged for 6 family visits to detainees across the front lines;
- forwarded 76,174 Red Cross messages and organized 43 family reunifications;
- held 2 training workshops on tracing for 2 local Red Cross branches;
- distributed food parcels, including 5-10 kg of flour per parcel, to some 43,000 beneficiaries in towns and 25,000 in rural areas;
- in the summer, provided 53,000 food preservation kits consisting of sugar, salt, oil and jar lids;
- as part of a potato multiplication scheme, distributed 15 tonnes of seed potatoes and 19,000 vegetable kits in Abkhaz villages;
- handed out 16,700 blankets, 279,000 candles, 3,200 kg of wool, 1,780 pairs of children's rain boots, as well as 179 bales and 2,499 sets of children's winter clothing;
- supported 24 community kitchens run by the local administration and local Red Cross branches, which daily provided 6,500 people with a hot meal comprising 2,200 calories;
- opened 4 new community kitchens;
- provided 55 schools in central Abkhazia with 6,980 school kits, and 3 schools with plastic sheeting for repairs;
- supplied winter jackets to all beneficiaries of the community kitchens;
- distributed seed and fertilizer to 10 collective farms, purchased part of their harvest and used it to supply the community kitchens;
- assisted 6 medical facilities to treat some 673 war-wounded in western Georgia and Abkhazia;
- assisted 2 polyclinics and a dispensary in the Sukhumi district by providing medical supplies, fuel and a vehicle to enable staff to conduct 4,248 home visits, provide personal hygiene and house cleaning services, deliver cooked meals and carry out more than 127,000 consultations;
- provided the Ministry of the Interior with one-off medical assistance to help it combat a dysentery epidemic in an Abkhaz prison;
- provided the Institute of Pneumology in Tbilisi with laboratory materials and staff training and carried out repairs;

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form students in Abkhazia. With the start of the new school year in September, the programme resumed in Georgia and was extended to 4,000 additional students in Russian, Armenian and Azeri schools who study Georgian as a second language. While evaluations of the first textbook were carried out, preparations for providing teaching materials geared to seventh-form students got under way.

- in the Tbilisi and Gagra workshops, manufactured 669 prostheses, including 184 for mine victims, and fitted 479 patients with artificial limbs;
- signed a three-year cooperation agreement with the Red Cross Society of Georgia and provided technical and financial support for its tracing and dissemination activities;
- supported the home care programme for elderly and displaced people run by the Red Cross branches in Sukhumi and Tkvarcheli, Abkhazia;
- gave legal advice to the Georgian Red Cross, which was officially recognized after draft laws were passed on the National Society and on protection of the emblem;
- enabled a representative of the Ministry of Defence to take part in the third international one-week course for legal advisers to the armed forces, organized by the ICRC in Kyiv;
- held numerous presentations on humanitarian law for Georgian, Abkhaz and Russian troops stationed on the front lines;
- for the first time, gave presentations on humanitarian law for the Abkhaz police force and authorities;
- organized a seminar in Abkhazia for 30 high-ranking officers of the Russian peace-keeping troops stationed on the front lines;
- held 2 regional training workshops on dissemination, one for dissemination officers from the Armenian, Azeri and Georgian National Societies, the other for the dissemination team based in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria;
- in extending the schools programme to Abkhazia, distributed more than 3,000 textbooks for fifth-form pupils and accompanying teachers' manuals, organized 5 teacher-training seminars and visited 70% of schools to brief the teachers about the ICRC and the schools programme;
- produced 10,000 pocket calendars for Abkhazia containing references to humanitarian principles in the local culture, and 2,000 similar table calendars for Georgia;
- produced video clips and short films on the schools programme, the prosthetic/orthotic centre, the red cross emblem and the ICRC's activities, partly in cooperation with national television;
- gave a presentation, broadcast by a private television network, to 25 Georgian television and newspaper reporters to promote ICRC activities and respect for humanitarian law.
A study of Georgian national legislation with a view to incorporating humanitarian law therein, for which the ICRC had appointed a legal expert from Tbilisi, was completed towards the end of the year. The delegation continued to encourage the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to pursue its preparations for the establishment of an interministerial committee on the implementation of humanitarian law.

As in previous years, assistance continued for hospitals treating the war-wounded, including victims of landmine explosions (73 new cases were registered by the ICRC) in western Georgia and Abkhazia; people who were injured in the Gali district were taken to hospital in Zugdidi by UNOMIG ambulance. Because of the ongoing economic embargo in Abkhazia, many health facilities had no reliable sources of medical or surgical supplies and depended entirely on ICRC assistance. As of July, a military dispensary in Ochamchira was included among the facilities visited and supplied on a regular basis, as was the Zugdidi polyclinic, which served some 60,000 internally displaced persons. Medical facilities in Abkhazia which ran home care programmes for elderly and displaced people received material support, technical assistance and staff training to enable them to hold consultations and carry out home visits. In addition, the ICRC health delegate checked on vulnerable people in their homes to see whether they had access to medical care.

As part of a general anti-tuberculosis campaign carried out in Georgia by the Ministry of Health with the cooperation of the WHO, the first phase of an ICRC-assisted TB programme for detainees got under way in July. In light of the results achieved with a similar programme in Baku, a modified approach was chosen to tackle the problem in Georgian prisons. The first step was an assessment of the prevalence of TB in places of detention and its resistance to drug treatment, carried out by an ICRC medical team in cooperation with the Ministries of Health and the Interior. Negotiations were subsequently held with the Ministry of the Interior about reorganizing the prison hospital in accordance with WHO recommendations. As a concrete measure, a training seminar was organized for laboratory staff to facilitate correct diagnosis and implementation of treatment methods.

In March, the ICRC and the Ministry of Health signed a one-year extension of their cooperation agreement for the two prosthetic/orthotic projects in Tbilisi and Gagra. Both workshops provided artificial limbs free of charge for amputees in Georgia and Abkhazia. As demand was on the rise, the premises of the facility in Tbilisi were extended, new trainee technicians were taken on, and a new prosthetic/orthotic service was introduced for amputees in the Gali region of Abkhazia who were unable to reach the other two ICRC centres.

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7 See Armenia/Azerbaijan, pp. 221-224.
Relief programmes again focused on Abkhazia, whose regional economy remained paralyzed by the blockade and structural economic problems. Although the entire population was affected, vulnerable groups such as the elderly, disabled people, orphans and large families were hardest hit. Following the completion of winter relief distributions in late January, a round of supplementary food distributions was started in February. Vegetable kits were handed out in rural areas, as were food preservation kits to enable families to conserve produce grown in the summer and reduce their dependency on relief in winter.

Support was kept up for more than 24 community kitchens run in Abkhazia by the local administration and the local Red Cross branches, with the aim of providing the elderly, the disabled and other vulnerable groups with one hot meal a day. In September the programme was delegated to the Finnish Red Cross, while the ICRC-supported home care programme for elderly and bedridden patients in Sukhumi was, in turn, delegated to the Swedish Red Cross. As in 1996, \textsuperscript{8} 10 collective farms in Abkhazia received seed, seed potatoes and fertilizer from the ICRC, which purchased a part of their output for the community kitchens.

In September, the ICRC, the Red Cross Society of Georgia and the Federation met with the authorities to discuss a draft law on the use and protection of the emblem, and a separate draft law on the Georgian Red Cross. Both laws were passed and on 6 November the ICRC recognized the National Society.

\textsuperscript{8} See the ICRC's \textit{1996 Annual Report}, p. 218.
The highlight of the year was the substantial progress made in peace negotiations between the government and the UTO,* which culminated in the signing of a peace agreement in Moscow on 27 June, officially bringing to an end five years of civil war. The implementation of the agreement got under way in September, with the return to the capital Dushanbe of the UTO leader and the start of the activities of the National Reconciliation Commission established in December 1996.

The cease-fire signed in December 1996 was generally respected during the year under review, with both parties appearing committed to the peace process. The cessation of hostilities enabled thousands of internally displaced persons and some 10,000 Tajik refugees who had sought safety in Afghanistan to return to their homes.

The only area where tensions ran high throughout the year was Kofarnikhon district, east of Dushanbe, where local opposition groups clashed with government units on several occasions.

The most serious cause for alarm, however, was the fierce fighting between rival groups within the government forces that shook Dushanbe and the southwestern parts of the country in August. Two hundred people were injured in the fighting and many others were affected by the ensuing breakdown in law and order.

Notwithstanding the suspension of military operations, the general security situation deteriorated steadily. Several cases of kidnapping were reported, and in the last quarter of the year Dushanbe was shaken by a wave of bomb explosions.

Humanitarian organizations were not spared, either: in February a militia group, which had already taken hostage and subsequently released several UN

* United Tajik Opposition
military observers in December 1996, struck again, seizing 14 expatriates, including two ICRC staff members. Although both workers were released after two days, the ICRC suspended its activities until all the other hostages had been freed. It resumed work in early March.

Following two further serious security incidents in June and July in central Tajikistan the delegation’s activities were scaled back considerably: in June two delegates working in the Tavildara region of central Tajikistan were deliberately fired at; two weeks later, on 1 July, two ICRC vehicles were shot at in the Karategin valley, fortunately again without resulting in any casualties. This prompted the ICRC to withdraw its staff from its office in Garm and to suspend its activities in central Tajikistan, pending guarantees that an enquiry would be made and that measures would be taken to avoid such incidents in the future.

In November ICRC delegates returned to the Tavildara and Garm areas, following a meeting between the Delegate General for Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the head of the UTO and chairman of the National Reconciliation Commission. Relief and medical assistance were immediately brought to the areas. However, a new hostage crisis involving expatriate humanitarian staff, which erupted in November and during which one French national was killed, forced the ICRC to reduce its expatriate staff.

Despite renewed discussions with the Tajik authorities at all levels, the delegation made no headway in its efforts to obtain access to government-held detainees in accordance with customary ICRC procedures. The main unresolved issue was the authorities’ unwillingness to allow delegates to interview in private detainees awaiting trial.

In contrast, successful approaches were made to the opposition, with a view to gaining access to prisoners held by it. In January 1997, delegates were able to visit again the group of government soldiers detained by the opposition, who had already been registered and seen by the ICRC in December 1996. All of them were subsequently released. Delegates also had renewed access to the front-line town of Tavildara, which had passed into the hands of the opposition, to discuss the possibility of seeing any detainees held there. In June, visits took place to 158 government soldiers in the Mionadu valley. Red Cross messages were exchanged between detainees and their relatives, and detainees who had been released by the opposition were visited in their home villages.

Following the mid-year suspension of activities, visits to detainees held in the Garm and Tavildara valleys resumed in early December. Delegates found that only 33 of a group of government soldiers seen by the ICRC in June were still detained by the UTO, the others having been released during the summer and autumn. Owing to the harsh winter climate, the remaining detainees were provided with clothes, shoes and blankets.
Protection of the civilian population and of wounded combatants was a major concern for the ICRC during and immediately after the fighting in August in the south and west of the country, including the capital. Through observations and interviews it was able to bring the problems faced by the population to the attention of the relevant military and civilian authorities, both locally and in Dushanbe. In addition, ICRC delegates delivered emergency medical supplies to health facilities treating people wounded in the fighting. They also monitored the situation during clashes east of Dushanbe in October.

As the threat of landmines persisted in central Tajikistan, additional mine-awareness leaflets were printed in Tajik and Russian to alert internally displaced persons returning to their homes in the region. To form a clearer picture of the landmine problem in the country, a data collection system was set up to formalize the gathering of relevant information.

For humanitarian law to be respected it was more important than ever before to ensure that combatants and civilians throughout the region knew and accepted its principles and rules. With this in mind, in addition to existing cooperation programmes with the Ministries of Defence and the Interior and the presidential guards, long-term cooperation agreements on instruction in the law of armed conflict were signed early in the year with the Tajik border troops, the police forces and the 201st Motor-Rifle Division of the Russian Ministry of Defence, deployed in Tajikistan as part of the CIS peace-keeping forces. An ICRC training manual for military instructors was approved by the Tajik Ministries of Defence and the Interior, and distributed to military units throughout the country.

Cooperation with the Ministry of Education continued with a view to incorporating humanitarian law into the curricula of higher educational institutions, particularly in faculties of law and military studies. Further working contacts in this regard were established with Tajik State University and Khodjent State University, where mandatory courses on humanitarian law were introduced for students of international law. A series of national seminars were held to present humanitarian law and its implementation to the Tajik legal community.

For the secondary schools programme, the Tajik-language books produced by the ICRC in cooperation with the Ministry of Education were distributed to schools in various regions of the country for testing and evaluation.

In August the government officially accepted the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission, set up in accordance with Article 90 of Additional Protocol I. It also took measures to revise the criminal code and to establish a national commission for the implementation of humanitarian law. Working contacts were made with the legal departments at the President’s Office and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Justice.

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9 See Moscow regional delegation, pp. 210-211.
As hostilities died down in the first half of the year, assistance to medical facilities in Dushanbe, to which war casualties from conflict areas had previously been referred, was gradually reduced. Nevertheless, deliveries of surgical supplies for the treatment of long-term injuries, bullet wounds and landmine casualties were kept up, including to hospitals treating people injured during the August fighting in and around Dushanbe.

Apart from the periods in which activities were suspended for security reasons, hospitals in former conflict areas received regular assistance. A primary-healthcare programme in Ciafark, in the Shugnau valley, was started in October to meet significant medical needs reported there. However, owing to the changes in the conditions that had prompted the start of this activity and because of security constraints, the delegation was forced to suspend the programme at the very end of the year. In contrast, monthly drug distributions, training and specialist assistance resumed in November for hospitals in Garm and Tavildara, following a survey of medical facilities along the old front lines and in areas cut off from regular medical supplies.

In the absence of an extension of the agreement with the Azeri authorities, the programme under which amputees were flown to Baku for limb-fitting had to be discontinued in the first half of the year.10 To meet the needs of amputees in Tajikistan the ICRC decided to rehabilitate an existing prosthetic/orthotic centre in Dushanbe. Work on the project started in November.

In early 1997, six months after the start of an emergency nutritional programme launched to ensure the survival of the approximately 7,000 detainees11 in the country, a comprehensive report detailing ICRC findings about the nutritional situation in Tajikistan’s 14 prisons was handed over to the authorities. This first assessment revealed that the level of malnutrition among detainees remained high. A second survey carried out in summer showed that although ICRC assistance had succeeded in reducing the mortality rate in prisons, the overall situation was still far from satisfactory: in many places of detention ICRC food supplies had become the only source of nutrition, instead of being used as a means to tide prisons over until the authorities had taken the measures necessary to make up the shortfall in food. In a new effort to alleviate the problem, the ICRC set up a therapeutic feeding programme for some 800 malnourished detainees. Offers were also made to help the prison administration start its own food production by providing seed and fertilizer. Representations were made repeatedly to prison staff and management, as well as to the Ministry of the Interior to reiterate that the care of detainees was the responsibility of the detaining authorities. Some improvement was noted in the last six months of the year. However, having care-

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10 See Armenia/Azerbaijan, p.222.
11 See the ICRC’s 1996 Annual Report, p.222.
- visited 200 detainees held by the Tajik opposition and enabled them to exchange 758 Red Cross messages with their families;
- under the nutritional rehabilitation programme covering some 7,000 detainees in 14 Tajik prisons, provided essential medicines, 250,000 vitamin tablets, 547.5 tonnes of wheat flour, 348.5 tonnes of beans and lentils, 189.7 tonnes of rice, 54.1 tonnes of vegetable oil, 25.6 tonnes of high-energy biscuits, 1.4 tonnes of enriched milk, plus 7.9 tonnes of soap, 1,729 blankets, 7,981 pullovers and 5,074 pairs of shoes;
- distributed relief assistance consisting of 1,033 tonnes of food and 498 tonnes of other supplies, such as blankets, clothes, candles, soap and plastic sheeting, to some 22,000 internally displaced persons and groups otherwise affected by the conflict, as well as to people requiring assistance following a minor earthquake in December;
- until June, provided medical and surgical supplies to 14 hospitals and several first-aid facilities caring for government soldiers and opposition fighters;
- as of June, gave regular supplies of medical materials to hospitals in Dushanbe and in November made ad hoc distributions in the south of the country;
- during the fighting in August, delivered emergency medical assistance to health-facilities treating the wounded;
- provided public health facilities for displaced people in 3 shelters in Dushanbe with medical supplies and recruited a doctor to give assistance;
- initiated training programmes and provided ad hoc support to hospitals in Ciafark, Garm and Tavildara;
- flew 14 war amputees from Tajikistan to Azerbaijan for the fitting of artificial limbs at its Baku prosthetic/orthotic centre;
- jointly with the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan, brought food and other relief to 355 people whose houses had been destroyed during the August fighting in Dushanbe and Kurgan-Tube;
- together with the National Society, helped 1,363 families return from Gorno-Badakshan to the Hatlon region;
- jointly with 55 branches of the National Society, provided 21.5 tonnes of warm clothes and 85,400 pullovers for vulnerable groups throughout the country;
- arranged for the head of the legal department of the Ministry of Defence to take part in the third international ICRC seminar on the law of armed conflict held in Kyiv in June;
- gave presentations on the law of armed conflict for officers and soldiers under the authority of the Ministries of Defence and the Interior, the presidential guards and the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, and helped prepare training materials on the same subject for troops and military instructors;
- arranged for a study to be carried out on national legislation with a view to implementation of humanitarian law and submitted the findings to the government;
- at the request of the government, conducted an assessment of the Tajik criminal code;
- assisted in introducing substantial courses on humanitarian law at 2 Tajik State universities;
- to launch the pilot phase of the schools programme in 5 regions, produced and distributed 2,000 copies of the Tajik-language textbook for pupils, as well as 100 copies of the teachers’ manual;
- supported the production of 12,000 copies of the Code of conduct for combatants: Tajik border troops in Tajik and Russian;
- printed 10,000 mine-awareness leaflets in Tajik and Russian to inform the population about the threat of landmines.
fully weighed up the situation and after submitting to the highest authorities a comprehensive written assessment, the ICRC confirmed its decision to phase out food assistance to prisons in June 1998.

To address hygiene-related problems and combat disease, basic medicines and assistance in the form of blankets, soap, shoes, clothes and plastic sheeting were provided. The medical assistance was minimal, and the ICRC strongly and systematically emphasized the fact that the prison authorities must resume full responsibility for detainees' health care.

At the beginning of the year food and other supplies were distributed to some 4,000 families who had been displaced or were otherwise still affected by the hostilities. Towards April and May people realized that the cease-fire was holding and started returning home. The ICRC facilitated their return and, in coordination with UNHCR, provided further assistance at the various places of origin only, so as to support the repatriation process. Some 3,500 persons who had taken refuge in Gorno-Badakshan and could not return home because of landmines and harsh winter were helped by the sub-delegation in Khorog until June, when they were able to move.

Following the resumption of ICRC operations in the Garm and Tavildara areas in November 1997, a last round of food distributions was carried out for people in Tavildara district in December. Furthermore, in view of the approaching hard winter, warm clothes and shoes were delivered to the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan, for distribution to especially vulnerable groups. This marked the end of the assistance programme, carried out in cooperation with branches of the National Society throughout the country.

To carry out its relief efforts the delegation once again had to overcome tremendous logistical obstacles. Owing to the destruction of key bridges and the insecurity in the central regions, convoys were unable to travel directly from Dushanbe to Garm and Khorog, but had to make a lengthy detour that involved moving into and out of neighbouring Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and crossing mountain passes at an altitude of more than 4,000 metres.

Cooperation with the National Society continued, notably in the area of tracing and dissemination, for which training and other support were provided. The ICRC recognized the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan in November.
TASHKENT
Regional delegation
(Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)

As in years past, the Tashkent regional delegation focused on disseminating international humanitarian law and strengthening the operational capacity of the region’s National Societies, in addition to providing logistical support for the ICRC operation in Tajikistan.

Senior military instructors representing the Ministries of Defence of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan took part in the second international course on the law of armed conflict held in Moscow for CIS countries, while one officer each from the Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Uzbek armed forces attended the third such course, aimed at legal advisers to the armed forces and organized by the ICRC’s delegation in Kyiv. A general from the Kazakh Ministry of Defence attended the first Russian-language course on the law of war held in San Remo, Italy, at the end of the year.

Discussions were held with representatives of the Ministries of Defence and the Interior, the border guards and the national guards of all four countries covered by the regional delegation with a view to setting up regular training programmes on humanitarian law and on integrating the law into military combat training and procedures. Following regular contacts with the Ministries of Defence of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan the ICRC participated in the training of a battalion scheduled to take part in a UN peace-keeping exercise. Several high-level meetings held with the Ministries of Defence and the Interior in Kyrgyzstan at the end of the year resulted in the setting up of training programmes on humanitarian law for the Kyrgyz armed forces. Dissemination sessions were also carried out throughout the year in all four republics, ranging from introductory presentations for officers to training seminars for military instructors. Specifically, numerous seminars on humanitarian law were held for officers of the Kazakh armed forces involved in peace-keeping operations in Tajikistan.

To promote awareness of humanitarian law and its incorporation into regular lecture programmes, further contacts were established with academic circles. After talks held with representatives of several universities in all four countries, the ICRC, together with lecturers, started to work on preparing courses on humanitarian law for various faculties; the first such courses were held at the start of the academic year at the law faculties of the Turkmen and Kazakh State Universities. The regional delegation also organized seminars and talks for students at various universities and institutes of higher learning.

12 See Kyiv regional delegation, p. 207.
As part of ongoing efforts to familiarize children with Red Cross and Red Crescent values and the fundamental humanitarian principles, cooperation agreements were signed with the Uzbek and Kyrgyz Ministries of Education to develop textbooks for a compulsory secondary school course entitled *Man and Society*.

Follow-up missions were carried out to promote the establishment of national commissions for the implementation of humanitarian law. The government of Turkmenistan subsequently decided to set up such a commission. A study on humanitarian law and its implementation in national legislation was carried out in all four countries covered by the delegation, and a number of recommendations were submitted to the relevant authorities.

Efforts to encourage the authorities to adhere to the 1980 UN Convention prohibiting or restricting the use of certain conventional weapons were partly successful, insofar as Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan declared their intention to ratify the Convention or Protocols thereto. Furthermore, Turkmenistan declared its full support for a global ban on anti-personnel landmines and was among the signatories of the Ottawa treaty. To support incorporation of the treaty into the national legislation, the government was provided with appropriate documentation. At the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan, the ICRC organized a seminar on landmines in Bishkek, which was attended by representatives from various authorities concerned by the issue.

The National Societies of the region received support in developing and promoting their activities, notably in the areas of dissemination and tracing, and in raising their public profile. As dissemination in particular was a priority, joint plans of action in this area were drawn up with all four National Societies early in the year. Activities focused on internal dissemination to National Society staff and the organization of competitions on humanitarian law for two important target audiences, namely young people and journalists. The ICRC recognized the Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan in March.

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IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- provided the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies with 2,500 family parcels to assist a sudden influx of Afghan refugees seeking shelter in Turkmenistan;

- provided the region's National Societies with training and guidance for the restoration of family links and gave them material assistance in the form of office equipment and salaries;

- signed formal cooperation agreements regarding tracing activities with the National Societies of the 4 republics covered by the regional delegation;

- financed the salaries of a dissemination officer in each National Society;

- organized a three-day seminar for the dissemination coordinators of the National Societies of the 5 Central Asian States;

- assisted the National Societies in training dissemination officers in their regional branches and organizing dissemination sessions for the authorities and young people, so as to raise awareness of their activities and of the basic principles of humanitarian law;

- provided material support for the Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan to produce a video film and a brochure about its work;

- supported National Society efforts to translate several ICRC publications into the national languages;

- supported the National Societies of Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan in organizing drawing competitions for schoolchildren in connection with World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day;

- provided funding for the Kyrgyz National Society's summer camp attended by 28 leaders of the Red Cross Youth, who were made familiar with the basic principles of humanitarian law and the Movement, and were taught how to set up social-welfare projects;

- in all 4 countries covered by the regional delegation, carried out studies on humanitarian law and its implementation in national legislation;

- held 2 seminars in Tashkent for the legal specialists recruited in the 5 Central Asian States to carry out the study;

- provided documentation and teaching materials for university libraries and the Centre for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law at Tashkent State University;

- continued to translate basic humanitarian law treaties into the national language of each of the countries covered by the regional delegation;

- held a one-week course on humanitarian law for instructors from the military academy of the Turkmen Ministry of Defence;

- paid for a participant each from Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to attend a seminar for lecturers of humanitarian law organized by the ICRC in Moscow;

- helped organize a one-day seminar on the implementation of humanitarian law in national legislation, which was attended by some 50 representatives of different ministries and universities in Uzbekistan.
In April 1997 the ICRC facilitated the simultaneous release of three detainees held at Khiam detention centre in Israeli-occupied southern Lebanon and one member of the South Lebanon Army. The ICRC, whose role as a neutral intermediary is recognized by all the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, has often been called upon to help ascertain the fate of missing combatants and to assist in the handing over of mortal remains. At the same time it strives to obtain authorization to visit all those held in connection with the events.
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: 77
National Societies: 4
Local employees: 368

Total expenditure
Sfr 36,360,351

Expenditure breakdown Sfr
Protection/tracing: 18,444,629
Relief: 1,064,501
Health activities: 8,093,981
Cooperation with National Societies: 2,017,968
Promotion/dissemination: 2,095,876
Operational support: 2,532,967
Overheads: 2,110,429

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1 Average figures calculated on an annual basis.
2 Under ICRC contract, as at December 1997.
Heading the list of the ICRC’s major concerns in the Middle East and North Africa was undoubtedly the violence in Algeria, which reached new heights at the end of 1997. Week after week, savage and indiscriminate attacks were perpetrated on entire villages, with hundreds reported slaughtered in flagrant violation of elementary humanitarian principles. The ICRC sought to intensify and broaden its dialogue with the authorities so as to be able to provide a humanitarian response to the situation through protection and dissemination activities and by lending additional support to the Algerian Red Crescent.

Another cause for concern in the region was the failure to resolve problems arising from past conflicts. In many cases, had even the most basic rules of the Geneva Conventions been respected by the belligerent States or groups during the fighting – for instance, the obligation to register fallen combatants and prisoners immediately and to pass on information about them to the other party – many of the problems subsequently encountered could have been avoided or dealt with much more quickly and easily. In addition, a measure of confidence could have been created between the parties and the painstaking efforts now required to build up such confidence before even partial solutions can be found would not have been necessary.

The ICRC was thus once again confronted with challenges that were all too familiar. Its main tasks during the year consisted in protecting the civilian population still living under Israeli occupation, endeavouring to repatriate prisoners of war remaining in captivity nearly 10 years after the end of the Iran/Iraq war, securing the release of Moroccans held by the Polisario Front for up to 20 years and continuing the search for those missing in connection with the Gulf war. No significant progress was made on any of these fronts in 1997.

The year was marked by the 30th anniversary of both the Israeli occupation and a strong ICRC presence in the area. For three decades the organization had been striving to ensure full respect for humanitarian law by the authorities. This law provides for the protection of populations under military occupation, essentially for a limited period of time only. The ICRC nevertheless believes that systematic compliance with the rules of the Geneva Conventions relating to occupied territories would help to create a climate more conducive to resolving the underlying political issues.

Special mention should be made of the situation of the Iraqi people as their country entered its seventh year under UN embargo. As early as October 1991, the ICRC had submitted to the members of the Security Council a report on the risks that such a measure was likely to entail. In 1997 the organization, already present in Iraq for 18 years, was able to bear witness to the slow but steady deterioration in the living conditions there, mainly with regard to such basic services as health care and water supply. On several occasions the ICRC drew the attention of the international community to the situation. In the meantime, it endeavoured
to alleviate the consequences of the embargo by pursuing its sanitation and prosthetic/orthotic programmes. Although the organization did not wish to become embroiled in the controversy relating to the future of the sanction regime, its duty was to underscore the increasing extent to which the civilian population was being left to its fate.

The conflict in northern Iraq dragged on, with its attendant consequences for civilians and no solution in sight, despite various diplomatic efforts undertaken by the international community.

Regarding all these issues, the ICRC made constant representations to the States party to the Geneva Conventions, calling their attention to the failure of certain parties to respect the provisions of humanitarian law. In some instances, it could have hoped for a more positive response and greater support.

On the basis of its right of initiative in situations falling outside its mandate as defined by the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC was able to develop its detention-related activities in Bahrain and pursue them in Yemen and Jordan, although it encountered some problems regarding access to detainees in Jordan towards the end of the year. In several countries where internal disturbances occurred or were a potential threat, the organization was able to step up its work to spread knowledge of humanitarian law among the armed forces and on a more general level.

As part of its global efforts to promote the incorporation of humanitarian law into national legislation, the ICRC organized several seminars in the region and built on the groundwork already laid in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Yemen to this end.

As in other areas of the world, the ICRC vigorously pursued its campaign against landmines, endeavouring to make people aware of the dangers of these weapons and urging governments to sign the Ottawa Convention prohibiting their use, stockpiling, production and transfer. In December, five of the region’s countries signed the treaty.

Overall, however, the year’s achievements failed to meet the expectations of all those entitled to protection and assistance under humanitarian law. The ICRC remained convinced that respect for humanitarian principles would contribute significantly towards calming the violence that prevailed in many of the countries of the Middle East and North Africa.

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3 See Promotion and development of international humanitarian law, pp. 295-297.
Althoough Israeli troops in Hebron were redeployed in January, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process reached a stalemate in 1997 as a result of two events in March: the Israeli decision to build the Har Homa settlement at Jebel Abu Ghneim and indiscriminate suicide attacks committed against Israeli civilians in Tel Aviv. The stalemate persisted despite diplomatic efforts at international level, especially in the second half of the year. Bilateral discussions between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government nevertheless got timidly under way once more towards the end of 1997.

The ICRC was deeply concerned by such acts as the suicide attacks and by the rise in tension, both of which gave reason to fear an escalation of the violence. It strongly condemned the attacks on civilians and appealed for respect for the most elementary principles of humanity, stressing that such indiscriminate acts were a serious violation of international humanitarian law.

Measures taken by the Israeli authorities in response to the violence included the complete closure of the Gaza Strip and West Bank, with additional restrictions placed on movement within them and the imposition of curfews. These territories were already subject to chronic closure at the best of times, making it very difficult
for people to go back and forth across the green line. The expansion of settlements - in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention - continued. More than 100 houses belonging to Palestinians were destroyed, mostly for lack of permits. The identity cards of many Palestinians from East Jerusalem were confiscated and Bedouin families were forcibly displaced and had their property destroyed or taken away from them. The consequences in humanitarian terms for Palestinian civilians were manifold, and included long-term economic problems due to unemployment and non-access to the Israeli market, and the splitting-up of families across the lines.

In view of the situation, the ICRC considered that humanitarian law still had a major role to play in facilitating relations between Israel and the Palestinians and creating the conditions conducive to the quest for peace.

The ICRC delegation in Tel Aviv therefore continued to promote 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 living under occupation, making representations on their behalf. However, once again, despite years of approaches to the Israeli authorities and the latter's response, the ICRC did not succeed in obtaining full respect for humanitarian law. In 1997 it reported scores of violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the authorities, a significant increase over the preceding period.

During clashes in the Gaza Strip and West Bank the ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary to facilitate urgent medical transfers. It provided strong support to the PRCS* Emergency Medical Service (see below), which gave on-the-spot first aid and evacuated the wounded.

The ICRC continued to act as a neutral intermediary between Israel and countries with which the latter had not signed peace agreements.

The ICRC delegations in Israel and Lebanon worked closely together, offering the parties to the conflict in southern Lebanon an efficient channel of communication through which matters of humanitarian concern could be resolved. At the request of the Israeli authorities and the Lebanese government, the ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary between them with a view to repatriating the mortal remains of an Israeli soldier killed in an operation in southern Lebanon in September. It remained available in the same capacity to ascertain the fate of Arab combatants and Israeli servicemen reported missing in action in Lebanon.

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* See Lebanon, pp. 254-256.

* PRCS: "Palestinian Red Crescent Society"
The ICRC delegations in Israel and Syria continued their combined efforts to enable people to cross the demarcation line between the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and Syria for humanitarian reasons.5

Throughout 1997 an average of 3,650 Palestinians were held by Israel and arrests continued at an average rate of over 300 per month. Virtually all Palestinian detainees were imprisoned in places of detention on Israeli soil, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The ICRC was concerned to note an increase in the number of detainees held for administrative reasons. In addition, contrary to the provisions of the Convention, it was still denied access to three Lebanese nationals detained by Israel since 1989, 1994 and 1996, respectively.

The ICRC pursued its activities for all Palestinian detainees, closely monitoring the situation in the various detention facilities and paying particular attention to the treatment of detainees under interrogation, who were visited on a regular basis. The ICRC reported its findings to the Israeli authorities and made representations with a view to improving treatment and conditions of detention, especially in investigation sections.

Running the family visits programme was a challenge for the delegation in the face of tight security restrictions and heavy administrative procedures. Nevertheless, despite some interruptions, more people were able to see their detained relatives than in the previous year, and in August there was a change of policy that improved the conditions under which the visits took place.

Delegates visited detainees in dozens of facilities located throughout the Gaza Strip and West Bank. These were administered by several separate detention services with different areas of responsibility, under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority. The ICRC's findings and recommendations based on the first 11 months of visits conducted in accordance with the revised Memorandum of Understanding signed in September 1996 were the subject of a report handed over to the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority in December 1997.

The ICRC kept up its extensive activities to restore and maintain family links for those affected by the consequences of the Arab-Israeli conflict, using its network of local offices throughout the occupied and the autonomous territories. It registered and monitored the situation of detainees protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention and forwarded Red Cross messages between detainees and their families. On behalf of people in the occupied and the autonomous territories, it issued detention certificates facilitating certain administrative procedures and enabling them to obtain various benefits.

Delegates endeavoured to increase awareness of humanitarian law and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement by organizing information

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5 See Syria, pp. 258-259.
sessions for various target audiences, both in Israel and in the occupied and the autonomous territories.

In a new development, an ICRC legal adviser held a term-long course on humanitarian law at the Hebrew University and an Israeli doctor of law was trained to hold such courses in the future. The IDF* Chief of Staff agreed in principle that the ICRC could organize dissemination sessions at the Command and Staff College. Otherwise, the delegation held its usual sessions for IDF legal staff.

Considerable progress was made towards ensuring that teaching on the Movement and humanitarian law was included in the curricula of the seven Palestinian universities in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. In addition, several presentations were held for the Palestinian Preventive Security Service.

The ICRC continued to assume the general direction of the Movement's activities in the occupied and the autonomous territories, where the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies pursued its support for the PRCS programme in institutional development and primary and secondary health care.

In particular, the ICRC provided the logistics for bilateral programmes run by National Societies: the Netherlands Red Cross programme to provide medical assistance to seven hospitals in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the Australian Red Cross "women's development" programme in Gaza.

As in previous years, the ICRC lent financial and professional assistance to the PRCS Emergency Medical Service. In February, a new Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the ICRC and the PRCS concerning the service, which provided urgent care and transport to hospitals, especially during the clashes. Kits for use in major medical emergencies were produced locally and handed over to the PRCS. The German Red Cross provided training to PRCS staff and the ICRC sponsored a course for PRCS ambulance drivers, with the technical assistance of the MDA,* to licence them to work, drive and practise in Israel, an essential requirement when transferring patients between the occupied and the autonomous territories and Israel.

The PRCS dissemination department, which coordinated the efforts of the 18 Red Crescent branches to spread knowledge of humanitarian law, was also supported by the ICRC. It concentrated on internal training, dissemination to young people and the media, and the production of information on the correct use of the emblem and on the Emergency Medical Service.

Regular contact was maintained with the MDA. The ICRC purchased medical equipment for its blood bank in order to replace old material and facilitated interaction between representatives of the MDA and the PRCS. The MDA was involved in the course for PRCS ambulance drivers (see above).

* IDF: Israel Defence Forces
* MDA: "Magen David Adom"
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- regularly visited Palestinians held in Israeli-run places of detention: in all, carried out 266 visits in 24 facilities, where it registered 933 detainees for the first time and held private talks with over 1,500 persons under interrogation;
- distributed 115 parcels of winter clothing to all foreign detainees held in Israel;
- in cooperation with the "Palestinian Red Crescent Society", ran the family visits programme, enabling almost 90,000 people to visit their relatives detained by the Israeli authorities;
- delivered 9,715 detention certificates, authenticated or copied thousands more and issued 257 powers of attorney;
- restored and maintained contact between detainees held in Israeli facilities and their families by forwarding 4,391 Red Cross messages, kept track of individual detainees protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention and informed their families of their whereabouts;
- monitored the detainees' medical situation during 27 visits to 8 Israeli detention centres;
- provided detainees with educational and recreational items;
- repatriated 1 Israeli national from Saudi Arabia to Israel;
- restored and maintained contact between residents of Israel, the occupied and the autonomous territories and their families living in countries without official relations with Israel by passing on 7,616 Red Cross messages and radio messages and dealing with 33 tracing requests;
- arranged for transfers between Damascus and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights;
- 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 44 tents to people whose houses in the occupied territories had been destroyed (6 for security reasons) by the Israeli security forces;
- when the Gaza Strip and West Bank were completely closed and during clashes there, 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;
- purchased medical equipment for the blood bank of the "Magen David Adom" in order to replace old material;
- held a term-long course on humanitarian law at the Hebrew University; held its regular yearly session to introduce humanitarian law to IDF trainee legal officers.

6 See Syria, pp. 258-259.
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- saw 2,791 detainees held by the Palestinian security services during 293 visits, to 35 places of detention;
- monitored the detainees' medical situation during 6 visits to 6 places of detention under the responsibility of the Palestinian Authority;
- provided detainees with educational and recreational items;
- through its mission in the autonomous territories, distributed 701 Red Cross messages;
- supported and strengthened the PRCS Emergency Medical Service by paying for running costs and equipment and providing technical expertise via a representative from the German Red Cross;
- organized dissemination sessions in Gaza and Hebron for 50 members of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service;
- gave support to the PRCS dissemination department and was involved in dissemination programmes in Palestinian schools and various World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day activities.
JORDAN

Delegates based in Jordan kept up their regular activities to protect detainees, restore and maintain links between families in Jordan and their relatives living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, promote international humanitarian law among various target groups and support the Jordan National Red Crescent Society.

The ICRC paid twice-monthly visits to security detainees held under interrogation at the GID.* As from 13 October, however, the delegation had to suspend these visits because the authorities had refused to grant access to all detainees. At the end of the year, representations were still being undertaken at the highest level with a view to resuming them as soon as possible, in conformity with the ICRC’s standard requirements. Delegates nevertheless continued to have access to detainees in facilities under the responsibility of the Public Security Directorate and the Military Intelligence Department.

The ICRC ensured links between families living in Jordan and their relatives detained in Jordan and Israel, or in Kuwait as a result of the Gulf war. It forwarded official personal documents and urgent messages between Palestinians in the occupied and the autonomous territories and their families in Jordan. It also facilitated ambulance transfers of urgent medical cases between the West Bank and Jordan. Such activities were more numerous when the occupied and the autonomous territories were sealed off following suicide bomb attacks in Israel. In cooperation with UNHCR, the ICRC issued travel documents to expedite the resettlement of refugees in third countries.

In order to promote humanitarian law, the ICRC maintained contacts with and gave courses or presentations at military and police academies, the GID, universities, schools, research and documentation institutes, the Institute of Diplomacy and cultural associations. Delegates started to cooperate closely with the Civil Defence Directorate, which had decided that humanitarian law should be included in its training curriculum.

The ICRC supported the dissemination activities of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society, providing training and financial assistance. Under a cooperation protocol signed with the Red Crescent, the ICRC provided assistance to launch a periodical for the Jordanian public summarizing topics of humanitarian concern and explaining the role of the National Society and its branches.

The delegation continued to act as the logistical base for the ICRC's assistance programmes in Iraq.

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* GID: General Intelligence Directorate
- carried out 40 visits to 468 security detainees in 8 places of detention, registering 409 for the first time, and exchanged 106 Red Cross messages on their behalf;

- restored and maintained contact between families living in Jordan and their relatives detained in Israel and Kuwait by forwarding 2,357 Red Cross messages;

- arranged for 51 Jordanians, including 17 children, to pay a two-day visit to their relatives detained in Kuwait;

- restored and maintained contact between Jordanian families separated as a result of various conflicts by forwarding 79 Red Cross messages;

- forwarded 97 official and 136 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 312 travel documents for Arabs who had been granted refugee status in third countries;

- in cooperation with the Jordan National Red Crescent Society and the Ministry of Education, gave regular courses on humanitarian law and principles to schoolchildren, teachers and National Society members, reaching nearly 2,000 people;

- in cooperation with the Red Crescent, facilitated ambulance transfers of urgent medical cases between the West Bank and Jordan;

- strengthened the National Society's dissemination capacities by training volunteers in the local branches and sponsored a drawing competition run by the Red Crescent for school pupils countrywide;

- ran a two-day workshop, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, attended by over 40 participants from academic and government circles, which adopted resolutions aimed at promoting national measures to implement humanitarian law;

- under the auspices of the Crown Prince and the Honorary Vice-President of the Jordan Red Crescent, organized a regional round table for representatives from Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen on the same subject, with the aim of encouraging an exchange of views and experiences;

- held courses or one-off sessions on humanitarian law at the Institute of Diplomacy and the Civil Defence Directorate, for senior officers of the Jordanian armed forces and military students;

- continued dissemination programmes for Jordanian military and police contingents being sent on UN missions;

- produced a leaflet entitled Seeds of Hope to outline its humanitarian activities for detainees.
LEBANON

The year 1997 saw an increase in military operations in southern Lebanon, resulting in considerable tension and a spiral of violence. Indiscriminate attacks took place against civilians, who had largely been spared at first after the signing of agreements to end Operation Grapes of Wrath in 1996. However, such incidents as the shelling of Sidon and Beit Lif showed that they were more and more vulnerable, and in both absolute and proportional terms increasingly subject to attacks. The regular confrontations between the occupying power and Lebanese armed groups caused a total of 40 dead and more than 100 wounded among the civilian population.

In addition, people living in or near the Israeli-occupied zone were often caught in the crossfire of military operations and many fell victim to explosive devices placed on roadsides. Thousands had abandoned their homes in the area over the years, leaving some villages to be run only by the elderly and the most vulnerable who were unable to start up their lives again elsewhere. The economy of the region had suffered considerably and those who remained behind were often prevented from working their fields as a result of military activity.

The ICRC kept up its protection work for civilians. Delegates in the field collected information on alleged violations of humanitarian law and representations helping civilians were made to the parties to the conflict urging them to spare civilian lives and property. The delegation negotiated security guarantees with all the parties in order to carry out its humanitarian activities and intervened when access to villages was blocked owing to the fighting.

Medical and material assistance were given to conflict victims: those deported from the occupied zone, people whose homes had been destroyed by shelling, others living in particularly difficult circumstances on the front line and inhabitants of villages cut off because of military operations. The ICRC ran mobile clinics in eight villages in or close to the occupied zone where medical facilities were non-existent or the people could not reach them. The number of consultations given there increased steadily over the year owing to the worsening economic situation of the population concerned. An emergency surgical stock sufficient to treat 500 war-wounded was set up, ready to deliver to hospitals in case of an escalation in the violence.

A broken pipeline located along the front line caused an interruption to the water supply in the region of Habouch, near Nabatiyeh. At the beginning of November, initial repairs were carried out under ICRC auspices. Some additional work was required, but the necessary security guarantees from all the parties active in the area had not been given to the organization by the end of the year.
An important part of the ICRC’s work in Lebanon was to act as a neutral intermediary in ascertaining the fate of Arab combatants and Israeli servicemen reported missing in action. During the year it oversaw various operations to release and repatriate detainees, and retrieve mortal remains from combat zones. In particular, it passed on messages between the Israeli authorities and the Lebanese government concerning the return of the mortal remains of an Israeli soldier killed in southern Lebanon in September.

The ICRC had been visiting the Khiam detention centre at frequent and regular intervals since gaining access to it in 1995 after ten years of efforts. On behalf of the detainees, it forwarded Red Cross messages and family parcels, issued certificates of detention, arranged transport for family members visiting their relatives in captivity and organized visits by a prosthetic technician and a dermatologist.

On 10 September the ICRC was informed by the relevant authorities that its access to Khiam and its family visits programme had been suspended. At the end of 1997 the organization was still striving to regain access, in accordance with the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, to all people held in Israeli-occupied southern Lebanon. In the meantime, it was authorized to provide the detainees with material assistance. Following a request by the ICRC for the release of five sick detainees on humanitarian grounds, two were freed and transferred directly to a hospital in Sidon under the organization’s auspices on 12 December.

Despite repeated representations, the ICRC had not received authorization to organize family visits to Lebanese detained in Israeli prisons.

A Palestinian ex-detainee from the occupied territories who had been deported by Israel to southern Lebanon in April 1995 received authorization to go to Jordan on 6 March 1997. During his stay in the UNIFIL* compound in Naqoura, the ICRC had visited him regularly to pass on Red Cross messages and to provide assistance.

The ICRC succeeded in conveying Red Cross messages and delivering family parcels for a couple of detainees held by a militia group, without however gaining direct access to them.

The organization was concerned to note that the Palestinian refugees living in camps in Lebanon, many for the last 50 years, still had to endure very precarious conditions, with no political solution in sight as regarded their future. The conditions and general mood of despair, coupled with the fact that there were many weapons in circulation, meant that there was a potential for violence. The ICRC supported a number of medical facilities in the camps and provided artificial limbs.

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* UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- carried out 30 visits to 190 detainees in the Khiam detention centre, including 73 who were newly registered, and provided them with family parcels, blankets and wooden boards for their beds;

- arranged for 10 released detainees to be transferred out of the Israeli-occupied zone, organized visits by 712 people to their relatives held in Khiam, forwarded 5,683 Red Cross messages to or from detainees and issued 347 certificates of detention;

- repatriated to Lebanon 1 Palestinian and 2 Lebanese nationals who had been held in an Israeli prison;

- provided needy families of detainees held in Israel and the Khiam detention centre with ad hoc assistance (1,610 food parcels and 1,537 blankets);

- repatriated to Israel an Israeli Arab who had been considered as "missing" by his family for more than 10 years;

- acted as a neutral intermediary in the simultaneous hand-over of the mortal remains of 2 Hezbollah combatants and 2 SLA* fighters (the latter killed in 1986), in the simultaneous release of an SLA member detained by Hezbollah and 3 prisoners from Khiam and in the recovery of a body from Khiam and in the recovery of a body from the front line, and forwarded messages between the parties with a view to the repatriation of the mortal remains of an Israeli soldier killed in an operation in southern Lebanon;

- restored and maintained links between family members separated as a result of the conflict by forwarding 986 Red Cross messages;

- made representations to the parties to the conflict when the rules of humanitarian law protecting civilians were not respected;

- provided ad hoc assistance to victims of the conflict, handing out in all 1,139 food parcels and 3,186 blankets;

- provided ad hoc surgical and other medical supplies to hospitals, dispensaries and first-aid posts along the front line between the Israeli-occupied zone and the rest of the country, and ran mobile clinics in the area, serving first 7, then 8 villages, which gave 3,548 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, a mobile clinic and 12 community health centres in areas affected by the conflict;

- held a session on ICRC activities in general and the organization's mandate in Lebanon in particular for 150 National Society first-aiders in East Beirut;

- supported the Lebanese Red Cross' dissemination, volunteer training and communication activities;

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* SLA: South Lebanon Army
- started dissemination activities for Hezbollah members and handed out to them 2,000 first-aid kits containing the ICRC brochure *Code of conduct for combatants* and the 1997 pocket calendar about the worldwide campaign to ban landmines;
- in coordination with its Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law and in cooperation with the Lebanese Red Cross, organized a round table on the implementation of humanitarian law at national level, under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice, for government, army, university and National Society representatives; 
- maintained and developed contacts with the media and organized courses for officers and other members of the armed forces, UNIFIL and combatants from various armed groups;
- for the first time, participated in the Arab Book Fair in Beirut, displaying a wide range of publications and showing films on its main activities;
- produced and distributed 50,000 pocket calendars and 300 wall calendars in support of the landmines campaign.

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7 For regional follow-up, see *Jordan*, pp. 252-253.
SYRIA

The main raison d'être for the delegation in Syria continued to be the presence of some 13,000 Syrian nationals living in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. These people, protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention, were not allowed to cross the demarcation line into Syria, where many of them had families they had not seen for over 30 years. The exceptions to this rule – mainly pilgrims and students – crossed the line under ICRC auspices, with the delegations of Damascus and Tel Aviv working closely together.

The ICRC, as before, restored and maintained links between family members separated as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict – both Syrian nationals and Palestinian refugees – by ensuring the exchange of Red Cross messages. It also issued travel documents for refugees who had been accepted by third countries. Towards the end of the year the delegation carried out a field mission to Al Houl camp in the north-east of Syria near the city of Hassakeh to provide travel documents to Iraqi refugees accepted for resettlement in Canada. This operation, organized jointly with UNHCR, was aimed at sparing the refugees the time and expense of a long trip to Damascus to carry out the necessary administrative procedures.

The delegation in Damascus maintained regular contact with the Syrian authorities in order to carry out the above activities. It was also in constant touch with representatives of several Palestinian groups based in the capital.

As part of its dissemination efforts in Syria, the ICRC held a course on the law of armed conflict for Syrian officers and a lecture for UNTSO* observers stationed on both sides of the Golan (Damascus and Tiberias). For the first time, three generals from the Syrian armed forces took part in a course at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy. The ICRC also lent support to the dissemination activities of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society.

Under a tripartite agreement, which was extended to 31 December 1998, the German Red Cross financed the material needed to run a PRCS prosthetic/orthotic centre in the Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus and the ICRC lent administrative, logistical and technical support. An ICRC technician made two visits to the centre to assess the production of artificial limbs and supervise the installation of a new hydraulic press donated by the organization's Special Fund for the Disabled, which was to make the production of components cheaper and faster. Three local technicians attended an ICRC training course in Addis Ababa.

* UNTSO: United Nations Truce Supervision Organization
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- organized the repatriation of 2 released detainees formerly held in Israel;

- arranged for 23 transfers between Syria and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights to enable hundreds of people to cross the demarcation line and, in cooperation with UNDOF*/UNTSO, arranged for a wedding to be held in the no man's land on the Golan Heights;

- forwarded 724 Red Cross messages and 25 official documents, organized 1 family reunification and issued travel documents for 328 people;

- financed the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society's stand at the Damascus International Book Fair, its publications for the occasion and other dissemination material;

- in cooperation with the National Society, organized 2 seminars on humanitarian law, 1 in Damascus and 1 in Sweida, each for 30 people, including representatives from the civilian, military and judicial authorities, and members and volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent;

- financed the purchase of materials for use in a first-aid training programme in the National Society 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 14 high-ranking officers of the Syrian armed forces and for UNTSO observers;

- in collaboration with the Cairo delegation, worked with Syrian producers to make TV spots and video films on various topics of relevance to the ICRC.

* UNDOF: United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
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.8

IRAQ

For the seventh consecutive year, the embargo imposed on Iraq in connection with the Gulf war remained in force. UN Resolution 986, adopted on 20 May 1996, authorized the country to sell a limited amount of oil so that it could purchase certain vital goods, in particular food and medical supplies. The resolution was renewed for six months in June and again in December 1997. However, its implementation was plagued by delays, and although food started reaching the country in March and some medical supplies in May, further medical items and equipment for electrical installations, agriculture, water purification systems and places of education were slow to arrive. Throughout the year, in order to alleviate some of the humanitarian consequences of the embargo, the ICRC maintained its water-supply and sanitation programmes and its efforts to rehabilitate the war-disabled.

Iraq's water boards received assistance aimed at helping them to improve the quality and quantity of water supplied to the population and to ensure better evacuation of waste water. These efforts, under way without interruption since 1995, helped significantly to prevent the spread of water-borne diseases, thereby contributing towards the public health of millions.

During the year, 34 Iraqi engineers and technicians, split into seven teams, implemented 28 rehabilitation projects under the ICRC programme. Their work

8 See Aftermath of the Iran/Iraq war, p. 264.
entailed the installation of imported equipment and a general overhaul of treatment plants. Equipment and materials for another 18 stations were provided to the water boards concerned, with the ICRC subsequently monitoring their correct use. Five of the 46 projects were intended to improve sewage systems and for the first time, in Diwaniyah, the programme included the rehabilitation of a sewage treatment station. Between 1995 and the end of 1997, the ICRC’s water-supply and sanitation programme covered a total of 155 stations.

The ICRC programme for the war-disabled provided assistance to the many amputees from the Iran/Iraq war, the Gulf war and the fighting in the north, and also to civilian mine victims. Iraq either could not afford, or was unable to import, the materials required for the proper technology to be used. Between the launching of the programme in 1994 and the end of 1997, the ICRC fitted 3,651 amputees with 3,944 prostheses and 654 patients with 799 orthoses.

During the year the ICRC continued to run a components workshop in Baghdad and lent technical and financial support to five prosthetic/orthotic centres, three under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, in Baghdad, Basra and Najaf, and one operated by the Iraqi Red Crescent Society in Mosul. It also ran a centre in Arbil, opened in 1996, for amputees from all of northern Iraq. The production of components began there in January 1997 and the technique for manufacturing above-knee prostheses was introduced and taught to local technicians from all the centres, in addition to the regular training provided by the ICRC. To accommodate the increased output, new staff were hired in Basra, Mosul and Najaf, and the Arbil centre was extended.

Cooperation between the ICRC and government centres was also stepped up in 1997. Agreements on ICRC support to centres in Baghdad, Basra and Najaf were signed between the ICRC and the Ministry of Health in October, and in December an agreement was concluded with the Ministry of Defence on ICRC assistance to the only military prosthetic centre operating in Iraq, Ibn Al-Kuff.

It was again a turbulent year for the people of northern Iraq, with no prospect of a lasting peace. Despite the cease-fire of October 1996, the rift deepened between the two main Kurdish parties, the KDP* and the PUK.* In March a peace-monitoring force of Turkmen and Assyrians was deployed to monitor breaches of the cease-fire, but the situation remained highly volatile with sporadic fighting between the parties and fierce clashes occurring in October and November. All too frequently, civilians suspected of sympathizing with one of the parties were expelled across the lines drawn between the two adversaries.

On 14 May the Turkish army, in alliance with the KDP, launched a military operation with the aim of dismantling PKK* bases. They withdrew – though only

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* KDP: Kurdish Democratic Party
* PUK: Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
partially—in June, returning on 22 September. During this period, clashes between KDP and PKK forces intensified. Also in May, fighting erupted between the PUK and the Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan in the Halabja region.

The hostilities gave rise to constant civilian displacements and arrests. The ICRC visited detainees held by the KDP and the PUK and gathered information on alleged violations of the basic principles of humanitarian law. In July it handed over to the leaders of both parties its annual report on these visits, which contained its main findings, concerns and recommendations. Throughout the year the ICRC also made constant representations to the parties with a view to ensuring that the detainees were being treated humanely and that the rules of humanitarian law were being respected during combat.

In cooperation with the Iraqi Red Crescent, the ICRC provided relief for tens of thousands of displaced people and delivered medical assistance to more than 20 hospitals treating the war-wounded. Its presence was especially necessary as, apart from its own staff, only the UN agencies, the National Society and a few international non-governmental organizations had remained in northern Iraq on a permanent basis since the heavy fighting in September 1996.

This part of the country was also covered by the ICRC’s programmes to improve water-supply and sanitation facilities and rehabilitate the war-disabled.

Disappointingly, a seminar on humanitarian law planned for senior officers of the Iraqi armed forces in October was cancelled by the authorities without any explanation. The ICRC nevertheless continued to support the activities of the Iraqi Red Crescent dissemination teams in nine governorates in northern Iraq by providing training and financial assistance.

* PKK: Kurdish Workers’ Party
- carried out 2 visits to 64 Iranian servicemen captured in 1991 and 1992 and detained in Ramadi camp; supervised the release and repatriation of two of them in December and handled 7,211 Red Cross messages between them and their relatives;
- carried out 156 visits to 3,114 detainees (2,655 of them for the first time) held in 39 places of detention in the northern governorates for security reasons or in connection with factional fighting among the Kurds and the Turkish invasion; handed over some 5,000 blankets, 4 tonnes of soap, 287 jerrycans and 134 tarpaulins;
- obtained the release on humanitarian grounds of an elderly detainee held by the PKK;
- provided 125 certificates of detention;
- issued 1,406 travel documents for Iranian refugees seeking resettlement in a third country and forwarded personal official documents for 69 people who were unable to contact their diplomatic missions directly;
- repatriated 8 Iraqis who had been living in Lebanon;
- provided ad hoc material assistance to people displaced internally as a result of the fighting in northern Iraq; in all, assisted some 45,000 people;
- 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;
- distributed emergency medical supplies to facilities in northern Iraq to treat several thousand casualties of the fighting;
- continued to support 3 government-run prosthetic/orthotic centres in Baghdad, Basra and Najaf, a centre run by the National Society in Mosul (see below) and its own centre in Arbil (northern Iraq) by training technicians and providing materials and polypropylene components manufactured in its workshop in the capital;
- supported the government school for Iraqi technicians by helping with training and supplying imported materials and held two training sessions at the Ministry of Health's Medical Rehabilitation Centre;
- fitted 1,909 new amputees, manufactured 2,132 prostheses (including 1,177 for mine victims), produced 482 orthoses and fitted 350 new patients with them at the 5 ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic centres;
- throughout Iraq, rehabilitated 28 water stations and provided 18 others with the materials required for maintenance and repair work to be carried out by the respective water boards;
- assisted the Iraqi Red Crescent in carrying out dissemination activities for students, trade unions, women's associations, villagers and other groups, took part in camps for young people, provided financial and technical assistance for the production of a monthly periodical, and prepared a joint campaign on the dangers of landmines;
- signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Society regarding activities to restore and maintain family links;
- supported the Red Crescent prosthetic/orthotic centre in Mosul by providing materials and components and by training technicians;
- gave lectures on international humanitarian law at the University of Baghdad for 90 students;
- in northern Iraq, held sessions for a total of 145 unit commanders, 277 peshmerga officers, 45 officers of the armed forces, 170 students and officers at military and police academies, 46 police officers, 54 civil servants and 32 security officers.
AFTERMATH OF THE IRAN/IRAQ WAR

On the eve of the tenth anniversary of the end of the Iran/Iraq war, the problem posed by thousands of Iraqi prisoners of war (POWs) held under the responsibility of the Iranian authorities and that of hundreds of Iranians missing in action on whom the ICRC had gathered information during the war remained unresolved, despite a trickle of releases. The repatriation of 722 Iraqi POWs in December 1996 under ICRC auspices had raised hopes that an overall solution might be found, but this proved not to be the case. A further 46 Iraqis were repatriated in September and 496 in November 1997.

The ICRC had regular access to an Iranian POW held in Iraq who was first visited in 1995 but who had been in detention in Iraq for 17 years.

High-level contacts aimed at finding a solution to the issue were kept up, notably through missions by the ICRC Director of Operations and the Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa to Baghdad in May and Tehran in July. In Baghdad the ICRC officials met, in particular, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and in Tehran the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the President of the Commission on POWs and Missing Persons. During the summit meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Tehran, the Delegate General also made representations to several high-ranking Iranian officials, including the President of the Commission, concerning POWs and missing persons from the Iran/Iraq war.

IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- in all, supervised the repatriation of 542 Iraqi POWs after holding private talks with them to ascertain their wish to return home;
- carried out 5 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 247 tracing requests and issued 369 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. The organization also chaired eight Technical Sub-Committee meetings held in the demilitarized zone on the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border. The purpose of these meetings was to help ascertain the whereabouts and fate of persons reported missing in connection with the hostilities. No significant headway was made, although the parties did affirm their willingness to continue using the existing mechanism with a view to resolving the issue.

High-level contacts aimed at finding a solution were kept up, notably through a mission by the ICRC Director of Operations and the Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa to Baghdad and Kuwait in May. In Kuwait City the ICRC officials met, in particular, the acting Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Defence.

In Kuwait, ICRC delegates monitored the conditions of detention and treatment of people who were being held in connection with the Gulf war and who had been without diplomatic representation since then. Visits were made to Iraqi, Jordanian, Yemeni and Sudanese nationals, Palestinians possessing only travel documents 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 split up and that detainees were not expelled to a country where they had reason to fear persecution. Delegates ascertained that those facing expulsion had the opportunity to settle their personal affairs and were allowed to take their belongings with them.

The regional delegation continued to restore and maintain links between family members separated by the Gulf war. In particular, it forwarded Red Cross messages between people living in Kuwait and their relatives in countries with no diplomatic relations with Kuwait. Travel documents were issued on a regular basis to people who had received entry visas for resettlement in a third country but were unable to obtain passports.
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- in Iraq, carried out 2 visits to 119 civilians (14 of them registered for the first time) from countries without diplomatic representation there and held in the Abu Ghraib detention centre near Baghdad;
- in Kuwait, visited 794 detainees (261 of them registered for the first time) in 14 places of detention;
- arranged for 51 family members to visit 34 Jordanian detainees in Kuwait;

- restored and maintained contact between family members separated as a result of the Gulf war by forwarding 19,019 Red Cross messages between people in Kuwait and their relatives in countries that did not have diplomatic relations with Kuwait and 8,154 messages between people in Iraq and their relatives abroad;
- issued 50 travel documents to people leaving for resettlement in another country and 226 certificates of detention.
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

KUWAIT
Regional delegation
(Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen)

The regional delegation focused its efforts on helping to ascertain the whereabouts and fate of persons reported missing in connection with the Gulf war and visiting detainees in Bahrain. It also carried out dissemination and information activities in the Gulf region.

Various means were used to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and of the ICRC's mandate among target groups such as decision-makers, National Society staff, school pupils and the general public. The aim was to promote the ICRC's role as a neutral intermediary in situations of armed conflict and internal strife and as a significant player on the humanitarian scene.

A seminar and a workshop for officers of the armed and security forces were held in Kuwait and Yemen, respectively. Two similar courses were organized for the armed forces of Qatar.

The ICRC continued to develop contacts with the region's National Societies in order to promote understanding and acceptance of its work and proposed various forms of cooperation, especially in the field of dissemination. The Kuwait Red Crescent Society supported the ICRC's landmines campaign through a week of promotional activities in May and, as a result of a letter written by the National Society's President, the issue was debated in the National Assembly. Joint events for the 8 May celebrations also provided opportunities for such contacts.

Visits to persons arrested and detained for security reasons in Bahrain had started on 9 November 1996, in accordance with standard ICRC procedures, on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the ICRC and the country's authorities in October of that year. These visits proceeded throughout 1997. In November the ICRC submitted to the Bahraini authorities its first summary report on the visits and talks were held with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of the Interior.

The innovative psychiatric care project launched in the Sana'a central prison in 1995 and in Taiz and Ibb in late 1996 and early 1997 had considerably improved the lot of mentally ill detainees in Yemen and was pursued throughout the year. The project was delegated to the Netherlands Red Cross, thus ensuring an expatriate presence in Yemen's prisons, and was supported by the Yemen Red Crescent Society.

9 See Aftermath of the Gulf war, p.265-266.
10 See the ICRC's 1995 and 1996 Annual Report, pp. 249 and 253, respectively.
During its visits to the central prisons of Aden, Hodeidah, Ibb, Sana'a and Taiz, where some 6,000 people were detained in all, the ICRC followed up on the water-supply and sanitation work carried out there and noted improvements.

The ICRC maintained its contacts with the OIC,* based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in accordance with the cooperation agreement between the two organizations.

* OIC: Organisation of the Islamic Conference

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**IN 1997 THE ICRC:**

- in Bahrain, carried out 33 visits to 23 places of detention and saw 2,111 detainees;
- in Yemen, carried out 5 visits to 5 places of detention housing 5,832 detainees;
- in Yemen, ensured that sanitary conditions for detainees were adequate by visiting places of detention and encouraging the authorities to take requisite measures, completed repair work on water tanks in the Sana'a central prison and provided technical support to prison sanitation engineers;
- in Yemen, handled 3,452 Red Cross messages, mainly between Somali refugees living in Yemen and their families abroad;
- cooperated with the Yemen Red Crescent on assistance to detainees, the psychiatric care project in prisons – delegated to the Netherlands Red Cross – and dissemination of humanitarian law and principles to the civilian population;
- organized seminars for 30 officers of the Kuwaiti armed forces, some 25 of the Yemeni armed forces and 26 of the Qatar armed forces, and held a lecture on the law of war for 30 UNIKOM* officers;
- in cooperation with the Yemen Red Crescent Society, held a round table in Sana'a for government officials and academics on the incorporation of humanitarian law into the national legislation of Yemen.**

**For regional follow-up, see Jordan, pp. 252-253.**

**UNIKOM: UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission**
North Africa

EGYPT

During the year dozens of people, including many civilians, were killed or wounded in violent attacks, notably in central Egypt and Cairo, highlighting the country's vulnerability to such incidents. The ICRC expressed its concern at unacceptable acts of this kind, in particular during a meeting between the organization's Vice-President and the Egyptian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs during the OIC* summit meeting held in Tehran.

The Cairo delegation maintained and developed contacts with the Egyptian authorities, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the armed forces, the Egyptian Red Crescent, eminent law professors and the media. It spread information on the ICRC's mandate under the Geneva Conventions and the organization's right of initiative as laid down in the Movement's 1986 Statutes, with a view to promoting acceptance of the ICRC in situations of internal disturbances.

Activities to increase understanding and acceptance of the ICRC's mandate and role were stepped up and expanded to cover the entire Middle East. The delegation produced specially adapted dissemination material and coordinated the ICRC's approach, ensuring that the message was appropriate for local target groups and lending technical support to the dissemination efforts of other ICRC delegations. Missions were conducted to Jordan, Qatar, Syria and the United Arab Emirates to meet representatives from information ministries and directors of TV and radio stations and satellite channels. As a direct result, the ICRC was immediately granted air time on the Dubai satellite channel, the most powerful in the region.

The delegation produced and distributed radio programmes and serials, material for TV and cartoon strips for publication in young people's magazines. By the end of the year, a number of productions had been broadcast by the BBC and Radio Monte Carlo and taken up by local channels in other countries, while others had appeared on the satellite channels Nile TV and Dubai TV. The cartoon strips had also been published in Jordan.

The regional delegate to the armed and security forces stepped up contacts with the Egyptian army.

The ICRC continued to work with the Egyptian Red Crescent, which supported the organization's campaign against landmines and its Advisory Service on

*OIC: Organisation of the Islamic Conference
International Humanitarian Law\textsuperscript{12} set up to assist States in implementing the law at national level.

The camp for displaced Palestinians on the Libyan side of the Egyptian-Libyan border was dismantled by the Libyan authorities and its population transferred to temporary premises with the promise that they would be resettled in Libya.

\textsuperscript{12} See Promotion and development of international humanitarian law, pp. 288-290.

IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- maintained and restored contact between separated family members by forwarding 1,167 Red Cross messages and issuing travel documents for 509 refugees granted asylum in third countries;
- on World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, organized interactive audiovisual conferences involving Red Crescent branches in 26 governorates and using technology made available by the Ministry of Education;
- cooperated with the Egyptian Red Crescent Society in setting up an advisory service on humanitarian law to support the country’s efforts to implement the law at national level;
- for the sixth year running, issued an illustrated calendar in Arabic, this time tracing the history of Arab cinema over a century through images reflecting humanitarian values;
- produced cartoon strips dealing with the rights of individuals in wartime, TV spots about prisoners of war, landmines and children in war, a video film on ICRC dissemination activities and Arabic translations and voice-overs for ICRC publications and productions;
- gave courses and lectures on humanitarian law and related ICRC activities for media, academic, legal and cultural target audiences;
- held the first-ever seminar at the Nasser Academy to train 30 senior officers in methods of teaching humanitarian law, organized a two-day seminar for 35 legal advisers to the armed forces, held a course for instructors at the National Defence College, chaired a seminar on humanitarian law and how to report on it for war correspondents and journalists at the same college; and gave two presentations on the ICRC and humanitarian law at the Military Management School in Cairo, aimed mainly at officers responsible for planning and conducting military operations.
The regional delegation in Tunis continued to follow up on the serious humanitarian issues arising from the aftermath of the Western Sahara conflict. At the same time, it was deeply concerned by the tragic developments in Algeria and stepped up its attempts to resume protection activities there.

In order to make humanitarian law and the ICRC’s mandate and role under the Geneva Conventions and the Movement’s Statutes better known and understood in the Maghreb countries, the delegation pursued its contacts with governments, National Societies, the media and academic circles. It encouraged States to incorporate humanitarian law into their national legislation and to recognize the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission set up under Article 90 of Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions.

Considerable effort was devoted to developing the activities and raising the profile of the region’s National Societies with a view to improving their visibility and operational capacity. The delegation helped them to carry out projects aimed at improving local knowledge of the ICRC, the Movement and humanitarian law.

In April the ICRC Vice-President and the Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa attended the Seventh Mediterranean Regional Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies held in Tunis and presented the organization’s activities in the Mediterranean area. The Vice-President and the Tunisian Minister of Defence discussed plans to disseminate humanitarian law in cooperation with the country’s armed forces.

A delegate based in Tunis carried out three missions to Mauritania, where she met government and Red Crescent representatives and conducted dissemination sessions. In addition, through various contacts and in coordination with the ICRC delegation in Bamako, she kept an eye on developments in northern Mali. The situation of Mauritanian refugees in Senegal was also discussed by the delegate with the people directly concerned.

In Algeria, the horrific attacks on civilians increased. Each month, the grim toll mounted as men, women and children, mainly in Algiers and south-west of the capital, were deliberately targeted in mass killings.

The ICRC, deeply shocked and concerned by these events, stressed the intolerable nature of the situation and the urgent need to spare civilians the effects of the internal violence. However, despite four missions to Algiers by the regional del-
legate to hold talks with the authorities, the organization's efforts to start up work in the country were unsuccessful. In May the ICRC President and the Delegate General for the Middle East and North Africa met the Algerian Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, formerly the Minister of Foreign Affairs, at ICRC headquarters. Their discussions centred on the following areas: which officials should be contacted about resuming ICRC activities in Algeria, the ICRC's procedures for visits and the categories of detainees to be seen, and whether dissemination activities could be carried out in the country. It was nevertheless clear that security problems would severely limit the possibilities for humanitarian action.

In the summer, for the first time, the Algerian Red Crescent organized a holiday camp for children traumatized by the violence. It also continued to provide needy families with free meals during Ramadan and school supplies. The latter two programmes were supported by the ICRC. In addition, the National Society helped transport to the Tindouf area family parcels for Moroccan prisoners held by the Polisario Front and medical supplies for health-care facilities treating these prisoners and Sahrawi civilians.

According to ICRC records, in 1997 the Polisario Front was still holding 1,887 Moroccans prisoner, nearly all of whom were visited by the ICRC during the year. ICRC doctors noted an increase in the number of cases requiring treatment and repatriation as a matter of priority, and in March and November a list of 362 of the most vulnerable prisoners—invalids, those over 60 years of age, those who had been in detention for 20 years or more and medical cases—was submitted to the Polisario Front, with copies to the Moroccan authorities for their information.

Following the UN Special Envoy's visit to Tindouf in March, the Front freed 85 prisoners. At the year's end, they were still waiting to be repatriated by the Moroccan authorities, who maintained their opposition in principle to any repatriations that did not concern all the detainees.

Despite the fresh momentum given to the Western Sahara issue by the resumption of negotiations and the new Houston agreement on the 1988 UN settlement plan, the ICRC continued to express its utmost concern for the captives. The organization stressed that all of them should be released in conformity with humanitarian law and reiterated its readiness to implement any agreement to repatriate them. The issue was raised at meetings between ICRC representatives and the UN Special Envoy; Polisario Front representatives in Algiers, Geneva and at the UN in New York; and Moroccan representatives of the Foreign Ministry and Royal Armed Forces. In addition, the head of delegation in Washington DC discussed the subject with the President of the US Institute for Peace in that city. These steps nevertheless failed to produce the desired outcome. In addition, more than 100,000 Sahrawi civilians were still living in precarious conditions, dependent on assistance from UNHCR and other organizations.
IN 1997 THE ICRC:

- saw nearly 1,969 Moroccan prisoners in the hands of the Polisario Front during two visits, in March and November;
- restored and maintained contact between Moroccan prisoners and their families by forwarding 51,841 Red Cross messages, and sent 2,000 family parcels to Moroccan prisoners via the Algerian Red Crescent;
- improved health care for Moroccan prisoners and the Sahrawi population by providing ad hoc assistance to local medical facilities;
- conducted a follow-up visit to 6 Moroccan prisoners in Rabat who had been repatriated from Algeria under ICRC auspices in December 1996;
- in Algeria, helped fund the National Society's programmes for vulnerable sectors of the population, which provided over one million hot meals to needy families during Ramadan, and books, overalls and satchels to over 600,000 schoolchildren from deprived families;
- in Libya, in cooperation with the National Society, held a dissemination session for 10 officials and 30 social science students, a training seminar for members of 30 Red Crescent branches and a training course on relief activities for over 50 young volunteers, and provided articles for the National Society's magazine;
- in Mauritania, cooperated with the Red Crescent on a programme introduced in May to explain humanitarian law to National Society volunteers and pupils and teachers from two secondary schools (nearly 400 people in all) in the south and south-west of the country;
- in Tunisia, took part in a seminar held in July to train young first-aid volunteers from several Mediterranean countries;
- supplied recent publications to the humanitarian law libraries run by the National Societies of Algeria, Libya, Mauritania and Morocco, and supplied publications to five law faculty libraries in Morocco via the country's Red Crescent Society;
- in Mauritania, worked with the Ministry of Defence to draft a training manual on humanitarian law adapted to the local context for distribution in 1998 to military units throughout the country;
- arranged for high-ranking officers from Mauritania and Morocco to attend courses at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy;
- in Morocco, organized a press conference for 20 members of the media; took part in a round table on the teaching of humanitarian law and human rights law in universities organized by the University of Casablanca for some 70 representatives of academic circles, the government and the National Society, and cooperated closely with the Moroccan Human Rights Department;
- in Tunisia, attended and gave presentations on humanitarian law, the ICRC and the Movement at sessions organized by the Association for International Studies, the Arab Institute of Human Rights and the Institute for Press and Sciences Information for audiences from the academic, media and diplomatic worlds and produced a brochure specially designed for the region on the development of humanitarian law and the contributions made to it by key personalities from the Maghreb region.
Although promoting international humanitarian law remains a top priority for the ICRC, dissemination delegates now also run mine-awareness programmes in a bid to save children and adults from a lifetime of suffering and dependence. Mercifully, at the end of the year 123 countries signed the Ottawa treaty banning the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines.
"Woza Africa! Music goes to war." This was the slogan adopted by six popular African musicians who, responding to the ICRC's call, led a campaign in 1997 to help curb the indiscriminate violence that has long plagued their continent. The musicians strove to reach people's hearts and minds through a series of original songs which they performed live and recorded.

To translate the principles of international humanitarian law into words that could be understood by war victims and combatants alike, especially young people, and that were sung by well-known performers who would be listened to was the aim of this ambitious campaign. "Woza Africa" was yet another attempt to meet the urgent and ongoing need to convince present and potential perpetrators of violence that they should respect humanitarian principles.

For the ICRC, and especially for its team of legal advisers, 1997 also marked the successful outcome of a five-year drive to bring about a ban on anti-personnel landmines. The legal and humanitarian diplomacy engaged in by the ICRC, which acted as a linchpin between States and non-governmental organizations, was no doubt a key factor in the process that led to the signature in Ottawa on 3 and 4 December of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. Now that the treaty exists and has been signed by 123 States, the next step is to ensure that it is ratified and complied with.

Regarding humanitarian law as a whole, the ICRC continued to pursue three main goals: the consolidation of the general rules of this law, the strengthening of its implementation mechanisms and the prohibition of inhumane means and methods of warfare.

Moreover, several dozen eminent lawyers around the world carried out a special study on customary humanitarian law. This major undertaking should enable the ICRC to draft various proposals aimed at reinforcing and developing the law as the twenty-first century dawns.

At the end of the year under review the ICRC's Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law took stock of its work for the first time since it was set up in 1995. The advice it had dispensed and its awareness-raising efforts had clearly borne fruit since many States had begun to assess and review their legislation for the national implementation of humanitarian law treaties.

Naturally, this work must continue. In addition, new implementation mechanisms should be developed at the international level. To this end, the ICRC supported States in their endeavour to set up a permanent international criminal court whose mandate would include the prosecution and sentencing of persons responsible for grave breaches of humanitarian law.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which at the end of 1997 comprised 175 National Societies, their International Federation and the ICRC, held its Council of Delegates from 25 to 27 November in Seville, Spain.
This statutory meeting, which brings together all the Movement's components, discussed many important topics, including two that are of particular relevance for the future. The first is the issue of the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems, their indicative and protective uses, and their shortcomings. The second is the new agreement between the Movement's components, which clarifies their respective responsibilities with a view to further enhancing their overall ability to assist the most vulnerable and needy groups.
PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

UNIVERSAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS AND THEIR ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS

In 1997 a total of 188 States were party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions. During the year two States acceded to the two Protocols of 1977 additional to the Conventions: Chad (17 January) and Lebanon (23 July). This brought the number of States party to Additional Protocol I and Additional Protocol II to 148 and 140 respectively.

Article 90 of Additional Protocol I provides for the establishment of an International Fact-Finding Commission to enquire into alleged serious violations of international humanitarian law. Tajikistan filed a declaration recognizing the competence of the Commission on 10 September, raising to 50 the number of States which had done so. Although the Commission, established in 1992, had not yet been asked to conduct a formal enquiry under Additional Protocol I, in 1997 informal discussions were undertaken to examine the role that it might play in relation to events in Colombia.

The year under review marked the 20th anniversary of the adoption on 11 June 1977 of the two Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions, which contain numerous provisions for the protection of victims of armed conflict, both international (Protocol I) and non-international (Protocol II). This important event was a milestone in the development of humanitarian law. Today, nearly three quarters of the world’s States are party to the Protocols, and the ICRC is continuing its efforts to promote universal acceptance of them. On the occasion of this anniversary the ICRC issued a solemn appeal to all the States which had not yet ratified or acceded to the Protocols, urging them to do so as soon as possible.
STATES PARTY TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS AND THEIR ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS

Map

This map shows which States were party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and to their 1977 Additional Protocols, as at 31 December 1997. It also indicates which States had made the optional declaration under Article 90 of the 1977 Additional Protocol I, recognizing the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission.

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

The following tables show which States were party to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and to the two Additional Protocols of 1977, as at 31 December 1997. 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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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.
Promoting greater respect for humanitarian law and ensuring its implementation at the national level continued to be an important and urgent task for the ICRC. The role of the organization's Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law, which was set up within its Legal Division at the end of 1995 pursuant to recommendations adopted by the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, is to advise governments on the implementation of humanitarian law and adherence to humanitarian law treaties. The Advisory Service works in close cooperation with governments, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, international organizations and specialized institutions.

In 1997 the Advisory Service organized a series of seminars around the world, bringing together representatives of national authorities and other experts to examine the implementation of humanitarian law and to plan further action. National seminars took place in Jordan (17-19 February), Swaziland (25 February), Lesotho (4-5 March), Yemen (8-10 March), Mozambique (18-20 March), Belarus (23-24 April), Senegal (7 May), Benin (17-18 June), Lebanon (8-10 July) and Russia (2-3 December). A regional seminar for the countries of South Asia was held in Kathmandu (19-23 May) in cooperation with UNESCO, and was attended by representatives from Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. A special meeting on humanitarian law was organized in Tehran (5 May), under the auspices of the 36th session of the African Asian Legal Consultative Committee, for representatives from over 30 African and Asian countries. Lastly, the Advisory Service contributed to a seminar on the dissemination and implementation of humanitarian law held in London by the British Red Cross and the British government (6-7 October).

The enactment of national legislation to punish war crimes and to prevent misuse of the red cross, red crescent and other emblems is central to ensuring full respect for humanitarian law. The Advisory Service therefore provides technical assistance and other advice on the drafting, adoption and amendment of such legislation. In 1997 it carried out this type of work in Armenia, Belarus, Benin, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, France, Georgia, Hong Kong, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Namibia, Syria, Tajikistan, Togo, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, the United States of America and Venezuela.

The Advisory Service also gathers and analyses information on new legislation and national case law. In 1997, for example, laws regulating the use of the red cross, red crescent and other emblems were adopted in Cameroon (January),
Costa Rica (October) and Guatemala (November). The scope of the United States War Crimes Act was expanded to cover additional offences, including breaches of the law committed in non-international armed conflicts and violations of Protocol II (on mines) to the 1980 UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Legislation on the use of anti-personnel landmines was enacted in Austria, Canada, Guatemala and Italy. Lastly, decisions relating to war crimes and other humanitarian law issues were handed down by a number of national courts, in particular in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

From 23 to 25 September an international meeting of experts was held in Geneva by the Advisory Service to discuss the repression of war crimes and other violations of humanitarian law under national criminal law. This meeting brought together over 35 national experts from civil-law countries, including judges, magistrates, prosecutors, lawyers and academics. Their conclusions, on a range of legal issues relating to the topic, will form the basis of published guidelines. A similar meeting for experts from common-law countries is planned for 1998.

During the year under review members of the Advisory Service also contributed to meetings on the repression of international crimes held, in particular, by Amnesty International, the University of Milan, the International Society for Military Law and the Law of War (all three in May) and the British Institute of International and Comparative Law (in November).

The establishment of national committees for the implementation of humanitarian law, comprising representatives of ministries and national bodies responsible for implementation, has been identified as an effective means of promoting compliance with the law at the country level. In 1997 such committees were set up in Belarus, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Panama, Portugal, Senegal, South Africa and Togo, and the national committees of Argentina and Chile held their first joint meeting. There are now over 60 countries with national committees or similar bodies. Other countries are considering setting up their own committees, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Canada, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, Guatemala, Mali, Mozambique and Slovenia.

In Abidjan on 12 and 13 August the Advisory Service organized the first regional meeting of national committees, which was attended by representatives from 12 African countries. The meeting’s purpose was to exchange information on the work of these committees and on the implementation of humanitarian law in Africa. Members of the Advisory Service also held meetings with representa-

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1 The full name 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.
publications

preparations for the meeting

recommendation of the International Conference

tives of national humanitarian law bodies in Argentina, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Namibia, Panama, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and took part in the Fourth International Workshop on National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, held in Mexico from 27 to 30 November.

During the year the Advisory Service published a report on the meeting of international experts that was held in Geneva in 1996 to discuss the work of national committees. The report, distributed to all governments, provides guidance on the setting-up, composition and working methods of the committees. Moreover, the Advisory Service added to its list of publications intended to explain humanitarian law issues in clear and accessible terms, and published its first annual report covering its own activities, general developments relating to the implementation of humanitarian law and guidelines on specific implementation issues.

First periodical meeting of the States party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions

In December 1995 the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent had endorsed, in its Resolution 1, the recommendations drawn up by the Intergovernmental Group of Experts for the Protection of War Victims (Geneva, 23-27 January 1995). Recommendation VII of the Group of Experts suggested that "the Depositary organize periodical meetings of the States party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions to consider general problems regarding the application of IHL". In response to this recommendation, the Swiss government, in its capacity as depositary of the Geneva Conventions, had submitted to the 26th International Conference its proposals for holding such periodical meetings and had specified that the ICRC would play a key role in preparing the meetings and the documents required for them.

Pursuant to a series of consultations begun in early 1997 between the Swiss government and the States Parties, the date of the first periodical meeting was set for 19 to 23 January 1998. Together with the ICRC, the Swiss government considered various topics for discussion at the meeting. Two of these emerged as the major focus of interest and concern among States: the security of humanitarian personnel working in situations of violence, on the one hand, and armed conflicts linked to the disintegration of State structures, on the other. The ICRC therefore prepared two working documents on these topics.

International Criminal Court

The Preparatory Committee on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court met three times in 1997 in New York. The Committee, open to all States, has been entrusted with the task of drafting a statute for the future court. Its discussions, held ahead of a diplomatic conference to be convened in Rome in June 1998, were intense and for the most part constructive. The conference's aim will be to adopt a convention setting up the court, which will be responsible for prosecuting individuals suspected of having committed serious international crimes, such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, in cases where national courts have failed to do so.

Pursuant to its mandate to promote humanitarian law, and in particular the implementation thereof, the ICRC took an active part in the Preparatory Committee's discussions. Many of the issues dealt with were of fundamental importance to both the effectiveness of the court and the safeguarding of existing law, especially the definition of the crimes envisaged, the question of the complementarity between national courts and the future international criminal court, and the preconditions to the exercise of jurisdiction by the court (referred to as the "trigger mechanism"). The ICRC deemed it important to take a position on these issues and to stress the need for ensuring, as far as possible, that existing humanitarian law was reflected in the court's draft statute.

Civil Defence

Together with the International Civil Defence Organization, the ICRC held a meeting of experts on the implementation of the rules of humanitarian law relating to civil defence in Gollion, Switzerland, from 30 June to 2 July. The meeting, on which a report was published, was organized pursuant to Resolution 2(A)(j) of the 26th International Conference, which "invites States party to Additional Protocol I to implement and disseminate the rules of the Protocol regarding civil defence and recommends that the International Committee of the Red Cross, in collaboration with the International Civil Defence Organization, encourage international cooperation in this field and the inclusion of this question in international meetings on international humanitarian law".

During the meeting the experts examined, in the light of the nature of current conflicts and disaster situations, the relevance of the provisions of humanitarian law which grant civil defence organizations and their personnel a status comparable to that of medical units (Articles 61-67 of Protocol I). They concluded that while the rules as a whole are still relevant, they are largely unknown.
DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LAW

Study on the customary rules of humanitarian law

The 26th International Conference, by endorsing Recommendation II of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts for the Protection of War Victims, formally invited the ICRC "to prepare, with the assistance of experts in IHL representing various geographical regions and different legal systems, and in consultation with experts from governments and international organizations, a report on customary rules of IHL applicable in international and non-international armed conflicts, and to circulate the report to States and competent international bodies".

A plan of action was drawn up in 1996 by the report's Steering Committee, composed of renowned academic experts in humanitarian law, and research began towards the end of 1996 and continued throughout 1997.

The Steering Committee's decision to divide the research into two parts, one focusing on national sources of State practice and the other on international sources, was fully implemented. Some 50 States were selected for an in-depth study of their practices as reflected in national sources. In each country a research team was set up to prepare a national practice report. By the end of 1997 most of the reports, drawn up on the basis of the Research guide for national practice reports, had been received. A meeting of some 30 national research supervisors took place in Geneva from 24 to 25 April to discuss all outstanding questions. Its conclusions were published in the form of a new annex to the Research guide, together with a revised table of contents. The practice of other countries was examined as part of the research conducted on international sources and in the ICRC's archives.

Two research assistants were appointed and some 40 recent armed conflicts selected for the part of the study carried out in the ICRC's archives. This resulted in as many reports, drawn up in accordance with roughly the same guidelines as the national practice reports.

Research on international sources was conducted throughout 1997 by six academic teams, each concentrating on one of the following topics: the principle of distinction, methods of warfare, the use of weapons, specific forms of protection, the treatment of individuals and human rights law applicable in armed conflict, and accountability and implementation. Reports on these topics were then prepared on the basis of the Research guide for international practice reports. In early 1998, the research teams will compile six consolidated reports, to be submitted to the Steering Committee during the year, which are to combine the information from the national practice reports with that from the international practice reports and the ICRC archives reports. The ICRC will subsequently draft the
Protection of internally displaced persons

Every year armed conflicts force hundreds of thousands, and even millions of people to flee their homes. These people are entitled to protection under the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols.

As part of its work on legal issues, in 1997 the ICRC assisted in the preparation of a set of Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement drafted by Mr Francis Deng, the UN Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons. The aim of the principles is to prevent displacement, protect persons who have already been displaced and facilitate their return home in safety and with dignity. The reiteration of these basic rules should serve both to promote the cause of war victims and to afford them greater protection.

Protection of children in armed conflicts

The situation of child victims of armed conflict around the world improved little during the year under review. However it was encouraging to note that both civil society and the international community had rallied behind them. The ICRC, for its part, met the UN Expert on the impact of armed conflict on children. A willingness was expressed on both sides to join forces in an effort to improve the situation of children, and the ICRC undertook to do its utmost to assist the Expert, in particular by contributing its expertise in the field of humanitarian law.

At the invitation of the UN Commission on Human Rights, in January the ICRC took part for the third consecutive time in the session of the working group responsible for preparing a draft optional protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. One of the purposes of the optional protocol is to raise the minimum age for the recruitment of children into the armed forces or other armed groups and for their participation in hostilities. The ICRC clearly expressed its support for bringing the minimum age up to 18 years, in accordance with the Plan of Action for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement concerning children in armed conflicts. To this end, it contributed to the relevant report submitted to the 1997 Council of Delegates, which adopted a resolution endorsing the approach taken by the Plan of Action. With a view to ensuring harmonization between the draft optional protocol and the principles and rules of humanitarian law, the ICRC also prepared a document containing details of the legal arguments that underpin its position, and referring specifically to its concerns about the potential danger that existing norms might be weakened.
Yet the introduction of a new protocol alone is not enough. Effective implementation of the law should also be ensured, in particular by establishing mechanisms to repress violations. For this reason, the ICRC proposed that the act of recruiting children into the armed forces or armed groups, or obliging them to take part in hostilities, should be included in the list of war crimes falling within the competence of the future international criminal court.

Human rights
The ICRC followed with unflagging interest the discussions on human rights and on developments in this domain that took place in numerous forums, particularly the UN Commission on Human Rights and its various bodies. The international community was now more aware of the importance of respect for human rights law and humanitarian law than ever before. Anxious to emphasize the strong ties between these two bodies of law, while at the same time stressing their peculiarities and dissimilarities, the ICRC endeavoured to attend and take an active part in meetings that dealt with such topics as the protection of women and children, forced disappearances, torture, minimum humanitarian standards, the transfer of arms (including anti-personnel mines), terrorism, refugees and internally displaced persons, the privatization of prisons, and impunity. Throughout 1997 the ICRC thus made substantial contributions, in the form of its legal expertise, to the development of international human rights law.

Minimum humanitarian standards
In its Resolution 1997/21, the UN Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General, in coordination with the ICRC, to submit to the Commission at its 54th session an analytical report on the issue of fundamental standards of humanity, taking into consideration in particular the issues raised in the report of the International Workshop on Minimum Humanitarian Standards held in Cape Town, South Africa, from 27 to 29 September 1996, and identifying, inter alia, common rules of human rights law and international humanitarian law that are applicable in all circumstances.

Protection of cultural property during armed conflicts
In 1997 the Hague Convention of 14 May 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict was under review. The ICRC took part in a meeting of 20 government experts held from 24 to 27 March at UNESCO headquarters in Paris to examine a proposal to improve the protection of cultural property during armed conflicts, known as the Lauswolt
document. On the basis of the experts' conclusions, the UNESCO Secretariat drew up a revised document, which it submitted to all the States party to the 1954 Hague Convention at a meeting at its headquarters on 13 November. The participants decided that another meeting should be held to discuss certain legal questions and they welcomed a proposal by the Netherlands to convene a diplomatic conference in 1999 to adopt the new Lauswolt document as an international treaty.

Identification of medical transports

As part of its work to protect and improve the means of identification of medical transports in times of armed conflict, the ICRC attended several meetings of experts convened by specialized international organizations such as IMO* and ITU.* It also pursued its research on new technologies which were being developed and could result in clearer identification of medical transports at some future stage.

REGULATIONS ON WEAPONS

Anti-personnel mines

In 1997 the ICRC and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement as a whole played a key role in the success of the Ottawa process, which culminated in the total prohibition of anti-personnel mines. In particular, the ICRC hosted or supported a number of important meetings at regional level. These included a seminar in Harare, Zimbabwe, from 20 to 23 April for officials from the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs of the 12 member States of the Southern Africa Development Community. Representatives of the National Societies of these 12 countries had already met in Maputo in February, where they had called upon their governments to support the Ottawa process and to adopt national prohibitions on the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines.

The ICRC and the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly organized a joint seminar on anti-personnel mines on 7 March in Budapest. This initiative led to a resolution by the Assembly urging all member States to become party to the future international treaty for a comprehensive ban on these weapons and to adopt national prohibitions.

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* The document is named after the Dutch town in which a small group of experts drafted it in February 1994.  
* IMO: International Maritime Organization  
* ITU: International Telecommunication Union
SIGNATORIES OF
THE OTTAWA CONVENTION

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Niue, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Seychelles, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

drafting and adoption
of the 1997 Convention
banning landmines

national measures

measures prohibiting or restricting their use. In July in Manila, with the cooperation of the Philippine government and the Philippine National Red Cross, the ICRC hosted an Asian regional seminar for military and strategic studies experts on anti-personnel mines that focused on the question of their military utility. Experts from 18 countries, including 13 in the region, attended the seminar, which found that the humanitarian consequences of anti-personnel mines far outweighed their military utility.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction was adopted on 18 September by 89 States at a Diplomatic Conference convened in Oslo, Norway, and it was signed by 121 States at an official ceremony held from 3 to 4 December in Ottawa, Canada.

It was the Canadian Foreign Minister, Lloyd Axworthy, who had provided the impetus for this treaty in October 1996. Several intergovernmental conferences were subsequently convened: in Vienna in February 1997, where views were exchanged on the content of the treaty; in Bonn in April, where the specific issue of verification was addressed; and in Brussels in June, where a declaration was adopted calling for the conclusion of the treaty at the Oslo Diplomatic Conference and its signature in Ottawa at the end of 1997. The ICRC took an active part in all these conferences, in particular with regard to the drafting of the text.

By the end of the year 123 States had signed the Ottawa Convention, three had ratified it, five had announced the total destruction of their stockpiles of anti-personnel mines and seven had adopted national legislation prohibiting them. In addition, as a matter of policy rather than law, a further 13 States were already in the process of destroying some or all of their stockpiles, 30 States had ended the production of these weapons and 31 their use.

With the adoption of the Ottawa Convention, the ICRC’s mines-related work moved into a new phase during which efforts turned to promoting universal

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5 Namely, Canada, Ireland and Mauritius.
adherence to and implementation of the treaty. The ICRC produced ratification kits in seven languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish), which were distributed to the representatives of the States attending the Treaty Signing Conference and Mine Action Forum in Ottawa. Moreover, a layman’s guide to the Convention and the Ottawa process was produced in all official UN languages.\(^6\)

1980 UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

The number of States party to the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)\(^7\) rose to 71 with the addition of Cambodia, Cape Verde, the Holy See, Monaco, Panama, Peru, Portugal and Uzbekistan. Of these eight States, all but Monaco and Peru adhered to the Convention’s three original Protocols, as have all but seven of its other States Parties. Monaco is party only to Protocol I on non-detectable fragments; Benin, Jordan and Peru are party only to Protocol III on incendiary weapons and to Protocol I; France, Israel and the United States are bound only by Protocol II on mines, booby-traps and other devices and by Protocol I. The ICRC continues to encourage adherence to the CCW’s Protocol II as this covers not only anti-personnel mines, but also anti-vehicle mines and other explosive devices.

Blinding laser weapons

The ICRC continued actively to promote ratification by States of Protocol IV prohibiting the use and transfer of blinding laser weapons, which was added to the CCW in 1995. It also encouraged governments, when ratifying it, to declare that they would apply the Protocol’s provisions "in all circumstances". This reflected the widespread agreement among the States having negotiated the Protocol that it should apply in both international and internal conflicts and that such weapons should simply not exist. States were furthermore urged to enact additional national measures to ensure that blinding laser weapons were neither developed nor produced. By the end of 1997 the following 16 States had ratified Protocol IV: Australia, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, the Holy See, Ireland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Sweden and Uzbekistan. It therefore appeared likely that the number of ratifications required for entry into force, namely 20, would be reached in 1998.


\(^7\) For full title, see p. 289.
Chemical and biological weapons

A major development in 1997 was the entry into force of the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)\(^8\) prohibiting the production, stockpiling, transfer and use of such weapons and requiring the destruction of existing stockpiles. This landmark treaty significantly reinforced earlier provisions of humanitarian law which outlawed only the use of chemical and biological weapons. Upon its entry into force on 29 April 1997, the States Parties formally established a new international body, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which is based in The Hague and is in charge of monitoring relevant chemical industry activities worldwide, overseeing the destruction of existing chemical weapons and investigating situations where doubts arise about compliance. At the first conference of States party to the CWC, the ICRC urged those which had made reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibiting the use of chemical and biological weapons to remove such reservations. By the end of the year 105 States had ratified the CWC.

Other weapons

In 1997 ICRC medical and technical staff continued to monitor technological advances concerning other weapons, both existing and under development, which might be considered to violate the norms of humanitarian law. In particular, attention was given to small-calibre arms and the category of new arms being promoted as "non-lethal". Possible objective criteria for evaluating new weapons based on their health effects were considered and the study of these criteria would continue in 1998.

Arms transfers

The ICRC continued to stress its deep concern about the effects of virtually unrestrained arms transfers, particularly of small-calibre arms, which have caused most of the civilian casualties in recent conflicts. In 1997 work continued on an ICRC study, commissioned by the 26th International Conference, on the relationship between arms availability, violations of humanitarian law and the deterioration of the situation of civilians. Arms transfers were also the subject of a resolution adopted by the Council of Delegates in November.

\(^8\) The full title of this treaty, adopted on 13 January 1993, is the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction.
SPREADING KNOWLEDGE OF HUMANITARIAN LAW

At a time of crumbling nation-States, privatization of wars and increasingly frequent overlapping between military hostilities and criminality, it is ever more important to spread the humanitarian message. Indeed, this is an essential component of the ICRC's work. Where this message fails to get across, humanitarian action is frequently misunderstood, access to victims is difficult and the safety of humanitarian workers is jeopardized. Yet the act of listening, communicating, persuading, and adapting to so many different situations poses a considerable challenge. In 1997 over 50 delegates, assisted by some 300 specialized local staff and their colleagues in the ICRC's 54 delegations worldwide, mobilized substantial political, military and artistic resources to take up this challenge. They launched educational programmes and local or international campaigns designed to spread the humanitarian message so that it could be received, understood and incorporated into the actions of all those involved in contemporary violence, no matter how different their perceptions and culture might be. The purpose of such activities is to foster an instinctive respect for human dignity and to alert various target groups to the fundamental principles that form the basis of humanitarian law. To this end, and especially so that in times of conflict civilians are respected, the wounded are collected and cared for, and prisoners receive humane treatment, those who promote and impart knowledge of this law constantly explore new avenues and seek new partners.

Youth: a challenge for today and tomorrow

Nowadays fighters are recruited from among all age groups, and young people play an increasingly prominent role in acts of violence and even armed conflicts. In countries at war, many children are already combatants and others soon will be. In these circumstances, how can one ensure that the humanitarian message gets through? How does one convince children bearing arms, who are at once the perpetrators and the victims of violence, to respect certain rules? In Somalia, the ICRC and the National Society pursued a dissemination programme begun in 1996 and designed specifically for young armed militiamen. Its goal was to teach these youthful combatants a certain code of conduct that must be applied in all circumstances. To achieve this, dissemination workers first identified the tenets of humanitarian law that already existed in Somali traditions and then used them as a basis for developing culturally suitable material. The result was a stage production that toured the entire country and was made into a video tape, radio programmes and a comic strip, all of which gave young people the opportunity to reflect on and react to situations that were both woven into the stories and occurred in their daily lives.
Similarly, the ICRC invited six of the most popular African musicians to stage an awareness campaign for youth, particularly young combatants, on their continent. The purpose of the campaign, launched in October, was to instil respect for humanitarian law in the youngsters and encourage them to reflect on the subject of violence. After visiting and facing the reality of some of the places in Africa most devastated by conflict – Angola, KwaZulu/Natal in South Africa, Liberia and southern Sudan – the musicians, five men and one woman, composed a series of songs about what they had witnessed. The most powerful, entitled "So Why", asks the questions that haunt them, such as why so many children die and why there are so many wars. The campaign also resulted in a documentary film and a book with a foreword by South African President Nelson Mandela, who commended the ICRC initiative and joined the musicians in "appealing to all Africans to make Africa a continent of our dreams."

Organized and run by Africans for Africans, the "So Why" campaign was hugely popular from the outset. It was simultaneously launched in 34 countries, including eight war zones, and the humanitarian message it conveyed echoed and reverberated throughout the continent. The involvement of the music stars throughout the campaign was the key to its success. In addition to performing the songs, they acted as peace ambassadors who brought the humanitarian message to their own communities. Respected and often adored by the young, including child soldiers, they succeeded in communicating their distress and misgivings about uncontrolled violence, and their hope that their young audiences would do what they could to overcome it.

More generally, children living in regions affected by serious instability or recent conflicts need support in their efforts to break away from the spiral of violence. While inspiration they derive from role models – musicians, actors, sports stars – plays an essential role, their education is often the catalyst to greater awareness. In Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan, for example, schoolchildren aged 11 and 12 years took a course to alert them to the problem of violence and help them explore the fundamental principles of humanitarian law. The ICRC, in cooperation with the Ministries of Education in these countries, distributed over 2.5 million reading books to the children with texts illustrating behavioural problems in situations of violence and conflict. Following its evaluation, the programme was to be extended in 1998 and 1999 to 13 and 14 year-olds in the same region.

Promoting humanitarian law in academic circles

The ICRC also developed its activities to promote humanitarian law in academic circles all over the world. In the Russian Federation, for example, this law now features in the curricula of institutions of higher learning and in India a national research centre supported by the ICRC monitors its promotion at the
University of Delhi and the University of Bangalore. The introduction of humanitarian law into universities serves both to familiarize the future political, economic and military elite with the fundamental rules governing respect for universal values of humanity, and to train experts in circles likely to participate in developing the law when the time comes. These important factors prompted the ICRC's Division for the Promotion of International Humanitarian Law to appoint a coordinator for academic circles. Starting in February, the coordinator supported the dissemination efforts of delegations and responded to numerous appeals from these circles. Such contacts were to be further strengthened in the months to come with the availability of a specialized Website, teaching materials and high-level training courses in Geneva and New York in 1998 and 1999.

Each year the ICRC helps run two courses on international humanitarian law for undergraduate and postgraduate law students. Accordingly, the 15th such course in English was held jointly by the Polish Red Cross and the ICRC in Warsaw from 4 to 14 August, and was attended by 29 students from 19 European countries, Canada and the United States. Similarly, the 10th course in French was held jointly by the Swiss Red Cross and the ICRC in Nottwil, Switzerland, from 27 August to 5 September, and was attended by 33 students from 17 European countries and Canada. The students, whose quality improves each year and who expressed satisfaction with the instruction received, were taught all aspects of the law and took part in practical exercises for each topic covered. Because the number of people wishing to attend the courses increases every year, the organizers are in a position to select quality candidates.

Instilling respect for humanitarian law in the armed and security forces: a crucial task

Access to victims of violence hinges on dialogue with the armed and security (police) forces. The ICRC develops ongoing relations with these forces so as to instil respect for humanitarian law in them and be able to fulfil its mandate to assist and protect these victims. This is the task of the Division for Relations with Armed and Security Forces, whose core activities consist in teaching and helping to introduce the law of armed conflict into military instruction programmes. The ICRC seeks thereby to build trustful relations with the military and paramilitary world so as to facilitate its access to victims that fall within its mandate, if need be. As for so-called irregular forces, the ICRC has admittedly struggled in its attempts to build up relations with them owing to their diversity and peculiar structure, or lack of structure. Humanitarian law is such an alien concept to these forces that it is difficult to find the right words or the appropriate means to convey to them the basic humanitarian message or code of conduct.
The ICRC cannot develop its activities to promote humanitarian law unless strategy decision-makers view the principles of that law in a favourable light. Accordingly, the organization has adopted a specific approach for its work with senior military instructors and commanders-in-chief. To this end, it created the post of Adviser on Relations with the Armed Forces, to which it appointed a retired major-general. In 1997 the incumbent was in regular contact with the German Military Academy in Hamburg, the NATO Defence College in Rome, the United States Army School of the Americas in Fort Benning and the Academy of the General Staff of the Russian Army in Moscow.

In order to guarantee that its contacts with the armed and security forces are maintained, the ICRC has set up a network of delegates to the armed forces on all continents except Oceania, which is covered by the regional delegation in Bangkok. These delegates can draw on the services of a pool of military and police officers who have been specially trained to teach the law of armed conflict and human rights law. They may be called on to give courses or, in some cases, to assist in introducing humanitarian law into national instruction programmes for the military or the police.

In its quest to inform the armed and security forces and their commanding officers about the law of armed conflict and human rights law, the ICRC endeavours to adapt its methods to their specific roles and to the situation in the countries concerned. To this end, it has developed a training module as a supplement to its traditional methods of instruction for high-ranking members of the military. The module comprises a wide range of tools, including printed material, transparencies, videos and a CD ROM, which make the teaching process as realistic, credible and effective as possible. By using the module, the ICRC can adapt its message to any target group within the armed or security forces. The organization's training programmes are designed in such a way as to help the military or police forces conduct their operations in compliance with the international law in force.

In a spirit of complementarity, the ICRC continued its support for the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo. As regards peacekeeping operations, the ICRC developed relations with the Canadian International Peace-Keeping Training Centre (or Lester Pearson Centre) in Nova Scotia and the International Association for Peace-Keeping Training Centres. Lastly, the ICRC's regular contacts with the Geneva Security Policy Centre was expected to lead in 1998 to the production of joint teaching materials.
Spreading the universal message of humanitarian law with due regard for cultural traits

During the year the ICRC stepped up its contacts and activities in over 150 countries in a bid to promote humanitarian values around the world. Through its network of regional delegations, it drew the attention of States to their obligation to spread knowledge of and promote respect for humanitarian law. Yet such efforts to prevent violations of the law were not directed at governments alone.

In some regions, such as the Middle East and North Africa, activities to promote humanitarian law were also intended to alert the largest number of people possible to its basic rules, and to present the ICRC as a legitimate humanitarian partner. Accordingly, the ICRC strengthened the regional promotion office of its Cairo delegation and stimulated discussions on related issues in all sectors of Arab society. The greatest challenge ahead was to ensure that quality material on humanitarian topics would be given space and air time in the most widely read press and the most popular television and radio shows in the Arab world.

This work, based on a sound knowledge of the habits, tastes and customs of the target communities, was undertaken in the hope that it would serve to enhance the universality of humanitarian law, with due regard for the local context. National Red Crescent or Red Cross Societies were joined in this endeavour by performers, sociologists, historians, lawyers and economists, all of whom contributed to the success of the Cairo delegation's productions. They also served as local critics and could explain cultural characteristics, which must remain unaltered at all costs. Lastly, they represented the way forward, for the ICRC will be able to depend on them in the future to assume some of the responsibility for promoting humanitarian law.

Concern for durable results and for regional and national considerations were also at the heart of an ambitious dissemination project in Guatemala, which began in 1996 and was to conclude in 1998. The year under review marked the end of the project's evaluation and preparation stage, which served to pinpoint the links between Mayan customs and the rules of humanitarian law. The implementation phase was to involve the active participation of various players in Guatemalan civil society, such as entertainers, journalists, academics, civil servants and representatives of non-governmental organizations. This project was developed at a time when, after 36 years of warfare, Guatemalan guerrillas were preparing to enter into a peace accord with the government. Following the accord's signature in December 1996, the Mayan project became part of a nationwide drive to strengthen social cohesion and improve respect for the political, cultural and economic rights of all Guatemalans, in particular the indigenous population.
Owing to the contacts it had forged and maintained over the years with all the factions involved in the conflict in Afghanistan, the ICRC was still able to make its message heard there. The bans that had rained down on the country, including the prohibition to reproduce visual images of living beings, constantly obliged the ICRC to adapt the tools it used to get its message across. During the year under review the organization focused primarily on national and international radio programmes, which enabled it to reach the vast majority of the population.

Local partners relay the humanitarian message

The Afghan, Guatemalan and Egyptian programmes all reflect the ICRC's policy of developing its network of contacts in entertainment, political, economic, military and academic circles. The humanitarian message is never more successful than when it is sent out by individuals in a position to influence the largest number of people possible and, if necessary, to trigger a debate on the universal values conveyed by humanitarian law. For this reason, many dissemination and promotion programmes rely on the input of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Rooted as they are in their own social and cultural environments, the members of these Societies are extraordinarily effective relays of the humanitarian message. Such was the case in Nigeria, for example, where the National Society joined the ICRC in conducting an awareness-raising campaign on humanitarian values among young people. The astonishing success of "Askari", a project named after the play which was its centrepiece, was due to the untiring efforts of the members of the Nigerian Red Cross. The play, about a king whose fear of losing his power prompts him to declare war on a neighbouring kingdom, was performed from May to July in 20 of Nigeria's provinces, triggering much debate on humanitarian values and related topics wherever it went.

This type of cooperation allows the ICRC to work closely with people from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. In so doing, it can explore many new ways of promoting the universality of humanitarian law, select humanitarian messages that are suited to the cultural context, and identify the most effective means of conveying them.

Banning anti-personnel mines: a campaign involving tangible prevention measures

The signature in 1997 by 123 States of the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel mines was the outcome of a vast campaign waged jointly by the ICRC and non-governmental organizations. Efforts will now have to be made to convince all States to accede to and comply with the Convention. At the same time,
immediate and relentless action is required to deal with the threat that millions of buried mines pose for entire populations.

Some 200 people trained by ICRC experts participated during the year in the mine-awareness and prevention programmes carried out by the ICRC in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Azerbaijan since 1996. Well integrated in their communities and usually members of local Red Cross or Red Crescent branches, these individuals were in a position to alert the population to the danger of mines and help change people’s behaviour where necessary. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina they collected information on mine-related accidents, which claimed an average of 50 victims per month. This information was used to build up a picture of local habits and adapt prevention campaigns accordingly. It was also made available to national and local authorities and to non-governmental organizations, particularly those involved in mine clearance, to help formulate a global and coordinated response to the mines problem.

A creative and stringent approach to spreading knowledge of the law

Protecting victims means, first and foremost, assisting those needing help today. Yet it also means thinking of the victims of tomorrow, and mobilizing anyone able to help prevent the acts that humanity condemns. To achieve these goals, projects aimed at spreading knowledge of humanitarian law explore every possible avenue and work with dependable relays that are well integrated in the local environment. Promoting the universal humanitarian message, using creative means to convey the message to others and undertaking stringent evaluations of projects already under way so as to keep on improving them, these are the challenges facing dissemination in a world, and in situations of conflict, that are ever changing.
ICRC COOPERATION WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

THE WORK OF THE STATUTORY BODIES

Standing Commission

The Standing Commission is a body within the Movement whose primary function is to monitor preparations for the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and the Council of Delegates. The Commission comprises nine members: five representatives of National Societies, who are elected at each International Conference; two representatives of the ICRC (its President and its Director for International Law and Policy); and two representatives of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (its President and its Secretary-General). Princess Margriet, Vice-President of the Netherlands Red Cross, was elected Chairwoman of the Commission at the 26th International Conference.

The Standing Commission met four times in 1997: from 21 to 22 April and on 30 June in Geneva, and on 17 and 28 November in Seville. During the year the four ad hoc working groups previously established by the Commission pursued their duties. Each group comprises one or two elected members of the Commission, who chair the group, one representative from the ICRC and one from the Federation. Their meetings concerned: (a) preparations for the 27th International Conference (chaired by Mrs Christina Magnuson and Dr Byron R. Hove); (b) the emblem (chaired by Mrs Christina Magnuson); (c) follow-up to and preparations for the Council of Delegates (chaired by Dr Guillermo Rueda Montaña, with the assistance of Mr Tadateru Koneo); and (d) the setting-up of an arbitration mechanism (chaired by Dr Byron R. Hove).

The Standing Commission submitted to the 1997 Council of Delegates in Seville three reports on its activities, dealing respectively with general questions, the emblem and preparations for the 27th International Conference. The reliance of the Commission on ad hoc working groups to carry out various tasks was welcomed by the Council of Delegates, which also encouraged the Commission to step up the involvement of National Societies in its activities.

In 1997 the Standing Commission awarded 24 Henry Dunant Medals.
Council of Delegates

The Council of Delegates is the body which, every two years, brings together representatives of all the components of the Movement (ICRC, Federation, National Societies) to discuss matters of mutual interest.

At the invitation of the Spanish Red Cross, the Council of Delegates met in Seville from 25 to 27 November. It was attended by representatives of all 175 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Pursuant to a tradition that dates back to the inception of the Movement, the ICRC President chaired the Council's proceedings. He was assisted in this task by Mr Juan Manuel Suarez del Toro Rivera, President of the Spanish Red Cross.

At a particularly moving opening ceremony attended by the Queen of Spain, 24 Henry Dunant Medals were awarded, including 21 posthumously to delegates and volunteers who died violently in the course of their humanitarian work. The Medal, which is intended to recognize and reward outstanding services and acts of great devotion, mainly of international significance, to the cause of the Movement by any of its members, is the highest Red Cross/Red Crescent distinction. The large number of victims who were claimed within the Movement in recent years was the reason why, for the first time since the distinction was created in 1965, so many of the Medals were awarded on one occasion.

The 1997 Council of Delegates gave rise to much debate, the outcome of which is likely to have a lasting impact on the future of the Movement. It concluded its proceedings by adopting 11 resolutions.

In particular, the Council of Delegates endorsed a set of rules of procedure for an arbitration board which is to serve as a means of last resort for settling disputes within the Movement. It also recommended that the Standing Commission invite leading figures from National Societies to take part, in a consultative capacity, in the preparation of topics to be discussed at the statutory meetings, i.e. the Council of Delegates and the International Conference. (Resolution 1)

After taking note of the report on the emblem, the Council of Delegates referred to two viewpoints expressed on the subject, both of which were supported by the ICRC. The vast majority of States and National Societies, who had not experienced problems with the red cross or red crescent, wished to maintain the status quo in the future and to strengthen those emblems. As for the others, they wished to continue the search for an overall solution to the problems they had encountered, with all due regard for the existing emblems. The Council of Delegates recommended that the Standing Commission conclude its consultations on the matter with the National Societies and government experts and that it report back to the Council in 1999. Its hope was that all the Movement's components would adopt a common position which could then be broached with States. (Resolution 2)
27th International Conference

The Council of Delegates also noted that the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent was to take place in 1999, the year that would mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Geneva Conventions. The overall theme of the Conference, to be held in Geneva from 1 to 6 November, was "the humanitarian commitment at the turn of the century". The ICRC and the Federation would be the joint organizers, and the principle of greater involvement of the National Societies in preparations for the event was approved. Furthermore, the Council of Delegates adopted simplified voting procedures for the election of the members of the Standing Commission. (Resolution 3)

The Advisory Commission set up pursuant to Resolution 3 of the 1995 Council of Delegates, which was composed of 12 members appointed in their personal capacity, submitted its report on the future of the Movement to the Council of Delegates. The Commission had received a mandate to review the statutory provisions concerning the role, competencies and functioning of the Movement’s three statutory bodies (the International Conference, the Council of Delegates and the Standing Commission); to work on a clear definition of the organization of the international activities of the Movement’s components; and to draft an agreement between them on this subject. The Council of Delegates took note of the Advisory Commission’s proposal not to revise the Statutes of the Movement and adopted by consensus its draft Agreement on the Organization of the International Activities of the Components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This Agreement, which replaces the 20 October 1989 Agreement between the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (now the Federation), immediately entered into force. (Resolution 6)

The report submitted to the Council of Delegates by the ICRC and the Federation under the agenda item on peace, international humanitarian law and human rights focused on five present-day problems: children in armed conflicts, street children, anti-personnel mines, arms transfers in relation to humanitarian law, and the security of field personnel.

♦ Children: The Council of Delegates expressed its support for the promotion of the principle of non-recruitment and non-participation of children under 18 years of age in armed conflicts. It also endorsed proposals to develop preventive programmes and provide alternatives for street children, who were an especially vulnerable group. (Resolution 8)

♦ Anti-personnel mines: The Council was in favour of pursuing the campaign for a total ban on anti-personnel mines, lent its support to the Ottawa process

10 See Promotion and development of international humanitarian law, pp. 293-294.
11 See Promotion and development of international humanitarian law, pp. 295-297.
and called for further assistance for the victims of this scourge. It welcomed the
efforts and activities undertaken by the ICRC in this regard. (Resolution 8)

- **Arms transfers:** The Council took note of the study on arms transfers\(^\text{12}\) undertaken by the ICRC, which would allow the Movement to clarify its position on
the subject. (Resolution 8)

- **Security of field personnel:** The Council supported the proposal to continue
approaches to States concerning security matters, in particular to encourage
them to adopt national legislation protecting the emblems. It furthermore
called on all the Movement's components to develop their training pro-
grammes and to rely more heavily on informed local knowledge of the secu-

The Communication Forum of the Movement, which is chaired by the Belgian
Red Cross and is composed of a number of staff members responsible for com-
mmunication within the ICRC, the National Societies and the Federation, was set
up by the Council of Delegates in 1995. Thereafter, it made a number of pro-
posals, including preparing key messages for the Movement and establishing a
common Website for it.\(^\text{13}\) The Council adopted the proposals and asked the
Forum to pursue its activities. (Resolution 9)

Five other important resolutions were adopted by the Council of Delegates.
Resolution 4 concerns the implementation of humanitarian law; Resolution 5
courages National Societies to support the ICRC's efforts to further the estab-
lishment of an international criminal court; Resolution 7 invites the ICRC and
the Federation to develop new mechanisms for functional cooperation;
Resolution 10 concerns the setting-up of a programme to mark the millennium
year; and Resolution 11 renews the mandate of the Commission for the
Financing of the ICRC. Lastly, the Council was kept informed of the results of
the study on the future of the Henry Dunant Institute\(^\text{14}\) that had been undertaken
pursuant to its Resolution 8 adopted in 1995.

\(^{12}\) See *Promotion and development of international humanitarian law*, p. 298.

\(^{13}\) See *Communication*, pp. 321-322.

\(^{14}\) See *Henry Dunant Institute*, p. 314.
FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ICRC AND THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

Joint ICRC/Federation Commission for National Society Statutes

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, the Joint ICRC/Federation Commission for National Society Statutes monitors the application and constant observance of the rules governing ICRC recognition of new National Societies and their admission to the Federation. It also examines the amendments National Societies propose to make to their statutes, which they must submit to the Joint Commission 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. In 1997 the Joint Commission met seven times.

On the Joint Commission's recommendation, in 1997 the ICRC Assembly recognized five new National Societies: the Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan (19 March); the Kiribati Red Cross Society and the Palau Red Cross Society (30 September); the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan and the Red Cross Society of Georgia (6 November). The new Societies were subsequently admitted to the Federation at its General Assembly, held in November.

The number of recognized National Societies thus stood at 175 at the end of the year. Recognition over the next few years of the emerging National Societies that remain will virtually complete the Movement's universality.

The Joint Commission also developed a model bill on the recognition of a National Society by its government, which it submitted to a meeting of National Society legal advisers in September.

Joint ICRC/Federation meetings

The 1989 ICRC/League (now Federation) Agreement provides for joint meetings to be held at least three times a year "in order in particular to assist the statutory bodies of the Movement in all procedural and substantive matters". Such meetings also enable the two organizations to keep each other informed of their work on a regular basis and to harmonize their positions on issues that involve both or are of concern to the Movement as a whole.
Six joint meetings took place in the course of the year. Their main focus was on planning and following up the meetings of the Standing Commission; organizing the 1997 Council of Delegates; and preparing for the 27th International Conference, scheduled to take place in Geneva in 1999.

In addition to these formal meetings, senior ICRC and Federation staff held frequent informal meetings with a view to improving functional cooperation between the two organizations, both in Geneva and in their delegations worldwide.

**ICRC CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES**

In accordance with its policy of cooperation, the ICRC attaches particular importance to three aspects of National Society development: (1) their basis (legal structure: statutes, law establishing them, protection of the emblem; representativeness: governing bodies, recruitment of staff members and volunteers); (2) their integrity (independence, respect for the Fundamental Principles, efficient management, honesty of the leaders); (3) their operational capacity (usefulness of their services, organization, financial autonomy, effectiveness).

For the first time, from 22 to 27 June the ICRC held a seminar at its headquarters for the 25 cooperation delegates in the field responsible for the development of National Societies. The seminar's purpose was to discuss the current applicability of the policy defined in 1990 in the document *ICRC contribution to the development of National Societies*, to take stock of current practices and to set some general guidelines for the 1998 objectives of the 54 delegations in the field. The Secretariat of the Federation also took part in the seminar.

The participants concluded that the overall orientation of the 1990 policy was still valid, and the ICRC reaffirmed that cooperation in fostering the development of National Societies was a key element in its vision for the future. It stressed that the objective of this cooperation was to facilitate the establishment and growth of a network of reputable National Societies capable of carrying out their humanitarian task with effectiveness, thereby further strengthening the Movement as a whole.

The ICRC intends to step up its practical involvement in the development of National Societies. In particular, it will endeavour to:

- encourage respect for the Fundamental Principles, with a special emphasis on the independence of National Societies from the authorities;
- help improve the level of integrity and responsibility of National Society senior staff, *inter alia* in administrative and financial matters;
♦ support National Society initiatives and projects that enhance their autonomy (including at the financial level) and their operational capacity, especially in conflict situations or in regions where there is a risk of armed conflict;
♦ with a view to improving the overall effectiveness of cooperation, harmonize ICRC activities with those carried out by others who contribute to the development of National Societies, such as the Federation and participating National Societies, with due regard for their respective responsibilities;
♦ maintain an ongoing dialogue with the Federation, which has principal responsibility for the development of National Societies.

MEETINGS WITH NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The ICRC attaches great importance to the meetings of National Societies. Its President and several members of the Committee – the ICRC's governing body – or other senior officials attended a number of conferences or important regional meetings in 1997, including:
♦ in Africa: the meeting of National Societies of West Africa and several participating National Societies (Abidjan, 28-30 April); and, within the context of regional cooperation among the Movement's components, the meetings held by the Federation and the National Societies of Senegal, Gambia, Kenya and Cameroon;
♦ in the Americas: the fourth Regional Meeting of Dissemination Directors of Spanish-speaking National Societies (Guatemala, 24-27 June); the youth seminar of National Societies of Central America and Mexico (Managua, 17-20 July); the meetings held by CORI* (Quito, 25-29 May, and Seville, 23 November);
♦ in Asia: the meeting of National Societies of countries within ASEAN*; the seminar on the Promotion of International Humanitarian Law and Principles in the 21st Century sponsored by the ICRC, the Singapore Red Cross Society and the Malaysian Red Crescent Society (Singapore, 26 and 27 February); the seventh meeting of Portuguese-speaking Red Cross Societies (Macao, 8-12 July);
♦ in Europe: the fifth Regional Conference of European National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Copenhagen, 17-20 March); the first meeting of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the Black Sea region, hosted by the Turkish Red Crescent Society (Istanbul, 11-13 April); the seminar held by the Federation and the German Red Cross on the institutional

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* CORI: Inter-American Regional Committee
* ASEAN: Association of South-East Asian Nations
development of European National Societies (Bonn, 6-10 July); the 12th Conference of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the Balkans (Ohrid, 18-19 September);

♦ in the Middle East: the seventh Conference of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the Mediterranean (Tunis, 2-4 April);

At the request of National Societies or by specific invitation, in 1997 the ICRC organized 74 visits to its headquarters for 181 people from National Societies (leading figures, senior staff and other members) and from the Federation (new staff). In addition to familiarizing visitors with the ICRC and its activities throughout the world, these visits provide an opportunity for discussions on issues of common interest. They also promote closer ties that are conducive to developing a dialogue and a strategy of cooperation, and thus serve to increase the Movement's cohesion.

Funds and medals

The Henry Dunant Medal, which was created in 1965, is the Movement's highest distinction. A record number of these Medals were awarded in 1997 at the Council of Delegates.\(^{15}\)

The Florence Nightingale Medal is the highest distinction a nurse can receive. Distributions take place every two years and not more than 50 medals may be issued at any one time. In 1997 the 33 award winners were nationals of the following countries: Australia, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Ghana, Ireland, Japan, Korea (Republic of), Liberia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Spain, Ukraine, and the United States of America.

The Empress Shôken 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 of Japan, the Japanese Red Cross Society, the Meiji Jingu Shrine Sukei-Kai association, which is devoted to the memory of the Empress, and some Japanese citizens. 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.

In 1997 the Fund's Joint Commission awarded grants totalling 280,500 Swiss francs to the National Societies of 12 countries, namely: Cambodia, China, Ecuador, Gabon, Lithuania, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Togo, Vanuatu, and Viet Nam; and to a regional project for South America.

\(^{15}\) See pp. 307-309.
Maurice de Madre French Fund

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.

The purpose of the Maurice de Madre French 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. The Fund may also contribute to the training of recipients and help them to resume their professional activity.

In 1997 the Fund's Board allocated 113,000 Swiss francs after having considered applications relating to staff of the Movement or their relatives who had fallen victim to events in the following countries: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

HENRY DUNANT INSTITUTE

The Henry Dunant Institute was set up in 1965 by the ICRC, the Federation and the Swiss Red Cross as a training, research, publication and dissemination centre for the Movement. In 1997 the Institute continued its work by building up contacts with National Societies and other organizations and institutions, particularly in the teaching and research fields, with a special focus on child soldiers and family reunification.

Since 1974 the training offered at the Institute has consisted mainly of annual courses for senior officials of National Societies, and is given alternately in English, French and Spanish. The 22nd annual course took place in French in May. This year again the Institute received the winning teams in the Jean Pictet International Humanitarian Law Competition, which it arranges for French-language students. In cooperation with the University of Santa Clara (California), it also held summer courses for English-speaking law students.

On 15 May the Institute held a second colloquium on humanitarian values at the end of the millennium. This year the emphasis was on Asia and humanitarian traditions.

On a historical note, the Institute published a study in French and Russian on Russia and the Red Cross from 1917 to 1945. The study describes the important role played by the Russian Red Cross before and after the 1917 Revolution, and the activities of the ICRC delegation in Moscow from 1917 to 1938.

Pursuant to Resolution 8 of the December 1995 Council of Delegates, the Executive Committee and the General Assembly of the Henry Dunant Institute continued their study on the future of the Institute with a view to redefining its role and activities. The study, scheduled to conclude in 1998, should provide the Institute with new momentum.
THE INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE

A brief history

This service, which was founded specifically to assist civilians persecuted by the National Socialist regime during the Second World War, developed from the central tracing bureau set up in London in 1943 at the British Red Cross by the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces. The massive migration of people throughout Europe as a result of wartime victimization and upheavals had caused countless families to be split apart. This was what prompted the creation of the tracing bureau, whose first aim after the gradual liberation of the territories that were occupied was to find people who had been deported or gone missing and reunite them with their families. The bureau's administration and headquarters changed location several times before being finally established in Arolsen, Federal Republic of Germany, in 1946. Two years later, the bureau received its current name, the International Tracing Service (ITS).

Under the 1955 Bonn Agreements, the Federal German government took on financial responsibility for the ITS, while managerial and administrative tasks were entrusted to the ICRC. At the same time, the work of the service was placed under the supervision of an International Commission comprising representatives from the 10 ITS member States. At its annual meeting, the Commission draws up guidelines for ITS activities and monitors their implementation with a view to safeguarding the interests of former victims of persecution. The original mandate of the ITS, which is to gather, classify, preserve and retrieve information about these people in order to respond to enquiries or requests for certificates from them, their descendants or any other eligible party, has remained unchanged over the years.

Streamlined processing of requests

Whereas in the early days enquirers generally wished to trace a missing person, today most people seek documents to back up compensation claims. The number of requests, which come from almost 70 countries, has grown steadily in recent years. This has caused a delay in their processing, despite various measures adopted to offset the problem. In 1995 the number of pending cases rose above the 300,000 mark. However, a new system of streamlined processing introduced in 1994 and used successfully ever since made it possible to speed things up starting in 1996.
Rapid processing depends on the cooperation of institutions based in the countries from which the requests stem, today mainly Belarus, Poland, Russia and Ukraine. In Ukraine alone, the ITS recently approached some 90 institutions, most of them associations of war veterans or former victims of persecution.

In view of the advanced age of the enquirers, the ITS has made streamlined processing a top priority. In 1997 it received 248,509 enquiries (as against 236,241 in 1996) and provided 274,316 replies (261,802 in 1996).

**Acquisition of documents**

Fulfilling the mandate to gather information is proving just as vital today as it was half a century ago, since it helps former victims of persecution to assert their rights and contributes towards developing and consolidating humanity’s memory of this tragic period of history.

The replies given to enquirers are based first and foremost on the information contained in the documents preserved at the ITS. Although the current stock amounts to over 22,000 linear metres, it is far from complete. Indeed, as many as half a million requests are pending for lack of information. The continuation of the policy of document acquisition is therefore fully justified. During the year under review 686 archive or other services were contacted in writing (592 in 1996) and 158 were visited (153 in 1996).

In all 232 missions (211 the previous year) were carried out by staff from Arolsen and the ITS office in Berlin, and documents were received from 383 services (314 in 1996). However, of the 884 linear metres (872 in 1996) consulted on the spot, only 359 (507 in 1996) related to the category of person falling within the ITS' mandate.

**Computerized data processing**

The growing use of computers over recent years for classifying and retrieving information has made it possible to speed up and optimize the work of the ITS. The creation in 1996 of a central data bank (for filing enquiries, documents and
place names), together with the storing of supplementary information (such as
details about the location of people or events) in this bank has already led to an
appreciable lightening of the workload involved in processing enquiries, from the
various tasks associated with filing right down to the sending of replies. The digit­
ization of the central file of names, planned for 1998, should make it possible to
speed up processing even further. In the medium term, all the information kept
at the ITS is to be digitized.

ITS documents and historical research

The ITS has received a number of requests for permission to conduct histori­
cal research in its files, and documents of a general nature may already be con­sulted by the public. As for the remainder, the International Commission that
monitors the ITS has decided to examine at its next meeting the conditions under
which these could be made available to researchers, with due respect for national
and international regulations governing access to information. It has nevertheless
stressed that at this stage the most urgent priority for the ITS is to continue pro­cessing individual cases of humanitarian concern.
The ICRC, at work in some 80 countries, spent 599 million Swiss francs in cash to assist victims of conflict and internal violence in 1997. Drawing attention to the needs of people whose plight no longer arouses the interest of the media and raising funds to help them, streamlining and evaluating relief and medical programmes, and arranging for the purchase and dispatch of goods all over the world are among the many tasks performed by its staff at headquarters.
The ICRC's financial situation was the cause of some concern in 1997. With a year's end deficit of some 50 million Swiss francs anticipated in November, fundraising became one of the organization's major preoccupations. All departments within the ICRC stepped up their efforts to generate revenue, and this eventually bore fruit. Measures were also taken to reduce costs, both at headquarters and in the field, which resulted in savings totalling around 19 million Swiss francs. More specifically, the ICRC decided to adopt a zero-growth headquarters budget and to cut a certain number of posts. In the area of human resources, emphasis was placed on heightened professionalism. In addition, the ICRC's introductory training course was expanded and training programmes were set up for locally hired staff. The recruitment of non-Swiss personnel was also pursued. All operational support services worked in the spirit of rationalization and with the one aim of helping the victims of armed conflict as effectively as possible. With this in mind, the Communication Department, together with staff specializing in the promotion of humanitarian law, conducted a study of a plan to centralize in one unit all external communication activities. The overall priority for operational support services was to improve still further the cost-effectiveness of every aspect of the ICRC's work.
The ICRC's aim in the field of communication is both to facilitate its own access to victims of armed conflict and to encourage efforts by the media to draw attention to the plight of these people. Dialogue at all levels and in all spheres of society is thus an essential component of the ICRC's approach to its operational activities. This is why the organization seeks to open up and maintain as many channels of communication as possible with an increasing number and variety of people and institutions throughout the world. When it comes to the media, recent experience has shown that hitting the headlines is not enough. ICRC press officers and delegates must strive to keep up regular contacts with journalists on all continents so as to ensure adequate coverage of problems relating to war victims.

In 1997 humanitarian issues were at the centre of wide-ranging discussions in which the ICRC played an increasingly prominent role, in particular at a number of seminars and symposiums. The London School of Economics and the British Broadcasting Corporation, for instance, organized a debate entitled "Conflict in the 21st century: can the spirit of humanitarianism survive?". The International Centre for Humanitarian Reporting held discussions in Boston on the subject of humanitarian action and the media: the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy, chose the role of the media in armed conflict as the theme of its 22nd round table; and the Centre for Diplomatic and Strategic Studies in Paris organized a workshop on the current challenges facing humanitarian action and international humanitarian law in Africa. The ICRC took an active part in all these events. In addition, it hosted a humanitarian forum in Wolfsberg, Switzerland, that brought together high-level representatives from major donor countries and humanitarian organizations to discuss the growing obstacles that confront humanitarian action.1

Communication policy for the Movement

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which is the world's largest humanitarian network, adopted an overall communication policy at its Council of Delegates held in November in Seville.2 The policy, drafted by the Communication Forum of the Movement, is built around a series of key mes-

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1 See External resources, p. 330.
2 See ICRC cooperation within the Movement, pp. 307-309.
sages reflecting the Movement's aims and activities. At the same time, the Council of Delegates agreed to the setting-up of a Web site for the Movement, a prototype of which had already been produced by the ICRC. Improving communication within the Movement and strengthening the capacity of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to relay up-to-date information on humanitarian crises and on the Movement's efforts to assist victims, while at the same time putting across the key messages adopted were among the aims of the new policy. The ICRC's regional delegation in Nairobi was chosen as the site of a pilot project in this connection, and a series of two-day workshops on relations with the media were held there for the National Societies of Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. In addition, the ICRC produced a TV spot entitled *The Power of Humanity*, which was shown for the first time at the Council of Delegates and copies of which were handed out to all the National Societies for use in their communication efforts. The organization also sent the National Societies regular reports and background information on its operational activities in order to support their information and fundraising efforts.

**Landmines campaign**

The ICRC's campaign "Landmines must be stopped" gathered momentum throughout the year as the date of the Ottawa conference, where an international treaty to ban anti-personnel mines was signed in December, drew nearer. Efforts were undertaken worldwide, both at the political level and in the areas affected or threatened by these pernicious weapons, to stress the importance of joining the campaign. As in previous years, National Societies played a key role in the drive to ban landmines, and a number of them carried out fundraising activities to help the victims of this scourge. The visit by Diana, Princess of Wales, to Angola early in the year received extensive media coverage, which gave the campaign a welcome boost.

ICRC delegations in Angola, Cambodia, Georgia and elsewhere organized information days and field trips around the issue of mines for the media and the authorities, in some instances with the involvement of religious leaders. They also took part in a number of local events, such as Cambodia's annual Mine Awareness Day. In the run-up to the Ottawa conference, several high-level regional seminars were held for officials and experts in the military, legal and diplomatic fields.

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3 See *Promotion and development of international humanitarian law*, pp. 295-297.
The ICRC produced a number of advertisements, TV spots and publications that helped turn the tide of public opinion against mines. The UEFA* agreed to have the short film Landmines Must Be Stopped shown during every Champions League football match held by it and broadcast by TV.\(^4\) It was estimated that some 200 million viewers saw the film. Traditional local means were also used to spread information on mines. In Angola and Mozambique, for example, popular singers and dancers performed in shows explaining the dangers of these weapons and how to avoid them.\(^5\)

The ICRC and various TV networks co-produced several documentary films on landmines, including Frontline Boys, Man-Made Epidemics and Moonwalking. The latter tells the story of Chris Moon, a mine-clearance worker who lost an arm and a leg in a 1995 blast, and who has been running marathons ever since throughout the world to draw attention to the plight of mine victims.

### Audiovisual productions

Although the main focus of audiovisual productions in 1997 was on landmines, the ICRC continued to provide TV networks with short films and archive material, emphasizing in particular conflicts that were no longer in the limelight. As part of the "So Why?" campaign,\(^6\) the ICRC produced a 54-minute video that follows six popular African musicians as they make their way through some of the continent's most violent trouble spots. In addition, the ICRC put out the 1997 version of Panorama, its traditional film reviewing the year's activities.

The ICRC's Web site attracted more and more "surfers" — almost twice as many as in 1996. In addition to recent information on the organization's aims and activities, it included an historical overview of the period from 1863 to the aftermath of the Second World War. After the site opened in 1995, the number of ICRC publications and videos ordered had risen substantially, and this trend continued in 1997.

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\(^4\) See External resources, p. 329.

\(^5\) For other mine-awareness efforts, see Promotion and development of international humanitarian law, pp. 304-305 and the boxes under each country.

\(^6\) See Promotion and development of international humanitarian law, pp. 276 and 300.

* UEFA: Union of European Football Associations
Exhibitions and publications

The ICRC exhibition *Challenging Inhumanity* continued to tour Switzerland in the first few months of the year. Before moving on to Florence, it was shown at the Red Cross museum in Castiglione, close to the site of the battle of Solferino in northern Italy where the founder of the Red Cross, Henry Dunant, was first confronted with the horrors of war. As in previous years, the ICRC also took part in events such as the International Geneva Press and Book Fair.

ICRC headquarters continued to issue regular publications such as *Red Cross, Red Crescent magazine*, the *Annual Report* and the *International Review of the Red Cross*. In addition, it published the first annual report of the Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law, a brochure on protection-related activities entitled *ICRC action on behalf of prisoners* and various books and manuals on legal issues7 and war surgery. As for the ICRC delegations, they put out a growing number of brochures, posters, calendars and leaflets.

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7 See *Promotion and development of international humanitarian law*, p. 290.
Day by day humanitarian work is becoming increasingly complex. In order to meet the challenges it poses, aid personnel must continuously broaden and hone their personal and professional skills. Clearly, if the quality of humanitarian action and its ability to adjust to ever-growing demands are to be ensured, then training is an investment that cannot be neglected in the medium or long term, even in the face of financial constraints.

Decentralized training

In 1997 the ICRC stepped up its training activities in the field, with training units opening in Nairobi, Colombo and Sarajevo. The purpose of setting up these units was to reach all ICRC staff while placing training programmes in their proper context and making use of local resources. Above all, decentralized training should make it possible to increase flexibility and ensure that ICRC activities can be rapidly adapted to changing needs on the ground.

In September, for the first time, the ICRC held an introductory training course away from its headquarters. The course, which was identical to the standard one conducted in Geneva for future delegates, took place in Kesroli, India. It was attended by expatriate staff, locally recruited interpreters and local employees from 12 countries who had been sent by the ICRC's delegations in Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and its office in Myanmar. This trial run met with such success that the ICRC decided to hold 10 similar training courses on all continents in 1998.

In the spheres of management and security, the ICRC carried out a comprehensive study in 1997 which enabled it to draw up a detailed further training plan. At the end of the year a new course on team and project management was inaugurated at headquarters. The first part of the course was also held in Sarajevo, where members of the training unit were able to monitor results on a regular basis at the regional level.

During the year under review the ICRC also strengthened its contacts with external instructors and developed a genuine training network. Constructive and regular exchanges continued with Federation instructors, especially in connection with 25 basic training courses that were organized by participating National Societies, in close cooperation with the ICRC and the Federation. At the same time, the ICRC made great strides in developing relations in many fields with universities in Switzerland and elsewhere. Various new courses were held by the
ICRC in conjunction with academic partners, and several research projects on subjects such as inter-cultural relations and field-based training were conducted by students of economics and personnel management, with the support of ICRC instructors.

Job mobility

Because of the very specific nature of its work, which is almost exclusively related to situations of armed conflict, the ICRC has a relatively high rate of staff turnover, with 250 people entering and leaving its service each year. On average, this number breaks down into some 150 specialists (doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, limb-fitting experts, engineers, administrators, secretaries, information technology staff, interpreters, logistics experts, technicians, etc.) and about 100 delegates (with university degrees or equivalent experience). Staff do not generally leave the ICRC for reasons of performance or personality, but rather because of family considerations that restrict their availability for assignment in conflict areas or because they wish to pursue their careers in another direction. When this happens, they face the problem of finding employment elsewhere, a process which has of late become more difficult because of the growing demands of the job market.

In 1995 a special unit was set up at the ICRC both to help staff plan their career paths and to assist those who wish to leave by advising them on outside opportunities and by making prospective employers and employment agencies aware of the special qualifications that ICRC staff possess. In order to do this, the unit meets regularly with outside contacts and provides them with reference material on ICRC skills that are transferable to other jobs. It thus acts as a link between the ICRC and the labour market.

During the year under review this unit assisted some 100 staff members who were either preparing to leave the ICRC or considering a career change.

The year in figures

In 1997 the ICRC hired 242 new staff members, including 207 for the field (93 delegates, 22 administrators, 13 secretaries, 29 interpreters, 37 medical and paramedical specialists and 13 technicians). In addition, the National Societies of 23 countries continued to provide considerable support for the ICRC by seconding no fewer than 521 people for assignments of various duration, representing an average of 208 posts over the year.¹

¹ See External resources, p. 329.
Progression of staff requirements
1987 - 1997

- Expatriates in the field
  - 1987: 1000
  - 1997: 1200

- Staff working at headquarters
  - 1987: 700
  - 1997: 800

- Staff seconded by national societies
  - 1987: 150
  - 1997: 250

- Locally recruited employees
  - 1987: 300
  - 1997: 700

* including 12 and 13 posts at headquarters in 1996 and 1997, respectively.
EXTERNAL RESOURCES

In the first half of the 1990s, the ICRC's annual field budget decreased and the allocation of the organization's funds underwent a change. Relief activities, especially food aid – which had long accounted for the lion's share of expenditure and had always been relatively easy to finance – were scaled back as needs in the field lessened. At the same time, the ICRC shifted its focus to activities that were more specific to the organization, such as protecting detainees and civilians, restoring family links and promoting international humanitarian law. Although these activities too were supported by the donor community, they proved more difficult to finance than food-aid programmes. Beginning in 1995, despite an overall increase in donor contributions, the relentless need for humanitarian assistance made it ever more difficult to balance income and expenditure. In 1997 not only was there a slight rise in the need for food aid, but the budget was strained further by the unforeseen expenditure resulting from the events in Africa's Great Lakes region, Afghanistan, Albania, Irian Jaya, Somalia and Uganda. As a result the ICRC, which had started the year with a deficit of 20 million Swiss francs carried over from 1996, was unable to cover the full cost of all its operations.

Funding sources

In order to secure the additional funds so necessary to keeping up its activities, in 1997 the ICRC strengthened the strategy it had adopted several years earlier of diversifying its funding sources.

Within the existing donor network, the organization presented from a new standpoint such traditional activities as prevention, disaster preparedness and assistance for mine victims, with a view to gaining access to budget lines other than those earmarked for humanitarian aid.

The ICRC also intensified its ongoing efforts to secure the support of additional countries, such as certain Gulf States, several members of ASEAN* and some nations of Central and Eastern Europe and southern Africa. This initiative, however, could only be expected to yield results in the long term.

Funding from the private sector was consolidated, particularly through the traditional means of mailing contribution requests to private donors and through

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*ASEAN: Association of South-East Asian Nations
the management of bequests, partnerships with the UEFA and Rotary International and projects presented to various foundations. In order to take advantage of the broad network of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and to strengthen its links with a number of them, the ICRC, together with the National Societies of Canada, France, Ireland, Italy and Switzerland, launched joint fundraising campaigns for the benefit of mine victims, on the basis of a cost and benefit sharing agreement. While each National Society coordinated a campaign in its own country, the ICRC contributed financially to their efforts and supplied them with promotional material. It also facilitated visits by television crews and other members of the media to the limb-fitting centres that it runs. In addition to the financial benefits, these campaigns enabled the National Societies to enhance their images in their own countries through their association with a popular cause of international scope.

Cooperation with National Societies working in the field was stepped up in relation to the implementation of delegated projects. The publication in July of the ICRC users' manual for delegated projects and the application of its guidelines helped to improve the management of these projects and to make their planning more rational and systematic. Visits organized in the field also made it easier to plan new projects. During the year under review 28 projects were delegated to 12 National Societies in connection with 13 ICRC operations. In addition, 26 bilateral projects mounted by 11 National Societies were carried out in 6 countries, with the ICRC coordinating.

Enhanced reporting system

In response to certain expectations that had been expressed, the ICRC endeavoured to improve its system for keeping donors abreast of its activities. Specific information was provided, in particular, in four special appeals (concerning, respectively, Albania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and assistance for mine victims), one budget extension appeal (Afghanistan) and, in September, a renewed emergency appeal which supplemented those previously
issued in 1997. Moreover, in order to improve regular intermediate information, a special effort was made to reduce the production time of the quarterly donor reports to six weeks and to standardize their contents. Over 50 updates were sent out, providing information on current developments in the humanitarian field in general and on ICRC activities in particular. All this written information was backed up by direct contacts. A dozen meetings were held to brief representatives of Permanent Missions in Geneva on operational matters relating to specific regions and to discuss such themes as the general state of ICRC activities, security, financing and the problem of mines. In addition, ongoing contacts were maintained with governments and National Societies, in Geneva, in the field and in the capitals, through a network of personal contacts.

Dialogue with the donors

In Wolfsberg, Switzerland, in June the ICRC hosted a humanitarian forum attended by some 70 high-level representatives from major donor countries and international aid organizations. The aim was to develop a closer dialogue between humanitarian and political players by holding informal discussions about the growing difficulties that humanitarian agencies face in carrying out their activities. A round table was also organized by the ICRC in Copenhagen in November, at the invitation of the Danish government, for the heads of the humanitarian aid departments of the same countries. Discussions focused on the possibilities for taking action to prevent conflicts and violations of humanitarian law. In addition, two week-long meetings were held in Geneva jointly by the ICRC and the Federation for some 30 representatives of National Societies taking part regularly in international humanitarian action. The meetings provided the opportunity to give these National Societies exclusive information on operational developments and to strengthen cooperation and reflection mechanisms.
Finance

In 1997 a particularly close watch was kept on the ICRC's financial situation, which gradually worsened. At the same time, considerable resources were allocated to "Finance 98", a project aimed at introducing an innovative financial management system to the organization.

With the completion of a full review of all internal financial processes, a number of needs were identified for the first time. As a direct result, in September initial steps were taken to put in place a new financial structure more conducive to the efficient performance of various tasks, including those arising from the aforesaid needs. At the same time, other tasks were streamlined.

With regard to cost accounting, an activity-based solution was adopted. This innovative choice should make it possible to gain a clearer picture of effective costs and to institute a reporting system that ties in closely with the needs identified. It should also lead in the longer term to a link-up with planning, the costing of objectives, evaluation, and expertise management. All the internal concepts relating to this cost accounting were developed during the year. In the summer, work began on the drafting of a manual on methodology and the updating of one on procedures. By late 1997 the modelling stage had been completed and the information technology requirements set.

After lengthy consideration, a software package was selected for the entire project which would tie in with logistics and human resource management. At the end of the year, work began on the configuration of the financial modules. Lastly, special emphasis was placed on revamping the internal and external financial reporting systems.

The financial section of the 1997 Annual Report represents the first tangible result of the "Finance 98" project, which is designed to meet the needs of the donors and the ICRC's other partners in a more satisfactory manner.

In the spring of 1998 a complete prototype of the new financial system, from the level of sub-delegation all the way up to headquarters, was to be tested. The subsequent installation of some 30 sites should enable the system to start operating worldwide on 1 January 1999.
Information and communication technology

After a complete reorganization, most of the information technology services that used to be performed by the ICRC at its headquarters were outsourced. To this end, a long-term agreement was signed with a Swiss company, which took on about 30 former ICRC staff members and became responsible for the operation and upkeep of the computer systems installed in Geneva and for carrying out new projects in this sphere.

An Information Technology Division was, however, maintained at the ICRC, with the task of designing and proposing strategies, handling relations with service providers, and coordinating and providing back-up for the work of specialists based in the field.

This strategic option – which was adopted with a view to enabling the ICRC to concentrate on its basic activities – should lead to greater transparency with respect to costs, together with the acquisition of high-quality services and a sharing of the risks associated with the use of new technology.

Along with the outsourcing of information technology, a major project was launched to revise management applications in the areas of finance, fundraising, logistics and human resource management. The aim of this wide-ranging initiative, based on the synchronized introduction in these areas of a state-of-the-art software package, was to increase the effectiveness of all ICRC support services.

Finally, the worldwide data retrieval network – run via an international operator – was further extended, enabling some 50 delegations to communicate with Geneva by means of an electronic mail link-up and groupware tools.
The new format adopted to present the 1997 accounts is the first visible result of the review of the ICRC’s financial system that was begun in 1996 and is to be completed in 1999. The following financial statements were designed with the aim of establishing a consistent, programme-based approach for all the accounts, from the initial appeals for funds to the final result; facilitating access to the various levels of financial information; reiterating the specific accounting principles adopted by the ICRC; and providing a breakdown of key figures. The new format, which is in conformity with international accounting standards, reflects both recent changes in this domain and the needs expressed by the ICRC’s principal donors and other partners.

The 1997 financial year

Throughout 1997, and in particular its second half, the ICRC’s financial situation was the source of increasing concern, with the cumulative deficit of the field financial structure rising to more than 100 million Swiss francs by the end of November. The situation improved only in the last few weeks of the year, when almost one quarter of total contributions for the year was received. To halt these unfavourable developments, major steps were taken from August onward to cut expenditure both in the field and at headquarters. Efforts were made, however, to avoid hampering operational activities already under way. In October a plan was launched to reduce fixed costs in the medium term. The plan should yield tangible results in 1998 and be accompanied by progressive staff cuts at headquarters. It was also necessary to retire part of the provision made to cover shortfalls in operational financing, so as to contain the growth of the field financial structure’s net cumulative deficit. At year’s end, this deficit amounted to 24.9 million Swiss francs, an increase of 4.7 million over the previous year.

Balance sheet as at 31 December 1997

Owing to the deteriorating financial situation, total available realizable assets (especially ready cash) decreased by nearly 7 million Swiss francs. This change appears in the table entitled “Cash flow statement in 1997”.

The total for operations with temporary deficit financing decreased by 4.5 million Swiss francs, and the total for operations with temporary surplus financing
by 9.2 million. The addition of these two items explains the 4.7 million increase in the cumulative net deficit.

The decision to retire part of the provision for insufficient operational funding so as to lower the overall deficit accounts for the decrease in total provisions.

Statement of income and expenses in 1997

This financial table underwent the most substantial changes. Whereas in previous years expenditure was broken down by ICRC administrative unit and geographic zone, in 1997 it was broken down by programme, in line with the appeals for funds issued to the major donors at the start of the financial year.

As major humanitarian needs arose in the course of the year in Afghanistan, Albania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, cash expenditure in the field rose to 511.6 million Swiss francs, an increase of 44 million over the previous year. At headquarters, total cash expenditure amounted to 135.5 million Swiss francs. This 4.2 million increase over 1996 was mainly due to the gradual implementation of a project aimed at completely reorganizing management systems in the areas of human resources, finance, logistics and fundraising, which was to be stepped up in 1998 and was due for completion in 1999.

Although significant, the increase in cash contributions to the headquarters and especially the field budgets (from 447.1 million Swiss francs in 1996 to 489.6 million in 1997) was insufficient to cover the growing humanitarian needs the ICRC had to meet. This accounts for the implementation of the various measures referred to above.
EXPENDITURE ACCORDING TO TYPE OF ACTIVITY IN 1997
(including contributions in kind and services)
in millions of Swiss francs

182.9 = 26.6%
Relief activities

48.8 = 7.1%
Research, development, promotion and dissemination of international humanitarian law

19.1 = 2.8%
Communication and relations with international organizations

63.9 = 9.3%
Support activities, management and allocations for risks and investments

105.8 = 15.4%
Health activities

196.1 = 28.6%
Protection, coordination of operations and Central Tracing Agency

25.4 = 3.7%
Cooperation with National Societies

44.7 = 6.5%
Operational support for delegations

Total: Sfr 686.7 million

EXPENDITURE BY REGION IN 1997
(including contributions in kind and services)
in millions of Swiss francs

137.6 = 20.0%
Headquarters/support for field activities

234.8 = 34.2%
Africa

65.5 = 9.5%
Eastern Europe and Central Asia

36.4 = 5.3%
Middle East and North Africa

71.1 = 10.4%
Western and Central Europe and the Balkans

31.5 = 4.6%
The Americas

109.8 = 16.0%
Asia and the Pacific*

Total: Sfr 686.7 million

* Except Central Asia
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   7.0 Summary of all contributions
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    10.7 Paul Reuter Fund
    10.8 Special Fund for the Disabled
1. BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1997
(in Swiss francs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>notes</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>4.3.1</td>
<td>66,737,279</td>
<td>80,039,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securities</td>
<td>4.3.2</td>
<td>22,100,766</td>
<td>19,637,832</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts receivable</td>
<td>4.3.3</td>
<td>11,443,474</td>
<td>10,794,899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventories</td>
<td>4.3.4</td>
<td>6,467,348</td>
<td>4,146,846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accrued income and prepaid expenses</td>
<td>4.3.5</td>
<td>49,627,259</td>
<td>48,939,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operations with temporary deficit financing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field activities</td>
<td>4.2.4</td>
<td>45,384,329</td>
<td>49,838,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.3.6</td>
<td>31,296,174</td>
<td>30,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.3.7</td>
<td>39,565,302</td>
<td>42,128,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>272,621,931</td>
<td>285,525,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust funds with banks</td>
<td></td>
<td>730,192</td>
<td>991,616</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LIABILITIES**

| Short term liabilities                                               |       |                  |                  |
| Bank debts                                                           |       | 211,899          | 5,587            |
| Accounts payable                                                    | 4.3.8 | 68,648,129       | 65,778,992       |
| Accrued expenses and deferred income                                | 4.3.9 | 23,214,529       | 26,259,996       |
| **Operations with temporary surplus financing**                     |       |                  |                  |
| Headquarters activities                                             | 4.2.6 | 0                | 179,025          |
| Field activities                                                     |       | 20,521,836       | 29,569,129       |
| **Long-term liabilities**                                           |       |                  |                  |
|                                                                      | 4.3.10| 8,500,000        | 8,700,000        |
| **Provisions**                                                       |       |                  |                  |
| For operational risks                                               | 4.3.11| 83,689,558       | 90,105,542       |
| For staff commitments                                               |       | 6,132,651        | 6,190,048        |
| For work in progress or to be undertaken                            |       | 1,566,459        | 1,636,525        |
| **Funds for investments**                                           |       |                  |                  |
| Real estate                                                          | 4.3.12| 32,607,263       | 32,427,263       |
| Furniture and equipment                                             |       | 13,232,614       | 10,592,690       |
| **Capital reserve**                                                  |       |                  |                  |
| General reserve                                                      |       | 12,500,000       | 12,500,000       |
| Balance at beginning of year                                        |       | 1,580,408        | 1,305,827        |
| Excess of income over expenses                                      |       | 216,585          | 274,581          |
| **Total liabilities**                                                |       | 272,621,931      | 285,525,205      |
| Trust funds - creditors                                             |       | 730,192          | 991,616          |
### 2. STATEMENT OF INCOME
(in Swiss

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities based on or directly related to the Geneva Conventions and other instruments of international humanitarian law</th>
<th>1997 Headquarters</th>
<th>in cash Field</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protection activities, coordination of operations and Central Tracing Agency</td>
<td>(18,625,677)</td>
<td>(164,125,904)</td>
<td>(182,751,581)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health activities</td>
<td>(8,195,132)</td>
<td>(78,190,832)</td>
<td>(86,385,964)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief activities</td>
<td>(5,680,800)</td>
<td>(150,095,154)</td>
<td>(155,775,954)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation in the development of National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies</td>
<td>(705,910)</td>
<td>(22,044,856)</td>
<td>(22,750,766)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International humanitarian law (IHL): implementation, research and development</td>
<td>(7,761,684)</td>
<td>(7,761,684)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHL: promotion and dissemination</td>
<td>(12,464,478)</td>
<td>(24,285,583)</td>
<td>(36,750,061)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations with international organizations</td>
<td>(4,140,575)</td>
<td>(4,140,575)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>(14,698,883)</td>
<td>(14,698,883)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational support at delegations</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support activities</td>
<td>(43,960,596)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial management and general services</td>
<td>(19,287,429)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation to headquarters budget</td>
<td>(31,224,153)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total expenditure</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(135,521,164)</td>
<td>(511,595,733)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excess activity-related expenditure</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(26,087,470)</td>
<td>(21,990,529)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allocation from field budget</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31,224,153</td>
<td>31,224,153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement of funds for investments and provisions</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(5,496,946)</td>
<td>9,228,016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution to foundations/funds</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fondation Avenir du CICR</td>
<td>(1,700,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Fund for the Disabled</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial income and re-invoiced costs</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,984,829</td>
<td>7,486,247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other income</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5,304,353</td>
<td>790,016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other expenditure</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(5,191,359)</td>
<td>(5,191,359)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational surplus/(deficit)</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37,560</td>
<td>(4,486,250)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increase/(decrease) of operations with temporary deficit financing</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(4,453,729)</td>
<td>(4,453,729)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Increase)/decrease of operations with temporary surplus financing</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>179,025</td>
<td>8,939,979</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excess of income over expenses</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>216,585</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AND EXPENSES IN 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997 in kind</th>
<th>1997 in services</th>
<th>Grand total</th>
<th>1996 Total cash</th>
<th>1996 Total in kind and services</th>
<th>Grand total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14,878,547</td>
<td>24,699,340</td>
<td>638,616,785</td>
<td>555,427,425</td>
<td>53,087,014</td>
<td>608,514,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6,540)</td>
<td>(2,661,323)</td>
<td>(185,419,444)</td>
<td>(168,957,290)</td>
<td>(3,176,587)</td>
<td>(172,133,877)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2,176,093)</td>
<td>(12,107,773)</td>
<td>(100,669,830)</td>
<td>(87,376,775)</td>
<td>(19,493,041)</td>
<td>(106,869,816)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(12,579,686)</td>
<td>(4,833,346)</td>
<td>(173,188,986)</td>
<td>(142,147,932)</td>
<td>(26,458,404)</td>
<td>(168,606,336)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1,193,382)</td>
<td>(23,944,148)</td>
<td>(15,178,186)</td>
<td>(820,955)</td>
<td>(15,999,141)</td>
<td>(172,349,334)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(116,228)</td>
<td>(2,350,379)</td>
<td>(10,228,291)</td>
<td>(6,791,358)</td>
<td>(6,791,358)</td>
<td>(6,791,358)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(276,500)</td>
<td>(37,026,561)</td>
<td>(33,329,731)</td>
<td>(2,696,691)</td>
<td>(3,912,135)</td>
<td>(3,912,135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(306,015)</td>
<td>(15,004,898)</td>
<td>(15,693,892)</td>
<td>(15,693,892)</td>
<td>(15,693,892)</td>
<td>(15,693,892)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(346,005)</td>
<td>(41,975,256)</td>
<td>(36,804,043)</td>
<td>(36,804,043)</td>
<td>(36,804,043)</td>
<td>(36,804,043)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(624,617)</td>
<td>(44,585,213)</td>
<td>(41,127,725)</td>
<td>(41,127,725)</td>
<td>(441,336)</td>
<td>(41,569,061)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(31,224,153)</td>
<td>(28,542,785)</td>
<td>(28,542,785)</td>
<td>(28,542,785)</td>
<td>(28,542,785)</td>
<td>(28,542,785)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(14,878,547)</td>
<td>(686,694,784)</td>
<td>(598,922,105)</td>
<td>(53,087,014)</td>
<td>(652,009,119)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(48,077,999)</td>
<td>(43,494,680)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(43,494,680)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31,224,153</td>
<td>28,542,785</td>
<td>7,088,312</td>
<td>(7,088,312)</td>
<td></td>
<td>28,542,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,731,070</td>
<td>(200,000)</td>
<td>9,401,624</td>
<td>9,401,624</td>
<td></td>
<td>9,401,624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1,700,000)</td>
<td>5,710,486</td>
<td>5,710,486</td>
<td>(5,710,486)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,710,486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9,471,076</td>
<td>(3,787,763)</td>
<td>33,339,802</td>
<td>33,339,802</td>
<td></td>
<td>33,339,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5,191,359)</td>
<td>10,915,860</td>
<td>(10,915,860)</td>
<td>(10,915,860)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(10,915,860)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4,448,690)</td>
<td>(4,453,729)</td>
<td>33,339,802</td>
<td>33,339,802</td>
<td></td>
<td>33,339,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(9,119,004)</td>
<td>(22,149,361)</td>
<td>(22,149,361)</td>
<td>(22,149,361)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(22,149,361)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>216,585</td>
<td>274,581</td>
<td>274,581</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>274,581</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR 1997
(in Swiss francs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cash flow from operating activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(9,556,861)</td>
<td>19,264,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating surplus before changes in working capital</td>
<td>1,511,815</td>
<td>12,500,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of income over expenses</td>
<td>216,585</td>
<td>274,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation of fixed assets</td>
<td>5,243,753</td>
<td>5,174,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraordinary income and expenditure - net</td>
<td>(217,453)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase/(decrease) of provisions and funds for investments</td>
<td>(3,731,070)</td>
<td>7,051,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Changes in working capital</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Increase)/decrease of current assets</td>
<td>(6,119,757)</td>
<td>5,604,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase/(decrease) of short term liabilities</td>
<td>(176,330)</td>
<td>12,734,179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Increase)/decrease of operations with temporary deficit financing</td>
<td>4,453,729</td>
<td>(33,339,802)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase/(decrease) of operations with temporary surplus financing</td>
<td>(9,226,318)</td>
<td>21,765,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cash flow from investing activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment in real estate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(225,037)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment in furniture and other equipment</td>
<td>(2,468,573)</td>
<td>(2,882,392)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of furniture and other equipment</td>
<td>12,755</td>
<td>44,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment in financial assets</td>
<td>(1,296,174)</td>
<td>(30,000,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cash flow from financing activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase/(decrease) of long-term liabilities</td>
<td>(200,000)</td>
<td>(200,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net variation of cash and bank deposits</strong></td>
<td>(13,508,853)</td>
<td>(13,997,893)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and bank deposits as at 1 January</td>
<td>80,034,233</td>
<td>94,032,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and bank deposits as at 31 December</td>
<td>66,525,380</td>
<td>80,034,233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1 Activities

The International Committee of the Red Cross, founded in Geneva in 1863 and formally recognized in the Geneva Conventions and by the International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, is an independent humanitarian organization having a status of its own.

The ICRC's principal tasks consist of:

♦ in connection with internal strife, international and non-international armed conflict, and their aftermath:
  - activities for persons deprived of their freedom;
  - protection and relief (in the form of medical supplies, drinking water, food and shelter) for the civilian population;
  - restoration of family links;
♦ at all times:
  - development and respect for international humanitarian law;
  - promotion and dissemination of humanitarian law and of the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement;
  - humanitarian diplomacy.

The ICRC is managed on the basis of two separate financial structures, one for headquarters and one for the field. The headquarters financial structure covers activities in Geneva, the management of the International Tracing Service in Arolsen, Germany, and the New York delegation.

The field financial structure comprises all other ICRC delegations, of which there were 54 at the end of 1997.

4.2 Main accounting principles

4.2.1 Securities
Investment securities are recorded at their purchase value in the case of shares, and at par in the case of bonds.

4.2.2 Inventories
Inventories held at headquarters are listed at the purchase price; inventories held at the delegations are not included under assets.

4.2.3 Accrued income and prepaid expenses
This account heading includes expenses paid in advance and contributions received during the first two weeks of the financial year following the year under report, but specifically attributed to the reporting period.

4.2.4 Operations with temporary deficit financing
This relates to expenditure in the field financial structure which is not covered by contributions already received.

4.2.5 Fixed assets
Investments in real estate, furniture and equipment at headquarters are carried as assets on the balance sheet. With the exception of real estate investments, all expenses incurred by the delegations are expensed in the current financial year statement of income and expenses, owing to the fact that the ICRC operates in unstable or conflict situations.

Applicable straight-line depreciation periods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset Type</th>
<th>in Switzerland</th>
<th>other countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real estate</td>
<td>50 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixtures and fittings</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture and equipment</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer and telecommunications equipment</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.6 Operations with temporary surplus financing
Some contributions received by the ICRC are earmarked for specific usage. At the end of the financial year, any such funds which have not yet been spent are recorded under this heading.

4.2.7 Provisions
Provisions for operational risks cover identifiable risks relating to insufficient operational funding, equipment insured by delegations and commercial disputes.
Provisions for staff commitments cover the ICRC's liabilities under the Collective Staff Agreement.
Provisions for work in progress or to be undertaken are allocated in anticipation of specific events, such as the International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, accrued over several accounting periods.

4.2.8 Funds for investments
The ICRC sets aside funds for capital expenditure on real estate and equipment, in order to be able to make investments essential for its operations regardless of short-term financial fluctuations.

4.2.9 Contributions
Cash contributions are recognized upon receipt; pledges are not recognized until received.
Contributions in kind (goods) and in services (in the form of staff, means of transport) derive from statistical information. For each contribution received in kind or in services, an equal and opposite amount is entered under both income and expenditure.
The value of contributions in kind is determined by the donor's estimation of the value of the goods, allowing for the cost of transport to the final destination.
The value of service contributions is estimated by determining the real cost that would have been incurred had the contribution not been made. In the case of staff seconded to the ICRC, the estimated value consists of the salary plus the social security and insurance contributions paid by the ICRC for the position concerned.
Income and expenditure for projects delegated to National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies are included under the total income and total expenditure items for the relevant accounting period.

4.2.10 Allocation to headquarters budget
A premium of 6.5% is added to cash expenditure incurred by the field financial structure. This amount is included in the income of the headquarters financial structure, so as to partly offset the cost of headquarters' direct support for ICRC operations in the field. This procedure does not affect the overall result for the financial year.

4.2.11 Excess of income or expenditure
The headquarters financial structure excess of income or expenditure is reported as an increase or decrease in the ICRC's capital reserve. The operating surplus or deficit of the field financial structure is allocated to operations with temporary surplus or deficit financing.

4.2.12 Translation of foreign currencies
Monetary assets and liabilities are translated into Swiss francs at the rate applicable at the year-end, except for securities denominated in foreign currencies, which are converted at the historical rate of exchange. Income statement items are converted at mean monthly exchange rates and any differences included under other income and expenditures.

The principal rates of exchange are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currency</th>
<th>Closing rate of exchange</th>
<th>Mean rate of exchange</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USD</td>
<td>1.4740</td>
<td>1.4488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>0.8135</td>
<td>0.8410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBP</td>
<td>2.4200</td>
<td>2.3700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRF</td>
<td>0.2430</td>
<td>0.2501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECU</td>
<td>1.6000</td>
<td>1.6392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4.3 Additional details relating to the financial statements

This section provides a breakdown of the main items on the balance sheet. All figures are in Swiss francs.

#### 4.3.1 Cash and cash equivalent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and current accounts (bank/post office) in Geneva</td>
<td>66,737,279</td>
<td>80,039,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and current accounts held by delegations</td>
<td>892,150</td>
<td>1,456,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time deposits</td>
<td>14,793,371</td>
<td>14,691,875</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.3.2 Securities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Securities</td>
<td>22,100,766</td>
<td>19,637,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other current assets</td>
<td>23,624,249</td>
<td>21,541,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for securities market fluctuations</td>
<td>1,962,947</td>
<td>1,420,571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3,486,430)</td>
<td>(3,324,054)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Market value of securities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32,733,133</td>
<td>31,829,435</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.3.3 Accounts receivable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governments</td>
<td>11,443,474</td>
<td>10,794,899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, organizations, foundations and funds</td>
<td>5,075,940</td>
<td>6,400,749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withholding tax and recoverable levies</td>
<td>474,544</td>
<td>573,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guarantee deposits</td>
<td>854,653</td>
<td>789,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts receivable, social security and insurance contributions</td>
<td>2,308,527</td>
<td>2,452,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance payments to expatriates on mission</td>
<td>2,929,910</td>
<td>752,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for doubtful accounts receivable</td>
<td>(200,100)</td>
<td>(200,100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.3.4 Inventories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical supplies</td>
<td>6,467,348</td>
<td>4,146,846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for depreciation of medical supplies</td>
<td>3,247,440</td>
<td>3,531,582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer and telecommunications equipment</td>
<td>1,742,970</td>
<td>1,341,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle fleet in Geneva and Brussels for use in operational activities</td>
<td>3,326,000</td>
<td>1,086,971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundry equipment</td>
<td>150,938</td>
<td>186,591</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.3.5 Accrued income and prepaid expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions receivable</td>
<td>45,903,235</td>
<td>44,588,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance payments, headquarters and field</td>
<td>3,724,024</td>
<td>4,351,468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.6 Financial assets

This is a medium-term deposit initially totaling Sfr. 30,000,000, booked on 1 October 1996 and maturing on 30 September 1999. The principle is fully guaranteed by the banking institution administrating the deposit.

4.3.7 Fixed assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book value, gross</th>
<th>Furniture and other equipment</th>
<th>Real estate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost as at 1 January 1997</td>
<td>23,298,087</td>
<td>41,981,531</td>
<td>65,279,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additions during 1997</td>
<td>2,468,573</td>
<td>225,000</td>
<td>2,693,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposals</td>
<td>(12,755)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(12,755)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost as at 31 December 1997</td>
<td>25,753,905</td>
<td>42,206,531</td>
<td>67,960,436</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accumulated depreciation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accumulated depreciation</th>
<th>Furniture and other equipment</th>
<th>Real estate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance as at 1 January 1997</td>
<td>(16,440,475)</td>
<td>(6,710,906)</td>
<td>(23,151,381)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation during 1997</td>
<td>(3,760,064)</td>
<td>(1,483,689)</td>
<td>(5,243,753)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance as at 31 December 1997</td>
<td>(20,200,539)</td>
<td>(8,194,595)</td>
<td>(28,395,134)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Net book value as at 31 December 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Net book value as at 31 December 1996</th>
<th>Furniture and other equipment</th>
<th>Real estate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6,857,612</td>
<td>35,270,625</td>
<td>42,128,237</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Net book value as at 31 December 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Net book value as at 31 December 1997</th>
<th>Furniture and other equipment</th>
<th>Real estate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5,553,366</td>
<td>34,011,936</td>
<td>39,565,302</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the buildings at the headquarters in Geneva is subject to a mortgage note tendered as collateral for the respective mortgage.

Real estate investments for the 1997 financial year relate to an apartment donated to the ICRC as a contribution in kind.

4.3.8 Accounts payable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governments</td>
<td>68,648,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9,228,016</td>
<td>8,209,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, organizations, foundations and funds</td>
<td>596,953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppliers</td>
<td>11,823,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social security and insurance contributions</td>
<td>25,359,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff vacation accrual</td>
<td>19,858,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundry items</td>
<td>1,781,870</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.9 Accrued expenses and deferred income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accrued expenses and deferred income</td>
<td>23,214,529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22,220,815</td>
<td>26,123,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid contributions</td>
<td>993,714</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.10 Allocation to headquarters budget

This is a mortgage taken out to pay for one of the buildings at the headquarters in Geneva. Interest amounted to Sfr 445,790, in 1997 (Sfr 456,097 in 1996).

4.3.11 Provisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Operational risks</th>
<th>Staff related provisions</th>
<th>Work in progress or to be undertaken</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance as at 1 January 1997</td>
<td>90,105,542</td>
<td>6,190,048</td>
<td>1,636,525</td>
<td>97,932,115</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use/release during 1997</td>
<td>(10,111,687)</td>
<td>(2,557,397)</td>
<td>(70,066)</td>
<td>(12,739,150)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allocations during 1997</td>
<td>3,695,703</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6,195,703</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance as at 31 December 1997</td>
<td>83,689,558</td>
<td>6,132,651</td>
<td>1,566,459</td>
<td>91,388,668</td>
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4.3.12 Funds for investments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Furniture and equipment</th>
<th>Real estate</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance as at 1 January 1997</td>
<td>10,592,690</td>
<td>32,427,263</td>
<td>43,019,953</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use/release during 1997</td>
<td>(10,076)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(10,076)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allocations during 1997</td>
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<td>180,000</td>
<td>2,830,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance as at 31 December 1997</td>
<td>13,232,614</td>
<td>32,607,263</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Additional notes

4.4.1 Reclassification

Certain items in the balance sheet and the statement of income and expenses for 1996 have been reclassified to conform with the new format for presenting the 1997 financial statements. These reclassifications did not affect the net result reported for 1996.

4.4.2 Taxes

The ICRC is exempt from taxes in Switzerland and most countries in which its delegations are based.

4.4.3 Financial instruments

Forward transactions are effected occasionally for contract periods not extending beyond the current month and solely for the purpose of hedging exchange rate risks.

4.4.4 Staff benefits

In accordance with Swiss law, pension contributions for staff working at headquarters or in the field and hired in Geneva are paid into a trust independent of the ICRC. The auditor's annual report confirms that this trust is able to cover its commitments.

Fondation Avenir, established at the ICRC's initiative, facilitates training or career moves for staff working at headquarters or in the field and hired in Geneva under an open-ended contract.

Personnel employed locally by the delegations receive social benefits in accordance with the legislation of the countries concerned.
Report of the auditors
for the year ended December 31, 1997
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 accounting records and the financial statements (balance sheet, statement of income and expenses, cash flow statement and notes) for the year ended December 31, 1997.

These financial statements are the responsibility of the management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We confirm that we meet the legal requirements concerning professional qualification and independence.

Our audit was conducted in accordance with auditing standards promulgated by the profession, which require that an audit be planned and performed to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement. We have examined on a test basis evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. We have also assessed the accounting principles used, significant estimates made and the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion. Finally, we have reviewed the reports of KPMG London, who were responsible for reviewing that the income and expenses relating to the field operations of the ICRC have been correctly accounted for. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the accounting records and financial statements comply with articles 957 and onwards of the Swiss Code of Obligations, with the articles of incorporation, and with the accounting principles of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The statement of income and expenses 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 22, 1998

ATAG Ernst & Young SA

F. Genetelli
French certified accountant
(Auditor in charge)

G. Moinat
Swiss certified accountant

Enclosures:
- Financial statements (balance sheet, statement of income and expenses, cash flow statement and notes)
## 5. HEADQUARTERS FINANCIAL STRUCTURE IN 1997

*Budget/expenditure in cash, kind and services (in Swiss francs)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headquarters expenses by activity</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Activities based on or directly related to the Geneva Conventions and other instruments of international humanitarian law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. Protection activities and coordination of operations (merged with Central Tracing Agency in 1997)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. Central Tracing Agency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3. Medical activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4. Relief activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5. Cooperation in the development of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6. International humanitarian law (IHL): implementation, research and development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7. IHL: promotion and dissemination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8. Relations with international organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9. Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Operational support at delegations</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Support activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1. General policy and operational support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. Human resources: recruitment, training, development and management</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3. External resources</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4. Information technology and telecommunications</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Financial management and general services</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1. Financial management</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2. Management control and external auditing</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.3. General services</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Allocations for risks, commitments and investments</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1. Operational risks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2. Staff commitments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3. Other liabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4. Funds for investments for furniture and equipment</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Allocation to provisions for variation of activities</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 Allocation to Fondation Avenir du CICR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
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### 6. FIELD EXPENDITURE

including (in Swiss Budget Cash Expenditure)

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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Emerg. Appeal</th>
<th>Amendment</th>
<th>Final</th>
<th>Protection &amp; tracing</th>
<th>Promotion &amp; dissemination</th>
<th>Health activities</th>
<th>Relief activities</th>
<th>Cooperation with National Societies</th>
<th>Operational support</th>
<th>Overheads</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AFRICA</strong></td>
<td>236,303,251</td>
<td>63,399,471</td>
<td>299,702,722</td>
<td>67,272,182</td>
<td>7,280,722</td>
<td>33,596,106</td>
<td>71,163,534</td>
<td>9,030,336</td>
<td>19,617,827</td>
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<td>221,478,154</td>
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<td>9,569,107</td>
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<td>1,774,589</td>
<td>1,589,277</td>
<td>8,501</td>
<td>1,397,301</td>
<td>52,991</td>
<td>7,380,723</td>
<td>333,961,006</td>
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<td>1,362,245</td>
<td>58,348</td>
<td>18,384</td>
<td>81,589</td>
<td>400,878</td>
<td>67,568</td>
<td>110,363</td>
<td>106,456</td>
<td>1,744,238</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>11,041,975</td>
<td>4,268,765</td>
<td>832,699</td>
<td>1,698,949</td>
<td>766,218</td>
<td>133,901</td>
<td>429,954</td>
<td>528,481</td>
<td>8,658,967</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>1,883,705</td>
<td>1,883,705</td>
<td>1,032,050</td>
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<td>110,363</td>
<td>106,456</td>
<td>1,744,238</td>
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<td>67,086,913</td>
<td>24,339,655</td>
<td>700,958</td>
<td>3,853,127</td>
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<td>32,227,378</td>
<td>2,749,322</td>
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<td>766,218</td>
<td>133,901</td>
<td>429,954</td>
<td>528,481</td>
<td>8,658,967</td>
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<td>24,057,588</td>
<td>3,547,145</td>
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<td>2,427,702</td>
<td>5,122,138</td>
<td>671,272</td>
<td>1,461,385</td>
<td>3,195,684</td>
<td>12,907,607</td>
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<td>6,489,676</td>
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<td>542,890</td>
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<td>298,372</td>
<td>524,474</td>
<td>382,882</td>
<td>6,308,877</td>
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<td>2,841,176</td>
<td>656,041</td>
<td>561,423</td>
<td>5,549</td>
<td>494,022</td>
<td>129,632</td>
<td>2,123,979</td>
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<td>1,790,737</td>
<td>998,837</td>
<td>454,255</td>
<td>177,459</td>
<td>326,000</td>
<td>127,176</td>
<td>2,083,727</td>
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<td>Nairobi (regional)</td>
<td>16,963,840</td>
<td>7,206,382</td>
<td>21,702,222</td>
<td>1,368,932</td>
<td>2,018,785</td>
<td>9,455,313</td>
<td>3,882,994</td>
<td>1,620,060</td>
<td>26,544,066</td>
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<td>Pretoria (regional)</td>
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<td>4,152,414</td>
<td>1,319,846</td>
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<td>583,797</td>
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<td>176,466</td>
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<td>2,162,065</td>
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<td>Mozambique</td>
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<td>18,286,867</td>
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<td>300,000</td>
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<td>300,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE AMERICAS</strong></td>
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<td>35,062,643</td>
<td>17,655,578</td>
<td>2,978,649</td>
<td>1,858,524</td>
<td>1,764,807</td>
<td>1,990,503</td>
<td>2,562,978</td>
<td>1,872,717</td>
<td>30,633,756</td>
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<td>Colombia</td>
<td>15,889,385</td>
<td>15,889,385</td>
<td>9,285,699</td>
<td>1,289,612</td>
<td>805,430</td>
<td>1,453,841</td>
<td>866,176</td>
<td>1,050,154</td>
<td>958,810</td>
<td>15,709,727</td>
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<td>Peru</td>
<td>6,362,546</td>
<td>6,362,546</td>
<td>3,584,336</td>
<td>262,998</td>
<td>839,762</td>
<td>310,966</td>
<td>214,723</td>
<td>580,576</td>
<td>376,569</td>
<td>6,169,930</td>
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<td>Brasilia (regional)</td>
<td>1,493,054</td>
<td>1,493,054</td>
<td>544,220</td>
<td>182,608</td>
<td>93,959</td>
<td>125,889</td>
<td>61,534</td>
<td>1,008,210</td>
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<td>Buenos Aires (regional)</td>
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<td>1,812,821</td>
<td>919,007</td>
<td>378,633</td>
<td>51,565</td>
<td>167,476</td>
<td>98,584</td>
<td>1,615,265</td>
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<td>Guatemala City (regional)</td>
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<td>5,521,768</td>
<td>2,462,598</td>
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<td>751,732</td>
<td>448,551</td>
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<td>1,047,259</td>
<td>859,718</td>
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<td>190,332</td>
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<td>1,131,453</td>
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<td>Panama</td>
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<td>2,935,810</td>
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<td>300,000</td>
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<td>Haiti</td>
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<td>2,935,810</td>
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<td>300,000</td>
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<td>300,000</td>
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</table>
## AND INCOME IN 1997

delegated projects (francs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cash Income</th>
<th>Reports of operations</th>
<th>Contributions spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allocated income</td>
<td>Allocation income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>income granted</td>
<td>in cash</td>
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<tr>
<td>9,419,433</td>
<td>3,323,115</td>
<td>12,742,548</td>
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<td>1,027,166</td>
<td>1,027,166</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,127,350</td>
<td>5,129,619</td>
<td>8,256,969</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,552,373</td>
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<td>27,207,122</td>
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<td>9,714,119</td>
<td>3,191,618</td>
<td>12,905,737</td>
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<td>40,253,306</td>
<td>3,252,851</td>
<td>43,506,157</td>
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<td>15,617,213</td>
<td>173,048</td>
<td>15,790,261</td>
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<td>1,668,906</td>
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<td>1,720,575</td>
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<td>705,778</td>
<td>1,377,949</td>
<td>2,083,727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9,992,028</td>
<td>15,538,295</td>
<td>25,430,423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,171,266</td>
<td>715,464</td>
<td>2,886,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>389,887</td>
<td>2,302,099</td>
<td>2,691,986</td>
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<tr>
<td>47,970,827</td>
<td>(47,970,827)</td>
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</table>

| 29,257,030 | 0                     | 29,257,030          |              | 1,003,819            | (4,259,520)         |                  |                  |                  | 87,785    | 743,285    |
| 12,735,896 | 567,562                | 13,303,458          |              | 954,216              | (1,913,310)         |                  |                  |                  | 87,785    | 335,076    |
| 5,597,333  | 1,404,701              | 7,002,034           |              | (2,176,061)          | (1,343,957)         |                  |                  |                  | 168,085   |            |
| 1,008,210  | 1,008,210              |                    |              |                      |                  |                  |                  |                  |          |            |
| 16,700     | 1,598,565              | 1,615,265           |              |                      |                  |                  |                  |                  |          |            |
| 3,032,461  | 2,000,000              | 5,032,461           |              |                      |                  |                  |                  |                  |          |            |
| 501,939    | 629,514                | 1,131,453           |              |                      |                  |                  |                  |                  |          |            |
| 164,149    | 164,149                |                    |              | 49,603               | (16,715)            |                  |                  |                  | 240,120   |            |
| 7,372,701  | (7,372,701)            |                    |              |                      |                  |                  |                  |                  |          |            |

AFRICA

 Angola
 Burundi
 Ethiopia [incl. Eritrea]
 Liberia
 Rwanda
 Somalia
 Sudan
 Abidjan (regional) [incl. Sierra Leone]
 Dakar (regional)
 Harare (regional)
 Lagos (regional)
 Nairobi (regional) [incl. Uganda]
 Pretoria (regional)
 Yaoundé (regional)
 Mozambique
 Contingency
 General use

THE AMERICAS

 Colombia
 Peru
 Brasilia (regional)
 Buenos Aires (regional)
 Guatemala City (regional)
 Washington (regional)
 Panama
 Haiti
 Contingency
 General use

349
## 6. FIELD EXPENDITURE
including (in Swiss)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Budget Cash Expenditure</th>
<th>Protection &amp; tracing</th>
<th>Promotion &amp; dissemination</th>
<th>Health activities</th>
<th>Relief activities</th>
<th>Cooperation with National Societies</th>
<th>Operational support</th>
<th>Overheads</th>
<th>Total</th>
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**TOTAL FIELD**                             | 618,795,053             | 78,704,823            | 697,499,876           | 164,125,904       | 24,285,583        | 78,190,832                          | 150,095,154         | 22,844,856 | 31,224,153  |
AND INCOME IN 1997  (CONTINUED)
delegated projects
francs

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<th>Reports of operations</th>
<th>Contributions spent</th>
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ASIA & THE PACIFIC
- Afghanistan (incl. Pakistan)
- Cambodia
- Sri Lanka
- Bangkok (regional)
- Jakarta (regional)
- Manila (regional)
- New Delhi (reg.)

WESTERN & CENTRAL EUROPE, BALKANS
- Former Yugoslavia
- Budapest (regional)

EASTERN EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA
- Caucasus
- Tajikistan
- Kyiv (regional)
- Moscow (regional)
- Tashkent (regional)
- Contingency

MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA
- Egypt
- Iran
- Iraq
- Israel
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Syria
- Kuwait (regional)
- Tunis (regional)
- Contingency

TOTAL FIELD
### 7. CONTRIBUTIONS IN 1997
*(in Swiss francs)*

#### 7.0 Summary of all contributions

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<th>Emergency appeals</th>
<th>Total cash</th>
<th>Total kind</th>
<th>Total services</th>
<th>Grand total</th>
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#### Grand total

|                  | 109,433,694 | 489,605,204 | 599,038,898 | 14,878,547 | 24,699,340 | 638,616,785 |

* Breakdown:

- Contributions to delegated projects: 1,451,098
- Relief supplies dispatched by the ICRC: 12,493,343
- Medical supplies dispatched by the ICRC: 934,106
- Total: 14,878,547
### 7. CONTRIBUTIONS IN 1997
**(in Swiss francs)**

#### 7.1 Governments

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<th>Total cash</th>
<th>Total kind</th>
<th>Total services</th>
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7. CONTRIBUTIONS IN 1997
(in Swiss francs)

7.1 Governments (continued)

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7. CONTRIBUTIONS IN 1997  
(in Swiss francs)

7.3 International organizations

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| **Total from non-governmental organizations** | **73,500** | **73,500** | **73,500** |

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### 7. CONTRIBUTIONS IN 1997

*(in Swiss francs)*

#### 7.5 National Societies (continued)

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**Total from National Societies**

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### 7. CONTRIBUTIONS IN 1997
(in Swiss francs)

#### 7.6 Public sources

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**Total from public sources**

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#### 7.7 Private sources

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**Donations from foundations/funds:**

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**Total from private sources**

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### 8. CONTRIBUTIONS IN SERVICES AND TO DELEGATED PROJECTS IN 1997

(in Swiss francs)

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9. RELIEF AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TABLES

The statistical data in the following tables can be summarized as follows:

9.1 Contributions in kind received and purchases made by the ICRC in 1997

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 1997. 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 140,402,500 therefore corresponds to the grand total given in the table "Relief and medical supplies dispatched by the ICRC in 1997".

9.2 Relief and medical supplies dispatched by the ICRC in 1997

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 1997.

9.3 Relief and medical supplies distributed by the ICRC in 1997

All relief and medical supplies distributed by the ICRC in the field between 1 January and 31 December 1997. These goods were either purchased or received in kind during 1997 or taken from stocks already constituted at the end of 1996.
## 9.1 Contributions in Kind Received and Purchases Made by the ICRC in 1997

By donor and purchase, according to stock entry date

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<th>Tents (units)</th>
<th>Kitchen sets (units)</th>
<th>Clothes (tonnes)</th>
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<th>Total relief (Sfr)</th>
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<td>7,359,402</td>
<td>7,912.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yaoundé (regional)</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE AMERICAS</td>
<td>328,895</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>178,013</td>
<td>1,337,198</td>
<td>407.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>92,534</td>
<td>133,942</td>
<td>37.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guatemela City (regional)</td>
<td>58,348</td>
<td>16,424</td>
<td>8.2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ASIA &amp; THE PACIFIC</td>
<td>241,673</td>
<td>62,988</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Afghanistan [incl. Pakistan]</td>
<td>201,086</td>
<td>62,988</td>
<td>63.0</td>
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<td>Cambodia</td>
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<td>49,357</td>
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<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>262,870</td>
<td>930,226</td>
<td>273.8</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jakarta (regional)</td>
<td>128,145</td>
<td>36,921</td>
<td>39.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manila (regional)</td>
<td>6,713</td>
<td>179,875</td>
<td>172.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEST &amp; CENT. EUROPE, BALKANS</td>
<td>59,876</td>
<td>2,684,426</td>
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<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>19,600</td>
<td>1,111,536</td>
<td>1,258.3</td>
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<td>40,196</td>
<td>1,572,890</td>
<td>1,420.4</td>
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<td>EASTERN EUROPE &amp; CENTRAL ASIA</td>
<td>5,399,288</td>
<td>5,208.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Caucasus</td>
<td>936,955</td>
<td>3,954,255</td>
<td>3,351.8</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>8,545,995</td>
<td>6,311,733</td>
<td>8,061.4</td>
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<td>Moscow (regional)</td>
<td>365,359</td>
<td>2,638,345</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIDDLE EAST &amp; NORTH AFRICA</td>
<td>343,792</td>
<td>1,064,501</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
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<td>1,064,501</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Israel [incl. occupied/autonom. territories]</td>
<td>259,046</td>
<td>400,420</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>541,296</td>
<td>159,277</td>
<td>65.6</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kuwait (regional)</td>
<td>88,989</td>
<td>45,163</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia (regional)</td>
<td>34,600</td>
<td>28,352</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EMERGENCY STOCKS W. EUROPE</td>
<td>558,587</td>
<td>36.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stocks in Brussels and Geneva</td>
<td>558,587</td>
<td>30.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAND TOTAL.</td>
<td>934,106</td>
<td>12,493,343</td>
<td>10,671.4</td>
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<td></td>
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### 9.3 Relief and Medical Supplies Distributed by the ICRC in 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Medical Sfr</th>
<th>Relief goods tonnes</th>
<th>Grand total Sfr</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AFRICA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>427,951</td>
<td>16,282</td>
<td>444,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>8,264</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>568,578</td>
<td>407,688</td>
<td>976,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>177,621</td>
<td>107,541</td>
<td>285,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>3,520,412</td>
<td>12,507,992</td>
<td>16,028,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>3,477,906</td>
<td>6,235,588</td>
<td>9,713,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>1,099,482</td>
<td>635,945</td>
<td>1,735,427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abidjan (regional) [incl. Sierra Leone]</td>
<td>937,372</td>
<td>5,048,639</td>
<td>5,986,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakar (regional)</td>
<td>553,794</td>
<td>960,282</td>
<td>1,514,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harare (regional)</td>
<td>45,945</td>
<td></td>
<td>45,945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagos (regional)</td>
<td>1,593</td>
<td>48,648</td>
<td>50,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nairobi (regional) [incl. Uganda]</td>
<td>541,738</td>
<td>2,865,640</td>
<td>3,407,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretoria (regional)</td>
<td></td>
<td>89,692</td>
<td>89,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaoundé (regional)</td>
<td>103,002</td>
<td>237,523</td>
<td>340,525</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THE AMERICAS</strong></td>
<td>336,065</td>
<td>1,518,709</td>
<td>1,854,774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>177,938</td>
<td>1,337,198</td>
<td>1,515,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>97,238</td>
<td>165,087</td>
<td>262,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala City (regional)</td>
<td>60,889</td>
<td>16,424</td>
<td>77,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASIA &amp; THE PACIFIC</strong></td>
<td>7,744,983</td>
<td>17,891,822</td>
<td>25,636,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan [incl. Pakistan]</td>
<td>6,587,791</td>
<td>16,993,484</td>
<td>23,581,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>736,713</td>
<td>49,357</td>
<td>786,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>287,621</td>
<td>632,185</td>
<td>919,806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jakarta (regional)</td>
<td>126,145</td>
<td>36,921</td>
<td>163,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manila (regional)</td>
<td>6,713</td>
<td>179,875</td>
<td>186,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WESTERN &amp; CENTRAL EUROPE, BALKANS</strong></td>
<td>11,337,089</td>
<td>15,596,030</td>
<td>26,933,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>1,039,650</td>
<td>5,078,466</td>
<td>6,118,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Yugoslavia</td>
<td>10,297,439</td>
<td>10,517,564</td>
<td>20,815,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EASTERN EUROPE &amp; CENTRAL ASIA</strong></td>
<td>1,666,573</td>
<td>16,870,136</td>
<td>18,536,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Caucasus</td>
<td>825,345</td>
<td>9,477,676</td>
<td>10,303,021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>338,637</td>
<td>3,545,397</td>
<td>3,884,034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moscow (regional)</td>
<td>502,591</td>
<td>3,847,063</td>
<td>4,349,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MIDDLE EAST &amp; NORTH AFRICA</strong></td>
<td>8,287,162</td>
<td>2,082,766</td>
<td>10,369,928</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>7,407,552</td>
<td>1,409,356</td>
<td>8,816,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel [incl. occupied/autonom. territories]</td>
<td>259,046</td>
<td>442,695</td>
<td>701,741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>496,974</td>
<td>157,200</td>
<td>654,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait (regional)</td>
<td>88,989</td>
<td>45,163</td>
<td>134,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunis (regional)</td>
<td>34,601</td>
<td>28,352</td>
<td>62,953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>46,351,538</td>
<td>88,850,732</td>
<td>135,202,270</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### 10. SPECIAL FUNDS

#### 10.1 FOUNDATION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1997**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>SFr</th>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>SFr</th>
<th>SFr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Securities</td>
<td>1,964,397</td>
<td><em>Inalienable capital</em> :</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(market value : Sfr 2,508,386)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Initial balance</td>
<td>1,813,721</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Allocation from 1997</td>
<td>138,241</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Tax Administration, Bern</td>
<td>10,750</td>
<td><em>Available funds</em> :</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(withholding tax refund)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Allocation from 1997</td>
<td>30,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>82,456</td>
<td>International Committee of the</td>
<td></td>
<td>75,641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Red Cross, current account</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,057,603</td>
<td><strong>2,057,603</strong></td>
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</table>

**RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1997**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
<th>SFr</th>
<th>RECEIPTS</th>
<th>SFr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bank and custody charges</td>
<td>11,319</td>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charges on purchase / sale of securities</td>
<td>5,749</td>
<td>Income from securities</td>
<td>68,643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premium on purchase / loss on sale of</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>Income from time deposits</td>
<td>3,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>securities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bank interest</td>
<td>1,160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>2,375</td>
<td>Profit on refund of securities</td>
<td>88,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenses</td>
<td>700</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20,743</td>
<td></td>
<td>262,178</td>
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**RESULT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross excess of receipts over expenditure in 1997</td>
<td>241,435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation of net result on securities transactions to the inalienable capital</td>
<td>(88,241)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation of 50 % of contributions to the inalienable capital in conformity with the Internal Regulations</td>
<td>(50,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation of 30 % of contributions to the available funds in conformity with the Internal Regulations</td>
<td>(30,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation of 20 % of contributions to the ICRC in conformity with the Internal Regulations</td>
<td>(20,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory allocation to the ICRC of net excess of receipts over expenditure in 1997</td>
<td>53,194</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## 10.2 Augusta Fund

### Balance Sheet as at 31 December 1997

#### ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>203,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>2,788</td>
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#### LIABILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inalienable capital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provision</td>
<td>18,470</td>
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<tr>
<td>Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation:</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1996</td>
<td>8,300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in 1997</td>
<td>(22)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florence Nightingale Medal Fund, current account:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1996</td>
<td>44,083</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1997</td>
<td>35,804</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>206,636</td>
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#### Receipts and Expenditure Account for 1997

#### EXPENDITURE

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>213</td>
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</table>

#### RECEIPTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>35,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of reduction of the overall provision</td>
<td>22</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1997</td>
<td>35,804</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

364
### ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>SFr</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>159,234</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stock of medals</td>
<td>43,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augusta Fund, current account</td>
<td>197,233</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### LIABILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>75,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reserve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1996</td>
<td>143,262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1997</td>
<td>53,961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1996</td>
<td>9,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in 1997</td>
<td>(17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>878</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1997

#### EXPENDITURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>SFr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of medals, printing and dispatching circulars</td>
<td>9,010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RECEIPTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>SFr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allocation of the excess of receipts over expenditure at 31 December 1997 of the Augusta Fund, in accordance with the decision of the Twenty-first International Conference of the Red Cross</td>
<td>35,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>27,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of reduction of the overall provision</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RESULT

Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1997: 53,961
### 10.4 CLARE R. BENEDICT FUND

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1997**

<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>3,086,937</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>1,632,629</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provision for portfolio variation</td>
<td>512,351</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1996</td>
<td>172,632</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reduction in 1997</td>
<td>(325) 172,307</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts and expenditure account:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1996</td>
<td>234,058</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution decided in 1997</td>
<td>(234,058)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1997</td>
<td>531,249</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>238,401</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3,086,937</td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3,086,937</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1997**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>RECEIPTS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>4,343</td>
<td>Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>535,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Share of reduction of the overall provision</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4,343</td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>535,592</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESULT**

Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1997 for attribution | 531,249
**10.5 MAURICE DE MADRE FRENCH FUND**

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1997**

<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>3,783,972</td>
<td>Capital:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1996</td>
<td>2,936,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1997</td>
<td>546,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,482,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1996</td>
<td>169,693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reduction in 1997</td>
<td>(403)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>169,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependant’s allowance</td>
<td>13,725</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>118,263</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3,783,972**

**3,783,972**

**RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1997**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>expenditure</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>RECEIPTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allocations</td>
<td>113,538</td>
<td>Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>4,270</td>
<td>Share of reduction of the overall provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenses</td>
<td>455</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**118,263**

**664,279**

**RESULT**

Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1997 | 546,016
10.6 OMAR EL MUKTAR FUND

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1997

ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>1,060,455</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Liabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial capital</td>
<td>760,500</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1996</td>
<td>48,533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in 1997</td>
<td>(113) 48,420</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Receipts and expenditure account:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1996</td>
<td>65,585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution decided in 1997</td>
<td>(65,585)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1997</td>
<td>184,729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>66,806</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1997

Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>1,221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Receipts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>185,837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of reduction of the overall provision</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESULT

Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1997 for attribution | 184,729 |
10.7 PAUL REUTER FUND

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1997

<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>364,328</td>
<td>Initial capital</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Receipts and expenditure account:
- Balance brought forward from 1996: 49,710
- Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1997: 95,515

Reserve:
- Balance brought forward from 1996: 35,356
- Reduction in 1997: (35,356)

Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation:
- Balance brought forward from 1996: 15,159
- Reduction in 1997: (39)

International Committee of the Red Cross, current account: 3,983

364,328

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>RECEIPTS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Award of 1997 Paul Reuter Prize</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>64,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>Share of reduction of the overall provision</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenses</td>
<td>1,602</td>
<td>Reduction of the reserve</td>
<td>35,356</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3,983

RESULT

Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1997: 95,515
### 10.8 SPECIAL FUND FOR THE DISABLED

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1997**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>2,927,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts receivable</td>
<td>22,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>475,698</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>Sfr</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></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1996</td>
<td>152,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in 1997</td>
<td>(309)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts and expenditure account:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1996</td>
<td>872,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of expenditure over receipts in 1996</td>
<td>660,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserved funds:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia project</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho Chi Minh project</td>
<td>224,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addis Ababa project</td>
<td>118,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mines appeal</td>
<td>197,741</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3,425,461

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1997</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXPENDITURE</td>
<td>Sfr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational cost:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Addis Ababa project - Regional training center</td>
<td>809,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ho Chi Minh project - Protheses production and training</td>
<td>137,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- N'Djamena project - Prosthetic material</td>
<td>6,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Nicaragua project - Prosthetic material</td>
<td>38,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>3,846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balances brought forward:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmes to be implemented as from 1998</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ho Chi Minh project</td>
<td>224,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Addis Ababa project</td>
<td>118,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mines appeal</td>
<td>197,741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,536,779</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECEIPTS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions received in 1997</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governments:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America - Addis Ababa project</td>
<td>717,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway - Addis Ababa project</td>
<td>372,211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho Chi Minh project</td>
<td>173,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Societies:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>21,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>30,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>130,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addis Ababa project - billed costs</td>
<td>26,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>509,585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of reduction of the overall provision</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2,197,073

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESULT</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1997</td>
<td>660,294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Contributions received in response to the Mines appeal
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 for General Affairs, the Director of Operations and the Director for International Law and Policy.

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).

Mrs Renée Guisan, General Secretary of the international "Institut de la Vie", 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).

As at 31 December 1997.
Mr Daniel Thürer, Master of Laws (Cambridge), Doctor of Laws, Professor at the University of Zurich, (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).

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).


Mr Jakob Nüesch, Agricultural engineer, Doctor of Technical Science of the Federal Institute of Technology of Zurich, Professor of micro-biology at the University of Basle, former President of the Federal Institute of Technology of Zurich, (1997).

HONORARY MEMBERS: Mr Jean Pictet, Honorary Vice-President.
Mr Maurice Aubert, Mr Hans Bachmann †, Mrs Denise Bindschedler-Robert, Mr Athos Gallino, 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, Ms Francesca Pometta, 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 Jean de Courten, Director of Operations
Mr Paul Grossrieder, Director for General Affairs
Mr Yves Sandoz, Director for International Law and Policy
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 1997, the fourth group of ICRC international advisers met in March and September. Its discussions centred on the impact of the tragic killings in Novye Atagi, Chechnya (southern Russia), the future of the ICRC, children in armed conflicts, the effects of sanctions in humanitarian terms, preparations for the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (to be held in 1999), the Movement's international activities and the consequences for the ICRC of the reorganization of humanitarian coordination within the United Nations.

Advisers for the period 1996-1999:

Mr Alioune Blondin Beye, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Angola (Mali).

Ambassador Vitaly Ivanovich Churkin, Ambassador to Brussels, former Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs (Russian Federation).

Dr Günther Gillessen, Professor of Journalism at the University of Mainz, former editor in charge of international affairs with the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (Germany).

Ambassador Yoshio Hatano, President, Foreign Press Center, Tokyo, former Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva and then in New York (Japan).

Judge Rosalyn Higgins, Judge at the International Court of Justice in The Hague (United Kingdom).

Mrs Graça Simbine Machel, former Minister of Education, former expert appointed by the UN Secretary-General to study the impact of armed conflict on children (Mozambique).

Major-General (ret.) John A. MacInnis, former Commander of the Canadian contingent of the UN forces in the former Yugoslavia (Canada).

Mr Jorge Madrazo, Chief Public Prosecutor (Mexico).

Mr Pedro Nikken, President of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, San José, Costa Rica (Venezuela).

Ambassador Herbert S. Okun, Member, International Narcotics Control Board, Visiting Lecturer, Yale Law School (United States of America).

Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, Joint UN/OAU Special Representative for the Great Lakes region of Africa, Special Adviser to the Director-General of UNESCO (Algeria).

Mr Bradman Weerakoon, former Presidential Adviser on International Relations (Sri Lanka).
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.

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.

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.

In all societies and cultures, the ICRC endeavours to promote international humanitarian law and the fundamental human values underlying that law.